

The Festival Exhibition 2020 at Bergen Kunsthall presents Norwegian-Sámi artist Joar Nango. Established in 1953, together with the Bergen International Festival, the Festival Exhibition is considered the most important solo presentation for a Norwegian artist in their home country.

Originally trained as an architect, Joar Nango constructs his exhibitions as social spaces, often in collaboration with a network of experts and practitioners. His projects investigate traditions and experiences from his cultural background in Northern Norway, which are characterized by flexibility, improvisation, pragmatism and adaptation to nature.

The exhibition in Bergen is based on a theoretical framework that Nango has set up together with collaborators from different artistic and academic backgrounds including art historian Mathias Danbolt, writer Candice Hopkins and anthropologist Dimitris Dalakoglou. Less a finished product, the exhibition will be an arena for a social process of creating places and situations, enabling possibilities for improvisation, collective action and direct negotiations with the local.

Nango's work addresses themes such as indigenous identity and decolonialization, looking at these topics not in isolation, but as expressions of the ongoing power dynamics between the cultural centers and its peripheries. Architecture and the built environment are seen in relation to the culture and power dynamics that governs them, and as a starting point to make changes. His artistic production includes site-specific installations, sculpture, photography, architectural structures, social projects, clothing, publications and theory.

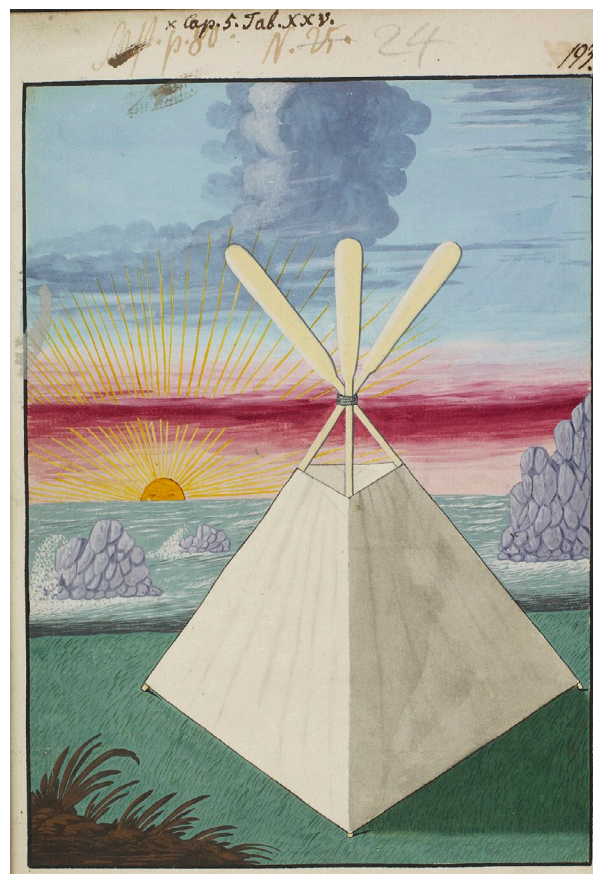
In the exhibition, based on research and conversations with art historian Mathias Danbolt, Joar Nango will re-appropriate a series of images that are among the first known visual representations of Sámi architecture – one of them is the key image above. The series of hand-colored drawings were made by an unknown artist in the mid-1700s, and later turned into a series of copper etchings reproduced in a seminal encyclopedic work on Sámi life and culture, written by the missionary Knud Leem and published in 1767. The images will be featured in Nango's exhibition – as a historic counterpoint, and a comment towards the appropriation, circulation and representative power of images from indigenous cultures.

For a large-scale projection screen, Nango makes use of dried halibut stomachs that are sewn together. The technique, called *skievvar* in the coastal Sámi tradition, is a way of making transparent windows in outhouses and simple buildings. Nango first discovered the technique in old written accounts from the nineteenth century, and

the process is a good example of the way he works with the coupling of the linguistic and theoretical with the physical, material, tactile and improvised.

In the Sámi tradition, knowledge is maintained and transferred through *duodji* (en. craftsmanship). The way people treat and handle their available resources is a central element in this knowledge. In his projects, Nango creates spaces in which various kinds of knowledge are activated and fused together.

Several of Joar Nango's previous projects are brought to Bergen for the exhibition, such as the *girjegumpi*, a small building made as a nomadic library inspired by the Sámi *gumpi*, a herder's hut mounted on sleigh runners. Nango's van, a Mercedes Sprinter which was used in the pro-



Unknown artist, ca. 1730. Study for illustrations by Knud Leem, «Beskrivelse over Finnmarkens Lapperderes Tungemaal, Levemaade og forrige Afgudsdyrkelse», 1767. Thott 1736 kvart -Det Kgl. Bibliotek/ København.

ject *European Everything* at documenta 14 in 2017, will also be a central element in the Festival Exhibition. The physical infrastructure and the travel itinerary between Bergen and Tromsø form a geographical line between two site-specific landing points in the project.

For *European Everything* he drove the same van from Tromsø to Athens – through the entire length of Europe – in an excursion in which themes of migration, relocation and the nomadic became a concrete experience. In May this year, the Sprinter doubled as a mobile TV studio during the production of *Post-Capitalist Architecture TV*.



Joar Nango & Ken Are Bongo Post-Capitalist Architecture TV

As a first chapter of the Festival Exhibition, Joar Nango made three films, together with Sámi filmmaker Ken Are Bongo, that explore Sámi architecture in a TV show format. The series was produced by Bergen Kunsthall as part of the official festival programme for the Bergen International Festival in May 2020, which could not be held in a physical form due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. The series was filmed with a mobile TV studio during travels through the northern landscape, meeting guests for interviews and visiting key architectural sites.

[Part 1: On materiality and resource economy](#)

[Part 2: On nomadism and flow](#)

[Part 3: On decolonization and architecture](#)

The TV-series is available to stream online on Vimeo, kunsthall.no and fib.no

Joar Nango was born in Alta in 1979 and lives and works in Tromsø.

About the Festival Exhibition

Bergen Kunsthall's flagship exhibition, established in 1953. Each Summer, we present a large-scale exhibition with new work by a Norwegian artist, in connection with the Bergen International Festival (Festspillene i Bergen). The exhibition is considered the most important solo presentation for a Norwegian artist in their home country and creates a national debate about the state of the art, similarly to the Turner Prize in the UK.

Recent Festival Artists at Bergen Kunsthall include Marianne Heske (1993), Olav Christopher Jenssen (2000), Bjarne Melgaard (2003), AK Dolven (2004), Elmgreen & Dragset (2005), Børre Sæthre (2007), Marianne Heier (2012), Gardar Eide Einarsson (2013), Fredrik Vaerslev (2016), Ane Hjort Guttu (2015), Mari Slaattelid (2019) and Joar Nango (2020) among others.

Press Requests

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Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a book published by Bergen Kunsthall with Joar Nango, which will provide the first survey of his work and functions as a guidebook and tool. The publication includes new texts by Mathias Danbolt, Dimitris Dalakoglou, Candice Hopkins, Sigbjørn Skåden and Axel Wieder. .

Events

An important element in Joar Nango's exhibition project will be a series of public events with talks, discussions, concerts and film screenings. A complete programme of events during the exhibition period will be announced later.

Collaborators, speakers and participating artists include Bergen Arkitektforening, Avant Joik (Maja Ratkje, Katarina Barruk, Matti Aikio), Blank Blank, Ken Are Bongo, Maret Ravdna Buljo, Carte Blanche, Cinemateket, Raven Chacon, Mathias Danbolt, Dimitris Dalakoglou, FFB (Joar Nango, Håvard Arnhoff and Eystein Talleraas), Candice Hopkins, Tone Huse, Insomnia, Alexander Rishaug, Katarina Spiik Skum, Stray Dog Productions and others.

FFB

Fellesskapsprosjektet å Fortette Byen

4 September – 8 November

Parallel to the Festival Exhibition, Bergen Kunsthall present a 'mini-retrospective' exhibition by the architecture collective Fellesskapsprosjektet å Fortette Byen (FFB) featuring objects and archive material produced over the past decade. The collective is an ongoing collaborative practice by Joar Nango, together with Håvard Arnhoff and Eystein Talleraas, and was established in 2010. FFB (meaning 'the collective project for a denser concentration of the city') works with temporary and event-based projects and installations in public space. The projects explore the boundaries between the individual's activity space and the common property of the community. Among FFB's latest projects is *Odelsgut og fantefølge*, a much-discussed public artwork in Kvam, Innlandet County that includes parts from a muck spreader and copper work made in collaboration with the Romanian coppersmith Lajos Gabor.

The Festival Exhibition 2020 and Post-Capitalist Architecture TV is supported by Arts Council Norway, Fritt Ord, The Sámi Parliament, International Sámi Film Institute, Bergesenstiftelsen, H. Westfal-Larsen og Hustru Anna Westfal-Larsen's Almennyttige Fond, Norske Kunstforeninger.

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