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HOMO LUDENS
DET LEKENDÉ MENNESKET



The Main Exhibition: Pioneer Voices

This year's main exhibition focuses on innovative and trailblazing pioneers

In conjunction with the centennial jubilee observing general suffrage, which entailed that women were given the right to vote, the Arts Festival of North Norway is proud to present an art exhibition that features women pioneers and avantgarde artists. Curator for the exhibition is Joakim Borda.

Harstad on the avantgarde map

- The starting point for this exhibition was an encounter with Ragnhild Kaarbø's art. The fact that such a groundbreaking avantgarde artists came from tiny Harstad was a revelation for me, while at the same time I was surprised over how little attention she has been given outside Harstad and outside the innermost art circles, says Borda.

The Kaarbø family and Ragnhild Kaarbø herself are well-known names in the city, but Borda hopes that he can display a more unfamiliar side of the artist through this exhibition.

- I want to show her best side
- that is, works from the period during which she was at her most innovative.

The exhibition places earlier female pioneers such as Ragnhild Kaarbø in dialogue with contemporary artists such as Ida Ekbal and the trendsetting Sami artist Aslaug Juliussen. The works of these artists will be exhibited alongside those of the internationally renowned artist Astrid Svangren.

The core of the exhibition consists of a distinctive presentation of Joan Jonas's works - one of the world's most important performance artists. She gathers much of her inspiration from North Norway, and she has visited the northern region of the country several times filming and gathering material. In addition, this will be the first time she exhibits here.

- The fact that an artist of this format chooses to exhibit in Harstad is nothing less than a sensation, but it also shows that the Arts Festival is a relevant arena for international contemporary art, Borda says.

The exhibition Pioneer Voices aims to initiate interesting encounters between important women artists across time and geographical boundaries.

-This exhibition demonstrates that it is not a matter of art from the outside world coming to North Norway, but instead that North Norwegian art reaches out to the world and makes its mark there. Through the exhibition, we will link our own region with national and international currents and breakthroughs in art, Borda explains.

Ida Ekblad (1980–) is one of Norway's most internationally acknowledged artists in recent years. She works within a variety of genres and has had several solo exhibitions both at home and abroad, this spring, for example, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Oslo.

Joan Jonas (1936 –) from the USA is considered one of the most important video and performance artists in the world today. She is represented in many of the weightiest collections, such as MoMa (New York), The Tate Modern in London and the Guggenheim (NY).

Ragnhild Kaarbø (1889 – 1946) was born and raised in Harstad. She studied pictorial art under the tutelage of Leger and Amédée Ozenfant in Paris. Associated with the historical avant-garde, and was for a period of time particularly influenced of the purism movement. She had her debut at Kunstnerforbundet in Oslo in 1918.

Aslaug Juliussen (1953 –) is one of today's foremost North Norwegian artists, with roots in Sami culture. Working on the threshold between applied arts and sculpture, she explores organic materials and textiles. Among other commissions, she has decorated the Sami Parliament of Norway and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition she is represented in a number of public collections.

Astrid Svangren (1972 –) is one of the most exciting Swedish artists of her generation. She has exhibited in a number of trendsetting galleries in Scandinavia, Great Britain and the USA. The Arts Festival of North Norway is her first exhibition in Norway.

Donna Hucana (1980 –) explores the social and political history of the female body, along with her own multicultural identity in her installations and performances. The American-born artist is based in Berlin and New York, and in spring 2013 is acclaimed for her major performance project at Lillith Performance Theater in Malmö.