



# INTERNATIONAL FORUM OSLO

## NEWSLETTER

March 2023  
Issue No. 483

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## INTERNATIONAL FORUM

P.O. Box 1505 Vika, 0117 Oslo, Norway

Website: [www.iforum.no](http://www.iforum.no) Email: [int.forum@online.no](mailto:int.forum@online.no)

**Visiting address:** Kronprinsens gate 3, Victoria Passasjen

**Bank account number:** 1600 40 36631

**VIPPS to:** **591747**

**Board 2022 – 2023:** **Anita Pratap** (President), Sissel Lindeman, Heba Mamish, Wenche Mohr, Elizabeth Rasmussen, Elizabeth Groth Kolby (Deputy), Lien Nguyen (Deputy), Jessie Sandosham (Deputy)

**Office Team:** Patricia Blackwell, Karin Skoglund

**Office hours:** Please send enquiries by email

**Editor:** Elizabeth S. Rasmussen

**Editorial Team:** Elspeth Walseth, Josephine Kamsvåg

**Secretary:** Elspeth Walseth

**Treasurer:** Anne-Lise Fasteland

**Auditor:** Verena Krienke

**Committee Leaders:**

Monthly Meetings G. Anita Solheim and Signe Howell

Special Events Mona B. Reinboth

Art Jane Steenbuch

Activities Anita Solheim

If you wish to become a member of International Forum, please contact us by email.



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### DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

For the **March Newsletter** is **March 16**. Please send your contribution to Elizabeth S. Rasmussen, [int.forum@online.no](mailto:int.forum@online.no). The Editor and the Editorial Team reserve the right to edit *all* material.



### **From the President**

Dear Members,

March is usually a time of beautiful sunsets. Built to human scale, Oslo enables residents to view sunsets from all angles, from everywhere. Most of us are *opacarophiles*. That sounds like a bad word, but it means ‘a person who loves sunsets’. *Opacaro* means ‘dusk’ in Latin and *phile* is Greek for ‘love’.

The reason most people love watching sunsets is that the colours stimulate the pineal gland in the brain, which produces melatonin and serotonin – our feel-good hormones. French philosopher Rene Descartes believed the soul lived in the pineal gland. Sunsets have a way of combining spirituality, literature, philosophy, art, and science. Simply put, a beautiful sunset is an aesthetic experience.

But sunset is also pure perception. We talk about the sky all the time. But there is no sky. We say that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. In northern Norway, summer sun doesn’t set, and when it does, it sets in the south. And then it doesn’t rise – for two months. And anyway, the sun doesn’t rise or set anywhere on earth. Sunset exposes all our presumptions, judgments, and opinions, some of which are not based on facts.

This will likely be a difficult year for the world. But it need not be. Sunset symbolizes the opportunity to rest and reset, it promises dawn, a reminder of how fleeting and beautiful life is and of how important it is to preserve this miracle for the sake of our planet and for future generations. To feel inspired, all it takes is to look up, to experience the power and possibilities, the magic and mystery of a radiant sunset in Oslo - or anywhere in the world.

Best regards

*Anita Pratap*

President

## *FROM THE BOARD* NEW MEMBERS



This month the Board has the pleasure of welcoming a new member

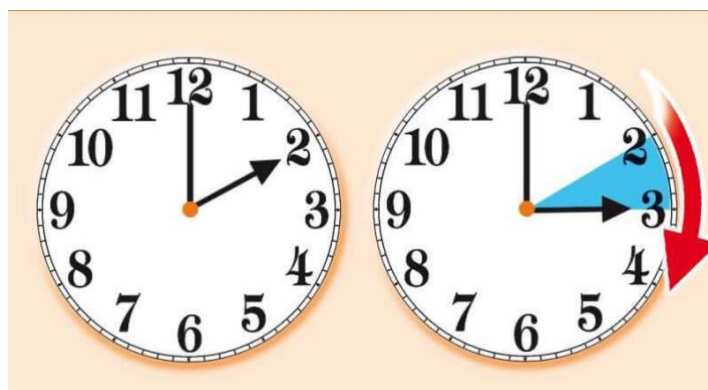
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## *SUMMER DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME*

Remember to *advance* your clock by one hour:

02:00 → 03:00

**Sunday, March 26!**



## *COMING EVENTS* MARCH MONTHLY MEETING

**March 6**

**Dr Ingebjørg Tonne on Children and Multilingualism**

‘Pride, Prejudice – and Poetry’



Dr Tonne will talk about a project carried out in a grade six classroom in a south-eastern suburb of Oslo some years ago. Four student-teachers were doing their practicum in a class and Dr Tonne, their supervisor, was supervising and observing them throughout the period.

In this class of 25 eleven-year-olds, 16 also spoke a language other than Norwegian at home with their parents. Primary school pupils' competence in languages other than Norwegian (and English) had not been much in focus earlier in the youngsters' schooling, but the student-teachers were curious.

Dr Tonne will show us that it is possible to make children in mainstream classrooms proud of their non-Norwegian linguistic skills and make them utilize their repertoire for the good of *all* the pupils and thus enhance everyone's linguistic awareness. There are many ways of doing this. In this exercise, the student-teachers used poetry.

**DATE/TIME:** Monday, **March 6** at 18:45 (for 19:00)

**SIGN UP:** To Anita Solheim, by email no later than Wednesday, **March 1.**

The event is open only to members. Members: Please sign up as indicated in the Newsletter

Non Members: if you would like to become a member, please email [int.forum@online.no](mailto:int.forum@online.no) for an application form. *Please note membership is not automatic. Applications are processed and decided by the Board.*

**PRICE:** NOK 105.- **Please sign up and pay.** Make your payment **preferably by bank transfer** to the Forum account: 1600 40 36631 or by VIPPS 591747. No cash will be handled at the venue. Please **state the event and your name** in the transaction (in the KID-number box for bank payments and in the dialogue box for VIPPS).

**TRANSPORT:** T-Bane 1 to Vinderen. Pay parking in the adjoining area until 20:00.

Guests are welcome.

No-shows will be charged. For last minute cancellations or questions, please call Anita Solheim on mob.: 404 80 944

## **THE ART COMMITTEE**

A fascinating behind-the-scenes guided tour  
of the Norwegian Opera and Ballet workshops!

**March 14**



Scenography or stage design is the practice of crafting an on-stage atmosphere that produces a sense of place in performance.

At the opera or the theatre, we are often mesmerised by the magnificent stage design and costumes that give perspective to the unfolding story. Very rarely do we get a glimpse of or understand the scope of work that goes into the production before we take our seats and hopefully enjoy the end-product.

The guided tour will explore the different workshops for scenery, costumes, hats and masks, just to mention a few, and will offer an insight into the buildings's inner life and activities.

**DATE/TIME:** Tuesday **14 March** at 11:45 (for 12:00)

**SIGN UP:** To Bente Skarsgård by email [as soon as possible and no later than Thursday, March 9.](mailto:int.forum@online.no)

The event is open only to members. Members: Please sign up as indicated in the Newsletter

Non Members: if you would like to become a member, please email [int.forum@online.no](mailto:int.forum@online.no) for an application form. *Please note membership is not automatic. Applications are processed and decided by the Board.*

PLACE: Kirsten Flagstads plass 1, 0150 Oslo



**PRICE:** NOK 120.- Please make your payment **preferably** by **bank transfer** to the Forum account: 1600 40 36631 or by VIPPS 591747. No cash will be handled at the venue. Please **state the event and your name** in the transaction (in the KID-number box for bank payments and in the dialogue box for VIPPS).

**TRANSPORT:** The Oslo Central Station for Train, Bus and Trams. A 5-minute walk.

Maximum 25 participants.

Guests are welcome if space is available.

Cancellations after the deadline and no shows will be charged. For last-minute cancellations, please call Bente Skarsgård

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **SPECIAL LECTURE**

**At the Norwegian Space Agency**

‘The Northern Lights – Aurora Borealis’

**March 21 at 11:45**



The Special Events Committee has the pleasure of inviting you to a fascinating lecture on the Northern Lights, Aurora Borealis, at the Norwegian Space Agency at Skøyen in Oslo.

Many have wondered about the stars, planets and lights flashing across the northerly winter skies. In Norway, we are very fortunate to be able to see these beautiful northern phenomena that appear unannounced during the winter. The aurorae, also commonly known as the polar lights, are caused by electrically charged particles originating from the sun that enter the Earth's upper atmosphere at a very high speed, resulting in beautiful displays of patterns of

brilliant lights in the form of ‘curtains’, rays, spirals, or dynamic flickers covering the entire sky.

To help explain these fascinating movements of light, space scientist Pål Brekke from the Norwegian Space Agency (NOSA) will introduce us to NOSA’s mission in Norway and Europe, and then present, using slides, some of the forces behind the Aurora Borealis.

**DATE/TIME:** Tuesday, **March 21** at **11:40 am**. The meeting starts at **12:00** sharp. **Please be on time!** The lecture will last about an hour.

**SIGN UP:** To Sonia Mykletun by email no later than **March 10**. Please sign up first, and then **pay** when you have received confirmation.

The event is open only to members. Members: Please sign up as indicated in the Newsletter

Non Members: if you would like to become a member, please email [int.forum@online.no](mailto:int.forum@online.no) for an application form. *Please note membership is not automatic. Applications are processed and decided by the Board.*

**PLACE:** The Norwegian Space Agency (Norsk Romsenter), Sjølyst Møtesenter at Sjølyst Parken, Drammensveien 165, 0277 Oslo, at Skøyen.

To get there, walk along Drammensveien away from Skøyen train station, walk past the Elkjøp store, then the Power store and towards Circle K petrol station. Here a committee member will direct you to the entrance of Drammensveien 165. Please see the map and photo below.

**PRICE:** NOK 25,- for a gift for the lecturer.

Please make your payment **preferably** by **bank transfer** to the Forum account: 1600 40 36631 or by VIPPS 591747. No cash will be handled at the venue. Please **state the event and your name** in the transaction (in the KID-number box for bank payments and in the dialogue box for VIPPS).

Maximum number of participants is 30.

Guests will be allowed if space is available.

**TRANSPORT:** **Public transport:** Buses 20 and 31 and all local trains stop at Skøyen train station. Tram 13 to Skøyen.

**Car:** There is public parking in surrounding areas.

**LUNCH:** There are several restaurants along Karenslyst Allé.

Cancellations and no-shows will be charged.

For questions or last-minute cancellations, please contact  
Sonia Mykletun





## *ACTIVITIES*

### **COOKING GROUP I**

Angelika Kruse-Jensen is looking forward to welcoming you to her home in March. The maximum number of participants around the table is 12. Angelika is Greek, but has lived many years in Norway. Did you know that the Greeks consume the most olive oil in the world?

The suspense is ‘what is she going to serve?’

DATE: March, **Tuesday 14** at 13:00

SIGN UP: No later than Friday, **March 10**,

The event is open only to members. Members: Please sign up as indicated in the Newsletter

Non Members: if you would like to become a member, please email [int.forum@online.no](mailto:int.forum@online.no) for an application form. *Please note membership is not automatic. Applications are processed and decided by the Board.*

## *R E P O R T S*

### **MONTHLY MEETING**

#### **Tove Romsaas Wang on Save the Children**

Our speaker at the February Monthly Meeting, Tove Romsaas Wang, is former Director General of Save the Children Norway. Ms Wang is a health professional, a nurse specialist in public health and tropical medicine with a Master in international health. She has 40 years of experience in international development. We were all spellbound by the account of her work experiences, some personal stories and the lessons that she has learned.

Education has become her passion during the last 15-20 years. ‘Education can save lives,’ she said, ‘as education is linked to health, poverty, and conflict.’ As many as 500 million children live in armed conflict zones. For these children, education is just as important as food and shelter, and should be part of any emergency assistance.

All children have the right to an education. This right is enshrined in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and whenever someone has a right, someone else has a duty, she claims.

Today, 258 million children (6-18) globally do not attend school, and this number is on the rise. Up until 2-3 years ago, there was progress, but no longer. The gap between the extremely poor and the extremely rich is getting bigger for the first time in 25 years. The upsurge in violent conflicts, climate change, and the Covid-19 pandemic are the main drivers.

At a children’s ward in a Yemeni hospital, babies had been dying daily for two years. What did the infants have in common? Illiterate mothers! The mothers



simply could not read the instructions on the infant formula packaging and did not understand that the water had to be boiled first or how much powder to add. Knowledge about hygiene and nutrition is obviously important for infant survival and child health. ‘Going to school can save your life, give hope, and change a person’s life,’ Ms Wang said. ‘You have more choices; you can even start a small business.’

Children must be protected in schools. For girls, education can reduce or postpone marriage and pregnancies and thus save lives. Girls deprived of their education have seven children on average worldwide, whereas educated women have two and are thus better equipped to ensure good childcare.

Devoted teachers and educational systems that can secure that learning actually takes place are also important. Many children attend school yet learn very little, even in Norway. There are apparently more children in school who are not learning than there are children out of school. One example was a girl that Ms Wang had observed, who was ‘copying’ the teacher’s writing on the blackboard. But the girl just drew wavy lines in her book, not letters. She could neither read nor write, but she went to school. It is important that the teachers care about the learning outcome and that they pay attention to attendance.



It is now common acceptance that children in conflict zones are entitled to education. Yes, ‘food, health, and shelter and education’, as Ms Wang insisted. This cannot happen without brave teachers, like those who teach in under-ground schools in Syria.

Sissel Lindeman, Ms Wang and Signe Howell

Sometimes the parents need to take action, like the wise fathers in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, or the brave students and school children such as Malala. ‘I take my hat off to teachers and parents and students,’ said Ms Wang.

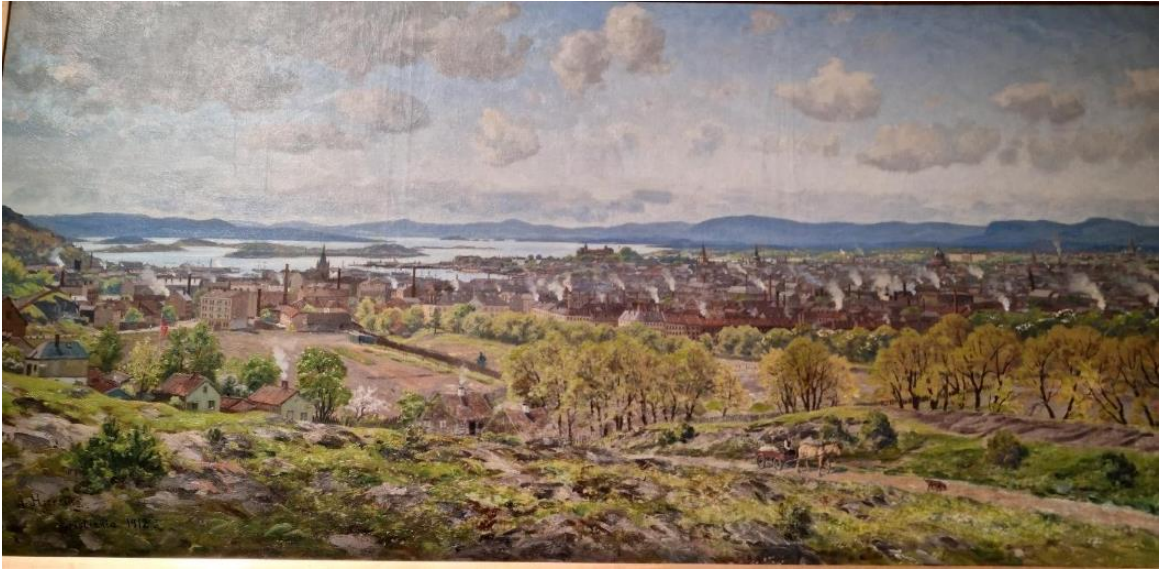
Ms Wang concluded by commenting on how the right to education could be ensured if we are willing to hold politicians, governments, and the international community accountable. It is also imperative to train more female teachers, build schools close to where children live, and protect buildings, children, and teachers in armed conflict zones from attack.

After her interesting speech, Ms Wang answered many questions from the audience.

Gunnel Anita Solheim

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### *City Scapes – Capturing Oslo* at the City Museum (Bymuseet)

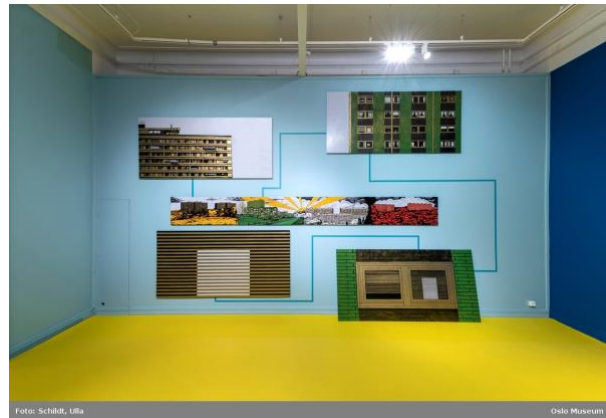


*View of Christiania* 1912, with smoking chimneys, Arne Hjersing

On a bright but ice-cold day at the end of January, 19 Forum ladies and a guest gathered at the Oslo City Museum in Frogner park for a tour of the exhibition *City scapes – Capturing Oslo*: Oslo/Christiania seen through the eyes of various artists. We were supposed to have an English-speaking guide, but due to illness we were given another guide, and we agreed to have the tour in Norwegian since all our participants could understand Norwegian.



*Bogstad Manor* c. 1800, Frederik Petersen



*The Golden Ghetto*, 2019, S.D. Qarakati

The exhibition show-cases, through paintings, how the city of Oslo/Christiania has changed and developed over the last three hundred years. Especially three periods are in focus: the time after the city fire in 1642, the industrial revolution, and the time after the dissolution of the union with Sweden in 1905.

On display are works by well-known artists, such as Peder Balke and Edvard Munch, as well as less established painters. The paintings come mostly from Oslo Museum's art collection. Our tour started with the newest work in the exhibition, from 2019, by Shwan Dler Qaradaki called *The Golden Ghetto*. It shows blocks of flats from the suburbs: Grorud, Stovner, and Romsås among others. Gold paint makes the blocks shine, but there are black clouds in the background: not all is idyllic.



*Christiania seen from Ekeberg 1829 with piles of plank, Peder Balke.*

The exhibition's oldest painting – from 1699 – is painted by Jacob Coning, a Dutch artist. It shows Christiania seen from Ekeberg. All the buildings in the town are red because only brick was allowed as building material after the city fire in 1642.

In the 1700s, manor houses (hovedgårder) were built by wealthy landlords on farmland around Christiania, including Frogner hovedgård, Ullevål gård, and Bogstad gård. These handsome manors were favourite objects for artists such as Frederik Petersen, who painted Bogstad gård around 1800. Incidentally, the Museum's gallery, in which the exhibition is mounted, was originally the stables at Frogner hovedgård.

We followed the industrialisation of Christiania, which began with the timber industry in the 1700s. One painting shows piles of planks down by the harbour. Works from the 1800s show smoke rising from factory chimneys. There are images from 'behind the scenes': the backyards and living quarters of the working class.

When Norway was ceded to Sweden 1814 at the end of the Napoleonic War, Christiania became the capital city of a sovereign state with a Swedish king, no longer a province of Copenhagen. Many cultural changes took place. One painting shows the Observatory at Solli, and another Karl Johans street. In another, the Klingenberg area with the National Theatre and the Tivoli are shown.



Paintings of prominent members of the Norwegian elite, such as Fritjof Nansen, Roald Amundsen, Christian Krogh and other famous persons are also displayed. The building of the Royal Palace began in 1824, intended to be the Norwegian residence of the French-born King Karl Johan (who did not live to see it finished. His son Oscar was the first king to use the palace).

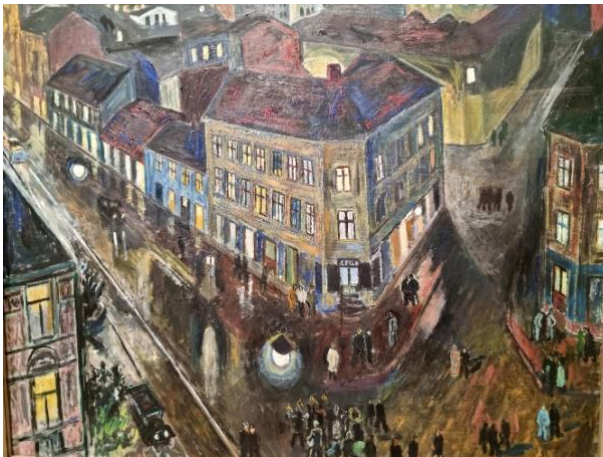


*Observatoriet Solli plass*



*Klingenberg area with Tivoli 1930,  
Kolbjørn Juel Sørli*

As we moved through the exhibition, industrialisation and modernisation continued. One painting from 1851 shows Nydalen tekstile factory by the river Aker. Another from 1933 depicts Grønlandsleiret, east in Oslo, with apartments and street lamps lit up by electricity.



By this time, as a result of the dissolution of the Union with Sweden in 1905, *Christiania* once again became *Oslo*. A painting from 1957 shows blocks of flats at Lambertseter, Oslo's first suburb, in green and pleasant surroundings. Another shows Oslo City Hall being built. It was completed in 1950.

*Grønlandsleiret 1933 with electrical street lights,  
Reidar Aulie.*

We came to the last picture in the exhibition, painted by Magne Rygh in 2007, showing the traffic flyover, now demolished, which passed over the area where the New Deichman library now stands.

After thanking Linken for her informative and interesting guiding, we went to the museum's Café Mathea to enjoy lunch and socialising.

PS: This exhibition lasts at least until August 2023 and is well worth a visit.

Rosemary Hauge

# ART COMMITTEE

## Visit to The National Museum

### Grayson Perry

#### *Fitting In and Standing Out (until 26 March)*

This is an exhibition to be highly recommended. It is entertaining, beautiful, provoking, and important. It leaves you in no doubt as to why Perry is one of Britain's most famous artists.

Grayson Perry says himself that his ideas are 'sophisticated art for a popular audience.' His art is very British with a distinct sound of British humour.

In the Duchampian tradition based on ideas that use ready-made materials, he creates a modern Bayeux tapestry, mixing personal and impersonal views on society. He investigates themes of identity, social class, gender roles, masculinity, norms, values, taboos, and the impact of consumerism.

He is a performance artist in his cross-dressing. A living sculpture with blurred boundaries. Alan Measles is his teddy bear, a symbolic father and protector, and his feminine self is called Claire. He declares that all heterosexuals have feminine emotions, and that it is ok to be sissy!



At Portsmouth Art College he explored a variety of materials and techniques and his own transvestite identity. In 1983, he discovered the potential of the humble tradition of ceramics produced by craftsmen rather than artists. He liked the fact that there is no hubris in bringing pottery to an art gallery. Perry represents anti-snobism in the art world but realises that the validation of



intellectuals is what keeps artists selling. He fits certain stereotypes of the art world, while at the same time pushing against the flow and not quite fitting in.

The exhibition opens with *The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman* from 2011. Great masterpieces in the history of art and in the British Museum were made by someone whose identity is no longer known. Perry has created an incredible ship that is loaded with forgotten craftsmanship.



*The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman*

On the other hand, vases have historically been high-value showpieces. From a distance, Perry's vases seem harmless and beautiful, but up close they are full of provocation. And a lot of humour. These ceramics are what have made him so famous and 'reading' the surfaces is enormously entertaining. From tongue-in-cheek sexual connotations to brutal criticism of modern society, they are literally bulging with profound ideas.



One tapestry in the *Vanity of small differences* series

Over the years, tapestries have become perhaps his most important genre after ceramics. His retelling of William Hogarth's 'A Rake's Progress' (1732-34) describes the tragic class journey of Tom Rakewell. This series of six tapestries is called *The Vanity of Small Differences*. These extremely brightly coloured and monumental works are full of religious, mythological and historical class symbolism. You need plenty of time to look at them. The sixth one, *Lamentation*, is a brutal picture of how wealth and consumption at the top of the class pinnacle can bring you crashing down.

A festival of art from one of Britain's best-loved artists!

Grayson Perry was awarded the Turner Prize in 2003 and promptly made a vase that declared 'It's about time a transvestite won the Turner Prize.'

He received a knighthood in King Charles' New Year Honours List 2023 and plans to turn up in a dress.

*Thank you* to Bente Skarsgård for helping me organising this event.

Jane Steenbuch

## IN MEMORIAM

**Elizabeth Bøhn**



© Sidsel Jakhelln Semb

Elizabeth Bøhn passed away on December 27, 2022, at the age of 87 following a rather long period of illness.

She was one of the founding members of International Forum, of which she was an active member. She had been leader of the Art Committee and was a faithful member of this committee until the very end.

She was also part of the Walking Group for many years.

Elizabeth was born in Mexico in 1935. She studied art in Boston, USA, and in Paris, and also obtained a silversmithing diploma in Taxco, Mexico.

In 1963 she married Jan Gunnar Bøhn and settled in Oslo, where she gave birth to two sons and one daughter. However, Mexico was always close to her heart and she often went back for visits.

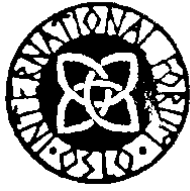
Elizabeth remained dedicated to her art work and jewellery-making throughout her life. Her paintings were shown at various exhibitions in Oslo, including one at the Oslo City Hall.

We will miss Elizabeth and will remember her as a friendly, creative, gracious, and elegant lady.

We have been informed by her son that the funeral will take place in Ullern Kirke towards the end of April.

Kerstin Petersen and Inger M. Melhuus Ræder





## INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Org.no: 994 566 806

**President**

Anita Pratap

**Editor and Layout:**

Elizabeth Rasmussen and Editorial Team

**Editorial Team:**

Elspeth Walseth and Josephine Kamsvåg

**Dispatch Team:**

Kerstin Petersen, Mona Reinboth, Mette Svadberg,  
Wenche Undrum, Elspeth Walseth and Patricia  
Blackwell

The Editor and the Editorial Team reserve the right to edit **all** material.

Date: March 1, 2023