



INTERNATIONAL FORUM OSLO

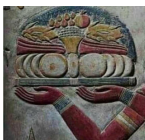
NEWSLETTER

April 2023
Issue No. 484

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



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For the **May Newsletter** is **April 16**. Please send your contribution to Elizabeth S. Rasmussen by email: and to int.forum@online.no. The Editor and the Editorial Team reserve the right to edit *all* material.



From the President

Hollywood's Oscar Awards this year was a celebration of diversity. Young, old, different nationalities, mainstream and offbeat – all won top honours. From actors to art, costume to cinematography, film to fashion, song to special effects, design to divas: *Everything, Everywhere, All at Once* showed how incredible diversity is. It makes us think and feel in new ways. The world is richer for it.

But there is a common misconception. Diversity is often seen to include merely different genders and races. This is a much-needed step in the right direction. But diversity of *thought* is equally important. Organisations may have men and women, whites and blacks, but if they think alike, it's a trainwreck waiting to happen. All data show that 'groupthink' derails institutions, companies and even countries. Diversity of ideas makes us creative and resilient. As Malcolm Forbes, publisher of Forbes magazine once said: 'Diversity is the art of thinking independently together.' Thinking independently but working together as a team.

The three CD members of the IF Board come from different countries. The six members representing Norway come from different backgrounds and experience. Together, so many decisions are taken. Working as a team helps to produce decisions that are solution-oriented and sustainable.

The Board reflects the diversity of our members. We have members now from 45 countries, almost a mini-United Nations. We believe in sharing similarities, celebrating differences.

With April comes the promise of spring. This year, April also showcases the diversity of human beliefs, customs and cultures, something to truly cherish.

Wishing you a festive season of sharing and celebrations as we enter the month of Easter, Passover, Vaisakhi and Eid.

Best regards

Anita Pratap
President



NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM is for members only and will be held on June 5th.

FROM THE BOARD

The Grethe Frydenlund Award 2023

The Grethe Frydenlund Award is a recognition given not for contribution in a particular year, but for years of dedicated service. Named after our Founding Mother, the Award honours members for their spirit and hard work, spanning years, if not decades.

This year, the Board is delighted to announce that the Award has been given to



ELSPETH WALSETH

More information in the May *Newsletter*.

FROM THE OFFICE

THREE NEW MEMBERS

This month the Board is very happy to welcome three new members.

We are so happy to have these ladies on board and hope to see them at our events and activities!

COMING EVENTS

THE ART COMMITTEE

Marc Chagall – *World in Turmoil*

At the Henie Onstad Art Centre

April 20



The exhibition is organised by Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt
in cooperation with Henie Onstad Art Centre

The exhibition sheds light on a highly topical, but little-known side to Marc Chagall – his works from the 1930s and 40s, when his colourful palette took on a darker hue. Chagall is one of the most celebrated of the early European modernist artists: a distinguished painter, graphic artist, stage set designer and producer of decorative arts and crafts. The works of this multi-talented Jewish artist are often described as poetic, dream-like and fantastical, yet they are always closely linked to his own personal experiences. This is particularly noticeable in the works he produced in the 1930s and 1940s.

In the early 1930s, Chagall's art explored the increasingly aggressive anti-Semitism in Europe. In 1941, he was smuggled out of France and sought refuge in the USA. During these years, his works touch on important contemporary themes, such as identity, homeland and exile, in particular the feeling of loss and nostalgia that he felt for his hometown, Vitebsk, in present-day Belarus.

From the 1930s, the artist focused more and more on the Jewish world and turned towards allegorical and biblical themes.

The exhibition comprises over 50 paintings and works on paper, on loan from several international museums, as well as public and private art collections.

This exhibition gives the public a unique opportunity to experience Chagall as a costume designer, through eight of the costumes he designed for the ballet *Aleko* (1942) while he was living in exile in the USA.

DATE: Thursday, **April 20** at 11:45 (for 12.00)

SIGN UP: By email to Inger Ræder or by phone or text message as soon as possible and no later than **April 13**. A confirmation email will be sent to the participants.

PLACE: Henie Onstad Art Centre, Sonja Henies vei 31, 1311
Høvikodden

PRICE: NOK 135.- for the guide, to be paid beforehand preferably by bank payment to the Forum account 1600 40 36631 or by VIPPS to 591747. No cash will be handled. Please state your name and the event in the transaction.

NOK 150.- entrance fee is paid at the Centre's ticket counter.

TRANSPORT: **Bus 160** (Rykkinn) from the centre of Oslo every 15 min. Get off at the Høvikodden bus stop. It is a 5-minute walk.

By **car**, take the E18 west and follow the signs. Free parking.

LUNCH: There is a cafeteria/restaurant at the Art Centre.

Maximum number of participants: **25**

NB! The event will be cancelled if the number of participants is less than 12.

Guests are welcome if space is available. Members have priority.

Cancellations after the deadline and no-shows will be charged.

For last-minute cancellations, please call Inger M. Ræder.

DIPLOMATIC SALON
Fasting and Feasting with an Egyptian Flavour

*A Journey through Time to View the Traditions of
Fasting and Feasting in Egyptian Culture*

Wednesday **April 26** at 11:00

The Residence of the Ambassador of Egypt



Carvings of *Kahk* cookies from Ancient Egypt

Fasting is deeply rooted in Egyptian culture from Ancient Egypt to Coptic and Islamic periods. The tradition became one set of habits for all Egyptians, regardless of their beliefs.

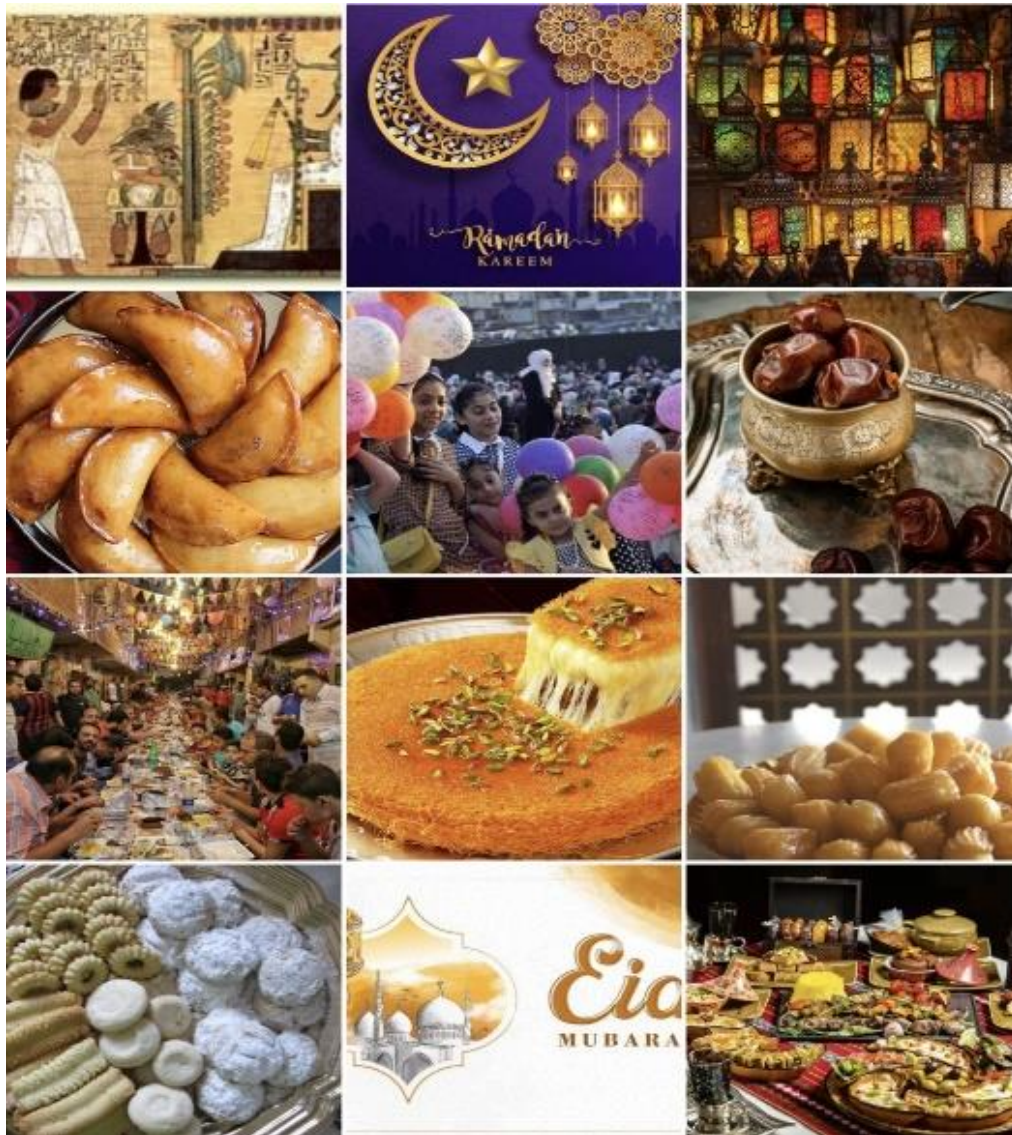
Ancient Egyptians used to fast 30 days a year. How did they fast, what was the purpose of fasting, and what did they eat at the feasts that followed fasting? Was fasting then a *tradition* before it became a form of *worship* for Egyptians?

In Egypt, Coptic Christian fasting means adhering to a vegan diet called ‘Siami’, which is based on *ta’ameya* fava beans and *foul* falafel, lentils, grape leaves, potatoes, among other ingredients, which are consumed during the days of fasting. Everybody spends time eating with his family or friends. Copts also spend Ramadan the same way as Muslims do – except for dietary differences. It really is more of a cultural than a religious tradition.

The fasting period ends with a feast that is a huge celebration. Eid ul-Fitr most probably will fall on April 22 this year. It involves cooking and eating many

Egyptian traditional delicacies. The food that is the most associated with the celebration is *Kahk*, which are nut-filled cookies covered in powdered sugar.

Kahk is believed to date back to Ancient Egypt. Carvings of people making *Kahk* have been found in the ruins in both Memphis and Thebes. A recipe for *Kahk* was also found in the Great Pyramid in Giza.



A feast of sweets, cookies and desserts

The presentation by Ambassador Amr Ramadan on Egypt's unique traditions will be followed by a Q and A session and a sampling of traditional Eid delicacies, including *Kahk*, prepared under the supervision of his spouse, Mrs Heba Mamish.

If you would like to attend, please email [Anita Pratap](mailto:Anita.Pratap@min.gov.eg).

Seats on a 'first come, first served' basis. Fee: NOK 40 for a gift.

MAY MONTHLY MEETING

May 8

Ms. Lisa Ann Cooper on her Work in Norway



In 1987, when Lisa Ann Cooper was 25, she met with explicit racism for the first time in her life. With a new job in New York City, she needed a suitable apartment and asked a lodging rental agency to find one, only to be told that the agency did not rent to Blacks. This incidence marked the beginning of a long career fighting racism and intolerance and promoting integration and equality.

She has lived in Norway since 1989 and is fluent in Norwegian. She has an MBA from BI (Norwegian Business School) and a bachelor in marketing from Penn State University.

Lisa Cooper worked for the Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (DEI) for over 16 years. While working with the Integration and Diversity Directorate in 2006-2008, she oversaw the portfolio of diversity and integration strategy development for Norway. Since 2008, she has led her own consulting practice.

Lisa is the founder and CEO of several social enterprises in Norway that are focused on creating social change with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion, mentoring, arts, culture, and youth. She will talk about her career journey in Norway and some of her projects and enterprises that she established to promote diversity, counter racism and make Norway a more inclusive society.

DATE/TIME: Monday, **May 8** at 18:45 (for 19:00)

SIGN UP: To Anita Solheim by email.

PRICE: NOK 105. **Please sign up before you 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 mobile phone.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Queen Sonja Art Stable

Craftmanship at the Royal Palace – 200 years of creations

May 11



The Special Events Committee has the pleasure of inviting you to the exciting exhibition *Craftmanship at the Royal Palace – 200 years of creations* at Queen Sonja Art Stable.

The exhibition displays a selection of beautiful, handcrafted objects from the Royal Collections. It emphasises the importance of traditional crafts and explains how the objects on display were made, as well as how they are still used and cared for today.

The Royal Stables were built between 1845 and 1848. King Haakon and Queen Maud expanded the facilities in 1911. British-born Queen Maud was an accomplished equestrian, and the stables were remodelled, based on those at Buckingham Palace: the Royal Mews. On Queen Maud's initiative, a British stable master was hired. At one point, the staff included 13 grooms who had their living quarters above the centre stable building. The centre stable could house 38 horses as well as carriages, saddles and harnesses.

After Queen Maud's death in 1938, the practice of keeping horses declined. The last horses were removed from the Royal Stables shortly after the outbreak of war in 1940. The Royal Stables have been used for storage since World War II.

The repurposing of the stables into an art gallery was a gift to Her Majesty Queen Sonja from His Majesty the King.



The Queen Sonja Art Stable officially opened on the Queen's 80th birthday on July 4, 2017. The opening marked the beginning of a new era for the building. Where the horses once stood in their stalls, the public can now enjoy art and history.

DATE/TIME: Thursday, **May 11** at 10:40 (for 11:00)

SIGN UP: To Mona Bækkelund Reinboth by email no later than **May 3**. Please sign up and pay only when you have received confirmation. Please pay before the deadline. After you have paid, please inform Mona Reinboth and state the date of payment.

PLACE: The Queen Sonja Art Stable, Parkveien 50, 0010 Oslo

PRICE: NOK 125.- for the entrance fee and guided tour.

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. Cancellations after the deadline and no-shows will be charged.

TRANSPORT: **Public transport:** T-bane to Nationaltheatret station, trams 12 and 13 to Solli Plass, Tram 19 to Inkognito gate. Buses 30 and 31 to Solli Plass.

LUNCH: There are several restaurants in the area.

For questions or last-minute cancellations, please contact:
Mona B. Reinboth by email.

A C T I V I T I E S

WALKING GROUP



Four walkers enjoyed themselves on Friday, March 10, and were rewarded with sunshine, freshly baked waffles, and a winter wonderland at Nygård in Bærum.

Berit Lindstrøm

COOKING GROUP

A big 'Thank you' to Angelika for a wonderful three-course lunch. The day before, we were unsure if we could make it because of the heavy snowfall on Tuesday. However, on Wednesday the sun was back, and 11 ladies enjoyed a long afternoon with good food accompanied by lots of laughter!



The next cooking morning will take place at Inge Pedersen's home after Easter.

DATE/TIME: Wednesday, **May 3** at 13:00.

SIGN UP: By Monday, **April 17**, by email to Liss Laan or Inge Pedersen.

PLACE:

Maximum number of participants: **10**

We wish you all a Happy Easter!

Liss R. Laan

R E P O R T S

MARCH MONTHLY MEETING

March Monthly Meeting

Dr Ingeborg Toppe on Multilingualism in the Classroom

Dr. Ingeborg Toppe explained the findings of a project involving four student teachers in a compulsory practicum organised by the teaching programme at the OsloMet, where she worked at the time. She supervised the students throughout their practice period. The student teachers worked with smaller groups of 6th graders in a school in eastern Oslo. The children came from a variety of backgrounds and represented 16 different home languages. Most of the children did not speak Norwegian with their family.



Dr. Toppe and Anita Pratap

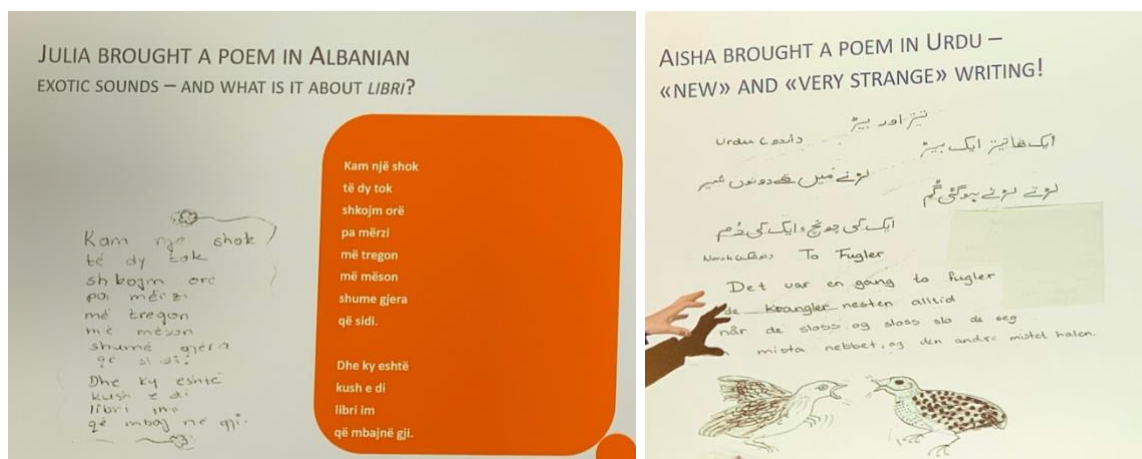
Usually, the Norwegian school programme includes the major Norwegian dialects and minority languages such as the different varieties of Sami, but there is no focus on the foreign languages that the students speak at home, especially in the bigger cities.

Dr Toppe's student teachers wanted to focus on the various home languages and increase awareness among the pupils about their language skills. No-one had ever been told that having a second language was a gift. The students were asked to bring to class a small poem in their respective languages. The poems

were then used to raise consciousness about some of the structural differences, i.e. the words' linguistic features. Languages are made up of phonemes (speech sounds, which may be very different from one language to another), morphological characteristics (how words are constructed), and structure at the sentence level (how words are combined in order to convey a particular message). All these features differ from one language to another.

Unilingual people usually take for granted the connection between linguistic form and 'object': one word, one 'object'. Multilingual children, however, unconsciously associate more than one word with a particular 'object'. The example was *table*. The object 'table' can be linked to a host of different words in different languages.

These linguistic differences automatically create metalinguistic awareness. The pupils were asked to read a poem and explain it to the other students in their group.



Julia's Poem

Aisha's Poem

One example was Julia with Albanian parents. The following line from the poem she brought, *kam një shok*, means 'I have a friend'. Here, 'I have' is expressed by the word *kam*, one word instead of two; i.e. a structure in which meaning derives from word form.

The word *libri* is a loan-word from Latin, meaning 'book'. The word *shok* [friend] has the same referent as *libri* [book]. A lot of things going on...

Aisha brought a poem in Urdu about two birds, written in the Urdu alphabet. She had done the transcription herself, showing a high level of awareness.

Ali also presented a poem in Urdu ('jeg gikk til skolen' – 'I walked to school'). In this little Urdu clause, the phrase 'walked to' was expressed in one word. The word order was also different from Norwegian subject-verb order: 'I school went to'. Yet again, not only were the sounds and alphabet different from Norwegian, but the sentence structure as well.

So, the pupils were able to appreciate different sounds and word forms and play on words through concrete text examples. Playing with language requires a certain awareness and linguistic skills. The pupils appreciated being the experts in their language. They had by the end of the project gained in confidence and pride when it came to their language skills.

The student teachers would have liked to have seen the experiment being repeated in other 6th-grade classes. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case. Only the school librarian compiled collections of poems once a year for an exhibition.

After the presentation, there were a number of questions. And Anita Pratap presented the speaker with flowers and a Forum bowl with the IF logo made by Victoria Berge.

Elizabeth S. Rasmussen

SPECIAL EVENTS

Visit to the Norwegian Maritime Museum

Jan Herman Linge

In August 2022, the Maritime Museum organised a centenary anniversary exhibition to celebrate naval architect Jan Herman Linge. Born in 1922, Jan Herman, the son of World War I hero Martin Linge, joined the resistance in 1940. At that time, he built his first yacht, the 'Vi to'. He studied ship design and naval architecture after the war.



Our excellent guide Eyvind Bagle, introducing the exhibition to the 15 IF ladies (and 3 husbands)

The exhibition showed the essence of Linge's designs and the development of Norwegian boat building. Naval construction was previously a traditional handcraft using wood materials, and constructing a boat was a time-consuming enterprise. Linge introduced designs that could be mass-produced in a shorter time and hence at a reduced cost – making all types of boats available to a wider

public in Norway and abroad. Though not a boat builder himself, he had a keen eye for improved constructability and its advantages.

Reverse transom – a surface forming the stern of a vessel, canted forwards at the upper side – was a design concept that makes it possible to save weight by reducing the size of the yacht's stern and moving the boat's weight to the keel. This improves the boat's performance. Linge also designed a reverse stern with separate rudder and keel. This combination enables more responsive steering and better manoeuvrability.

When stationary or at slow speeds, a deep V-shaped motorboat hull, a water ballast tunnel and lifting strakes allow water to fill the ballast tunnel, providing more stability. At higher speeds, the water drains out, the boat lifts, and the strakes (longitudinal strips on the hull below the waterline) reduce the drag. The water is directed away from the hull and generates lift, so that the boat sits higher in the water, giving a higher speed for less power.

Linge designed many motorboats and yachts which were constructed by others. Two of his yachts were admitted into the Olympic games. The yacht 'Soling' was accepted as an Olympic class in 1968 and participated in eight Olympic Games. 'Yngling', also designed by Linge, was accepted as an international class in 1979 and as Olympic class before the Games in Athens in 2004 and maintained this ranking until 2012.

Jan Herman designed and constructed the boats, but his wife Tuva did all the marketing of the brand, making it famous. She designed logos, jumpers, stickers and much more.

On a more personal note: We were an active 'Soling' racing group in Asker where our starting point was within sight of Linge's home, and he would often watch us start our race. We enjoyed meeting in his boat house, and in October 2000 we celebrated the Sydney Olympic bronze medal winners with Jan Herman and his wife Tuva.



Above: Linge with bronze winners Herman H. Johannessen and Espen Stokkeland and their beautiful boat from the Sydney Olympics, now at the museum. The 'Soling' participated in the Norwegian National Competition in Tønsberg in August 2000.

Robert Laan

ART COMMITTEE
VISIT TO THE NORWEGIAN OPERA WORKSHOPS
March 14, 2023

We were a full group who met up in the foyer of the Norwegian Opera House in Oslo, and the morning sun streamed through the walls of glass.



Our guide introduced himself as Dag and began with strict instructions as to how we should behave backstage. We were not allowed to take any pictures, mainly to protect the identity of 600 employees, but also because all props being made are secret until the premiere.

The Opera House opened in 2008 and was designed by the architects of Snøhetta. There are many artworks in the building and architectural aspects that are all very interesting, but Dag told us that we would steal so much time from visiting the workshops if he talked too much about the building.

The house has three performance stages with a total capacity of some 2000 people as audience. There are 1100 rooms in the building and the workshops and production area constitute the largest part.

Each performance, be it opera or ballet, has its own 'bible'. This is a record of the entire production, drawings, blueprints, costumes, make-up, wigs, models of the stage construction, and so on. The 'bible' can be used for a re-run, and it can be used by international operas if they want to produce the same performance. It is also a historical document.

Our tour began in the make-up and hair workshop. We learned that the wigs are made from Indian hair, or from goats (angora), buffalo and Highland cattle(!), just to mention a few of the animals. Making a wig is a labour-intensive job with each strand being fixed to the under-piece.

There are workshops for absolutely everything. For masks, for hairpieces like coronets etc. For shoes, for metal, for glass, and the largest one of all is for costumes. Forty people are employed in the costumes workshop. We were not allowed in but could visit the storage rooms of current productions. The workshops can dye fabric, hand-paint it, or use digital pattern printing. The crafts people also repair and recycle outfits. There is another very large warehouse somewhere outside Oslo where all the costumes are stored.

The largest workshop in the house by height and area size is the painting and carpentry workshop. The constructions created, according to blueprints that have been drawn in yet another workshop, are the identical size of the stage itself, so there are huge doors, pulleys, and rails by which the various parts can be transported straight onstage. There are four enormous holding areas for scene changes.

As if this is not enough, there is also a workshop that takes the stage pieces apart again either for storage or for sending abroad.

You need eyes out of the back of your head walking around here! There is just so much to see. We only saw a small number of workshops. Dag was a mine of information and listened intently to all our questions.

On our tour, we passed an unknown number of rehearsal studios, dressing rooms, and private offices. We also walked through the Ballet School that is on the top floor. It was a surprise to see an open-air atrium in the middle of the building designed so that people can spend their working day with daylight in their offices or rehearsal studios.

We wound up in total darkness watching a rehearsal taking place on the main stage.

We can thoroughly recommend making up a group and booking a guided tour. Make sure you ask for 1 ½ hours and not just one hour, and ask for Dag!

Many thanks to Bente Skarsgård and Josie Kamsvåg for arranging this wonderful event.

Jane Steenbuch

IMPRESSIONS OF NORWAY

Bridging Nations, Cultures and Eras:

Gudbrand Gregersen 1824 – 1910

By H. E. Eszter Sándorfi

Ambassador of Hungary to Norway



Gudbrand Gregersen

Last month, on March 15, Hungarians worldwide commemorated the 175th anniversary of the Civic Revolution and War of Independence of 1848-1849, one of the most significant events in Hungary's modern history. In this era of national awakening in Europe, Hungarians fought to break away from the Habsburg Empire and create their own independent state with civic freedom and liberties. Although the revolution was defeated, this resurgence of a sense of Hungarian nationhood later led to the creation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1867.

This was the time when national art, music and literature flourished. Moreover, national heroes who would be honoured by future generations were born: István Széchenyi, politician, investor, philanthropist, and father of the modernisation of Hungary; Lajos Kossuth, the leader and regent-president, then Prime Minister during the revolution; and the magnificent poet of the revolution, Sándor Petőfi.

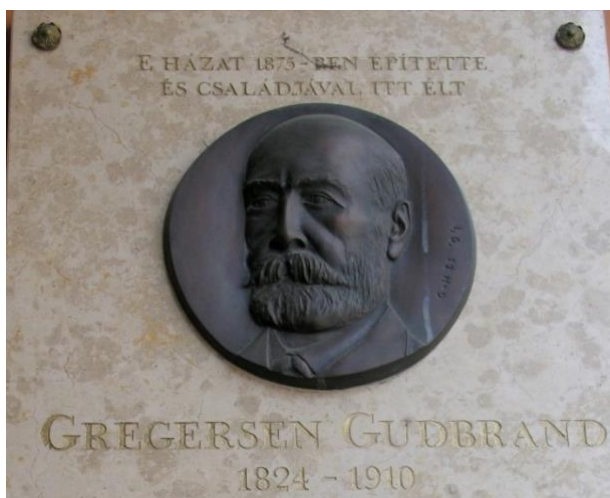
The mid-19th century also brought Scandinavian Norway and Central-European Hungary closer than geography would have suggested at the time. As Norway was in union with Sweden, many Norwegians understood and supported Hungary's fight for national independence. Henrik Ibsen himself was greatly inspired by the Hungarian uprising. At the age of 21, in 1849, he wrote a poem titled *Til Ungarn*, condemning the cruel repression of the revolution.

Decades later, in 1891, already an internationally renowned playwright, he visited Hungary at the invitation of Count Géza Zichy, a Hungarian aristocrat, composer and playwright. Ibsen saw his play *A Doll's House* in the National Theatre in Budapest. He visited the National Museum and the Opera House, and met some of the most prominent artists of the time, such as painter Gyula Benczúr, sculptor Alajos Strobl, and the popular writer Mór Jókai. He was

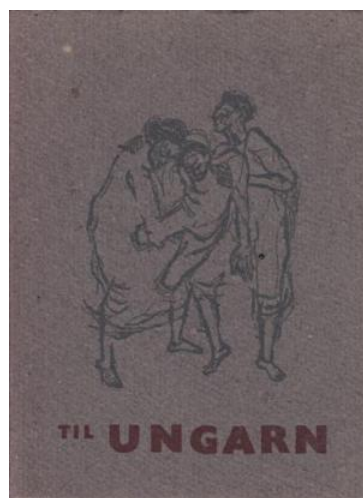
moved by the kindness and hospitality he experienced during his visit and fondly remembered his poem in praise of Hungary as a young man.

A much lesser known but fascinating character who linked our countries of that time was a young Norwegian builder, Gudbrand Gregersen Saági, who later became a bridge engineer and a successful businessman.

Gudbrand Gregersen was born on April 17, 1824, in Modum to farmers Nils Gregersen and Anne Trulsdatter. As a young man, he moved to Christiania where he was apprenticed to a master builder, working on the construction of the Royal Palace. He also took private lessons in geometry and mathematics and studied at the Royal Drawing Academy.



Commemorative plate on his house in Budapest



Til Ungarn

He then moved to Copenhagen, where he obtained his journeyman's certificate in 1844. After travelling through Germany and staying in Vienna for a while, he finally arrived in Pest, Hungary, in 1847. He met the Italian engineer Talagini, in charge of the railway construction in the country, who tasked Gregersen with his first railway bridge construction.

In 1848, when the civic revolution and freedom war against the Habsburg rule started, Gregersen volunteered and worked on the Hungarian side. He took part as an engineer in several military construction projects, including designing and building a pontoon bridge for the freedom fighters at Paks on the Danube. When the revolutionary forces were defeated, he fled to Italy but returned to Hungary in 1851. He settled in Szob, near the Danube north of Budapest, where he started his own business. In 1865, he moved to the capital, setting up his company, Gregersen and Sons Construction.

His company successfully carried out several significant railway projects in Hungary: the rail link between Buda and Nagykanizsa, the railway bridge in Szolnok – which was the longest wooden bridge in Hungary at the time – and the Erzsébet (Elisabeth) bridge in Komárom, to mention a few. As a master of carpentry, he designed and led the carpentry works on the building of the

Hungarian Parliament and the Museum of Fine Arts, as well as on the building of the National Theatre in Budapest.

However, he became best known for constructing dams at Szeged, the third largest city in Hungary. In the spring of 1879, the Tisza River breached the old dams, destroying a large part of the town, and more than 150 people drowned. Gregersen was first commissioned to pump out the water, then to build three dams around the town in record time; the longest dam was 15 km long and 9.5 metres high. The following year, there was another flood, but the dams held. In recognition of his efforts, Gregersen, his wife and their children were elevated to the Hungarian nobility in 1884 and decorated by Franz Joseph I, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary.

While running a successful and growing construction business in his new home country, Gudbrand Gregersen never forgot about his Norwegian roots. After settling in Hungary, he visited Norway 15 times and bought a farm in Modum in 1901. In 1902, he became an honorary member of the Norwegian Engineers and Architects Association. He was awarded Hungarian citizenship in 1875, but also retained his Norwegian nationality. In 1885, he was appointed Knight 1st Class of the Royal Norwegian Order of Saint Olav. He invited many relatives to work with him in Hungary, and many of his descendants still live there.



Building the Szeged dam

Gregersen also raised a large family. He married the Hungarian Alojzia Sümegh (1836-1906). They had 19 children, of whom 12 grew into adulthood. One of his sons, Endre, worked as the Norwegian consul in Hungary. Another son took over the successful firm from Budapest, expanding it to Prague and realising

different projects in Central Europe. Unfortunately, the turmoil and bloodshed of the 20th century and the post-war Iron Curtain ended this golden era of development and the Gregersen and Sons Company. However, the founder himself was fortunate enough not to experience this: he died on Christmas Eve in 1910 at his country house in Szob, aged 87. He rests in the family mausoleum in the historical Kerepesi Cemetery in Budapest, where Lajos Kossuth and many of the martyrs of the 1956 uprising also found their final peace.

But history never ends. Last year, when we commemorated March 15, 1848, with the Hungarian diaspora at our Embassy, I mentioned this unique story in my welcome speech. During the reception, a distinguished gentleman thanked me for the kind words about his great-great-grandfather. He was Miklós Konkoly-Thege, a descendant of Gregersen (and also a descendant of a well-known 19th-century Hungarian painter with the same name) who immigrated to Norway with his father decades ago and who later became a director of Det Norske Veritas. After many generations, he still feels very close to his great-great grandfather. 'We are very similar', he says. 'He settled in Hungary, did a lot of good things for the country, but in his heart he stayed Norwegian. I have been living in Norway for decades, and built a successful career, and I think like a Norwegian, but my heart is Hungarian.'

People like Gudbrand Gregersen not only build bridges over rivers but also between nations, cultures and eras. It is our responsibility to keep those bridges safe for future generations.

DIPLOMATIC CHARITY EVENT

Ukraine Ambulance – An Update

On December 6, 2022, in partnership with the Female Ambassadors of Oslo and the Diplomatic Spouse Association of Norway, International Forum organised a Diplomatic Charity Event to raise funds to donate an ambulance for Ukraine. NOK 275 000 was raised and transferred to the Ukrainsk Forening Øst-Norge's charity project *Ambulance to Save Lives*. An additional NOK 5000 was received after the event, taking the total donation up to NOK 280,000.

The ambulance is equipped with oxygen cylinders, cervical collars, extraction devices, ECG monitor, and breathing bags for cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. We also received a free medical ambulance stretcher tailored to this type of vehicle. On March 17, 2023, the ambulance left Fredrikstad for Kyiv, where it will be fitted with additional medical equipment before being transported to Kharkiv Hospital.

We appreciate your help to Ukraine and Ukrainians.

Maryna Mellerud
Embassy of Ukraine in Norway

AROUND OSLO

Theodor Kittelsen Museum

Malmveien 620, 3370 Vikersund

Opens Saturday **May 13**



Theodor Kittelsen (1857 – 1914) was a beloved Norwegian artist, illustrator, author and caricaturist. For Norwegians, he is first and foremost associated with his vivid illustrations of the Norwegian folk tales collected by Per Chr. Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe and first published in 1851. His career as an illustrator of Asbjørnsen's and Moe's popular tales lasted for 29 years. His themes are people, trolls, mystical creatures, animals and landscapes. His visual representation of Norway has shaped its identity.



Nøkken (water troll) 1904



*Trollene i Hedalskogen
(Trolls in the forest)*

For more information, please see:

[Koboltgruvene og Kittelsen-museet - Blaafarveværket](#)



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Org.no: 994 566 806

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Date: April 3, 2023