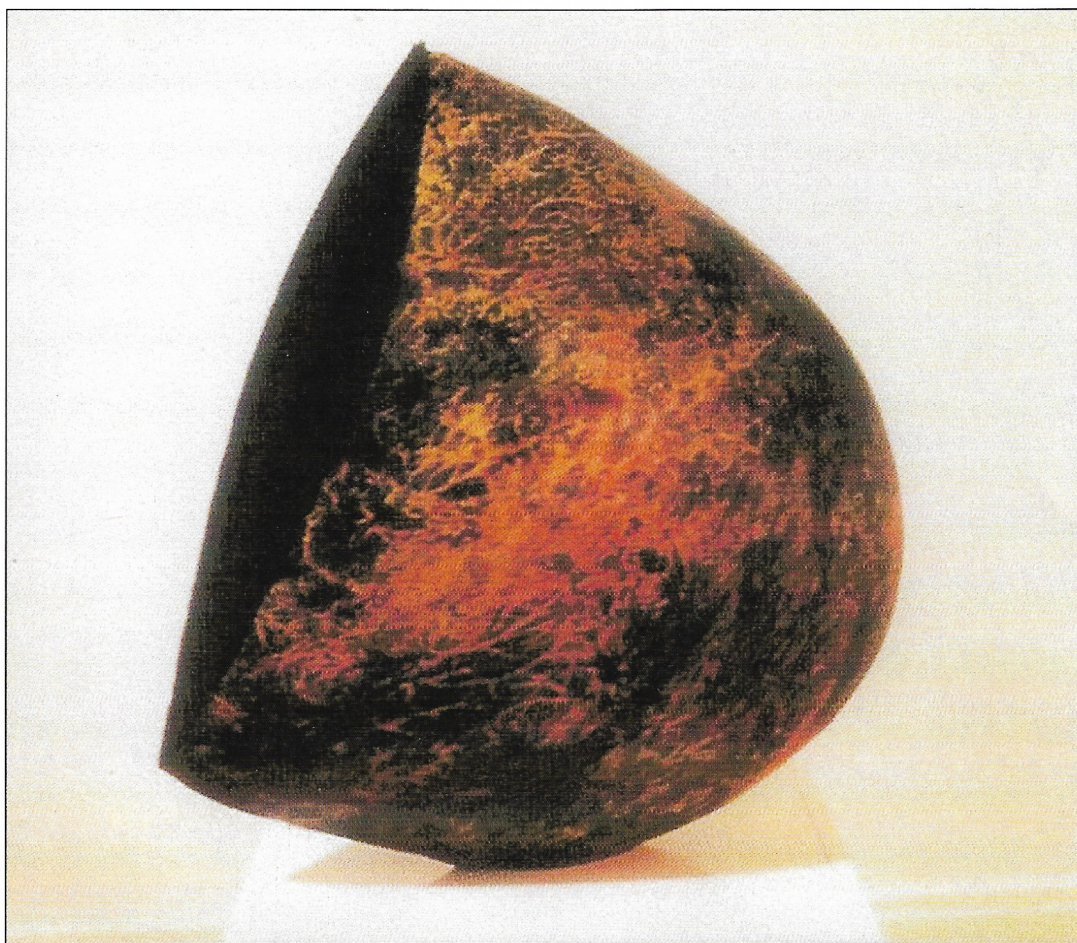


THE INTERNATIONAL SÁMI JOURNAL

*Issue #25 Autumn Equinox 2004*



©2003: Rose-Marie Huuva, "NAA"

## Sámi Identity in Art, Film, Music and Storytelling

• Rose-Marie Huuva Discusses Her Work • Rauna Kuokkanen: "Kirsti Paltto, the First Female Sámi Writer" • Jorma Lehtola: "Laista Lailaan: Sámi Image in Film" • Roland Thorstensson / Krister Stoor / Hans Ragnar Mathisen: "All Sámi Music is Not the Same" • Nils P. Sara: "The Tundra for Lunch" • "Our Gateway Ancestors" and much, much, more...

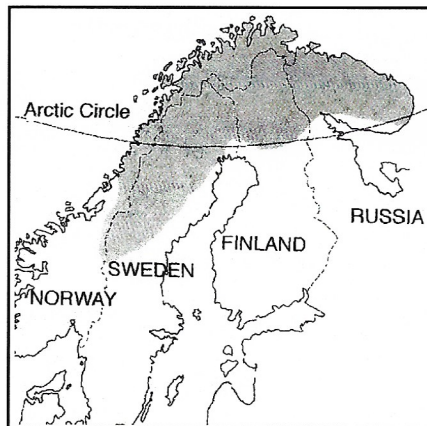




## WHO ARE THE SÁMI AND WHAT IS BÁIKI?



THE BÁIKI LOGO ©



### MAP OF SÁMI AREA TODAY

Source: *The Saami: People of the Sun and the Wind*  
Ajlte Swedish Mountain and Saami Museum, Jokkmokk: 1993.

"Sámi" [sah-mee], also spelled Saami or Sami, means "the People." The Sámi are the Indigenous People of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Kola Peninsula. They call the Sámi area in the North "Sápmi" [sahp-mee], and in the South "Saemien Eatname" [sahmi-et-nam]. The Sámi language is related to Finnish, Estonian, Hungarian, Turkish and the Nenets languages. There are about 100,000 Sámi in the Nordic countries and half live in Norway. It is estimated that there are also about 30,000 people in North America with Sámi ancestry. Some are descended from the reindeer herders who came to Alaska at the turn of the 20th century and others are descended from immigrants who usually hid their Sámi identity when they came in the 1800s.

The Sámi sometimes refer to their spiritual belief system as "the Nature Religion," a reciprocal relationship with nature. Traditional Sámi society was organized into *siidas* — semi-nomadic extended families who hunted, fished and picked berries together according to the cycles of Nature. These ways are still a part of Sámi society whenever possible.

After contact with Europeans, the Sámi came to be called "Lapps," meaning "heathens," or "the uncivilized." Lutheran missionaries discredited the Nature Religion, burned the Drums, forbid the *yoik* [spiritual chanting] and had the *noiaides* [shamans] killed who would not convert. The governments of Norway and Sweden removed Sámi children from their *siidas*, placed them in boarding schools and trained them to think and act like Norwegians and Swedes. The processes of conversion and assimilation set the stage for the removal of Sámi People from their ancestral lands and the abuse of their natural resources. In this way, the history of Sápmi and Saemien Eatname parallels that of the world's other Indigenous Peoples during the same 500-year colonial period.

"Báiki" [bah-h'kee] is the nomadic reindeer-herding society's word for the cultural connection — "the home that lives in the heart" — that survives when the People migrate from one place to another. *Báiki: the North American Sámi Journal* is the name of the periodical that grew out of the search for Sámi connections in the U.S. and Canada. With the appearance of *Báiki* in 1991, the Sámi presence in North America was recognized for the first time. The *Báiki* logo was designed by Faith Fjeld, *Báiki*'s founding editor and publisher, using pictographs from Sámi Drums. The logo is meant to encompass all elements of the Sámi culture: the reindeer symbolizes subsistence; the *lavvus* [Sámi tents] symbolize the extended family; the mountain symbolizes Nature and the Ancestors; and the *njalla* [storage shed] symbolizes cultural renewal.

Today the Sámi are incorporating new technologies into the revival of their language, the *yoik* and other traditional arts, and they are in the forefront of the worldwide post-colonial Indigenous renaissance. Moreover, having their own parliaments in Norway, Sweden and Finland, the Sámi relationship with their former colonizers is improving as well.

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## BÁIKI EDITORIAL PAGE

### LIVING IN A CIRCLE AROUND A FIRE

*"The exhibit — the photos of the Sámi people in Alaska and the reindeer herds — is bringing us closer. The bond, the friendship, the gratitude, it's awesome! No matter how many times I see those photos and read those captions, the words take me back, and when I hear the yoiks I see how in tune the Sámi are with nature and I see how much alike we are."*

— Anna May Ferguson (Yup'ik), Alaska Native Heritage Center

I am very grateful to all of our subscribers and sponsors who have patiently waited for this issue. I am pleased to tell you that once again we will be able to publish *Báiki* twice a year. We have also opened an office in Anchorage to expand the work of our office in Oakland. These developments have been made possible by generous grants from the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation and the Sámediggi [the Norwegian Sámi Parliament].

You will notice that *Báiki* has been reincarnated as *the International Sámi Journal*, indicating a stronger North American tie with the artists and writers of Sápmi as evidenced in this issue. We hope this has been worth the wait and we thank our brother publication *Árran* for keeping the home fires burning.

This summer "The Sámi: Reindeer People of Alaska" exhibit was installed at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage and a lavvu was set up outdoors in the woods among the Heritage Center's five Native Village Sites. A sign by the door of the lavvu explained why an Indigenous culture not native to Alaska had been included:

"This is the traditional tent of the Indigenous Sámi ("Lapp") People," it read. "Sámi reindeer herders came to Alaska from Norway in 1894 and 1898 as part of the Reindeer Project to introduce reindeer herding to the Yup'ik and Inupiaq Peoples. Some of the Sámi stayed on in Alaska and married into Native families."

As a cultural representative at the Heritage Center, I would stand by the door of the lavvu and invite our guests to come inside. When they entered, I would ask them to erase the word "Lapp" ["uncivilized"] from their vocabularies and replace it with "Sámi" ["the People"]. Then I'd tell them stories from the Reindeer Project, since a lavvu is a great place for storytelling. I would explain how a lavvu is made and quote from a friend in Sápmi: "We miss the time when our families lived in a circle around a fire. When we moved into square houses with separate rooms we lost track of each other."

After I finished my stories people would ask me questions like "How many people would live in a lavvu?" When I answered "A family of four or five," they'd look around, confused.

Halfway through the summer I realized that most of my guests thought that Sámi families spent the day huddled around fires in small windowless "teepees." That's when I started to point out that lavvus are not "houses."

I began to explain that they sheltered families while they ate, slept and warmed themselves around the fire. Then I would gesture outside the lavvu toward the woods. "The world outside the lavvu was the place where the Sámi lived and worked!" I'd say. "That's why they took such good care of Nature." And then I would watch my visitors stop and think.

Many thanks to Jon Ross, CEO, Alaska Native Heritage Center, and to Angie Demma, the curator. Thanks also to Joan Hamilton, director of the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum, for getting this started. We dedicate this issue to those who have contributed the support that made the Sámi lavvu and our first two exhibits in Alaska possible. They are:

The Alaska Humanities Forum  
The Seventh Generation Fund  
The Calista Corporation, The Shuyak Corporation  
The Bay Area American Scandinavian Foundation  
The Royal Norwegian Consulate General (New York City)  
Radio Station KYUK (Bethel, AK)  
The Career Development Institute (San Leandro, CA)  
The family of Berntina (Kvamme) Venes  
—in honor of Ellen Marie Sara  
Raynold Savela (Mahtomedi, MN)  
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Lois Stover, Mary Eyman and Becky Twitchell (Kodiak, AK)  
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and Mats Sexton (Minneapolis, MN)  
and the Native and Alaskan artists, photographers and  
Sámi knifemaker Eric O. Bergland (Blue River, OR) who  
shared their work with us for our fund-raiser,  
and The Dine-In'na Athabaskan Nation  
who allowed us to build a Sámi lavvu on their land

— *faith fjeld*



The Sámi lavvu at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage. The poles are from the birch trees nearby; the cover is from Northern Lavvu; Nathan Muus supervised the construction.

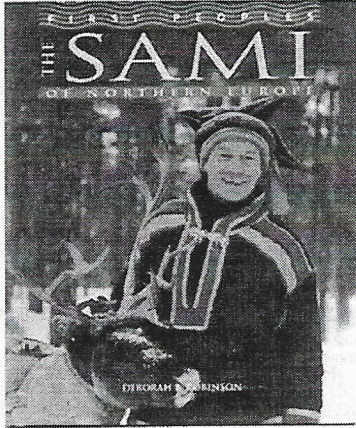




# SÁMI CONNECTIONS



## DON'T BUY THIS BOOK



[Editor's note: In Issue #24 we reviewed *The Sami of Northern Europe* by Deborah B. Robinson (Lerner Publications: 2002), taking issue with many aspects of the book. Rauna Kuokkanen's response to the Robinson book is reprinted here.]

Dear Editor of Lerner Publications:

I am writing to you with regard to your recent publication, *The Sami of Northern Europe* by Deborah B. Robinson. While I would like to congratulate you for demonstrating an interest in educating children on indigenous issues, there several concerns that I, as a Sámi scholar, want to express in relation to this book.

First, it is inappropriate that the book in question is written by a person who is not Sámi nor has long-term knowledge and/or connections to the Sámi people and Sámi land. This has resulted in a book which may be written with good intentions but is full of mistakes and incorrect or inadequate information. This is particularly inappropriate in a situation where there are Sámi scholars and writers fluent in English who could and would be able to produce a text with a more in-depth, current and accurate description of their culture, history and traditions.

Second, the book continues the ethnographic tradition of omitting the names of people in photographs, rendering them a nameless but colorful mass. This practice has already been

criticized for decades by representatives belonging to these groups. Not only is this inappropriate and unethical, it continues the long and shameful tradition of outsiders treating the Sámi (and other Indigenous peoples) as an anonymous group.

Third, the book does not give credit to those Sámi whom the writer visited and interviewed for the book. This is related to the above concern of continuing unacceptable colonial tradition of appropriation and exploitation of "the other."

Fourth, there is a discrepancy between the text and photographs, most of which show Sámi wearing their traditional clothing. This mirrors a desire to make the Sámi people look more exotic, romantic and "different" than they are and in so doing feeds into old and redundant stereotypes.

Finally, the list of "further readings" at the end of the book is objectionable as it does not list a single book by a Sámi author in spite of the fact that there are numerous books readily available in English written by Sámi writers and scholars for both younger and older audiences.

I hope these considerations will be taken into account when decisions are made about what kind of books are published in the future.

**Rauna Kuokkanen**  
Vancouver, B.C. Canada  
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## GLOBAL WARMING & SÁMI MYTHOLOGY

I am a traditional Finn from Tampere, Finland. I work at Tampere Polytechnic as Project Manager for Snowchange. I also fish and write poems.

Project Snowchange has been organized to collect and document the experiences of Indigenous peoples relating to climate change. The major documentation for the project is taking place in Sámi communities in Scandinavia, Finland and on the Kola Peninsula of the Russian Federation.

The project involves various partners in the North American Arctic and the Russian Arctic including Siberia and the Far East; [www.snowchange.org](http://www.snowchange.org), the Snowchange website, functions as the information portal.

The first round of documentation ended in spring 2004 and a unique publication *Snowscapes, Dreamscapes* — a *Snowchange Community Book of Change* was released in June 2004. This book encourages people to think in a different way about global warming and climate change. It is a collaboration between people from the dominant society and Indigenous people, and helps to bridge the gap between Western science and Indigenous knowledge.

*Dreamscapes: Stories and Paintings* by Elina Helander is part of the publication. Inspired by Sámi mythology, her material serves as a guide to Indigenous values and modes of thought. Helander is a Sámi reindeer owner from Utsjoki, Finland. She works at the Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, as a senior scientist.

In 2002 the Snowchange Project was awarded the prestigious Panda Prize by the Worldwide Fund for Nature (Finland) for the Best National Ecological Project.

**Tero Mustonen**

[tero@snowchange.org](mailto:tero@snowchange.org)

[Editor's note: We will be reviewing *Snowscapes, Dreamscapes* — a *Snowchange Community Book of Change* in Issue #26.]

## SÁMI IDENTITY: A NORTH AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

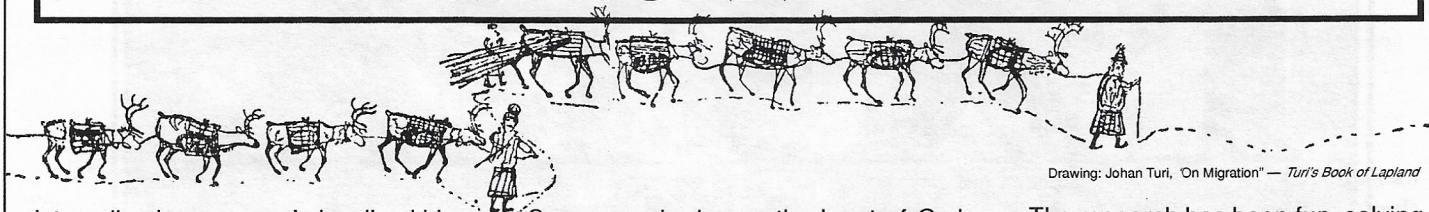
Growing up in Wisconsin, I don't think I ever heard the word "Sámi," or even "Laplander." I knew that my grandfather was from Sweden and that my grandmother was from Norway but she died long before I was born, and my grandfather died when I was a few years old, so I have no memory of them.

Throughout my life I have felt that wrongness was part of my core self and that I must somehow do something extraordinary in order to justify my existence. I developed a sense of having no identity. I was a non-entity. Finally I reached the point where I had my own





# SÁMI CONNECTIONS



Drawing: Johan Turi, "On Migration" — Turi's Book of Lapland

internalized oppressor. I visualized him as a Nazi with his foot on my throat, holding me down and pressing harder whenever I showed any signs of struggling to get up.

Then, in 2002, I had a spiritual awakening. The experience continued to evolve, develop and expand into all areas of my life.

In 2003 I went to the Scandinavian Festival in Thousand Oaks, California and had the joyous experience of being with people of Sámi descent; I recognized my kinship with them. Shortly afterwards, at the Saami Báiki Symposium in Seattle, I encountered the word "decolonization," along with the words "healing" and "recovery." The words came alive for me. I realized that my healing and recovery must deal with the immense pain that was incurred when someone in my lineage made the decision to disown and keep secret our family soul in order to survive in the dominate society.

**David Ander**  
Bellingham, WA

## "PASIFIKA"

A few weeks ago a friend of mine took me to an exhibit of South Pacific artifacts at the Anthropology Museum in the University of British Columbia. The exhibit, called "Pasifika," had been collected and catalogued by Frank Burnett, a man who obviously cared very much for the Peoples of Samoa, New Guinea, and the other islands. Given new names by their "discoverers," these South Pacific Peoples were known as "primitive savages" by those who decided it was their job to civilize them.

As I read Burnett's observations of the European settlers, I noticed that much of his criticism was reserved for missionaries. As an Evangelical Christian I am often annoyed by the excessive criticism of my religion and those who practice it, but in this case I didn't become defensive as I read the concerns raised by Mr. Burnett.

Someone who knows the heart of God would not steal children away from their families and put them in boarding schools where they were often abused and mistreated and punished for speaking their own language, yet this was done in Pasifika. Is it any wonder that the people there felt animosity towards the church?

We in the post-Christian west could learn alot from Aboriginal values. The rampant materialism, wars, crimes and frantic pace of life — are these the marks of a superior culture? Although Christians don't share the Aboriginal belief that the Earth is a sacred being, that does not give us the right to destroy plants, animals and other people. Let us learn from the past so we don't repeat it.

**Kim Oliver**  
Vancouver, B.C. Canada

## THE SÁMI: REINDEER PEOPLE OF ALASKA DESCENDANTS SOUGHT

For the past year, I've been compiling biographical and genealogical profiles of the men, women and children who came to Alaska as part of the Reindeer Project. I've posted historical, genealogical and anecdotal information about each family member and have woven this into a series of "bio's" with references that should be handy tools for families and researchers.

I have included the 1894 and 1898 arrivals and the folks who came to Alaska later to join their families. I did a thorough job with the *Kautokeino* and *Karasjok Slekters* [Sámi family genealogy books], then added historical and anecdotal sources from *Báiki* and *Arran*.

I would love to have interested descendents and knowledgeable researchers review the drafts of families or individuals they know. Please get in touch with me if you are interested in doing this, and specify which family names.

This is a *Báiki* project; we hope to compile this information into a useful set of family guidebooks or binders, and include parts in "The Sami: Reindeer People of Alaska" exhibit catalog. *Báiki* will then print and make these available upon request.

The research has been fun, solving mysteries, finding tidbits in various sources, and piecing it all together. I decided that doing 150 biographies would be similar to — but more rewarding than — working on jigsaw puzzles during the long winter evenings here in Northern California's redwood country! I look forward to hearing from you.

**Ruthanne Cecil**  
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<cecilr@humboldt1.com>

## THE SÁMI: REINDEER PEOPLE OF ALASKA EXHIBITS OPEN

The first "Sami: Reindeer People of Alaska" exhibit opened in Bethel, Alaska April 5th at the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum. I had a wonderful feeling of coming home and felt that our ancestors were pleased with our work.

I want to thank Joan Hamilton, the museum director, Elders Bernie and Elias Venes, Bernie's daughter June McAtee, and Nathan Muus, who has loaned the exhibit the Saami Báiki collection of *duodji* [Sámi handcrafts].

Our genealogy efforts would have been much more difficult without the help of Ruthanne Cecil, who is preparing an extensive Reindeer Project genealogy reference book.

The exhibit moved to the Alaska Native Heritage Center, Anchorage, on Mothers' Day, May 9th. At the opening we were honored by the presence of Johan Mikkel Sara from the Sámediggi [the Norwegian Sámi Parliament], who presented Faith Fjeld, the Reindeer

(SÁMI CONNECTIONS continued on page 25)

The purpose of "Sámi Connections" is to provide a forum for readers' comments, questions and shared information. Since we receive many emails and letters, we reserve the right to edit those published down to a size that fits this space. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of this journal. Write: The Báiki Office in Alaska, 131 West 6th Ave. #1, Anchorage, AK 99501, USA, or e-mail: <faithfjeld@alaska.net>





NORJALAINEN SUURELOKUVA

# LAILA

TUNTURIEN TYTTÖ



Jättiläismenestys Tukholmassa, Osllossa ja Kööpenhaminassa. — Kuva, josta amerikkalaisetkin ovat maksaneet huimaavia summia.

PAKOSASSA:  
**MONA MÅRTENSSON**  
Käsikirjoitus ja ohjaus:  
GEORGE SNEVOIGT

ENSI-ILTA LAHITULEVAISUUDESSA

## KINO-PALATSISSA

SUOMEN BIOGRAFI OSAKEYHTIÖ

Yksinoikeus:  
Keskuskatu 1 • Puh. 37404

[above] Poster for the 1929 silent film *Laila: Girl of the Mountains*, starring Swedish actress Mona Mårtensson, proclaims: "Huge success in Stockholm, Oslo and Copenhagen — a picture for which even Americans have paid staggeringly high amounts of money!" [facing page] Poster for *Lappblod*. Made in 1948, *Lappblod* was the second color film ever made in Sweden. This illustration is from a scene that takes place less than two minutes from the beginning of the film. The younger guy has just skied down from the mountains and he gets into a fight the minute he walks into a local shop.





# JORMA LEHTOLA

## FROM LAILA TO LAILA

### THE SÁMI IMAGE IN FILM

*Jorma Lehtola is the author of the first book about the Sámi image in film, *Lailasta Lailaan* ["From Laila to Laila"], published in Finnish by Kustannus-Puntsi in 2000. The title is a play on words. "*Lailasta Lailaan*" sounds like a Sámi yoik: "loi-lo-go-loi-loo." "Laila" is the name of a Norwegian girl in a 19th century story by J. A. Friis. She falls from her parents' sledge during a wolf attack and is rescued and raised by "Lapp" reindeer herders. The three movie versions of the Laila story reflect advances in film-making technology. The first was a silent film (1929), the second film was in sound (1937), and the third Laila was in color (1957). It should be noted that in the following article, the word "Lapp" is used for stereotypic and racist images of the Sámi.*

#### MOVIE "LAPPS"

During the first 80 years of Scandinavian cinema, Sámis in films were seen through the eyes of outsiders and Sámi roles were played by non-Sámi actors. The "Lapps" I saw on the screen as a child in Finland were nothing like the Sámis I saw around me and played with. The "movie Lapps" existed in the imagination of film makers who came North to Sápmi from Oslo, Stockholm and Helsinki, shot their footage in the mountains and then went back. When a filmmaker went to Lapland he stepped into a totally different world and the resultant films reflected how well (or badly) he enjoyed or accommodated himself.

Lapland was an attractive place to make a film, especially after the ravages of World War II. A Lapp was primitive and free. There were other "free" characters in Finnish film, too, but with a difference. The rough lumberjack usually turned out to be the scion of a wealthy family, the joyful vagabond on the road was really a nobleman in disguise. As soon as the pretty girl was enchanted, these guys would reveal their secret identity. But a Lapp remained a "Lapp;" he didn't reveal any secrets at the end of the story.

The movie Lapps seemed so authentic to most Scandinavians that real images were not acceptable. To them, Lapps were reindeer herders who were fond of alcohol, didn't own land and came from dysfunctional homes. They either were seducers, murderers, thieves, and drunkards, or else they were mystics, eternal wanderers and romantic "Children of the Wilderness" who got themselves killed by stabbing, shooting, drowning or spearing. Or they were eaten by wolves. And when Lapps chose to join the dominant society they were usually destroyed.

There was also the tendency to ignore any real Sámi who were part of the film crew. In writing about the making of *Aila*

(1950), the editor of a Finnish movie magazine mentions all nine Finnish members of the film crew by name and then ends the sentence with "and a Lappish expert." But when you see 3000 reindeer in the film, you wonder who rounded up these animals — the director? the producer? the cameraman? Where would Aila be without that nameless Lappish expert?

#### THE "INDIANS OF THE NORTH"

There's a scene in the Swedish film *Barna från Blåsjöfället* [The Children from Blue Lake Mountain] (1980) where orphan kids are looking for shelter from a snowstorm. They come to a *lavvu* where an old Sami man sits watching a Western on TV. "We Lapps are the Indians of the North," he tells them. This

particular comparison is not correct because, unlike the Lapps in Scandinavian films, the American Indians played a warlike role in American Westerns. The "Winning of the West" was based on conquering obstacles and Indians were among the obstacles.

On the other hand, Samis tend to avoid conflict and withdraw when threatened. They did not even have a word for "war" until they borrowed "*sota*" from the Finnish. Sámis were not as attractive a subject for dramatic or violent films as were their American Indian brothers. They were usually portrayed as weak, passive people and Lapland as a

far away hospital or survival station in the North where life's misfortunes got treated. In *Maaret, tunturién tyttö* [Maret, Girl of the Mountains] (1947), a surgeon who has lost his son and has been rejected by his wife exclaims, "I just want to forget the South. Here it's different, mountains as far as you can see, and sky to eternity. Here you can feel the breath of the Creator!"

In both cases, the movie Indians and the movie Lapps were treated as lower forms of civilization by the film makers, which reflected the prevailing popular attitude in both countries. It's reasonable to ask, then, how much the outlook of the dominant society is still fed by these old movie images and how much they affect the thinking of the people who make decisions about Sámi (or American Indian) issues today.

#### UNREQUITED LOVE

During the first part of the 20th century in Scandinavia, "inter-racial" marriages between Sámi and non-Sámi were frowned upon. In movies where a Sámi falls in love with a non-Sámi, the relationship seldom succeeds and even the most promising romances end when the former fiancé of the non-Sámi returns or when the Sámi lover tragically dies.

(LEHTOLA continued overleaf)







Lapp puppets were often characters in the popular 1960s Finnish childrens' television program "Nikslan TV" when "exotics" were needed.

In 1936 the Finnish writer Ernst Lampén expressed an opinion that was not unusual for the time: "When I saw gigantic Norwegians in Hammerfest standing beside dwarfed Lapps, I realized that marriages between these were unnatural. A St. Bernhard shouldn't have puppies with a fox terrier."

Early Finnish films did show "mixed marriages" between classes, for example, maids marrying upper or middle class men. Love that crossed the boundaries of race and class reflected the period following the War of Independence from Russia (1917-18). Unity and reconciliation was the hidden message of these films and the couple either chose to become peasants or joined a higher level of society.

But love never crossed racial boundaries and marriage between the

Finnish and Sámi "races" in Finnish film was absolutely out of the question.

## SÁMI WOMEN IN LAPP MOVIES

The classic Finnish vampire film *White Reindeer*, directed by Erik Blomberg, won an award at the 1952 Cannes Film Festival. There are many inaccuracies from the Sámi point of view, but it is an excellent black and white picture with an exciting score by classical composer Einar Englund. *White Reindeer* is about a Sámi woman who, unhappy in her marriage, makes an offering to a *siedde* [a sacred rock] and acquires the ability to transform herself into a reindeer that no man can resist, which turns out to be a curse for them.

The image of an active woman with her own needs was unheard of in the 1950s, and such a woman was often portrayed as "bad." It is no surprise, then, that this Sámi woman dies at the end of the film, speared by her own husband.

Perhaps the most controversial Laila can be seen in the Finnish film *Sensuela* directed by Teuvo Tulio (1973). Laila falls in love with a German soldier during the WW II, follows him to Hamburg and ends up as a prostitute. Tulio, a highly respected director, used postcards from the Alps as mountains in the background, and Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" as the score. The acting was extremely bad, and Tulio stopped making films after *Sensuela*.

But there's absolutely no other film where a Sámi father takes revenge on his



Mirjami Kuosmanen and Kalvervo Nissilä in *White Reindeer*.

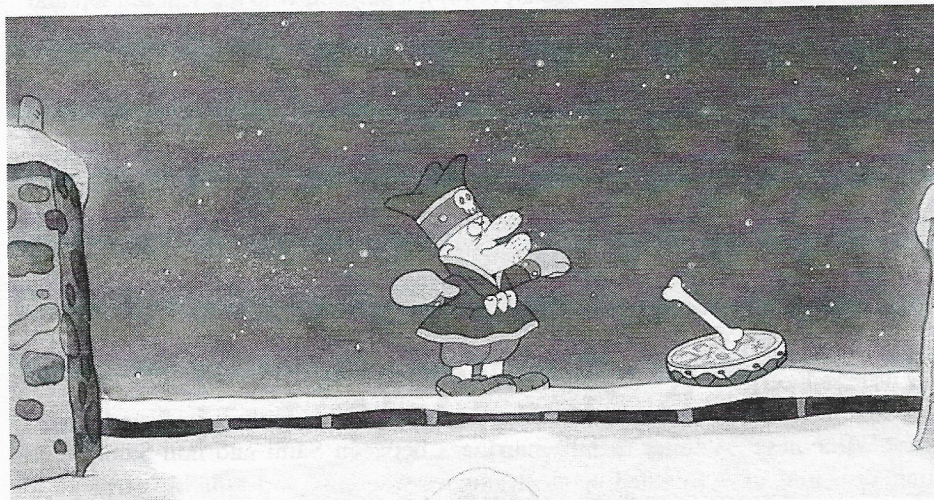
daughter's seducer by using his teeth in the traditional way of castrating live male reindeer! The film wasn't shown to the public for 30 years, but now it's becoming a cult film.

## THE "DYING" WAY OF LIFE AND THE BIRTH OF SÁMI FILM

For the past thousand years the Sámi culture has survived. Challenged and influenced by the outside world, they have always created something new but still very Sámi out of this contact.

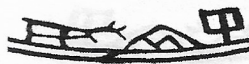
In spite of this, there is still the popular but mistaken belief that Indigenous cultures like the Sámi are either "dying," or else are stuck in a primitive state. Stereotypic imagery persists in travel agency advertisements and on souvenir postcards because tourists do not want these images to give way to the modern Sámi culture of today, and the tourist industry can't afford to let their best attraction die.

In the 1970s the Sámis finally had influence over the films that were made about them by others, but the birth of Sámi film at the end of the 1980s meant that they could finally express their own feelings and culture — a natural continuation of the Sámi story-telling tradition that began to negate the stereotypic "dying culture" imagery.



This figure is from an animated cartoon called *Santa Claus and the Magic Drum* (1996), the most successful export in the history of the Finnish Broadcasting Company. The story is about a "Lapp shaman" whose drumming disturbs Santa while he is busy in his workshop. At the end of the film it is revealed that the "shaman" is actually someone who was forgotten by Santa 50 years before, and so the moral is: If Santa doesn't bring you presents you can always try to become a Lapp shaman!





ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE

BEST FOREIGN FILM



# PATHFINDER

"A strong and simple film, of our brutal and beautiful, unspoiled and magical, a very strongly highlighted nature."

NILS GAUP

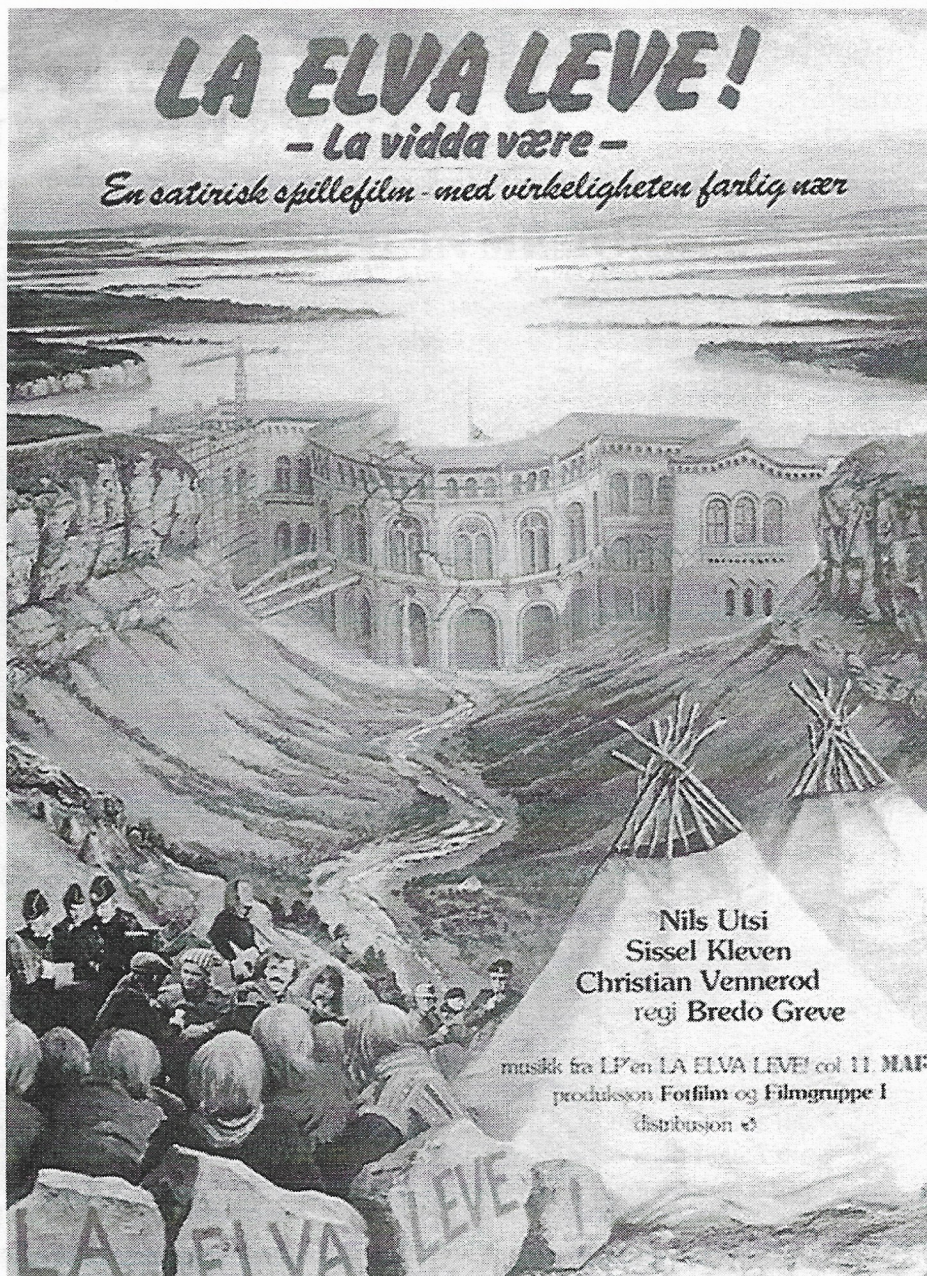
The award-winning *Pathfinder* [*Ofelas*], released in 1989, is still available at U.S. and Canadian video stores.

The actors in the first Sámi-made film *Ofelas* [*Pathfinder*], directed by Nils Gaup in 1987, came from the Beaivvás Sámi National Theatre Company. Beaivvás was given impetus by the crisis in Alta, Norway when the Norwegian government decided to dam the Alta River. This caused massive resistance and created a whole new awareness of unity among the Sámi in different countries, an awareness that had already started in the 1960s inspired by, among others, the Black Power Movement.

Film was seen by the new Sámis as a tool for strengthening their language and identity. In fact Walt Disney's *Donald Duck* was translated into Sámi during this period to encourage Sámi kids to read and use their own language!

*Ofelas*, filmed in the Sami language, was based on an ancient legend about the Sámi outwitting violent invaders. It was nominated for an Oscar for the "Best Foreign Film of 1989" and was the biggest hit in Norwegian film history — not a bad start!

In addition to *Ofelas*, only two long films have been made — both directed by Paul-Anders Simma. *Legacy of the Tundra* is a documentary about the hard



# LA ELVA LEVE!

— La vidda være —

En satirisk spillefilm - med virkeligheten farlig nær

Nils Utsi  
Sissel Kleven  
Christian Vennerød  
regi Bredo Greve

musikk fra LP'en LA ELVA LEVE! vol. 11. MAJ  
produksjon Forfilm og Filmgruppe 1  
distribusjon e

This 1980s film *Let the River Live!* — *Leave the Tundra Alone* — was a satire that — as the poster says — was "dangerously close to reality." The film focused on the building of a dam on the Alta River by the Norwegian government.

conditions of reindeer herding in Northern Norway, where the pastures are decreasing and the Sámis are already fighting each other. *Minister of State* is based on an incident right after the WW II near Inari, Finland, when a Finnish vagabond came to an isolated Sámi village, made them believe he was Minister of State and tricked them into giving him money before he disappeared.

As with other Sámi art forms, Sámi film connects the old with the new. Paul-Anders Simma has said that film and television, the very same media that has destroyed so much

of the Sámi story-telling tradition, can also serve as its life-saver.

Unfortunately, because of difficulties in funding, Sámi films are still relatively few. While a certain number of shorts have been made, television production — especially in Norway — has been the lifeline of Sámi film and the *Skábmagovat* Festival in Inari, Finland has become the main forum for new Sámi and other Indigenous films. The name means "Reflections in the Endless Night,"

(LEHTOLA continued on page 26)





# ROSE-MARIE HUUVA

## discusses her work

*We were having dinner at the Báiki Office in Anchorage — take-out food from a nearby deli. We had been discussing ideas for the Báiki cover, among other things. All of a sudden I laid down my fork and picked up my pen because Rose-Marie Huuva had started to discuss her work:*

*"If I expected to make money from my art," she said, "I would have done pictures of reindeers or Sámis in gakti because that is what people expect from Sámi artists. But Sámi art is much more diverse than this. Being a Sámi artist doesn't mean I am isolated in the far North and only deal with Sámi issues. I get inspiration from the whole world all the time and that is reflected in my work. There are pieces I had to do. I don't get paid for them, I don't sell them. When I get inspired I have to do something about it." Here are three of those pieces:*

*by Rose-Marie Huuva  
with faith fjeld*

### "REFLECTION"



© 2003 : Rose-Marie Huuva: "REFLECTION," (the artist in foreground)

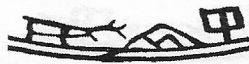
One of the installations in my last exhibition was about war: "Why are people fighting all the time?" I went to the library and found out that mankind had started wars 500 years before Christ. I selected five wars — there could have been hundreds. The five wars were World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, and China's occupation of Tibet and Israel's occupation of Palestine which are still going on.

On the floor there were 30 old rusty helmets on 5 beautifully- monogrammed clean linen sheets

trimmed with lace. On the wall there were 30 photocopies of brains. The brains represented Presidents, Prime Ministers and Commanders — the ones who decide to start wars and are very far from the soldiers who do the dirty work. The sheets represented all the women who have lost their sons, fathers, brothers and lovers in wars.

There also was a bowl of water on each of the sheets. The water symbolized life. Life starts in water inside your mother. You can't live without water — it's sacred...





## “SARCOPHAGUS - CHERNOBYL IN MEMORIAM”



© 1999 : Rose-Marie Huuva: “SARCOPHAGUS - CHERNOBYL IN MEMORIAM”

The rain from the April 26, 1986 accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the former Soviet Union fell on the South Sámi people and everything was effected in that area. In one week the explosion became a problem for the whole world. In Alaska the people picked salmonberries and other foods to ship over to Áarjiel-saemieh because they thought that people there had nothing to eat. But the Sámi problem was small compared to the people living close to Chernobyl. The radiation around the death zone will last 48,000 years. In this exhibit I wanted to describe different aspects of the accident.

There were 33 babies to represent the 33 men who immediately lost their lives when they tried to extinguish the fire. The babies lay on cold steel tables.

One of the babies was encased in lead. This baby represented Valerij Chodmtjuk, Chernobyl's chief

operator who was left inside the power plant. The lead that encased this baby was deteriorating — as is the sarcophagus that was built to cover the power plant. The 33 babies also represented the children left behind and the children the men never had a chance to have.

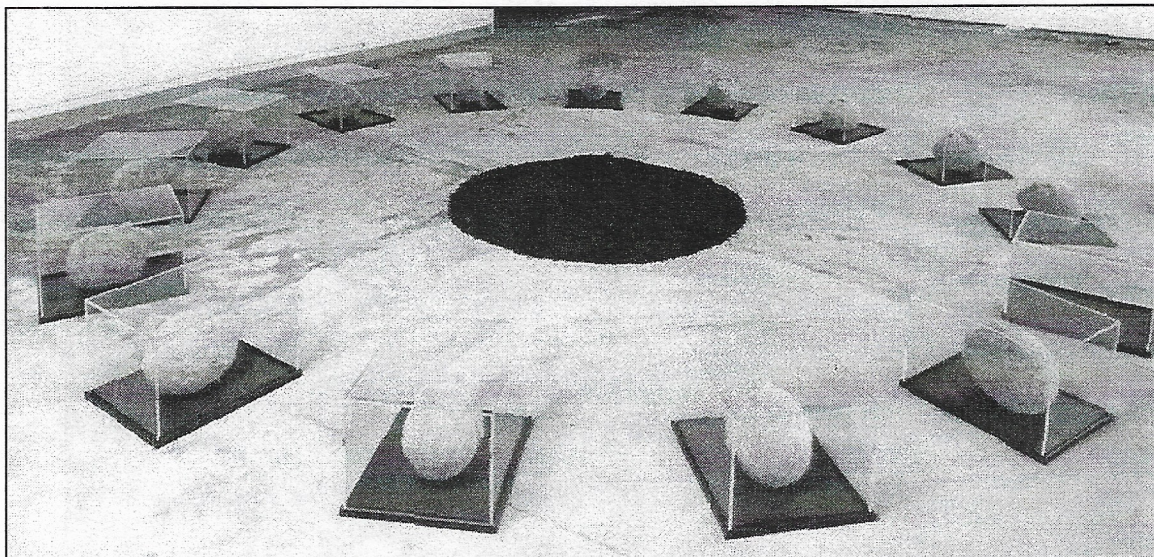
Another part of the Chernobyl exhibit was about the effect it had on the environment. There was a reindeer calf inside a plastic bag labeled “radioactive.” There also were three glass cages, one with polluted earth where there was nothing except a dead insect, one with polluted air where there was a bird that had died, and one with polluted water that you couldn't drink. I also included poems by Paulus Utsi and Tomas Marainen, as well as Sámi school children's thoughts about the Chernobyl catastrophe.

(HUUYA continued overleaf)





## “OBJECT FOR RESEARCH – HOW LONG?”



© 1999 : Rose-Marie Huuva: “OBJECT FOR RESEARCH - HOW LONG?”

There was a TV program about the Sámi skulls that still remain in institutions in the Nordic countries. Old letters written by Lars Levi Laestadius, a pastor in Karesuando, had been found. Scholars had written to him saying they wanted a Sámi child's skull—that they already had skulls from Sámi adults. They had even traded for the Sámi skulls, one skull from Greenland for two skulls from Sápmi. Laestadius answered that he could get them a child's skull since in the wintertime bodies couldn't be buried due to the permafrost. Children's skulls were found with the skin still on them—were they mummified?

I put 14 skulls made of wax and wool into 14 Plexiglas boxes. In the middle of the circle of Plexiglas boxes was a mound of earth. The skull's faces were

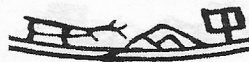
looking at the mound because they wanted to be buried with their bodies.

A 15th box was empty. When this piece was exhibited in Karasjok, the 15th box worried people. “Why is this box empty?” they'd ask. My answer to this was, “It's empty because your skull or mine might be there when we die because they are still doing research on Native people.”

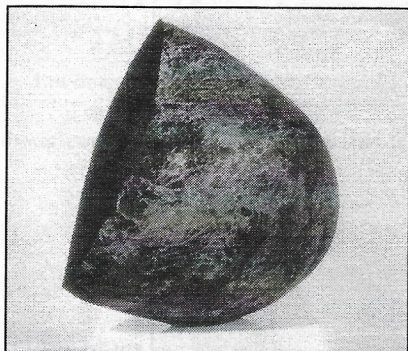
There was a second meaning to this piece.

There is a legend of fifteen Sámi chiefs. Fourteen of them were killed by the people who colonized Sápmi. The fifteenth escaped to the North. The legend says he is coming back someday. He will have the knowledge and wisdom of what it is to be Sámi. So the empty 15th box points north.





## ROSE-MARIE HUUVA REINDEER SKIN PROJECT



© 2003: Rose-Marie Huuva: "NAA,"  
reindeer hide and sealskin

Rose-Marie Huuva has received a grant from the Nordic Sami Council for her Reindeer Skin Project to use reindeer hide in art. "I make sculptures and objects from reindeer hide that look like stone," she says. "So far I am the only one working in this way." The above piece, "NAA," is on the Báiki cover.

*Rose-Marie Huuva lives and works in Kiruna, Sweden. She has one daughter. Huuva is the author of several poetry books including Galbmaa Rádna [A Cold Companion], published in 1999, that was nominated for the Nordic Literature Award in 2001 and has been translated into Swedish and Icelandic.*

*Next summer she will join the Swedish International Polar Expedition "Beringia-2005." All Swedish scientific polar expeditions include artists, and Huuva is the first Sámi artist to participate. "This is a great opportunity and I don't know in what way this experience will influence my art in the future," she says.*

*Thanks to Ron and Turid Senungetuk and to the Pratt Museum, Homer, Alaska, for making possible the visit of Rose-Marie Huuva.*

## ABOUT THE SÁMI: ANSWERS TO SOME FREQUENTLY-ASKED QUESTIONS



### IS "SÁMI" THE SAME THING AS "LAPP"?

"Lapp" is an archaic word that means "uncivilized." "Sámi," means "the People," and that is what the Indigenous People of the Nordic countries call themselves. The word is also correctly spelled "Saami" and "Sami."



### WHAT KIND OF FOODS DO SÁMI PEOPLE EAT?

A Sámi meal may consist of fresh or smoked reindeer meat, reindeer stew, salmon, cod and other fish prepared in different ways, whales, walrus, bear, moose, wild potatoes, carrots and other root vegetables, mushrooms, cloudberries, blueberries and other kinds of berries.



### WHAT TYPE OF HOMES DO THE SÁMI LIVE IN?

In pre-contact times the Sámi lived in lavvus and goahttis [conical tents and turf huts with a fire in the middle]. Today they usually live in square houses, but many families also maintain a lavvu or a goahti in the areas where they fish, hunt or herd.



### WHAT IS THE SÁMI RELIGION?

The Sámi sometimes refer to their original belief system as "The Nature Religion," which is based on a reciprocal relationship with Nature. In the Middle Ages Lutheran missionaries tried to convert the Sámi and some Sámi have combined the two ways.



### WHAT IS THE SÁMI LANGUAGE?

Sámi is one of the Finno-Ugric languages related to Finnish, Nenets, Estonian, Hungarian, and Turkish. There are at least 9 languages within the Sámi language group itself, the dominant one being Northern Sámi. There are many Sámi language

newspapers and other publications. Many radio and television stations have broadcasts in Sámi. There is also a wealth of literature written in Sámi.



### HOW DO THE SÁMI MAKE A LIVING?

They keep reindeer, they fish, farm, have civil service jobs, are teachers, researchers, doctors, artists, journalists, farmers, musicians, craftspeople and do many other things — often combining several of these occupations throughout the year.



### DO THE SÁMI LIVE ON RESERVATIONS?

No.



### WHAT IS "YOIK"?

Yoik is the unique Sámi way of singing that honors people, and expresses events and Nature. It is circular in form and has no beginning or end. Traditionally yoik is done a cappella. At one time the church outlawed yoik as "the music of the devil." Today it is enjoying a renaissance and is often combined with jazz, classical and rock music.



### WHERE DO THE SÁMI COME FROM?

The Sámi say they are descended from the Sun. Some say they come from the East, some say from Mongolia.



### DO ALL SÁMI HERD REINDEER?

About 10% of the people are reindeer herders today. Much of it is government controlled. Many more Sámi hunt and fish.

For more information visit  
[www.baiki.org](http://www.baiki.org) or [www.same.net](http://www.same.net)





# THE TUNDRA FOR LUNCH:



photo: from the collection of Nita P. Sara

## CETUAQ [THE WHALE]

As the Yukon embraces  
the sea, an old man  
stirs his cookpot,  
a 55-gallon drum.

I am nourished by the whale.  
The flesh of the whale  
strengthens my flesh.  
The blood of the whale  
sustains my blood.  
The spirit of the whale  
settles on my spirit,  
and I dive even deeper  
through the sea of my beginning.  
I laugh with the gulls  
and hear the whale's song  
whistle and click  
in my heart.

Smiling in his wrinkles  
of great beauty,  
his eyes soft and deep as the ages,  
the old man also sings.  
— 12/11/76

## THE TUNDRA FOR LUNCH

Taking pause from gazing at a photo of  
my father and his brother  
in their parkys on the tundra  
having lunch, relaxing, smiling  
in their kingly winter gowns;  
sip of coffee, read the label,  
pull upon the string that runs  
up to shutter freezing seconds  
up to clear, unblinking lens  
up to clear sky not withholding  
all of nature's deep blue secrets  
all the warmest from the mother  
all the kindest amends;  
all the portents of the riot  
fought against the dark descent  
battles fought to dark dominions,  
protests to untimely ends;  
fresh air sky and timid fire  
nodding to the blackened pot defying  
eye of ember, air dividing  
into flying spark, inviting  
all beginnings into ends;  
deep blue sky and melting snow  
peaks still white and shining over  
rivers just about to go  
roaring crunching spring hello  
waved to cranes in soaring flight  
fragile lifting spread of feathers  
greeted by the icy might,  
kissing fleeting joy of daylight  
slipping softly into night,  
weaving webs of starlit darkness  
far flung singing wingless flight,  
smiling, drink the warming coffee  
drink the springtime earth delight.

— 3/19/77

## THE SHAMAN

I am of the earth and wind  
my garden stretches  
to the sea  
I know the sound of winter frost  
I know eternity  
I know the hawk and fox  
as one  
I drink the gold  
of setting sun  
it is a part of me  
I know the heights  
the rock and air  
they taught me of the secrets  
where  
the eagle reaches free  
my spirit is  
the light of day  
my spirit is  
the depth of night  
I vanish  
even as I stay  
within your chains of sight

— 12/22/76





# THE POETRY OF NILS P. SARA

## WRITTEN AFTER "THE CONFLICT"

I'm one of the ones who got back out  
I can look at mountains again  
though mountains look different to me now  
I get to walk through grass again  
without the tension and the fear  
of walking through grass that covers  
bad surprises, but  
though the grass is soft and short  
a part of me is still on edge  
I look at the women and their children  
working in the fishcamps  
bringing other ones to mind  
until I have to turn away  
reach for the bourbon in my pack  
I cruise the river once again  
but I do that differently now  
I used to carry a gun for food  
and now it is for fighting back  
I half expect to hear the crack crack crack  
and dive, returning fire  
amidst the smells of metal, sweat and fear  
the rifle and the boat  
the helmet and the flowing blood  
smelling like new copper  
I bled, but not as badly  
as others who no longer walk through grass  
or look at mountains  
anymore  
I got up and walked again  
I got up and smelled the world again  
although it smells different to me now  
I walk among strangers in a different way  
I watch for a flicker of bad intent  
which will trigger in me  
a move to the solar plexus or esophagus.

My parents were both gentle people  
and I am gentle too  
though carrying sadness  
of the danger that was thrust at me  
the danger I returned  
the danger that is part of me  
and though I try with all my might  
on many a lonely, tearful night  
it cannot be unlearned.



photo copy by James H. Barker

## CLEMENT

Clement was hooked on nature  
he was addicted to motion  
he was enthralled with reflection  
Clement did a drug when he was young —  
he drank just like the next guy  
and did some wild and silly things.  
But Clement broke out of one addiction  
to trade it for another...  
he traded the headache and regret  
of a hangover morning  
for the blink, look and leap  
of coming aware with all your  
abilities unharmed and eager.  
He sought the leap inside which comes  
with putting parts together  
or looking at some wondrous scene...  
a simple afternoon with wind  
and different colored skies...  
with clouds that flew as fast  
as anything that large can move  
with blue all 'round in snow and hail  
and sky.



Sámi petroglyph: reindeer corral

*Nils P. Sara (Yup'ik - Sámi)  
lives in Bethel, Alaska where  
he is a subsistence fisherman  
and a published poet. He is a  
veteran of the Vietnam war.*

*Nils' paternal grandparents  
were Inger Marie Mortens-  
datter and Nils Persen Sara,  
Sámi reindeer herders who  
came to Alaska from  
Kautokeino, Norway in 1898  
to take part in the Reindeer  
Project, bringing with them  
five of their children. These  
included Nils' father Clement,  
(also spelled "Klemet"), age  
five, and his uncle Morten,  
age seven.*

*Nils' mother was the late  
Martha Oscar (Yup'ik) from  
Bethel.*

*The photo on page 14 was  
taken in the late 1920s near  
the Sara family reindeer camp  
on the Kiserluk River  
northeast of Bethel. Morten is  
drinking coffee and Clement is  
pulling the string that is  
attached to the shutter of his  
camera. Clement also took the  
photo on this page of himself  
and his herding dog "Watchie."  
These and other photos of the  
Sara family are included in  
"The Sami: Reindeer People  
of Alaska" traveling exhibit  
(see page 26).*

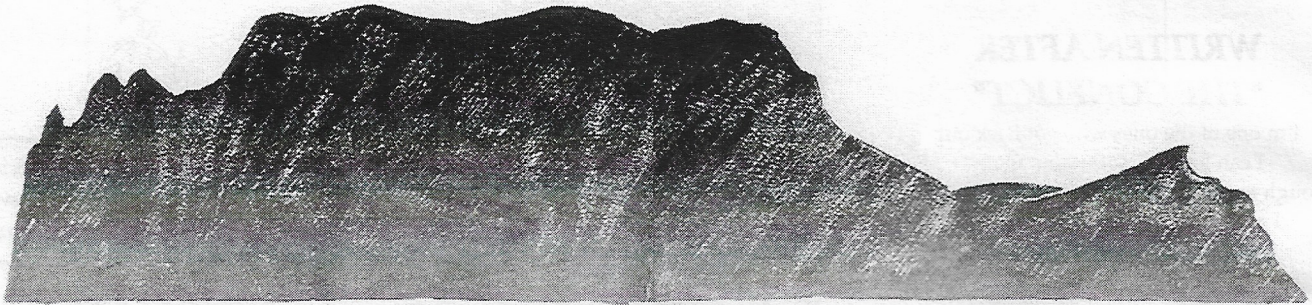
*The poetry of Nils P. Sara  
is copyrighted; we print these  
five poems and the two  
photographs with his  
permission.*





# IMAGE-MAKERS, IMAGE-BREAKERS:

by Krister Stoor and Roland Thorstensson, with woodcuts by Hans Ragnar Mathisen



Hans Ragnar Mathisen: "HOVLI," a Noaidi island seen from NNW

## THE SÁMI IMAGE IN MUSIC TODAY

Where is Sami music today? Traditional yoik is performed and recorded. The stigma once attached to it is gone — or almost gone. Sámi musicians themselves are also lending their talents to fusion music, blending Sámi singing styles and Sámi ideas with styles and ideas from all parts of the world. There is Sámi reggae, Sámi spiritual yoik, Sámi country, Sámi hard rock. And there are singers who look to us for their possible inspiration.

### ISAK SABA

In 1906 Isak Saba wrote the lyrics for what was to become the Sámi Anthem in 1986. Saba describes in loving terms the mystic land "far to the north, beneath the constellation of the Great Bear;" he also calls attention to the plight of the Sámi as people fighting for their existence in Sápmi, the area in the North where Sámi people live and where their language is spoken. His poem ends with a mandate:

*Kinsfolk! Let us confuse our adversaries  
With our patience and stamina.  
Indefatigable sons of the Sun-Father!  
Repressors cannot triumph  
If we cherish our golden language.  
Treasure the words of our forebears:  
Sápmi for the Sámi!*

Saba's words were prophetic. He foresaw a time when the Sámi would be free to express themselves in their own language, through writing and through song. A century after Saba wrote his lyrics, the Sámi have a voice of their own and Sámi musicians perform traditional Sámi songs as well as very modern fusion songs, alone and together with other exponents of world music. Music conjures up images; music breaks down stereotypical images but also creates new ones; music can both explain a culture and obscure our understanding of it.

There are a few singers and musicians who have helped to shape the image of the Sámi. Some of the earlier ones, the Swedes Lapp-Lisa and Jokkmokks-Jocke, for instance, were not Sámi themselves but to the non-Sámi, especially those living far from Sápmi, they were voices of "the mysterious North."

In 1959 Sven Gösta Jonsson in Sweden, "the Rocking Sami," sang a song that was played so often on the radio that people began to dislike it and write their own derisive lyrics to its melody. Jonsson was somewhat of a transitional figure, however, and as such very important because he was influenced in dress and singing style by Elvis Presley.

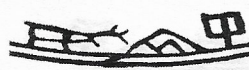
In 1980, Sverre Kjellsberg and Mattis Hætta composed and performed a song that became Norway's contribution to the Eurovision Grand Prix. Their song was inspired by the conflict that resulted from the building of the Alta dam in Norwegian Sápmi, a conflict that attracted international attention and garnered outside support for Sámi causes for years to come. Something had obviously happened between 1960 and 1980 to make the Sámi more culturally assertive. They were beginning to step out and both "confuse adversaries" and actively ask for extended human rights.

Since the early 1950s, musicologists recorded Sámi yoik and published academic books on the distinctiveness and meaning of the recordings. The Sámi voice was beginning to be heard. Music and poetry were often the best vehicles for the Sámi to express how they felt about their traditional culture and what directions they wanted their culture to take.

Nils-Aslak Valkeapää — or Ailo as he preferred to be called — ushered in a kind of music in the 1960s and 70s in which the Sámi performers are in charge, whether they sing traditional yoik or lend their language, cultural distinctiveness and musical talents to world fusion music. Three Sami performers, the afore-mentioned Ailo, Mari Boine and Wimme Saari, have attained international recognition and for understandable reasons; they are the most skilled musicians, and the boldest innovators of Sámi music. Although monumental figures, these verbal and vocal artists will not be the focus of this article. Music and literary critics have written about them and much more will undoubtedly be written. We will instead focus on musicians and music in the margin, in areas where images are made.

Isak Saba wanted a Sápmi for the Sámi, but he was likely also looking for "genuine" Sámi people who were Sámi not just superficially but through their very essence, people who should know his or her culture, speak its language, use it proudly. Saba probably would not have excluded a Lapp-Lisa or Jokkmokks-





# All Sámi Music is Not the Same

*"Whisper to the mountain / hidden, someone listens / receives the word / carries it onward / makes it complete."* — Paulus Utsi, "The Word"

Jocke from his Sámi midst — they were good, well-meaning people— but these two singers of traditional and religious songs, most often performing dressed in Sámi garb, could hardly represent Saba's Sápmi. They were perhaps not as ostentatious as Buffalo Bill and his Wild West troupe were when they displayed Americana to Europe a little over a century ago, but the Sáminess that they presented to uncritical non-Sámi audiences had little to do with the area where Sámi people live and where their language is spoken.

## PAULUS UTSI

Paulus Utsi (1918-1975) is perhaps the most prominent Sámi cultural figure to emerge during the beginning of the new revitalization in the late 1960s. Utsi was a teacher of *duodji* [handicraft] at the Sámi Folk High School in Jokkmokk, Sweden, and also an eminent poet. *"Nothing stays longer in our souls than the language we inherit — it liberates our thoughts, unfolds our mind, and softens our life,"* he writes in one of his poems.

Utsi had a trilogy in mind, when he, as a man already in his fifties, set out to write collections of poetry, not just single poems. He wanted the titles of each part to hint at his artistic intentions. Only two collections were published, *Giela giela* (1974) and *Giela gielain* (1980). The latter appeared posthumously with Inger, Paulus's wife, as co-author. The chosen titles are significant. *Giela giela* means "capture the language." Utsi felt that the mastery of language was a key to the survival of the Sámi as a culture. The Sámi should preserve their native language, but they should also master the majority cultures' languages so as to avoid being manipulated by representatives of these cultures. *Giela gielain* means "capture the language in a snare." "Language" is both the subject and the object; it is to be captured in a snare, and it is the snare itself.

In his article called "A Language for Ensnaring Ptarmigans," Harald Gaski speculates what title Utsi might have given his last collection had he lived long enough to complete it. Gaski writes,

"Utsi may have selected the title, *'Gielain gielain*, which, among other things, can mean 'with the language among the languages.' Thus it would still make note of the situation of Sámi as one of the many languages in the areas where we live. Such a title would at the same time be an appeal that Sámi remain one of the languages of the North in the future as well."

Gaski continues, "But because Utsi also wanted other people and societies to know about the Sámi — after all a minority culture needs publicity today, in order to survive — he felt it was important to inform the outside world about them and their ways. And because of the vibrant culture that the Sámi have, there should be no reason for not wanting to exhibit it, Utsi felt."

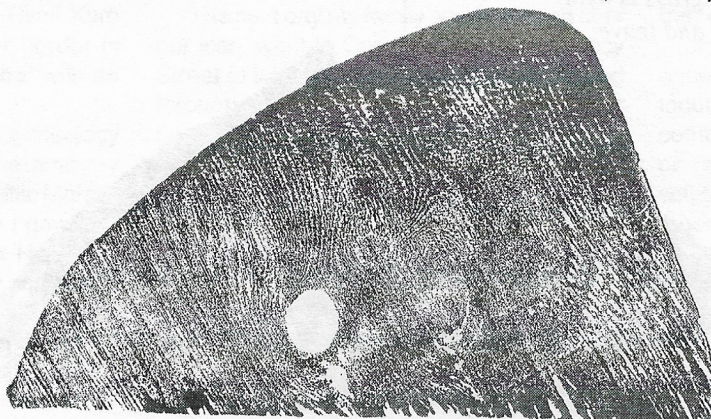
Many of Utsi's dreams have been realized. Since his death in 1975, Sámi writers, artists, duodjars, and more recently, filmmakers and musicians, have used their language to capture the attention of the world.

## ROGER PONTARE

Roger Pontare is a popular contemporary Swedish singer who, in some of his songs, has lyrics that could have been written by Paulus Utsi. In a recent release called *Vargens spår* (Wolf Tracks 2000), Pontare has a song titled "Hör mitt ord" ["Hear My Word"]. The first lines of the song express the poet-singer's harmonizing with nature: "I whisper my word to the mountain/receive my word/send it onward/make it real."

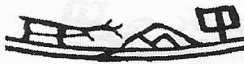
In one of Utsi's poems written three decades earlier, the same harmony between humans and nature is described in these words: "Whisper to the mountain/ from a hiding-place someone listens/ receives the word/carries it onward/makes it complete." One can not say that Pontare is singing Sámi music. Neither can one say that he is not. Pontare is a modern Swedish singer who sings in Swedish, but his ancestral roots are in Sámiland and he must have had Sámi mentors, both those embedded in nature and people like Utsi who always brought nature into his poetry.

(MATHISEN / STOOR / THORSTENSSON continued overleaf)



Hans Ragnar Mathisen: "RÁIGESUOLU," Island With a Hole Through It





Utsi, in one poem, speaks of the yoik as a sanctuary for our thoughts and a place to hide from a harsh world:

*[The yoik] has few spoken words  
free sounds reach farther than words  
The yoik lifts our spirit  
allows our thoughts to soar  
above the little clouds  
keeps them  
as its friend  
in nature's beauty*

Pontare is not a yoiker. He is a modern singer with a variety of singing styles on his repertoire — he even played a major role in a Swedish production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. But to Pontare, allowing his voice to respond to, blend and compete with the sounds of nature is something central, something sacred:

*Now I wander  
sacred  
my breathing for all to see  
my tracks for all to see  
my voice  
is my companion  
Behold me  
I carry the sun's power with me  
and the moon's paths  
adorn me  
Singing, my voice follows me  
wherever I go*

Paulus Utsi describes a Sápmi in transformation. Modern forces have come there in hopes of conquering the land and changing the lifestyles of those who have lived in harmony with it. He describes his Sápmi and its people in this poem, but he obviously also thinks of Indigenous people in general, of Peoples of nature, of people for whom nature is something sacred:

*Our own land, our lives' bread, has shrunk  
the mountain lakes have risen  
the lakes have become dry  
the streams sing in sorrowful voices  
the land grows dark, the grass is dying  
the birds grow silent and leave.*

In a song called "Siaren" ["The Prophet"] Pontare expresses similar ideas, but he is more defiant:

*Wandering people  
Seek the voice of the Great Spirit  
Go out of the shade  
into the light  
into the light*

*Many times they killed me  
Many time I was reborn  
Thousands of feet beat against the ground  
my drum comforts me*

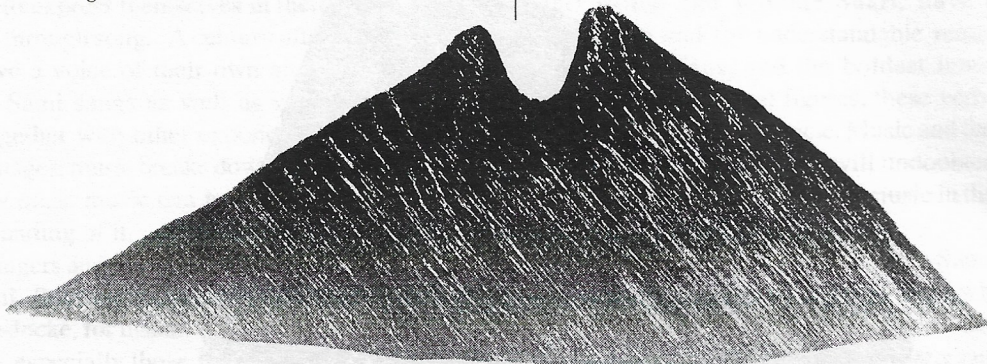
*I see a light  
that shows us the way  
Wings of winds  
Listen to my drum beat  
Listen to the beat of my drum  
My soul is young  
My power is great  
And the trail is afire, red with blood  
The drumbeat resounds across the land  
and the message keeps the sap warm*

It is Sápmi, a Sápmi that is for the Sámi, but just as much a Sápmi that is for the world. We can certainly no longer say that all Sámi music is and sounds the same.

**Hans Ragnar Mathisen** is an artist, poet, writer and map maker. The woodcuts are from Hans Ragnar Mathisen, Elle Hansá, Keviselie, DAT: 1998. They are reproduced here with the permission of the publisher. His epic poem "Luleju" appeared in *Issues* #23 and #24 of Báiki.

**Krister Stoor**, Department of Sámi Studies at Umeå University, Sweden, was the American Scandinavian Foundation Visiting Lecturer at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN, in 2004.

**Roland Thorstensson** is Professor of Scandinavian Studies at Gustavus Adolphus College where he teaches a course on Sámi culture. He is a frequent contributor to Báiki.



Hans Ragnar Mathisen: "MIN SYDHAVSØY," My South Sea Island





## a Genealogy Column by Donna Matson

# OUR GATEWAY ANCESTORS



Donna Matson's grandmother Ellen Mattila ("Coggie") Matson and her grandfather Robert C. Matson.

The purpose of this column is to explore Scandinavian and Finnish genealogy. Genealogy has turned out to be the gateway to my family's place in history in both a traditional and a spiritual sense because I see it as a way of honoring my ancestors.

Every family has a genealogy nut, and I'm the one in mine. If I hadn't been, I never would have known that we had three Finnish relatives on the *Titanic* (one survived, the other two didn't). Or that one of our ancestors, Johannes Nicolai Tornberg, a Swedish clergyman, was murdered by Russian Cossacks when he refused to hand over the key to the Overtorneå church. Or that I'd be able to go as far back as the early 1400s. Or that my family is descended from a legendary Sámi woman, Roju-Elli (Elin Riimi Kyrö Kallats), who was a reindeer herder in Finnish Sápmi and killed a bear with an axe handle.

I first became interested in genealogy when I was a teenager at the time my beloved grandmother Ellen Mattila Matson (or "Coggie" — the nickname I gave her when I was a child) died in Hancock, Michigan of a stroke. My family and I drove up from Iron River to see her in the hospital, but she was in a coma and we

couldn't communicate with her. Somehow I knew she was conscious on some level so I wordlessly told Coggie I loved her and that I would pray for her to get well again.

That night at our motel I read an article in *Reader's Digest*, "How To Climb Your Family Tree." Then, as I was trying to go to sleep, I had a profound experience of a psychic/spiritual nature.

Suddenly it was as if my senses tuned into a different dimension. I smelled Coggie's favorite perfume and felt a warm wave of love from her. It faded slowly and my senses returned to normal. Coggie's presence was gone. Ten minutes later the phone rang in my parents' room next door. I had a feeling it was the hospital calling to say that she had died. A moment later my dad came in to my room to tell me what I already knew.

The next day my family and I, grieving over our loss, went to Coggie's house on Quincy Street to take care of her things. As I looked through her cedar chest made by her father Leonard (who had come from Oulu as a young man), I found a treasure trove of old photographs. I found myself peering into the face of Coggie as a beautiful young woman — a face I hadn't seen before.

As I studied her wide eyes and soft features I became captivated. And mystified. She didn't look typically "Finnish."

I didn't know then that she and my grandfather Robert Matson were also descended from Swedes, Norwegians and Sámis.

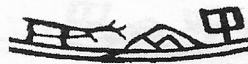
I became obsessed with finding out where our family came from, which I believe was Coggie's profound gift to me.

Years later I learned that the term for the ancestor in one's family that takes us over to the country of origin is "The Gateway Ancestor." I also found out that the name of the motel we had stayed at the night of Coggie's passing was The Gateway. Today I live in a house on a street called La Entrada — "the gateway" in Spanish. I think the triple coincidence is another little message from Coggie, who I often feel around me, especially when I do genealogy.

If you're having trouble finding your ancestor, I'd like to hear from you! My focus will be on Sámi lineage, which is complex. In each *Báiki* I will tackle one or two problems and try to provide solutions, which should prove helpful for others encountering similar situations.

**E-mail Donna Matson at  
[dmvortex@yahoo.com](mailto:dmvortex@yahoo.com)**





# THE WHITE STONE



**Kirsti Paltto**

## VILGES GEADGI

*This is the first of a series of children's stories by Kirsti Paltto about a Sámi girl named Elle and a gufihtar girl named Sáija. Gufihtars [goo-fee-tars] are little people who live under ground. The original version in Sámi, Vilges geadgi [The White Stone], was illustrated by Tuula Mukka and published by Jorgalæddji in 1980. It has been translated from the Sámi by Rauna Kuokkanen and Philip Burgess, who have kindly granted Báiki permission to print this excerpt. They are currently seeking a publisher for the English translation of the book.*





# SAIJA

## 1.

The summer day has given way to evening and the house is quiet. Grey has seeped through the window. Elle, a young girl, sits on a chest in the bedroom dressing a doll called Márjá that her Mother made for her. Márjá's face is dirty, her leg has almost fallen off, but she is still Elle's best friend.

"Don't cry, Márjá, go to sleep — nobody will bother you. Issat and Niillas are out and Mother is milking the cows. I don't know where Grandma's gone... and Dad is up in the mountains marking the reindeer calves." Elle cradles Márjá for a while and puts her to bed, covering her well so that the mosquitos can't bite her. Márjá smiles at Elle from under the blanket.

Elle walks into the main room, sits down at the table and sighs. It is not nice to be in the house all alone. Mom asked Issat and Niillas to take her out to play, but her brothers didn't want to, saying she was too small.

Too small! She sniffs. Five years old last winter, she feels like a big girl. She looks out the window and sees her toys in the yard. Niillas and Issat have kicked her ball into the hay stack. Her eyes move across the field, the river, over the hills and come to rest on Ptarmigan Mountain, which has snow on its highest peak.

Grandma once told her that a mountain spirit lives inside Ptarmigan Mountain. He is a nice and kindly old man who looks after his people. Sometimes they live above the earth, especially during the summer. They have reindeer and live in a *goahti* [a turf hut] just like the Sámi used to in the old days. Sometimes, Grandma would see them driving their reindeer bulls and she had even talked to them. She told Elle that the person who befriends the people of the mountain spirit will be happy all their lives.

Elle remembers how Grandma used to sigh whenever she spoke about these people, as if her memory of them was beautiful but sad. Grandma used to stroke Elle's hair and warn her not to tell anyone else the stories she had told her.

Elle stares up at Ptarmigan Mountain and sighs once more. Black clouds are gathering behind the mountain. Is there going to be a thunderstorm? Fear creeps over her. She leans over and watches the dark clouds approaching. If only Mother would come back from milking the cows!

## 2.

Knock! Knock! Elle is so startled that she jumps. Who's knocking? Is the wind blowing birch branches against the window?

No, somebody is definitely knocking on the window!

Elle is about to run to the cow shed to her Mother when a little girl appears at the window. The girl laughs and beckons

her to come closer. Elle approaches warily. The girl is about the same size as Elle. She is wearing a red Sámi hat and a grey *gákti*. Elle has never seen her before.

"Come outside!" the girl shouts. "Come on out and play!"

Without stopping to think, Elle runs out the door. The girl is waiting for her on the threshold.

"Who are you?" Elle asks. "What's your name?"

The girl laughs so hard that her dark eyes disappear. She takes Elle's hand.

"Guess!"

"You are?" Elle looks at the girl. If it wasn't for her clothing, she could be Aunt Risten's sister's daughter. But she's even wearing reindeer leather boots! Aunt Risten's sister was supposed to be coming from Sweden today and she has a five year-old daughter, but children don't dress like that in Sweden...

"Can't you guess?" the girl laughs. "I'm Sáija and I live in Ptarmigan Mountain."

"In Ptarmigan Mountain!" Elle screams and pulls her hand away from the girl.

"Don't be afraid, I'm not going to eat you," says Sáija, her voice bubbling like an underground stream. "I come here to see human children. I have passed by many times and have seen you. I thought that you would want to have someone to play with, because you're nearly always alone."

Elle steps away from the threshold. She does not feel comfortable around this girl. What if she's trying to trick her?

Suddenly they hear Niillas' and Issat's voices from behind the house.

"Let's hide so that Niillas and Issat can't see us!"

They run toward the woodshed. There is a big woodpile beside it. Elle disappears to the woodshed and Sáija follows her.

It is dark inside. The girls huddle close and hardly dare to breathe. They can hear the boys coming closer and closer. If only they don't look inside the shed! Elle squeezes Sáija's hand hard.

Luckily, Niillas and Issat pass by, looking for the ball they lost while playing football. Let them look all they want, Elle thinks, she won't tell them where the ball is.

The two girls cautiously leave the woodpile. Niillas and Issat have disappeared behind the shed. Elle pulls Sáija in the direction of a small knoll behind the cow shed. They run toward some trees where they cannot be seen.

"What do you want to play?" Elle asks Sáija when they have stopped.

Sáija wants to play reindeer and reindeer herder. She saw Elle's make-believe reindeer village when she was coming down.

"I just hope that Niillas and Issat haven't destroyed it," says Elle.

"We will build it again!" Sáija says with a laugh.

(PALTTO continued overleaf)





"Yes!" Elle replies happily. "We will build a better one! We will put it in a place where they will never find it and where they can't destroy it, those two brats."

They walk on a little further and come to the place where Elle's reindeer village used to be. There is no sign of it.

"Two scoundrels!" Elle storms, stamping the ground. "They always tease me!"

But Sáija has already started making a new village, collecting twigs from the ground to make a *goahti*. Elle makes another *goahti*. Soon, the village is ready. They collect pine cones which they pretend are reindeer.

They play all evening, moving, traveling and grazing the reindeer. Elle has never had such a great time.

"I'll come again tomorrow," promises Sáija when they part.

"Do come!" says Elle, joyfully looking at her new friend. She turns to run home. Her flowery dress flutters in the wind as she dodges twigs and disappears under the fence.

*From that time on the two friends have many adventures during which Elle learns important lessons about the significance of her Sámi language and cultural heritage.*



Kirsti Paltto at the Sámi Council Literary Award Ceremony, March 9, 2003, Utsjoki, Finland. Photo: Eino Kuokkanen.

## KIRSTI PALTTO:

by Rauna Kuokkanen

*"Sami writers, together with other artists and cultural workers, are our ofelas, our pathfinders. They are also our visionaries who are rooted in oral tradition and who use that knowledge not only to reflect our current reality but also to create new visions for the future that is grounded in the past."*

— Kirsti Paltto

Kirsti Paltto was born on the Finnish side of the river Deatnu [the Tana River] in the village of Vuovdaguoka [Outakoski], one of the strongholds of Sámi oral tradition. The Deatnu Valley is the home of many storytellers and writers, including Hans-Aslak Guttorm, Kerttu Vuolab and Eino Guttorm, some of whom are her relatives.

Paltto grew up in a family of seven children. Her parents were farmers who raised cows and sheep and fished for salmon from the river. The family was a typical Sámi household that received its livelihood from *lotnolas ealáhusat*, the Sámi word for the subsistence cycle of living in balance with the seasons of nature — salmon fishing, cloudberry picking, ptarmigan hunting, reindeer herding, and so on. The family also made and sold or traded various types of *duodji* [reindeer boots, mittens and other clothing] in the nearby market place at Kárásjohka [Karasjok]. The round-up and slaughtering of reindeer during the peak seasons also brought extra income to the family. All were part of their *lotnolas ealáhusat*.

Storytelling and oral tradition played a central role in Paltto's childhood. Her father constantly told stories about events, local people and figures of the oral tradition while going about daily activities, particularly during hay-making in the summer.

Paltto attended a residential school where, as the oldest daughter of her family, she felt very lonely because she did not know the other children. She learned to read and write quickly and found solace for her loneliness in writing.

Like many young adults of her generation who were born just after World War II, Kirsti Paltto left her home village to attend school in southern Finland. She enrolled in a teacher training college and graduated in 1971. That same year, her first collection of short stories, *Soaknu* [Marriage Proposal] was published. The collection was based on the rich oral tradition in which she grew up.

Upon graduation she worked as a primary school teacher for four years, after which she became a full-time writer. "I wrote in Sámi," she says, "because I didn't want the Sámi language to disappear from the world. I also wanted to use stories that I heard as a child in my writing. I realized how important and rewarding it was to write in my mother tongue. I could give words to those innermost feelings that are sometimes difficult to express in speaking."





# THE FIRST SÁMI WOMAN WRITER

Paltto, among a handful of other artists and writers including Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, was one of the key figures in the Sami Cultural Reawakening (CSV Movement) at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s. She was the founding chair of the Nordic Sámi Writers' Association, established in 1979, and she still actively participates in its work. More recently she has been involved in establishing the Sami Artists' Organization of Finland made up of artists of various fields and *duojárs* [crafters]. The mandate of the organization acknowledges the unique lifestyle of contemporary Sámi artists:

*"For the Sámi, art is a way of life, a way of receiving a livelihood from the land and the environment as well as a way to enrich everyday life... It is common to combine several jobs throughout the year in order to earn a living in a harsh environment. Sámi art forms are not separated into different categories. Sámi artists do many things at the same time: they paint, write, yoik, act and make crafts."*

So far Paltto has written and published seventeen books, including poetry, childrens' books, novels, plays, short stories and a 1973 pamphlet titled *Saamelaisset* [Being Sámi], the only book she has written in another language, Finnish. *Saamelaisset* called for awareness on the part of the dominant society of Finland about issues that threaten the existence of the Sámi language and culture. These include racism, the pressure to assimilate, diminishing opportunities for traditional Sámi livelihoods and stereotypical views about the Sámi and their culture – in other words the lack of recognition of the Sámi as a distinct People with certain rights.

Paltto's first novel was *Guhtoset dearvan min* [Pasture in Peace, Our Reindeer] published in 1987. It was the first part of a trilogy that described the impact of WWII on the Sámi when large parts of northern Finland were burned down as the German army withdrew and the Sámi families were evacuated to small towns in central Finland where they were temporarily relocated in Finnish homes. The reception of the Sámi by the Finnish families was in many cases hostile and they were often made to feel inferior because of their "peculiar" culture, clothing, language and habits. Upon returning home, many families found that their houses were gone and they were forced to start from scratch. WWII and the evacuation marked an abrupt change in the Sámi culture, characterized by rapid modernization, the loss of *lotnolas ealáhusat* and the internalization of the colonial mentality which held that the Sámi were inferior to the Finns and other dominant society people. *Guhtoset* was translated into Finnish and nominated for the Finlandia Prize in 1987 — the first time a Sámi writer has been nominated for this prestigious Finnish literary award.

In 1995 Paltto received the Literary Prize of the Finnish Sami Parliament, and in 2001, the international Helen Prize that recognizes the work of exceptional women and their contribution

to their communities. Her recent short story collection *Suoláduvvan* [Stolen] was nominated for the Nordic Literary Prize in 2002, and that same year the book received the Literary Prize of the Sámi Council. It has also been translated into Norwegian.

Paltto has also been in charge of Rávgos, a Sámi theater group based in her home village, and she has started her own publishing company Gielas to counteract the difficulties and challenges faced by Sámi writers due to the lack of funding sources.

One of the greatest challenges for Sámi literature is that it is written in the Sámi language. This is also an aspect which differentiates Sámi literature from other contemporary Indigenous literature which, in North America for example, is written mainly in English and thus is available to a much broader audience. The Nordic governments have passed Sámi Language Acts but they lack the will to allocate necessary funds and resources to implement them. Sámi politicians do not fare much better in this regard — they like to give speeches about the importance of maintaining the Sámi language but at the time of decision-making, they view these concerns through a very narrow lens that tends to focus on "traditional Sami livelihoods" and not Sami literature.

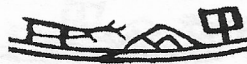
Sami writers, together with other artists and cultural workers, however, are our *ofelas*, our pathfinders. They are also our visionaries who are rooted in oral tradition and who use that knowledge not only to reflect our current reality but also to create new visions for the future that is grounded in the past.

Kirsti Paltto lives in Ohcejohka [Utsjoki], not far from her birth place. At the moment she is waiting to get the last part of her trilogy published and she is also working on a collection of short stories inspired by oral tradition. When questioned about being a Sámi writer, she replies: "You must believe— almost foolishly — in the importance of your work if you are going to write in the Sami language, otherwise you run out of motivation and energy. It is difficult to get much feedback from the Sámi audience and I guess one of the reasons is that Sámi — especially older people — have not learned to read Sámi. The Sámi culture is still very oral: there are many people who are more likely to tell stories than to pick up a book. On the other hand, it is wonderful to write in your own language about everything between heaven and earth. But you have to trust in your work."

More on Kirsti Paltto and her views on literature, writing and the Sámi culture can be found in *No Beginning No End: The Sámi Speak Up*, Elina Helander and Kaarina Kailo, ed., Canadian Circumpolar Institute: 1998.

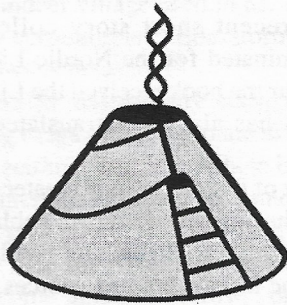
*Rauna Kuokkanen is a Sámi woman from the Deatnu River, the Finnish side of Sámi land. She has just completed her Ph.D. at the University of British Columbia, Canada on the relationship between Indigenous people and academia. She is a frequent contributor to Báiki.*





## BÁIKI RECOMMENDS

### A LAVVU FOR ALL SEASONS



This is the official lavvu of "The Sámi: Reindeer People of Alaska" exhibits. It is also the perfect place to have a warm fire on a cold night. Northern Lavvus are made of natural beige denim (heavier than canvas) and "lap stitched." They come with instructions; poles not included. \$195. for 10-foot diameter lavvu cover plus \$20. U.S. shipping and handling; MN residents add 7% sales tax; AK, Canada and foreign residents ask about shipping prices.

Make checks or money orders payable to "Northern Lavvu." Address: 727 - 14th Avenue Southeast, Minneapolis, MN 55414; telephone: (612) 378-9646; email: <northernlavvu@hotmail.com> or visit [www.lavvu.com](http://www.lavvu.com). —Chris Pesklo

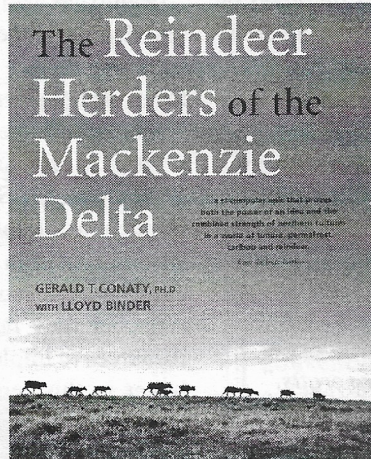
### SAAMI SPIRIT CALENDARS — THEY'RE BACK!



Kurt Seaberg's popular "Saami Spirit Calendars" are back for 2005! Beautiful and informative, they are valuable

teaching tools and make great gifts. You can order yours by sending \$20.00 to Kurt Seaberg, 2000 Seabury Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55406. Overseas orders, add \$2.00 for postage. —Cara Carlson

### A GOOD BOOK FOR AUTUMN EVENINGS



*The Reindeer Herders of the Mackenzie Delta* is the story of the reindeer herd that is directly descended from the original 2,382 animals that a group of herders led by Andy Bahr (Sámi) brought to Canada from Alaska in 1935.

Reindeer and the part they played in Canadian Arctic history is told by three people who were joined together in marriage and in reindeer herding from then on: Ellen Pulk Binder, the daughter of Sámi herder Mikkil Pulk who came to Canada in 1935, her husband Otto Binder (Inuvialuit) from the North West Territories, and their son Lloyd, who today manages a herd of over 5,000 reindeer for the Kunnek Resource Development Corporation near Inuvik, NWT in Canada's western Arctic.

The book, written by Gerald Conaty, Senior Curator of Ethnology, Glenbow Museum (Calgary, Alberta) with Lloyd Binder, is divided into sections that introduce circumpolar cultures, reindeer herding and the Alaska / Canada Reindeer Project. Three chapters are written in the first person — one chapter each for the stories of Otto Binder, Ellen Pulk Binder and Lloyd Binder.

We learn about the difference between reindeer and caribou, the tending of reindeer on skis and snowmobiles, and

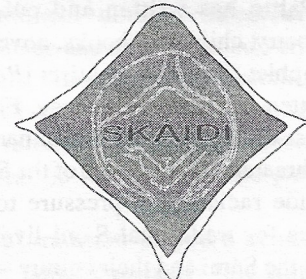
the Binders' journey to Sápmi for a visit with relatives. We also learn how Arctic Native cultures have changed, adapted and survived in a world that continues to suggest they are "disappearing."

Both Lloyd and Ellen Binder have participated in *Báiki* activities, including the First Reindeer Gathering and Siidastallen at the Minnesota Zoo (1994), and Norsk Høstfest in Minot the following year.

Order *The Reindeer Herders of the Mackenzie Delta* from Firefly Books, Inc., P.O. Box 1338, Ellicott Station, Buffalo, NY, 14205, email <service@fireflybooks.com> or call 1-800-387-5085. \$16.95.

—Nathan Muus

### SKÁIDI, THE NEXT TIME YOU'RE IN TROMSØ



In the old days, whenever you were in Tromsø, Norway, you'd head for Prelatten, a wild and noisy Sámi pub located in a cellar down a side street near the SAS Hotel. This was the place to find out what was happening in Sápmi.

But times have changed. Now the Sámi place might be Skáidi, a new watering hole inside the Radisson SAS Hotel itself. In the Sámi language "skáidi" means "the place where the rivers meet." It is being promoted as "Norway's first Sámi bar." Artist Hans Ragnar Mathisen has designed the interior and filled it with Sámi colors and shapes, even down to the carpet and tiles on the floor. Hans Ragnar's paintings, based on Sámi mythology, and the quilted wall hangings of Berit Marit Hætta, are among the 20 Sámi art pieces that hang from the ceiling and walls. And there's more: soon the restaurant upstairs will offer Sámi foods. —faith fjeld



People exhibit coordinator, with a check from the Sámediggi to help support the work that she and Báiki are doing. Nathan Muus yoiked and added much to the Sámi atmosphere. We love this man!

Walter van Horn, curator of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, was at the opening and we thank him and the museum for lending us the baby cradle that has been in the Sara family for five generations.

I presented Bernie Venes (my aunt) with a Sámi hat as a way of thanking her and her husband Elias for their help. Her mother, Ellen Maria Sara (my grandmother), was among the 130 Sámi who came to Alaska in 1898.

The exhibit will open at the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak September 28th and will be there through January.

Lois Stover  
Kodiak, Alaska

<shuyak@ptialaska.net>

### THE SARA FAMILY CRADLE



Baby James Biddle is in the Sara family cradle flanked by his mother Cherie Biddle (l.) and his grandmother Lois Twitchell Stover (r.). The photo was taken at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art. The Sara family cradle came to Alaska in 1898 where it was used by three generations of the Sara family. A photo of Lois' grandmother Ellen Sara holding baby sister Berit in the cradle is featured on "The Sami: Reindeer People of Alaska" exhibit poster [see page 26] and it is also part of the exhibit. The Sara family cradle is on loan from the museum.



## NEWS FROM SÁPMI

### THE FINNMARK BILL THREATENS SÁMI LAND AND WATER RIGHTS IN SÁPMI

by Nathan Muus

In April, 2003, a bill known as "The Finnmark Bill" was introduced in the Storting [the Norwegian Parliament] to set up a state agency that would control decisions about natural resources and their future use in Finnmark. Finnmark covers some 47,000 square kilometers in the northernmost part of Norway where the Sámi constitute a majority in many municipalities.

According to the bill, no decisional rights would be given to the Sámi, who are the Native People of that area, although it states they would be represented.

This has alarmed the Sámediggi [the Norwegian Sámi Parliament], the NSR [the National Sámi Reindeer Association] and others who have been negotiating Sámi rights issues since the 1981 Alta Dam conflict when many promises were made to the Sámi by the Norwegian government. The bill does not reflect any input from the Sámi about the safeguarding of their land and water rights and the use of their natural resources, nor does it involve the Sámediggi in the decision-making process.

In May, 2004, on the opening day of the Second Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, members of the Sámediggi addressed the UN Forum regarding the Finnmark Bill. A delegation composed of representatives from Sámi organizations including the women's group Sáráhkka attended. This year's Permanent Forum focus has been on Indigenous women's issues.

Prior to leaving for New York, Johan Mikkell Sara of the Sámediggi, visited the Báiki Office in Anchorage and granted Báiki co-editor Nathan Muus a short interview.

Nathan Muus: "Why is a Sámi delegation going to New York?"

Johan Mikkell Sara: "We are informing the UN Forum about the proposed Finnmark Bill, and we are also preparing a bill of our own."

NM: "What's wrong with the government's proposed bill?"

JMS: "This is the most important bill regarding the Sámi in many years; it takes away Sámi rights without giving anything back to us. It's not a good bill for the Sámi People."

NM: "When will the Norwegian Parliament vote on the proposed bill?"

JMS: "In January or February of next year."

NM: "What do the Norwegians think of this bill?"

JMS: "They don't necessarily know much about it but I think in general they are sympathetic to the Sámi at this point."

NM: "What do you hope to accomplish at the United Nations Forum?"

JMS: "We hope to put international pressure on the Norwegian government regarding Sámi rights. We have also invited the ILO [the International Labor Organization] to meet with us regarding the Finnmark Bill since they have criticized Norway for not adhering to international law according to ILO Convention No. 169 which Norway ratified in 1990 and which safeguards international human rights."

NM: "Thank you, and please keep us informed on this important issue."

JMS: "Thank you."

The UN Permanent Forum adjourned May 23rd. In a July 6th email to Báiki Johan Mikkell indicated that two meetings between the Sámediggi and the Storting have taken place since then. He went on to say:

"The Norwegian government has agreed to specify Sámi areas in Finnmark so that is a step forward; I believe that most of Finnmark is Sámi. There is a lot of support from other Indigenous groups because this will set a precedent for them in other countries. Our strategy to put international pressure on Norway and solve the problem through political channels has been successful.

"If not, we are ready to take our land rights issues to court," he added.





Sámi film director Paul-Anders Simma photographed with Finnish television anchor Leena Kaskela. He had just won a "Telvis" — the Finnish "Emmy" — for his short film *Let's Dance!* (1993)

because the festival takes place in the middle of January during the coldest darkest time of the year.

At the end of the 1960s at the time when he was reviving the Sámi *yoik*, a young Nils-Aslak Valkeapää said: "Sámis won't be content to be relics of ancient times. They are a living culture and as such they are going to use every modern means needed to keep the culture on the move."

And that's what he did. And that's what we are doing. The ambitious Sámi Cultural Center that is now being built in Inari will include an Indigenous Film Center and a Sámi Music Center and that's when the show will really begin!

*Author Jorma Lehtola is Artistic Director of Skábmagovat, the Indigenous Film Festival of Inari, Finland. E-mail him at:*

*<jorma.h.lehtola@kolumbus.fi> For more about Skábmagovat go to [www.sjida.fi/skabma](http://www.sjida.fi/skabma).*

*Thanks to Jolene Jacobs and Birte Horn-Hanssen for contributing to this story.*

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Herder Ellen Sara and her baby sister Berit.

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