



# INTERNATIONAL FORUM OSLO

## NEWSLETTER

January 2026  
Issue No. 514



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*The brain in a digital age.*



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*ART·HAND·WORK*



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Visit to the Grand Hotel

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Mr. Matsumura from the Japanese Embassy:





## INTERNATIONAL FORUM

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Activities: Gunnel Anita Solheim

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If you wish to become a member of International Forum, please contact us by email, and we will send you an application form.





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### DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

For the **February Newsletter**, the deadline is **January 14**. Please send your contribution to Elizabeth S. Rasmussen by email to Elizabeth Rasmussen and to [info@iforum.no](mailto:info@iforum.no). The Editorial Team reserve the right to edit all material.



## THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE



Dear Members,

Happy New Year! May it be peaceful and prosperous!

We are still in the dark season, but the light will slowly return over the next months. Along with it, I hope that the activities of the Forum will continue to attract our members and bring us closer together!

The world is still a fickle and often a dangerous place, and I don't see any change in the near future. But during difficult times, it is good to show people around you that you are positive and friendly. That you accept people for what they are. International Forum has a mission of promoting friendship across cultures. That is what we in Forum do best. A smile will always be well received. A smile will open doors and hearts. We may be culturally different, but we all share the basic needs of family, food, peace, and safety.

The winter this year seems to become a wet or icy one. I for one do enjoy skiing, both cross-country and downhill, so my NewYear wish this year is snow! Lots of it! Whether you're an expert or a beginner, being out in nature always soothes your soul. The snow smells nice when it is fresh, and it has the acoustic ability to muffle noises and clear your mind.

In the city we never greet people we meet on the street, but in the ski trails we always say *hello* and *smile* as we pass other skiers. This may be a cautionary approach to strangers that Norwegians – who used to live far from their neighbours – have practised for centuries in order to verify whether a stranger is friendly or not. Better stay on good terms with the people around you.

I wish you all the best for the new year: friendship and peace of mind. May you all be safe wherever you go.

Elizabeth S. Rasmussen  
President

# COMING EVENTS

## JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING

**Dr. Marte Roa Syvertsen:** *The brain in a digital age. How to master the digital challenge.*



**Monday, January 12**

Dr. Marte Roa Syvertsen is a physician at the Department of Neurology and Head of Research at Drammen Hospital. Through more than ten years of dedicated research, she has explored the mysteries of the brain.

She is the author of books such as *The Human Brain: Dangerous and Fantastic* and *The Adolescent Brain: Wild and Visionary* – which have made the intricacies of the brain accessible to a broad readership. She is also the founder and leader of EpilepsyNett, a national research network that has received support from the Research Council of Norway. Her latest book is *The Brain - A Biography: How Life Gets in Your Head, and Everything You Can Do to Take Control* (2025).

Our world is constantly changing. Digital tools are developing and providing new opportunities and new challenges, and have changed the way we buy goods, communicate with banks and authorities and travel.

The increased risk of online fraudsters, hackers and identity thieves warrants greater vigilance. We constantly deal with manipulated images, ‘fake news’ and conspiracy theories. Artificial intelligence is being presented as a potential challenger to the human brain. It can also be a resource. How do we deal with this? What resources do we have at our disposal? How do we cope with the digital challenge?

DATE/TIME: Monday, **January 12** at **17:45** (for **18:00**)

PLACE: Majorstuen Seniorarena, **Slemdalsveien 3a, 0369 OSLO**

SIGN UP: To Anita Solheim by email before Thursday, **January 8.**

**PRICE:** **NOK 105.-** Please sign up to Gunnel Anita before you pay. Please make your payment **preferably by VIPPS** to 591747 or pay by bank transfer to the Forum account: 1600 40 36631. Please **state the event and your name** in the transaction in the dialogue box for VIPPS and in the KID-number box for bank payments.

Guests are welcome.

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

For last moment cancellations, please call Anita Solheim on mobile telephone.

## **ART COMMITTEE**

*ART·HAND·WORK*

**The National Museum**

**Thursday, January 22**



Art can be interpreted in many ways. Each art discipline has its own ways of being read, and each way of reading offers new meanings.

This exhibition is an opportunity to discover some of the ways crafts can be understood. With almost 100 works by a score of artists, contemporary crafts are presented with breadth and depth under a variety of headings. From large, immersive installations to small, intricate pieces of art – the exhibition offers both surprises and hidden stories.

In *ART·HAND·WORK* contemporary crafts are grouped under the titles of Materiality, Craft Traditions, Everyday Life, Decoration, Recycling, And Post-Industrialism. Here you will encounter a range of voices and perspectives, through audio stories, texts, activity spaces, and videos that show work processes.

In 2025, the artist organisation Norske Kunsthåndverkere (the Norwegian Association of Craft Artists) celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. To mark the occasion, Kode in Bergen, the National Museum in Oslo, and Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum (the National Museum of Decorative Arts and Design in Trondheim) have joined forces to create an exhibition that presents crafts as an independent and important art form. The exhibition is mainly showcasing the collections of the three museums, with an emphasis on works from the past twenty-five years.

DATE/TIME: **Thursday, January 22**, at 11:45 (for 12:00)

SIGN UP: To Inger M. Ræder, by email as soon as possible and no later than **January 13**.

PLACE: The National Museum, Brynjulf Bulls Plass 3, 0250 Oslo

PRICE: The entrance fee is NOK 200 to the Museum for adults (free entry for National Museum members. Please be reminded that each member can bring a guest for free.) This fee should be paid at the Museum.

A fee for the guide is NOK 155.- Please make your payment **preferably by bank transfer** to the Forum account 1600 40 36631 or **by VIPPS** to 591747. Please **state the event and your name** in the transaction (in the dialogue box for VIPPS and in the KID-number box for bank payments if there is no KID number).

No cash will be handled at the venue.

We need at **least 15 participants** for the guided tour to be held.

Maximum participants: 25

For those who have already seen this interesting exhibition, a guided visit will give you a deeper understanding of the objects of art exhibited here!

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

For last-minute cancellations, please call Inger Ræder on Mobile telephone.



## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Grand Hotel, 151 years old!



#### **Tuesday, January 27**

The Special Events Committee once more invites you to join us on a guided tour of the Grand Hotel on Karl Johans gate, which opened in 1874. Considered one of the best hotels in Norway, it comes into focus every year on December 10, when it hosts the celebrations of the Nobel Peace Prize award. We have all seen on television the receiver of the prize, the Laureate, on the hotel balcony, waving to the crowds holding torches in the street below. But the walls of this hotel have seen and heard a lot more. For example, the famous Norwegian playwright, Henrik Ibsen, had lunch here every day sitting in his specially reserved armchair.

We are very fortunate to have again Hotel General Manager, Toril Flåskjer, as our guide. An added attraction since our visit in January 2025, is to admire the two new large, top-luxury suites on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. Come with us to have a look around this beautiful hotel and hear its history.

After the tour you are welcome to join in for lunch in the Hall of Fame in Palmen Restaurant. See details below.

DATE/TIME: **Tuesday, January 27** at 11:15. Please be on time (The tour starts at 11:30)

PLACE: The Grand Hotel on Karl Johans gate 31, Oslo. We meet in the lobby, (the reception area), just inside the main entrance.



- SIGN UP:** To Rosemary Hauge by email no later than the deadline **Monday, January 19**. Please state your mobile number in case we need to contact you.
- PRICE:** **NOK 35,-** for a gift for our guide. If you are staying for lunch, please **state your choice** and pay when signing up. Please see LUNCH for details
- Tour only: **NOK 35,-**
- WITH LUNCH** (Choose between):
- NOK 35,- plus NOK 325,- for Cæsar Salad = NOK 360,-
- NOK 35,- plus NOK 349,- for Skagen Toast = NOK 384,-
- <https://communicatorcloud.blob.core.windows.net/imagecontainer/63282008-11e6-4e36-98c1-b38f47a1abed.pdf>
- Beverages, for example, wine, beer, tea, coffee etc., must be ordered and paid for individually at the table. **N.B.** Please pay at the same time when ordering. This will avoid having to wait to pay when you want to leave.
- Please pay **after** you have received confirmation of a place on the tour. **Please state your food choice when you pay.** Please pay **preferably by VIPPS 591747** or to the Forum **bank account:1600 40 36631**. No cash will be handled at the venue. Please **state the event and your name** in the transaction in the dialogue box for VIPPS, or in the KID number box for bank payments.
- TRANSPORT:** Public transport to Nationaltheatret or Stortinget (T-bane) or to the city centre. All T-bane trains, and many trams and buses stop within walking distance of Karl Johans gate. Maximum number of participants is **30**. Guests are allowed if space is available.
- Cancellations after the deadline and no-shows will be charged.
- For last-minute cancellations, please call Rosemary Hauge on mobile telephone.

## **FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING**

**Monday, February 2**

**Mr. Hajime Matsumura**

Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Japan in Oslo.

‘Cultural Relations Between Japan and Norway, and Difference of Tasks as Diplomat in the countries of posting.’

Mr. Matsumura has legal training and specializes in mechanical engineering and structural systems. He has conducted research on molecular design by molecular orbital calculations and simulation of the optical response of fine structures. Mr. Matsumura also has experience in the creation of inventions and the support of patent applications at research institutions.

DATE/TIME: Monday, **February 2** at **17:45** (for **18:00**)

PLACE: Majorstuen Seniorarena, **Slemdalsveien 3a, 0369 OSLO**

SIGN UP: To Anita Solheim by email before Thursday, **January 29**.

PRICE: **NOK 105.-** Please sign up to Gunnel Anita before you pay. Please make your payment **preferably by VIPPS** to 591747 or pay by bank transfer to the Forum account: 1600 40 36631. Please **state the event and your name** in the transaction in the dialogue box for VIPPS and in the KID-number box for bank payments.

Guests are welcome.

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

For last-minute cancellations, please call Anita Solheim on mobile telephone.

# *A C T I V I T I E S*

## **ACTIVITIES AND COURSES SPRING 2026**

### **ACTIVITIES:**

International Forum Activity Groups are formed when one member or a group of members get together and organise an activity. No payment is required, and the activities are open to all members depending on availability. Are you interested? See the contact information below.

If you are interested in an activity that is full, sign up anyway, as there may be cancellations. If you have problems joining an activity because it is full, please contact Gunnel Anita Solheim, as we might consider forming new groups.

**Contact:** Gunnel Anita Solheim by email or by mobile telephone.

### **THE NORWEGIAN CONVERSATION GROUP** (norsk samtalegruppe).

This activity has been paused for a period due to declining demand. Should the need arise again, the group can be resumed.

The aim of this group is to practise speaking Norwegian in an informal setting and to share experiences and interests in our daily life. We have all levels of proficiency. The meetings are held once a month in each other's homes. There is no homework since the main point is to come together and have fun. The hostess decides if she wants to serve a light lunch or just coffee and biscuits (or cake) after the practice session.

**Contact:** Eva Øglænd by email or by mobile telephone, or Mona Bækkelund Reinboth by email or by mobile telephone.

### **INTERNATIONAL BOOK CLUB I**

The gatherings are held on the **third Wednesday of the month** in members' homes, in which case the hostess serves a light lunch. We read and discuss books, usually novels by international authors, chosen by the group.

**Contact:** Dorota Steensland by email or by mobile telephone.

## **INTERNATIONAL BOOK CLUB II**

The same procedures as those of the International Book Club I. The gatherings take place once a month. As always, we meet in each other's home for a light lunch on the **first Thursday of the month at 13:00**. The person who suggested a book prepares a short presentation and leads the discussion.

**Contact:** Heidi Høivik by email or mobile telephone.

## **COOKING GROUP**

This cooking group has been up and running for many years. Some of the original ladies are still in our group. Since we are an international group, some women are leaving, and new ones are attending. As we rotate between each other's private homes there will be limited space most times.

**Contact:** Liss Laan by email or on mobile phone.

## **MONDAY DUPLICATE BRIDGE**

We usually play duplicate bridge every Monday in the players' homes. In the winter season, we meet at Hilde Løchstør's home.

**Contact:** Kirsten Whist by email or mobile phone.

## **MONTHLY WEDNESDAY BRIDGE GROUP**

We generally meet on the second or third Wednesday of the month, depending on the holidays, to play duplicate bridge and enjoy a light lunch afterwards. The bridge sessions are held in the players' homes, and we are usually 8 or 12 players, on occasion 16.

**Contact:** Inger Støtvig, by email or by  
Mobile phone.

## **WALKING GROUP**

Kerstin Pettersen will send an email to the group members and inform them of the first walk of Spring 2026. Walking is great exercise and fun for those who like the outdoors. If you are interested, please send Kerstin your mobile number and email address.

**Contact:** Kerstin Petersen by email or by  
Mobile phone.

## **PHOTO GROUP**

We are amateur photographers. No qualifications are required other than being interested in learning about digital photography. The aim is becoming a better photographer, taking good pictures with camera or smart phone (camera-techniques such as sharp and/or blurred pictures, lighting, picture composition). Learn how to edit and organise pictures, how to make Photo Books, post Instagram Stories, and so on.

We have workshops at Gunnel Anita's home at Nesbru about 3 – 4 times a year, depending on the demand.

**Contact:** Gunnel Anita Solheim, by email or by mobile phone.

## **SWIMMING AT LYSEBU**

The Danish Cultural Centre at Voksenkollen. Members of the International Forum will be most welcome to swim at Lysebu and must only show their IF membership card at the front desk. The fee is NOK 100.- per visit. This is not a group activity as such, but IF members can use this great, newly renovated facility as a group or individually.

The swimming facilities are open to IF members all weekdays (Saturdays and Sundays are reserved for guests at the hotel).

**Contact:** Gunnel Anita Solheim by email or by mobile phone.

## **COURSES**

The courses are activities for which the participants pay a **fee** to the teacher.

### **TRADITIONAL NORWEGIAN ROSE PAINTING**

Rose painting ('rosemaling') is a traditional Norwegian folk art which goes back to the 1700s and which is still alive in many parts of the country. Morning and evening courses can be organised for large or small groups.

**Contact:** Vivian Grieg Teisner, email or by mobile phone.

# *R E P O R T S*

## **CHRISTMAS MEETING**

**December 1 at 18:00**



This year's Christmas meeting was attended by 37 members. The catering from Ruud was much appreciated, and Gunnel Anita's cakes were simply fabulous! The atmosphere was convivial and happy. Unfortunately, our pianist was unable to come so Berit Lindstrøm – with the help of a Boom – led us through one Christmas song. It was a bit more difficult than we had thought, but it did bring out the laughter!

Your new President, Elizabeth Rasmussen. Photo: Sidsel J. Semb ©

The Monthly Meeting Committee worked hard as always to ensure that everything went smoothly. A big *Thank you!* from us all. The raffle brought in NOK 4250 which will be donated to the Atlas Alliance, an umbrella organisation of various charitable organisations working to promote the rights and living conditions of persons with disabilities in the Global South.



The raffle prizes. Photo: Sidsel J. Sem ©





The Monthly Meeting Committee minus Gunnel Anita Solheim). Photo: Sidsel J. Semb ©



Anita Pratap and Elizabeth. Photo: Sidsel J. Semb ©



Åsny and Kumiko. Photo: Sidsel J. Semb ©



Sissel Lindeman and Elizabeth Rasmussen During the Draw. Photo: Gunnel A. Solheim



Kumiko, Berit, Guri Lie, and Mette Svadberg

← Kerstin Petersen and Sidsel J. Semb. Both photos: G. Anita Solheim





Kumiko Larsen, Berit Lindstrøm, Guri Lie and Mette Svadberg. Photo: G. Anita Solheim:



The Raffle Draw: Sissel, Elizabeth and Sylvia  
Photo: Gunnel A. Solheim



Wenche Mohr, left. Betty Mellby:  
The winner of Kumiko's Christmas  
Treat  
Photo: Gunnel A. Solheim

A heartfelt *Thanks* to everyone who came and made this Christmas meeting memorable! And a special *Thanks* to the Monthly Meeting Committee!

Elizabeth S. Rasmussen

## ART COMMITTEE

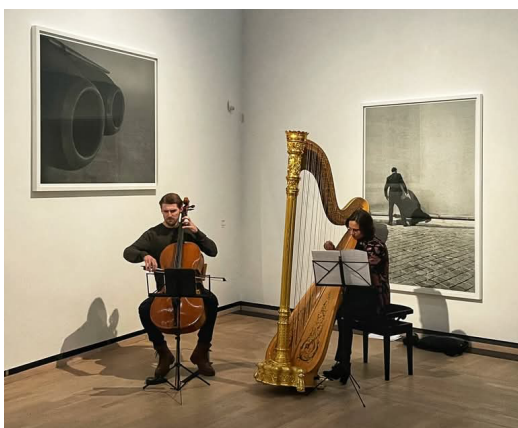
### Visit To Henie Onstad Art Centre

Tom Sandberg: *Vibrant World*



The exhibition of Tom Sandberg's black and white photographs is the largest retrospective of his works ever shown and is an aesthetically beautiful experience. The curators, Morten Andenæs and Susanne Østby Sæther, have created an almost sacred space, transporting the mysterious and silent, mostly monumental, photographic works of art into a transcendental dimension. The presence of two cellists and a harpist playing quietly in the background made the experience no less than magical.

Tom Sandberg (1953-2014) worked at the Henie Onstad Art Centre from 1973 as a photographer and later as an exhibiting artist. He studied photography at Trent Polytechnic in Nottingham and was one of the founders of Fotogalleriet in Oslo in 1977.



Music was a large part of Sandberg's universe. He was a friend of Andrej Nebb, a Polish refugee to Norway, who played punk rock and Dadaist music. There is a large portrait of Nebb in the exhibition. Sandberg photographed musical instruments from Dextra Musica, a subsidiary of Sparebankstiftelsen DNB, which owns one of the foremost collections of musical string instruments in the

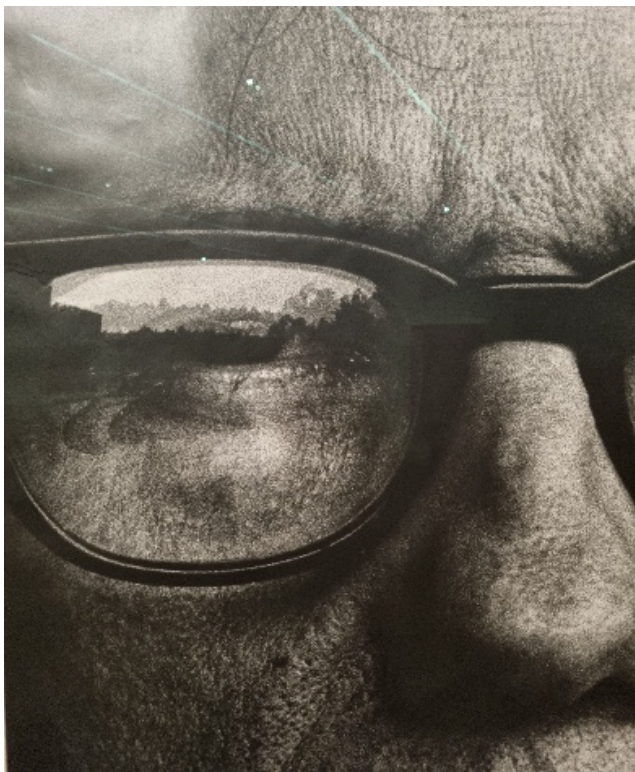


world. All the instruments are lent to musicians, and music is an intrinsic part of the exhibition. Check with the Art Centre to find out when music will be played.



Tom Sandberg was at the threshold of turning photography into an accepted art form. His large black and white photographs are often blurry, taken so close that the object becomes abstract, swathed in a mysterious fog, or taken from an unexpected perspective. The camera interprets the world rather than documenting it and brings forth a vibrant world that we would otherwise not have seen. One definition of art is that an artist shows us something we do not normally see, and that is how Sandberg carried photography into an art form.

In many of his early works, he pointed the camera downward. He became known as ‘The Asphalt Artist’. It is sometimes difficult to see what we are looking at, as each drop of water and each gritty stone turns into a somehow familiar abstract form.



Christo



Asfalt

His portraits were radically blown up. They were criticised as being ugly with such obvious pixels. Nevertheless, some have become iconic (John Cage). Sandberg was fascinated by spectacles and the mirror effect on a face. The

portrait of Christo, known for his large-scale landscape installations, has a landscape mirrored in his glasses.

Later, Sandberg moved on to use a more fine-tuned modulation of light, and the quiet, mysterious portrayal of trees, nudes, musical instruments, and airplanes carries the viewer into another dimension of reality. The clouds seen from an airplane become both monumental and ethereal. The black shadows turn the clouds into mountains.



A manipulated photograph of an airplane seemingly coming into land is very disturbing. There are no landing wheels. This is an experiment with both texture (printed on canvas) and what the photographer can do to change reality. A pre-runner to Fake News.

An exhibition worth seeing more than once. Many thanks to 'Fredrik', who was an excellent guide, and to Bente Skarsgård for arranging this event.

Jane Steenbuch

# INTERNATIONAL FORUM



Org.no: 994 566 806

**President:** Elizabeth S. Rasmussen

**Editor:** Elizabeth S. Rasmussen

**Editorial Team:** Elspeth Walseth, Robin Wittusen and Renate Scapin

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

**Dispatch:** January 5, 2026