

**LET THE  
RIVER FLOW**

**THE SOVEREIGN  
WILL AND  
THE MAKING  
OF A NEW  
WORLDLINESS**

Let the River Flow.  
The Sovereign Will and the  
Making of a New Worldliness

Exhibition Dates:  
Thursday, 20 April–Sunday,  
3 June

Opening Hours:  
Wednesday to Sunday  
from 11:00 to 17:00

Office for Contemporary  
Art Norway  
Nedre gate 7  
0551 Oslo

The Office for Contemporary Art Norway is a non-profit foundation created by the Norwegian Ministries of Culture and of Foreign Affairs in 2001, with an arm's length policy. Its principle aim is to foster dialogue between the art field in Norway, including Sami practitioners, and the international arts scene; as well as support these artistic figures in their activities around the world. As a result, OCA's discursive, exhibition, publication, residency and visitor programmes focus on bringing to Norway the plurality of practices and histories at the forefront of international artistic debates, and participating in such debates nationally and internationally. OCA has been responsible for Norway's contribution to the visual arts section of the Venice Biennale since 2001.

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**OCA**  
Office for Contemporary Art Norway

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The People's Action against the Áltá-Guovdageaidnu Waterway (c. 1978–1982) radically shook the course of history in the Nordic region. Its call to “let the river live” was launched against the construction of a large dam across the legendary Álttáeatnu river in Sápmi / Northern Norway. It grew from an unexpectedly broad movement of solidarity across civil society – Sámi, Norwegian and international – in which Sámi artists played a crucial role.

The Áltá action grew in reaction to the profound impact that the flooding of large areas of Sápmi would have on Sámi communities, their livelihoods, cultural heritage, as well as on their role as environmental protectors. The resistance movement was as unprecedented within the history of social protest in Europe, as was its dramatic climax – the Sámi hunger strikes in Oslo in 1979 and 1981. Moreover the Áltá action was part of a new environmental consciousness in the 1970s, as well as the emerging histories of Indigenous empowerment of the time.

Today, the Action elicits bitter-sweet memories. Some historians claim that by catalysing Norway's signature of the United Nations' ILO Convention 169 and the creation of a Sámi Parliament, Kárášjohka, in 1989, the action ushered in a new era of Nordic decolonisation. One that potentially placed Norway at the forefront of social justice policymaking worldwide. Yet a new generation of Sámi artists and thinkers claim that this process stalled early on, and that the very survival of Sámi culture, livelihood and worldviews is in serious danger today. Their voices are being heard in the most prestigious cultural arenas internationally, and play an essential role within the powerful Indigenous movements spreading across the world – in artistic, ecological as well as political spheres.

‘Let the River Flow’ is the fruit of three years of dialogue with artists, scholars, and other cultural peers and peoples across Sápmi, (whose land traverses the four nation-states of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia). The exhibition showcases the essential role of Sámi artists in the

action, in particular the seminal *Mázejoavku: Sámi Dáiddajoavku* (Sámi Artists' Group, 1978-83), as well as the solidarity of non-Sámi counterparts. It presents rare historic works, side-lined by the Nordic art-historical canon and a small number of *duodji*, as well as material from The Archives of the Protest Movement against the Damming of the Áltá-Guovdageaidnu Water System, and new contemporary commissions that explore the legacy of Áltá today. 'Let the River Flow' simultaneously claims and challenges the place of Sámi art amongst the new global, modernist museologies dedicated to expanding the canon of art history to a world scale.

'Let the River Flow' is curated by Katya García-Antón, with Antonio Cataldo. The project has been honoured by the guidance of an Advisory Council consisting of Sámi scholars, Prof. Harald Gaski and Dr. Gunvor Guttorm. The exhibition design is the result of discussions between the curatorial team and a Sámi-Norwegian collaboration of the architects A-Lab (Káre R. Anti) and Torsteinsen Design.



*The Sun, My Father / Beaivi, áhčážan / Solen, Min Far*  
**Medium:** Book, 460 pp.  
**Year:** 1988  
**Lender:** DAT

Always ahead of his time, the iconic Sámi artist and intellectual Áillohaš, dedicated his life to empowering Sámi culture during the post-war period, and led the path to decolonisation in many ways. In 1991, he won the Nordic Council Literature Prize for the book of poetry and photography, *Beaivi, áhčážan* (The Sun, My Father). Áillohaš's work reveals the cultural destruction and social trauma that resulted from the Nordic colonisation of Sápmi. In *What Goes Around Comes Around: Sami Time and the Question of Indigeneity* (2010), Prof. John Weinstock's highlights the fact that "the Sámi are the most studied Indigenous peoples on Earth." Áillohaš used this extraordinary fact to compile a book of nearly 400 photographs gleaned from archives around the world. The book presents imagery from the anthropological archives of Western museums, but also acts as "the ultimate family album for the Sámi" (Kathleen Osgood Dana, "The Native Poet as Shaman", 2004) by integrating poetry, images, and musical scores drawn from the Sámi communities he knew so well. While *Beaivi, áhčážan* establishes the mythological cycles of life in Sámi terms, its companion piece *Eanni, eannázan* (The Earth, My Mother) published in 2001, embraces all Indigenous cultures, acknowledging the place of the Sámi amongst the over 370 million-strong global family of Indigenous peoples throughout the world.

Áillohaččat (Ingor Ántte Áilu Gaup & Áillohaš). Sápmi, O Sápmi! (Sápmi My Little Bird) / *Sápmi, Vuoi Sápmi!* (Sápmi Lottážan I) / Sápmi, O Sápmi! (Sápmi min lille fugl)  
**Medium:** Audio recording  
**Year:** 1982  
**Duration:** 22' 26"  
**Lender:** DAT

The yoik, a Sámi musical form that differs from what is commonly known in Euro-American music, was banned as devil's music under centuries of Nordic suppression of Sámi culture, particularly by religious fundamentalists who went as far as associating it with drunkenness, sin and barbaric behaviour. Áillohaš re-kindled the yoik as a living cultural form, introducing the unprecedented use of instruments. *Joikuja* (1968) was the first step in making this Sámi practice widely available. In the inaugural meeting of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples of 1975 in Port Alberni, Turtle Island (Canada) Áillohaš's yoik is said to have electrified the delegates present, connecting deeply with their Indigeneity. This secured the acceptance of Sámi peoples within the larger international community, at a time when legal debates for Indigenous rights across the globe were gaining significant credence. Alf Isak Keskitalo, Pekka Lukkari, Ole Henrik Magga (who went on to become the first president of the Norwegian Sámi Parliament), Esko Palonoja, Aslak Nils Sara, Per Mikal Utsi and Ingvar Åhren accompanied him as representatives from Sápmi.

As part of the social justice movement that developed across the Nordic region demanding Sámi rights at the time of the Áltá action, Áillohaš put together a series of recordings emblematic of the times. *Sápmi, O Sápmi!* is a recording with a circular sound geometry. Field recordings of the peacefulness of the region, the river around which the controversy revolved, and the violence of the action, the ominous buzzing of police helicopters and the sound of protesters were interlaced with the yoiking of the young Sámi musician Ingor Ántte Áilu Gaup. In this sound work, the yoik takes on a leading role as a mediator between the cosmos, nature and humanity, and as the guarantor of a meaningful connection between all things.



Nils-Aslak Valkepää, also known as Áillohaš (b. 1943 – d. 2001), was a Sámi writer, musician and artist who dedicated his life to the empowerment of Sámi cultural life and rights. He was born on the Finnish side of Sápmi, and later moved to Ivgubahta (Skibotn), on the Norwegian side. He trained as a teacher in Giemajávri (Kemijärvi), but never entered the profession. Shortly after receiving his education, he took on what would become his life project, which first included the release of yoiks on LPs and developed as compositions, books, photo and visual art exhibitions, concerts both at home and abroad, publishing work and much more, including the establishment of the Sámi publishing house DAT in 1984. From 1978-81, he served as the artistic coordinator of the WCIP (World Council of Indigenous Peoples), and in 1979 he initiated the formation of the Sámi artist organisations Sámi Girječálliid Searvi (the Sámi Authors' Association) and Sámi Dáiddačehpiid Searvi (the Sámi Artists' Association). His debut as an author came with the pamphlet *Terveisiä Lapista* (1971), subsequently translated to Nynorsk and English (as Greetings from Lapland). In 1991, he was awarded the Nordic Council's Literature Prize for *Beaivi, áhčážan* (The Sun, My Father). In 1993 he received the jury's special prize in the European radio competition Prix Italia for his *Goase dušše* (Bird Symphony), which garnered great international attention. In 1994, he received the Cultural Award of Eanodat (Enontekiö) Municipality. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from the universities of Oulu and Roavenjárga (Rovaniemi), and received the Estonian Order of the White Star in 1995. He was a festival artist at the Arctic Arts Festival in 1991, and later his artworks were exhibited in international venues, including Japan and China. Among his most famous writings are *Ruoktu Váimmus* (Trekways of the Wind, 1985); *Eanni, eannázan* (The Earth, My Mother, 2001) and the play *Ridn'oaivi ja Nieguid Oaidni* (The Frost-Haired and the Dream-Seer), which premiered in Japan in 1995, and was staged in its original Sámi language at the Sámi National Theatre Beaivváš in 2007.



Iver Jåks. *Sámi culture against the grain / Bajás guvlui viggamín Sápmái duddjomat / Oppadstrevende samekultur*  
**Materials:** Wood, reindeer horn, *sisti* (reindeer skin)

**Dimensions:** 29 x 20 x 25 cm

**Year:** 1979

**Lender:** Sámi Art Repository/  
 Sámi Dáiddamágasiidna –  
 RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)

**Image courtesy:** © Iver Jåks/  
 BONO, Oslo 2018

Iver Jåks is considered a pioneering Sámi artist for bringing visibility to duodji at the highest level of aesthetic excellence. Duodji, often mistranslated as 'Sámi handicraft', is a term that embraces profound layers of meaning and signifies a holistic view of life and culture. As the Sámi scholar Irene Snarby argues, the concept places multiple practical, social and spiritual activities on an interrelated and equal level, where the gathering, treatment and use of working materials (such as wood or reindeer leather) are an integral part of Sámi epistemologies and belief systems. In this sense, duodji is both the making of an item and the item itself (Irene Snarby, "Duodji as Sámi experiences in contemporary art", 2014). As a highly qualified *duojár* (the highest recognition given to a person who has mastered this approach and techniques), Jåks worked to reveal the inner qualities of the materials. He tried to display what he called their potential, their 'soul'. Jåks' three-dimensional works are therefore not static pieces, as they transform naturally with each passing decade. Seemingly arranged by chance, and with the fewest interventions possible, they are in a process of gradual disintegration. As an ambassador of Sámi culture, duodji's perishability should be connected to the natural cycle of life embedded in Sámi beliefs. *Sámi culture against the grain*, relates to changes catalysed by 1979 and the resulting effects on Sámi culture. Jåks' work inspired Sámi artists to reclaim their Sámi identity with pride. He was also a force behind what came to be known as the Sámi Artists' Group, having extended an invitation to five members of the collective to make a piece for the newly erected school in the small village of Láhpoluoppal in the municipality of Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino).

Iver Jåks (1932–2007) was born into a family of reindeer herders in Kárášjohka (Karasjok). He studied at the Norwegian National Academy of the Arts and Crafts Industry (now the Oslo National Academy of the Arts) and at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. His education in Denmark brought his work into dialogue with the European avant-gardes prominent in Copenhagen at that time. Jåks was an illustrator, painter, sculptor and a *duojár*, working with natural materials such as wood, horn, skin and bone. He looked to old Sámi culture and beliefs for inspiration, including the patterns representing different layers of spiritual worlds found on the Sámi drums used for shamanistic rituals. Jåks illustrated a number of Sámi books, and worked on commissions for public buildings such as the RiddoDuottarMuseat in Kárášjohka, and the Tromsø University Museum. He received the Arts Council Norway Honorary Award in 1992, and in 2002 he was given a knighthood, in the First Order of the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olav. The Museum of Contemporary Art (the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo) held an Iver Jåks retrospective exhibition in 1998–99.



Jon Ole Andersen. *Guksi*

**Materials:** Wood and reindeer horn

**Year:** 1985

**Dimensions:** 18 x 10 cm

**Lender:** The Sámi Collections / Sámiid Vuorká-Dávvirat (SVD) – RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)

*Guksi* is a drinking cup obtained from carved birch burl, contoured to a rough shape.

Birch wood has been an important material in the duodji tradition, as much as the burls that can be found growing on tree trunks. For the duojár the terrain where it grows, and in which direction, determine connections to the environment and the knowledge needed to treat the material. The duojár Jon Ole Andersen advocates gaining awareness of the tree's dynamics during different parts of the year in order to understand when to cut the burl. He recommends, for example, harvesting burls in the autumn or in the winter when trees are less active, as reported in *Muora ii galgga sojahit eambbo go gierdá: duojára Jon Ole Andersena birra* (1999) by Synnøve Persen and Bente Geving. Thus, nature informs the duojár's holistic approach.

Although obvious to many, it is worth stressing that duodji is based on, and integral to, everyday Sámi life. Duodji should be regarded both as an activity and as a frame of mind that is central to Sámi society. Whilst it is a personal form of expression, it also embodies a worldview. The fact that duodji has been consistently misconceived as a craft testifies to the limitations inherent to comprehending duodji from the Western perspective of the modern. Modernity, an historical era running from approximately 1650 to 1950, premised upon European enlightenment, has unravelled as a colonial period both militarily and culturally speaking.

Jon Ole Andersen (b. 1932, Horbmá [Horma], Deatnu [Tana], lives and works in Kárásjohka) and is one of Sápmi's foremost duojár (an expert in duodji). He holds the title of 'gudneduojár' (Honorary duojár) at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Guovdageaidnu. Given that duodji holds the highest regard in all Sámi visual cultural expression, Jon Ole Andersen is a source of inspiration not only to other duojárs, but also to Sámi architects, artists and designers. He was among the initiators of *Duojáriid ealáhussearvi* in 1998, an organisation which promotes duodji. Together with Iver Jáks, Jon Ole Andersen was responsible for creating the first permanent artistic installations of the Sámiid Vuorká-Dávvirat (The Sámi Collections) for the RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM) in Kárásjohka. The RiddoDuottarMuseat consists of exhibition spaces, repositories and outdoors museums. It was established in 1972 as the first Sámi Museum in Norway with the aim of strengthening Sámi culture and identity. Iver Jáks made reliefs and sculptures in the entrance hall. Jáks and Andersen's innovative display system evokes a connection between the space of the museum and Sámi cosmological worlds; Sigrid Lien and Hilde Nielssen write that the display can be seen as an effort to "undermine the conceptions of time and history of the dominant society". The museum instead "inscribes itself into a Sámi conception of time and space – a Sámi understanding of reality". A project for a new Sámi Museum able to host all the collections has been under planning for 40 years, and unrealised to date.



Rose-Marie Huuva. *Evening bag / Eahketveasku / Aftenveske*

**Materials:** Textile, silk and cotton  
**Year:** 1985

**Dimensions:** 26 x 15.5 cm

**Lender:** The Sámi Collections / Sámiid Vuorká-Dávvirat (SVD) – RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)

**Image courtesy:** © Rose-Marie Huuva



Rose-Marie Huuva. *Bracelet / Giehtabáddi / Armbånd*

**Materials:** Textile, silk and cotton  
**Year:** 1985

**Dimensions:** 26 x 15.5 cm

**Lender:** The Sámi Collections / Sámiid Vuorká-Dávvirat (SVD) – RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)

**Image courtesy:** © Rose-Marie Huuva

Rose-Marie Huuva, a skilled duojár, was instrumental in fuelling the so called *Sámáidahttan* (Sámification) movement that led to the empowerment of Sámi identity during the 1970s. Until then there had been a rejection of Sámi cultural markers amongst Nordic society, and people in Sámi clothing were habitually barred access to public places such as restaurants, especially in large cities such as Oslo. In the decade leading to the Áltá action and the years that followed it, clothing and accessories were expertly used as a tool for strengthening identity, and Sámi symbols were called upon to channel this cultural empowerment. The pioneering work of practitioners such as Huuva led to the revival of *biesko* (boots), *gákti* (dress) and other elements of Sámi clothing amongst Sámi communities as well as amongst non-Indigenous allies intent on demonstrating their public support of the Indigenous cause. Huuva's work was inspirational to Sámi art practitioners that fought for recognition at this time. Huuva, who was on the committee to elect the first official Sámi flag, stitched a copy of Astrid Báhl's winning proposal (displayed in the exhibition) the night of its selection, so it could be raised the next morning for the Saami Council meeting, 15 August 1986.

*Armband* (1985) and *Evening Bag* (1985) are part of reclaiming knowledge and forms of expression forced into disappearance during the Norwegianisation process and its Swedish and Finnish equivalents. They play with materials in fashion during the 1980s such as silver silk thread matching dominant aesthetic whilst revitalising unique Sámi techniques such as the *datneárp* (tin thread) with skins like *sisti* (tanned reindeer hide).

Starting from the 1850s, the use of Sámi languages was heavily discouraged and even forbidden in schools across the Nordic countries. State economic interests in the North prevailed over Sámi culture. Swedish settlers were encouraged to move to the northern regions through incentives such as land and water rights, tax allowances, and military exemptions. Between 1913 and 1920, a political movement went so far in Sweden as to create a race-based biological institute that collected samples from living people and graves, and sterilised Sámi women. Through her work Huuva has brought to light knowledges and practices, which would have otherwise been largely neglected, as a result of these policies.

Rose-Marie Huuva (b. 1943, Rensjön, Gabna Sameby, Kiruna, Sápmi / Northern Sweden) is a visual and textile artist, a duojár and a poet. As a poet, she was first published in magazines and anthologies in the early 1980s. She published the poetry collection *Galbma Radna* (Cold Comrade) in 1999 for which she was nominated for the Nordic Council's Literature Prize in 2001. In 2003 she was awarded the Cultural Scholarship *Rubus arcticus*.



Catarina Utsi. *Rucksack / Gaeblehkevoesse / Ryggsekk*  
**Materials:** *Sisti*, seal skin, silk  
**Year:** 2002  
**Dimensions:** 44 x 45 x 7.5 cm  
**Lender:** The Sámi Collections / Sámiid Vuorká-Dávvirat (SVD) – RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)  
**Image courtesy:** © Catarina Utsi

Catarina Utsi is a Sámi practitioner who grew up in a reindeer herding family in Árjepluovve (Arjeplog) on the Swedish side of Sápmi, where the reindeer provided abundant materials for duodji, such as horn, skin and tendons. Her mother was a skilled duojár who created objects (with so-called traditional, and contemporary forms) from these materials and as such Catarina Utsi learnt many of these skills early on.

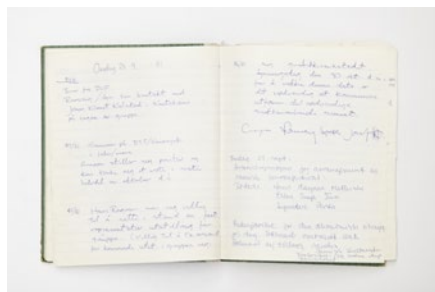
If Nordic colonialism affected the length of the region for centuries, during the 1970s and 1980s the revitalisation of Sámi culture also encompassed the Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian sides of Sápmi. Dam construction characterised the colonial process across Sápmi. The aggressive expansion between 1971 and 1975 of the Lule river dam (first built in

1915), on the Swedish side resulted in the enforced evacuation of many Sámi families from their soon to be submerged homes. Catarina Utsi's uncle, the poet Paulus Utsi, was amongst the evacuees, and one of his most famous poems, *Goahtoeanan*, drew its inspiration from this tragic experience. The artist Keviselie dedicated his poem *Luleju* to commemorate the Lule river (presented in this exhibition as part of his diary). Similarly, Catarina Utsi released an album titled *Báze Dearvan Goahtoeanan* (1990), produced by Áillohaš and the Sámi publishing house DAT, using her uncle's poems as lyrics to her songs. She is also known for the Sámi language children's album, *Suga Suga Su* released in 2001.

Catarina Utsi has been practising methods and traditions of the Southern Sámi people for decades. Utsi, who grew up with duodji, creates functional objects that in and of themselves insist on the continuous relevance of Sámi knowledge in contemporary society. *Rucksack*, is modelled from naturally tanned reindeer skin, which requires treating the skin with water and willow bark. The seal skin embraces kindred relations between the Sámi and other Arctic Indigenous peoples which preserve many worldviews similar to that of duodji.

Catarina Utsi (b. 1960) lives and works in Namsskogan, Nord-Trøndelag, in the Southern Sámi region. She is a reindeer herder, duojár and leads the organisation Samiid Duodji which represents duojár's nationally on the Norwegian side of Sápmi. She is an advocate for the introduction of a new duodji certification which will protect the Sámi duodji traditions from appropriation and misuse.

## SÁMI ARTISTS' GROUP / MÁZEJOAVKU: SÁMI DÁIDDAJOAVKU / SAMISK KUNSTNERGRUPPE



Sámi Artists' Group. Logbook /  
Loggagirji / Loggbok

**Material:** Book

**Dimensions:** 21 x 17.3 x 1.4 cm

**Year:** 1978–83

**Lenders:** The artists

**Image courtesy:** © The artists/  
BONO, Oslo 2018

The legendary Sámi Artists' Group was formed in 1978 by a generation of pioneering young Sámi practitioners who in an unprecedented move, sought recognition as contemporary artists, simultaneously claiming pride in their Sámi heritage. To this end they invented a new word *dáidda* (adopted into the Sámi language and in the name of the group) that defined them as contemporary in order to sideline the negative stereotyping that *duodji* had experienced for so long, and enable recognition by the Norwegian and Nordic artistic infrastructure. The group were committed to expressing their 'Sáminess' freely, and to reclaim a new space of recognition for Sápmi, by advocating and negotiating Sámi thinking and being through the arts. The same year of their creation they decided to set up their base in the small village of Máze where the Guovdageaidnu municipality had offered them a house. The Sámi Artists' Group was comprised of Aage Gaup (b. 1943), Trygve Lund Guttormsen (b. 1933 – d. 2012), Josef Halse (b. 1951), Berit Marit Hætta (b. 1948), Keviselie / Hans Ragnar Mathisen (b. 1945), Britta Marakatt-Labba (b. 1951), Rannveig Persen (b. 1953) and Synnøve Persen (b. 1950). The group's headquarters became a meeting point and a catalyst of political activism for the Sámi peoples, and has been a great source of creative energy in

the region ever since. It was also to some extent inspirational for the founding of the Dáiddadállu artists' group (whose work is included in this exhibition) and house in Guovdageaidnu, 2015. In 1983, the Sámi Artists' Group disbanded. The artists continued to be active practitioners, and settled in different parts of Sápmi; only Trygve Lund Guttormsen remained in Máze, continuing to care for the house until passing away in 2012. The legendary Máze group was a forerunner of the Sámi Dáiddačehpiid Searvi (Sámi Artists' Union) that was founded in 1979, which went on to establish the Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš (Sámi Contemporary Art Centre) in 1986.

The work of the Sámi Artists' Group was celebrated as part of documenta 14 with the inclusion of three of its members in the exhibition. During the course of 2017, honouring the Tráante 2017 celebrations, Sámediggi and Office for Contemporary Art Norway called two gatherings (consultations and workshops curated by Sámi peers) in Máze in 2017 in order to advocate for the relaunch of the legendary Sámi Artists' Group housing and studios as Máze Dáiddasiidii (Indigenous artists' Residency).

Elsa Laula Renberg (b. 1877 – d. 1931) from Helgeland and the Sámi women's association from Brurskanken initiated the first Sámi assembly which took place in Tráante (Trondheim) on 6–9 February 1917. 150 participants from different parts of Sápmi gathered for this event, which is celebrated annually as the Sámi national day on 6 February. Tráante 2017 marked the centenary of this meeting.



## Aage Gaup



Aage Gaup. *Sculpture I* and *Sculpture II* / *Bázzi I ja Bázzi II* / *Skulptur I og Skulptur II*  
**Material:** Wood and other material  
**Dimensions:** 66 x 78 x 273.5 cm  
**Year:** 1987  
**Lender:** Northern Norwegian Art Museum  
**Image courtesy:** © Aage Gaup / BONO, Oslo 2018

Aage Gaup was in constant dialogue with Iver Jåks, who was both a friend and inspiration to him. As followers of *duodji*, they were both concerned with the inner functionality of material; its capacity to 'speak' and inspire. Gaup's monumental sculptures and installations often emphasise perishability, in keeping with the temporality of nature.

*Sculpture I* and *Sculpture II* move between two-dimensional and three-dimensional surfaces, eliciting a connection to music, specifically the vocal break common in *yoik*. The central part of the sculptures is painted in the colours of the Sámi flag – a celebration of a dynamic culture. The Sámi National Theatre Beáivváš was founded in the same year as Gaup's sculptures, providing a further anchor for Sámi culture into the future. Gaup went on to be a long-term collaborator of the company.



Aage Gaup. *Scale model for Our moorland* (1981–2018) / *Skalerejuvvon modealla – Min duoddarat* / *Skalert modell av stykket, Våre Vidder*

**Material:** Mixed media  
**Dimensions:** 50 x 50 cm. Scale model (1:25)  
**Year:** 1981–2018  
**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Aage Gaup / BONO, Oslo 2018  
 Re-make commissioned by OCA, 2017–2018

Gaup was a driving force behind the establishment of the Sámi National Theatre Beáivváš. In 1981 he conceived the scenography of the first Beáivváš theatre play *Our moorland*, on the occasion of the company's inauguration. The score was composed in the style of a Rock Opera by Áilloháš, Ingor Áillu A. Gaup, Halvdan Nedrejord, Svein B. Olsen and Sverre Hjellose. A number of people from the Sámi Artists' Group contributed to the production, including Josef Halse as stage manager, and Synnøve Persen, who wrote an accompanying text. They wrote a number of songs to tell the story of how young in Finnmark were dealing with the conflicts that arose when mining companies came to the moorland: "*Our moorland* is a musical with *yoik*, humour, rock, poetry and politics, set in the time before the Áltá action reached its climax. The piece stages the conflict between the reindeer herders and the mining companies, where the audience sees itself in the Čávžu valley and with the river rescuers in Stilla. Today, all of this is history. The river is going to be dammed. But the culture is a river they can never stop" (programme booklet). Even though a darkness had fallen on Sámi society in the previous two years, the artists were focused on cultural revitalisation, growth and renewal.

The play addresses Sámi civil rights in the face of outside pressure on the community. While the mining companies would ideally bring economic benefits to the region, the effect on the environment and on reindeer-herding practices would be catastrophic as the moorland provided a unique feeding ground for the animals to pasture.

Without any preparatory sketches, Gaup pitched his first idea for the scenography in a composition of matches. This is symbolically reminiscent of the heated discussions of those years, still on the Sámi territory today.



Aage Gaup. *Uprising / Stuibmi / Opprør*

**Material:** Tempera on paper

**Dimensions:** 59 x 42 cm

**Date:** 1976

**Lender:** Sámi Art Repository/  
Sámi Dáiddamágasiidna –  
RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)

**Image courtesy:** © Aage Gaup/  
BONO, Oslo 2018

The original sketch for this silkscreen print, dated 1976, was painted with a knife; multiple versions of it were produced with various printing techniques. The sketch appears on a poster from 1977 with the words *8-11-1852 Guov'dagæi'dno*, referring to the first Sámi uprising of 8 November 1852, a deadly confrontation addressing exploitative methods used by some members of the Norwegian authorities against the Sámi peoples. From that moment on, the Norwegian state assimilation policies were launched in force. The Guovdageaidnu rebellion was part of a wider global history of conflictive contact between Indigenous and colonial forces (such as for example the Santhal rebellion of 1855–56 which was part of the start of the decolonisation process against the British in India). A large number of the protesters were arrested, many were imprisoned for life. The leaders of the uprising, Mons Aslaksen and Aslak Jakobsen Hætta, were executed by decapitation on 14 October 1854 for murder; their heads, claimed by the Norwegian government for scientific research, were held in the collection of 900 skulls at the Anatomical Institute in Oslo. The decapitated heads were claimed back by their ancestors – Niillas and Ánde Somy – and after years of legal debate they were returned to their descendants in 1997 for burial alongside their bodies.

A different version of the motif is also found in a small exhibition booklet that the Sámi Artists' Group made to accompany a number of group shows shown in the spring of 1979, among others, at the Sámi Collections in Kárášjohka and the Áltá Artist Association. A work by each member of the Sámi Artists' Group was acquired by the Sámi Dáiddamágasiidna (Sámi Art Repository), which is now part of the RiddoDuottarMuseat complex. The Sámi Art Repository is a collection of approximately 1,300 works and is thus the largest collection of Sámi contemporary art and contemporary duodji in existence. Aquisitions are made by a committee appointed by the Sámi Parliament consisting of members of the Sámiid Dáiddačhepiid Searvi (Sámi Artists' Union).



Aage Gaup. *Ur-head / Máttaráhkku / Urhode*

**Material:** Soapstone

**Dimensions:** 20.5 x 24 x 19 cm

**Year:** 1976–1981

**Lender:** Sámi Art Repository/  
Sámi Dáiddamágasiidna –  
RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)

**Image courtesy:** © Aage Gaup/  
BONO, Oslo 2018

While wandering in the city during his stay in Tråante (Trondheim) when he was attending his studies at the Art Academy, Aage Gaup often crossed the Nidaros Cathedral. The building, which began to be built in 1070 and was finished some time around 1300, defines what is known to be the northernmost medieval cathedral in the world. Throughout the centuries, this landmark has undergone a number of reconstructions, one in the 1970s. Gaup obtained one of the resulting cast away stones, attracted by its signs of fragility and contradictory durability. "It's a broken sculpture", he said recently when speaking about *Máttaráhkku*.



*Máttaráhkku* is the Sámi name for grandmother (not to be confused with *Máttaráhkká*, the Earth Mother goddess in Sámi mythology). Here Gaup seems to make pun on duration, relations, and the circularity of time that applies to all things in nature. Gaup's Norwegian title for the work, *Urhode* [Ur-head], denotes a relation to time and nature unique to Indigenous people.

Aage Gaup (b. 1943) is a scenographer, sculptor and a member of the Sámi Artists' Group who has been awarded a number of artists' grants and honorary designations. Gaup has been commissioned for various artworks in the public space, and his works are collected by the Sámi Council, the Norwegian Arts Council, the Sámi Collections in Kárášjohka and the Northern Norwegian Art Museum in Romsa (Tromsø) among others. Together with Berit Marit Hætta, he was given the Hedda Award (2000) for the year's best scenography in the play *Vølundda Mitalus* (the Lay of Vølund) and he has received the Kárášjohka Municipality Culture Award (2012). Aage Gaup has also been involved in the Cultural School, and has worked for the Kárášjohka Art School since it was created, where he currently serves on the board.

## Trygve Lund Guttormsen

Trygve Lund Guttormsen.

*Evening / Eahket / Kveld*

**Material:** Linoleum print on paper

**Dimensions:** 64.2 x 48.2 cm

**Year:** 1979

**Lender:** Sámi Art Repository/

Sámi Dáiddamágašiidna –

RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)

**Image courtesy:** © Trygve Lund Guttormsen/BONO, Oslo 2018

According to Øystein Dalland, author of "The Last Big Dam of Norway: Whose Victory?" (*Dams as Aid*, 1997), and former editor of the local newspaper *Altaposten* during the Áltá case, Trygve Lund Guttormsen was the first person to accidentally come across the initial plans of the damming of the Áltáeatnu (Áltá river) when he visited a regional engineer's office in Áhkanjárga (Narvik) in the mid-1960s. In search of documentation for a drinking-water supply scheme, he found that on one map a dotted line of about 300 metres indicated the upper limit of a large reservoir. Lund Guttormsen's suspicions grew in 1969, when many of his neighbours' applications for building permits near the river were turned down by the county agricultural office without a logical explanation. The dam plans developed without any public consultation; Lund Guttormsen raised local awareness through the district newspaper, and this quickly turned into national news. The parliamentary committee that visited Máze in August 1970, was received by a silent demonstration of local inhabitants holding a banner proclaiming "We were here first" (silence is a traditional form of dissent within Sámi communities). The demonstration forced the NVE (the Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Administration) to present their plans at a subsequent public meeting in Máze.

Within this context, the oversized figure of a Sámi man imposing against the background landscape, in Lund Guttormsen's painting *Evening* (1979), speaks of the rise of a new political consciousness in Sápmi that rides upon the collective memory of the Guovdageaidnu uprising of 1852.



Trygve Lund Guttormsen.  
*The Sámi Parliament holding their first plenary / Sámedikki vuosttaš dievasčoahkkin / Sametinget holder sin første plenum*

**Material:** Acrylic painting on paper

**Dimensions:** 50.5 x 62 cm

**Year:** 1993

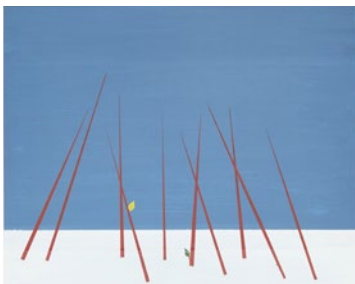
**Lender:** Sámi Art Repository/

Sámi Dáiddamágasiidna –

RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)

**Image courtesy:** © Trygve Lund

Guttormsen/BONO, Oslo 2018



Trygve Lund Guttormsen.

*Gathering or Assembly / Čoahkkaneapmi / Oppstand eller Samling*

**Material:** Acrylic painting on paper

**Dimensions:** 51 x 62 cm

**Year:** 1993

**Lender:** Sámi Art Repository/

Sámi Dáiddamágasiidna –

RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)

**Image courtesy:** © Trygve Lund

Guttormsen/BONO, Oslo 2018



Trygve Lund Guttormsen.

*The preparation for the establishment of the Sámi Parliament / Ráhkkanneamen Sámedikki ásaheapmái / Forarbeid til opprettelsen av Sametinget*

**Material:** Linoleum block print on paper

**Dimensions:** 27.5 x 26.5 cm

**Year:** 1998

**Lender:** Sámi Art Repository/

Sámi Dáiddamágasiidna –

RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)

**Image courtesy:** © Trygve Lund

Guttormsen/BONO, Oslo 2018

Besides his practice as an artist, Trygve Lund Guttormsen held central positions in Sámi politics. He worked as an educator and formed part of the municipal council of the Guovdageaidnu municipality for a total of 20 years.

*The Sámi Parliament holding their first plenary* contains an important caption which reads "The Sámi Parliament holds its first meeting far beyond Karasjok. It's morning, and Steinar Pedersen is out to greet the sunrise."

Steinar Pedersen started his political career in the Sámi Parliament in 1989, and became a deputy representative of Finnmark in the Norwegian Parliament in 1993. The establishment of the Sámi Parliament in 1989 in Norway was regarded as an important development to implement Sámi rights in the Norwegian Constitution. Whilst this marked a gesture towards self-governance, the new Sámi Parliament holds but an advisory position; which is financially directly dependent on Oslo, and has few decision making powers. By signalling Steinar Pedersen's inclusion in the Norwegian Parliament in 1993, Lund Guttormsen allegedly indicates the importance of more direct political power to achieve real Sámi self-governance.

*Gathering or Assembly*, depicts the coloured poles of a *lávvu* in the process of construction. The work might precede or succeed *The Sámi Parliament holding their first plenary*. *Gathering* was realised at a time during which the new opportunities for political empowerment and representation gained through the Áltá Action – and similar cases internationally – were strongly debated in Sápmi. Opinions were divided amongst those who believed in using the traditional form of Sámi gathering, and those for whom the only model possible in practice was one that was recognised by the Norwegian state, that is a parliamentary format. It was the latter that won the debate, and led to traditional forms being replaced a Norwegian model. For many amongst the young Sámi generation of today, this decision remains the subject of some controversy.

Lund Guttormsen returns to these legal and socio-political themes multiple times. *The preparation for the establishment of the Sámi Parliament* (1998) followed King Harald's formal apology of 1997: "on behalf of the state for the injustice committed against the Sámi people through its harsh policy of Norwegianisation". The eventual recognition of Sámi rights is taken anew here, twenty years after the clash between the police and protesters in Áltá and across Norway.

Trygve Lund Guttormsen (1933–2012) was a visual artist and a member of the Sámi Artists' Group. He was already residing in Máze when the artists Synnøve Persen and Aage Gaup relocated there in the autumn of 1978. During the first year of the group's existence, they formed the main working team in the Máze house. Lund Guttormsen continued to live in Máze, until his passing away in 2012, and has contributed to the local society in numerous ways through his work not only as an artist, but also as a teacher and headmaster of the Máze school from 1962–1973, as a politician on the municipal council of Guovdageaidnu from 1963–1983, and as a public debater. A cycle of interviews were conducted in 2008 with the artist by Rossella Ragazzi and Terje Brantenberg, Associate Professors at Tromsø University Museum, the Arctic University of Norway, in conjunction with his exhibition at the Tromsø Museum in 2009.

The museum donated a copy of the film (OCA commissioned the subtitles in Sámi) to the Máze Dáiddasiidii: the latter is an ongoing project for an Indigenous Artist's Residency in Máze in the legendary Sámi Artists' Group housing and studios – a collaboration between various Sápmi stakeholders, including the Máze citizens, the municipality, the Sámi Parliament, and OCA)

## Josef Halse

Josef Halse. *April / Cuorománnu / April*

**Material:** Watercolour and gouache

**Dimensions:** 33 x 40 cm

**Year:** 1984

**Lender:** Sámi Art Repository/

Sámi Dáiddamágasiidna –

RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)

**Image courtesy:** © Josef Halse

Josef Halse. *February / Guovvamánnu / Februar*

**Materials:** Watercolour and Gouache

**Dimensions:** 33 x 39 cm

**Year:** 1984

**Lender:** Sámi Art Repository/

Sámi Dáiddamágasiidna –

RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)

**Image courtesy:** © Josef Halse

The Sámi worldview upholds a non-linear perspective of time where life has a cyclical and circular nature. The relationship between lighter and darker periods echoes this perspective, whereby seasons are more relevant markers of time than the non-Indigenous construction of the month. Sámi have eight seasons in total. Seasonal rhythms determine changes in nature as well as the chromatic hues of the landscape, and these are connected to each community living in the various Sámi areas.

In 1984, Josef Halse addressed two key moments in the Sámi cyclical perspective of time, approximately equivalent to two months in the Western calendar. The beginning of *Gidđa* (spring) corresponds to the month of April and follows on from the season of *Giddadálvi* (spring-winter). *Gidđa* is also the period of transhumance, when the reindeer herds move from the *Finnmárkkoduottar* (Finnmark plateau) to the coast. It is also the period when calves are born. *Dálvi* (winter) corresponds to the month of February, a time during which the herds are at their winter pastures and animals are slaughtered for sale and food supplies. The sun returns to Northern Sápmi in late January and marks the end of the long Polar Night. At the moment of writing this pamphlet, Halse (together with a number of cultural practitioners) is protesting against the forced unionisation of the counties of Finnmark and Romsa, which, in his view, denies the specificity of histories, culture,

rights and peoples. Subsuming Indigenous specificity within a wider non-Indigenous category is a problematic example of colonial methodology. This is one of many contemporary examples of how today, just like at the beginning of the 1980s, Sápmi and its people are at risk of losing their livelihood and cultural identity, both of which are inherently interconnected.

Josef Halse (b. 1951) was a member of the Sámi Artists' Group and is active both as a painter and a musician. Halse studied at the Norwegian National Academy of Craft and Art Industry, Oslo, after which he returned to his hometown of Guovdageaidnu in 1979. Halse's acrylic-based paintings and watercolours are records of nature-as-culture. They pay homage to the chromatic rhythms resulting from the stark changes of the landscapes across the seasons in his native Sápmi.



Berit Marit Hætta. *Ravdna with a load of hay / Ravdna Suov'dne noaddin / Ravdna med høybør*  
**Material:** Pencil on paper  
**Dimensions:** 21 x 16 cm  
**Year:** 1979  
**Lender:** Sámi Art Repository/ Sámi Dáiddamágašiidna – RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)  
**Image courtesy:** © Berit Marit Hætta/BONO, Oslo 2018

Berit Marit Hætta was born in Máze, the village which would be inundated following the Norwegian government's decision to build a dam on the legendary Áltá river. According to this plan, the expected rise in the water level would leave only the top of the church spire in view. At the end of the 1970s, Hætta produced a series of works using pencil on paper depicting the Sámi way of life, in the form of traditional seasonal practices that would be threatened by the impact of the dam. *Ravdna with a load of Hay* depicts a woman, Ravdna, carrying hay on her back to dry, a process necessary in marshland areas that could not be easily reached by motor vehicles.



Berit Marit Hætta. *The Ice Sea's Glow / Jietnjameara hiiat / Ishavets Glød*  
**Material:** Textiles  
**Dimensions:** 107 x 128 cm  
**Year:** 1979/1980  
**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Berit Marit Hætta/BONO, Oslo 2018

*The Ice Sea's Glow* was made a few years after the recognition of Sámi Indigeneity during the World Council of Indigenous People (WCIP) – the first transnational pan-Indigenous human rights organisation with a worldly perspective and scope.

The founding conference took place from 27 to 31 October 1975 at the Tseshaht Reservation in Port Alberni (Turtle Island / Canada). After acquiring consultative NGO status within the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1977, WCIP qualified to advocate for the rights of its constituency at the United Nations. The founding conference of the WCIP on Vancouver Island gathered 260 participants, including 52 Indigenous people coming from all over the Americas, Scandinavia, Greenland and Oceania.

In *The Ice Sea's Glow*, Berit Marit Hætta speaks of the fraternity between the Sámi peoples and the wider family of global Indigenous peoples they are a part of. The work depicts two Inuit Indigenous women of Greenland, wearing traditional clothing. The outerwear is called Anorak, and is made from seal skin, animal fur and velvet stitched together with embroidery and beadwork. Hætta addresses in this work the interrelation of colour and landscape in the Indigenous culture of the Circumpolar North. What may appear to be a monochrome, empty landscape to the colonial eye, especially during winter time, is strongly disputed by Sámi people's world-view, as much as by the Inuit. From a Sámi perspective the winter landscape 'glows' with unexpected colour tonalities during day and night. In a gesture of sisterhood, the work intermixes Inuit and Sámi styles by using a technique usually applied to making ribbons in Sámi clothing.

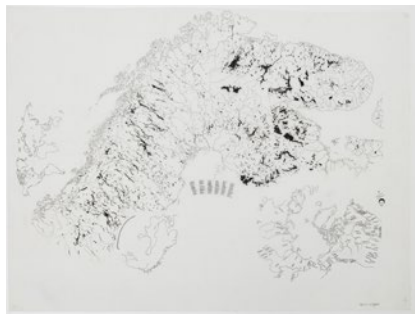
Berit Marit Hætta (b. 1948) is an artist, musician and costume designer, and was a member of the Sámi Artists' Group. She is an established illustrator, and among her most notable book covers is the first Sámi children's book by Sámi author Marry A. Somby, *Ámmul ja alit oarbmaelli* (Ámmul and the Blue Cousin), published in 1976. She learnt Sámi sewing techniques at home and received a formal education as a seamstress before starting her arts education at the Norwegian National Academy for Crafts and Art Industry, completed in 1974. After graduation, she worked at the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History's Sámi collections in Oslo. Hætta has made numerous costumes for Sámi theatre productions and along with Aage Gaup, she was awarded the Hedda award for costume and set design in 2000 for the play *Vølundda Mitalus* (the Lay of Vølund) at the Sámi National Theatre Beaivváš.

John Gustavsen.  
*Sámi Silent No More: on the ban on expression in Sápmi / Sámit eai šat oro jaska : sátnefriijavuoda gielddu Sámis / Samer tier ikke lenger: om ytringsforbud i Sameland* (Trohaug, 1980). Book cover by Berit Marit Hætta.  
**Material:** Book, 144 pp.  
**Year:** 1980

The cover of *Sámi Silent No More: on the ban on expression in Sápmi* is based on a drawing by Haetta from 1979, portraying Sámi people parading with flags. "Marching is not a typical Sámi behaviour," says Haetta, "though during those years, we were forced to adopt a language which could be understood by the Norwegian government." The flag depicted in this illustration forms part of a wider phenomenon of flag-making at the time, which while not an intrinsic aspect of Sámi culture, was employed in order to achieve recognition. In particular, Haetta's drawing was based on a proposal for a flag by artist Synnøve Persen.

John Gustavsen (b. 1943) is a writer and honorary member of the North Norwegian Writers' Union, specialising in Sámi rights and socio-political issues related to the Barents region. He is based in Romsa.

## Keivelie / Hans Ragnar Mathisen



Keivelie / Hans Ragnar Mathisen.  
*Sápmi with only Sámi place names /*  
*Sápmi dušše sámi báikenamaiguin*  
*/ Sápmi (Sameland) med kun*  
*samiske stedsnavn*

**Material:** Pastels and ink on translucent paper

**Dimensions:** 88.5 x 75 cm

**Year:** 1975

**Lender:** The artist

**Image courtesy:** © Hans Ragnar Mathisen/BONO, Oslo 2018



Keivelie / Hans Ragnar Mathisen.  
*Dixi Sic Transit Mundi Gloria* (Thus  
passes the glory of the world).

Registered as *The Academy* / Ná  
nohká máilmmi hearvásvuohta /  
Slik forgår verdens herlighet

**Material:** Paper, cardboard and  
textile collage

**Dimensions:** 114 x 126 cm

**Year:** 1978

**Lender:** Sámi Art Repository/  
Sámi Dáiddamágasiidna –  
RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)

**Image courtesy:** © Hans Ragnar Mathisen/BONO, Oslo 2018



Sápmi as a concept "is more than a territory; it describes the Sámi living space, consisting of water and land, and also people and culture," as Sámi scholar Maria Therese Stephansen explains in an essay on the artist in 2017, commissioned by the respected art journal *Afterall*. Since the mid-1970s, Keviselie (also known as Hans Ragnar Mathisen) has dedicated a lifetime's practice to researching and reintroducing into the cartography of the region the Sámi place names removed by the colonial forces since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This aspect of his practice is particularly interesting given the strategies of popular mass distribution that accompanied it, in the form of reasonably priced multiples. In 1975, Keviselie completed the first map, *Sápmi with only Sámi place names*. A few years later, as a student at the Oslo Art Academy, he produced *Thus passes the glory of the world* (*Dixi Sic Transit Mundi Gloria*). The title can be read as reminder that everything is fleeting and nothing lasts forever, it also has various uses among intellectuals, including a form of farewell mostly aimed at instilling a sense of insecurity in others.



Keviselie / Hans Ragnar Mathisen.  
ČSV  
**Material:** Woodblock print on paper  
**Dimensions:** 32 x 32 cm  
**Year:** 1974  
**Lender:** Sámi Art Repository/  
Sámi Dáiddamágasiidna –  
RiddoDuottarMuseat (RDM)  
**Image courtesy:** © Hans Ragnar  
Mathisen/BONO, Oslo 2018

"ČSV appeared in the autumn of 1970, during the course of a Sámi political event in Máze, and the notion existed as a Sámi political slogan for some years thereafter," says Sámi scholar Johan Klemet Hætta Kaistad. ČSV (*Čájet Sámi Vuoiŋa* / Show Sámi Spirit) immortalised a consciousness and need to unify Sámi symbols and concepts to enhance 'Sáminess' in the public sphere, as much as to encourage

the use of Sámi perspectives and artefacts in everyday life. It was especially aimed at drawing the youth into Sámi politics, as well as at catalysing the awakening and the strengthening of a common identity through meetings, conferences, festivals and newspaper articles. It was in this spirit that Mathisen designed the ČSV logo.



Keviselie / Hans Ragnar Mathisen. *It is happening / Sámesoga loahpa / Slikt skjer også her...*  
**Material:** Lithography on paper  
**Dimensions:** 38 x 32 cm (inside area: 30.5 x 25.5 cm)  
**Year:** 1981  
**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Hans Ragnar Mathisen/  
BONO, Oslo 2018



Keviselie / Hans Ragnar Mathisen. 1852  
**Material:** Lithography on paper  
**Dimensions:** 48.5 x 62 cm  
**Year:** 1981  
**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Hans Ragnar Mathisen/  
BONO, Oslo 2018

In this emblematic print titled *1852*, Keviselie refers to the Sámi uprising in Guovdageaidnu by a group of Sámi people who confronted representatives of the Norwegian authorities. During this time, the Sámi were considered economically poorer by the Norwegian settlers because Sámis regarded wealth in terms of reindeer or other livestock rather than in terms of currency. They were also treated as socially inferior.

The Guovdageaidnu rebellion took place in the context of a religious movement led by the preacher Lars Levi Læstadius. The introduction of alcohol by Christian missionaries had become a widespread, destructive phenomenon among Sámi communities at the time. Læstadius' teachings were highly regarded by many Sámis, specially due to his ban of alcohol consumption. Læstadius' followers considered the Norwegian State Church too close to the state-run alcohol

industry, provoking militant actions. A local merchant selling liquor to the Sámi became the target of the rebellion due to his repeated exploitation of Sámi customers. 1852 depicts a nib (which could also be a bell tower) at the fracture point between silence and protest. Oppression in language, dispossession and the return of colonisation connects 1852 with 1981 (the year this poster was made). The print was also used as the cover of the Charta 79 publication (no. 4-5, 1981). A series of Charta 79 issues were made in the years 1979-1981 including an international issue, drawing support for the Áltá Case from Indigenous peoples around the world. Charta 79 was edited by Máret Sára among others in the Sámi Action Group; she played an important role in highlighting the role of women during the Áltá action.



Keviselie / Hans Ragnar Mathisen.  
*Diary B14 / Beavegirji B14 / Dagbok B14*  
**Material:** Book  
**Dimensions:** 15 x 10.5 cm  
**Year:** 1977-1978  
**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Hans Ragnar Mathisen/BONO, Oslo 2018

In a text titled "Human Bodies and the Forces of Nature: Technoscience Perspectives on Hydropower Dams, Safety, Human Security, Emotions and Embodied Knowledges" (2016), May-Britt Öhman and Eva-Lotta Thunqvist, researchers at Uppsala University, observes: "Hydropower has commonly been promoted as an environmentally friendly and renewable energy resource.

Despite this, the major negative social and ecological impacts on the environment and its local inhabitants have been well established for a long time, as well as the high risks for large-scale disasters caused by hydropower dam failures."

Porjus, the first power plant in the Lule River (Luleju in Lule Sámi) by the mouth of the Julevädno on the Bay of Bothnia, was inaugurated in 1915. The hydropower station was expanded in size with new dams and plants downstream along the river from 1971 to 1975. This affected reindeer husbandry, farming, and the landscape, including the biodiversity of the river.

Keviselie wrote a poem during the heated Álttáeatnu (Áltá river) debates, and published it as *Luleju, The Story of a Sámi Siida and a River* in 1981 in response to events on the Swedish side of Sápmi. Before the Swedish state finalised its regulations in the 1970s, the river was rich in salmon, and the river valley hosted most of the nomadic and forest-based Sámi reindeer herders in the nation-state of Sweden.



Keviselie / Hans Ragnar Mathisen. *Boat / Fanas / Båt*  
**Material:** Lithography on paper  
**Dimensions:** 35 x 22.5  
**Year:** 1978  
**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Hans Ragnar Mathisen/BONO, Oslo 2018

Keviselie aka Hans Ragnar Mathisen (b.1945) is a visual artist who lives and works in Romsa. He studied at the National Academy of Fine Arts in Oslo, receiving his degree in 1979. Keviselie was a member of the Sámi Artists' Group from its inception in 1978. His prolific artistic practice is primarily defined through a determined advocacy of Sámi rights, cultural expression and autonomy, as well as the connectivity of Indigenous peoples around the world. It extends across a variety of media, including painting, graphic arts, drawing, sculpture, photography, book illustration, cartography and writing. Keviselie has frequently exhibited through solo and group exhibitions across Scandinavia, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Canada, USA, China, and Taiwan and his work was shown in Athens and Kassel during Documenta 14.



## Britta Marakatt-Labba

Britta Marakatt-Labba. *Nightmare / Deattán / Mardröm*

**Material:** Wool embroidery on linen fabric

**Dimensions:** 55 x 70 cm

**Year:** 1986

**Lender:** Region Gälveborg

**Image courtesy:** © Britta Marakatt-Labba/BONO, Oslo 2018

Britta Marakatt-Labba. *Flying Shamans / Girdinoaidit / Flygande nåjder*

**Material:** Wool embroidery on linen fabric

**Dimensions:** 54 x 38 cm

**Year:** 1985

**Lender:** Arbetsförmedlingen

Enköping Bålsta

**Image courtesy:** © Britta Marakatt-Labba/BONO, Oslo 2018

Britta Marakatt-Labba grew up as one of nine children in a reindeer herding family in Saarivuoma Sameby, on the Swedish side of Sápmi. Her practice is fundamentally one of storytelling through finely hand-embroidered images. This technique, inherent to her Sámi heritage, allows her to be mobile continuing her production any place at any time. Growing up with duodji, textiles constitute a common thread throughout Marakatt-Labba's life, and are used to highlight the artist's rejection of the colonial prejudices constructed against Sámi culture. By conveying an image of the world she is part of she provides an understanding of Sámi culture and history, with which to guide its future. The numerous embroideries and other works that she has produced since the 1970s stand as an impassioned and political defence of the Sámi people. They assert a Sámi worldview through both historic and everyday events, that intertwine nature, lifestyles, spiritual perspectives and mythology, fairy tales and sayings, as well as political struggle and confrontation.

Both *Flying Shamans* and *Nightmare* were made in the context of extended waves of militarisation across Sápmi: the latter included the land-scorching and the consequent evacuation of the whole Finnmark region at the end of World War II, and later, during the Áltá action, the largest police deployment in Norway witnessed in the post-war era. In *Nightmare*, Marakatt-Labba portrays

a *lávvu* under attack. Much more than just a living quarter – with defined areas for sleeping and eating – a *lávvu* has a specially demarcated area for spiritual practices. *Nightmare* portrays the mass desecration of the *lávvu* as a metaphor for the ransacking of Sámi resources and Sámi beliefs during the past and present. During Marakatt-Labba's John Savio Award lecture (held at OCA on 7 December 2017), the artist observed that the entire Sámi belief system is under threat today, given that Sámi (and Indigenous peoples globally) are the first to be menaced by the consequences of changes in climate and the environment linked to the massive mining exploitation and industrialisation of nature.

*Flying Shamans* comments upon the police-enforced displacement of Sámi communities and livelihood. The *noaidi* (or shaman), is depicted here as coming to the Sámi's defence. Noaidis are intermediaries between humans and the forces of the other world in which Sámi cosmology is a tripartite structure composed of the celestial, the human and the underworld. Noaidis' practices were repressed throughout the christianising 'Nordic missionary crusades' of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In *Flying Shamans*, the *noaidi* re-emerges as the guardian and the sole defender of the community order.



Britta Marakatt-Labba. *Stallo and the three sisters / Stállu ja golbma oappáža / Stallo och dom tre systarna*

**Material:** Mixed media

**Dimensions:** 100 x 180 x 100 cm

**Year:** 1978

**Lender:** The artist

**Image courtesy:** © Britta Marakatt-Labba/BONO, Oslo 2018

Marakatt-Labba made this work for her graduation project at the School of Design and Crafts in Gothenburg in 1978. The puppet theatre was inspired by the mythological Sámi stories about the 'Stallo' – a supernatural creature which exists in two distinct forms, as a slightly enlarged human figure of extreme strength

known for stealing children, or as a force called forth by the noaidi to hurt or kill his enemies. The puppet theatre was toured live around the whole of Sápmi featuring Marry A. Somby's play *Little Stallo and the Three Sisters*. Her story portrays the encounter of three girls, Mádde, Jurri and Tuddi, with a small Stallo suffering from an inferiority complex. The Stallo kidnaps the children, but they eventually manage to fool him and escape from captivity. Marry A. Somby, author of many children's books, and Britta Marakatt-Labba came together to tell a tale to children about decolonisation, and to instil in young people a sense of empowerment and a desire for change which had been forbidden in their generation.

Britta Marakatt-Labba (b. 1951, Lavkooaivvi, Davvavuomi, Lávvnnjivuomi) is a visual artist living in Övre Soppero, on the Swedish side of Sápmi. She grew up in a family of reindeer herders and then studied art at the Sunderby Folkhögskola and at the School of Design and Crafts at the University of Gothenburg, receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Textile Art in 1978. Marakatt-Labba became a member of the influential artist collective, the Sámi Artists' Group, in 1979. She has exhibited widely, nationally and internationally. Her major retrospective 'Cosmos', at the Bildmuseet in 2008, included over 100 works. Her central medium is embroidery; the epic work *History* is a 24-metre tapestry inspired by the Bayeux Tapestries that narrate the history and cosmology of the Sámi people. The latter was a centre piece of the recent Documenta 14, amongst other works presented both in Athens and Kassel. The major monograph, *Broderade berättelser* (Embroidered Stories), was published in 2010. She lives and works in Bajit Sohppar/Övre Soppero, Sápmi/Northern Sweden.

## Rannveig Persen



Rannveig Persen.  
*Power and Honour, and we Sámi / Fábmo Ja Guđ'ni Ja Mii Sábmelažžat / Makten og Æren og Vi Samene*  
**Material:** Linoleum block print on paper  
**Dimensions:** 25 x 30 cm  
**Year:** 1978  
**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Rannveig Persen



Rannveig Persen.  
*Protect our rivers and fields / Suodjal min jogaid ja eatnamiid. Vern våre elver og marker*  
**Material:** Linoleum block print on paper  
**Dimensions:** 30 x 39 cm  
**Year:** 1979  
**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Rannveig Persen

As an artist and educator, Rannveig Persen worked as an illustrator on a number of Sámi books for children from the 1970s on. *Power and Honour, and we Sámi* and *Protect our rivers and fields* are both direct responses to the construction of the hydroelectric power plant in the Áltá river. In *Power and Honour, and we Sámi*, Persen highlights the distance between the national government's policies and the Sámi people's livelihood. Instead of showing the protests, she presents the square in front of the Parliament as deserted. The only trace left of the Sámi peoples are two hats – the *čiehgaħpir* (the four corners hat) and the *nissongahpir* (women's headpiece) – infamously banned as devilish by Norwegian missionaries. The work questions whether conciliation across society can ever be achieved.

*Protect our rivers and fields* takes on the violence of the Norwegianisation policy and the censorship of the Sámi language. The phrase *Protect our rivers and fields* visualises a continuity between all the given elements in nature, including language. It addresses the deep interconnection between language, nature and sovereignty, essential for survival among Indigenous peoples.

The process of Norwegianisation was an official policy carried out by the Norwegian government directed at the Sámi, and later the Kven people of Norway, to assimilate non-Norwegian speaking Indigenous communities and ethnic minorities into a culturally uniform population. This finds its roots in the missionary programs of the 1700s, formalised as official government policy in the late 1800s. Laws were passed prohibiting schooling in Sámi, and restricting the rights of Sámi speakers to purchase land. The laws were motivated by Norwegian nationalism and also by religious/spiritual differences between Sámi and the Norwegian population. The Norwegianisation policy was discontinued in the 1980s with the creation of the Sámediggi (the Sámi Parliament of Norway) and other related initiatives.

Rannveig Persen (b. 1953) is a visual artist and was a member of the Sámi Artists' Group. After finishing her studies at the Norwegian National Academy of Crafts and Art Industry, she relocated to Máze with her sister, Synnøve, to join the group. She is known to have worked with various media, ranging from linoleum block prints to illustrations and more recently, digital collage.

## Synnøve Persen



Synnøve Persen. *Sámi flag / Sámeleavga / Samisk flagg*

**Material:** Silkscreen print on paper  
**Dimensions:** 62 x 73.5 cm

**Year:** 1977

**Lender:** The artist

**Image courtesy:** © Synnøve Persen/BONO, Oslo 2018



Synnøve Persen. *Sámi land for Sámi / Sámi eana sámiide / Sameland for samene*

**Material:** Silkscreen print on paper  
**Dimensions:** 67 x 92 cm  
**Year:** 1977

**Lender:** The artist

**Image courtesy:** © Synnøve Persen/BONO, Oslo 2018



Jan-Erik Stensgård. Photo of Synnøve Persen and Victor Lind / Synnøve Persena ja Victor Linda govva / Foto av Synnøve Persen og Victor Lind

**Material:** Photograph of original print

**Dimensions:** 13 x 9 cm

**Date:** 1977

**Lender:** The artist

Synnøve Persen belonged to the first generation of Sámi to be fully educated by the Norwegian assimilation policy in state-run boarding schools. In this process she experienced – like thousands of other Sámi peoples – a sense of loss as her language, culture, and home were pushed far from her. Added to this was the traumatic sense of shame at being Sámi that the Norwegianisation policy instilled.

Persen attended the Art Academy in Oslo, where in 1977 she developed an artwork portraying a Sámi flag. Flag-making was not an inherent part of Sámi culture, and yet from the 1960s flags began to emerge in a bid to stand up to the devastating effects of Norwegianisation. This development was part of the growing ČSV (Čájjet Sámi Vuoiŋga / Show Sámi Spirit) movement of 'Sámification',

whereby duodji and specific colours gained power as symbolic elements of a growing sense of Sámi identity across Sápmi and the nation-states it traversed. Persen's flag exists within a wider context.

As Ánde Somby observes, "The pattern itself wasn't original [...] the inspirations were there for all to see. It could be a magnified end of the sleeve of the gáktis from Buolbmát and Várjjat. It could be the design used in different pulpits at the time. The design was even used in some banners to make political statements." A similar pattern was used in Kárásjohka in 1962 at the initiative of Marit Stueng. In 1986, Astrid Båhl won a competition with a design, that then became the official Sámi flag.

Synnøve Persen (b. 1950) is a visual artist and poet, living in Bevkop on the Norwegian side of Sápmi. She studied painting at the National Academy of Fine Arts, Oslo, and was one of the founders of the influential Sámi Artists' Group, an artists' collective that sought to empower the standing of the work of Sámi artists. Synnøve Persen has published several poetry collections and has performed her poetry in readings and musical collaborations. Her most recent solo exhibition was at the Adde Zetterquist Kunstgalleri in 2016, while her first took place in 1983 at Tromsø Kunstforening. She has also been a consistent political figure in the defence of Sámi rights. She was a leading figure in the Áltá Case, participating in the 1979 hunger strike outside the Norwegian parliament in Oslo. Persen has been an important organiser of Sámi artists, both in developing the Sámi Artists' Union and establishing the Sámi Centre for Contemporary Art in Kárásjohka. Her work was shown in Athens and Kassel as part of Documenta 14.

## Arvid Sveen

Arvid Sveen. *Detsika camp / Detsika-leaira / Detsika-leiren*  
**Material:** Original photographic print  
**Dimensions:** 13 x 18 cm  
**Year:** 1979  
**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Arvid Sveen/  
 BONO, Oslo 2018

Arvid Sveen. *Cavčo series / Čávžu-ráidu / Sautso-serien*  
**Material:** Original photographic print  
**Dimensions:** 13 x 18 cm  
**Year:** 1979  
**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Arvid Sveen/  
 BONO, Oslo 2018

Arvid Sveen. *Planting of Trees, Stilla / Muoraid gilvimin, Savu / Planting av trær, Stilla*  
**Material:** Original photographic print  
**Dimensions:** 13 x 18 cm  
**Year:** 1979  
**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Arvid Sveen/  
 BONO, Oslo 2018

Arvid Sveen. *The Stilla March series / Muoraid gilvimin, Savu / Stilla-marsserien*  
**Material:** Colour diapositives  
**Dimensions:** 42 x 35 mm  
**Year:** 1980  
**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Arvid Sveen/  
 BONO, Oslo 2018

Trained originally as an architect, Arvid Sveen first moved to Vadsø in the early 1970s, employed by the regional planning and building agency. Working on areas of importance to Sámi reindeer herders and with tasks involving decision-making on water and land resources, he quickly became aware of the existing conflicts to be found in the territory. Consequently, he resigned from his post in 1978 and joined the *People's Action Against the Building of the Áltá-Guovdageaidnu Waterway* as a photographer and supporter. A number of newspaper reporters were sent by major papers to document the protest at the time, focusing exclusively on the moments of violence between protesters and the

police. Sveen, however, became part of the Sámi community's non-Sámi allies on the site, spending time in the two camps that led the action, and documenting the fraternity between them. He also photographed the structural organisation of Detsika and Stilla camps, which served as centres for cultural and political gatherings.

The photographic series *Planting of Trees (Stilla)*, captures a walk over the mountain from the Detsika camp to the Stilla camp – where the construction initially started – in July 1979. Conceived as a poetic gesture to express disagreement over the development plans in the area (including the construction of a road) the members of the Áltá action planted trees at the end of a new road still under construction.

Čávžu (Cavco/Sautso) refers to the Áltá Canyon, the valley carved by the Áltá river. It is the largest canyon in Northern Europe. The Áltá hydroelectric power station which was completed in 1987 now sits at the top of the canyon, with a 145 m tall Virdnejávri dam.



Arvid Sveen. *Emancipation / Luovvaneapmi / Frigjøring*

**Material:** Offset print  
**Dimensions:** 64 x 46 cm  
**Year:** 1981

**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Arvid Sveen/  
BONO, Oslo 2018

Arvid Sveen. *Norwegianisation / Dáruiduhttin / Fornorskning*

**Material:** Pen on paper  
**Dimensions:** 14 x 19,3 cm  
**Year:** 1972

**Lender:** Odd Mathis Hætta  
**Image courtesy:** © Arvid Sveen/  
BONO, Oslo 2018



Arvid Sveen. *Sámi future / Sámi boahhtteáigi / Samisk framtid*

**Material:** Gouache on paper  
**Dimensions:** 82 x 59,5 cm  
**Year:** 1980

**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Arvid Sveen/BONO, Oslo 2018



Arvid Sveen. *If they take the fish, they take us all / Jos guoli váldet, váldet min buohkaid / Tar dæm fisken, tar dæm oss alle*

**Material:** Linoleum print on paper  
**Dimensions:** 64 x 46cm  
**Year:** 1979

**Lender:** The artist  
**Image courtesy:** © Arvid Sveen/BONO, Oslo 2018

Arvid Sveen worked prolifically on commissions campaigning to raise awareness of the consequences of damming the Álttaeatnu, especially through poster-making. His practice brought together the environmental and Indigenous concerns of the time. With bold titles such as *If they take the fish, they take us all*, *Sámi future*, and *Emancipation*, he alludes to the possibility for a different future for Sámi liberation and autonomy. As a non-Sámi person, Sveen was respectful of the responsibility he carried in creating posters that would serve as powerful communication platforms in uniting the Sámi peoples in their struggle for sovereignty. He therefore sought the advice of renowned Sámi artists – and would often submit his sketches to Iver Jåks for instance – in order to receive their feedback before the final poster went to print.

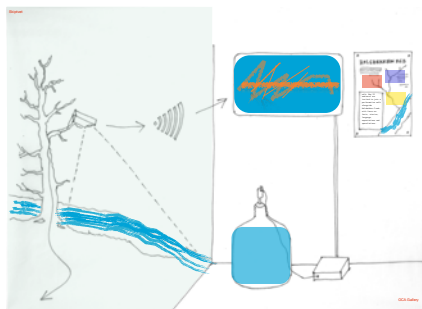
As colours were the new signs of identity during these years, the colour of the Norwegian flag is blended into the emerging Sámi flag (*Emancipation*), and the struggle for Sámi rights is reinserted into a global perspective referencing the new alliance with the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (*Sámi Future*).

**Arvid Sveen** is an artist, photographer and graphic designer. He was born in the municipality of Ringsaker in 1944. He has been politically active since the beginning of his career. He drew the banner of Finnmark Ungdomslag (youth group) of 1984, and he also made the logo and poster for the Norway Ungdomslag's (youth group) 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1971. 49 of his drawings for Norwegian municipal and county coats of arms were accepted. Sveen trained as an architect and completed his degree at NTH University in Trondheim in 1970. Alongside his artistic practice, he has made programmes for television and published many books.

## **THE ARCHIVES OF THE PROTEST MOVEMENT AGAINST THE DAMMING OF THE ÁLTÁ-GUOVDAGEAIDNU WATER SYSTEM**

In 1993, The Áltá Museum was given the archives of the movement's head office in Áltá, thereby taking over responsibility for administering its contents. The archive is a great source of information, and contains documents about the organisation, declarations of support, reports, maps, financial accounts, photographs, printed material, newspaper cuttings and much more. Some of the material in the archive derives from a sub-committee in Oslo.





Geir Tore Holm and Søsja Jørgensen. *Holsbekken (RGB)*  
**Material:** Multimedia installation  
**Dimensions:** Dimensions variable  
**Date:** 2018  
 Commissioned by OCA, 2018

Parallel to their video, photography, sculpture, sound and performance based work, Geir Tore Holm and Søsja Jørgensen's practice focuses on mediating, writing and teaching about contemporary art. In 1993 they started Balkong, using their apartment as an exhibition space, to find alternative ways of doing and presenting art. With other artists from Thailand they initiated the Gildeskål-based Sørfinnset School / nord land in 2003, in the Nordland county. This ongoing project questions the exploitation of nature, and focuses on the exchange of knowledge, as well as on architecture in a broad aesthetic understanding of ecological realities in which societies, humans and nature are implicated. A few years ago Holm and Jørgensen relocated to Skiptvet, in the Østfold county, south-east of Oslo, an area surrounded by fields and forests.

*Holsbekken (RGB)* consists of two parts: a sculptural installation and a performative walk. The installation piece at OCA is composed of water from the eponymous stream running beside their house, mixed with yeast. A surveillance video from Holsbekken is continuously viewed during the exhibition at OCA in Oslo. Signals of activity in the water from the creek interfere with the video in real time. The creek, Holsbekken, flows into Glomma, the longest and largest river in Norway, whose 621-kilometre-long span has a drainage basin that covers 13% of Norway's area, in the South Eastern part of the country.

Holm and Jørgensen will present the second and complementary part of their work, as a walk alongside the Holsbekken creek. The walk includes discussions about a number of fluvial issues focusing on facts, stories, languages, expectations and speculations on the subject. This offsite event will take place on **12 May**. Please check OCA's website for details.

Though environmental conditions in the Norwegian rivers and lakes are better compared to other European countries, there are wide regional variations, and the environmental conditions are the poorest where the population density is the highest. There is an abundance of water which is used for domestic, agricultural and industrial purposes in almost all parts of the country and at all times. Norway has ten of the world's 35 highest waterfalls, though a number of these have been affected by hydropower regulations. More than 70 per cent of Norway's largest rivers are regulated for hydropower production.

Søssa Jørgensen (b. 1968) is an artist, currently completing an MA in Landscape Architecture at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB), Ås. Alongside her individual practice within the fields of performance, sound/recording and installation, she works with her long-term partner, Geir Tore Holm on a number of projects in which they have exhibited, debated and taught contemporary art.

Geir Tore Holm (b. 1966) is an artist. He was a research fellow at Oslo National Academy of the Arts, with an artistic research project titled 'Poetics for Changing Aesthetics' at the department of Arts and Crafts. In 2006–2007, Holm was the head of the project for the establishment of the Academy of Contemporary Art and Creative Writing in Romsa. Since 2010, he has lived and worked from the farm, Ringstad, in Skiptvet, Østfold with his long-term partner Søssa Jørgensen. Holm works with media such as video, photography, sculpture, performance and installation, and has also curated various exhibitions.

## Dáidadállu | Artist Collective – Guovdageaidnu / Mai-Lis Eira and Elle Márjá Eira



Mai-Lis Eira and Elle Márjá Eira.  
*Don't Fuck With Me / Ale dájo muinna / Ikke kødd med meg*  
**Material:** digital film  
**Year:** 2018  
**Commissioned by** OCA, 2018

*Don't Fuck With Me* is a cooperation between Elle Márjá and Mai-Lis Eira. Both Elle Márjá, a musician/film director, and Mai-Lis, a film director, were born in Máze, growing up with the stories of the Áltá Action and the small town at the heart of it. Their families took an active part in those discussions. Elle Márjá recreates a soundscape and a video around the 1979 hunger strike demonstration in Oslo where seven young Sámis stood in front of the Norwegian Parliament. Mai-Lis meets Máze inhabitants who participated in the Áltá Action, giving central attention to the 15 Sámi women who occupied the office of Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland on 6 February 1981. Together with other protest actions during this period, the occupation of the Prime Minister's office catalysed the establishment of the Sámi Parliament in Norway in 1989.



Mai-Lis Eira (b. 1991) is a Sámi film director who uses film and storytelling to problematise contemporary events from a Sámi perspective. She is involved in the *Pile o' Sápmi* project (founded by artist Máret Ánne Sara, co-member of the Dáidaddállu collective) as director of a forthcoming film that documents the legal and artistic events around of reindeer herder Jovvset Ánte Sara's court case against the Norwegian state. She is the director of the short films *Jahki ii leat jagi viellja* (This Year is Not Last Year's Brother) and *Turistene* (The Tourists), and has produced a TV documentary for children and young adults for NRK for which she received the prize of Best Youth Programme from Northern Character in Russia.

Elle Márjá Eira (b. 1983) is an artist and musician known for electronic music which incorporates yoik and Sámi language vocals. She grew up in a reindeer herding family in Guovdageaidnu in Sápmi, and uses music as a stage to share stories about the Sámi way of life. With her band she has performed internationally, in Brazil, Guatemala and Germany among other places. Her debut album is forthcoming. Elle Márjá Eira is also the director of the short-film, *Iditsilba*, released in 2015.

## Dáidaddállu | Artist Collective – Guovdageaidnu / Susanne Hætta



Susanne Hætta. *Seeing Máze / Oaidnit Máze / Å se Masi*  
**Material:** Digital photography transferred to colour diapositives  
**Dimensions:** 42 x 35 mm  
**Year:** 2017/2018

"Back then, I was a witness. Vague memories of people chained up in the snow, hundreds of policemen, me sitting in smoke-filled lavvos with my father, Sámi people dragged away by those policemen on the television news. But also the art. An artist drew a sketch of me. My mother took me to art exhibitions. With young eyes I studied every line of the paintings we had in our home. I took up my father's cameras and started to photograph.

And I, too young to understand, wanted to see, wanted to understand and to witness what was happening to us, the Sámi people. Many years later, this became clear to me.

The Sámi Artists' Group was central to a part of the Sámi movement in the late 1970s. In 2017, with the camera as an extension of my gaze, I walked into the building where they worked in back then. It was messy and seemed abandoned. But there were echoes. Echoes of something hard to define; a timeless urge for expression beyond the spoken word, beyond the political demands, beyond the need to be respected. Like our ancestors that hunted in these valleys, caught fish in the river, struggled, lived and loved, the Sámi Artists' Group chose to work from here. I had been drawn to the building for years, feeling that I had probably been there with my parents at some point in my childhood. When I was given the opportunity, I entered the time capsule. I was again a witness of history."

Susanne Hætta (b. 1975) is a Sámi photographer, artist and author based in Čáhcesuolu (Vadsø). She is a member of the Sámi artists' collective Dáiddadállu. Her work has been exhibited in a number of shows in different parts of Sápmi and in Oslo, and she has authored multiple books including *Utsi – The Way Out of Criminal Life* (2015) and the Northern Sámi-language children's book, *Okta beaivi Ánniin* (One Day in the Life of Anne) in 2000. Among her forthcoming publications is a book about the Sámi artist, poet and activist, Synnøve Persen who was a member of the Sámi Artists' Group.

## Dáiddadállu | Artist Collective – Guovdageaidnu / Máret Ánne Sara



Máret Ánne Sara. *Pile o'Sápmi Power Necklace | Pile o'Sápmi dahje: fápmočehporas*

**Dimensions:** Approximately 200 parts, 5 x 2.5 x 2 cm each, total: 115 x 30 x 20 cm.

**Date:** 2017

**Lender:** The artist

According to Máret Ánne Sara, *Pile o'Sápmi* started as "an artpiece and an extended artistic movement accompanying the trial of my little brother." It first appeared outside the Indre Finnmarkku District Court in Deatnu, Sápmi (Tana, Norway) in 2016. Here she installed a form of protest-sculpture by piling up 200 freshly killed reindeer skulls, and crowned – with a Norwegian flag. *Pile o'Sápmi* follows the trial of her reindeer herding brother, Jovsset Ánte Sara, bringing wide attention to an otherwise broadly ignored case – the imposed slaughtering of reindeer in Finnmarkku, whereby Jovsset Ánte Sara would be forced to slaughter half of his herd. One of dozens of similar cases, the legal struggle between Jovsset Ánte Sara and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, claims that the enforced state ruling causes Sara's inevitable bankruptcy and forces him to abandon his way of life, his culture and ultimately his inherited rights.

*Pile o'Sápmi* is directly inspired by a historic photo taken in Regina, on Métis land, Turtle Island (Canada) that Máret Ánne Sara found on the Internet titled *Pile of Bones*. The image served as a document of the ecocidal strategies of settlers across the American continent during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. The near extermination of tens of millions of bison that had, until then, roamed freely upon the Great Plains since

the last Ice Age, was intended as a colonial/settler strategy of genocide seeking to exterminate the First Nations that depended upon bison for their livelihood.

*Power Necklace* makes a direct reference to the brutality of colonisation. In North America, bison bones were coarsely ground into fertilizer, or shipped overseas to produce fine porcelain sold to European families. Mirroring this process, Sara commissioned a porcelain necklace of reindeer skulls, made from powdered reindeer bones. The grandeur of the necklace would seem to befit governmental leaders, a regal adornment of protest perhaps or an arrogant assertion of settler-colonial power.

Máret Anne Sara (b. 1983, Håmmárfeasta/Hammerfest, Sápmi/Northern Norway) is an artist whose work deals with political and social issues affecting the Sámi peoples and their reindeer herding communities. Sara has created posters, CD/LP covers, scene visuals and fabric prints for numerous Sámi artists, designers and institutions and has exhibited in the field of visual arts since 2003. Furthermore, she is an editor, journalist and published novelist. Her first book *Ilmmiid gaskkas* (In Between Worlds, 2013), was nominated for the Nordic Council's Children's and Young People's Literature Prize in 2014. She is one of the founding members of the Dáiddadállu Artists' Collective Guovdageaidnu. Sara's ongoing project *Pile o'Sápmi* was showcased, amongst others, as part of the Documenta 14 exhibition at the Neue Galerie, Kassel 2017. She lives and works in Guovdageaidnu.

Tanya Busse and Joar Nango



Tanya Busse and Joar Nango.  
*The Nomadic Library* (Charta 79 – et manifest nr. 3/79) /  
*Johttigirjerádju* (Charta 79 – et manifest nr. 3/79) / *Det nomadiske bibliotek* (Charta 79 – et manifest nr. 3/79)

**Material:** Installation including risograph print on paper  
**Year:** 2018–

*The Nomadic Library* is a loose archive of printed materials that have been gathered over many years and is an ongoing project, which begins with a re-issue of *Charta 79 – et manifest* nr. 3/79.

It initiates Tanya Busse and Joar Nango's focus on counter-cultural publishing initiatives in the Barents region: Northern Europe, Sápmi and Russia. The project addresses the relationship between cultural production and social movements in the Circumpolar Arctic of Northern Europe, both historical and contemporary. It is also a way of animating histories of subversion and dissent that have happened outside of mainstream institutions and culture. The artists' aim is to look at how printed matter has been used politically to mobilise larger social transformations and examines the power it still has to create communities.

Tanya Busse (b. 1982 in Moncton, she lives and works in Romsa holds an MA in Capitalism, Sustainability and Art from the Academy of Contemporary Art in Tromsø, and a BFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax. Working primarily with print and installation, Busse's practice explores questions of visibility in relation to deep-time, invisible architecture and to broader systems of power. She has exhibited at Gallery 44: Center for Contemporary Photography in Toronto, Canada (2013); Turku Biennial in Turku, Finland (2013); and UKS in Oslo, Norway (2012) among other venues. Busse is the co-director of Small Projects (Romsa and Mondo Books).

Joar Nango (b. 1979, Áltá [Alta], Sápmi/ Northern Norway, lives and works in Romsa is a Sámi architect with a degree from the NTNU in Norway, and a practising artist. He works with site-specific installations and self-made publications, which explore the boundary between architecture, design and visual art. Thematically speaking, his work relates to questions of Indigenous identity, often through investigating the oppositions and contradictions in contemporary architecture. He has recently worked on the theme of the Modern Sámi Space through, amongst other things, a self-published zine series entitled *Sámi Huksendáidda: the Fanzine*, the *Sámi Shelters* design project and the mixtape/clothing project *Land & Language*. He is also a founding member of the architecture collective FFB, which works with temporary installations in urban contexts. He has exhibited in Canada, at the 161 Gallon Gallery (2007) and the Gallery Deluxe Gallery in Halifax (2008), at Gallery SAW in Ottawa (2013) and at Western Front in Vancouver (2014). He is currently involved in setting up a network of Sámi architects across Sápmi.

## Elin Már Øyen Vister

Elin Már Øyen Vister. *Singing along to whooper swans – talking with the rocks – Goase Dušše revisited / Lávlumin njuvččaiquin – hupmamin gedggiiguin, ruovttoluotta Goase Dušše – skerrui / Synge med sangsvaner, snakke med steiner – et gjennhør med Goase Dušše*  
**Material:** Audio, text and sensory forest walk with a deep listening to Goase Dušše  
**Year:** 2018  
 Commissioned by OCA, 2018

*Singing along to whooper swans – talking with the rocks – Goase Dušše revisited* is a new work by Norwegian artist and composer Elin Már Øyen Vister, which results from deep-listening to Áillohaš's celebrated *Goase Dušše – Loddessinfonijja* (*The Bird Symphony*, 1992), and reflects upon the process of its creation.

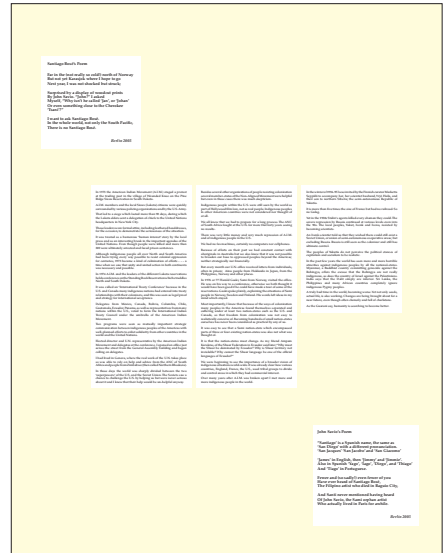
The renowned Sámi artist and musician Áillohaš / Nils-Aslak Valkeapää spent his lifetime listening to and being part of the natural cycles of his homeland. He was fascinated by state-of-the-art sound recording technology, and incorporated field-recordings – archival and his own – as early as the mid 1970s. He continued to work with field recordings in nature to capture the soundscapes of his land, Sápmi, until the completion of *Goase Dušše*.

*The Bird Symphony* was a commission from the Music Drama Group/Swedish Broadcasting Corporation (Sveriges Radio). It premiered on Swedish Broadcasting Corporation on 22nd October 1992. This one-hour-long symphony of nature, was composed from a multitude of field recordings registered in different parts of Sápmi and was mixed in Áillohaš's cottage in Beattet (Pätkkä), on the Finnish side of Sápmi, together with the Swedish sound technician Mikal Brodin. The work was produced by Gunilla Gustafsson (later Bresky) and Sven Åke Landström. The sounds of *The Bird Symphony* have a timeless quality, which accentuate the relevance of its environmental messages today. Øyen Vister comments, "Áillohaš's piece is a call to listen to the sounds of life, and a warning that "nature is dying" (Áilu-loddemánná). It was and still is today, in an era of global ecological crisis, ahead of his time and more relevant than ever."

Øyen Vister's piece re-presents Áillohaš's *Goase Dušše* as a listening kit, consisting of an iPod, head-set and a booklet. The artist recommends you listen to *Goase Dušše*, walking or sitting alongside Akerselva, the local river running past the exhibition venue (please collect a listening kit at the entrance of the exhibition). On 5 May, the artist will lead a sensory walk into Lillomarka forest, north-east of Oslo, which culminates in a deep-listening session to *Goase Dušše*. Please check OCA's website for details.

Elin Már Øyen Vister (b. 1976) is a sound artist, composer and DJ. Coming from an audio background, their multidisciplinary work is concerned with listening as an artistic practice and a way of composing, sensing and experiencing the world. Øyen Vister works with field recording, installation, composition, performance, sculpture, live improvisation, radio, film soundtrack and site-specific sound interventions. One of their ongoing projects, *Soundscape Røst*, investigates and documents the rapidly changing natural and cultural soundscapes of the Røst archipelago, as a result of the ongoing global environmental crisis. They are also part of Røst AIR working group, running an interdisciplinary artists' residency as well as communal workshops exploring the inter-relatedness of ecology, queer thinking and Indigenous perspectives. Founded in 2012, Røst AIR is situated on the tiny island of Skomvær, Røst, Nordland, Sápmi / Northern Norway).

## Jimmie Durham



Jimmie Durham. *Untitled / Namaheapme / Uten tittel*  
Year: 2018  
Dimensions: Dimensions variable  
Lender: Michel Rein

Durham's connection to Sápmi has been longstanding. In 1974 the IITC (International Indian Treaty Council) embarked on a mission to connect Indigenous peoples from all around the world (a task that continues today, in a different form) and to present their treaty issues to the international community. Its office was in New York, right across the street from the UN, and the small staff team was headed by Jimmie Durham. It was through this position that over the following years he came across the Áltá action against the Norwegian government.

Durham's piece for this exhibition addresses – through a series of poems – Indigenous, globally interconnected issues invoking the iconic Sámi artist John Savio and the Filipino artist, Santiago Bosé, an Indigenous advocate.

Durham was commissioned in 2004 to create a work for the newly established Court House in Deatnu. This first bilingual court has hosted many trials between the Sámi peoples and the Norwegian state. Durham's labyrinthine installation of coloured pipes with elaborate objects, natural elements and text runs through the building with branches in several directions

that cross walls and reach out to a large rock, before disappearing into the ground. Whether the work begins outside or inside the building remains an open question. A brass plate on the wall says: "There are seven main directions: Up, East, South, North, West, Down and Inside Yourself."

Jimmie Durham (b.1940) is a sculptor, essayist and poet. In 1968 he enrolled at L'École des Beaux-Arts in Geneva, where he worked primarily in performance and sculpture. With three other artists, he formed the Draga group, which explored ways to integrate art into public life. At this time, he formed an organization with Indigenous friends from South America called *Incomindios*, which attempted to coordinate and encourage support for the struggle of Indians of the Americas. A lifelong activist, in 1973 he returned to the United States to participate in the occupation at Wounded Knee, in South Dakota, and became a full-time organiser for the American Indian Movement (AIM); he would become a member of their Central Council in 1975. That same year he became the executive director of the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) in New York City and was made the representative of American Indians to the United Nations, the first minority group to have official representation within the organization. From 1975 to 1980, he was the coeditor of the *Treaty Council News*, a monthly newspaper of the IITC, and edited the second edition of the *Chronicles of American Indian Protest* in 1976, published by the Council on Interracial Books for Children. In 1980 he quit AIM and returned to a focus on art making. Throughout this decade his work addressed questions of identity, modes of representation, and colonial violence and genocide, specifically related to the experiences of Indigenous peoples in the Americas. He was the director of the Foundation for the Community of Artists in New York City from 1981 to 1983, and from 1982 to 1985 edited their monthly *Art and Artists Newspaper* (formerly *Artworkers News*).

Durham has published many texts in journals such as *Artforum*, *Art Journal*, and *Third Text*. His book of poems, *Columbus Day*, was published in 1983 by West End Press, Minneapolis. His collected essays, *A Certain Lack of Coherence*, was published in 1993 by Kala Press. In 2013 *Jimmie Durham: Waiting to Be Interrupted, Selected Writings 1993–2012* was published by Mousse Publishing and Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerp, and his book of poetry *Poems That Do Not Go Together* was published by Edition Hansjörg Maye.





**Maria Thereza Alves. *Rio Doce: Sweet No More / Rio Doce: li šat fiinnis / Rio Doce: Ikke Sæt lengre***  
**Material:** Painting on textile  
**Year:** 2017  
**Dimensions:** 337 x 165 cm  
**Lender:** Michel Rein  
**Photo:** Kai-Morten Vollmer

In *Rio Doce: Sweet No More*, Maria Thereza Alves addresses the collapse of the mining waste dam in 2015 owned by Samarco company in the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil which released toxic waste into the Rio Doce (Sweet River), thus destroying the way of life of the Krenak community forever.

Alves's work is emblematic of the challenges affecting Indigenous communities around the world.

The political exchange between Indigenous populations emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as new types of Indigenous social movements grew, after nearly two centuries in which Indigenous peoples had been marginalised from national politics. These movements called for a greater recognition of the cultural rights of Indigenous peoples, respect for Indigenous knowledge, and their active participation in development and other forms of public decision-making. Today, as in the 1970s, Indigenous belief systems are under threat. Sámi and Indigenous peoples globally are the first to be menaced by the consequences of changes in the climate and the environment resulting from massive mining exploitation and the industrialisation of nature.

Maria Thereza Alves (b. 1961) is an artist. Alves was co-founder of the Partido Verde of São Paulo, Brazil in 1987, and in 1981 she served as a representative to the US for the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party) of Brazil. In 1979, as a member of the International Indian Treaty Council, based in New York, she made an official presentation on the human rights abuses suffered by the Indigenous population of Brazil at the UN Human Rights Conference in Geneva. In 2012, José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Union, asked Alves to be part of his special committee to formulate a New Narrative for Europe. Alves's artwork has been seen in many international exhibitions and biennials, among them the 29<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial (2016, 2010), the Moscow Biennale (2015), the Berlin Biennial (2014), and dOCUMENTA 13 (2012), and is currently on view at the Sharjah Art Biennial 13.







The exhibition 'Let the River Flow' closes with a series of talks about the Áltá action, Sámi theatre, and other forms of affirmative cultural thinking during the 1970s and today. The event includes presentations by Pauliina Feodoroff on her work at the intersection of ecological restoration, theatre and film, and a talk by scholar Áine Managaoang addressing the relationship between songs and rebellion. Nabil Ahmed will lead a workshop engaging his recent research on environmental regulation, spatial and media practice, and the law, in connection to current challenges across Sápmi.

**Nabil Ahmed** is a London-based, Bangladeshi artist, writer and researcher. His transdisciplinary research explores the contemporary status of nature in relation to the law, conflict and development. Recently, Ahmed participated in the Taipei Biennale (2012), Cuenca Biennale (2014) and HKW in Berlin, where he was part of the two-year 'Anthropocene Project' (2013–14).

Ahmed is co-founder of Call and Response, a sound art organisation based in London. He is a member of the ERC-funded Forensic Architecture Project at Goldsmiths, which brings together architects, artists, filmmakers, activists and theorists to undertake research that gathers and presents spatial analysis in legal and political forums. Ahmed is a lecturer at The Cass School of Architecture at London Metropolitan and has previously taught in the department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. He was a guest critic at the Architecture Association, University of Westminster Faculty of Architecture and the Royal College of Art, London. He is a fellow at Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart.

**Pauliina Feodoroff** is a Sámi film and theatre director and a writer, known for among others, *CO2lonialNATION* (Giron Sámi Teáhter, 2017) and *Non Profit* (film, 2007) for which she was awarded the SARV (The Finnish Critics' Association) Critical Incentives Prize in 2007. Her family are originally from the Kola Peninsula, and she grew up in a reindeer herding Skolt Sámi community in Sápmi/Northern Finland. Feodoroff has fought for water and land rights as well as to preserve the reindeer husbandry in the old forests of Nellim in Sápmi/Northern Finland. Between 2006–2008 she served as elected President of the Sámi Council. During this time Feodoroff visited many remote Sámi communities in Russia to investigate the impact of land occupation by mining companies. She also participated in a multiannual study of land occupation which resulted in the critically acclaimed publication, *Eastern Sámi Atlas* (Tero Mustonen and Kaisa Mustonen [eds.], Snowchange Cooperative, 2011).

**Áine Mangaoang** is an Oslo-based, Irish musicologist, educator, and musician. Her work is concerned with how music is experienced in everyday life, particularly by those at the margins of society. Her current research project, *PRISONS OF NOTE*, uses mixed methods, including sound and film-making, to map the role of music in contemporary places of detention. Her writing appears in the journals *Postcolonial Text*, and *Torture*, and her first monograph, *Dangerous Mediations: Pop Music and Power*, is published by Bloomsbury (forthcoming). Mangaoang is co-founder of *Nordic Sounds*, an interdisciplinary research group, and currently holds a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at the University of Oslo. Prior to this, Mangaoang held academic positions at the Iceland Academy of the Arts, Reykjavík, the Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, and the Institute of Popular Music, University of Liverpool.

The Áltá struggle was an eye-opener to the many insights concerning Indigenous peoples' issues. First of all, it demonstrated the important dialogic connection between arts and politics, which has become even more obvious over the last decades concurrent with a recognition of a more holistic view of our existence on this planet. Secondly, the Áltá action proved how important it is to have good allies in the struggle for Sámi and Indigenous rights. Indigenous peoples need good relationships with supporter groups in order to make our voices heard. The strongest foundation for this allied activity is the shared views among Indigenous peoples all over the world, emphasizing belief in the strength of our traditional values and worldviews.

The Sámi took an active part in the global Indigenous peoples' movements from the very beginning, represented through the endeavors to establish a worldwide collaborative political and cultural organization for Indigenous peoples, namely the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, WCIP. The first assembly of this body consisted of political deliberations, but also functioned as popular gatherings where the cultural get-togethers which followed the political meetings strengthened the continuity of the fight. Even the pale-faced Sámi were accepted as an Arctic Indigenous group in Port Alberni at the founding congress of WCIP in the mid 1970s when the Native peoples from the Southern regions heard the powerful *juoigan* (traditional Sámi vocal genre) performed by one of the artists in the Sámi delegation – namely Áilloháš, who is also represented in this exhibition. Áilloháš was elected to serve as the cultural coordinator of WCIP, as such he took the initiative to organize an Indigenous peoples' festival, "a Woodstock of the North" – the Davvi Šuvva festival in Gárasávvon in 1979 in the heartland of Sápmi, close to where the national borders of Norway, Sweden and Finland meet.

The 1970s was a very politicised and powerful decade in Sápmi, bringing forth a well-educated generation of scholars, politicians, and artists who spoke and performed from a position of self-esteem and a strong sense of belonging to a culture filled with pride and endurance. And knowledge. We took pride in our epistemologies, we honored our myths, and we were ready to share our wisdom with the rest of the Indigenous world.

When we talk about contemporary artistic approaches and expressions, *duodji* and *juoigan* (yoik) are of central importance. Duodji today can be understood as existing in continuity with a 'traditional' context of Sámi craft or it can be liberated from it, as a mediator between the different contexts of art and craft. It is possible to look at the duodji concept as an affirmation of Indigenous knowledge and experience. Such an approach forms a part of the struggles that started in the 1970s, and it demonstrates how an Indigenous perspective can contribute to the global discourse of art and its interpretations today.

**Statement by the architects  
Káre Anti (A-Lab), Fredrik and  
Solveig Torsteinsen and Vidar Øverby  
(Torsteinsen Design)**

The exhibition design is the result of close discussions with the curatorial team.

The aesthetics of necessity is a motif that recurs throughout the installation, the choice of materials and use of resources. In order to display Sámi art, we were inspired by Sámi culture, and its inextricable link to nature. Sámi vernacular buildings are low-key and informed by functionality and a material scarcity, even as *duodji*, features a wealth of detail and the joyous use of vibrant colours. The style of the exhibition is therefore a hybrid between these two polar opposites.

In line with traditional Sámi architecture, the exhibition has been designed according to the local context, that is OCA's exhibition space. The exposed trusses in the ceiling provide a constructive opportunity and have been used to let exhibition elements hang freely in the room, as though in an open landscape. The stairway serves as a focal point and forms a dynamic backdrop for the larger installations. The many windows create a link between the inside and outside worlds. The shifting light becomes an integral part of the style and helps connect the exhibition to the site.

The exhibition has taken the circle as its basic form, inspired by the Sámi calendar wheel and the cycles of nature. The exhibition elements radiate forth from a midpoint, similar to how the Áltá demonstrations came to assume a central position in the development of the Sámi art presented. Seen from the centre, the exhibition surfaces disappear from sight. The totality becomes more than the sum of the parts, as in the narrative of the "Let the River Live" campaign.

The materiality and design of the exhibition elements reflect the down-to-earth Sámi use of materials. In the same way that a *lavvu*, or tent, is a temporary construction, the various exhibition elements have been prefabricated and assembled on site. The suspension is visible and functional, while the panels may be dismantled and reused.

The display panels are clad in birch plywood and scaled to maximize the use of the materials. The surfaces are unfinished and reveal the natural variation in colouring and structure. Inlaid vitrines and shelves have boards covered with *sisti*, reindeer hides, that have been tanned by hand according to the traditions of Sápmi (the Sámi homeland). The side slits have been painted red, a nod to the love of colour in Sámi symbols and *duodji*.

The venue's posterior wall serves as a literal and figurative backdrop for the exhibition. A large and wide-ranging collection of items from the time of the Áltá demonstrations is displayed as the kind of "bulletin board" prevalent in the camps of the action, which served as an important source of information.

The space beneath the stairs has been reworked as an interpretation of a *lavvu*, which may be entered through a multicoloured wool curtain. The wool cloth and the reindeer hide laid out on the floor create a warm, secluded space for projected works. The colours of the cloth are recognisable both from Sámi *gákti* and from the Sámi flag, emblematic of the Áltá demonstrations.

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- 13 Catarina Utsi
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Translations of the booklet in Northern Sámi and Norwegian are available on the OCA website.