

BAIKI

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Muriel Antoine: "Daughter of the Midnight Sun," mixed-media clay, 1990

THE SAAMI SPIRIT IN ART AND POETRY

• **Marlene Wisuri:** Two Retrospective Exhibits • **Paulus Utsi:** As Long As We Have Waters • **Rauna Kuokkanen:** Sami Women Upholding Cultural Tradition • **Helen Berman:** From Lapland to the Sharon • another Sami architecture fanzine from **Joar Nango** and much much more

House Copy

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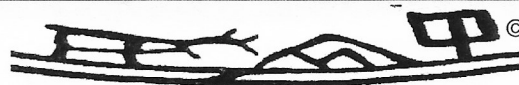
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Please visit www.baiki.org.

WHO ARE THE SAAMI AND WHAT IS BÁIKI?



THE BÁIKI LOGO



MAP OF THE SAAMI AREA TODAY

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

"Báiki" [bye-h'kee] is the nomadic reindeer-herding society's word for the cultural identity that survives when people move from one place to another. *Báiki: the International Sámi Journal* grew out of the search for Sámi connections world wide by people in North America. After its appearance in 1991 the Sámi presence in the United States and Canada was finally acknowledged. The *Báiki* logo was designed by faith fjeld, *Báiki*'s founding editor and publisher, using pictographs from Sámi Drums. The reindeer symbolizes subsistence, the *lavvus* [Sámi dwellings] symbolize the extended family, the mountain behind symbolizes spirituality, and the *njalla* [storage shed] symbolizes traditional knowledge kept for future generations.

The "Sámi" [sah-mee] — also spelled "Saami" or "Sami" — are the Indigenous People of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Kola Peninsula. The Sámi area in the North is called "Sápmi" [sahp-mee], and in the South "Áarjel Saemieh" [war-yel sah-mee-eh]. The nine Sámi languages are related to the Samoyedic, Uralic and Altaic language groups. There are about 80,000 Sámi People living in the Nordic countries. It is estimated that there may also be at least 30,000 people living in North America who have Sámi ancestry. Some are the descendants of the reindeer herders who came to Alaska and Canada in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and some are the descendants of Sámi immigrants who settled in the Midwest, the Upper Michigan Peninsula, the Pacific Northwest and parts of Canada during the same period.

The Sámi refer to their spiritual belief system as "the Nature Religion." Sámi society has traditionally been organized into *siidas* or *samebys* — semi-nomadic extended families who hunt, fish, farm and harvest together according to Nature's subsistence cycles. This worldview and way of life is still a part of Sámi society wherever possible.

The history of Sápmi and Áarjel Saemieh parallels that of the world's other Indigenous Peoples. Colonization and genocide began in the Middle Ages after contact with European missionaries. Sami areas were divided by national borders, and Sámi children were removed from their families and placed in boarding schools where they were taught to think and act like the colonizers. Conversion by the church and assimilation by the state set the stage for the abuse of the Sami natural resources.

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

BAÍKI EDITORIAL PAGE

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SAAMI? (part two) LIVING IN A CIRCLE AROUND A FIRE

"The new Saaminess, the modern expressions of it seen in home decorations, clothing, production of CDs, modern technology, has to do with the ego of the Saami, and not with the true Saami identity. Spiritual ways, the alteration of consciousness, transformation, awareness-shaking experiences, integration with spirits and animals, surely could help to get the Saami on the right road again. I believe it is time for the Saami to revive the Old Wisdom in their contemporary lives." — Elina Helander-Renvall

A lavvu is a symbol of Saami identity that does not involve making up stuff. Because a lavvu triggers memories of who we are and where we are from, it is a structure that brings us closer to our ancestors. In traditional times, a lavvu made it possible for a family to survive the rigors of the arctic winter. Lavvus still provide shelter for the reindeer Saami when they migrate with their herds, and I've noticed that most Saami families have a lavvu somewhere in the mountains or the forest to which they can repair.

In 1968 a lavvu was used to symbolize Saami Indigenous rights. When the Norwegian government made plans to dam the last free river in Sápmi, flooding in the process a sacred canyon and a traditional village, a small group of young Saami poets and artists erected a lavvu in front of the Norwegian Parliament in downtown Oslo as a protest. The presence of a lavvu and what it represented drew worldwide attention.

A lavvu is portable and easy to put up. Three forked spruce or birch poles are interlocked to form a tripod that is sturdy enough to support a dozen or more straight poles. A covering of reindeer skins or other heavy waterproof material encircles the poles, leaving at the top a small opening to the sky. The poles serve as convenient places from which to hang necessities: cooking pots, skeins of shoe grass, smoked meats, a baby's cradle, looms for band weaving.

Branches are laid down on the circle of earth inside the lavvu and covered with reindeer furs to form a fragrant cozy place to sit. Four logs organize the floor space into areas for (left) the family and (right) their guests, and to define the "kitchen" at the back. Fire heats and lights the interior and so the fire place is located in the center of the lavvu. This is where food is cooked and coffee is boiled.

When a Saami family moves into a lavvu, three Grandmother Spirits, Sáráhkka, Juksáhkka, and Uksáhkka, join them. Sáráhkka lives in the fire place. She presides over their family life and the births of their children. Juksáhkka, known as the Bow Woman, teaches them the skills of hunting. Uksáhkka is the lavvu doorkeeper and she is also the guardian of the family's children.

Memories of lavvu life must have haunted our immigrant ancestors when they left their homeland. I believe that this was sensed by their descendants because the earliest

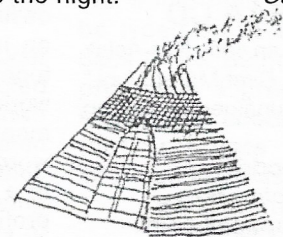
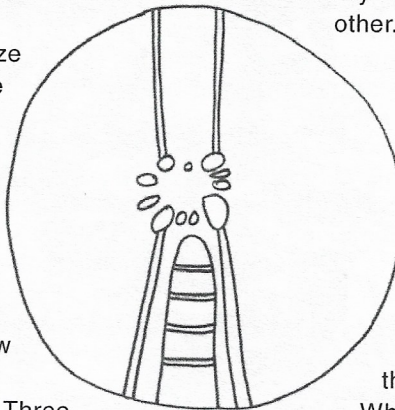
formal meeting of the North American Saami community was called "Looking for a Lavvu." We were still looking for a lavvu when our fledgling group prepared for the first North American Saami encampment, a reindeer festival at the Minnesota Zoo. Lacking a lavvu we borrowed a teepee from the Minneapolis AIM Peacemaker Center. The presence of a Native American teepee in the first Saami Camp in North America symbolized the fact that we recognized each other.

When we learned how to make them, lavvus appeared in Saami Camps at all the major Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish American cultural festivals, and in our back yards as well.

No matter where a lavvu is located it should be respected as a sacred space, a symbol of the universe where loved ones gather in a circle around a fire in a dwelling that connects them to the earth and the sky.

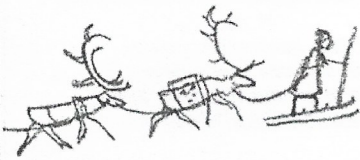
When Johan Turi, a reindeer nomad who lived all his life in lavvus, wrote the first book ever written in the Saami language, *Mui'talus Sámiid Birra* [Turi's Book of Lapland], he described a ceremony that blesses a lavvu. "The Saami still have an old custom," he wrote in 1910. "When they reach their summer camping place in the spring they greet it in this way: 'Hail to you, hail to you, Mother and living-place!' and then they give something and ask the Spirits to take care of their herds so that the reindeer do not die and the calves grow big."

Eighty years later, Hugh Beach, author of *A Year in Lapland: Guest of the Reindeer Herders*, described the year he lived in a lavvu as being a constant adventure: "Lying warm on a reindeer hide with a fire blazing, as the wind screeches by outside searching for someone to freeze, this is the fulfillment of all the dreams spawned by a noisy, hectic world. I am thrilled by the wind and laugh like a mouse, happy to be in its hole. My thoughts drift up with the smoke...out into the night." — Oskuvárri / faith fjeld



lavvu floor plan from *Baiki*; lavvu drawing from *Turi's Book of Lapland*

SAAMI CONNECTIONS



REINDEER TRAGEDY

Stockholm, Sweden: It was bad enough that nearly 300 reindeer tragically drowned after the ice collapsed on a Swedish river crossing. Then a company wanted to grind the reindeer carcasses into biofuel.

The reindeer perished en route to their winter pastures in mid-November. Villagers were herding 3,000 reindeer in the biannual trek through the forest and over the frozen Kutjaure River in northern Sweden. The reindeer walked in a line like a string of pearls, but then something spooked the lead reindeer. Confusion spread through the herd, and the trek turned into chaos. The herd started to run in circles on the ice, and pressure increased so much that the ice broke. Reindeer after reindeer spilled into the ice-cold water. The herders moved along on scooters, but remained helpless as more reindeer — mainly females and their calves — fell into the water. More ice broke as the animals tried to claw and clamber their way back on to solid ice.

"Nothing like this has ever happened," said devastated herder Bertil Kielatis from the village of Sirge. "It is a tragedy in many ways, especially for the animals that suffered. To stand there and witness the animals fighting in the water and not being able to do anything to help them, is not nice."

The females and calves are the most valuable and the tragedy will result in an economic loss for years to come.

VALKEAPÄÄ CD

DAT has reissued an early Nils-Aslak Valkeapää CD, "Vuoi, Biret-Máret, Vuoi." Seppo Baron Paakkunainen is also on this. It is great!

Mary Goodrich
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NEW SAMI RESEARCH PAGE



photo source: d.umn.edu/~jvileta/samiresearch

This fall at UMD we launched the website
www.d.umn.edu/~jvileta/samiresearch

and I believe we are now finished with our edits. It was fun doing this.

Jim Vileta, Business Librarian,
University of Minnesota
Duluth, Minnesota
[<jvileta@d.umn.edu>](mailto:jvileta@d.umn.edu)

Editors note: Thank you, Jim! This is an absolutely wonderful, interesting, helpful, and well-organized website for serious researchers and for recreational browsers. You are the best!

HELPX

This year, at age 70, I needed to reflect on "what really matters." After my first trip to New Zealand in 2005 I'd always had the desire to return. I had heard about HELPX, an internet site that brought "helpers" together with "hosts," i.e., a few hours of work in exchange for accommodations and meals. (Google it and check it out!) I was worried that no host would be interested in a woman of my age so I prepared a profile that emphasized my maintaining the land around my yurt in the mountains above Ukiah, California. It worked, and six

HELPX stations were arranged for a period of two months. The "work" was so easy I felt guilty. I gardened, painted cupboards, changed beds in a hostel, did laundry, etc. while I soaked up the Kiwi culture and geography. I traveled only by public transportation. Here are some insights from this experience:

- Traveling alone is empowering.
- I did not succumb to the reasons why I should not "just do it!"
- Traveling slowly allowed me to make new friends, share the daily lives of my hosts and develop a sense of belonging to the location.
- I experienced a daily sense of happiness.
- Young adventurous travelers inspired me greatly.
- I could have traveled indefinitely with my small suitcase and backpack.
- I thrived on the stimulation of interesting people, places and diverse cultures.
- Because I had my laptop with me I took time to reflect in journals.
- I want to set up my place so I can host HELPXers here. I need them!

Lillian Hoika
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Editor's note: The HELPX website lists nine host locations in Norway, fourteen in Sweden, and three in Finland.

SAAMI GENEALOGY GROUP ON FACEBOOK

Thank you for coming to our Finnish genealogy meeting. So many are searching for their roots. Parents and grandparents often did not talk about where the family lived before they came to America. Many do not even know the name of their ancestors. So we look for clues such as photographs, customs, etc. Most of us were told we were Finnish, Swedish, or Norwegian, when in fact our heritage is Saami.

SAAMI CONNECTIONS



Your map of Sápmi with no country borders was interesting. It led me to think that now with the Internet, we no longer have borders. The more I thought about it, the more I thought about the young people who use social networking such as Facebook. The young people seem to live on the Internet. Now the barrier isn't so much political borders, but technology. The elders may not be as involved with the Internet and may lose touch with the young people.

As a result of what you said at the meeting, I thought I would see if there was any interest in Saami genealogy on Facebook. I started a Saami Genealogy Group on Facebook the day after you spoke to our group. Two weeks later, there were 55 members. Most of them are from Norway and Finland and they seem to range in age from the 20s to 60s. Perhaps this is a way to bridge the gap between young and old in the Saami community.

I see this also as a way to provide information for those who do not know their family roots. The first link placed on the group page was to your publication, *Báiki*. People are very glad to see your presence on Facebook. You have been such an inspiration to those who are trying to find information about their Saami heritage. Sincerely,

Mary Lukkarila
Cloquet, Minnesota
<mlukkari@arrowhead.lib.mn.us>

LOVE BÁIKI

Báiki is beautiful; everything in it resonates with my soul at a deep level. I found out that my grandmother from Iceland had a Finnish name and her features sure look Saami. So I get it from both sides. I read in my Viking research that a lot of Saami came to Iceland and Greenland with the Norse, some as thralls and some willingly, used for their strong magic and ability to calm seas and find fish. Some researchers even think the sea Saami

taught the Norse how to make the *klinker* seaworthy vessels. That makes sense since the invading Norse peoples were from inland and were herders not sea people. The indigenous Sami taught them how to build boats and hunt reindeer.

I remember in Norway hearing some interesting old myths from the farmers about the "little dark people," the original inhabitants, and how the Norse made them slaves, drove them north and intermarried with them. I looked at a map of the old areas where Saami were in Scandinavia and it was all over, from top to bottom in every ecosystem, just like the Bear Religion Ainu in the Japanese archipelago who were driven north by the horse-riding Yamato invading from Korea.

Lesley Thomas
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HOMEcoming IN KUIPER



Báiki and the North American Saami community are featured in an article called "Homecoming" in the current issue of *Kuiper*, a Norwegian literary arts magazine. The issue is devoted to the Saami in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the ČSV cultural renewal movement.

The article about us was written by Joar Nango and Tanya Busse who selected eighteen photographs of our activities down through the years to illustrate the shared experiences that have woven us together. They describe our community as being "infused with a rich cultural hybridity of traditional Saami values and urban

American reality." We are honored by this compliment and grateful to be included in this publication. For information contact:

Kuiper
Strandveien 95
9006 Tromsø, Norway
<kuiperkuiper@gmail.com>
or visit: www.kuiper.no

WHERE'S MY BÁIKI?

I am wondering when I will receive my next *Báiki*. How many issues come out a year? Am I missing some? Please let me know. I do enjoy it and look forward to each issue. Kiitos,

Rebecca Hoekstra
Toivola, Michigan
<momabecca@hotmail.com>
Editor's note: We try to publish

two issues a year but that is not always possible. Each issue takes on a life of its own and "Saami time" seems to be part of our editorial process. Your subscription is good for four issues regardless of when they are ready to be published.

BÁIKI BOOK PROJECT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are in the process of putting together a "Best of *Báiki*" book with chapters organized according to topics such as "Saami Identity," "Traditional Healing," "Symbolism," "Nature Religion," "Storytelling," "Environmental Wisdom," etc.

Since *Báiki* was not digital prior to Issue #25 it will be necessary to type up the older articles and we need volunteers to help us do this. We would mail you hard copies to be typed up in Word and emailed back to us. Being part of this book project is a great opportunity to learn more about a Saami subject that interests you. For more information please contact:

Báiki Editorial Office
(218) 728-8093
<faithfjeld@q.com>

As Long As We Have Waters

THE POETRY of PAULUS UTSI

Paulus Utsi (1918 - 1975) was primarily a reindeer herder and craftsman. He taught duodji (Sami handicraft) at the Sami Folk High School in Jokkmokk in northern Sweden for a number of years. The school was one of the hotbeds of the revitalization of Sami crafts and culture that began around 1970. As the advisor of enthusiastic young people who sought admission to the school in Jokkmokk, Utsi played a central role in this development. He had the status of Elder because he served as a link between tradition and the modern era in Sápmi.

Based on his own experiences, Utsi could address the Sami dilemma. He had himself been forced to move because of the building of hydroelectric plants and he had experienced the closing of the border between Norway and Sweden which prohibited the normal movement of the reindeer. In his poetry he is occupied with the question of how the modern way of life undermines old values and how the Sami are losing their rights to land and water. But he sees hope in the younger generation and derives strength from people who preserve their language and traditions. His main source of inspiration, however, is Nature in the northern world, where Arctic birch and willow thrive on ground where no plants should be able to exist.

AS LONG AS WE HAVE WATERS

As long as we have waters where the fish can swim
as long as we have land where the reindeer can graze
as long as we have woods where wild animals can hide
we are safe on this earth

When our homes are gone and our land is destroyed —
then where are we to be?

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

The good gifts we have received
no longer move our hearts
things meant to make life easier
have made life less

Painful is the walk
on rough roads of stone
silent cry the people of the mountains
while time rushes on
our blood becomes thin
our language no longer resounds
the water no longer speaks

REFLECTIONS BY PEOPLE OF NATURE

In these modern times
the thoughts of People of Nature
are like dust
if something touches them
they turn to nothing
lift
and disappear
they are like the mountain birch
when it is weighted down
and bent
to never again stand erect
—IPU

OUR LIFE

Our life
is like a ski track
on the white open plains
the wind erases it
before morning dawns
—IPU

YEARNING

Like a crooked birch tree
at the edge of the tundra
my life too
is bent by the wind
as the birch longs to reflect light
on patches of bare soil
I long for mountains and plains
summer pastures
this is my life
which I love
—IPU

NOTHING

Nothing stays longer
in our souls
than the language we inherit
it liberates our thoughts
unfolds our minds
and softens our life

SHORELESS SHORE

I don't understand anything
my heart is heavy
just look around
whole villages are gone
the strangers have fooled us
their greed has no limit

I stand by the shore
a shoreless shore
just look around
old shores are no more
the strangers have robbed them
their greed has no limit

I see people bend
on an open sea in stormy weather
just look around
the law is no longer just
the strangers have made their demands
their greed has no limit
—IPU

IN THE CLOUDS

In the clouds the wind runs amuck
thinking it can extinguish
the tiny fragile light
but it keeps flickering
giving the Sami
belief in the future and strength
—IPU

The introductory paragraphs and the poems are from In the Shadow of the Midnight Sun: Contemporary Sami Prose and Poetry, Harald Gaski (ed.). Davvi Girji: 1996. They are reprinted here with the permission of the editor. The poetry was translated into English by Roland Thorstensson and those marked "IPU" were co-authored by Paulus Utsi's wife Inger Huuva Utsi.



drawing: birchwood reindeer milking bowl

SAMI WOMEN: UPHOLDING CULTURAL TRADITIONS OR JOINING THE MAINSTREAM

"The knowledge of how to survive without killing Nature still exists. This knowledge can be found in women."

— Jorunn Eikjok

by Rauna Kuokkanen

photo by Grete Kvaal

Women are considered strong and powerful in Sami society, both in the past and in the present. Nonsense Sami women can be found in all walks of life and we generally tend to think that Sami women are equal to their male counterparts and that they have equal access to all spheres of society. In other words, it is often thought that Sami women do not share the equality concerns of many other women in the world. Some Sami women feel it is not natural to be separate from their communities, while others contest the image of the "strong Sami matriarch" that is often employed to brush aside demands by Sami women's organizations and groups.

According to Sami scholar and activist Jorunn Eikjok, the notion of powerful Sami women in a traditional matriarchal society was created during the Sami ethno-political movement of the 1970s, which needed to distinguish the Sami people from the patriarchal Nordic societies that surrounded them. Jorunn Eikjok was one of the seven hunger strikers during the Alta-Kautokeino River conflict.

Until the late 1980s it was common in the Sami movement to stress that Sami women were not as oppressed as Nordic women and that in Sami society, women were equal with men. Besides a marker of distinctiveness, the notion of the strong Sami woman also had to do with a desired ideal of Sami society rather than with everyday reality. Today, this notion is often used against Sami women who advocate women's issues.

Sami women are often torn between two sets of demands in their daily lives. On the one hand, they are required to uphold cultural values and customs that

are connected with the traditional subsistence economy, and on the other hand they are required to fulfill the various expectations placed on mainstream women. Eikjok suggests that this is due to the internalization of patriarchal social relations in the Sami society while at the same time there is very little support for Sami women's efforts. The adoption of mainstream gender roles has diminished the status of Sami women especially in the public sphere.

Like many other Indigenous women of the world, Sami women have historically held a form of equality with men that has been characterized by complementary roles and tasks. Louise Bäckman, Sami scholar of religion and history, notes: "In a society in which hunting is a prerequisite for survival itself, it is obvious that everyone, regardless of sex, shares the burden of work, and that the division of labor is made on a practical basis." This results in a situation where Sami women have been independent and possess power and control over certain domestic and in some cases economic domains. Reindeer herding women were and often are in charge of their family economy.

Moreover, it has been customary for women and men to own their property separately. Skolt Sami women, for example, traditionally owned everything that they prepared and made including their husband's clothing. Women and men managed their loans and inheritances on an equal footing. It was also common for a Sami widow to move back to her own family and community and take her property with her.

Today traditions have been replaced by such practical factors as employment. The modernization of Sami society especially since the mid-1950s changed many of the practices and customs — an indication of

the influence of patriarchal ideologies that followed the societal changes.

Sami Women and Political Participation

Inspired by other civil and human rights movements around the world, the Sami women's movement culminated in the establishment of the Sami women's organization Sáráhká in 1978. Sáráhká is the female spirit who lives in the fire at the center of the *lavvu* and presides over birth and family life. Many of the women involved in the organization have been active in the Sami ethno-political movement and other forms of cultural revitalization that emerged in the early 1970s. The history of the struggle for Sami rights, however, goes back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this struggle, Sami women have always played a central and significant role. [Editor's note: Women with Sami ancestry have been leaders in the North American Sami reawakening that began in 1991 with the appearance of Báiki.]

The first national Sami conference in 1917 was organized due to the efforts and vision of Elsa Laula Renberg (1877-1930), the chair of the first Sami women's organization. She also established the first (though short-lived) national Sami organization in 1904, and several local associations in both the Swedish and Norwegian sides of Sápmi. Renberg actively promoted Sami land rights. In 1904 she wrote a pamphlet, "Life or Death," that encouraged the Sami to claim their rights to land. She also advocated the education of women. Despite her deep commitment to her



People, Renberg's role in the Sami rights movement has usually been neglected or left out of historical accounts which focus on her male counterparts and their activities.

Sami women played a central role in the Alta-Kautokeino River conflict in the late 1970s and early 1980s although their actions have generally received much less attention than some of the male activists. The Alta-Kautokeino River conflict is considered a watershed in Sami-Nordic relations. It involved a plan by the Norwegian government to build a hydroelectric dam in Northern Norway. In its original form, the dam was going to submerge the Sami village of Máze (Masi) and a considerable portion of important grazing and calving areas in the heart of the reindeer-herding region.

The government plans were met with unexpected resistance by the Sami as well as by environmentalists and fishermen who wanted to protect the river. In 1979 the conflict culminated in a massive demonstration at the construction site and a hunger strike in the front of the Norwegian Parliament building in Oslo.

In 1981 fourteen Sami women occupied the office of the Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland. The Prime Minister met with the Sami women but did not consider their concerns worthy of her time and she left the meeting after half an hour. The

women refused to leave the Prime Minister's office and the next morning the police had to carry them out. Ignored in most accounts of the Sami political movement of the 1970s and 1980s, the fourteen women and their actions were finally recognized in 2005 by the Norwegian Sami Association that held a special ceremony for them.

Sami Women and Traditional Economy

Government policies have made women invisible in the livelihood in which they have always played a central role. In many cases, they have erased the traditionally-held right of women to own reindeer, and in official records have placed reindeer-owning Sami women under the auspices of their husbands. This has had ramifications ranging from the allocation of subsidies and grants, to the status of women, which is often considered one of the central markers of Saminess and Sami identity.

Jorunn Eikjok suggests that presently reindeer herding is commonly regarded both inside and outside Sami society as synonymous with men's activities, while in reality, women continue "to stand for much of the production and for the versatile management of the resources."

Women are also more prone to maintain the traditional Sami *verdde* system, which is the practice of establishing and sustaining economic relations and social bonds between different individuals and families.

What is more, Sami scholar Solveig Joks contends that if reindeer herding is viewed only as a meat industry instead of a traditional way of life (which has been the emphasis of state policies and regulations since the 1950s), women's input and role is made invisible. This view has also been adopted by Sami reindeer herding associations that generally do not recognize the special tasks of Sami women as part of the livelihood.

The result has been in an increasing number of women leaving reindeer herding as a viable way of life and moving to other occupations. There is, however, a growing dissatisfaction in the current situation among Sami reindeer herding women, one of whom has compared the training and marking of reindeer to the raising of children in the family.

Rauna Kuokkanen, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor of Political Science and Aboriginal Studies at the University of Toronto. She is Sami from the Finnish side of Deatnu (the Tana) River. She is the author of Reshaping the University: Responsibility, Indigenous Epistemes, and The Logic of the Gift (both UBC Press, 2007) and the editor of the anthology on contemporary Sami literature Juoga mii geasuha (Davvi Girji 2001). She is a frequent contributor to BAIKI. Rauna's blog: rauna.wordpress.com

*SIMPLICITY, INDIVIDUALITY, AND A CERTAIN MYSTICISM**

the retrospective exhibits of Mel Olsen and Solveig Arneng Johnson

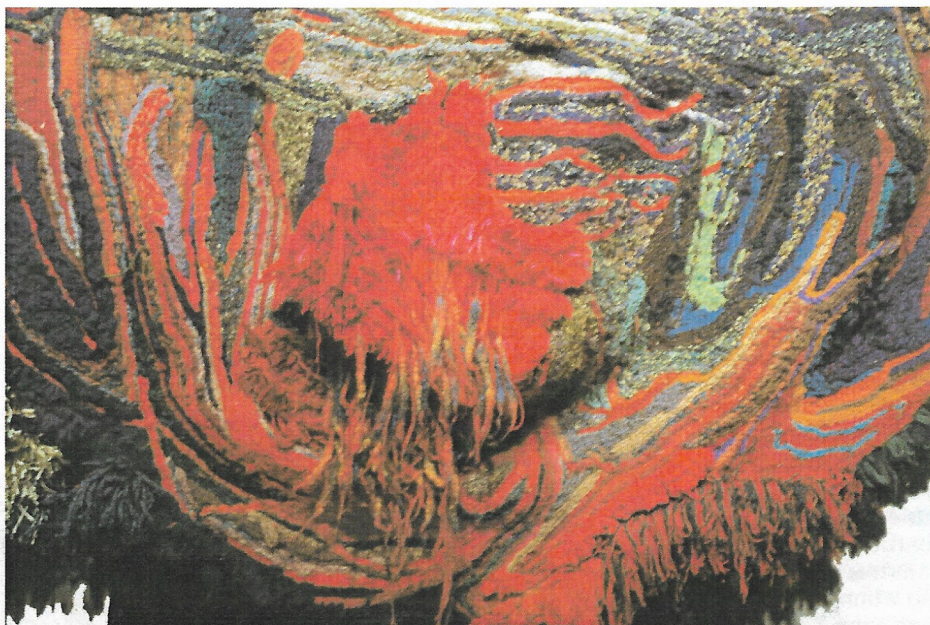
Reviews and exhibition photographs by Marlene Wisuri

The Sami Spirit shines in work by artists Solveig Johnson and Mel Olsen who were friends for many years and shared a passion for creating meaningful art. Recent retrospective exhibits have made their work available to expanded audiences.

It is only fitting that the University of Wisconsin-Superior's Kruk Gallery was the site of Mel Olsen Retrospective: A Lifetime of Art in November 2009. Mel Olsen (1938-2007) taught art and art history for over 38 years at UWS and also served as chair of the Visual Arts Department there for a number of years. The exhibit was curated by Gallery Director Gloria Eslinger with the assistance of Chelsey Miller, UWS art student who has been an active participant in Sami-American activities since childhood. Around 25 pieces were selected from Mel's estate, which is in the care of his sister, Margaret Markgren of Spooner, WI. The work spanned several decades from early black and white woodcuts and lithographic prints to a large block for a woodcut—begun, but left unfinished.

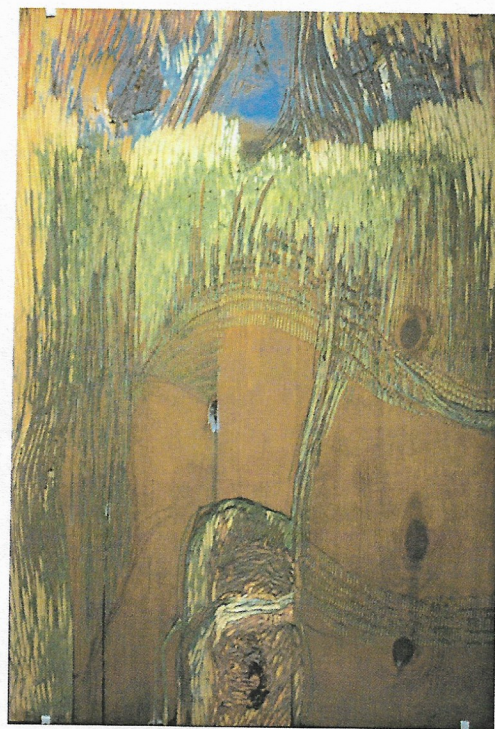


Mel Olsen pictured in the Sami Camp, FinnFest1996, Marquette, MI.



Representative of the large fiber pieces Mel worked on for over 40 years is this detail of a surface crochet piece with characteristic organic shapes and rich, complex color. Although this work is seemingly abstract, it is very much grounded in the natural world, which served as an inspiration for Mel in much of his work.

* a quote from Mel's translation of the Norwegian art education book, *Billed-Grammatikk* by Thomas Breivik (1961, Bergen). Mel's hand drawn copy of the book was included in the exhibition.



Insight into the process used in the production of Mel's large woodcuts was provided in the exhibit by the inclusion of several of the actual printing blocks. The block above shows the similarity of shape and color he used with different media. The large (over 6 feet tall) block on the left was sketched, but the carving uncompleted in a poignant reminder of time run out. The themes and shapes are Nordic and seem to be infused with Mel's research and interest in his Sami heritage.

This thread-wrapped animal mask was one of two pieces included of Mel's fiber sculptures that were an important part of his oeuvre. It incorporates the bold color seen in some of the other textile pieces.

Marlene Wisuri is a long time contributor to *Báiki*. She taught with Mel Olsen at the University of Wisconsin-Superior for a number of years and is the co-author of several books on Ojibwe history and culture, local history, and immigration.

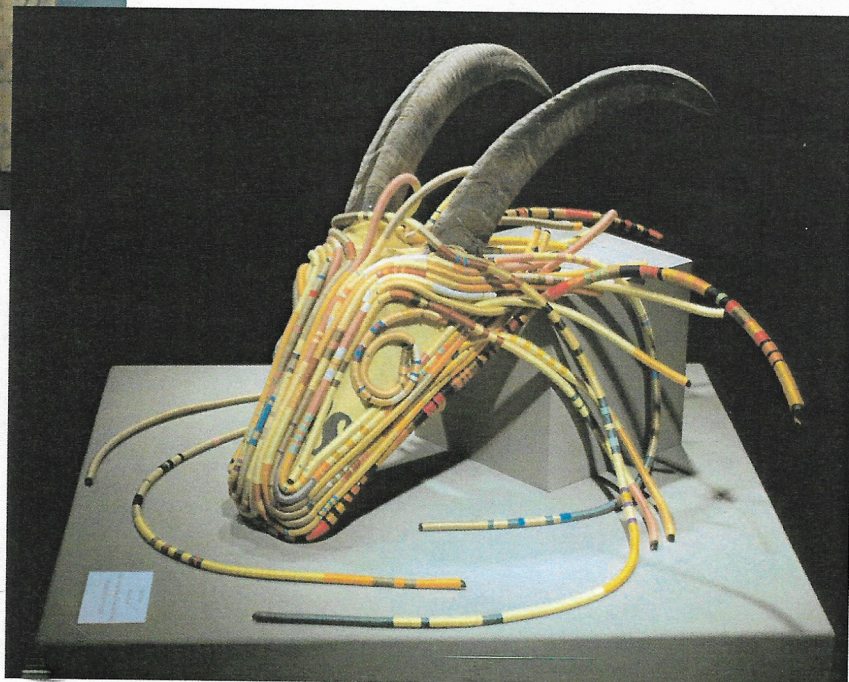
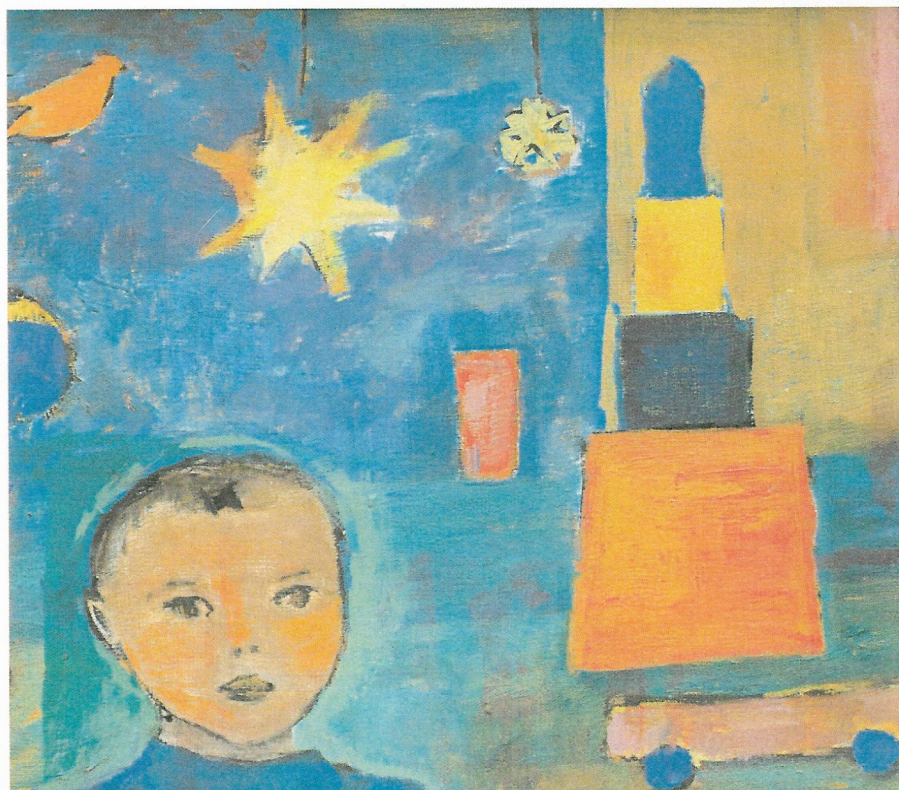




Photo by Casey Meshbeshner

Solveig in her art filled dining room with a portrait painted by her granddaughter Hannah Savage.

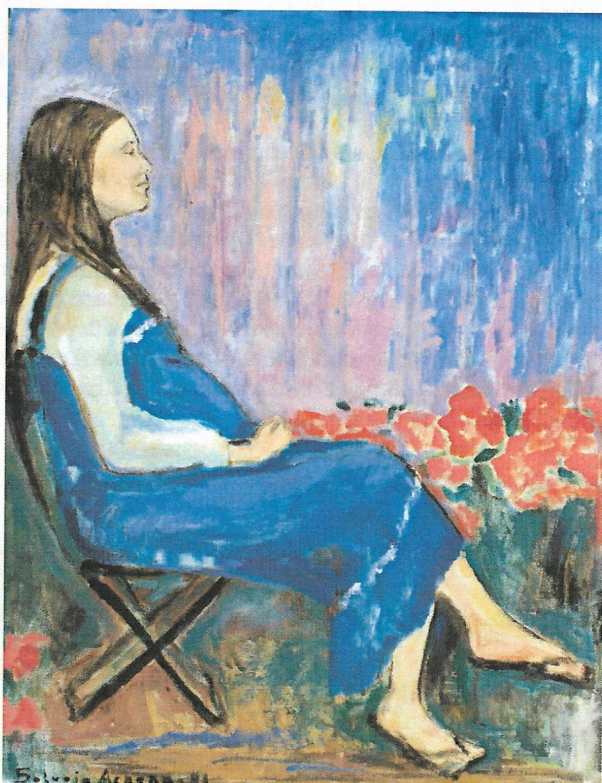
Internet technology has been used to present the retrospective exhibit of Solveig (Sally) Arneng Johnson's paintings, which can be seen at <http://www.arneng.com/solveig/>. Dedicated to her beloved husband, Rudy Johnson, Solveig's on-line exhibit features 112 portrait, landscape, still life, and abstract paintings done over a lifetime. The show was organized and executed by Solveig's son and Àrran editor, Arden Johnson, and Àrran web master Casey Meshbeshner. The exhibit can also be reached on the Àrran web site at <http://arran2.blogspot.com/>.



Kai with toys, 1955

Like many women artists before her, Sally has turned to subjects at hand and portrays her family with an affectionate eye. Her sympathy with the natural world and interest in the quality of light has been with her since childhood. She states that her use of clear, pure color comes from growing up in the Arctic. To learn more about Solveig's life in art, an informative biographical article is available in English and Norwegian on the exhibit web site.

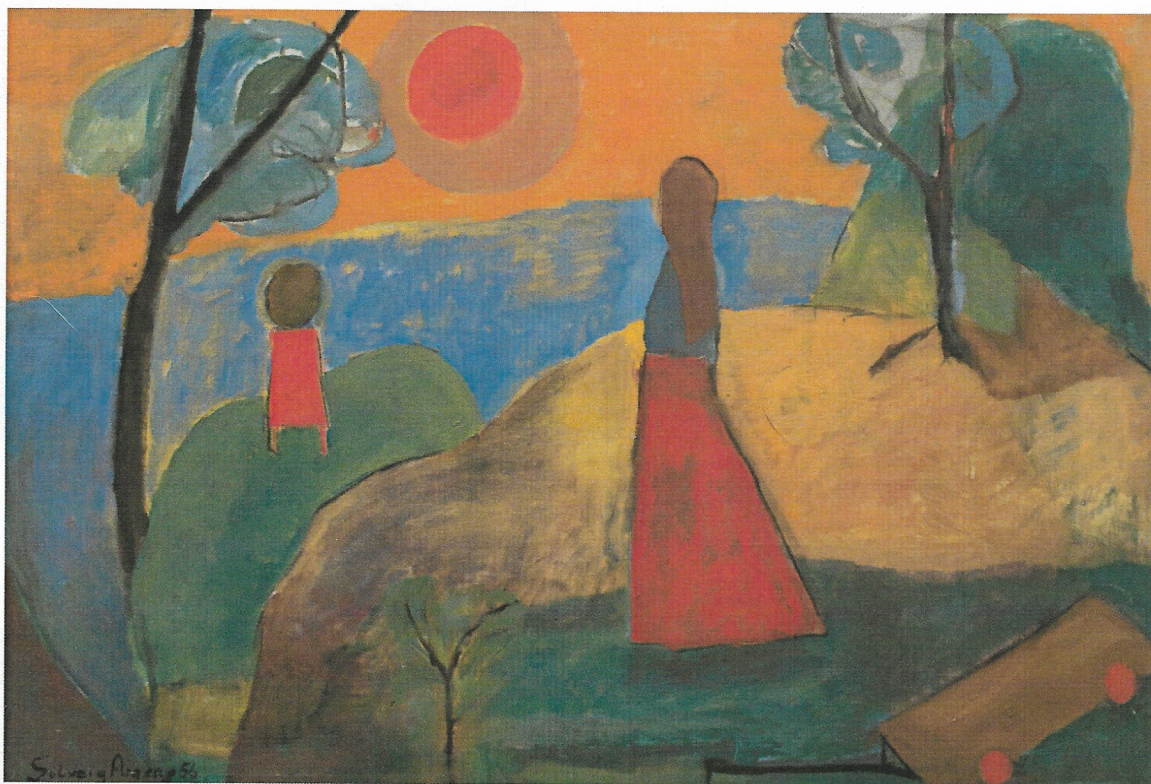
Photographs of Solveig's paintings by Casey Meshbeshner and used with permission. Additional photographs by Casey can be seen at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/caseyscamera/>.



Pregnant daughter, 1981

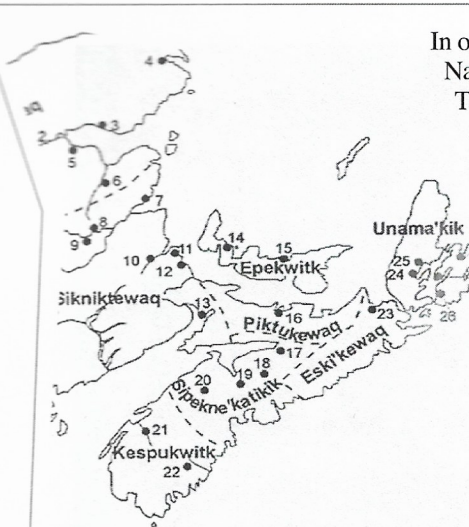


Granddaughter Lila, 1999



Longing for family across the sea, 1956

In order to understand contemporary Saami architecture, I thought it might be interesting to compare it with the Mi'kmaq. Nations who have a lot in common with the Saami. Not only do they live in a similar climate and landscape. The traditional Mi'kmaq dwelling, the Wigwam, is also quite similar to the Saami Lavvu (see my "Saami Architecture" article). As have the Saamis. Their language is threatened and the development and maintaining of Native Mi'kmaq culture by car through six different reserves in the northern part of Nova Scotia. As suspected, I found both



It is apparent that the assimilation process has had a different impact on the Mi'kmaq culture. This is evident in Sápmi. There can be many reasons for this. The history of Mi'kmaq communities and their traditions and livelihood to the fast pace of the modern North American lifestyle. However, when faced with challenges similar to the Saami. Only one third of the Mi'kmaq population is able to sustainably it seems there is a growing awareness of these issues and these challenges are being addressed toward the future of their People. Albert Marshall, an Elder from Eskasoni, is one of them. "Eyes Seeing," which joins ancient Native wisdom and spirituality with positive beliefs about the future. and Kroeker presents an interesting model of how traditional knowledge can be reinterpreted in the present. Landing. Together with the Saami building Árdna, these two buildings show how space can be reinvented of our traditional cultural symbolism.

Example of a traditional Mi'kmaq Wigwam with birch bark coverings.



The Mi'kmaq

COMPARING

The Health Care Centre in Pictou Landing is a relatively small project (5000 sq. ft. on two floors) intended to serve the specific needs of the local Native community. The project was designed by Richard Kroeker whose specialty is alternative light wood construction. The round bentwood truss assembly is of interest for its use of thinnings sourced from the local sustainably managed forest. The wood used was from red spruce trees. The selection was made on the basis of straightness and the need for a base that was 7 to 8 inches in diameter and 50 feet high. The wood was hand-picked from trees that were growing in clusters because the closeness of the trees to each other caused them to grow straight and tall in search of light. Following the local Native tradition, the selected wood was then submerged in salt water for several days. This technique was used throughout the project and it served not only to preserve the wood but also to facilitate the bending of the timbers. Although no scientific testing has been carried out to determine the efficacy of salt water in preserving timber it is worth noting that there was apparently a similar tradition in older coastal communities in Ireland.



Pictou Landing Health Care Centre, Pictou Landing, NS, Canada



A Mi'kmaq front-lawn, Waycobah

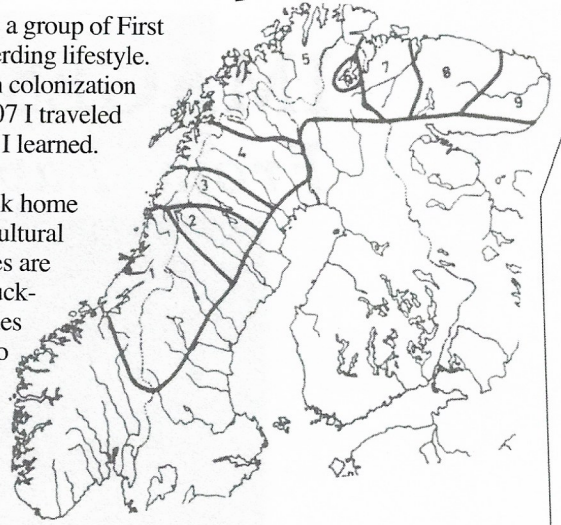


A Mi'kmaq front-lawn, Waycobah

In Eskasoni, the biggest Mi'kmaq reserve in Nova Scotia, there is a narrow road. The outdoor area surrounding each Finnmarksvidda villages in Norwegian Sápmi. While it is a rare sight here. Rather than being "messy," however, these areas which here are recognized as places to use and live. The similarity between Saami settlements and Eskasoni is a significant underlying factor in how buildings are planned and built. The tradition in which close relatives prefer to settle close together is that exist in both the Mi'kmaq and the Saami culture.

the architecture of another Indigenous People, the Mi'kmaq of eastern Canada. The Mi'kmaq are a group of First Nations whose semi-nomadic hunting, fishing and gathering society closely resembles the Saami pre-herding lifestyle. (see "Architecture" fanzine, Báiki Issue #30). The Mi'kmaq people have also suffered under European colonization and the loss of traditions are of constant concern for the Elders who guide their communities. In August 2007 I traveled to the Mi'kmaq reserves and differences between our two Peoples. On this page I will present a few of the things I learned.

The Mi'kmaq and the non-Mi'kmaq relationship is in less of a state of flux than what I know from back home. The Mi'kmaq on reserves has provided difficulties for the Mi'kmaq concerning the adaptation of their cultural traditions to modern life. It comes to cultural survival and the maintaining of language and group identity, their communities are struggling and/or write in Mi'kmaq and unemployment is the major problem on the reserves today. Luckily, during my travels I met positive and strong Mi'kmaqs who are maintaining healthy attitudes. One meeting I had with him was truly inspiring. He spoke to me about his philosophy of "The Two Worlds" and how he blends traditional and modern science. His interest in architecture and his cooperation with the Canadian architect Richard Hargrave led to the design of new architectural design in buildings such as the Health Care Centre at Pictou. The use of natural materials can be treated in a way that contributes to Indigenous society by the much-needed

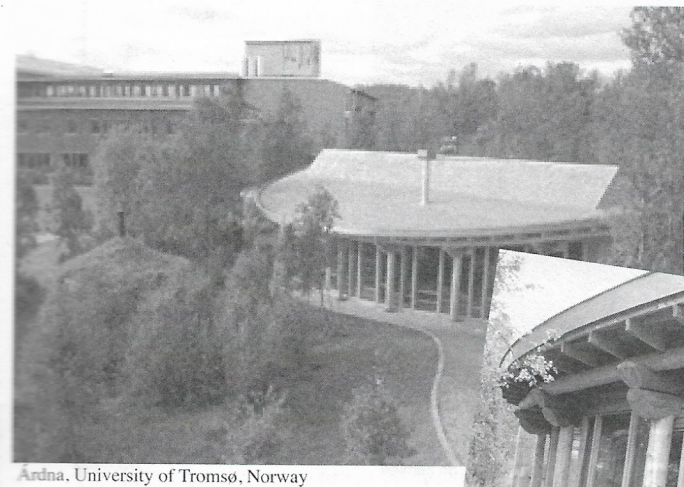


Example of a traditional Saami Lavvu
reindeer herder's tent.

The Saami

Perhaps the finest example of modern Saami architecture is to be found in Árdna at the University of Tromsø Centre for Saami Studies. The Saami word "Árdna" means "a treasure," or "something of great value." Árdna is part of what is considered to be a Saami landscape within the university campus, along with a *goahti* [traditional turf hut] and a *labyrint* [labyrinth]. It is a simple building in the shape of a half moon, beautifully and finely detailed in its design and use of materials. The way it silently blends into the terrain is a clear reference to the Saami *goahti*.

The Saami craftsman Jon Ole Anderson was involved in the construction process and he chose the materials for the building. Its multipurpose space is used for receptions, meetings, exhibitions and other educational and cultural gatherings. The curved open glass façade creates excellent light in the daytime and as in the traditional Saami *lavvu* and *goahti* dwellings, the fireplace is located at the center of the space and fire gives life to the circular interior. The fireplace is surrounded by benchlike seats that are built into the floor. So Árdna is an innovative architectural expression where both traditional materials and ancient spatial principles are reinterpreted and introduced in a new and modern context.



Árdna, University of Tromsø, Norway



the buildings are single-unit houses situated alongside the roads. It appears to be very similar to the Saami settlements in the past. The fences and green lawns with neatly cut hedges would be a difference is cultural — another understanding of outdoor spaces to look at. When I talked to locals, another interesting thing was itself. It turned out that family relationships often are an important part of the reserve. The *familie-tun* [family farm] is a natural consequence of the strong family ties



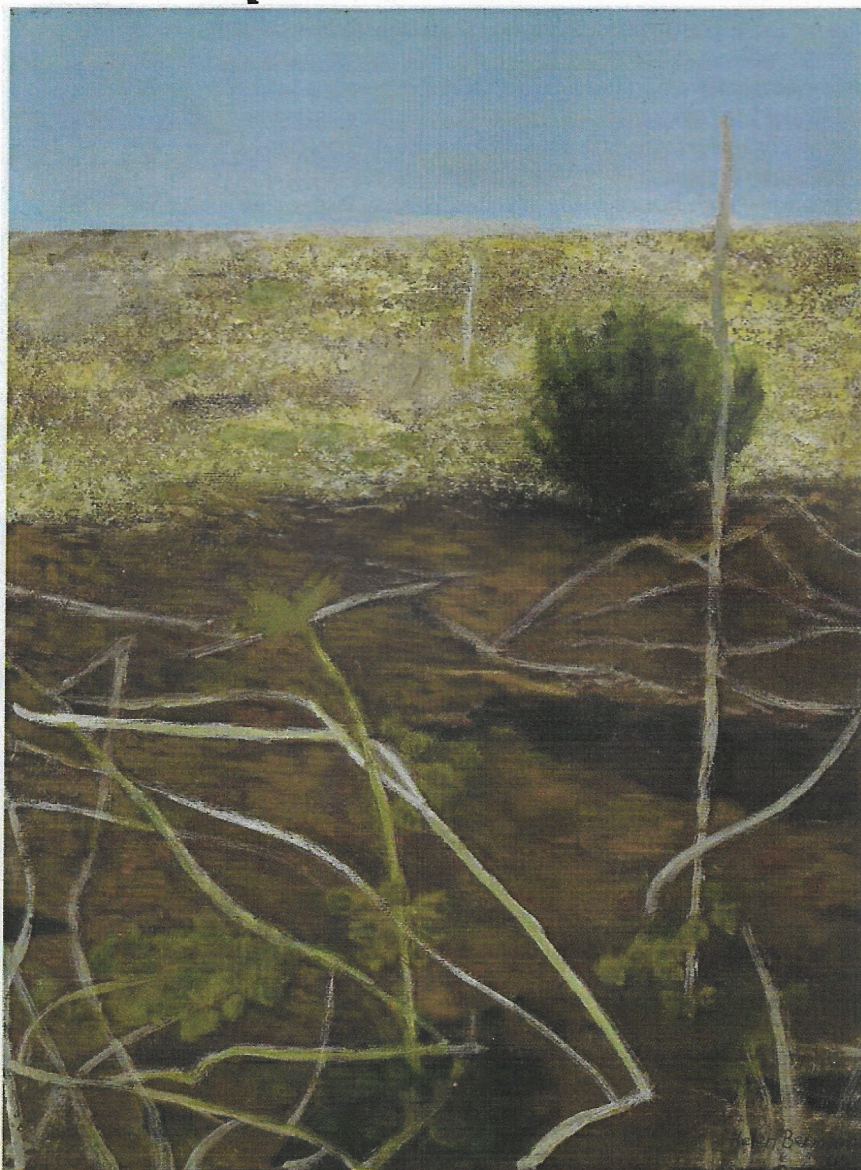
A Saami front-lawn, Kautokeino, Sápmi



A Saami front-lawn, Kautokeino, Sápmi

IMAGES OF HEALING

From Lapland to the Sharon



Helen Berman: "Sharon Landscape," 2005, 30 x 40, acrylic on canvas

The Landscapes of Helen Berman

by Mordechai Goldman

The most important period in Helen Berman's art occurred in her sixties. She was painting then in a style which could be defined as lyrical-abstract post-expressionism, and it seems that it served her primarily as a means to cope with darkness. This darkness was memories of the Holocaust, the windowless winters, the horror of all-consuming time, the charcoal layers of depression, the gloom of being cut off. It was a place where consciousness entrenched itself in uncertainty — a painful twilight of deprivation, lack and negation, sorrow about everything that was lost and the hunger for form and color.



Helen Berman: "Sharon Landscape," 2005, 50 x 40, acrylic on canvas

The artist came to Israel in 1978 from the Netherlands, many years after the War, and like many immigrants, was torn between places no longer hers and those not yet hers. Many of her expressionist paintings are landscapes blending those of the soul with concrete ones, some of them relating to landscapes of Lapland and motifs from its native Sami culture.

The artist had begun to take an interest in Lapland when, at the age of fourteen, she read Robert Crottet's book *Enchanted Forests*, mystical myths and legends of the Skolt Sami. She read the book over and over and Lapland even entered into her nightly dreams. It seems that understanding her relation to the Sami landscape is key to the psychological basis of her art.

The reason for Helen Berman's interest in Lapland can be found, I think, in her biographical background. In the period of the Holocaust, she was hidden, together with her parents, in an attic. She entered this hideout at the age of six. When she was eight, the family was caught by the Germans and taken to prisons in Rotterdam and The Hague. Later, the three were sent in a cattle train to the Westerbork transit camp. They were liberated there in April 1945.

The war years had a freezing effect on her feelings. Her mother had been terrified in that claustrophobic situation to the point of not being able to give Helen much love. Her father, likewise, was very tense because of his fears. The main attention the girl received was strict control of her movements and her voice. She was expected to be silent. If she cried, her mother silenced her with a pillow.

The perfect metaphor for the trauma of those years of hiding and imprisonment, characterized by everyday mortal fear and lack of human warmth, was the frosty snow plain of Lapland. Its inhabitants, the Sami People, are able to survive its icy temperature by their sheer optimism, and it seems that young Helen soon identified with their survival. Lapland has a long dark polar winter, but spring awakens with an abundant growth of primal and shimmering greenery, spreading over the land, swarming with birds and insects, the night sky star-studded as

in a fairy tale. This interaction between the devastating winter and the joyous creative energy of a green spring is characteristic of Helen Berman's paintings. Her post-expressionistic paintings were "early blossoms," that sprouted miraculously after a long winter.

Following her studies she married concert pianist Bart Berman and raised with him a son and two daughters. Only in her sixties, after their children grew up and married, did she allow herself to paint more and the quality of her paintings is remarkable.

Today the artist lives in Tel Mond in the Sharon region, the northern half of the coastal plain of Israel. It lies between the Mediterranean Sea to the west and the Samaritan hills to the East. There she transforms the photographs she takes into paintings done in oils, acrylics, watercolors and pastels. From the joint acts of photographing and painting, Helen Berman has developed "fantasy landscapes" — works made of memories of real and transformed landscapes. In my view, the secret of her paintings lies in their transmitting the feelings of a lone wanderer who finds rest for her soul in a friendly landscape that contains no great threat or major deprivation.

Mordechai Geldman is an Israeli poet, author and psychologist living in Tel Aviv. He is the award-winning author of five books of essays and eleven books of poetry. His poetry has been translated into English, French, German, Italian, Greek, Polish, Croatian, Chinese, Russian and Arabic.

Two of Helen Berman's paintings of Sápmi were used as illustrations for "The Healing Power of Plants and Trees" in BAIKI Issue #24, 2002. At that time she wrote, "Thirty years have passed since we immigrated to Israel. Recently I found out about BAIKI on the internet. I became its first and only subscriber in Israel. I'm happy to read it and to stay informed about the Sami people in their various countries."

ABOUT THE COVER

"DAUGHTER OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN" A MURIEL ANTOINE MASK

Lakota (Sicangu) artist Muriel Antoine draws on her traditional background to create highly emotive, symbolic personal statements about Lakotas, Native Peoples and human experience. The Lakota philosophy of respect for all living things and the four sacred colors of people is celebrated in her works and offers a way of being in the world which is sorely needed today.

She is a great grandmother, a Korean War veteran and a traditional spiritual person. She holds a master's degree in educational administration from the University of South Dakota. A prolific writer under the name Anpetu Winyan (Day Woman), her varied experiences infuse her writing and inspire her audiences.

Mask courtesy of American Indian Contemporary Arts.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Reflecting on my place in this universe, I add my dedication to preserving the harmony of this country's insight by embodying my art (masks) and poetry as a bridge between logical thinking and paradox. The masks bring their own power of suggestion that need no words or explanation. This artistic utilization as an indirect teacher is a powerful source of unconscious communication. It touches that part of one's self that responds to the ancient use of symbols from the distant past, giving each mask its unique character.



photograph: "Lakota Sioux," Old West Pictures

CYCLIC PATTERNS

— Muriel Antoine

Every object's origin is derived
by conditions of its history,
let those born be worthy
of their ancestors' memory, our identity
we trace in our grandparents' tracks
through walks in the past

The depths of life's cycles
spiral through many dimensions
level after level of timeless rhythm
existing in many wombs that bore me
echoing the action's blessing
that shaped their thoughts into
our character with ideals and thought
forms of their past deed's living memory

Past existence is stamped
upon each creature of this present time
the past bore me the present
carrying the future in my womb
deeds done are the living stones
with which your being is built
and the structure of the future

Our life's identity is imprinted
upon those coming generations
according to our embodied
thought, word and deeds
we give thanks to our Creator
for this cyclic pattern
of life's passage

Memories of past life experiences
still exist as those memories run through
the darkness of my mind like moonbeams
bright as day through the years
all *Mita Uncis* and *Tunkasilas**
who have walked this Earth
passing but in a fleeting second
so we may know this time and place

We inherited the rituals
the elders' songs of the stones
all *Mita Uncis* and *Tunkasilas**
we send you our grateful voices
we have sung your song
and it will continue on.

*Grandmothers and Grandfathers



photograph: Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, Beaivi, Ahcázan

A BLESSING FOR THE SAMI

—Ainak Ahkebeaivi

May Rádien, the Almighty Father, Ruler of the Skies,
Bless and keep your clans from all harm.
May your Goahhti become more numerous than the reindeer,
And your Siida spread far and wide throughout the lands.

May Máttaráhkká, Ancestral Mother of the Tribes, Goddess of the Earth,
Grant you shape and form, and always reside beneath your floors.

May Sáráhká, Ancient Mother of Fire,
Keep your people fertile and strong, and always dwell in your hearths.
May Juksáhká protect and guard your children,
Her bow ever ready to defend against your enemies.
May Uksáhká, gatekeeper and defender of the people,
Stand guard at your door and show you the secret ways.

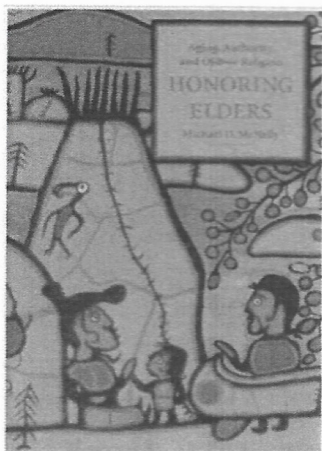
May Guovssahasat illuminate your path on cold winter nights,
As they dance with Sarvvabivdi amongst the bright stars.
May Bieggolmmái, Master of the Winds, watch over your herds,
His winds ever to your back;
And Beivenieida bring the eternal sunshine of summer,
And Bieggalles usher in the soft snows of winter.
May Basse Aske guide you through the darkness,
As Sacred Mánnu shines through your moon rings.

May the Gufihtar dance and sing in your forests,
And the Haldi protect your sacred places.
May your lands be filled with holy Basse,
And your prayers in Bassevárri always be answered.
May your clans gather around the Sieidi,
Ever guided by the wise Noaidi.
May your Gázzi always stand with you,
In times of darkness and hardship.

May your hearts be forever filled with Joik,
And your souls with Sacred Drumbats!
May the clans never be forgotten,
And Sápmi be forever blessed!

*(See page 21 for a glossary of the Saami words
used in "A Blessing for the Saami" and
information about the author.)*

Anne Dunn: BAIKI BOOK REVIEWS and POETRY



***Honoring Elders: Aging, Authority, and Ojibwe Religion.* Michael McNally. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. 400 pages.**

When I saw this book I wondered, “How could Michael write so much about such a simple topic?” But after just a few pages memory carried me back to my childhood. I lived with my grandparents and emulated Gramma so closely that I was known as “Mindimooyenh,” little old woman. Although there were those who laughed at the idea of a little girl already being called old woman, I was honored. I suppose I’ve been old for nearly my entire life.

My grandparents were excellent teachers and I became their student. As Michael points out, the 3L’s of education in the Anishinabe community are Look, Listen and Learn. So I was an observant, quiet, thoughtful child.

While it’s true that not all elders are Elders, I adhered to the social ethic of respecting my elders because my elders were worthy of respect. Of course, as a child I enjoyed a small society and a narrow place in the scheme of things. In time I would be exposed to some very disappointing elders. But in that place during those early days my elders expanded my horizons to include a reverence for the wisdom, kindness and compassion of the old ones. I was admitted into a realm where aging was recognized as a meaningful process.

Now I know there are those who demean aging and view the process with

fear and contempt. I have been told that a full life includes four hills: child (which includes the fetus), youth, adult and elder. Michael enhances the stages for us. He writes that the first hill is the age of listening, the second is the age of doing, the next is the age of giving back and the last is the age of sacred learning. Furthermore, the cycle of life reflects the cycle of seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter.

When one considers that we live in cycles we see that the elder and the child are close. For this reason many elders share an especially loving relationship with their grandchildren. As one ages there is a growing awareness that elder knowledge has been carried within for a long time but only in old age does it distill into wisdom. I think this is a benefit that comes from enjoying a close bond with the elders.

They also say the first and the last hill are more difficult, dangerous and rugged than the hills of youth and adult. Old ones with faltering step, gasping breath and halting strength will fall. Some are quickly absorbed into the hill. Others fall but get up to move on a bit farther before they are absorbed. In the meantime, they help one another and even shout encouragement to those on the third hill. The crest is hidden in a mist and only a few reach that point. Then they vanish into the clouds. As we approach “the last weary hill” we should have lived out our own visions and helped our children along their journey, too. We want them to know how to grow old and how to climb the last hill with integrity and dignity.

The tradition of honoring the elders has not been easy to maintain. The continuity of the tradition has been challenged by many historical events. There have been the dark days of missions, boarding schools, treaties, displacements, reservations, relocations, poverty, disease and epidemics. Yet the role of elders as mentors, teachers and spiritual guides remains an integrated way of Anishinabe life.

Cherish your old age, Michael writes. It is a gift. Live with extreme courage for elderhood is a calling, a vocation. Assure that the sacred community has a place in contemporary life by honoring the library of cultural memories carried by our elders.

Uncombed Hair

Wind whispers tangled in my hair.
Gramma left it uncombed for days.
Later she would find what
Wind had left in my hair.

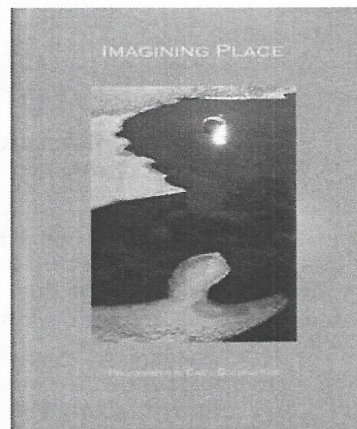
She would tell it to me
As she brushed the tangles out
With gentle, prayerful hands
And deep grandmother sighs.

I often leave my hair uncombed
For several days.
Then with aching fingers I find the stories
Wind is whispering to me.

Bit by bit I set them free.

— Anne M. Dunn

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During Hjemkomst 2009 artist/scientist Carll Goodpasture’s photographs of Minnesota were on exhibit at the Spirit Room Galleries in Fargo. Anne Dunn was at the book signing.



***Imagining Place: Photographs of a Tall Grass Prairie - Eastern Deciduous Ecotome.* Carll Goodpasture. Gjettem, Norway: Imago Ans, 2009. 80 pages, limited edition.**

When I opened *Imagining Place* I was awed by the texture of Carll Goodpasture’s stunning black and white photographs of a tall grass prairie. I found it difficult to believe there were only 38 pictures because at the turning of the final page I felt I’d been on a long and timeless journey.

Then I read the words that accompanied the images and discovered the voice of Black Elk, an Oglala Lakota. Born in 1862, he saw the land as we shall never see it. Goodpasture writes, “In a poetic sense my eye has been listening for ancient voices in the land.” When I listened with my eyes I heard the heartbeat

(ANNE DUNN continued on page 22)

IN REMEMBRANCE

The Báiki community has lost several parents and we wish to acknowledge and honor them.

SEABERG

The Seaberg family, including active Sami community members Eric and Kurt, lost their mother, June Ovall Seaberg, on September 26, 2009. Her maiden name was a shortened version of Ostervallskog, her father's village in western Sweden which he left as a very young man. June grew up in Mound, Minnesota and worked as a medical secretary much of her life. She was also active in the Swedish Covenant Church and Swedish American organizations. Her husband, the artist Albin Seaberg, passed away in 1995.

PESKLO

Our lavvu maker Chris Pesklo lost his mother, step-father and father.

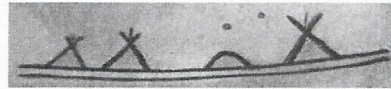
His mother, Violet Anderson Materkowski, died August 8, 2008, in Anoka, Minnesota. She was from the Norwegian Sami side of the family. Her husband, Johnny Materkowski, died fourteen days later. For several years the Materkowskis were lighthouse keepers at historic Thacher Island, Rockport, Massachusetts.

Chris lost his father, Joseph Pesklo, on January 3, 2010. He was from a Polish Jewish family and worked as an electrical engineer for most of his life.

Chris says that because of all three of them, "I know every possible Polish and Norwegian joke ever told. They will be missed."

—Nathan Muus

(continued from page 19)



A Siida: Elina Helander-Renvall from *Siida: Sami Mythic Texts and Stories*

A SAAMI GLOSSARY

Basse or Bassi: A sanctuary, altar or a sacred place where cooking is done for sacrificing in gratitude to a god.

Basse Aske: The moon that rises near the time of the Winter Solstice. Rings are made for the sacred moon to shine through and hung in the goahti to give the blessing of light in the darkness of winter.

Bassevárri: Sacred mountains, the dwelling places of shaman spirits.

Beivenieida: The "Daughter of the Sun" who brings sunshine in the summer so that grass grows and the reindeer and creation will be well.

Bieggalles: The "God of the Winter Winds."

Bieggolmmái: The shovel-carrying "God of the Winds and Tempests."

Gázzi: Guardian spirits or shaman spirits. Each person is born with a guardian spirit.

Goahti: The Saami home. It is considered to be a sacred shrine inhabited by household gods and spirits.

Gufihtar: An attractive folk who live in the earth and protect the herding lands. When asked to visit their realm, one should not eat or drink there lest one get stuck underground.

Guovssahasat: The great Northern Lights who will punish those who fail to appreciate their beauty and honor them.

Haldi: The spirits of places and of animals. Every grove, hill, lake, and feature of the landscape contains such beings.

Joik [also spelled "yoik"]: A cappella traditional song chants. The noaidis possess special songs that allow them to work powerful transformations by singing things into being.

Juksáhká: The "Bow-Woman," a Goddess who can make an unborn child male, and who

is an instructor of boys. She lives near the entrance to the home.

Mánnu: The Moon, which has a special place in Saami tradition.

Máttaráhká: The "Earth Goddess" who is the mother of Sáráhká, Juksáhká, and Uksáhká. She receives the souls sent down for incarnation by Rádien. She lives beneath the floor of a goahti.

Noaidi: The great shamans of the Saami, who conduct healing rituals, give prophecies, forecast the weather, retrieve lost souls, and use a ceremonial Drum decorated with sacred art.

Rádien: The "Powerful Father," also called Rádien Atte, the all-ruling God of the upper sky. From him descend human souls that go to Máttaráhká and then to her daughter, Sáráhká for incarnation into earthly life.

Sápmi: The Saami homeland without borders.

Sáráhká: One of the most beloved Goddesses of the Saami. She dwells in the hearth of every house, thus she is the "Mother of Fire." She molds an unborn baby's body around a soul and helps the mother give birth.

Sarvvabivdu: The cosmic elk hunt that is reflected in the constellations of Gemini, Castor, and Pollux. Sarvvabivdi, Fávdna (Arcturus), chases the elk.

Sieidi: Natural or man-made sacred sites around which individuals, families, and clans gather. Some are unusually-shaped stones or rocks whose markings and holes are reminiscent of humans, animals and gods. Offerings are left with them.

Siida: A Saami village.

Uksáhká: The "Door Wife," the helper of newborns who protects women and children from illnesses and other dangers. She guards the front door of the goahti.

Ainak Ahkebeaivi is the Saami name given to Henno Parks, a teacher of Finno-Ugric Languages in Tallinn, Estonia. He recently traveled throughout Sápmi: "Even though I am not Saami myself," he writes, "I belong to one of the Finno-Ugric tribes who has suffered in a similar way — the Estonians. As a result of my experiences in Sápmi this short blessing came into existence. With so much of the old Saami religion gone, I just felt it was important to remember their roots and traditions. We Estonians have similarly lost our ancient roots and traditions that were destroyed by 60 years of Soviet occupation and so now we must turn to our cousins in the North to rediscover them." Thanks to Elina Helander-Renvall for serving as consultant for "A Saami Glossary."

(ANNE DUNN continued from page 20)



black and white photo: Carll Goodpasture, "A Way of Birch."

of the universe, the dance of life. I heard grass growing, water flowing, trees mourning, flowers singing, leaves talking, snow breathing, ice cracking, clouds clashing and stones dreaming. I heard wind prayers follow the birds, the shrill star chorus pierce the night, winter rattle in the moon and our tilting earth tumble across the sky.

The images speak of the interconnectedness of all beings... all things. They ask, how will life be sustained if we break this fragile connection? Some say it is already broken or so badly damaged that we are already facing extinction.

The stewardship of First Nations has been usurped. Industrial mayhem has prevailed and much has been destroyed. Earth and sky are deeply wounded but they will recover.

My elders have told me, "It was a pretty land the white people took from us." So when I stand breathless in a beautiful place I wonder how much more beautiful it was when the ancestors saw it. We cannot know because our time on earth is too brief. The elders also say there will be a restoration of earth and sky. We will not witness this great event. Nor will our children or their children.

But if we return to indigenous, ancient, earth-based, tribal wisdom perhaps children in the distant future will witness that restoration. However, if we continue with the vicious, violent, vulgar conduct of this modern, materialistic, destructive, commercialized civilization earth and sky will restore themselves without us.

Goodpasture's camera documents a yearning toward older ethics. He awakens awareness that the resources of our Mother Earth and Father Sky are limited. But he does not abandon hope that humankind will return to harmony with all our relations. He maintains that we must learn to live in balance because the alternative is so unthinkable.

We are reminded: "Man did not weave the web of life. He is but a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web he does to himself." Attributed to Chief Seattle.

I have been told that the land remembers us. The elders said our breath falls down around us and leaves an unforgettable record of our passing. Carll Goodpasture's breath is as much a part of this land as is yours or mine, Seattle's or Black Elk's.

The Sacred Mystery

Myth is a memory of creation.
A vision of a universe being born.

Ancient peoples enacted myth.
Found relatives everywhere.

In myth we recall the unfolding
Of an expanding vastness,
Immense distance, enormous power,
Unknown depth, eternal complexity.

This evolving universe created us.
All beings, all cultures, all nations.
The pine, the fern, the salamander,
The dolphin, the crow, the comet.
Our solar system, our air, our food,
Our history, our future.

From long ago the old ones knew
The universe was beyond understanding.
They accepted the unknowable,
Acknowledged limitations,
Walked in harmony, lived in balance,
And recognized the sacred mystery.

— Anne M. Dunn

Kurt Seaberg FILM REVIEW: AVATAR

I recently experienced the movie *Avatar*, James Cameron's visually stunning 3D blockbuster and was struck by how well this film works as a parable for our time — and with many parallels to Nils Gaup's Sami epic *Pathfinder*. *Avatar* and *Pathfinder* are both stories of Native resistance to a foreign invader who craves their material resources and will take them by force, if necessary. In both films the invaders are technologically superior but spiritually disconnected, and this inability to "see" results in their ultimate defeat.

For those who haven't seen it yet, *Avatar* is a science fiction story that takes place in 2154 on a distant planet called Pandora. The Natives are called Na'vi, a peaceful, pre-industrial race of tall, blue-skinned humanoids who live in close harmony with their environment (and thus have much in common with many Indigenous Peoples here at home). The invaders are humans from a despoiled Earth in search of other planets to exploit. In other words, the invading humans are like the Tschudes of *Pathfinder* in the form of a predatory, mineral-extracting corporation with its own private, mercenary army and all the latest high-tech weaponry.

But while *Pathfinder* draws a clear distinction between the peaceful Sami and the rapacious Tschudes, in *Avatar* there are a few decent humans (like us?) who sympathize with the Na'vi and ultimately take their side in the inevitable conflict that develops.

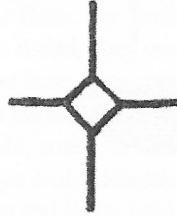
Jake Scully, a paraplegic Marine and one of the mercenaries, is on a mission to infiltrate the Na'vi, win their trust and convince them to move away from their sacred tree under whose roots lie the mother lode of a mineral the corporation craves. He is given three months to do this, after which time more forceful means will follow. Astute audiences will recognize colonialism at work here: when bribery and coercion (ahem, I mean diplomacy) fail, send in the Marines. Of course the humans, having lost their souls, have nothing to give that the Na'vi could possibly want, so war is a foregone conclusion. But Jake, under the tutelage of the Na'vi, starts to recover his soul. Thus his journey — and ours — becomes an

(KURT SEABERG continued on page 25)

This page is an excerpt from "The Mother Earth vs Western Man: the American Confrontation Between Two Opposing Value Systems," Faith Fjeld, Masters Thesis in American Indian Symbolism, San Francisco State University, 1989. It was also published in BAIKI Issue #18, 1998. It has been revised for this issue by the author. [left] The Saami pictograph of the Sun and the Four Directions symbolizes a world in balance. [right] The symbolism of the dollar sign needs no explanation.

The Indigenous Worldview

HARMONY WITH NATURE



Nature reflects the Creator.

Spirituality dominates the Peoples' actions.
Material wealth is shared and given away.

Behavior is cooperative.

The People follow the laws of Nature.
Technology serves the People and Nature.

Justice and equality are achieved by
cultural forms.

Ceremonies are based on cultural renewal.

Cosmology is spatial and timeless.

Everything is related and connected.

Feelings are important.

Society is based on cultural pluralism
and the extended family.
Roots are remembered.

Cultural Elders are the information bearers.

Leaders put the People above themselves.

**The balance of Nature
is maintained.**

The Colonizers' Worldview

DOMINATION OF NATURE



The Creator is in Man's image.

Materialism dominates the Peoples' actions.
Material wealth is hoarded and consumed.

Behavior is competitive.

The People follow the laws of Man.
The People and Nature serve technology.

Justice and equality are achieved by
legislation.

Ceremonies are based on personal gain.

Cosmology is linear and time-oriented.

Everything is divided and categorized.

Feelings are rationalized.

Society is based on assimilation
and the nuclear family.
Roots are forgotten.

The mass media controls information.

Leaders put themselves above the People.

**The balance of Nature
is destroyed.**

AN INTERNET GLOSSARY FOR ELDERS



Woman (holding Blackberry): "How do you work this thing anyway?"
 Husband (testily): "Berit, I keep telling you we should have kept our landline!"
 Baby in gietka (thinking to himself): "As soon as I can talk I'll show 'em how to tweet."

Some of us are old enough to remember the downhome simplicity of "two longs and a short" when grandma's telephone rang. Now we are faced with cell phones and the internet. We hope that this internet glossary will help us stay in touch with the next generation.

BLACKBERRY:

Wireless mobile devices that include email and telephone capabilities, an address book, a calendar, and to-do lists.

BLOG:

A website maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events and other material such as graphics and video.

BOOKMARKS:

A way of cataloguing and accessing web pages that a user visits and chooses to save.

CELL PHONE:

An electronic device used for mobile telecommunications over a cellular network of specialized base stations.

CHATROOM:

The sharing of information with other users via text instead of talking on the phone.

DOMAIN NAME SYSTEM (DNS):

A naming system that identifies computers, services and resources on the Internet — similar to a phone book.

DOWNLOADING and UPLOADING:

The receiving and sending of information between a personal computer and a remote website.

FACEBOOK:

A social networking website to connect and interact with other people. People can add friends, send messages, and update their personal profiles.

FLICKR:

An image and video hosting website for sharing personal photographs.

TO FRIEND:

To make direct connections with people the users know. Passwords or digital signatures are used for authentication.

GOOGLE:

The most widely-used search engine on the Web.

TO HACK:

To access a computer by circumventing its security system.

KINDLE:

A software and hardware platform for the wireless reading of books, newspapers and other digital media.

MESSAGE BOARD:

An online discussion site — the internet equivalent of a bulletin board.

MYSPACE:

A social networking website with an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music, and videos.

NAPSTER:

An online music file sharing service.

PHISH:

The criminally fraudulent process of acquiring sensitive information by masquerading as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication.

TO POST; POSTS:

To assign to a place or position; entries in a blog or internet forum

SEARCH ENGINE

A tool designed to search for information on the World Wide Web, e.g., **GOOGLE**. The search results are usually presented as a list commonly called "hits."

SKYPE:

A software application used to make voice calls over the internet.

SPAM:

The use of electronic messaging systems to send unsolicited bulk messages.

TABLET:

A computer device that allows one to "hand-draw" images and graphics.

TEXTING and TEXT MESSAGING:

The sending of abbreviated messages of 160 characters or less (including spaces) from mobile phones.

TWITTER and TWEETS:

Twitter a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read other users' updates known as "tweets." Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length which are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other users known as "followers" who have subscribed to them.

URL:

A Web address.

VIRUS:

A computer program that can copy itself and infect a computer without the permission or knowledge of the owner.

WEB BROWSER:

A software application for retrieving, presenting, and traversing information resources on the World Wide Web.

WIFI:

A wireless computer networking technology that uses radio waves to provide high speed internet and network connections.

WIKIPEDIA:

An internet encyclopedia.

WORM:

A self-replicating computer program used to send copies of itself to other computers without any user intervention. Unlike a virus, it does not need to attach itself to an existing program.

WORLDWIDE WEB, "THE WEB" and WWW:

An internet system to spread information through an easy-to-use and flexible format. The Web is not synonymous with "the internet."

Thanks to Wikipedia, and thanks to Mary Lukkarila, Head Librarian, Cloquet (MN) Public Library, for sharing her knowledge and internet expertise. See Mary's letter, "A Saami Genealogy Group on Facebook" in Saami Connections, page 4.

Donna Matson: OUR GATEWAY ANCESTORS

I hope you enjoy this immigration story:

Journey to a New Land

by Karen Nilson

Being Sami was a known fact in our family. Nils Nilsson Skum prints were a part of our everyday lives and miniature Sami figurines overheard many conversations.

My story starts in a small Sami village in northern Sweden where Hans, my great-grandfather, is married to Astrid. They own a farm with reindeer and have three sons. When Hans is fifty-three years old, Stella, a twenty-four year old maid, comes to work on the farm. Her six-year-old daughter Helena is with her. Hans and Stella fall in love. Stella is my great-grandmother.

Stella becomes pregnant, and it is shameful for Astrid. When baby Oskar, my grandfather, is born, Stella and Hans leave the farm and Helena is left behind.

They make other sacrifices. One is Hans' positiv, his portable barrel organ. After selling it, memories of polkas and waltzes play in his head as he rides home on his horse.

The next sacrifice is the horse. Its sale provides money for their passage and metaphorically carries them to a new life. They pack their things in a cart that the horse pulls. Soon the waters of a lake appear and Anders, a neighbor, waits at the shore with a boat. The horse is sold and the boat is loaded. It's time to go, says Stella. Their boat slips quietly through the water as Anders and the horse disappear into the woods.

A three-day journey to the seaport Mo i Rana lies ahead, but having the boat makes it easier. At the end of the day Hans catches trout, threads them onto green sticks and toasts them in the fire. The next day is rainy and water starts to fill the boat, and bailing and rowing proves exhausting.

Ahead lies an even more exhausting leg of the trip, a twelve-mile trek through the mountains carrying a baby and their belongings. They unload unnecessary items before continuing on.

Ships of all sizes are docked at the waterfront. Hans arranges passage to Canada on the *Oscar II*, a name that is not lost on Hans and Stella. The voyage is almost unbearable. Hans sacrifices food every day so that Stella gets enough nourishment to feed their baby. The long voyage is made

easier by watching young children play with Oskar. Stella thinks of Helena, the daughter she has left behind, and decides to keep this a secret. She hopes her new life will help her live with this decision. They watch the horizon in anticipation and finally reach their destination: Canada.

They are happy to be on land. Merchants try to sell them horses, carts and other items but Hans decides to wait and buy a horse from a farmer. They buy bread and dried meats and sit in a small courtyard to eat. They talk about how much Oskar has grown during the trip. Hans is glad to have sacrificed food to make his son strong. Stella remarks that he is thinner and Hans says it is bad enough to be old, but it would be worse to be old and fat!

They walk during the day and sleep under a tree at night. The next day they pass a farm with a Dala horse in the yard and the farmer smiles when Hans greets him in Swedish. The farmer's wife insists that they have dinner and stay the night. She sends them off with a loaf of bread and potatoes and tomatoes from their garden and the farmer sells Hans an old mare. He suggests they go to Waterville, Quebec, a journey made easier by the mare. There they are greeted by other Swedes. Within a month a carpenter hires Hans, and Stella is hired as housekeeper and cook at a farm where Swedes are working. They sleep in a corner of the barn where there is a small stove.

One night Stella tells Hans that she is pregnant again. Hans is happy. Soon he gets a small parcel of land from the government. He builds a small house and barn with the help of his Swedish friends and in the years that follow, Stella and Hans have eight more children.

Hans is proud of himself for being brave enough to create a new life, but he is not without regret. He knows nothing about his sons or if he has grandchildren. Stella writes letters to her daughter Helena, but she and Hans take her secret to their graves. Some may say that what they did was wrong, but if everyone looks into their past, I'm sure they will find something they don't like. Hans and Stella created my grandfather, my father, and in turn, me, and I am glad to forgive them for any transgression.

(KURT SEABERG continued from page 22)

initiation into Indigenous consciousness and opens up the possibility of redemption.

Jake's first lesson in Indigenous awareness comes when, in his avatar body, he gets lost in Pandora's dense jungle and is surrounded by a pack of hungry, hyena-like creatures. He is rescued by a Na'vi woman named Neytiri who he tries to thank but is sternly told that "thank you" is not the proper response to senseless bloodletting — and that grief is. He watches in astonishment as Neytiri bends over the dying creature that almost killed him and offers tender prayers to its departing soul.

Through experiences such as these Jake's consciousness is transformed from the predatory, Nature-destroying militarist attitude he was brought up with, to a more ecological Indigenous awareness. "Our home has no green on it," he laments, "we've killed it all." Central to this awareness is recognizing the deep, spiritual connection between us and the natural world.

As in *Pathfinder*, where the noaide Raste reminds young Aigin of the "invisible bonds" that connect us to one another (which is the source of Sami wisdom and strength), the Na'vi of Pandora have the ability to connect literally with other beings and meld their separate consciousness into a single whole. This awareness is summed up in the simple greeting they give to one another while looking deeply into each other's eyes: "I see you."

Some have criticized *Avatar* as just another "white man saves the Natives" story, but what makes this film unlike typical Hollywood fare is that, in addition to some powerful female characters who instruct and humble him, its leading man chooses to walk away from his privilege as an American white male. In the end he becomes a Na'vi, reincarnated permanently in his avatar body.

To turn away from the usual jingoist, militaristic, chest-thumping, America-knows-best line we usually get from pop culture is no small feat in this time of post 9-11 never-ending war. That this message is being enthusiastically received by a wide audience in the U.S. and throughout the world is something to celebrate.

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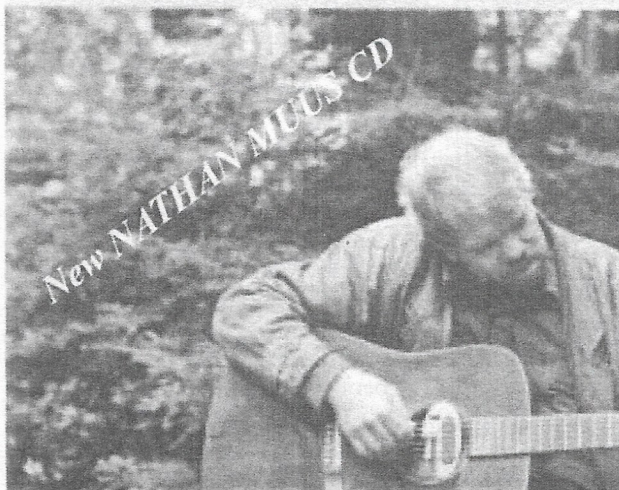
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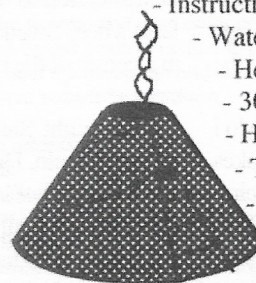
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