



NORDIC ECHOES — TRADITION IN CONTEMPORARY ART

The first major traveling exhibition of contemporary Nordic folk arts and cultural traditions from the Upper Midwest opens at Scandinavia House in April 2025.

New York, NY—Opening in **April 5, 2025** at **Scandinavia House: The Nordic Center in America**, *Nordic Echoes — Tradition in Contemporary Art* is the first major traveling exhibition of contemporary Nordic folk arts and cultural traditions from the Upper Midwest. Featuring 55 works by 24 contemporary artists whose practices are informed by Nordic traditional skills, the exhibition will showcase the malleability and persistence of these traditions in the U.S. Looking at painting and textile traditions as well as works in wood and metal, *Nordic Echoes* highlights how variations on traditional themes and innovations have led to the emergence of living, evolving forms. No longer static objects rooted in an imagined past, these works explore themes of identity and belonging as well as how traditions have been shaped by their U.S.-based environments. On view through **August 2, 2025**, the exhibition will be accompanied by a wide range of programming, including **artists' talks** and **panels, workshops, films, music, guided gallery tours, and family activities**.

A range of events will take place on **Opening Day, Saturday, April 5**. From **11 AM-2 PM**, artist **Beth Kraus** will lead a birchbark-weaving workshop. At **3 PM**, folklorist **Victoria Stewart** (Assistant Director, Wayne State University Humanities Center) will moderate a discussion with four artists featured in the exhibition: **Kjetil "K.J." Groven, Beth Kraus, Peter "Pekka" Olson, and Sonja Peterson**.

Featuring artists living and practicing within the pan-Nordic regions of North and South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, the exhibition demonstrates how traditions have been passed down and changed or altered by new generations, often shaped by the Upper Midwestern environment and landscape by using local materials. A *skinnfeld* or *hudteppe* (usually a sheepskinned coverlet in Norway) takes on new dimensions in **Robin Carlson's** full-sized buffalo hide, while **Lisa Wiitala's** *ryijy* (Finnish pile rugs) pay tribute to the local berries of the Upper Peninsula. The exhibition also looks at how artists explore questions of identity and belonging. **Tia Keobounpheng's** weaving and film speak to her Finnish family connections as well as her newly discovered Sámi heritage, and **Talon Wilson's** metalwork creates a meeting place between the skills and knowledge he gained in studying blacksmithing in Sweden and the Dakota traditions that are his heritage.



Christine Novotny,
*Roses in a broken
vase are still always
Roses*, n.a. Photo by
E.G. Schempf

Organized by The American-Scandinavian Foundation (ASF) with partial support from The National Endowment for the Arts, *Nordic Echoes: Tradition in Contemporary Art* will later travel to institutions including the South Dakota Art Museum, Brookings, South Dakota; American Swedish Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Vesterheim, Decorah, Iowa; Plains Art Museum, Fargo, North Dakota; Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, Wisconsin; and De Vos Art Museum, Marquette, Michigan. Mid-America Arts Alliance/ExhibitsUSA is facilitating the Upper Midwest exhibition tour, which is supported by Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, a generous contributor to the exhibition's development. The organization of the exhibition at Scandinavia House has been made possible in part by the Tova Borgnine Bequest, the Birgitta Dill Bequest, The Barbro Osher Pro Suecica Foundation, and Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies. Support has also been provided by the following ASF Funds: The Bonnier Family Fund for Contemporary Art, The F. Donald Kenney Fund for the Visual Arts, and The Centennial/Second Century Fund.

OPENING DAY	Saturday, April 5, 2025 11 AM-4 PM
WHERE:	Scandinavia House 58 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016
GALLERY HOURS & ADMISSION	April 5 through August 2, 2025 Tuesday through Saturday, 12—6 PM Wednesdays, 12—7 PM

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Sally Yerkovich is Director of Educational Exchange & Special Projects at The American-Scandinavian Foundation. A cultural anthropologist with a background of working in museums, she oversees all of ASF's fellowships and grants programs. *Nordic Echoes: Tradition in Contemporary Art* draws upon her work with Nordic-inspired artists in the Upper Midwest over the past eight years. Dr. Yerkovich has held leadership positions at the South Street Seaport Museum, Museum of the City of New York, Museum for African Art, and the New Jersey Historical Society. She also teaches in the Museum Anthropology Master's Degree Program at Columbia University.

PROGRAMMING

Related programming will include artists talks and panels, workshops, films, music, ongoing guided gallery tours, and family activities.

PUBLICATION

The exhibition is accompanied by a special issue of the ASF magazine *Scandinavian Review*, including articles by exhibition curator Sally Yerkovich and James P. Leary, emeritus professor of folklore and Scandinavian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and co-founder of the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures.

SUPPORT

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THE AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN FOUNDATION

The American-Scandinavian Foundation (ASF) promotes firsthand exchange of intellectual and creative influence between the United States and the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. A publicly supported American nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, ASF has an extensive program of fellowships, grants, intern/trainee sponsorship, publishing, and cultural activities. Headquartered in New York City, ASF has members throughout the United States, and alumni and donors worldwide. **For more information:** amscan.org

SCANDINAVIA HOUSE

Scandinavia House was created by the American-Scandinavian Foundation to promote the artistic and intellectual influence of the Nordic countries. As the leading center for Nordic culture in the United States, Scandinavia House offers enriching programs that illustrate and illuminate the culture and life of the Nordic countries. The diverse programs include exhibitions, film series, concerts and other performances, readings, lectures, language courses, and activities for kids and families.

For more information: scandinaviahouse.org | Facebook | Twitter @ScanHouse

For visual materials and press information, please contact: Lori Fredrickson, Director of Communications, Marketing, & Digital at 212-847-9727 or lori@amscan.org.