

## Press Release

Frankfurt am Main, 09.10.2019

### **HOUSE OF NORWAY 11 October 2019 to 26 January 2020**

**Press conference: Wed, 9 October 2019, 11 am**

**Opening: Thu, 10 October 2019, 7.30 pm**

With HOUSE OF NORWAY the Museum Angewandte Kunst devotes its entire exhibition space to Norway, the Frankfurt Book Fair's guest of honour 2019. The exhibition HOUSE OF NORWAY brings together and mixes works of art, design, craftsmanship and architecture in order to create special constellations that surprise and propose a new way of seeing.

It can be read like a journey of a special kind: with first-time and recurring encounters, moments of astonishment and contemplation. With new discoveries where what has already been seen seems familiar. A journey through a country characterised by different landscapes, climates and population densities: the South and West of Norway, with its coastal areas, lakes and forests, is distinctly different from the snow tundra of the Finnmark in the North or the Arctic climates in the Northeast; life in Oslo and the other few large cities is different from that in the rural areas. Accordingly, it is not only the realities of people's lives in the respective places that differ, but also the inspirations for their artistic and creative work. And so the existence of an Indigenous ethnic group whose cultural area, Sápmi, stretches across Norway, Sweden, Finland and parts of Russia, offers artists and designers other themes than the landscapes in the Telemark, which are determined by deep valley incisions and dark forests – which in turn lead to other forms of expression and meanings attributed to the works.

The open thematic presentation unites works by contemporary artists such as Frank Ekeberg, Kari Steihaug, and Ingrid Torvund with drawings and accompanying lyrical prose texts by the world-famous artist Edvard Munch on loan from the Munchmuseet in Oslo. A guest performance by the Sámi National Theatre Beaivváš (SNTB) provides an insight into the art and culture of the Indigenous Sámi people. In addition, works by the Sámi artists Per Heimly, Britta Marakatt-Labba, Joar Nango, Synnøve Persen, Máret Anne Sara, and Hans Ragnar Mathisen as well as those by artisans such as Sune Enoksson and Jørn Are Keskitalo, will be presented.

Visitors will also encounter important designers, among them Regine Juhls, Torbjørn Kvasbø, Peter Opsvik, Grete Prytz Kittelsen and Tone Vigeland. Examples of modern architecture, like that of Sverre Fehn or Joar Nango, and the area of social design as well as latest trends in fashion and new Nordic cuisine represent the creative exploration of a world in transition.

In addition to 47 artistic and creative positions, the exhibition presents short films from Norway. With their themes, the selection of films, curated by Sabine Schirdewahn, make imaginable the individual reflections of the artists and designers in their relationship to the objective social, ecological and economic conditions that might have accompanied the

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creation of their works.

A multi-faceted accompanying programme with lectures, panel discussions, culinary events and an educational programme consisting of workshops and public guided tours for adults, children and teenagers, round off the exhibition program. The educational program is supported by the Stiftung Polytechnische Gesellschaft in Frankfurt/Main.

### **Edvard Munch's texts and drawings on loan from the Munchmuseet, Oslo**

One of the main highlights of the exhibition HOUSE OF NORWAY includes texts and drawings by Edvard Munch on loan from the collection of the Munchmuseet in Oslo. The five drawings exhibited, combined with lyrical prose, are loose sheets dated to around 1930 that were found inserted into a large, heavy album. In this album, referred to as the *Tree of Knowledge*, Edvard Munch assembled drawings, prints and texts. No one really knows why Munch assembled this album. Perhaps he made it in preparation for a book or an exhibition, or perhaps he was attempting to impose order on various literary and visual versions of works from his enormous artistic oeuvre. Research at the Munchmuseet has revealed, however, that he worked on this project for years. The most astonishing works in the album are perhaps Munch's texts about love, jealousy, life and death, composed in large, colourful lettering.

### **Contemporary Art of the North**

The contemporary art featured in the exhibition will focus primarily on works in which, as in the case of Munch, the personal relationship to and confrontation with one's own identity and homeland are central. These include, for example, Ingrid Torvund's film trilogy *Under Earth*, created in collaboration with Jonas Mailand between 2009 and 2019. Most of the principal filming took place in Kviteseid in the province of Telemark, where the artist grew up. The dark forest landscapes of the Telemark are known for their folkloric narratives, in which pagan and Christian symbols exist side by side: Dragons, angels, crosses, demons, trolls and talking animals. Her films, paintings and sculptures take us into the cosmos of a mystical, enigmatic universe.

A majority of the contemporary artists presented belong to the Indigenous Sámi people and have received worldwide recognition at the latest since their invitation to documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel in 2017. Their works deal with individual and collective experiences with traditions, beliefs, discrimination as well as foreign and self-determination in their works. Britta Marakatt-Labba's embroidery work *Movement*, together with sketches and a video adaptation of her work *Historien*, refer to the traditions and history of the Sámi in the Norwegian Finnmark. The installation *Gielastuvvon* (English: captured) by Máret Anne Sara consists of reindeer lassos. In the exhibition space they hang from the ceiling like gallows. The artist thus refers to the recent regulations of the Norwegian authorities regarding grazing lands and the size of reindeer herds. The restrictions pose a threat to the livelihoods of many Sámi, especially the younger generation. Joar Nango's works are also strongly influenced by his hometown of Alta at the end of the Altafjord and by his Sámi identity. With the collective FFB he investigates contrasts and contradictions in contemporary architecture in order to deal with questions of Indigenous identity. In the process, site-specific installations are created at the interface between art and architecture – improvised temporary buildings that

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refer to the formerly largely nomadic way of life of the Sámi and serve as stages for various interventions. In addition to documentaries and excerpts from his work *Meahccetrošša/Matatu*, the exhibition presents his film *Indigenuity Manifesto* (2016). The film and the play on words in the title are dedicated to the inventive spirit of Indigenous culture in architecture, design and everyday life.

### Northern Design

The selection of designers also points in many ways to the close relationship to Norway's varied landscape and history. While the works of designers such as Arne Jacobsen or Hans J. Wegner from Denmark or Alvar Aalto from Finland became design icons after the Second World War and still stand for Scandinavian design today, the same degree of success was not achieved with Norwegian designs from the same period. However, it is precisely this circumstance that opens up an open playing field for a younger generation of Norwegian designers. This can be seen in their works at the interface of design, craftsmanship and art, which cannot be reduced to formal simplicity and functionality, but make it clear that design can also be playful, humorous and loud.

The selection here ranges from furniture designs from the 1950s and 1960s by Hans Brattrud and Torbjørn Afdal and Birger Dahl to Peter Opsvik's sculptural *Globe Garden* chair from 1985 and the *Aalto* desk designed by Andreas Engesvik for Fjordfiesta in 2019. The exhibition features polychrome glass sculptures by Kjersti Johannessen alongside geometric ceramics by Guri Sandvik or experimental shoe fashion by Elisabeth Thorsen next to the expressive and colourful necklaces by Liv Blåvarp. The silver jewellery by Regine Juhls from the 1970s inspired by the barren vegetation forms in the Finnmark – mosses and lichens – is juxtaposed with the jewellery works by Grete Prytz Kittelsen from the late 1950s. The visually compelling graphic print creations of London-based fashion designer Edda Gimnes are contrasted with a simple felt dress by Marit Eken Kalager, inspired by women's wool dresses and national costumes that remind her of her childhood.

### Traditional Sámi Handicrafts, Duodji

In the exhibition you will find traditional Sámi handicrafts, Duodji: knives and brooches, a shaman drum and wooden drinking vessels. The minimal design differences between historical and contemporary objects point to a pronounced sense of tradition among the designers, in which the use of natural materials is of central importance.

### Nordic architecture

Sverre Fehn, the Sámi architect and artist Joar Nango, as well as the *Steilneset Memorial* by Peter Zumthor and Louise Bourgeois show completely opposite views of architecture. The most influential twentieth-century Norwegian architect, Sverre Fehn (1924–2009), is an important example of Norwegian modernist architecture. The winner of the Pritzker Prize is known for the Nordic pavilion in the Giardini of the Venice Biennale. At the Museum Angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt am Main, visitors can enter a scale model of a corner section of his iconic *Villa Norrköping* (1963/64), whose spatial arrangement refers to the *Villa La Rotonda* by Andrea Palladio (1508–80). The family house, which is still inhabited today, gives the Nordic dualism of light and dark, midnight sun and polar night an architectural form: While the living and sleeping areas are in windowless brick cubes, the connecting corners

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are completely glass-walled.

Photographs by Ken Schluchtman impressively document the *Steilneset Memorial* (2011) by Swiss architect Peter Zumthor. The witch memorial stands for a contemporary approach to architecture and once again illustrates the interplay between form, history and landscape. The monument is located in the far Northeast of Norway on the edge of the island town of Vardø in the Barents Sea and is dedicated to the victims of witch burnings in the seventeenth century. The memorial consists of two parts: A 125 metre-long wood and canvas construction reminiscent of the shape of a traditional Norwegian fish drying rack and a ten-by-ten-metre square pavilion, which stands opposite. The pavilion of the memorial contains the last major public work by the French-US-American sculptor Louise Bourgeois from 2010: an iron chair enclosed by a round concrete cylinder almost one metre high, from whose seat five gas flames permanently flicker. Seven oval mirrors on five-meter-high steel masts form a circle around the fireplace, like judges around the victim.

### **JOHAN TURI - Sámi National Theatre Beaivváš**

Among the highlights of the exhibition programme is a guest performance by the Sámi National Theatre Beaivváš (SNTB) from Kautokeino. From 12 October to 9 November they will perform a total of 24 performances of the play *JOHAN TURI* in the Sámi language with German and English surtitles in a specially designed stage landscape within the exhibition. The play had its world premiere in Oslo in 2017 and will now be shown outside Norway for the first time. Outside the performance times, the stage architecture can be visited. The room is complemented by photographs by the Sámi photographer Per Heimly, who over the years has portrayed the older generation of Sámi inhabitants in the Finnmark in their traditional costumes.

### **Furniture for homes and public spaces**

For the entire duration of the exhibition, a concept store of the furniture platform Northern, which specialises in current and newly staged designs from Scandinavia, will be located in the lobby of the museum. In Frankfurt they present a selection of Norwegian design objects and books. Although the pieces cannot be purchased directly from the store, QR codes lead to an online platform where the pieces can be ordered directly to your home. The area of social design is rounded off with generous loans from Vestre. The outdoor furniture, which was created for urban public spaces, invites visitors to rest and repose in the Museum lobby and outside of the museum.

### **Poster and media design**

The accompanying print media for the exhibition was developed together with students of the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Offenbach. The illustrations were designed inspired by works from the exhibition. The selected typography Viksjø by designer Frode Helland should be mentioned here because the individual letters were derived from the brutalist Y-shaped government building by architect Erling Viksjø in Oslo. The building was one of two targets of the connected terrorist attacks of the Norwegian right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik against Norwegian government employees in Oslo and against young people in a holiday camp on the Norwegian island of Utøya on 22 July 2011, which resulted in 77 victims. The subsequent impending demolition of the building in 2014 prompted designer Frode Helland

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to develop the typeface, which attempts to translate ethical principles of brutalist architecture into written forms. The proceeds from the licence fees go to an initiative to preserve the Viksjø building.

### **HOUSE OF NORWAY – an exhibition with works by:**

Torbjørn Afdal, Heidi Bjørgan, Liv Blåvarp, Inger Blix Kvammen, Hans Bratrud, Birger Dahl, FFB (Joar Nango, Eystein Talleraas, Håvard Arnhoff), Frank Ekeberg, Marit Eken Kalager, Andreas Engesvik, Sune Enoksson, Nikolaus Fankki, Sverre Fehn, Svein Flygari Johansen, Edda Gimnes, Sidsel Hanum, Per Heimly, Kjersti Johannessen, Willy Johansson, Regine Juhls, Jørn Are Keskitalo, Torbjørn Kvasbø, Petteri Laiti, Matt Lambert, Håvard Larsen, Jonas Mailand, Britta Marakatt-Labba, Kari Mølstad, Edvard Munch, Peter Opsvik, Synnøve Persen, Grete Prytz Kittelsen, Hans Ragnar Mathisen (KEVISELIE), Johan Rist, Sámi National Theatre Beavvváš (SNTB), Guri Sandvik, Máret Anne Sara, Ken Schluchtmann (Peter Zumthor, Louise Bourgeois), Martin Solem, Kari Steihaug, Elisabeth Thorsen, Ingrid Torvund, Manuel Vadillo Benitez, Paolo Venini, Tone Vigeland und Jan Eric Wold Skevik.

### **Idea and concept of the exhibition HOUSE OF NORWAY:**

Prof. Matthias Wagner K, Sabine Schirdewahn

**Curator:** Prof. Matthias Wagner K

### **Funders and exhibition partners**

The exhibition is part of *The Dream We Carry* – Norway as Guest of Honour of the Frankfurter Buchmesse. It is made possible by NORLA Norwegian Literature Abroad, Visit Norway, the tourism department of Innovation Norway, and sponsored by the furniture manufacturer Vestre. It was developed in cooperation with the Munchmuseet (Oslo), the Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum (Tromsø), Norwegian Crafts, the Sámi National Theatre Beavvváš (Kautokeino), the Sámi University College (Kautokeino), the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art (Karasjok), the Riddo Duottar Museat (Karasjok), the Kunstnerforbundet (Oslo), the Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum (Trondheim) and many further institutions. The educational programme for the exhibition HOUSE OF NORWAY is sponsored by the Stiftung Polytechnische Gesellschaft in Frankfurt/Main.

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## **Director**

Prof. Matthias Wagner K

## **Location**

Museum Angewandte Kunst  
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## **Opening hours**

Tue, Thu – Sun 10 am – 6 pm, Wed 10 am – 8 pm

## **Admission**

12 Euro, reduced 6 Euro

## **Press contact**

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## **Press downloads**

www.museumangewandtekunst.de