

# i Vesterveg

A collaboration between artists and museums  
in Shetland, Faroe Islands, Denmark, Iceland  
and Norway.

Málfríður Aðalsteinsdóttir  
Johannes Vemren-Rygh  
Elsie-Ann Hochlin  
Kristin Reynisdóttir

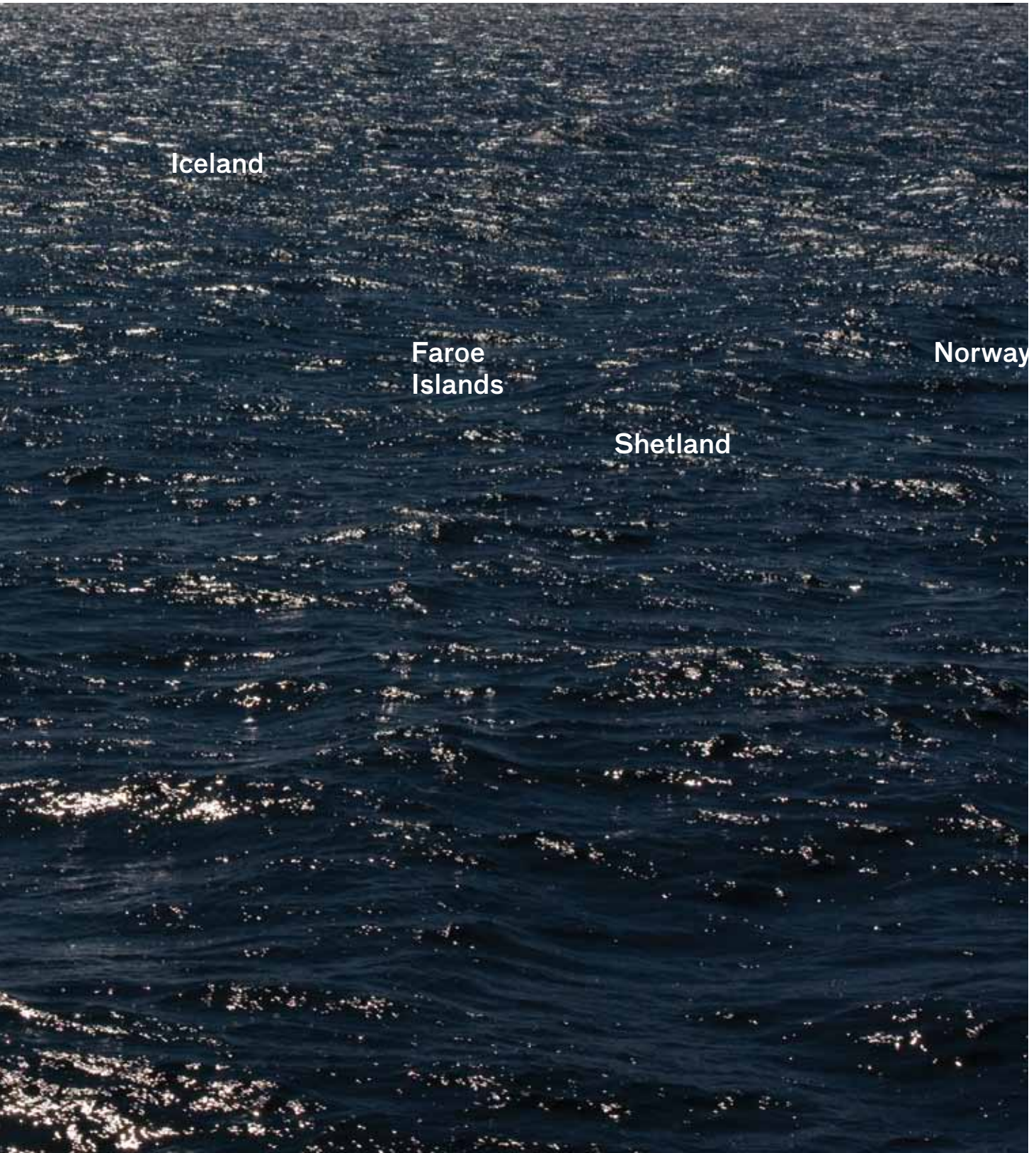
Guðjón Ketilsson  
Roxane Permar  
Barbara Ridland

Iceland

Faroe  
Islands

Norway

Shetland





The exhibition is presented in

i Vesterveg

Norway

Kunstmuseene i Bergen  
Avd. Permanenten 20.02. – 11.04.2010

The Faroe Islands

Norðurlandahúsið  
30.04. – 24.05.2010

Denmark

North Atlantic House  
05.08. – 30.08.2010

Shetland

Shetland Museum & Archives  
27.11. – 03.01.2011

Iceland

Norræna húsið  
12.02. – 12.03.2011

Introduksjon

Introduction

Málfríður Aðalsteinsdóttir  
Jón Viðar Sigurðsson

Kunstnere

Artists

Johannes Vemren-Rygh  
Elsie-Ann Hochlin  
Málfríður Aðalsteinsdóttir  
Kristín Reynisdóttir  
Guðjón Ketilsson  
Roxane Permar  
Barbara Ridland

Artikler

Articles

Arne Torp  
Henning Laugerud  
Sigbjørn Grønås  
Rasmus Joensen  
Regin Debess  
Hannes Lárusson  
Anne Sinclair

Project Manager  
Málfríður Aðalsteinsdóttir

We thank our supporters.

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The Norwegian Association of Arts and Crafts  
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Shetland Arts Development Agency







I Vesterveg is a collaborative venture between artists and museums on Shetland, Faroe, Iceland, Norway and Denmark. The project will disseminate information about the Nordic cultural inheritance in the North Atlantic area and give the participants inspiration for new contemporary artistic creation. The project will build networks and create contacts and develop the field beyond the national borders.

The starting point for I Vesterveg was my interest in old crafts and traditions and my curiosity about cultural inheritance in these countries. For a long time I had had a dream of participating in a project like this, and in the end I decided to create it myself. I was born and raised in Iceland, but have lived as an adult many years in Norway. During these years I have seen a lot of similarities between Norwegian and Icelandic cultural traditions, but also differences. I wanted to see if the same was the case on Shetland, which used to be called Hjaltland in Iceland, and Faroe.

As an example, we can look at the different shapes of the spinning wheel: the Icelandic spinning wheel is built upwards, with the reel on the top above the wheel. The Norwegian spinning wheel has the reel placed at the side and is built horizontally. When I came to Shetland I discovered that its spinning wheel shares the same design as the Icelandic one, as does the Scottish. Probably women, taken from the islands by the Norwegian Vikings on their way to Iceland, brought these tools.

I wanted to research the development of crafts and art from different angles. How are traditions created, and how do they affect our everyday life and our society? How do they develop and how do we use them today? Also, how can they be shaped artistically to create new pieces of art?

The countries are geographically close and historically share much: the sea, language, access to resources, and handicraft traditions such as boat building, house construction, culinary traditions, textile production, and the use of turf and peat, etc.

In earlier times, the sea connected these countries. Now the sea is disconnecting the countries because travelling by boat is too demanding in a society where speed and efficiency matters. This also affects human communication. Once the language community of which Shetland was a part contributed to extended contact: today we need to communicate in English.

During the summer of 2005 I made a journey from the west coast of Norway, westwards to Shetland, on to Faroe and further west to Iceland. My aim was to find interest in a collaboration between the countries on the subject of cultural inheritance. On my way I created a network of institutions and artists who were interested in participating in the project. I wanted to create a group consisting of both artists who worked in conceptual art and artists who had a material-based approach. The idea created a lot of interest. I was encouraged to realise an artistic project which had been on my mind for many years.

Two artists from each country are participating, and over two years the artists/artisans from Iceland, Faroe, Shetland and Norway have met in each other's countries. The fact that the participants had the opportunity to experience the culture, nature and society in each hosting country is a basic part of this project.

Two meetings were held the first year, in Norway and Shetland. The year after, we met on Faroe, and then in Iceland. To inform and inspire the artists lectures and seminars on tradition, history and cultural inheritance were held by the host country.

### The project begins

The first meeting was held in Norway, in June 2008, at the Coastal Museum in Øygarden outside of Bergen. Norwegian coastal culture was an essential subject. Lectures on general subjects like the weather and language and also more specific subjects like the Stave churches in Norway were held. A selection of these lectures are published as articles in this catalogue.

It is important for me to underline that the reproduction does not do justice to the speakers in terms of how knowledgeable and entertaining our experience with them was. One example is Arne Torp, Professor in Languages at the University in Oslo's lecture, "Languages in the Nordic Countries, Then and Now, with Emphasis on the Islands in the West". Evidently, he spoke both Icelandic and Faroese as well as Norwegian.

This was the artists' first encounter. Presentations by each artist and discussions created the foundation for further collaborations.

The encounter on Shetland had its main focus on traditional textiles, language, boat building and recycling/

reuse. We attended lectures on Fair Isle and Shetland knitting. There was also a lecture about the Shetland dialect, and how they try to preserve and keep alive the old language. Visiting Sandness Mill, a textile factory existing for a long time as an international supplier of quality products, made an impact, considering Norway and Iceland are shutting down small-scale industry and moving the production to low-cost countries. Machinery gets lost and knowledge disappears. We also visited a recirculation factory where all glass from Shetland is reused and made into tiles and slabs. We visited Mary and Tommy Isbister's farm, where along with boat building and mill conservation, they also try to conserve domestic animals of Shetland breed.

The third encounter was in Faroe in June 2009. Lectures on the Faroese boat, on folkdances and building customs were held in a week full of new experiences. On tours in Torshavn and when visiting the beautiful A Latrím museum in Eide with Bettami Egilstrød as our guide, we heard about tough living environments in old times in a country with harsh weather and great nature. We had a meeting and tour in The Nordic House. Our fantastic helpers, Jens Dalsgaard from LISA and Jonhild Johannessen, saw to all our needs. And a supper, to which we were invited by Jogvan Biskøpstø, introduced us to traditional Faroese culinary specialities like whale and spik, which he cooked himself.

The last encounter was a ten day tour of Iceland. The main focus was on the Icelandic horse, on turf farms and on peat as a construction material. Crossing the country we experienced yet another kind of nature and bathed in hot springs. We visited Safnasafnid, a museum of folkloristic and contemporary art. We stayed in Hólar in Hjaltadal, a bishopric and cultural centre existing since the Viking Ages and travelled in the area around Skagafjörður, to the Herring museum at Siglufjörður showing us the adventure of the Norwegian-Icelandic herring, and to Glaumbær, a folk museum showing houses made of turf. Turf was used as an important building material in Iceland, used in walls and in the whole house, whereas in the other countries it was mainly used on roofs and as insulation. In all of the countries turf or peat was used as fuel. We experienced cutting turf at Bær with Hannes Lárusson as well as attending a lecture on the topic of the Icelandic turf farm.

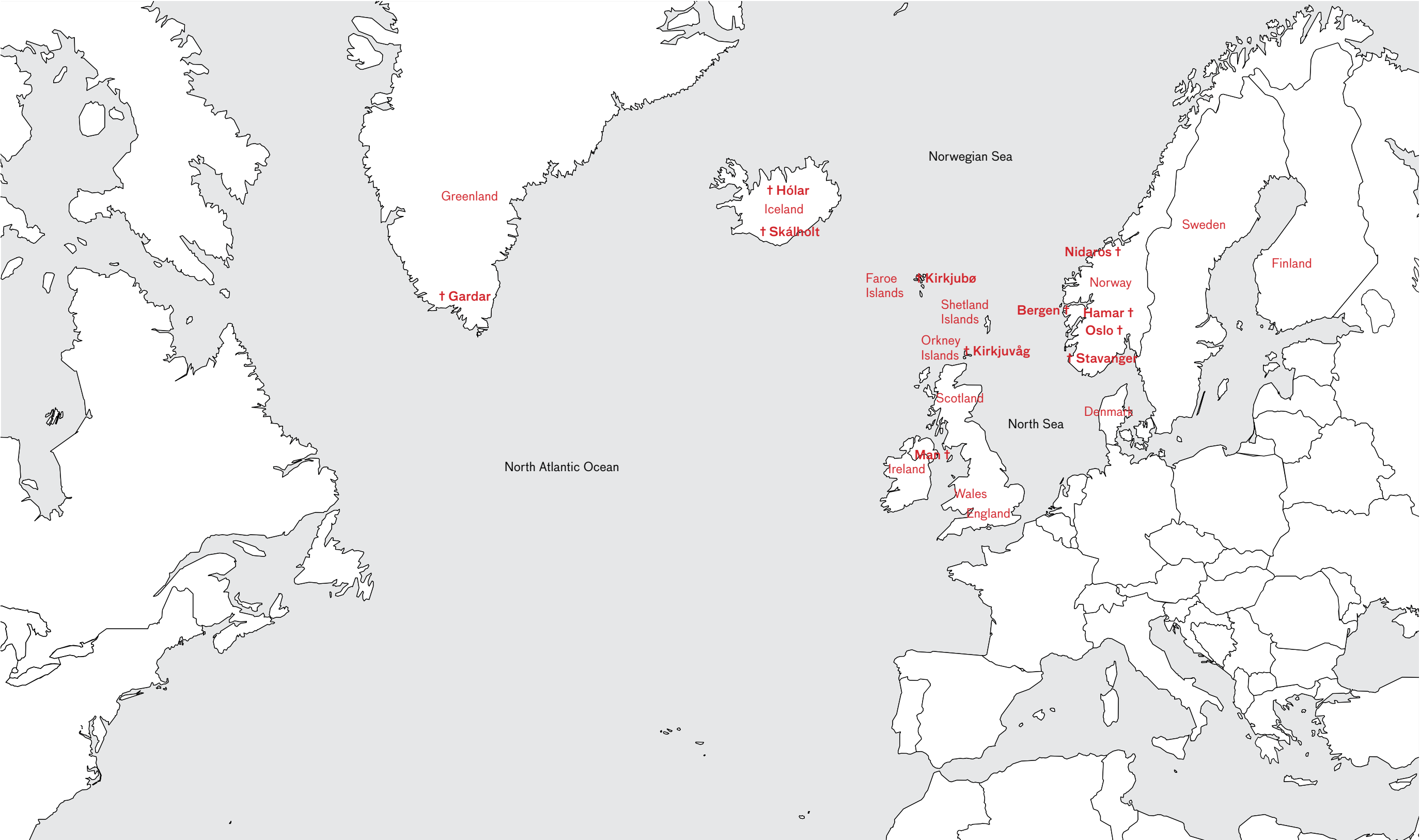
In Hólar we attended a lecture on the Icelandic horse and about their collection from the mountains in the autumn and learned how to card, spin and twist horse-

hair for yarn. Luckily there was also time for an Icelandic horse ride. Kristín Reynisdóttir, one of the artists, has all of her family in Skagafjörður which was very fortunate for us. We travelled out to Drangey which, as related in the Saga, was the last abode for the famous Icelandic outlaw Grettir, and also the place where he was killed. The island is a huge nesting place for birds and we climbed steep cliffs to get to the top. From there we saw whales swimming around the island and a lot of different seabirds. We got to see how the Icelandic people catch puffins in a net, an old hunting tradition, and later we ate puffin. We had a tour of a leather factory which tans everything from horse skin to sheep and fish skin. We visited a textile museum in Blönduós. The journey finished in Reykjavík and at the University we learned about the geology of Iceland and the history of how it was created. We had a tour of the collection of Icelandic manuscripts and got to see Icelandic cultural treasures at Þjóðminjasafnið.

It has been very useful to travel and experience the culture in these countries and the artists have been inspired and affected by everything they have experienced during this time: this is apparent in their work. I hope this project, with the exhibition in the five North Atlantic countries, creates more interest in our Nordic inheritance.

I want to thank everybody who has made this project possible, and who has helped us on the way. Especially I want to thank Anne Wiland who has been a great sparring partner and an important resource for the project. Greetings to all the great people we have met.

And many thanks to the artists for the time we have spent together.



To travel – Vesterveg – meant in the Viking Age and the early Middle Ages to travel to the countries west of the North Sea.

In our context we will narrow down this definition and say that to travel was to sail from Norway to Shetland, Faroe and Iceland. Most of the settlers on these islands came from Norway during the 7th century, travelling first to Faroe and Shetland, and then to Iceland around year 870.

Travelling by sea was the only option between the islands in the west and Norway and it was the Norwegian ships which connected “the colonies” to the motherland. Big enough trees did not grow on the islands in the North Atlantic and because of this it was not possible to build ocean-going vessels on Iceland, Faroe and Shetland. For this reason the people on these islands depended on Norwegian ship builders and merchants both for trading goods and communication with the world outside. It was this strong bond between the societies on the islands and Norway which makes it possible for us to speak of a common North Atlantic culture with a common development of a society concerning settlement, economy, politics and religion in the Middle Ages.

The Norwegian king held an important collective focus in this culture. This is clear through the concept of “the King’s Time”. We know nothing about the system of time in Norway before the constitution of royal power. Probably every (Viking) clan had their own system of time, which also was based on the governing time of the chieftain. Narratives of the time were framed in the context of how many winters a chieftain had governed. The development of royal power in Norway by the end of 800 heralded a time system based on the king’s ruling period, and events were placed in the context of how many years a king had ruled. This supposed change in time system in Norway is likely to have been important to underline who had the superior power in the country – the king. This time system was also used on the islands in the West, a fact confirmed by the Sagas. A common time zone connected the North Atlantic culture, in spite of the fact that the Norwegian king only gained full control over the islands late in the 11th century.

Orkney and Shetland were likely to have been under Norwegian control around 900, when Harald Fairhair installed an Earldom over the islands. But it was as late as 1195 that the islands became part of the jurisdiction of the Norwegian king. King Sverre accused the Earl of Orkney, Harald Maddadson, of having supported a failed rebellion against the King. In 1195 Harald left for Bergen to settle peace with Sverre. Sverre did not give easily and took control over Shetlands and demanded half of Sakören in Orkney.

It was probably Magnus the Good who managed to put Faroe under the control of the Norwegian crown around 1035: in the last part of the 10th century the islands had a Norwegian Sysselmann<sup>1</sup>. Iceland was officially under Norwegian taxation from 1262 to 1264. In 1264 all the islands which had been settled directly by Norwegians during the Viking Age were held in taxation under the Norwegian king.

Around the year 1000, Christianity was officially introduced into Norway, Shetland, Faroe and Iceland. Significant roles in the process were played by the Norwegian kings Olaf Tryggvason and Olaf Haraldsson. At the time, the four countries belonged to the Archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen. After a long-standing disagreement, an Archbishopric was established in Lund, covering the Nordic countries and the Norse settlements on the islands. The Archbishop in Lund, however, ruled only for a short period of time. In 1152/53, the five dioceses in Norway – Trondheim, Bergen, Stavanger, Oslo and Hamar – together with the dioceses on Man, Orkney, Faroe, Greenland and Hólar and Skálholt on Iceland, were put under the Archbishop in Trondheim (Nidaros).

After the islands became part of the Norwegian kingdom, strong administrative ties connected them to Norway. This applied particularly in Bergen which, during the second half of the 10th century and in the 11th century, became the most important city in Norway and earned the reputation as the capital of the North Atlantic culture. The trading connection between the islands in the west and Bergen was very strong. Norwegian merchants had a trading monopoly with the islands in the west. All goods headed for the islands passed through Bergen, and goods exported to foreign countries from these islands first came to Bergen. The trading routes did not usually pass between the islands in the North Atlantic, so in order to travel from Iceland to Shetland in the 11th century, you first had to pass through Bergen.

Around the year 1300, Faroe, Shetland and Iceland were all part of the Norwegian kingdom. It could be argued that due to the communication between the islands in the west and Norway, these islands had a stronger integration with the kingdom than for example Eastern Norway. After the year 1300 the ties between Norway and the islands in the west were deteriorating. This was due to several facts. In 1319, Norway and the islands in the west joined kings with Sweden. The king’s residency was moved to Sweden, and was by the end of the century again moved to Denmark with the creation of The Kalmar Union. In 1468, the daughter of the Danish king Christian I became engaged to Jacob III of Scotland. Christian I was in lack of money for the dowry and pawned Orkney the same year, and Shetland the following year, for respectively 50 000 and 8 000 Rhenish Guilders. He secured a clause in the contract which gave him the right to redeem the islands, which later kings attempted without success.

The ties between the societies on the islands and Trondheim were weakening during the late Middle Ages mainly because the Archbishop lost power to the King. With the reformation, the last Archbishop fled from Norway in 1537 and as a consequence the religious connection between Trondheim and the islands in the west was broken. The head of the church was now in Copenhagen. Trading between Bergen and the islands in the west had declined by the middle of the 12th century because foreign merchants began crossing the ocean and soon controlled the whole trade.

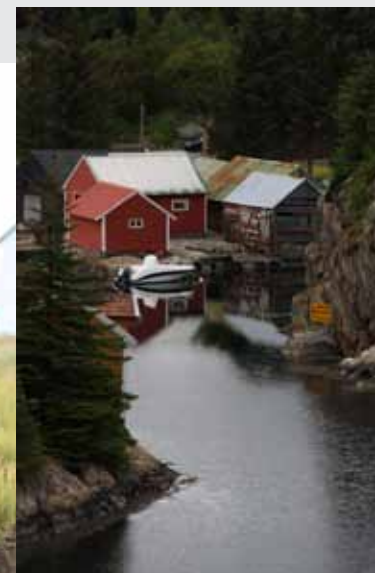
In 1814 the bonds connecting Norway, Iceland and Faroe were broken. Fredrik VI of Denmark-Norway was allied with Napoleon and was thus one of the losers in the Napoleonic wars. The Treaty of Kiel in 1814 ceded Norway to the King of Sweden. Iceland and Faroe, however, which since 126–1264 had been treated as part of Norway, remained connected to Denmark. Around 1800 the North Atlantic culture was more or less divided into its basic parts. Shetland “belonged” to the British Isles, Norway was controlled by Sweden, and Faroe and Iceland by Denmark.

The ties between Iceland, Faroe and Norway recovered after 1800, both through fishing and trading – and again Norwegian merchants played a central part. It is in these years Iceland again opened towards Europe. In the beginning the impulse mainly came from Denmark. From the middle of 17th century, increasing impulses came from other countries like America, but mainly from Norway. Since then, the connection between these three countries has grown. Because of the attachment to London and Edinburgh, Shetland (and Orkney) has not been part of this process. This is regrettable because of the settlements’ shared culture, which is important to retain and further develop.

<sup>1</sup> Sysselmann/Sýslumaður is a Norwegian and Icelandic title of local government. It was used during the Middle Ages as a noble title. It has been revived twice in modern times as a special form of local government; the Governor of Svalbard now holds the title and the Governor of Erik the Red’s Land held the title from 1932 to 1933. The English version is Sheriff. (Wikipedia)



Johannes Vemren-Rygh  
 Elsie-Ann Hochlin  
 Málfríður Aðalsteinsdóttir  
 Kristín Reynisdóttir  
 Guðjón Ketilsson  
 Roxane Permar  
 Barbara Ridland





The goal of the “Vesterveg” project is to give participants increased understanding and knowledge about the common cultural heritage across the North Atlantic region. What is the most significant new knowledge about this heritage that you have gained from taking part in the project? My knowledge about these countries was poor when I entered the project. But I’ve learned a lot through the project. I’m amazed by the variety and beauty compared to my previous assumptions about these countries. The most significant experience from the journey is the striking cultural similarities. I as a Norwegian recognised much of the social way of behaving, and it made me feel at home in all the places we have visited. This came as a surprise to me, who thought that living in a country without trees would feel awkward to me.

Many contemporary artists see themselves as cultural “nomads” in a world with unlimited access to global information. What significance does your own cultural background have for you in this global setting? I like to see myself as an internationally independent artist, but my cultural background has much to say whether I like it or not. To deny or disguise my own background is probably impossible. I’m perhaps more affected by my local surroundings than I would like to admit. I often base the theme of my work on contemporary media issues, and mix it with an everyday object. I guess my everyday is quite different from a non-Western person. And that fact has significance to how the concept is interpreted.

Did you bring any ideas or expectations about what would be important for you to work on in this project, and if so, have they changed along the way? My ideas about what to make have differed a lot during the journey. But I have had an idea about making an item for each country based on some of my impressions.

The North Atlantic region is bound together by the Atlantic Ocean. In your opinion, what cultural impulses seem to have been the most viable across the region? What seems to be the common denominator between the countries you have visited? One obvious connection traditionally is the boat and much of the folk culture is also similar. In modern times the connection is more subtle. Some of the way of behaving is perhaps a cue. We have in many ways the same sense when it comes to temper. We are traditionally quite shy people and are used to having lots of space around us, due to the small populations.

What has been the most interesting experience in the project for you as a contemporary artist? It has been fantastic to visit countries that aren’t in the usual art scene related to countries like Germany or England, and to see that the art scene is vital and original.

Could you please elaborate a bit on your artistic contribution and the idea behind it? During the journeys of the project I’ve collected some items from each country we have visited. The criteria for why I’ve chosen these specific objects can be summed up in one phrase: Natural materials reflecting some of the beauty of Nordic island wildlife.

I didn’t want the objects to be too typical to where I found or bought them. So souvenir shops were out of the question. But each object had to have a relevant cultural connection.



Re-shaped wood  
20 cm

An African candlestick shaped as a human figure caught my attention mainly because it was made from an exotic hardwood, so I bought it. It later occurred to me that this candlestick was a quite bizarre finding—an African candlestick in a Faroese second-hand shop.

The candlestick was probably not the most obvious souvenir I could come up with in terms of local culture, but the fact that this exotic item had found its way to the Faroe Islands reminded me of driftwood. The local occurrence of wood is almost absent in North Atlantic islands. The Faroe Islands have therefore been dependant on collecting driftwood to use as a resource. Faroese building tradition is based on wooden buildings made from driftwood.

Driftwood has a long tradition in this region; according to Norse mythology, the first humans, Ask and Embla, were formed out of two pieces of driftwood.

I’ve been told that in one of the old houses for Tinganes in Tórshavn there is a beam of palisander hardwood from a log that had drifted from the southern hemisphere. In comparison, the candlestick was a sort of modern piece of driftwood—a souvenir drifting across borders and cultures. Since wood is a scarce resource, it has often been reused and reshaped for new purposes when old houses are taken down. I wanted to reflect some of this by reshaping the human-shaped candlestick into something more familiar to Nordic culture: the Atlantic fisherman.



### Chupacabra

2010

Goat horn, steel, silver

41 x 15 x 10 cm

Knife and fork set for serving meat dinners.

The idea is that the meat served reflects the animal in this serving set. Chupacabra means Goat-Sucker and is a mythical animal/alien thought to have been seen by witnesses in Central America sucking blood from livestock. Knife and fork: Necessary tools we humans need to have a meal. Horn: Necessary "tools" animals use for marking of rank, status, and defence.



The goal of the “Vesterveg” project is to give participants increased understanding and knowledge about the common cultural heritage across the North Atlantic region. What is the most significant new knowledge about this heritage that you have gained from taking part in the project? What amazed me the most was to hear how the Norse language still persists, even on Shetland, and that with my sketchy text book knowledge of Old Norse I could understand both place names and spoken language.

Many contemporary artists see themselves as cultural “nomads” in a world with unlimited access to global information. What significance does your own cultural background have for you in this global setting?

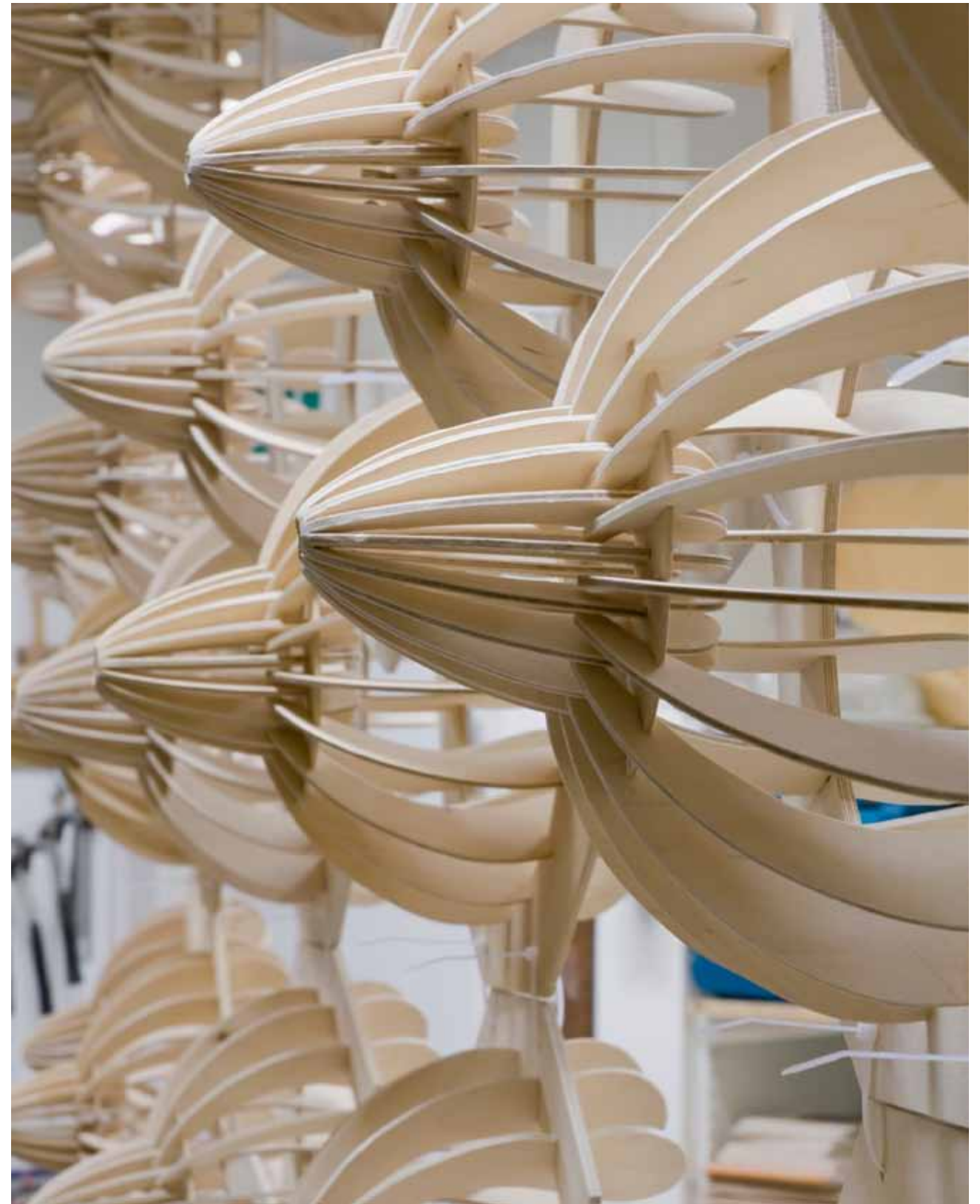
My personal background is a thorough mix of American and Russian with dashes of French thrown in for good measure. To me it was exciting to see that being “nomads” on the World Wide Web is not very different from being nomads in the physical sense of the word, just like my immediate family and in fact also the Norse and Viking travellers were.

Did you bring any ideas or expectations about what would be important for you to work on in this project, and if so, have they changed along the way? I must confess that I met with an entirely open mind and without preconceptions of any kind.

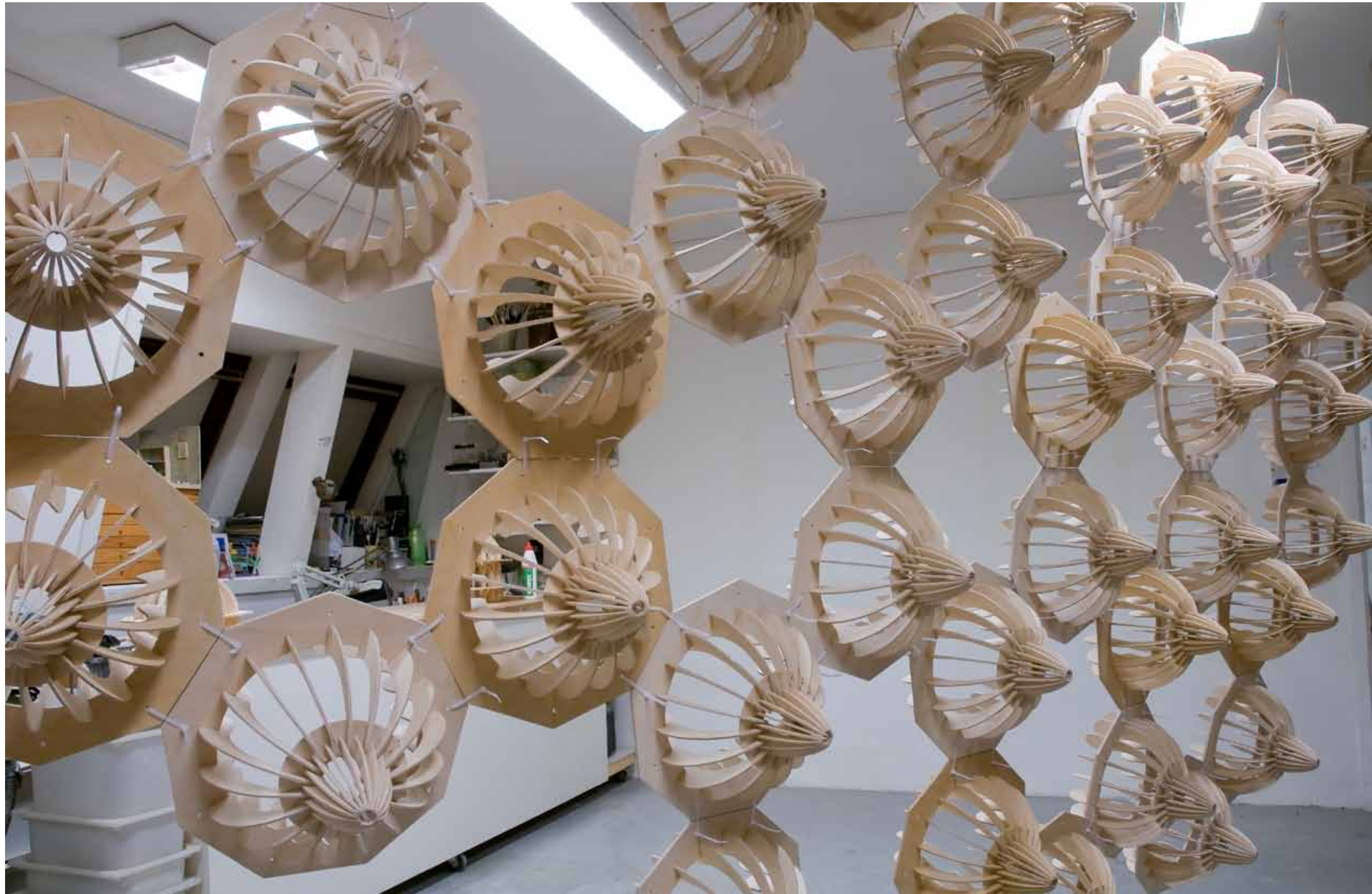
The North Atlantic region is bound together by the Atlantic Ocean. In your opinion, what cultural impulses seem to have been the most viable across the region? What seems to be the common denominator between the countries you have visited? A stubborn desire for Norse people to settle down in hostile environments with sheep and fish as our immediate neighbours.

What has been the most interesting experience in the project for you as a contemporary artist? The opportunity to visit and meet friendly and hospitable colleagues in each location, and to learn about their local history and tradition.

Could you please elaborate a bit on your artistic contribution and the idea behind it? The idea is loosely connected to the repeating patterns found in fishing nets and knitwear, both of which are typical of the region.









The goal of the “Vesterveg” project is to give participants increased understanding and knowledge about the common cultural heritage across the North Atlantic region. What is the most significant new knowledge about this heritage that you have gained from taking part in the project? When I first planned the “Vesterveg” project I had some ideas about the similarities in the cultural heritages across the countries. After having travelled around the region I now see many similarities. Our languages have the same origin and they are still quite close. I was surprised to find that this also applies to Shetland. Norse words still flavour their English, particularly in old phrases and when they use their Shetland dialect. Names for birds, for instance, are often the same. Old sayings were often also recognisable and easily understood by all. One can easily see that it is not long ago when we spoke roughly the same language and understood each other perfectly.

Many contemporary artists see themselves as cultural “nomads” in a world with unlimited access to global information. What significance does your own cultural background have for you in this global setting? My cultural heritage has been a treasure trove for me that I have been able to dive into and use in my artistic expression. Moreover, I find it gives me a sense of belonging that I think is expressed in my work. I feel very local in my foundation, but also part of a global world.

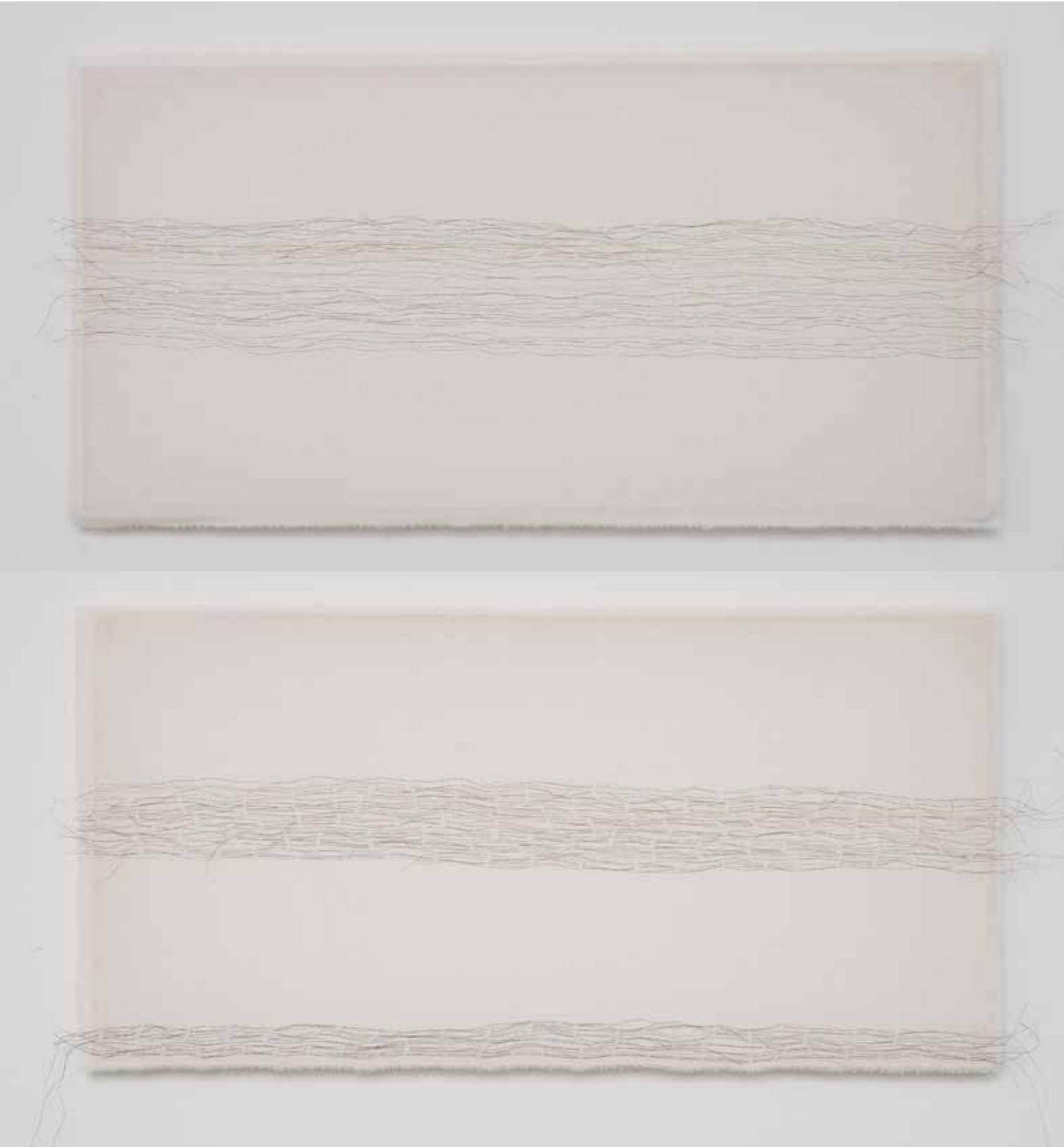
What has surprised you the most in your encounter with the other artists? I had a certain idea what I wanted to work with before I started. I intended to work quite differently than how I ordinarily do. However, now that the project is drawing to a close and I have gone through the process, I again sense the theme that I normally feel in my artistic work.

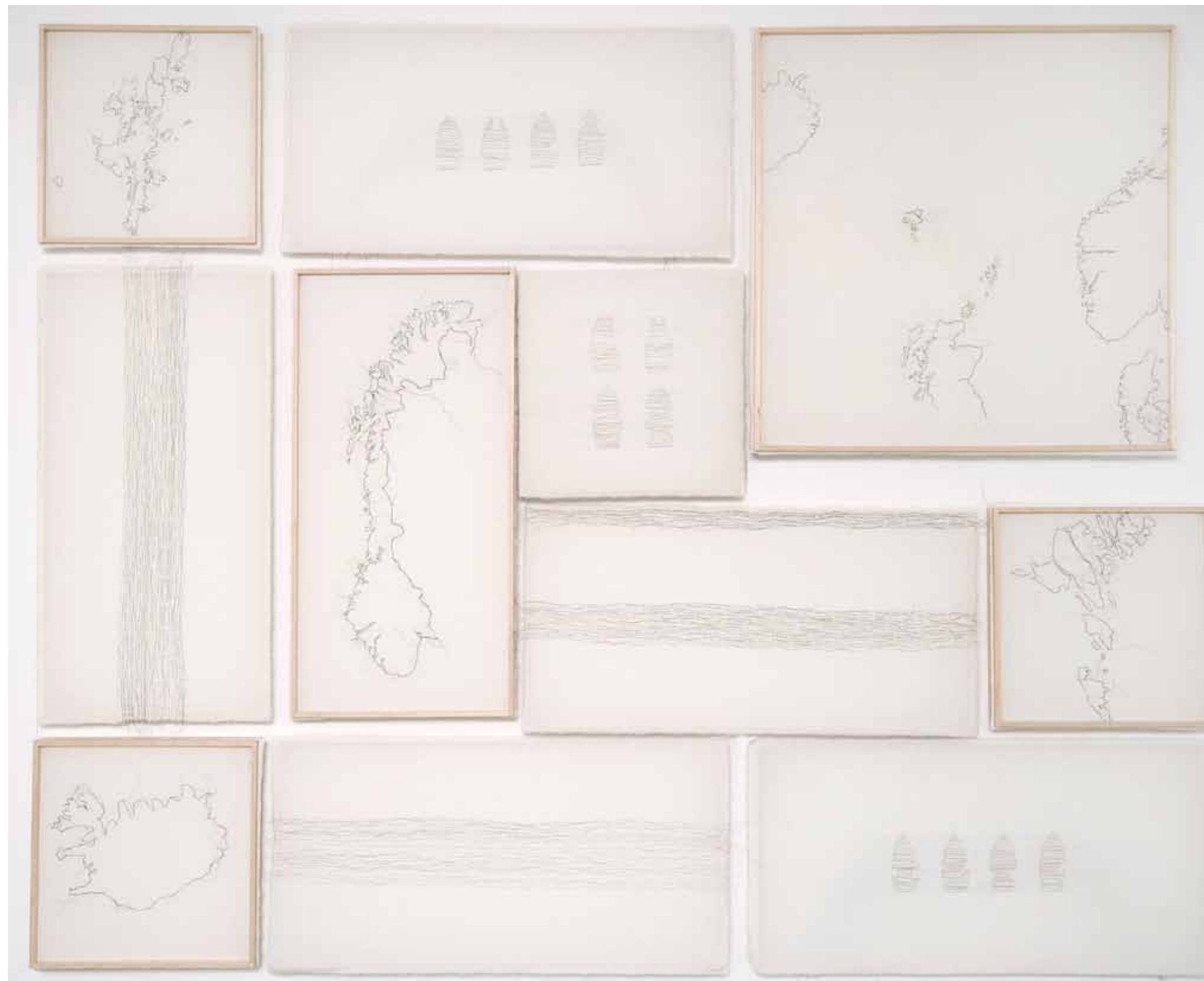
Did you bring any ideas or expectations about what would be important for you to work on in this project, and if so, have they changed along the way? It surprised me how little we know about neighbouring societies and countries despite the fact that we are geographically so close. The cultural impulses that to me seem to have been the most viable are the ones related to working with raw materials, for instance, how to process wool and fish. As a consequence, the gastronomy in our barren region is quite special and a result of different ways of preserving food by dry curing, salting, soaking in brine and even burying in the ground.

What has been the most interesting experience in the project for you as a contemporary artist? It has really been great to have had an opportunity to discover and learn crafts and traditions dating back several centuries. The challenge now is to transfer what we have learned to contemporary artwork. It has been both a privilege and interesting to get to know each artist’s culture and country as seen through their eyes. This clearly enriched the project and made it also exciting to work together.

Could you please elaborate a bit on your artistic contribution and the idea behind it? Two ideas became clear to me quite early. One is an idea that has changed constantly both in terms of expression, execution, materials and technique. What I want to show is a composite work comprising elements taken from all four countries, in which I will use sketching and embroidery to tap into the vast treasure trove of textile tradition.

The other is an audio work or a video which has matured along the way. I think about it in terms of a poetic depiction of crafts and traditions from both the near and distant past into the present.







**Kristín Reynisdóttir**  
**Iceland**

The goal of the “Vesterveg” project is to give participants increased understanding and knowledge about the common cultural heritage across the North Atlantic region. What is the most significant new knowledge about this heritage that you have gained from taking part in the project? What was most significant for me was first and foremost to experience the delicate thread that links these nations together; you feel the world getting smaller. Also the inventiveness and the subtlety to use whatever material and product each territory offers, and all the solutions the inhabitants have utilised for their fair sustenance.

Many contemporary artists see themselves as cultural “nomads” in a world with unlimited access to global information. What significance does your own cultural background have for you in this global setting? My cultural background becomes in many ways clearer after taking part in a project like this. Traditions are part of the national awareness. Icelandic is a language that has been preserved in the Icelandic sagas which deal with various role models the nation can still relate to today. Strong relations to the nature are also reflected in stories of fairies, dwarves, elves and trolls that many Icelanders grow up with as being real, and moreover, many landmarks bear names that reflect some story.

But usually the national cultural background interacts with global influences to form a unity; this maybe becomes more like two sides of one and the same coin.

Did you bring any ideas or expectations about what would be important for you to work on in this project, and if so, have they changed along the way? My idea for this project was always to collect and assimilate as much information on tradition and cultural heritage as I could, as these traditions and cultural heritage left over from previous generations are a never-ending source of wisdom.

The North Atlantic region is bound together by the Atlantic Ocean. In your opinion, what cultural impulses seem to have been the most viable across the region? What seems to be the common denominator between the countries you have visited? In all the places we visited, you can see traces of old Nordic influences. They can be seen in the languages as well as in the crafts. Shipbuilding is a prominent factor in all of these territories as the ocean plays a big role in the lives of the inhabitants. Forms used in the traditional buildings are apparently related, although the material used is different. Anglo-Saxon popular culture is without doubt the most striking common denominator today, but it is good to go beyond that and examine the common Nordic roots.

A house for nets.  
 Wood, paper, 60 x 55 x 90 cm  
 Plexiglass, 110 x 80 cm

The prototype stands at Øygarden outside of Bergen in Norway.

What has been the most interesting experience in the project for you as a contemporary artist? The nature in each of these places was the most interesting experience, as well as the phenomenal influences it has had on forms and patterns in all the manmade things we came across.

My conversations with natives from these places were also an interesting experience, to learn how our forefathers had aesthetics as a guiding light in their crafts, and to see and discover the courage, diligence and concern embedded in the manmade things that have survived.

Could you please elaborate a bit on your artistic contribution and the idea behind it? I will use the material I have gathered during my participation in the project to make three-dimensional art works, which will include videos and photographs.

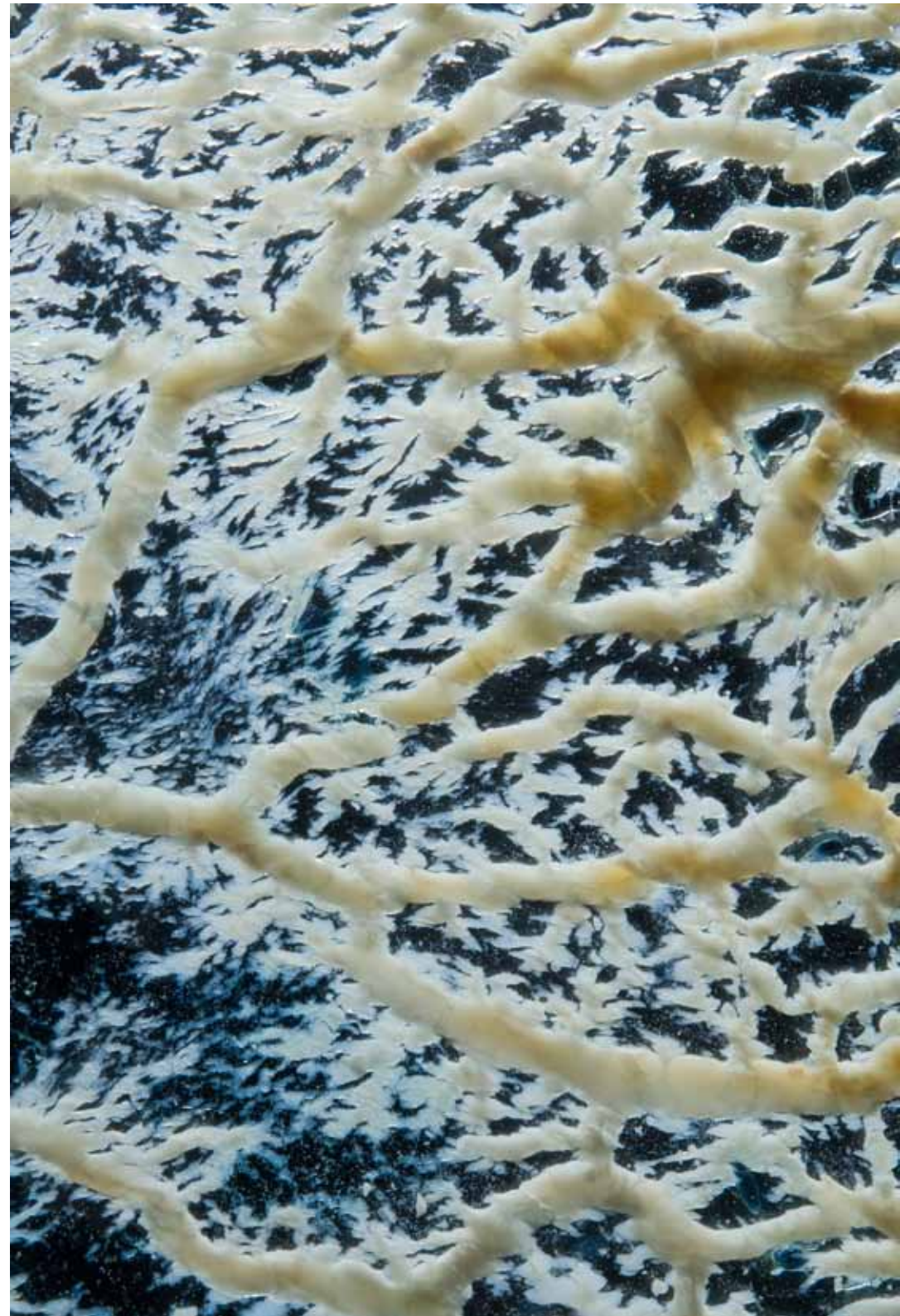
My work deals with inner and outer worlds. I exhibit the phenomenon Netja (reticulation), which is a membrane of suet that covers the insides of animals; a double membrane that covers the stomach absorbs suet and functions as a store of fat for protection and for repair. At its core it implies purpose, and what supplies are needed for subsistence in the northern regions.

I also exhibit a house for nets, which had the function of drying nets made of cotton. The fish in the North Atlantic have been a cache for the inhabitants of Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Shetland and Norway, and it has linked these nations and moulded their relations through the years.



**Reticulation/Netja**  
Wood glass and netja  
35 x 55 cm

The Icelandic word Netja stands also for -netju-mör/suet. netju-ský/cloud.  
netju-þykkni/concentrate. húð-netja/skin,membrane.





The goal of the “Vesterveg” project is to give participants increased understanding and knowledge about the common cultural heritage across the North Atlantic region. What is the most significant new knowledge about this heritage that you have gained from taking part in the project? The project interests me as a rare chance to be acquainted with my neighbours in the north and to research the common elements and circumstances by which our society has greatly been formed. As Icelanders are perhaps most familiar with the Faroe Islands, both countries being former colonies of Denmark, I was surprised to know how much Icelanders share with the Shetland Islands. Our culture is largely formed by the sea and the weather conditions.

Many contemporary artists see themselves as cultural “nomads” in a world with unlimited access to global information. What significance does your own cultural background have for you in this global setting? I suppose that Icelanders see their language and geographical position, situated midway between Europe and America, as their main distinctiveness. The language, mediaeval literary heritage, weather and identity as an islander—these are conditions that inform my cultural background as an artist. In that aspect, my source is very much inspired by my cultural identity; I consider myself less of a cultural “nomad”.

Did you bring any ideas or expectations about what would be important for you to work on in this project, and if so, have they changed along the way? For these visits, I have tried to be free from prepared plans or preconceptions of what awaits us. The visits and the collaboration have been very enjoyable and informative. My participation in the project has added to my sources of inspiration and has enriched my practice.

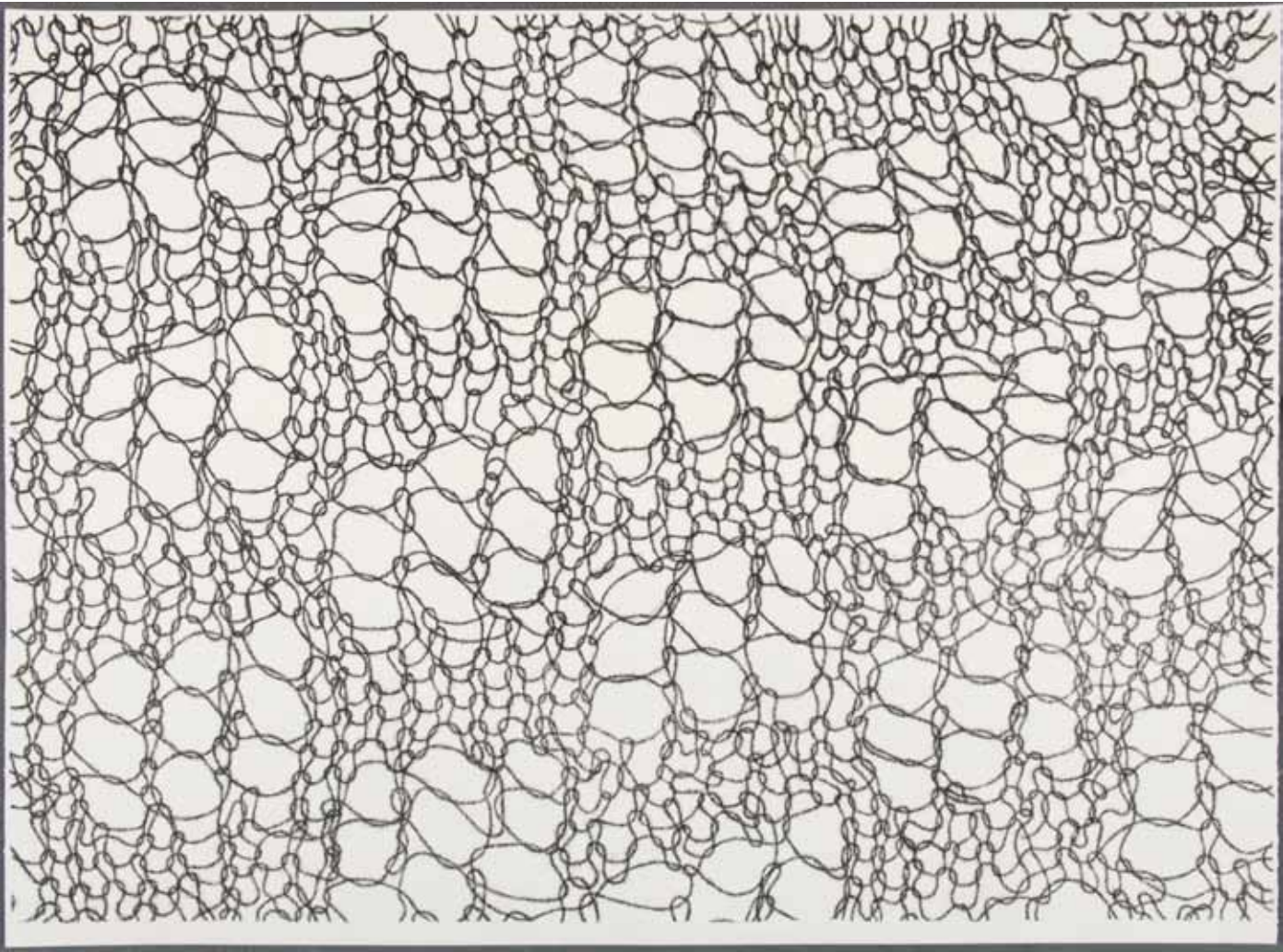
The North Atlantic region is bound together by the Atlantic Ocean. In your opinion, what cultural impulses seem to have been the most viable across the region? What seems to be the common denominator between the countries you have visited? The proximity to the sea is obviously the common denominator of these countries, and as a source of food but also a destructive force, it has shaped their existence. The fishing industry has long been a main contributor to Iceland’s economy. But with globalization the emphasis has changed; the region seems to be at a crossroads.

Could you please elaborate a bit on your artistic contribution and the idea behind it? For these visits, I have extensively photographed various objects and situations similar to those in my own home country, as well as historically and geographically intriguing ones such as certain phenomena in the landscape, local building materials, architecture, crafts and design.

I have used these photographs as point of reference for my works, made specifically for the project. During the visits, I have been especially drawn to the lighthouses of each location—these easily recognizable, beautifully shining towers, their role being to rescue seafarers, giving a warning of shoals to passing ships.

Lighthouses are not only tall buildings with a powerful light at the top. They are symbolically charged, which has through time been reflected in the culture of most nations of seafarers through lyrics, sayings and visual arts.

One could say that my works in this exhibition are portraits of particular lighthouses of each of the countries in the North Atlantic Ocean.







The goal of the “Vesterveg” project is to give participants increased understanding and knowledge about the common cultural heritage across the North Atlantic region. What is the most significant new knowledge about this heritage that you have gained from taking part in the project? Knowledge about whales and the history of whaling, particularly in Faroese communities, is perhaps the most significant new knowledge I gained about our North Atlantic heritage during the project. This knowledge surprised me and challenged my views about the role of whaling and, more broadly, the delicate balance between our basic needs for survival and social responsibility. As a result, I have gained increased understanding about the idea of “community”, the roots of our cultural practices and our relationship to the environment both locally and globally.

Many contemporary artists see themselves as cultural “nomads” in a world with unlimited access to global information. What significance does your own cultural background have for you in this global setting? My background has taught me the importance of culture to foster mutual understanding and tolerance. It has instilled in me a curiosity to find out firsthand about different places through travel and cultural exchange. I am especially drawn to cultures that are very different from my cultural background and feel at home in a number of places. I was born into the McCarthy era in America and grew up during the height of the Cold War. I lived in Moscow before moving to London in 1975, where I was based until 1998. I first visited Shetland in 1985 and, after visiting regularly and realising a number of projects, moved there permanently in 2000.

Did you bring any ideas or expectations about what would be important for you to work on in this project, and if so, have they changed along the way? For a variety of reasons, practical, artistic and conceptual, my ideas for my work have changed significantly over the period of the project. Gift-giving and exchange, alongside collaboration and participation, play an important role in my practice. It’s perhaps therefore somewhat disappointing that I have not been able to develop my early ideas around participatory and collaborative works. Nonetheless, I am very happy to be working with film, a medium that I have been developing in the last decade, and I am delighted by the way my work has evolved.

The North Atlantic region is bound together by the Atlantic Ocean. In your opinion, what cultural impulses seem to have been the most viable across the region? What seems to be the common denominator between the countries you have visited? I am sure everyone in this project has found the cultural impulses across these

countries to be incredibly complex. Traces of common denominators seem to resonate across each country, with each place, nonetheless remaining very distinctive. I have impressions of warm communities deeply in tune with their land and sea, welcoming yet close-knit; also of rich material cultures, including everywhere boats and textiles, sweaters, sails and nets. I sense independence and clearly defined cultural identities underpinned by contradictions, visionaries and mavericks. Languages intertwine, and lineage runs deep.

What has been the most interesting experience in the project for you as a contemporary artist? Initially I was very interested to see how these countries compare to Shetland and with each other. Then the creative journey itself became a very exciting experience because it generated many new ideas and possibilities for work. The research visits were of course fundamental to this whole process, intense experiences generating constant learning, stimulation and challenge. The time in between these visits, when I digested, tested and changed artistic direction, was very important and has in the end proved to be most interesting for the way it has enabled me to take risks and refine my visual response to the entire experience.

Could you please elaborate a bit on your artistic contribution and the idea behind it? I have made four films, one per location, which move very slowly, almost imperceptibly. They reveal impressions, or traces, like tracks in the sand; imprints that change constantly, just as our lives are not fixed but always in a state of flux.

The films are white. I decided to use white following a moment of epiphany at the Natural History Museum in the Faroes when I learned about the way people in the past used a white domestic “blanket” to signal the sighting of whales. This small piece of information linked many of my interests through a symbolic motif—textiles, communication, people working together, our relationship to the natural world and the maritime heritage of each location.

The colour white and the rectangular form of the “blanket” have brought discipline, focus and clarity to my thinking as well as visual coherence to the hundreds of memories I collected from these countries. The colour white also carries meaning in its own right. It evokes many associations, which I hope add a sense of ambiguity and resonance to my work.







The goal of the “Vesterveg” project is to give participants increased understanding and knowledge about the common cultural heritage across the North Atlantic region. What is the most significant new knowledge about this heritage that you have gained from taking part in the project? Shetland is an interesting place to come from; it is rich in physical remains of Pictish settlements and Viking colonization. The Scandinavian language was the vernacular of Shetland for 800 to 900 years. Norn was replaced by Scots in the 1700s, leaving Shetland with historical cultural connections to the north, and its government and economic infrastructure to the south. In order to get a fuller understanding of our cultural heritage we must look north as well as south. I could say we are drawn north; Shetlanders do think warmly of their Norwegian, Faroese and Icelandic “neighbours”.

Many contemporary artists see themselves as cultural “nomads” in a world with unlimited access to global information. What significance does your own cultural background have for you in this global setting? I am content not to be a cultural “nomad”. Shetland has reflected itself back in a global setting, time and time again, by meeting demands for its amazing textiles and home-grown products. It is important to know who you are: I could, and undoubtedly do, absorb other influences, but am content with what I have. We say best what we know best. I can also say that taking part in “I Vesterveg” has left me thinking about Shetland as part of a “northern identity”.

Did you bring any ideas or expectations about what would be important for you to work on in this project, and if so, have they changed along the way? It is difficult to define the most significant new knowledge about our heritage that I have gained. I was surprised at how similar our natural languages are—the Shetland dialect with Icelandic, Faroese and Norwegian—when English is set aside. Almost every place name in use in Shetland can be traced back to the Vikings, some bird and fish names are also the same, and numerous other words were said the same way with the same meaning.

I am left with the knowledge that our links are strong, but also very fragile, being eroded by time and global influences.

The North Atlantic region is bound together by the Atlantic Ocean. In your opinion, what cultural impulses seem to have been the most viable across the region? What seems to be the common denominator between the countries you have visited? We are connected by the sea and clean, cooler northern air; we work with the weather, in that our northern climate restricts when we can take the boat out fishing and what we grow for crops and in our gardens. Nothing is guaranteed; we get out into the sun when it is there. In latitude we experience a greater contrast in difference in the light and dark in summer and winter. We are described as insular communities, but have come together through fishing, smuggling, whaling, wars and the more recent oil industry. It is easy to understand how traditional stories spread and are similar in all these places.

In the past we have lived simply working with what is there. Men were often away working for long periods, leaving the women at home with the families, cumulating in strong independent people, skilled on land and at sea.

What has been the most interesting experience in the project for you as a contemporary artist? As a contemporary artist the most interesting experience has been gaining an understanding of the other participants’ inspirations. The most interesting will be seeing the final art works and hearing the individual artists thinking behind them.

Could you please elaborate a bit on your artistic contribution and the idea behind it? I work mainly as a freelance designer in knitwear, and have an interest in traditional basket-making as a sculptural art form. With no commercial constraints my work becomes an expression of identity, fresh space and light, flight of birds, fish and flora, theatrical folklore, myths and legends. The people of the North Atlantic countries thought that the hills and the sea were full of mysterious persons who could metamorphose themselves into the likeness of beast, bird or fish; fishermen saw sea monsters that were perhaps sharks or whales. My art pieces for “I Vesterveg” are based on these mythical creatures. At the same time I want to say that we are similar people, who have developed in different ways. I also try to show the beauty of these northern places and to let the real experiences I took part in to come through.











Språk i Norden før og nå – med spesiell vekt på de vestnordiske øyspråk  
Arne Torp

Det området vi kaller Norden, er vidstrakt, og omfatter i alt fem stater: Danmark, med Færøyene og Grønland, Finland, Island, Norge og Sverige, slik vi ser på kart 1.

I dette området blir det tradisjonelt snakka mange ulike språk, som hører til tre helt forskjellige språkfamilier:

indoeuropeisk
germansk
nordisk (= nord-germansk)
svensk, dansk, norsk, færøysk, islandsk

uralsk	
finsk-ugrisk	
samisk	østersjøfinsk
nordsamisk, lulesamisk, sørsamisk	finsk

eskimoisk-aleutisk
grønlandsk

Av disse språka snakkes grønlandsk bare på Grønland, finsk stort sett i Finland, men også av minoriteter i Sverige (meänkieli i Tornedalen) og Norge (kvensk i Troms og Finnmark), mens de samiske språka er minoritets-språk på hele Nordkalotten (nordlige Finland, Norge og Sverige + Kolahalvøya). De nordiske språka er majori-tetsspråk i resten av Norden (se kartet).

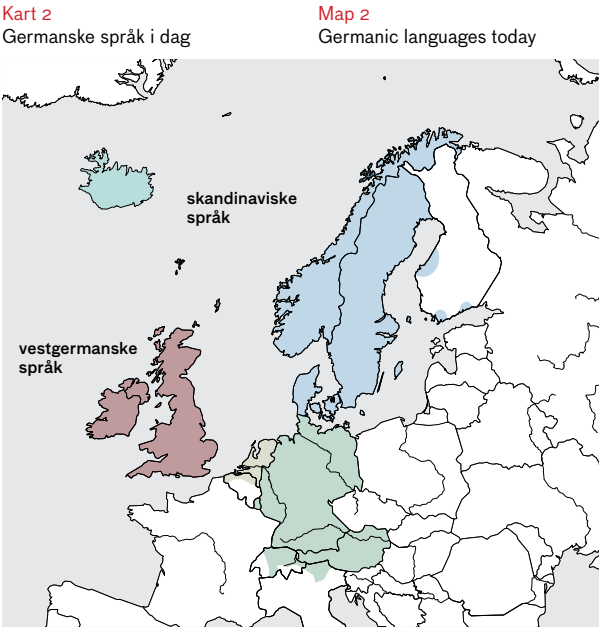


Nordiske = nordgermanske språk

De nordiske eller nordgermanske språka kommer opp-havlig fra Skandinavia, jf. at nordiske språk ofte kalles skandinaviske språk (Scandinavian) på engelsk. I dag blir nordiske språk både snakka i Skandinavia og på de nordatlantiske øyene Island og Færøyene, mens vestger-manske språk blir snakka på det europeiske kontinentet (nederlandsk og tysk) og de britiske øyene (engelsk). På kart 2 er nordiske språk markert med blå og turkis farge, mens de vestgermanske språka er markert med rødt (engelsk) og grønnfarge (nederlandsk og tysk).

Men i vikingtida var det nordiske språkområdet langt større enn i dag. På kart 3 ser vi utbredelsen av german-ske språk på 900-tallet; fargemarkeringene er de samme som på kart 2.

De blå områdene i øst (Baltikum og Russland) viser det såkalte Garðaríki, den blå stripa sør for England er Normandie, mens de turkise områdene i vest dekker store deler av De britiske øyene + alle øyene i Atlanter-havet fra Shetland i øst til og med Grønland i vest (det siste utenfor kartet). I alle disse oversjøiske områdene er det altså bare på Island og Færøyene at språket frem-deles er nordisk.



Languages in the Nordic countries  
past and present, with particular emphasis on the western insular languages  
Arne Torp

The area we call the Nordic Countries is large and contains the states Denmark (with Faroe), Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, as we can see on Map 1.

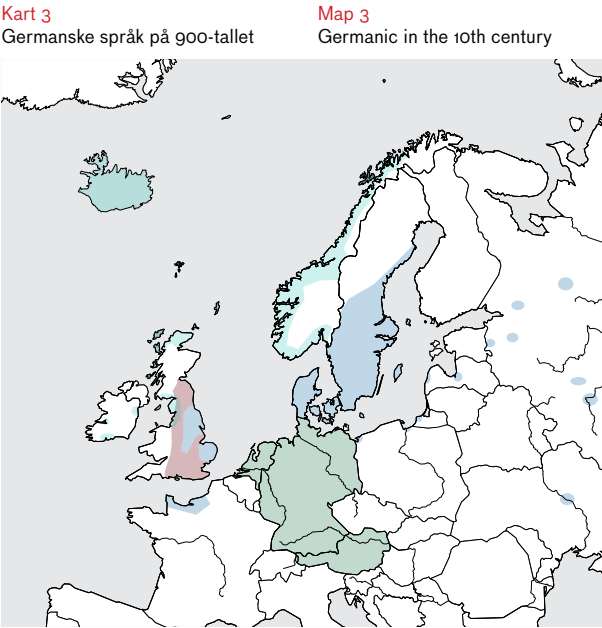
In this area many different languages are spoken; they belong to three separate language families:

Indo-European
Germanic
Nordic Languages (= North Germanic)
Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Faroese, Icelandic

Uralic	
Finno-Ugric	
Sami	Baltic Finnish
Northern Sami, Lule Sami, Southern Sami	Finnish

Eskimo-Aleut
Greenlandic

Greenlandic is spoken only in Greenland; Finnish is spoken mainly in Finland, but dialects of it are spoken by minorities in Sweden and Norway (Meänkieli, in the Torne Valley and Kvennish, in the provinces of Troms and Finnmark, respectively); the Sami languages are minor-ity languages spoken in Nordkalotten (the “Cap of the North”, situated north of Finland, Norway and Sweden).



Nordic Languages

The Nordic, or North Germanic, languages (often called the “Scandinavian languages” in English) originated in Scandinavia. Today, Nordic languages are spoken both in Scandinavia and on the North Atlantic islands of Iceland and Faroe. West Germanic languages are spoken on the European Continent (Dutch and German) and in Great Britain (English). On Map 2, the Nordic languages are marked in blue and turquoise, while the West Germanic languages are marked in red (English) and green (Dutch and German).

But during the Viking Age, the area in which Nordic languages were spoken covered a much larger area than today. On Map 3, we can see the expansion of Germanic language in the 10th century; the colour markings are the same as on Map 2.

The blue areas in the east (the Baltic and Russia) represent the so-called Garðaríki; the blue stripe south of England is Normandy, while the turquoise areas in the west cover large parts of Great Britain and all the islands in the Atlantic from Shetland in the east to Greenland in the west (outside the map). Of all of these overseas areas, only Iceland and Faroe retain a Nordic language.

Here are examples of some ways in which the Nordic and other Germanic languages differ:

Sound characteristics	
/j/ falls away in the beginning of a word	English: <b>year, young, yoke</b> Old Norse: <b>ár, ungr, ok</b>

w falls away before rounded vowels	English: <b>word, wolf, wool</b> Old Norse: <b>orð, ulfr, ull</b>
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Characteristics in the system of inflection	
	English: <b>the word, the wolf</b> Old Norse: <b>orðit, ulfrinn</b>
	English: <b>they meet</b> (each other) Old Norse: <b>þau mætask</b> (jf. Norwegian: <b>de møtes</b> )

From Proto-Norse, the common ancestor of all Nordic languages, to Old Norse, the common Norwegian-Icelandic language

For a period lasting 1500 years, language in Scandinavia was completely different from how it is today, and we know it only from small runic inscriptions.



Her er noen språklige kjennetegn som skiller nordiske språk fra andre germanske språk:

Lydlige særtrekk		
/faller bort først i ordet	engelsk:	year, young, yoke
	norrønt:	ár, ungr, ok

w faller bort foran	engelsk:	word, wolf, wool
runda vokaler	norrønt:	orð, ulfr, ull

Særtrekk i bøyingssystemet		
etterhengt bestemt	engelsk:	the word, the wolf
artikkel	norrønt:	orðit, ulfrinn
refleksive verb (det	engelsk:	they meet (each
refleksive pronomenet	other)	
sik (= seg) blir en	norrønt:	pau mtask
verbendelse –sk	(jf. norsk:	de møtes)

Fra urnordisk, det felles utgangspunktet for alle nordiske språk, til norrønt, det felles norsk-islandske språket

For ca. 1500 år var språket i Skandinavia helt ulikt de moderne språka, og vi kjenner det bare fra ganske korte runeinnskrifter.

På 1200-tallet oppfatta folk i de ulike delene av det nordiske området antakelig språket som mer eller mindre det samme. Den islandske historikeren Snorri Sturluson (1179-1243) omtalte for eksempel sitt språk både som dQnsk tunga (dansk tunge) og norrøna – ordet islenska dukker først opp på 1400-tallet, og samtidig begynner en også å omtale språket i Norge som norskn, som er norn + sk, seinere forenkla til norsk. Ordet ”norsk” blir på nederlandsk Noors, og dette gir i sin tur det engelske ordet Norse, og Old Norse er det samme som norrøna, som også er opprinnelsen til norn, navnet på det gamle språket på Shetland og Orknøyene.

Fra norrønt til moderne skandinaviske språk

Etter norrøn tid ble språket i Skandinavia veldig forandra, og det skyldtes i stor grad påvirkning fra nedertysk (plat-tysk), som var det språket hansakjøpmennene brukte. Her følger det en setning i tre ulike versjoner; den første er på moderne norsk, og her er de nordiske orda kursivert, mens alt det andre som ikke er kursivert, er lånord fra nedertysk. Deretter følger setningen på nedertysk, og til slutt kommer den samme setningen på islandsk, og her er de nedertyske orda understreket.

Moderne norsk (bokmål):

Skredderen tenkte at trøya passet fortreffelig, men kunden klaget og mente at plagget var kort og tøyet simpelt og grovt.

Nedertysk:

De schrâder dachte dat die trôie vortreffelik paste, men de kunde klâgde und mende dat die plagge kort was und dat tûg simpel und grof.

Moderne islandsk:

Klæðskerinn hélt að skyrtan passaði fullkomlega, en viðskiptavinurinn kvartaði og taldi að flíkin væri stutt og efnið einfalt og gróft.

Dette eksemplet viser at det er veldig mange nedertyske ord i skandinaviske språk, og langt færre i islandsk.

Men det er ikke bare de nedertyske orda som skaper avstand mellom islandsk og skandinaviske språk, det er mange andre ord også som er forskjellige, slik disse tre setningene viser. Den første er riktignok nokså forståelig for en skandinav, men den andre er verre, og den tredje helt ubegripelig:

1. Konan talaði við manninn sinn um bílinn. (=Kona talte med mannen sin om bilen.)
2. Kerlingin mætti tröllinu á fjallinu. (= Kjerringa møtte trollet på fjellet.)
3. Sjónvarpið bilaði þegar ég var að horfa á fréttirnar. (= Fjernsynet gikk i stykker mens jeg så på nyhetene.)

Ei fornuftig inndeling av de moderne nordiske språka basert på innbyrdes forståelighet, blir dermed seende slik ut:

nordisk		
øynordisk	skandinavisk	
	nordskandinavisk	sørskandinavisk
islandsk	norsk, svensk	dansk
færøysk		

In the 11th century, people in the different parts of the Nordic area probably perceived their languages as being more or less the same. The Icelandic historian Snorri Sturluson (1179-1243) described his language both as the Dönsk tunga (Danish tongue) and Norrøna (Old Norse) – the word Islenska (Icelandic) does not appear until the the 13th century. At that same time (13th century), the language in Norway was named Nornsk (Norn + sk), later simplified to Norsk (Norwegian). The word Norsk becomes Noors in Dutch, which is the origin of the English word “Norse”. The origin of Norn, the name of the old language of Shetland and Orkney was Norrøn (Old Norse).

From Old Norse to modern Scandinavian languages

After this time, the language in Scandinavia changed a great deal: this was due to an increased influence of Low German (Plattdeutsch), which was the language of the Hanseatic League. The following is a sentence in three different versions: the first in modern Norwegian, the second in Low German and the third in Modern Icelandic. The one in Norwegian has the Nordic words in italics and the Icelandic one has the Low German words underlined.

Modern Norwegian (bokmål):

Skredderen tenkte at trøya passet fortreffelig, men kunden klaget og mente at plagget var kort og tøyet simpelt og grovt.

Low German:

De schrâder dachte dat die trôie vortreffelik paste, men de kunde klâgde und mende dat die plagge kort was und dat tûg simpel und grof.

Modern Icelandic:

Klæðskerinn hélt að skyrtan passaði fullkomlega, en viðskiptavinurinn kvartaði og taldi að flíkin væri stutt og efnið einfalt og gróft.

This example demonstrates the presence of a great number of Low German words in Scandinavian languages, and fewer in Icelandic.

But it is not only Low German words which create distance between Icelandic and Scandinavian; there are also many other words that differ, as is shown in the following three sentences. The first sentence is admittedly quite understandable to a Scandinavian, but the next is less so and the last is completely unintelligible:

1. Konan talaði við manninn sinn um bílinn. (=Kona talte med mannen sin om bilen.)
2. Kerlingin mætti tröllinu á fjallinu. (= Kjerringa møtte trollet på fjellet.)
3. Sjónvarpið bilaði þegar ég var að horfa á fréttirnar. (= Fjernsynet gikk i stykker mens jeg så på nyhetene.)

With English translation:

1. Konan talaði við manninn sinn um bílinn. (= The wife talked to her husband about the car.)
2. Kerlingin mætti tröllinu á fjallinu. (= The woman met the troll in the mountains.)
3. Sjónvarpið bilaði þegar ég var að horfa á fréttirnar. (= The television broke while I was watching the news.)

A sensible representation of the modern Nordic languages’ mutual intelligibility looks like this:

Nordic		
Insular	Scandinavian	
Scandinavian		
	North	South
	Scandinavian	Scandinavian
Icelandic, Faroese	Norwegian, Swedish	Danish

Grammatically, Insular Scandinavian and Scandiniavian are quite dissimilar, due in particular to the preservation of Old Norse inflection in Icelandic. In comparison, Scandinavian’s inflection is greatly simplified.

Insular Scandinavian	Scandinavian
Grammatical cases	No cases
isl. hesturinn, um hestinn, frá hestinum, til hestsins	da./no. (bm.) (om fra, til) hesten
fær. hesturin, um/til hestin,	sv. (om, från till) hästen
frá hestinum	
(eng. around, from, to (the horse).)	

Verbal inflection in person and numbers	No verbal inflection in person and numbers
isl. ég kem, þú kemur, hún kemur, við komum, þið komið, þær koma	da. jeg, du, hun, vi, I, de kommer
fær. eg komi, tú kemur, hon kemur, vit, tit,	sv. jag du, hon, vi, ni, de kommer
tær koma	(ny-)no. eg, du, ho, me, de, dei kjem
(eng. I, you, she, we, you, they come)	

Grammatisk er også øynordisk og skandinavisk ulike, ettersom øynordisk, og spesielt islandsk, har bevart mye av det norrøne bøyingssystemet, mens skandinavisk er sterkt forenkla, slik vi ser her:

Øynordisk	Skandinavisk
kasussystem	ingen kasus
isl. hesturinn, um hestinn, frá hestinum, til hestsins	da./no.(bm.) (om fra, til) hesten
fær. hesturin, um/til hestin, frá hestinum	sv. (om, från till) hästen
verbbøying i person og tall	ikke verbbøying i person og tall
isl. ég kem, þú kemur, hún kemur, við komum, þið komið, þær koma	da. jeg, du, hun, vi, I, de kommer
fær. eg komi, tú kemur, hon kemur, vit, tit, tær koma	sv. jag du, hon, vi, ni, de kommer
	(ny-)no. eg, du, ho, me, de, dei kjem

Spesielle likheter mellom øynordiske språk og vestnorsk

Det fins en hel del interessante lydlige likheter mellom de øynordiske språka og spesielt sørvestnorske dialekter. En av de mest interessante parallellene (det fins også flere andre) er utviklinga av norrønt ll til ddl, i ord som norr. kalla, som både på islandsk og færøysk blir uttalt kaddla (men skrevet kalla). I Norge fins denne utviklinga i det området som vist på kart 4.

Disse og andre lydutviklinger (f.eks. utviklinga av gammel lang a til ao i området Hardanger-Sogn og på Island: mál > maol) skyldes kanskje en slags iboende tendens til slike lydutviklinger i det gammelvestlandske språket utvandrerne tok med seg fra Norge, men denne uttalen kan ikke ha eksistert før etter låndnåmstida, for da ville den ha vist seg også i skrift alt fra første stund, men spor av slike former finner vi ikke før langt seinere.

Noen ord om norn

Det nordiske språket på Shetland og Orknøyene, norn, som ble fortrengt av Scots (skotskengelsk) trolig på 16-1700-tallet, var sannsynligvis mer likt norsk (vestlandsk) enn både færøysk og islandsk er, men fordi norn ikke ble skrevet ned før det var nærmest utdødd, er det vanskelig å vite akkurat hvordan det var. Det er likevel grunn til å regne med at norn har hatt mange av de samme spesielle ”vestnorske” lydutviklingene som vi finner i islandsk og/eller færøysk; det lille som er bevart av språkprøver, tyder i alle fall på det. Her er et Fadervår på Shetlands-norn fra 1700-tallet:

Fy vor or er i Chimeri.  
Halaght vara nam dit.  
La Konungdum din cumma.  
La vill din vera guerde  
i vrildin sindaeri chimeri.  
Gav vus dagh u dagloght brau.  
Forgive sindorwara  
sin vi forgiva gem ao sinda gainst wus.  
Lia wus ikè o vera tempa,  
but delivra wus fro adlu idlu.  
For do i ir Kongungdum, u puri, u glori,  
Amen

Vi ser opplagte innslag av engelsk i denne teksten, som gainst, but, delivra, puri, u glori; og en del former er nok forvanska, men likevel er det klart at det er et norrønt språk som ligger bak; og vi finner også typiske vestnordiske lydutviklinger som ll > ddl (jf. ovenfor): fro adlu idlu er nesten helt likt islandsk frá öllu illu, uttalt frao øddlu illu. Her ser vi dessuten at norn har hatt i alle fall rester av dativ da dette ble skrevet ned, for uten dativ ville det hett fro alt ilt (som også er notert i andre versjoner).

Significant parallels between insular Scandinavian and West Norwegian

There exist some interesting parallels in sound between insular Scandinavian languages and in particular south-west Norwegian dialects.

One of the most exciting ones (there are several others), is the retention in Faroese, Icelandic and the West Norweigan dialects of the Old Norse pronunciation of the phoneme ll as ddl, as in the originally Old Norse Faroese and Icelandic word Kalla, pronounced Kaddla. In Norway this pronunciation is used in the area showed in Map 4:

These and other sound developments (for example, the change of the old long a to ao in the Hardanger-Sogn area and the change from mál to maol – “measure” – in Iceland, were possibly caused by an inherent tendency in the old West Norwegian immigrants, but probably not: this pronunciation could not have existed until after the Landnámstida (settlement of Iceland) because it would have appeared in written language immediately and traces of the form are not found until much later.

Some words on Norn

The Nordic language on Shetland and Orkney, Norn, which was suppressed by Scots in the 15th to 16th centuries, was probably closer to Norwegian (West Coast) than both Faroese and Icelandic, but because Norn was not written down until it was almost extinct, it is difficult to known for sure.

It is, however, reasonable to presume that Norn underwent many of the same special “West Norwegian” pronunciation changes we find in Icelandic and Faroese; the small number of preserved samples points in this direction. Here is a version of the Lord’s Prayer in Shetland Norn from 16th century:

Fy vor or er i Chimeri.  
Halaght vara nam dit.  
La Konungdum din cumma.  
La vill din vera guerde  
i vrildin sindaeri chimeri.  
Gav vus dagh u dagloght brau.  
Forgive sindorwara  
sin vi forgiva gem ao sinda gainst wus.  
Lia wus ikè o vera tempa,  
but delivra wus fro adlu idlu.  
For do i ir Kongungdum, u puri, u glori,  
Amen

We can see obvious traces of English in this text, in gainst, but, delivra, puri, u glori, but it is clearly an Old Norse language at its root: we find typical West Nordic pronunciation changes like ll to ddl, and fro adlu idlu is almost the same as the Icelandic frá öllu illu, pronounced frao øddlu illu. Here we also can see that Norn has at least had traces of the dative when this was written, because without the dative it would have been fro alt ilt (which is also printed in other versions).

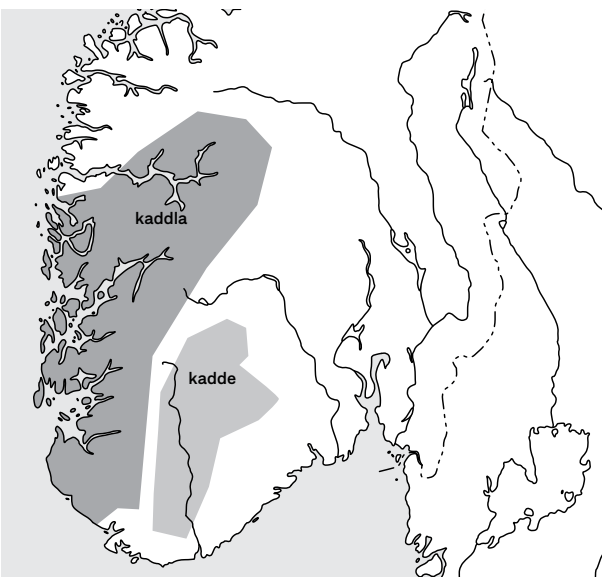
The spoken language in Orkney and Shetland today is a dialect of English, but there are several memories of Norn in the vocabulary: see The Shetland Dictionary ([http://sh.shetlanddictionary.com/index.php?title=Main\\_Page](http://sh.shetlanddictionary.com/index.php?title=Main_Page)).

Kart 4

Utvikling av f.eks. kalla > kaddla eller kadde

Map 4

Development of e.g. kalla > kaddla eller kadde (kalla=called/named)





## Tradisjoner, bilder og ritualer. Møtet mellom Middelhavet og Nord-Atlanteren

### Henning Laugerud

Tittelen på denne lille artikkelen kan ved første øyekast kanskje virke noe underlig, for Middelhavet og Nord-Atlanteren ”møtes” jo strengt tatt ikke rent geografisk. Men på det historiske og kulturelle området gjør de absolutt det. Gjennom begrepene ”tradisjon” og ”møte” antyder også tittelen noe dynamisk og bevegelig. Derfor kan et passende motiv og startsted for vår lille vandring her kan være bildet av en pilegrim fra et av kapitelrelieffene i Urnes stavkirke, laget en gang på 1100-tallet. Pilegrimen var en kvinne – eller mann – i bevegelse og på reise, en ”homo viator”. I en middelaldersk forståelse kunne hele menneskelivet erkjennes som en reise fra det jordiske til det himmelske. Og det er nettopp dette som er vårt tema. Reiser og bevegelser av ulik art, både kulturelle og historiske, i tid og rom.

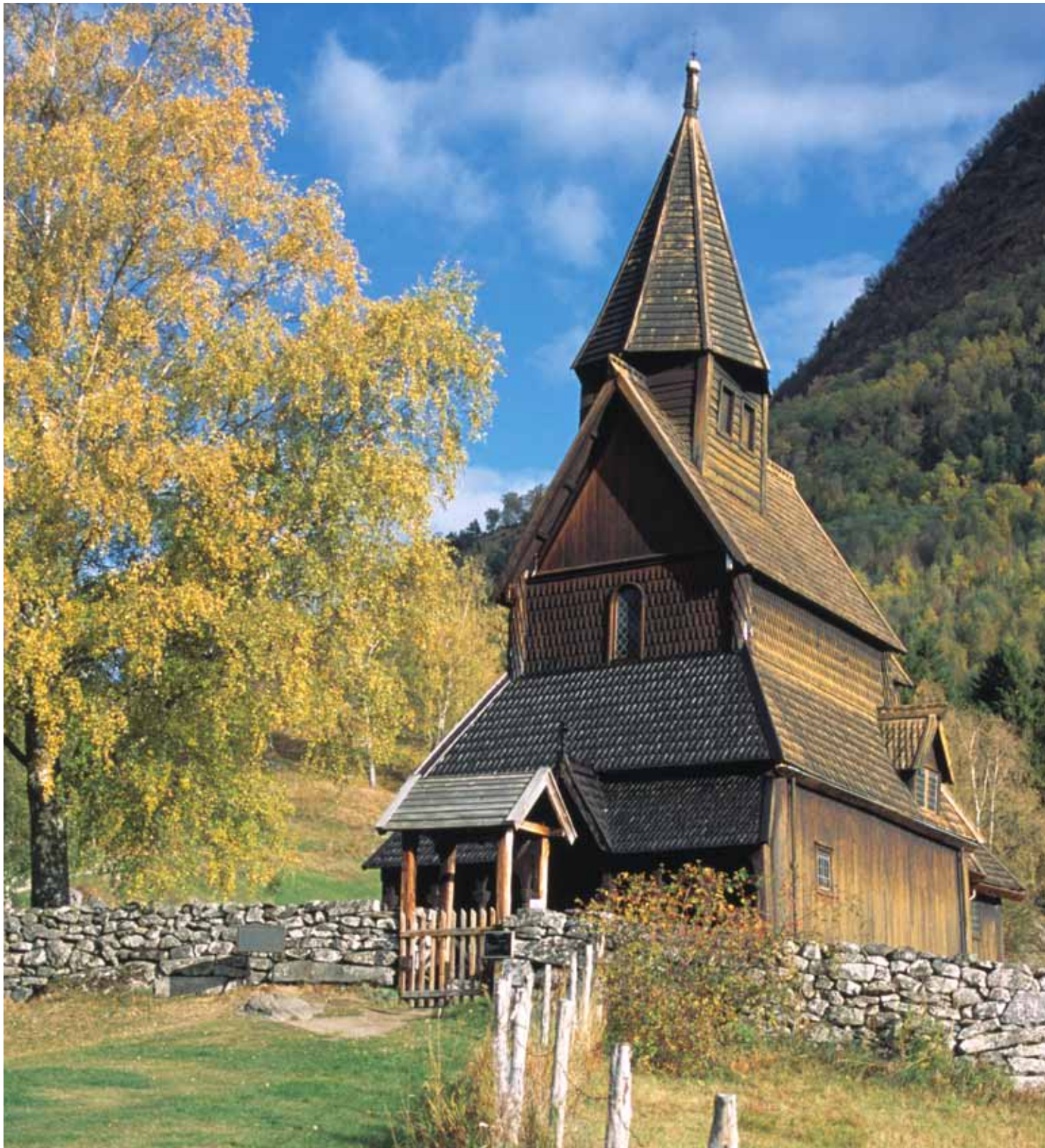
Vi skal ta utgangspunkt i det vi ofte oppfatter som et av de mest typisk norske bidragene til verdens kulturarv, nemlig stavkirkene. Urnes stavkirke et opplagt utgangspunkt, siden den er et av de få monumenter fra Norge på UNESCOs World Heritage List.

### Stavkirkene

Urnes stavkirke ble bygget omkring 1130, men interiøret inneholder både eldre og nyere bygningselementer. Noen av de mest kjente delene fra kirken er dyreornamentene på nordveggen. De stammer fra en eldre bygning fra omkring 1050-1080. Det er også en rekke endringer og ombygninger fra 1600- og 1700-tallet. Dette er typisk for alle de bevarte stavkirker, en nærmest ”organisk” historie. Aldri frosset til en bestemt tid, og heller ikke alltid til et bestemt sted fordi det var slett ikke uvanlig å flytte bygningene. Stavkonstruksjonen gjorde dette relativt enkelt. Det er i dag ikke mer en 28 stavkirker igjen i Norge, av et opprinnelig antall på omkring 2000-3000 som bel bygget fra omkring år 1000 til en gang på slutten av 1400-tallet. De fleste har forsvunnet, ikke fordi trebygninger har kort levetid, men fordi de ble for små og for lite funksjonelle.

Bygg av denne type var imidlertid ikke begrenset til middelalderens Norge. Man har funnet rester og spor etter tilsvarende konstruksjoner både i Sverige, Danmark og England. Det var stavkirker på Island, sannsynligvis bygget av importert tømmer fra Norge, og høyst sannsynlig også på de andre øyene i Nordsjøområdet. Det all grunn til å tro at dette var en bygningstype som var utbredt over hele Nord-Europa i tidlig middelalder frem til 1000-tallet. Etter hvert ble de avløst av kirkebygninger i stein, som det jo også finnes mange av i Norge. Det har ofte vært slik at når man snakker om ”stavkirker” så har man fokusert på deres stavhet, hvordan de er konstruert, og hva de er bygget av. Dette er selvfølgelig også interessant, men for å forstå hva en stavkirke er må vi se

Urnes stavkirke  
Fotograf: Morten Stige  
Urnes Stave Church  
Photographer: Morten Stige



## Tradition, Images and Rituals. The Meeting Between the Mediterranean and the North Atlantic.

### Henning Laugerud

The title of this essay may seem at first somewhat strange, because The Mediterranean and the North Atlantic do not really “meet” in the strictly geographical sense. But in the historical and cultural field they absolutely do. Through the concepts of “tradition” and “meeting”, the title points towards something dynamic and in motion.

Therefore an appropriate motif and point of departure for this small journey can be the image of a pilgrim from one of the capital reliefs from Urnes Stave Church, created in the 10th century. The Pilgrim was a woman or man in motion and travelling, a “Homo viator”. In a Medieval understanding, all of human life could be recognised as a journey from the earth-bound to heavenly-resided. And this is exactly our subject: different journeys and motions, both cultural and historical and in time and space. We will have as a basis what we tend to perceive as one of the most typical Norwegian contributions to the worlds heritage: namely, the stave churches, and, in particular, Urnes Stave Church, an obvious starting point, being one of very few monuments from Norway on UNESCOs World Heritage List.

### The stave churches

Urnes Stave Church was built around the year 1130, but the interior contains both older and later construction elements. Some of the most famous elements of Urnes Stave Church, for example the animal ornamentation on the North wall, originate from an older building from approximately 1050-1080, and there are also changes and reconstructions from the 15th and 16th century. This is typical for all the preserved staves, a history close to “organic”. They were never frozen in one time, or even to a certain place, because it was not unusual to move the buildings. The stave’s construction made this a relatively effortless task.

Today no more than 28 stave churches are left in Norway, from an original number of about 2000-3000 which were built between the year 1000 and the end of the 15th century. Most of them have disappeared, not because the wooden buildings have a short life span, but because they became too small and less functional.

This style of building, however, is not limited to Medieval Norway. Traces and remains have been found from corresponding constructions in Sweden, Denmark and England. There were stave churches in Iceland (probably built on timber imported from Norway) and most certainly also on the other islands in the North Sea. Actually, there are many reasons to believe that this was a building type which was spread all over Northern Europe in



**Triumfalkrusifiks**  
Opprinnelig fra Urnes stavkirke. Står i dag i Bergen Museum.  
Fotograf: Tore Holter  
**Triumphal Crucifix**  
Originally from Urnes Stave Church. Today at the Bergen Museum.  
Photographer: Tore Holter

på dens kirkelighet, det faktum at den er et kirkebygg. Så i denne lille "vandringen" gjennom historien skal vi ikke nøye oss med å se på stavkirkene som et stykke trearkitektur typisk for et bestemt sted i verden. For å forstå hva en stavkirke er må vi derfor gå innenfor og se.

### Stavkirkeprekenen

Hvordan skal vi så forstå bygningen og dens interiør i sin middelalderske og historiske sammenheng? Vet vi noe om hvordan middelalderens mennesker så og tenkte om sine kirker? Det gjør vi faktisk, ikke bare indirekte gjennom bildene og gjenstandene selv og ulike teolo-



giske tekster, men også ganske så eksplisitt knyttet til stavkirkene. Fra 1100-tallet har vi bevart den såkalte "stavkirkeprekenen", i en samling prekentelekter kalt Gammelnorsk homiliebok. Tekstene her er oversatt fra latin til norrønt og tilpasset lokale forhold. Dette er en såkalt "kirkedagspreken", til bruk på den enkelte kirkes dedikasjons- eller innvielsesdag.

Her kan vi finne den symbolske og allegoriske betydningen kirken som fysisk bygning kunne forstås innenfor i middelalderen: "Både kirkebygning og kristenhet kalles med ett og samme ord i bøkene." Det er dette som er betydningen av ordet kirke. Teksten forklarer videre hvordan disse to allegoriske nivåene skal forstås. For det første på et allment plan som kirke: "Koret er et bilde på de salige i himmelen, mens kirkeskipet betegner de kristne på jorden. [...] De fire hjørnestolpene i kirkene er de fire evangelister, for den lærdommen de inneholder, er de sterkeste støttene i den kristne tro." Men dette kan også forstås på det individuelle plan. "[...] på samme måte som vi sier at kirken er et bilde på hele kristenheten, kan vi også si at den er et bilde på hver enkelt kristen, som ved å leve i renhet gjør seg til et tempel for Den hellige ånd." I denne sammenheng blir hjørnestolpene tolket på en annen måte: "De fire hjørnestolpene er de fire hoveddyder som er de sterkeste støttene for alle gode gjerninger: Det er visdom og rettferdighet, styrke og måtehold." Det er ikke bare delene i selve bygningskroppen som settes inn i denne betydningsmettede sammenhengen, det gjelder også for interiøret. Alteret symboliserer Kristus, alterduken er "de hellige menn som pryder Kristus med gode gjerninger". Korsene, krusifiksene og kirkeklokkene har også en allegorisk betydning utover sine umiddelbare referanser.

Målet med denne allegoriske tolkningen var å løfte den enkelte troende mot Gud og frelsen: "Så skal vi vite at alt vi trenger til utstyr til kirkene eller til gudstjenesten, kan tolkes på åndelig vis og oppfylles i oss, dersom vi lever så ulastelig at vi blir verdig til å kalles Guds templer." De synlige elementene i kirkebygget skulle vekke både betrakterens erindring og åndelige følelser og vise vei mot de høyere realiteter. Slik understrekes de synlige elementenes "oppløftende" eller anagogiske [gr. "å løfte opp"] karakter. Man skulle se med sjelens øye: "hugskots augum".

"Kirken" må altså forsås i en bred meningskontekst. Den var både en institusjon og et felleskap, samtidig som den også var et sted og et bygg som pekte frem og "opp" til det som var den absolutte mening for middelalderens mennesker. En mening basert i troen på den kristne religion som var en felles europeisk kulturell referanse og tradisjon.

early medieval times up until the 9th century, when they were eventually replaced by church buildings of stone, of which there are quite a few in Norway.

Often when talking about staves one has a tendency to focus on their "staveness" – how they are constructed and what they are built from. This is of course very interesting, but to understand what a stave church is, we must look at its churchliness, the fact that it is a church building. So, in this small "wandering" through history we will not only recognize the stave church as a piece of wooden architecture typical for a particular place in the world. In order to understand what a stave church is, we need to go inside and have a look.

### Stave Church Sermon

How do we go about understanding the building and its interior in the medieval and historical context? Do we know anything about how medieval man saw and thought about their churches? We actually do, not only through the images and objects themselves and different theological texts, but also through the stave churches themselves.

From the 10th century we have preserved the so-called "Stave Church Sermon" in a collection of sermons called Gammelnorsk homiliebok. The texts here are translated from Latin to Old Norse and adjusted to the local context. This is a so-called "church day sermon", to be used for the dedication day of a church.

Here we can find the symbolical and allegorical explanation of the different parts and elements of a wooden church building in the Middle Ages: "Both the church building and Christianity are referred to in the books with the same word." This is the actual meaning of the word church. The text explains further how these two allegorical levels are to be understood.

First, in a common level as a church: "The choir is an image of the heavenly blessed, while the nave denotes the Christians on earth. The four corner posts in the churches are the Four Evangelists: because of the teachings they contain, they are the strongest supporters of Christian faith. But this can also be understood on the individual level." "... in the same way as we say that the church is an image of all Christianity, we can also say that it is an image of every Christian, who by living in purity makes her/himself into a temple for the Holy Spirit." In this context the corner posts are interpreted in a different way: "The four corner posts are the four main

virtues which are the strongest supporters for all good deeds. They represent wisdom and justice, strength and temperance."

It is not only the structural parts of the building, but the interior, too, that are put into this symbolic and significant framework. The altar symbolises Christ; the altar cloth, "the holy men who adorn Christ with good deeds". The crosses, crucifixes and church bells also have an allegorical meaning beyond their obvious references. The aim of this allegorical interpretation was to lift the single believer towards God and Salvation: "So we will know that all of the equipment in the churches or the liturgy can be interpreted in a spiritual way and fulfilled in us if we lead an irreproachable life to be worthy of the title The Temple of God." The visible elements in the church building were there to awaken both the memory and the spiritual emotions of the witness and lead them on the way towards higher realms.

In this way the "uplifting" or anagogical [gr. "to lift up"] character of the visible elements are reinforced. To see with the eye of the soul: " hugskots augum" (the "eye of the mind"). "The Church" has to be identified in a broad context of meaning. It was an institution and a community, simultaneously a place and a building, which pointed "up" and towards the absolute truth for medieval man. A truth based in the belief of the Christian religion, which was the common cultural European reference and tradition.

### Images, objects and rituals

In what way were this truth, this belief and these traditions presented for the congregation?

The sermons, through the spoken word, were of course a method for the communication of this diversity of beliefs, but as we have seen, this was incorporated into a visual and material context where actions – rituals – had an integrated part. One of the most important ways of communicating and sustaining belief was through images and objects. We will stay with The Urnes Stave Church as we look at a few examples.

One of the most spectacular pieces of the interior is the huge triumphal crucifix situated at the opening of the choir from the end of 10th century. This motif is often named a kalvariegruppe, and refers to the crucifixion of Christ on The Golgate. Here we see His mother, The Holy Virgin on His right side and, to the left, John the Baptist. Originally there was also another sculpture of The Holy Virgin, dated approximately from the same time



### Bilder, gjenstander og ritualer

Hvordan ble denne meningen, denne troen og disse tradisjonene, formidlet til de troende? Prekener, gjennom det talte ord, var selvfølgelig en måte å kommunisere dette meningsmangfold, men som vi har sett over inngikk dette i en visuell og materiell sammenheng, hvor også handlinger – ritualer – var en integrert del. En av de viktigste måter å kommunisere og fastholde mening på var gjennom bilder og gjenstander. Vi skal holde oss til Urnes stavkirke og se på noen eksempler.

Et av de mest spektakulære inventarstykkene, er det store triumfalkrusifikset over koråpningen fra slutten av 1100-tallet. Dette motivet kalles gjerne en kalvariegruppe, og refererer til Kristi korsfestelse på Golgata. Her ser vi Hans mor, Den hellige Jomfru på Hans høyre side og til venstre disippelen Johannes. Opprinnelige befant det seg også en annen skulptur av Den hellige Jomfru, fra omtrent samme tid som kalvariegruppe. Denne sto sannsynligvis på et sidealter viet til Jomfru Maria. Skulpturen befinner seg i dag i Bergen Museum.

Vi startet med pilegrimen på en av kirkens kapiteler, men det er en rekke andre utskjæringer som er verdt å nevne. Et interessant eksempel er en kentaur, også en langveisfarende, som forbant den norrøne kulturen ikke bare med kristendommen, men med den større kulturelle arv fra Middelhavsområdet. Videre finner vi ornamenter og en del andre middelalder gjenstander i kirken, blant annet en skipsformet lysestake i jern. Til kirken hørte det også to Limoges-lysestaker fra 1200-tallet som i dag også er på Bergen Museum.

Dette er bare noen eksempler fra Urnes, men i de andre kirkene fra middelalderen kan vi finne lignende. Verdt å nevne er det store monumentale billedsyklus med motiver fra Bibelhistorien og Jesu liv, som for eksempel det såkalte "Ål-taket" som i dag befinner seg på Historisk museum i Oslo, samt altertavler, alterfrontaler, skulpturer både i tre og stein, døpefonter og lysestaker. Alle disse bildene, og gjenstander skulle på ett nivå lære betrakteren troens sentrale sannheter, som de hellige historier, ideal å etterlikne, morallære osv. På et annet nivå var de også "redskaper" til å erindre disse sannheter og trosforestillinger. Bildene var også hjelpemidler for hukommelsen. Kirken var i en viss forstand en stor "erindringsmaskin".

Det er her det knyttes an til de handlinger som ble fremstilt i kirken, for bildene var ikke bare ment å bli sett, forklart og tolket. De var en integrert del av handlinger, ritualer av ulik art og til ulik tid, som den troende og fellesskapet av troende skulle utføre. Den mest sentrale handlingen var nattverdsfeiringen under messen, hvor

brødet og vinen blir Jesu legeme og blod. Dette er en gjentakelse av Jesu siste måltid med sine disipler, og Hans frelsende offer. Ritualer er i seg selv en "erindringsmaskin" som transporterer den troende tilbake i historien, gjennom en aktuell nåtidig handling som skal lede frem til den fremtidige frelse. I dette, og andre ritualer, levde den troende ut historien samtidig som hun eller han levde seg inn i den. Gjennom ritualer deltok den troende i de historiske hendelsene, og på den måten ble de et "bilde" på troen som pekte fremover.



as the kalvariegruppe. It was probably situated on a side altar consecrated for The Virgin Mary. The sculpture is today at the Bergen Museum.

We started with the pilgrim on one of the capitals of the church, but there are also quite a few other wood-carvings worth mentioning. One interesting example is a centaur – also a traveller – one who connected the Norse culture not only with Christianity, but also with the larger cultural inheritance from the Mediterranean.

Furthermore we find ornaments and other objects from medieval times in the church, like the iron candelabra formed as a ship. Two Limoges candelabras from the 11th century also belong to the church, which today are at the Bergen Museum.

These are a few examples from Urnes. But in other medieval churches, too, we can find similarities. Worth our attention is the great monumental picture cycle with motifs from the Bible and the life of Jesus Christ, the so-called "Ål-taket" (wooden vault of Ål Stave Church) which today is in the Historical Museum in Oslo, as well as various altar pieces, altar fronts, sculptures both in wood and stone, baptismal fonts and candelabras.

All these images and objects were designed on one level to teach the viewer the central truth of faith: the holy stories, ideals to follow, moral teachings, etc. On another level they were also "tools" to remember these truths and beliefs. The images were aiding the memory. The church was to a certain extent a huge "memorising machine". Here is the connection to the actions presented in the church, because the images were not only there to be seen, explained and interpreted; they were an integral part of the actions, different rituals the faithful and the community were supposed to perform.

The most central action was the celebration of Communion during mass, where the bread and wine became the body and blood of Christ. This is a repetition of The Last Supper, and Jesus' salvation sacrifice. The ritual is in itself a "memorising machine" which transports the faithful back in history, through a series of actions which are to lead to salvation in the future.

In this, and other rituals, the faithful lived the history parallel to living into it. Through the ritual, the faithful participated in the historical happenings, and in this way they became an "image", a metaphor for the belief pointing forward.

### To see the Divine

This forward-looking aspect shows us a third level in understanding both images, and the visual totality accounted for by the church, namely the salvation and ascension towards the final goal of seeing and recognising The Divine. To understand this we need to take closer look at the perception of seeing and recognising in the Middle Ages.

The Church Father Augustine (354–430) developed a theory of human sight on three levels based in theology. First you have physical or optical sight, where you

## Å se det Guddommelige

Dette fremtidsrettede aspektet viser til et tredje nivå å forstå både bildene, og den visuelle totalitet som kirken utgjorde, nemlig frelsen og oppstigningen mot det endelige mål å se og erkjenne Guddommen. For å forstå dette over dette må vi se litt nærmere på middelalderens oppfatning av syn og erkjennelse.

Kirkefaderen Augustin (354-430) utviklet en teologisk forankret teori om det menneskelige syn på tre nivåer. Først har man fysisk eller optisk syn, hvor man ser de guddommelige sannheter via naturlig optisk sansning f. eks. i bilder eller gjennom verden omkring seg. Dernest, på et høyere nivå, har man åndelige syn eller forestillinger, hvor man ser som i drømmer. Det tredje nivå er intellektuelt syn hvor, man direkte kan se de ikke-materielle ting og de Guddommelige sannheter. Dette er en synsteori hvor optisk og fysisk syn er direkte forbundet med åndelig og "visjonært" syn.

Synet ble av Augustin og hans etterfølgere sett på som den viktigste av alle sanser og den fremste vei til erkjennelse. Erkjennelsen, trangen til å vite, er nedlagt i oss som en lengsel, sier Augustin: "[...] og da øynene er fremst blant de sanser som gir kunnskap, kalles de i Guds ord for 'øynenes lyst' (1. Joh, 2.16). " Den store middelalderfilosofen Thomas av Aquino (ca. 1226-1274) hevdet at all kunnskap hadde som sitt utgangspunkt i sanseerfaringer, og primært synssansen. Syn var også kunnskap i et psykologisk perspektiv fordi vi, ifølge Thomas, forstår og tenker gjennom indre bilder, såkalte "phantasmer". Våre intellektuelle forestillinger og ideer er en form for bilder som er lagret i våre sinn. Vår hukommelse, erindringen, er lagerrommet med alle disse "bildene". Det forhold at de er mentale bilder er det som gjør det mulig for ideer å bli husket som gjenstand for kontemplasjon eller tenkning. Vi ser tydelig forbindelsen mellom erindring og bilder og tenkning og bilder. Å se er å forstå, en språklig etymologisk forbindelse vi fremdeles finner i det fleste europeiske språk.

Optisk syn var et ledd i en erkjennelsesprosess, og den åndelige og intellektuelle skuen var en forlengelse av den fysiske. Synet beveget seg langs en "glideskala" fra det lavere til det høyere. Denne måten å tenke på gjenfinnes i "Stavkirkeprekenen". Kirkebygget, bildene og alle gjenstandene var det fysisk utgangspunkt for en erkjennelsesprosess. Gjennom bildene kunne man nå et høyere nivå av forståelse av de Guddommelige sannheter med det endelige mål å se Gud, "ansikt til ansikt".

## Tradisjoner

Stavkirkene står som vi ser i en lang og stor tradisjon. Eller kanskje heller flere ulike tradisjoner som er dynamiske, slik tradisjon er. Et slikt eksempel er den at man via sine bilder, gjenstander og handlinger kunne reise både i tid og rom. At tradisjonen er bevegelig og foranderlig blir tydelig gjennom de ulike visuelle uttrykk som har "samlet seg opp" gjennom århundrene i stavkirkene. Dette går igjen både i kirkebygget og ritualene. Alle kan spores tilbake til Middelhavets området, men de er uttrykt og utformet på en litt annen måte, tilpasset og utviklet realiteter som både like og forskjellige. Intet nyskapende, men allikevel nytt, som kirken selv internasjonal men lokal på samme tid. Ikke "frosset" og isolert men i kommunikasjon med andre tradisjoner og realiteter.

Når vi går inn i en stavkirke på Norges vestkyst, eller hvilken som helst kirke for den del, reiser vi på et vis både tilbake til – og fremover – til Jerusalem. Vi ender opp i det indre Middelhav, i Jerusalem, hvor alt startet for 2000 år siden og spredte seg via det Romerske imperium til de fjerneste kyster av Europa. For middelalderens mennesker var Jerusalem det geografiske og betydningsmessige sentrum i Verden. Der fant Åpenbaringen gjennom Inkarnasjonen og Kristi frelsende offer sted, og der var Jesu grav. Men "Jerusalem" var også lokalt til stede i ens egen kirke. Ethvert alter var på et vis Kristi grav. Jerusalem var også et "sted" i fremtiden. Frelsen for den enkelte troende lå der, i det Himmelske Jerusalem.

Så vi avslutter her med vår pilegrim igjen. Et menneske på vandring, slik tradisjonen, og et bilde på den troende i ferd med å utføre sine troshandlinger. Denne pilegrimen hadde kommet en lang vei fra Middelhavet til disse fjerne kyster ved Nord-Atlanteren. En tidsreisende på vei fra sitt gamle liv og til sitt nye, slik også stavkirken er en tidsreisende fra en fjern fortid som møter oss i vår egen tid – forhåpentligvis på vei mot en bedre fremtid, også for oss.

can see the Divine truth via the natural optical sense as in images or in the world around you. Through the second, higher level, one has spiritual visions or revelations, where one sees as one dreams. The third level is intellectual sight where you can directly see the non-material things and the Divine Truth. This is a theory where optical and physical sight is directly connected to spiritual and "visionary" sight.

Sight was considered by Augustine and his followers the most important of all senses, and a leading path to realisation. The recognition, the need to know, is inherited in us as a longing, Augustine says: "[...] and when the eyes are the foremost of the senses which give knowledge, they are called in the words of God 'the desires of the eyes' ( 1. Joh, 2.16)".

The great medieval philosopher Thomas of Aquino (ca. 1226–1274) declared all knowledge to have its point of departure in sensory experience, and primarily in the visual sense. Sight was also knowledge from a psychological perspective, because we, according to Thomas, understand and think through inner images, so-called "phantasms". Our intellectual memory – the recollection – is the warehouse with all these "pictures". The fact of their being mental images make it possible for ideas to be remembered as objects for contemplation and thinking. We see clearly the connection between recollection and images and thinking and images. To see is to understand, an etymological connection we still find in most European languages.

Optical sight was part of a process of recognition, and spiritual and intellectual seeing was a continuation of the physical. Sight moved on a "sliding scale" from lower to higher. This way of thinking is also found in the Stave Church Sermon. The Church building, the pictures and all the objects were the physical starting point for a process of recognition.

Through the images you could reach a higher level of understanding of the Divine Truth, with the final goal to see God, "face to face".

## Traditions

The stave churches are, as we see, part of a long and great tradition. Or we might say, rather, several different dynamic traditions. An example is that through images, objects and actions we could travel both in time and space. Seeing tradition as mobile and changeable becomes apparent through the different visual expressions collected through the centuries in the stave churches.

This is clear both in the church building and the rituals. Everything can be traced back to the Mediterranean area, but is expressed and formed in its own way. There is nothing altogether new, but original, like the Church itself, international, but local at the same time. Not "frozen" and isolated, but in communication with other traditions and realities.

When entering a stave church on the west coast of Norway, or any other church for that matter, we travel in a sense both backwards and forwards to Jerusalem. We end up in the central Mediterranean, in Jerusalem, where it all began about 2000 years ago and spread throughout the Roman Empire to the remote coasts of Europe. For medieval man, Jerusalem was the geographical and meaningful centre of the World. There the Revelation through the Incarnation and Christ's sacrifice took place; there was the tomb of Jesus.

But "Jerusalem" was also present locally in one's own church. Every altar was in a sense the tomb of Jesus. Jerusalem was also a "place" in the future. The salvation for the single believer resides in the Heavenly Jerusalem.

So, we finish here with our pilgrim. Like tradition and an image of the believer in an act of faith: a wandering man. This pilgrim had come a long way from the Mediterranean to these remote coasts of the North Atlantic. In our present time, a time traveller from a distant past is meeting us – hopefully on her way to a better future which includes us.

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Og Norig det ligg vel langt i nord og vetteren varer lenge, skriver Elias Blix i vår fedrelandssalme. Kort og konsist uttrykker dikteren det viktigste ved vårt klima, at våre områder ligger langt i nord, noe som medfører relativt kaldt klima med store årstidsvariasjoner. Det siste skyldes at jordaksen danner en vinkel, i våre dager 23,44°, med planet for jordbanen rundt sola. Hadde vinkelen bare vært noen få grader mindre, ville vi hatt evig istid. Vinkelen sikrer oss mye solstråling om sommeren, over skyene til dels mer gjennom et døgn enn i tropene. Da kan folk i Vesterveg synges med nordmannen: og naar Næter er ljose som Dagar, kann han ingenstad vænare sjaa (Ivar Aasen).

Istider og mellomistider

Jordaksens vinkel varierer langsomt mellom 22,1 og 24,5°, med perioder over titusener av år. I tillegg følger jordbanen en ellipse som forandrer seg slik at tiden på året da jorda er nærmest sola, også varierer. Årsaken til variasjonene er påvirkning av planetenes gravitasjon. Disse langsomme variasjonene i jordbanen kjenner vi i detalj både bakover og framover i tid. De gir betydelige variasjoner i hvor mye solstråling vi mottar på våre bredder om sommeren, variasjoner som gir opphav til langsomme vekslinger mellom istider og mellomistider etter Milutin Milankovitchs teori.<sup>1</sup> Siste istid hadde sitt maksimum for cirka 20 000 år siden. Fra den tid økte solstrålingen om sommeren på våre bredder til et maksimum for 11 000 år siden. Da nådde jordaksens vinkel sin maksimalverdi samtidig som jorda var nærmest sola om sommeren. De store iskappene på nordlige bredder smeltet, og vi gikk inn i vår mellomistid holosen (figur 1). I lang tid ble mye av den ekstra solenergien brukt til å smelte isen. Etter at det meste av isen ble borte, fullstendig over Skandinavia, bredde skogen seg mot nord over kontinentene. Dette forsterket oppvarmingen fordi skog reflekterer mindre solstråling til verdensrommet enn land uten skog<sup>2</sup>. I våre områder var det varmere enn i dag fra cirka 8000 til 5000 år siden. Sommertemperaturen var i gjennomsnitt over 2 grader varmere<sup>3</sup>. Etter hvert endret jordbanen seg slik at sola i dag er nærmest sola om vinteren. De siste par tusen år har endringene i jordbanen vært små og ikke bidratt til klimaendringer. Men jordaksens vinkel avtar fremdeles, slik flytter polarsirkelen seg nordover 14,4 meter i året. Om en ser bort fra andre årsaker til klimaendringer, vil neste istid trolig starte om 100 000 år.<sup>4</sup>

Fimbulvinter

Vårt klima er karakterisert ved store, tilfeldige variasjoner fra år til år, variasjoner som kan forklares fra atmosfærens kaotiske bevegelsesnatur. Våre norrøne forfedre før landnåmstiden på Island erfarte dette og var redd for lange, kalde vintre som kunne true den korte vekstsesongen. Enkelte år opplevde de en spesielt tung vinter, den kunne de kanskje fåle. Det verserte trolig fortellinger om at det en gang fant sted to slike vintre på rad, år med stor hungersnød. De forestilte seg at tre slike tunge vintre på rad kunne ingen overleve. Da kom i følge norrøn mytologi verdens undergang, Ragnarok. Disse tre vintrene som skulle komme før Ragnarok, ble kalt Fimbulvinteren.

I tillegg til de tilfeldige variasjonene, finner vi spor etter mer regulære variasjoner over flere år opp til flere tiår, endringer som ofte knyttes til variasjoner i havsirkulasjonen. Dette er interne variasjoner i klimasystemet. I tillegg endres klimaet over tiår og hundreår av ytre pådriv på klimasystemet. Ytre pådriv i holosen før den industrielle revolusjon er naturlige pådriv som stort sett enten skyldes vulkanutbrudd eller variasjoner i solstrålingen på grunn av solaktivitet, ofte karakterisert ved antall solflekker. Store vulkanutbrudd kan føre store mengder små svevende partikler opp i stratosfæren, laget over det nederste laget, troposfæren, der de fleste skyene befinner seg. I stratosfæren kan partiklene bli værende et par år og blant annet bidra til at mindre av solstrålingen når jordoverflaten. Et kjent eksempel er utbruddet fra vulkanen Tambora i Indonesia i 1815 AD. Det neste året ble over Europa og Nord-Amerika kjent som året uten sommer.

Paleoklimatologer prøver på ulike måter å rekonstruere klimaet langt tilbake i tid. En metode er basert på studier av treringer. Tidsoppløsningen gjør data fra treringer spesielt interessante for år med uvanlig vær. Blant annet gir treringer pålitelige data om de to ekstremt kalde årene 535 og 536 AD<sup>5</sup>. Samtidige skrifter beskriver solstråler som ikke lenger var klare, noe som tyder på at ett eller flere store vulkanutbrudd fant sted. Annaler, for eksempel fra Irland, forteller om stor hungersnød. Kanskje våre forfedres tro på en Fimbulvinter skriver seg fra denne klimahendelsen. Opp gjennom historien har vi mange eksempler med uår i jordbruket og hungersnød. Norge hadde for eksempel uår i 1741/42. Det spesielle med denne hendelsen er at den ikke synes være knyttet til vulkanutbrudd og at den fant sted i en periode innen Den lille istid (se under) da det ikke var spesielt kaldt.

“And Norig lies far up North and the winter lasts a long time”, writes Elias Blix in our national anthem. With precision the poet expresses the most important factor contributing to our climate: we are situated far up north, and, because of this, we have a relatively cold climate with pronounced variations in season.

These variations are caused by the Earth’s axial tilt, which today is 23,44°. If the tilt was only a few degrees fewer, the Earth would be wrapped in a perpetual ice age. The tilt ensures we receive more sunlight each day in the summer than do the tropics.

People in Vesterveg can thus sing with the Norwegian: “ ... and when nights are as bright as days, he can nowhere more beautiful see.” (Ivar Aasen)

The Ice Ages and interglacial periods

The Earth's tilt varies slowly between 22,1 and 24,5° in a cycle that lasts approximately 26 000 years. In addition, the Earth's orbit is elliptic, which means that the time of the year when the earth is closest to the sun also is subject to variations. These variations are caused by the planet’s gravitation.

These slow variations in the orbit of the earth we know a great deal about, both back in time and forward. They contribute to substantial variations in the quantity of solar radiation that falls on our latitudes during summer, variations which cause the slow changes between ice ages and interglacial ages, as discussed in the theory of Milutin Milankovitch's<sup>1</sup>.

The last ice age's Glacial Maximum (the point at which the ice sheets had spread to their greatest extent) was approximately 20 000 years ago. After that time, the solar radiation increased during summer on our latitudes to their greatest point 11 000 years ago. At that time, the tilt of the Earth’s axis had reached its maximum value and simultaneously the Earth was closest to the Sun in the summer. The great polar ice caps melted, and we entered our interglacial time, which is called the Holocen Epoch (Figure 1).

After the ice disappeared completely from Scandinavia, the forest grew back, and covered the continents up north. This reinforced the (global) warming because woods reflect less solar radiation back into space than does land without forest.<sup>2</sup> Because of this, between 8000 years ago to 5000 years ago, our areas were warmer than they are today, with summer temperatures higher,

on average, by more than 2°C.<sup>3</sup> Eventually the orbit of the Earth changed so that the Sun today is closest to the Earth in winter.

Over the last couple of thousand years, changes to the Earth’s orbit have not been great enough to contribute to a change of climate. But the tilt of the Earth’s axis still decreases and, because of this, the polar circle retreats northward at a rate of 14.4 m per year. Without considering other reasons for changes in the climate, the next ice age will probably start in about 100 000 years.<sup>4</sup>

The Fimbulvinter

Our climate is characterised by huge, random, yearly variations, variations which can be explained by the chaotic nature of movement in the atmosphere.

Our Norse ancestors before Landnåmstiden (the Icelandic Age of Settlement) on Iceland experienced this and thus were afraid of long, cold winters which could threaten the short growth season. Some years they would experience an especially heavy winter, which they could endure.

Old tales told of two such winters in a row, which caused great famine. They imagined no one could survive three heavy winters in a row. In Norse mythology, this apocalypse was called Ragnarök (“final destiny of the gods”), and the three winters which were to come before it were called the Fimbulvinter.

In addition to these random variations in climate, we find traces of more regular variations over years and decades, changes which often are connected to variations in the circulation of the oceans. These are internal variations in the climate system. In addition, the climate is changed over the decades and centuries by external forces.

External forces of the Holocen Epoch before the industrial revolution include changes in the solar output, often characterised by the number of sunspots, and volcanism. Huge volcanic eruptions can send large quantities of tiny floating particles up into the stratosphere (the layer of the atmosphere above the lower layer, the troposphere, where most of the clouds are situated). In the stratosphere, the particles can stay for a couple of years and cause, among other things, less solar radiation to reach the surface of the Earth. A famous example is the eruption from the volcano Tambora in Indonesia in 1815 AD. The next year in Europe and North America was known as The Year Without a Summer.

Figur 1 og 2  
Temperaturvariasjoner for nordlige halvkule siden siste istid. Variasjonene er bare omtrentlige og sterkt utjevnet i tid. Det viktigste med figuren er å få fram de meste kjente variasjonene og illustrere omtrentlig hvor store utslagene har vært.

Den varme middelalderperioden

Rekonstruksjoner av temperatur forteller oss om relativt varmt klima i våre områder i middelalderen, fra cirka år 800 til 1300 AD. Det diskuteres om den varme perioden kan spores i gjennomsnittstemperaturen for hele kloden eller for den nordlige halvkule og hvor varm den var i ulike regioner i forhold til dagens klima. Årsaken til den varme perioden og den kalde perioden deretter, prøver en å finne i variasjoner i solaktivitet og hyppigheten av store vulkanutbrudd. I den varme perioden fantes i det minste kortere perioder med stor solaktivitet (økt solstråling) og relativt få vulkanutbrudd (IPCC 2007).<sup>6</sup>

Klimavariasjoner gir som regel størst utslag i nordlige områder. Dette skyldes den forsterkning – tilbakekopling - som variasjoner i dekket av is og snø gir ved klimaendringer. Mindre/mer snø og is betyr at mer/mindre av solstrålingen reflekteres til verdensrommet. Derfor hadde den varme middelalderperioden klare utslag i våre områder. Det er usikkert hvor varmt det var i forhold til dagens klima. Mange mener det i perioder var like varmt som i perioden 1985–2005 (IPCC 2007).

Viktige rekonstruksjoner av klima er basert på analyser av iskjerner boret ut fra toppen av Grønland. Andre metoder studerer avleiringer i jord (torv) og på bunnen av havet og innsjøer. I tillegg kommer rekonstruksjoner basert på skriftlig materiale om for eksempel dyrking av korn og vin og nedtegnelser av isforhold. De første temperaturmålingene kom på slutten av 1600-tallet, først i England. Figur 2 viser tre rekonstruksjoner av temperatur tilbake til vikingtiden, en for Grønland (Willy Dansgaard, iskjerne),<sup>7</sup> en fra England (Hubert Lamb, historisk dokumentasjon)<sup>8</sup> og en fra Island (Páll Bergthorsson, is langs kysten).<sup>9</sup> Alle tre representerer temperatur i snitt over året jevnet ut over tid for å få bort kortsiktige variasjoner fra år til år og fra tiår til tiår.

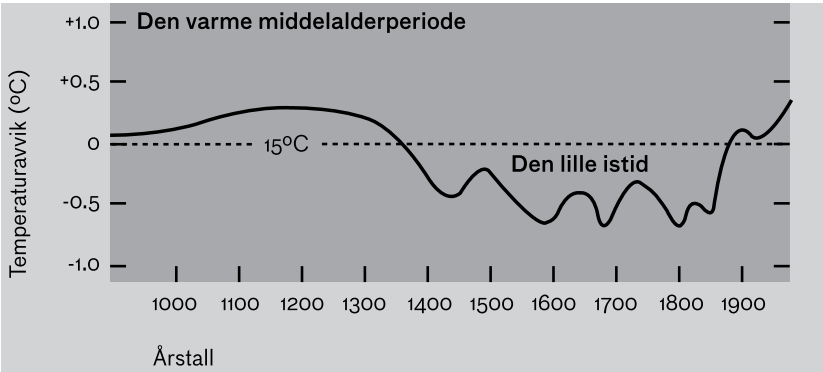


Figure 1 and 2  
The temperature variations in the Northern hemisphere since the last Ice Age. The variations are only approximate and strongly balanced in time. The purpose of the figure is to show the known variations and illustrate approximate impact.

Den varme perioden er tydelig, men ikke som en sammenhengende periode over flere hundre år. Inn i mellom finner vi kortsiktige variasjoner. Rekonstruksjonene viser varmest klima på Grønland og Island i landnåmstiden, mens den varmeste perioden i England kommer et par hundre år senere. Den varme perioden i England faller sammen med en kulturoppblomstring i det meste av Vest-Europa med blant annet en kraftig auke i folketallet.

Etterkommere av Hans Egede oppdaget på 1700-tallet at mindre barske vintre på Grønland (Godthåp) faller sammen med relativt kalde vintre i København, og omvendt er det spesielt kaldt om vinteren på Grønland i vintre da det er relativt mildt i Danmark. I dag kjenner vi denne forskjellen som en følge av Den nordatlantiske svingning (oscillasjon) (NAO) som gjør seg gjeldende over store deler av Nord-Atlanteren og områdene omkring. I Norge kjenner vi NAO som årsak til variasjoner i temperatur og nedbør gjennom vinteren. For eksempel hadde vi på 1990-tallet spesielt milde vintre med mye nedbør i Vest-Norge, mens vi på 1960-tallet hadde en god del kaldere vintre med mindre nedbør. Forskjellen karakteriseres ved styrken på vestavindsbeltet, som kan måles ved en trykkforskjell mellom Azorene og Island. Stor trykkforskjell betyr relativt sterk vestavind og milde vintre.

Rekonstruksjon av NAO viser gjennomgående sterk vestavind og milde vintre gjennom den varme middelalderperioden fra cirka 1100 til 1300 AD, men mindre verdier før 1100 år.<sup>10</sup> Dette kan bidra til å forklare forskjellene i den varme perioden mellom Grønland/Island og England. Klimavariasjoner i det meste av Norge er påvirket av NAO på samme måte som i England. Klimavariasjoner på Island går mer i takt med variasjonene på Grønland, men ikke i samme grad.

Paleoclimatologists try in various ways to reconstruct the climate far back in time. One method is based on the study of tree rings. Tree rings give especially interesting data about years with unusual weather. For example, they give reliable data about the two extremely cold years, 535 and 536 AD.<sup>5</sup> Writings of the time tell us about a decrease in the brightness of the sun, which points towards the presence of one or more large volcano eruptions. Annals, from, for example, Ireland, report great famine. Maybe our ancestors' belief in a Fimbulwinter derives from this climate event.

History provides many examples of failed harvests in farming and subsequent famine. Norway had widespread famine in the years of 1741–42. The fact that this event was not connected to volcanic eruption and that it happened during a period of the Little Ice Age (see below), which was not particularly cold, makes it a rare one.

The Medieval Warm Period

Reconstructions of temperature reveals a relatively warm climate in our areas in the Middle Ages, lasting from approximately 800 to 1300 AD. Whether the warm period was limited to the northern hemisphere or was global are still being discussed. So too are the different regions warmth relative to now. For the reason for this warm period and the following cold period, one looks to the variations of solar activity and the frequency of huge volcanic eruptions.

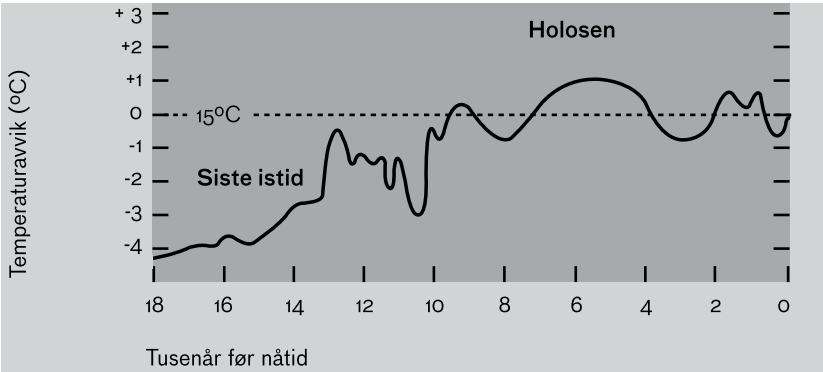
In the warm period we had shorter periods of increased solar activity and relatively few volcanic eruptions (IPCC 2007).<sup>6</sup> Climate variations are expressed most strongly in the Northern Hemisphere. This is due to the effect that ice cap size and quantity of snow has on climate. More/less snow and ice means more/less

reflection of the Sun's radiation back into space. This is why the Medieval Warm Period had a clear impact on our areas. It is not sure how warm it was compared to today's climate. Many researchers hold that it was as warm as it was from 1985 to 2005 (IPCC 2007).

Significant reconstructions of climate come from analyses of ice cores drilled from the surface of Greenland. Other methods include study of deposition in soil (peat) and the earth at the bottoms of seas and lakes. In addition, reconstructions are generated based on written material concerning, for example, the cultivation of grain and wine and the registration of ice matters.

The first temperature recordings appear, by the end of the 15th century. Figure 2 shows three reconstructions of temperature back to the Viking Age, one for Greenland (Willy Dansgaard, from an ice core),<sup>7</sup> one from England (Hubert Lamb, from historical documentation),<sup>8</sup> and one from Iceland (Páll Bergthorsson, from study of ice along the coast).<sup>9</sup> Taken together, the studies demonstrate that average yearly temperatures declined over time and erased short-term variations year to year and decade to decade.

The warm period is clear, but not as a coherent period over several hundred years. Throughout, we find short-term variations. The reconstruction shows that the warmer climate in Greenland and Iceland comes during the Icelandic Age of Settlement, while the warmer period in England comes a couple of hundred years later. The warm period in England comes parallel to the blooming of culture in most of Western Europe and a strong rise in population.



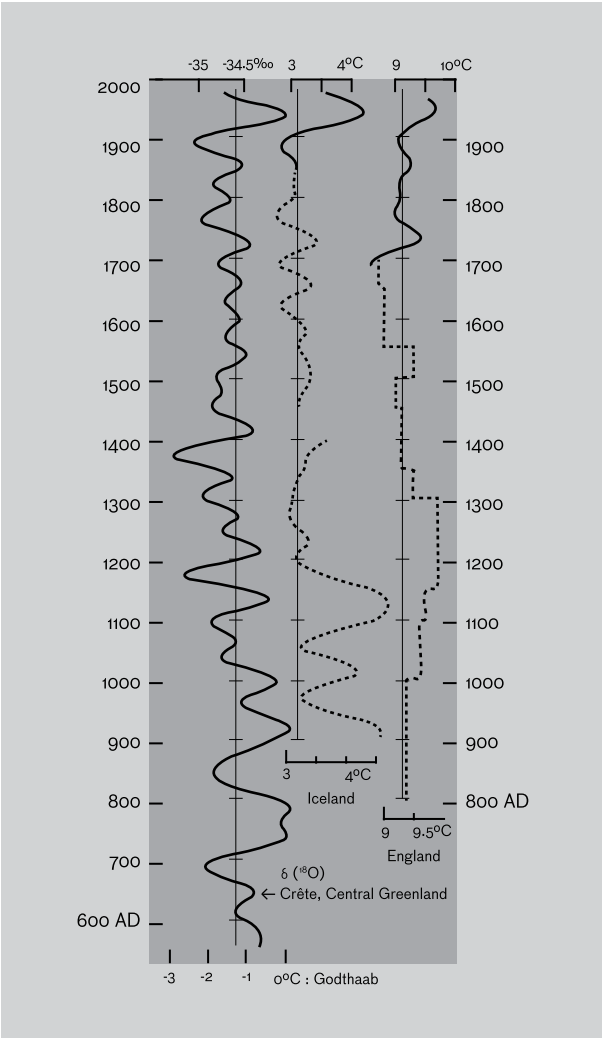


**Figur 3**  
Tre rekonstruksjoner av temperatur, gjentegnet etter figur fra W. Dansgaard. Til venstre: fra Crête, Grønland, representativ for Godthaab. I midten: for Island etter P. Bergthorsson. Til høyre: for England etter H. Lamb (for referanser, se tekst). Direkte observasjoner for siste 150 år, for England fra litt før år 1700.

Den varme perioden ble avsluttet tidligere over Grønland/Island enn over Storbritannia og Skandinavia. Mange mener at klimaforverring på Grønland var en hovedårsak til å den norrøne bosetningen på Grønland dødde ut<sup>11</sup>. Kongespeilet, skrevet i Bergen omkring 1240 AD, forteller om problemer med is på Grønland, at en prøvde å så korn, men at det ikke ble modent. Som en digresjon tar vi med at denne boka presenterer noe av det ypperste av europeisk middelalderkunnskap om været.<sup>12</sup>

Den lille istid

Den lille istid er en relativt kald periode som varer fra cirka 1400 AD til nærmere år 1900 AD (figur 2). På Island og Grønland startet den kalde perioden tidligere, fra cirka år 1200, kaldest var det rundt år 1300 og fra



**Figure 3**  
Three reconstructions of temperature, taken from W. Dansgaard. Left: from Crête, Greenland, represents Godthaab. In the middle: for Iceland, from P. Bergthorsson. Right: for England, from H. Lamb (for references, see text). These are direct observations from the last 150 years, and, for England, just before year 1700.

1600 til 1800 AD. I England og trolig også i store deler av Norge, var det kaldest på slutten av 1600-tallet i en periode med minimum solaktiviteten (Maunder minimum). Rekonstruksjoner viser at Den lille istid er knyttet til en lav NAO for vinteren (svakt vestavindsbelte). Det er viktig å understreke at Den lille istid ble avbrutt flere ganger av varmere perioder, for Norge slik som første del av 1500-tallet og deler av 1700-tallet.

Hemisfærisk snittemperatur i Den lille istid var mindre enn en grad kaldere enn klimaet i siste hundre år (IPCC 2007). Det var særlig vintrene som var kaldere. Østersjøen var islagt om vinteren i langt større grad enn i våre dager. Det samme gjelder elvene i Nord-Europa, f. eks. var Themsen islagt i flere uker i ganske mange vintre. I Skagerrak var det ofte mye is, i ekstreme år mener en at hele Skagerrak var dekket av is fra Skagen til Sørlandet (Lamb).

Nedgangen i norsk kultur startet før Svartedauden. I følge historikerne var det en viss oppgang i næringslivet i Norge på 1500-tallet<sup>13</sup>. Antall gårder var i følge manntall i 1665 likevel mindre enn på 1300-tallet. Ut på 1600-tallet voks breene og truet flere gårder. På Hardangervidda ble det dannet noen små nye breer. Ødegårdene etter Svartedauden ble ryddet fram til cirka 1640, men korn dyrkingen ble ikke som i høymiddelalderen.

På slutten på 1600-tallet var det spesielt kaldt både på Grønland/Island og i våre områder. I Norge hadde vi folketellinger i 1665 og i 1701. Sammenligning av ulike tall gir et bilde av et folk i stagnasjon. I mange prestegjeld og enkelte amt gikk folketallet tilbake. Vekstraten per år for hele Norge er anslått til 0,35 % per år, bare en tidel av vekstraten i mange utviklingsland i dag. Befolkningssøkningen var høyere i århundret før denne perioden og i siste halvpart av 1700-tallet.<sup>14</sup>

Hubert Lamb mener at i 1690-årene hadde arktiske vannmasser i havet den største utbredelsen mot sør i dette tusenåret (Lamb). Det verste året var 1695 da han mener arktisk vann dekket havet rundt Island om senvinteren og videre ned mot Skottland og Norge. Innstrømming av Atlanterhavsvann langs norskekysten var trolig på et lavmål. Torsken trives best i sjøtemperaturer mellom 4 og 7 °C. I perioden 1685-1704 AD sviktet torskefisket ved Island og Færøyene. I det verste året var det også lite torsk ved Skottland og Shetland (Lamb). Torsken forsvant trolig også fra det meste av kysten av Norge.

In the middle of the 16th century, descendants of Hans Egede discovered that milder winters in Greenland (Godthåp) coincided with relatively cold winters in Copenhagen, and vice versa: Greenlandic winters are especially cold when it is relatively mild in Denmark. Today we know this difference is a consequence of the North Atlantic oscillation (NAO), which is active in large parts of the North Atlantic and the surrounding areas. In Norway we know NAO as the cause of variations in temperature and precipitation throughout the winter. For example in the mid-1990s, the West Coast had especially mild winters with a lot of precipitation, whereas the 60s had much colder winters with less precipitation. The difference is characterised by the strength of the westerly winds and storm tracks, which can be measured by atmospheric pressure differences between the Azores and Iceland. Greater differences in pressure levels leads to increased westerly winds and milder winters. The reconstruction of NAO shows consistently strong westerly winds and mild winters throughout the Warm Medieval Period from 1100 to 1300 AD, but smaller pressure differences before 1100.<sup>10</sup> This helps the differences between Greenland/Iceland and England in the warm period.

Climate variations in most parts of Norway are affected by NAO in the same way Britain is. Climate variations in Iceland are more related to variations in Greenland, but not so strongly as Norway and Britain is by the NAO. The warm period was terminated earlier in Greenland/Iceland than it was in Great Britain and Scandinavia. Many believe that the climate deterioration in Greenland was the main reason why the Norse settlement in Greenland became extinct.<sup>11</sup>

The King’s Mirror, written in Bergen around 1240 AD, describes problems with ice in Greenland, where they tried to grow grains, but could not. As an aside, we add that this book provides some of the most comprehensive information about European medieval weather.<sup>12</sup>

The Little Ice Age

The Little Ice Age was a relatively cold period that lasted from approximately 1400 AD to 1900 AD (Figure 2). In Iceland and Greenland, the cold period started earlier, around 1200 AD, and was coldest around 1300 AD and from 1600 to 1800 AD.

England and probably most parts of Norway were colder at the end of the 15th century: it was a period with minimal solar activity (it is called the “Maunder Minimum”).

Reconstructions show that the Little Ice Age was linked to a low NAO in the winter (weak westerly winds).

It is important to underline that the Little Ice Age was interrupted several times by warmer periods. In Norway, these occurred in the first part of the 14th century and parts of 16th century. The hemispheric average temperature in the Little Ice Age was less than one degree colder than our climate of the last hundred years (IPCC 2007).

It was, above all, the winters which were colder. The Baltic Sea was to a much greater extent covered in ice than we find today. This applied, too, to rivers in the north of Europe, such as the Thames, which was covered in ice several weeks during many winters. There was often a lot of ice in Skagerrak: in extreme years it is held that all of Skagerrak was covered in ice, from Skagen to southern Norway (Lamb).

The decline of Norwegian culture begins before the Plague. Historians note a rise in corporate activity in Norway in the 14th century<sup>13</sup> but there were fewer farms, according to the census in 1665, than in the 12th century.

During the 15th century, the glaciers were growing, and threatened several farms. In Hardangervidda (the main mountain area) a few new glaciers were formed. The farms deserted after the Plague remained so until about 1640, but grain cultivation did not re-establish itself like it did in the High Middle Ages.

By the end of 15th century it was especially cold both in Greenland/Iceland and in our areas. In Norway we had a census both in 1665 and 1701. Comparison of the figures paints a picture of a people in stagnation. In many parishes and in some counties the population decreased. The growth rate per annum for Norway was estimated to be 0. 35% per annum, only a tenth of the growth rate for many developing countries today. Population increase was larger in the previous century and the last part of 16th century.<sup>14</sup>

Hubert Lamb believes that in the 1690s, Arctic waters had spread to their greatest extent south this millennium. The worst year was 1695, when he believes Arctic water covered the ocean around Iceland in the late winter and extended even further south, to Scotland and Norway. The flow of Arctic water along the Norwegian coast was probably low. Cod thrives in sea temperatures between 4 and 7°C. In the period 1685–1704 AD, the cod fishing failed in Iceland and on Faroe. In the worst year there

Islendingene dyrket korn i landnámstiden. Ettersom klimaet forverret seg, fortsatte de å dyrke korn helt til dette ble oppgitt i det femtende århundret. Fra skattemister er det estimert at folketallet var 77 500 i 1095, og at det sank til rundt 72 000 i 1311. Island hadde sin svartedød i 1402-1404. I 1703 var befolkningen cirka 50 000, men den sank til 38 000 i de vanskelige årene rundt 1780 med mye is og virkningen av vulkanutbruddet fra Laki i 1783 (Lamb). I dypeste alvor ble det overveid å flytte hele den islandske befolkning til Jylland.

Per Øyvind Nordli har rekonstruert temperaturen gjennom vekstsesongen på Østlandet fra 1727.<sup>15</sup> Den laveste temperaturen var 9,1°C i 1802 og den høyeste 14,1°C i 2001. Året 1816 ikke var spesielt kaldt slik som over store deler av Europa. Det har vært en tydelig økende trend i temperaturen over hele perioden. For eksempel har det ikke vært sommertemperaturer under 10°C siden 1923.

Den menneskeskapte globale oppvarmingen vil prege klimaendringene i framtiden. Ennå vet vi for lite hvor store endringene vil bli i våre områder, f. eks. hvordan NAO vil påvirkes og hva som vil skje med havstrømmene. På lang sikt kan betydelige deler av Grønland smelte og bidra til en stor økning i havets nivå (IPCC 2007).

was also little cod in Scotland and Shetland (Lamb). The cod probably disappeared also from most of the Norwegian coast.

The Icelanders grew grains during the Icelandic Settlement. As the climate deteriorated, they continued growing grains until this was impossible by the 15th century. From the tax register it is estimated that the population was 77 500 in 1095, and that it had decreased to around 72 000 by 1311. In 1402–1404, Iceland was hit by the Plague. In 1703 the population was around 50 000, but decreased to 38 000 in the hard years around 1780 because of an increase in the quantity of ice and the impact of the volcanic eruption in Laki in 1783 (Lamb). At the time, moving the entire population of Iceland to Jutland (Denmark) was seriously considered.

Per Øyvind Nordli has reconstructed the temperature of the growth season in Eastern Norway from 1727.<sup>15</sup> The lowest temperature was 9.1°C in 1802 and the highest 14.1°C in 2001. The year 1816 was not particularly cold as it was in large parts of Europe. There has been a clear rise in temperature over the period. For example, there have not been summer temperatures under 10°C since 1923.

Human-induced global warming will characterise climate change in the future. Still, we know too little about how big the changes will be in our areas, for example, how the NAO will be affected and what will happen to thermohaline circulation. In the long-term, significant areas of Greenland will melt and contribute to a huge increase in sea level (IPCC 2007)

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### Nakað um hin føroyska dansin

Tann føroyski dansurin er gamal og hevur sín uppruna í Suðureuropa, í Spanialandi og Fraklandi í 1200 árunum. Hann var sera vælumtóktur á teimum stóru og oftani sera køldu borgunum hjá mætum fólkunum. Hjá smákongum, fyrstum og greivum.

Men fleiri vóru tey, sum hildu nógv av hesum dansi, so við tíðini fór hann um alt Europa. Hann kom eisini, um-vegis Danmark, Svøríki og Norra ella møguliga um Bretland og tær oyggjarnar og Hetland til Føroyar og Íslands.

Sum árinu gingu, doyði hann útftur allastaðni uttan í Føroyum. Helst er hann vorðin ómodernaður. Men vit vita eisini, at eitt tíðarskeið hóskaði hann ikki inn í tað, sum fólk tá í tíðini hildu vera sømiligur levnaður.

Tó í Føroyum varð hann verandi, og man tað vera tí, at her á landi hevur hann verið vælumtóktur alla tíðina. Fólk hava mett dansin og dansispølini sum eitt gott ítriv og undirhald. Tó vita vit, at hann í ávísum tíðarskeiðum hevur fingið sínar ákoyringar, men hann hevur yvirlivað.

At hesin dansurin, sum hevur sín uppruna í Suðureuropa, bert verður dansaður í Føroyum, hevur havt við sær, at nú verður hann nevndur Føroyskur Dansur.

Her skal eg skóta inn, at av tí at hann bert verður dansaður hjá okkum, og vit eru tey einastu, sum duga hann, so blívur hann burtur úr allari verðini, um hann blívur burtur her hjá okkum í Føroyum. Við ørðum orðum, vit hava eina ábyrgd, at varðveita og brúka hann.

### Hvat er føroyskur dansur

Vit kunnu seta spurningin: Hvat er føroyskur dansur og hvat er tað at dansa føroyskan dans.

Eg plagi at siga, at dansurin er drama, frásøga, stev, rytma, samvera, mál o.m.a. og tá vit dansa føroyskan dans, tá eru vit við í framfærsluni av einum leiki; einum kvæða - og sjónleiki, sum verður framfærdur av teimum, ið dansa.

Tá vit fara upp í ringin, taka vit tvey onnur fólk í hendurnar og saman við øllum hinum, ið eru uppií, gera vit ein ring. Ikki er vist, at vit hava ein rundan ring, tí mangan er hann heldur at meta við eina slangu, ið ringir seg eftir gólvinum.

Sum onkur hevur hug at byrja eitt kvæði ella vísu, fer ringurin á glið við ávísari rytmu og ávísam stigum.

Skiparin byrjar og hini taka undir í ørindunum, alt eftir hvussu tey duga. Men tey allarflestu kunnu tó taka undir í niðurlagnum.

Tað, sum eyðkennir hin góða dansin er, tá skiparin fær dansin undir fót og fær frið at byrja ørinidini, áðrenn hini taka undir. Í góðum dansi hvílir skiparin í niðurlagnum, fyrri at gera klárt til næsta ørindi.

Í tí góða dansinum eru fólk aktiv. Tey lurta og dansa og uppliva.

Eg vil fegin venda aftur til dramað í dansinum. Tað, sum eyðkennir hin føroyska dansin er, at her eru ikki ljóðføri við, men tað eru ræddirnar, ið bera hann. Og alt hetta ræddirnar, rytman, stevið og øll samveran í ringinum, lýsir tað, sum kvæðið verður um, tú sært tað í andlitunum og á kropsburðinum.

Alt hetta lýsir støðuna og gevur okkum ábendingar um hvat kvæðið verður. Um tað er um bardagar í kriggi, um brøgd, dvørgar og huldugentur, um kærleika og sorg o.m.a.

### Kvæði og vísur

Tá vit tosa um føroyskan dans, gera vit mun á kvæðum og vísnum. Kvæðini er tey føroysku kvæðini og vísurnar eru tær donsku ella útlendsu vísurnar, sum á teirra málið verður rópt fólkavísur.

Tey eldru føroysku kvæðini eru frá miðöld og innihaldið er oftani klassiskt úr Evropisku mentanini, sum t.d. Sjúrdarkvæðini, ið byggja á sama innihald sum Nibelungenlied í Týsklandi og Vørsungasøga úr Íslandi, ið vísa aftur til gomlu gudadýrkanina. Eisini er innihaldið hetta, sum oftani vendir aftur í hugaheiminum hjá okkum meniskjum. Hetjur og brøgd, kærleiki og sorg, ástarøvund, álvar og álvagentur, tað góða móti tí ónda o.s.fr.

Vísurnar, fólkavísurnar, eru komnar seinni til Føroya, helst við prestum, sum eru komnir úr Danmark. Hesir hava havt bækur ella bløð við sær, við fólkavísnum og tær eru so tiknar við í dansin. Innihaldið er sum í kvæðunum, men fleiri eru um ávísar søguligar hendingar í Norðurlondum.

Seinni frá uml. 17 – 1800 talinum og fram til okkara dagar eru eisini fleiri kvæði yrkt, har evnið fyrri ein part er tikið úr Føroyingasøgu. Vit hava eisini kvæði, har evnið er norskari og íslenskari søgu.

Í Føroyum hava vit eisini táttayrking, har ein ella annar persónur verður hildin fyrri spátt, tí hann av einihvørji orsök, er komin at gera nakað, sum hini hava hildið verið so býtt, at tað átti at fingið tátt.

### Thoughts on the Faroe folk dance

The Faroe folk dance originates in Southern Europe, Spain and France in the 13th century. It was popular in the large and—in winter—cold castles of the aristocracy, minor kings, princes and gentry.

The common people came to like and enjoy this kind of chain dance, and with time it spread throughout all of Europe. It also came—via Denmark, Sweden and Norway or perhaps by way of Britain and the British Isles—to the Faroe Islands and Iceland.

With time it went out of use everywhere except in the Faroes. It has most likely fallen out of fashion. We know

that for a time it did not fit into what people then thought was decent behaviour.

But in the Faroes it stayed, probably because in this country it has always been enjoyed. People have deemed the dance and the dance games a good pastime and entertainment. We also know that at times it has been criticized, but it has survived nevertheless.

The fact that this kind of dance, which hails from Southern Europe, is now only practiced in the Faroes has given it its present name of the Faroese Dance. I may add that as it is now only danced here in the Faroes, and we are the only ones who know it, it will disappear from the face of the earth if we discontinue it. In other words, we have a responsibility to preserve and use it.





Summir av hesum táttum eru til enn og onkur verður eisini kvæðin í dansi nú á døgum.

### Dansispøl

Tað er soleiðis, at fyrr í tíðini vóru dansispøl fastur táttur í dansinum eitt vanligt dansikvæld. Oftani varð byrjað og endað við dansispølum. Vit vita, at dansispøl hava verið brúkt í Føroyum frá byrjanini av 1600 talinum. Dansispølini vóru vanlig líka fram móti 1900 og sumstaðni nakað inn í 1900.

Tað er soleiðis við dansispølum, at tá koma vit oftani at dansa sum pør, dreingir og gentur, og tá koma vit av og til at halda um eina gentu ella drong, sum vit hava gott eyga á. Hetta hava ung og helst eldri við hildið verið spennandi, og tað er tað eisini.

Seint í 1800 talinum, tá nýggjar kristiligar røslur komu til landið, vóru dansispølini mett ókristiligur levnaður og doyðu tey liðandi burtur í mongum bygdum.

Føroyingar gjørdu dansiferðir til útland í 1920-unum og seinni við og vóru greiðir yvir, at føroyski dansurin skal upplivast í ringinum og er ikki vælegnaður til framfærslur. Fólk fáa ikki nokk burturúr bert við at hyggja. Fyri at

áskoðararnir skuldu fáa meira burturúr framfærslunum, fá ymiskar tættir í dansi og dansispølum, varð leitað aftur til dansispølini.

Í dag er tað soleiðis, at tá vit vísa føroyskan dans fyri fólki, so er tað mesta dansispøl, ið tikin varða fram, so áskoðararnir kunnu fáa eina ábending um hvussu ríkur skatturin við kvæðum og vísum er í Føroyum.

Og í hesum tíðum, tá fólki hevur tørv á at røra seg, so eru dansispølini gylt høvi at brúka í hesum sambandi. Øll kunnu vera við, bæði børnini í barnagarðinum og tey eldru á eldraheimunum.

### Dansurin er livandi

Tað er sera umráðani, at vit, tá vit tosa um føroyskan dans, gera okkum greitt, at vit hava við ein livandi dans at gera.

Eg eri vanur at siga, at tann føroyski dansurin er livandi í okkum og við okkum, sum brúka hann. Hann er ikki fornminni, sum liggur á onkrum savni.

### What is the Faroese Dance?

We may ask the questions: What is the Faroe Dance, and what does it mean to practice the Faroe Dance?

I usually say that the dance is drama, narrative, step, rhythm, social intercourse, language, vocal production and many other things. When we engage in the Faroe Dance, we take part in a play, a ballad and staged act, which is performed by the dancers.

When we join the dance, we take two other people by the hands, and with all the others involved we form a human chain. Preferably not a circular ring, but rather a winding ring of changing shape across the floor.

When someone starts a ballad or song, the ring starts moving with a certain rhythm and step. The lead singer begins each stanza, and the others follow him according to how well they know the poetry by heart. But most people are able to join in the refrain.

That which characterizes a good dance is the ability of the leader to control the dance with his feet, voice, demeanour and body language. He needs peace to begin each verse or stanza before the others join in. When the going is good, the leader rests during the refrain to remind himself of and prepare for the next stanza.

In a good dance the participants are active. They listen, observe, dance and experience the contents and action of the ballad.

Let me return to the drama of the dance. The predominant feature of the Faroe Dance is that it has no accompanying instruments. The voices carry it. And all this, the voices, rhythm, the step and the social interaction in the ring, reflect the content of the music. You can see it in the faces, voices and the body movement. All this shows the action and gives us the impression of what the chanting is about, whether it is battling in war, great heroic effort, supernatural creatures, love, sorrow, etc.

### Ballads and songs

In the Faroe Dance we distinguish between ballads (kvæði) and songs (vísur). The ballads are longer and in Faroese, while the songs are shorter poems with Danish or foreign historical themes and sung in the Danish language. The Danes call them ‘folksongs’.

The older Faroe ballads date from the Middle Ages, and the content is often related to classical European

themes, e.g. the chansons de gestes and the Songs of Sigurd, based on the Nibelungen Lieder in Germany and ‘Völsungasaga’ from Iceland, with roots back to the worship of the ancient Germanic gods. The themes are also typical of the human mind: heroes, knights and ladies, great deeds, love and sorrow, jealousy, elves and fairies, good against evil, etc.

The songs (‘vísur’, ‘folksongs’) arrived later in the Faroe Islands, most likely with clerics from Denmark. They brought with them books or pamphlets with these songs, which have been adapted to the dance. The subject matter is as in the ballads, but several are about specific historical Nordic events.

Later, from the 18th and 19th centuries to the present, several ballads were composed with themes from the Saga of the Faroese. We also have ballads with subject matter from Norwegian and Icelandic history.

In the Faroes we have also had the tradition of composing poetic lampoons, in which some person is made a fool of because he has done something so stupid that others have thought him worthy of being remembered in song and dance.

Many of these lampoons are still remembered or in print, and some are even sung and danced nowadays.

### Dance games

In times past, so-called ‘dance games’ formed part of a traditional dance evening. A dance session often began and finished with dance games. We know that they were common from the early 17th century and continued up to 1900 and beyond.

They are often performed as pair dances by men and women. That gave an excuse to embrace someone of the opposite sex whom one liked. Both young and old must have enjoyed this exciting opportunity.

In the late 19th century when new Christian denominations came to the Faroes, the dance games were deemed indecent and died out in many villages.

The Faroese went on dancing trips abroad in the early 1900s and found out that the Faroe Dance must be experienced in the ring and is not well suited for staged performances. People don't get enough out of it by just being spectators. To give onlookers a more vivid impression of the various forms of the Faroe Dance, the dance games were revived.





Tann feroyski dansurin er ein av gimsteinunum í feroysku mentanini. Ein gimsteinur verður klárari og blankari og kastar ljósið meira margfalt aftur, meira hann verður brúktur.

Soleiðis við feroyska dansinum. Meira hann verður brúktur, fleiri kvæði og vísur vit brúka, størri gleði og fleiri og betri upplivingar fáa vit.

Latið okkum tí brúka tann feroyska dansin – ein av gimsteinunum í feroysku mentanini.

Feroyskur dansur er sum longu sagt fleiri ferðir so mangt, hvør okkara fær tað butrutúr, sum hann ella hon nú einaferð fær. Men eitt sum eg eisini skal nevna í sambandi við feroyska dansin er, at her kunnu øll vera við, tá eg sigi øll, meini eg eisini øll. Eingin fellir niðurímillum - øll leiðast og stiðja hvønnannan. Tú fert uppi har tær lystir og ivast tú, ja, so er onkur har, ið bjóðar tær uppi. Tú leiðir tey, sum har eru, uttan at hugsa um kyn, aldur ella annað. Tann feroyski dansurin er sera vælegnaður til at sjóa fólk saman.

### Støðan í dag

Vit kunnu siga, at í dag livir dansurin næstan bara í dansifeløgnum. Tey eru fá uttanfyri dansifeløgini, ið brúka dansin nakað nevnt.

Millum manna er støðan hon, eftir hvat eg kenni til, at fólkinum dámar feroyska dansin og heldur nógv av honum. Men kunnleikin um feroyska dansin millum feroynigar, er alt ov vánaligur. Her liggur stórt arbeiði fyri framman hjá teimum, ið kenna sær ábyrgd, Mentamálaráðið, Sláið Ring o.o., at kunna um dansin.

Vit eru øll samd um, at feroyski dansurin er ein av mentanardýrgripunum í Føroyum, og vit eru eisini samd um, at hann skal vera sjónligur partur av mentanini og vit vilja øll, bæði tað almenna og dansifeløgini, leggja okkara orku í halda honum livandi.

Í Sláið Ring – landsfelag feroyskum dansi at frama – eru 14 dansifeløg við uml. 2.000 limum. Tað er ymiskt hvussu aktiv tey eru í lýtuni og tí kann støðan hjá dansinum tykjast ivasom, men við tí arbeiði, sum verður gjørt við barnadansi og sum vónaði fer at vera gjørt í skúlunum, meti eg, at dansurin hevur eina bjarta framtíð.



When we show foreigners the Faroe Dance today, the dance games are a major part of the performance so that onlookers may get an indication of how rich a cultural heritage the Faroes have in the form of these ballads and songs.

Nowadays when people need exercise, the dance games are a good opportunity. Everyone may join, from kindergarteners to the elderly at the old-age pensioners' home.

### The dance is alive

It is very important to bear in mind that the Faroe Dance is a living tradition.

I often say that the Faroe Dance is alive in and with those of us who use and practice it. It is not an archaeological artefact in some museum.

The Faroe Dance is one of the gems of Faroe culture. A gem becomes clearer, more sparkling and reflective the more it is used.

The same applies to the Faroe Dance. The more it is engaged in, the more ballads and songs we use, the greater the joy and the more varied experiences we enjoy. Let us use the Faroe Dance—one of the gems of Faroe culture.

The Faroe Dance is, as said before, so many things. Each of us enjoys it and gets out of it as much as one wants. One feature of the Faroe Dance is that literally everybody is welcome to participate. No one needs to feel left out. All the dancers move hand in hand, in unison and individually and support one another. You join the chain where you feel like it, and if in doubt someone will invite you beside him or her. You hold the hands of the persons on either side of you, be they male, female, young or old. The Faroe Dance is well suited to bringing people together.

### The present situation

We may say that today the Faroe Dance lives almost only in the dance clubs or associations. There are few people outside the societies who dance very much.

In my opinion, people in general like the Faroe Dance and are aware of its unique cultural importance. But the Faroese at large have a somewhat superficial knowledge of the dance. Deepening that knowledge is a major challenge for those who feel responsible for its continuation, e.g. the Ministry of Culture, 'Sláið Ring' (the national dance association) and others who wish to educate the young about the dance.

Most people agree that the Faroe Dance is one of the cultural treasures of the Faroes. We also agree that it ought to be a visible part of our culture. We feel a public and private duty to endeavour to keep the dance alive.

In 'Sláið Ring' there are 14 separate dance clubs with approximately 2,000 members in all. The level of activity varies from club to club. But the work being done at present, such as teaching children to dance outside and within the schools, should ensure that the Faroe Dance has a bright future.

Orðatakið segði, at føroyingurin var føddur við ár í hond. Sigast má, at róðrabáturin í farnum tíðum hevur havt alstørsta týðning hjá føroyinginum og verið ein aðal-hyrnissteinum undir samfelagnum í gomlum døgum.

Føroyingar sjálvir hava ikki átt skip frá einaferð í miðöld til 1804, tá ið Nólsoyar Páll og aðrir bygdu Royndina friðu. Eftir at slupptíðin byrjaði í endanum av 1800-talinum, er skipaflostin vaksið, og fiskivinnan hevur nú størsta týðningin í okkara vælferðarsamfelagi.

Føroyski báturin hevur verið í broyting gjøgnum allar tíðir. Í dag hevur hann annað skap og er ætlaður aðrari nýtslu enn fyri öldum síðani.

#### Rundferð kring landið

Vit fara eina rundferð kring landið og hyggja at um-støðum og virksemini í samband við bátar og fólk.

Byrjað verður suðuri í Sumba, sum er syðsta bygdin. Har er stór møl við malargróti, sum um veturin legst upp av tí øgiliga briminum. Á 8myndini síggjast bátarnir standa á mølini, neystini eru omanfyri, og bygdin liggur aftanfyri.

Veðrið um okkara leiðir er nærum altíð skiftandi, tí látrýst ferðast javnan hevda vegin og hava vind ella storm við sær. Men tá ið ein skái er, ræður um at vera skjótur á fiskimiðunum. Tí eru bygdir á landsoddunum góð til útróður og fuglaveiði.

Í Svínoy standa bátarnir niðri á helluni. Her eins og aðrastaðni kring landið hava verið serstaktir bátasmiðir. Onkur meta bátin at vera listaverk, og bátasmiðin sum listarmann, og at tað gamla bátasmiði eigur at verða varðveitt til eftirtíðina.

Í Mykinesi, sum er vestasta oyggin, standa bátarnir niðri á lendinini. Veðrið er gott, helst er tað ein summardagur, men brimið kann vera øgiligt her um veturin. Tað sýnir tann reinskolaða hellan á myndini okkum.

Ymisk lendingarviðurskipti eru kring landið. Her er sløtt fjøra í Hoyvík, brattur dráttur í Skúgví og kyrra í Vágsbotni í Havn.

#### Nýtslan av bátinum

Ein grind er deyð norðuri í Sundalagnum. Bátar koma tá tysjandi úr øllum ættum, bæði nær og fjar. Grindin hevði alstóran týðning fyri fólkíð í Føroyum fyrr eins og nú. Ein grindahvalur kann vera góðar 6 m langur, og tvøstið og spikið av honum vígaði um 1,5 tons. Doyðu 100 hvalir, gav tað um 150 tons av føði. hesin matur var saltaður ella turkaður.

Klaksvík er góð hvalvág í Norðoyggjum. Teir eru farnir at skera upp. Grindin, tvøstið og spikið, varð býtt javnt til allar íbúgvarar í grindaøkinum eftir ávísari skipan, sum sýslumaðurin stóð fyri.

Tað var spenningur í luftini, tá ið grindaboð bórust. Dreingirnir gleddu seg at sleppa við, æntin í báti ella at vera á landi, vaða út og gera seg vátan sum hinir menninir. Drongur var ikki stórur, eini 8 ár, tá hann fekk sín fyrsta grindakniv og slapp at hjálpa til at skera hval upp.

#### Flutningur

Bátur liggur til reiðar at flyta læraran út í aðra oyggj. Hetta er skjúts. Menninir í bygdini høvdu ávísa skjúts-skildu, te. at teir máttu leggja arbeiðið hjá sær niður fyri at fara at skjútsa einhvønn, helst embætismenn, prest, lækna, jarðamóðir ella við posti millum oyggjarnar.

Atløgupláss hjá skipum komu fyrst í 1900-talinum. Fyri ta tíð lógu skipini varpað upp á Redini út fyri Havnini.

Tá ið ferðamannaskipini komu á Havnina, samlaðust nógvir smábátar og ferjubátar kring leyttan, fyri at vinna sær nøkur oyru at flyta ferðafólk ella farm í land.

A proverb says that the 'Faroese are born with oars in hand'. It must be said that boats with oars have been of great importance to the Faroese people and have been the main basis for survival in the society in past times.

The Faroese people had no ships from the Middle Ages until 1804, when Nólsoyar Páll along with others built Royndin Friða. At the end of the 1800s there was a great change in Faroese society. The fleet of fishing smacks started to grow, and today the fishing industry is of great importance to our welfare society.

Over time, the Faroese boat has changed. Today it has a different shape and is intended for different purposes than some centuries ago.

#### A tour 'round the Islands

We are going on a tour around the Islands to look at the circumstances and activities of boats and people.

We'll begin in Sumba, the southernmost village. There is a great rise (møl) by the shore with lots of round stones (malagrót) which are thrown up by the strong seas during winter. The boats are standing on the rise, the boathouses are above the rise and the village is farther up the mountainside.

The weather in the Faroes is very changeable as a result of low pressure systems travelling this way bringing wind and storm along with them. When there is a break from storm and wind, it is necessary to be quick in getting to the fishing points. That is the reason for the villages being situated at the tongues of the land, from where it is easy and a short distance to go fishing and bird-catching.

In Svínoy, one of the northern islands, the boats are left down on the stone ledge by the seaside (hellu). Here as well as in other places on the Islands there have lived special boat builders. Some say the boat is a piece of

art and the boat builder an artist, and that the art of boat building ought to be preserved for times to come.

In Mykines, the westernmost island, the boats are left down by the landing place. The weather is good, it is likely a summer day, but the sea can be very forceful here during winter. The clean and tidy stone slant proves it.

Different landing circumstances are to be found around the islands. In Hoyvík the shore is flat, there is a steep slope in Skúvoy, and there are still waters in Vágsbotn in Tórshavn.

#### The usage of the boat

A group of pilot whales has been killed in the north in Sundalagið. Boats come from all over the islands. Pilot whales were, and still are, of great importance to the Faroese people. A pilot whale can be up to 6 metres long and the meat and blubber from it weighs about 1.5 tons. If one hundred whales were caught, it meant about 150 tons of food. This food was salted or dried.

Klaksvík has a suitable bay for hunting pilot whales. You can see the men cutting up the whales. The whale, meat and blubber, was divided equally for all inhabitants in the so-called 'Whale district' according to a set of rules administrated by the head of the district police.

You could feel the excitement in the air when people heard the call 'Grindaboð'. Most boys wanted to join the hunt, either onboard or ashore, ready to wade into the sea and get wet like the grown-up men did. Boys were only about eight years old when they would get their first whale knife (grinda-knív), and they would be allowed to help cut up and divide the whales into so-called 'parts'.





## Útróður

Útróður var høvuðsvinnan um veturin. Sluppfiskimenninir fóru við skipunum yvir á Suðurlandið í Íslandi um várið, komu aftur í mai og fóru síðani yvir á eysturlandið. Teir komu heim í september - oktober, og tá var sluppin lögð fyrri teym fyrri veturin.

Um 1920 fingi bátarnir motor ísettan, og eftir tað varð lítið róð út við gamla róðrabátinum.

Í endanum av 1800-talinum fóru nógvir føroyingar yvir til Íslands at rógva út um summarið. Teir høvdu bátar við sær úr Føroyum. hesir bátar vóru sera væl umtóktir av íslendingum, sum mangan keyptu bátarnar frá føroyingum eftir verskeiðið.

Í 1950- og 60-árunum fóru hundræðtals av føroyingum til Grønlands at rógva út við maskinbátum. Teir fingi loyvi at byggja sær smáttur ymsa staðni nær góðum fiskileiðum og búleikaðust har og róðu út alt summarið.

Um heystið komu teir heimaftur við farmaskipinum, sum eisini førði saltaða fiskin heim til Føroya ella víðari út í verð.

## Frítíð og hátíð

Her er nýsmíðaður kappróðrabátur, Vestmenningur á Havnarvág eina ólavsøku millum kríggini. Kappróðrabáturin er ein nýtt bátaslag, lættari og smiligari bátur enn gomlu útróðrabátarnir. Hundræðtals av róðarfólki rógva kappum sumrarnar í tí nýggja føroyska róðrabátinum.

Kongavítjanin fyrst í 1900 var stórt hátíðarhald. Her rógva nógvur uppsnollaðir bátar við dannebrog á stong aftaná sjaluppini við kongi inn eftir Havnarvág.

Kleivin í Mikladali mann hava ein tann truplasta landingin í landinum. Her bíðar ferðabúgvinn harri eftir, at menninir skulu flota bátin, so at hann kann verða fluttur um fjørðin.

## Rundvísing í bátahøllini

5 ymskir róðrabátar eru í bátahøllini í framsýningini hjá Føroya Fornminnissavni í Hoyvík. Bátastøddirnar eru: svart fýramannafar, smíðað á Eiði uml. 1846, svart seksmannafar smíðað í Leirvík 1920?, ljósablátt/hvitt áttamannafar úr Kaldbak, smíðað 1898 í Mikladali, svart/grønt tíggjumannafar úr Nólsoy frá 1898? og reyður/svartur seksæringur úr Norðragøtu frá 1907.

Framsýning av lutum við frágreiðingum í teksti og myndum er um bátasmíð, sjóklæðir og útgerð í samband við fiskiskap. Í seksæringinum er grindareiðskapur, og í áttamannafarinum er línureiðskapur. Seglini er sett á tíggjumannafarinum og í fýramannafarinum liggja dyrgingartráður.

“Miklingur” er áttamannafar, te. bátur vanligi rógvin av átta monnum. Hann er uml 12 alin te. 7.6m langur og er merktur til 1,53 tons. Bátsformaðurin sat ofta á eysrúmsbekki í bakborði, nevnt rangaborð, so hann betur kundi tosa við menn, meðan teir róðu. Varð siglt, setti hann se aftur í rong at stýra. Árarnar eru langar og smalar fyrri at spara tilfar, og at tær skuldi vera lættar og ikki taka nógvan vind á seg í andróðri ella vera ov tungar í streymasjógv.

Hvør maður hevði sín fasta sess á bátinum, sína egnu ár, snøri, agn og skjáttu ella útróðrarskrín. Fiskað varð mest í felag, og veiðan varð býtt eftir ávísari skipan.

Ein útróðrardagur kundi byrja kl. 4 um morgunin og komið varð aftur seinna partin móti kvøldi. Siglt ella róð varð alt eftir ætt og streymi út á fiskimið, sum kundi vera 6-8 fjórðingar úr landi á 100 metra dýpi. Men fiskað var eisini innari og grynri. Fiskiambóðini var snøri og frá seinni helvt av 1800-talinum eisini lína, og veiðan var mest toskur, hýsa, longa, brosmu ella kalvi.

## For transport

The boat is ready to transport the teacher seen in the picture to another island. This is called 'skjúts', or transport. The men in the villages had transport chores, which meant that they had to lay down other work when they were needed for transport. It could be people from the government, priests, doctors, midwives or post that had to be transported between the islands.

## Fishing

During wintertime, fishing (útróður) in the open rowing boat was a means of survival. In springtime fishermen went with the fleet of fishing smacks to the south of Iceland; they returned in May and then sailed to the east of Iceland to continue fishing. At the end of September or in the beginning of October, they would return home again and the fishing smacks were anchored for the winter.

Around 1920, engines were fitted to the boats, and after this point few people used rowing boats for fishing.

At the end of the 19th century, many Faroese went to Iceland to work as fishermen during the summer, bringing their own boats. The Icelanders, who liked these boats very much, often bought them when the Faroese returned home.

In the 1950s hundreds of Faroese people went to Greenland to go fishing with open boats with engines installed. The men were allowed to build huts near their fishing points and lived there, and went fishing during the summer. In autumn they returned to the Faroe Islands on cargo ships, which also transported the salted fish to the Faroes or to other places in the world.

## For leisure and festivals

Between the World Wars a new rowing boat was built for rowing competitions. This boat is called 'Vestmenningur' and is situated in the bay of Tórshavn on the national holiday, Ólavsøka, on the 29th of July. The boat used for rowing competitions is a new kind of boat, lighter and more nimble than the older boats. Hundreds of people row in competitions during the summer with these boats, in different sizes.

## The King of Denmark visits

At the beginning of the 20th century, the King of Denmark came to visit the Faroe Islands. The King's ship was celebrated on its arrival to Tórshavn by lots of Faroese boats decorated with Danish flags.

## Mikladalur

The place (Kleivin) you travel to and from to Mikladalur is one of the most difficult places to get to. The gentleman in this picture is waiting for the men to float the boat in order for him to be transported across the firth.

## Tour around the Boat Hall

In the Boat Hall in Hoyvík, Føroya Fornminnisavn (The Historical Museum) has five different sizes of the Faroese rowing boats on show. These boats are: a black 'fýramannafar' boat for four men, made in Eiði around 1846; a black 'seksmannafar' boat for six men, made in Leirvík around 1920; a white and blue 'áttamannafar' boat for eight men from Kaldbak, made in Mikladalur in 1898; a black and green 'tíggjamannafar' boat for ten men from Nólsoy from 1898; and at last, a red and black 'seksæringur' boat for twelve men from Norðragøta from 1907.

The exhibition shows artefacts and pictures of boatbuilding, sailor outfits, and tools and fishing gear. In the boat for twelve men there is equipment for whale hunting, and in the boat for eight men you will find long line fishing



Í mongum heimum í Føroyum var fiskur mesti døgurðamaturin, einar 5 dagar um vikuna, so sum kókaður feskur, seinni eisini steiktur, ræstur fiskur, turrur fiskur, saltfiskur, knettir og frikadellur. Um heystanar mangan seiður og livur, bæði feskur, visnaður og turrur.

Eitt fyribrigdi er á báti, tú mátti ikki nevna lutirnar við teirra rætta navni, tí so fingi tey heidnu vald at tær. Td. var knívur ongantíð nevndur, men tú kundi siga ”hvast við lær”. Men knívur hevði alstóran týdning fyrr, tí eitt orðatak var, sum segði, at “knívleysur er lívleysur”.

### Bátatal og fólkatal

Í 1781-82 vóru 141 vetrarbátar í Føroyum (te. seks- og áttamannafør), og manningin var 1.048 mans. Fólkatalið í landinum tá var 4.409.

Í 1813 var bátatalið 482 (te. fyra-, seks- og áttamannafør, harav 270 fyramannafør og 212 seks- og áttamannafør). Fólkatalið var tá 5.252.

Í 1903 var bátatalið 1.450 í øllum støddum, (harav 450 seks- og áttamannafør). Fólkatalið í 1901 var 15.230.

Fiskiskapur við skipum (sluppum) byrjaði um 1880, og flotin var um 1900 komin upp á 100 skip, og hann vaks

í stórum. Við hvørjum skipi vóru um 20 mans, so her hava verið einir 2.000 sjómenn í landinum. Samfelagið broyttist frá at vera eitt landbúnaðarsamfelag til eitt fiski-vinnusamfelag.

Eitt orðatak er: “bundin er bátleysur maður”. Tað sigur nakað um, hvønn leiklut báturin hevur havt í tí føroyska samfelagnum, og hvussu stóran týdning tað hevur verið hjá monnum at fáa møguleikar at virka frítt.

Og báturin hevur enn í dag stóran týdning hjá fólkinum, her býr. Nýggir bátar koma hvønn dag. Nú eru teir mest úr glastrevju, hava stóran motor og eru skjóttgangandi.

Eisini eru feløg kring landið, sum vilja varðveita ein lítlan part av teirru gomlu mentanini og hava fingið smíðað sær nýggjar “gamlar” bátar í gomlum sniði við árum og seglum. Teir luttaka á regattasiglingum og kappsiglingum og gera útferðir td. við skúlaflokkum og øðrum, sum á tann hátt læra eitt sindur um søgu føroyinga.

#### Litteratur:

Hin føroyski róðrabáturin, Andras Mortensen, Tórshavn 2000.  
Færøbåden, Morten Gøthche, Vikingskibshallen i Roskilde 1985.



equipment. The sails are set on the boat for ten men and in the boat for four men you will find fishing rods.

### Miklingur

Miklingur is a boat for eight men (áttamannafar), usually rowed by all eight. Its length is about 12 alin, or 7.6 metres, and is marked as weighing 1.53 tons. The foreman of the boat often sat on ‘eysrúmsbekki’ on the port side, called ‘rangaborð’. This made it easier for him to talk to the other men while they were rowing. If they were sailing, he would return to ‘aftur í rong’ to steer the boat. The oars were made long and narrow to save material, and in order not to catch too much wind while rowing against the wind (andróður) and to not be too heavy in choppy seas. Each man had his own place in the boat, his own oar, fishing gear, bait, fishing bag or box. Mostly the fish was caught in common and then the catch would be divided according to certain rules.

On any given day, fishermen would leave in the middle of the night and return late in the afternoon. They would sail according to the weather, wind and ocean currents to find the fastest way to their fishing point, which could be six to eight miles away from land, and the water would be around 100 metres deep. But they would also go fishing closer to land, where it was shallower. The fishing gear would be hand line (snøri), and from the second half of the 19th century they also used long lines. They



mostly caught cod, haddock, ling, tusk and halibut.

In many homes in the Faroe Islands, families would have fish for dinner five days a week. People had it boiled, fresh, later fried too, ‘ræstur’ (partly dried), dried, salted and made as ‘knettir’ and ‘frikadellur’, two different kinds of fish balls. In the autumn they would have coalfish and liver, fresh, ‘ræstur’ and dried.

A saying on board was that you weren’t to mention things by their correct names, otherwise ‘the hidden people’ (huldifólk) would get hold of you. For instance, a knife was never mentioned by name, but one could say ‘hvast við lær’—‘sharp by thighs’. But the knife was of great importance, and as a proverb says, ‘knívleysur er lívleysur’—no knife, no life!

### Number of boats and people

From 1781 to 1782, there were 141 winter boats in the Faroe Islands (boats for six and eight men), and the crew consisted of about 1,048 men. The total number of inhabitants was 4,409.

In 1813 the number of boats was 482 (270 boats for four men and 212 for six to eight men). The number of inhabitants was 5,252.

In 1903 the number of boats was 1,450, all sizes included (450 boats for six to eight men). The number of inhabitants was then 15,230.

Fishing with ships (smacks) began around 1880. In 1900 the fleet was around 100 ships, and this number kept growing. Around twenty men were on board each ship, thus 2,000 seamen in total. The society changed from an agricultural nation to a fishing industry.

A proverb says: ‘Bundin er bátleysur maður’—‘a man without a boat is not a free man’. This explains the importance of the boat in Faroese society and the importance it held for men to be able to be free to work on their own accord.

The boat is still of great importance to the people living here. New boats are built every day. Now they are mostly made from fibreglass, have big engines and sail very fast.

Some groups around the islands want to preserve the traditional heritage and have made new ‘old’ boats with oars and sails. They attend regatta sailing and competitions and go on tours with classes from schools and others. This makes it possible to learn a little about our boat history.



Ræmur og hnausar  
Hannes Lárusson

Allt frá upphafi byggðar á áttundu öld og vel fram á þá tuttugustu hefur torf í mismunandi myndum, að vísu oft í nánu samneyti við ótilhoggið grjót, verið mest einkennandi efni í íslenskum byggingum. Svo rammt kveður að torfnotkuninni að þessi húsakynni hafa jafnan verið kennd við efnið og kölluð torfbærir. Torfbærinn sem er eins konar vöundarhús lífrænna bygginga, er í senn fagaður og frumstæður, oftast hlýr, mildur og mjúkur, lágstemdur og högvær og einmitt þess vegna fallegur á náttúrulegan hátt. Í sumarbúningi er hann grænn og brúnn, en hvítur og grár í vetrarham.

Vitund Íslendinga um eigin tilvist og fortið hefur löngum verið klofin í glundroðakenndum tvískynnungi þar sem togast á stolt og skömm, hroki og minnimáttarkennd. Gamli íslenski bærinn hefur á seinustu áratugum farið fram og aftur í þessari tilvistarhakkavél. Flestum Íslendingum er tamast að kalla torfbæinn aldrei annað en moldarkofa. Orðatiltækin “að vera nýskriðin út úr moldarkofunum” eða “vera á leiðinni aftur inn í moldarkofana” dregur upp mynd af því versta sem venjulegur og vel menntaður nútíma Íslendingur getur hugsað sér. Upplýstir Norðmenn kalla tæplega stafkirkjur sínar í daglegu tali “fúahjalla og spýtnarusl” og ekki Frakkar, Þjóðverjar og Bretar kirkjur sínar og kastala “saggafullar steinhrugur”. Íslenski torfbærinn á sér rætur í sameigin-



Mynd 1  
Hvalur skorinn með torfljá. Lögbók frá 15. öld. Líklega elsta þekkta mynd sem sýnir notkun á torfljá.  
Image 1  
A whale cut with a turf scythe, from an Icelandic law book from the 15th century. It is probably the oldest preserved picture showing the application of a turf scythe.

legri byggingararfleifð Evrópu frá því fyrir landnám. Þessi arfleifð hefur þróast og fágast í mörg hundruð ára búsetu í landinu og tekið breytingum í samræmi við náttúrufar, tíðaranda og aðgengi að byggingarefnum.

Torfhúsum má lýsa sem misflóknum timburhúsum umluktum einangrandi hjúp úr torfi, grjóti og mold. Á dæmigerðum bæjum eru mörg hús tengd saman í marvíslegum tilbrigðum og hafa innbyrðis vægi eftir notagildi. Þessa lífrænu húsaþyrpingu, ásamt görðum og tröðum, köllum við íslenska bæinn. Þar er að finna baðstofuna, búið, stofuna, hlóðaeldhúsið og göngin, einnig skemmu, hjall, smiðju og gripahús. Stærð og umfang getur spannað allt frá tveimur litlum húsum til tuttugu bygginga klasa og sum húsin tvílyft.

Innst í rangölum undirmeðvitundar Íslendingsins stendur torfbær upp á hól, reyk leggur frá strompi, hangikjötslæri dingla upp í rjáfri og jólasveinar gægjast á glugga og skella hurðum. Á hinum raunverulegu bæjarhólum landsins eru þeir að vísu nær allir horfnir ofan í moldina eða lentir í gini stórvirkra vinnuvéla.

Fyrstu landnemarnir tóku með sér eða bjuggu strax til verkfæri til þess að losa torfið frá jörðinni, það verður ýmist að rista það eða stinga svo hægt sé að nota það. Verkfæri áþekk eða í nánum skyldleika við verkfæri fyrstu torfkarlanna voru notuð á Íslandi frá upphafi byggðar og langt fram á tuttugustu öldina. En þá var þeim nær öllum hent fyrir róða, enda höfðu þau þá loksins þjónað tilgangi sínum, fáein fengu að innþorna og detta í sundur í stofuhita safnanna.

Hér verður nú lýst tveimur lykilverkfærum í torfhandverkinu. Torf er efni með sérstaka eiginleika. Það verður til í vatnssósa mýrum, þar sem gömul túndrugrös mynda flækju seigra róta. Torf sem rist hefur verið úr mýri er svampkennt viðkomu með einkennandi og heillandi málmlykt. Oft má merkja í hnausunum öskulag þekktra eldgosa, einkum sunnanlands. Það er einstök tilfinning að skera og handleika torf, blautt, þungt og sterkt um leið og það er viðkvæmt, brothætt og torrætt. Torf er sérstakur sendiboði jarðarinnar. Torfskurður er sömu ættar og skurður á stórum sjávarskepnum, selum, hákörlum og hvölum. Vafalaust hafa sömu verkfærinn oft verið notuð til að skera torf annars vegar og spik og kjöt hins vegar.

Það á við um flest, að geri menn nógu mikið af einhverju verða menn góðir í því. Þetta má kalla náttúruval handverksins. Íslendingar lærðu að lesa torf og grjót kynslóð eftir kynslóð í meira en þúsund ár. En aflærðu svo, þegar nútíminn reið yfir, flest sin torffræði á methraða og standa nú aftur á upphafsreit, eins og þegar Norðmenn og Vestmenn numu landið, og stinga nú sína litla hnausa

Chunks and strips  
Hannes Lárusson

Ever since the first inhabitants settled in Iceland in the ninth century, and well into the twentieth, turf or sod (Icelandic: torf) in its many different forms has been the predominant building material in Icelandic houses. Turf was often used along with natural, unshaped but often carefully selected rocks. This tradition of using turf was so widespread and common that these houses were named after the building material and called turf houses.

The turf house (torfbær) is like a maze of interconnected organic units. It is at the same time refined and primitive. Most of the time it is warm, mild and soft, low-key and modest: it is therefore beautiful in a very natural way. In its summer plumage the turf house is bright green and brown, while white and grey in its winter one.

Icelanders’ consciousness about their own being and past has for a long time been divided into a psychotic double-standard where there is a tension between pride and shame, arrogance and a sense of inferiority. The old Icelandic farmstead has for the last couple of decades been simmering in an existential grinder. Most Icelanders are not used to referring to the turf house as anything other than a mud hole. The sayings ‘to have recently crawled out of the mud hole’ or ‘something is on its way back to the mud hole’ are among the worst scenarios that a well-educated contemporary Icelander can imagine. Enlightened Norwegians probably do not refer to their stave churches as mould shacks and wood rubbish, and the French, Germans and British probably do not call their castles and churches damp stone heaps. Icelandic culture has more content than only the mere smell of smoked lamb.

The Icelandic turf house has its roots in the shared building heritage of European societies from before the settlement of Iceland in the Middle Ages. This heritage has evolved and been refined in a special way under unique conditions over many hundreds of years and has changed with the natural environment, the spirit of and fashion in society, as well as access to building material.

Turf houses can be described as timber houses surrounded by an insulating layer of turf, rocks and gravel. In the most common houses, multiple buildings are interconnected in many different ways and have an inherent value that depends on their intended use. This organic cluster of buildings we call the old Icelandic farmstead. There you find the living room (baðstofuna)—a place where the Icelanders worked and ate and slept, were born, made love and eventually died—the pantry, the sitting room, the hearth-kitchen and the tunnels, along with the workroom, fish-drying shed, smithy and outhouse. Their size can span from between two small houses to

Mynd 2  
Hverakot, Grímsnesi, Árnessýslu, Mynd frá um 1930.  
Image 2  
Hverakot. Farmstead in the south of Iceland in the 1920s.

Mynd 3  
Brettingsstaðir, Laxárdal, Suður-Þíngeyjarsýslu. Mynd frá um 1940.  
Image 3  
Brettingsstaðir. Farmstead in the northeast of Iceland around the 1930s.



a cluster of twenty buildings where some of the houses have two storeys.

Deep down in the dark tunnels of the Icelandic subconsciousness stands a turf-house on a hill. There is smoke rising from its chimney, there are legs of smoked lamb dangling from the ceiling and Christmas trolls are peeping through the windows and slamming the doors. But in the non-imaginary hills in contemporary Iceland, most of these houses have now disintegrated into mud and bulldozed away.

The first settlers in Iceland brought tools with them, or made them as soon as they had arrived, which they used to cut the turf from the marsh. One must either slice the turf or cut it. Tools similar to, or closely related to, the tools that were used by the first turf-workers continued to be used in Iceland from the beginning of the settlement and well into the twentieth century. But then nearly all of them were cast aside, since they all had finally served their purpose. Few of them had the chance to slowly dry out and fall apart in museums.

Turf is a material with special qualities. It evolves in marshes where old grass from the tundra turns into a tangle of stringy roots. Turf that has been cut from the marsh is quite spongy to the touch with an alluring metal-

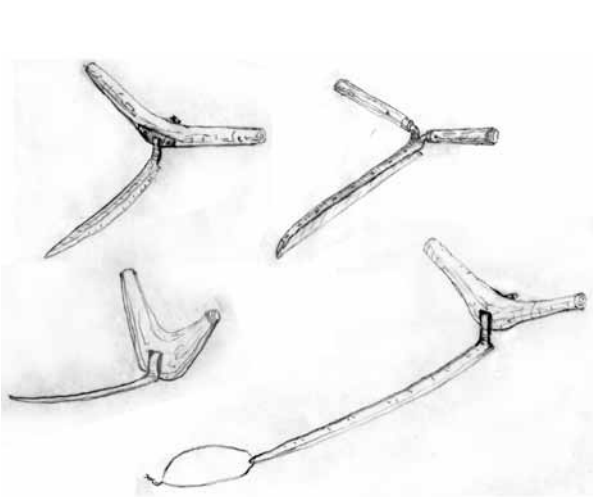
Mynd 4  
Torfljáir  
Image 4  
Turf scythes

á inniskónum sitjandi á volgum stól við tölvuskjáinn. Á öldum áður voru raunveruleg verkfæri notuð við þessa iðju. Verður nú tveimur þeira helstu lýst.

Torfljáir og torfpálar eða stungupálar eru meðal þeirra verkfæra sem fylgt hafa búsetu á Íslandi frá upphafi. Þetta eru sérhæfð verkfæri til jarðvinnslu, torfstungu, torfristu og veggjarhleðslu. Alla tíð voru þessi verkfæri heimasmiðuð. Blöðin voru smíðuð úr jární og eftir atvikum stáli í smiðjum bæjanna og skeft úr aðgengilegum og heppilegum viði. Gerð þeirra virðist í gegnum aldirnar hafa verið mjög stöðluð hvað snertir stærð og lag.

Torfljáir eru oftast tiltölulega þykkir og langir ljáir sem festir eru við handfang sem kallast skammorf, en sá endi ljásins sem festur er við það kallast þjó. Algengast er að skammorfið sé olnbogamyndað og dugar best sé það gert úr tré sem bogið er með náttúrulegum hætti, svo sem sjálfbognum birkiröftum eða rótarhniðjum. Lag ljánna getur verið nokkuð mismunandi allt frá því að vera verulega bognið eða nánast beint. Þykktin og breiddin er einnig nokkuð breytileg.

Algengasta gerð af torfljá með tilliti til lengdar á blaði er stundum nefnd tvískeri. Í nafninu felst að rist sé frá báðum hliðum þar sem skurðirnir mætast í miðju og skera þá um 40-60 cm breiða torfu. Önnur gerð torfljáa er með mun efnismeiri blöðum og oft liðlega alin (63 cm ) á lengd, allt upp í 90 cm. Gert er ráð fyrir að tveir menn risti torf með þessum ljáum og er þá oftast lykkja í enda ljáblaðsins en stundum eru skammorf á báðum endum. Þessir ljáir kallast einskerar, eða heilskerar enda er torfan þá skorin í einni atrennu í fullri breidd. Ljárinn er oft um 40 cm á lengd, þó oft töluvert lengri eða styttri.



Mynd 5  
Pálar  
Image 5  
Turf spades

Pálar eru verkfæri með sterka formræna nærveru og liggur þyngdarpunktur þeirra mjög neðarlega sem oft getur reynst góður eiginleiki við torfstungu. Sköft á varðveittum pálum eru afar áþekkt, virðast oft vera um 65 cm á lengd og kringum 7 cm í þvermál neðst. Dæmigert pálskaft mjókkar síðan upp þar sem það er fellt í handfang sem liggur á það þvert og er fest með tréna-gla. Neðri endi skaftsins er jafnan gyrtur járnspöng eða járnhólk. Lengd pálblaða virðist oft vera liðlega 20 cm að frádrengnum tanga. Breidd þeirra er nokkuð breytileg frá 11-20 cm neðst. Oft er vísað til lengdar á pálblaði sem mælieiningu þegar rætt er um torfstungu og kjekki. Lag blaðana getur verið nokkuð breytilegt. Algengast er að blöðin breikki töluvert því nær sem dregur egginni. Eggin sjálf er oftast því sem næst bein fyrir en í sumum tilfellum áberandi ávöl. Lárétt út frá efrihluta pálblaðsins og neðsta hluta skaftsins gengur að jafnaði gerðarlegt járnstig, sumir pálar eru þó án ástig??. Þegar stungið er með páli gegnir þyngd og lengd verkfærisins lykilhlut-verki þannig að lílkmasstaærð og líkamsþyngd nýtist sem mest við vinnuna.

Með þessum forneskjulegu tólum eru skornar ræmur og stungnir hnausar úr torfi í blautum og seigum mýrum. Torfhandverkið felst í því að beita þessum verkfærum, og nokkrum fleiri, og komast síðan upp á lag með að byggja úr ræmunum og hausunum. Leiðin að því marki er, eins og svo oft, að lesa söguna aftur á bak og leggjast síðan á hnén í blauta mýrina og renna vel brýndum ljánum inn- undir svörðinn eða grípa þétt um handfang pálsins, stíga fast á blaðið og hlusta eftir rétta hljóðinu þegar egginn smígur í jörðina.



lic smell. Often one can notice layers of ash from famous volcanic eruptions in the chunks of turf. It is a very special feeling to cut and interact with turf. The turf is wet, heavy and tough while being delicate, fragile and mysterious at the same time. Turf is a special messenger of the earth. Turf-cutting is of the same nature as the slicing up of large sea animals—seals, sharks and whales. Without a doubt, the same tools used to slice whale and seal blubber and meat were also often used to slice turf.

What applies here is the same maxim as in nearly every field: If one does the same thing often enough, he becomes skilful at it. This can be called the natural selection of handcraft. Icelanders learned to read turf and rocks generation after generation for roughly a thousand years. But then they unlearned their skills of turfing almost overnight when modernity came storming into Iceland during the first part of the twentieth century. Now they again stand at the same starting point as when the first inhabitants of Iceland began settling on the island, and now cut their small chunks of turf in their slippers while sitting in front of their computer screen on a lukewarm chair.

During past centuries specialized tools were used to cut turf, and now two of the most important ones will be described.

Turf scythes (torfljáir) and turf spades (torfpálar) or cutting spades (stungupálar) are among the tools which have been used since the beginning of the settlement in Iceland. These are specialized tools for working the soil, for turf cutting (torfskurður), turf slicing (torfrista) and for building walls. Through the ages these tools were always homemade. The blades were made from iron or steel in the smithies of the farmsteads, and handles were made out of the wood which was accessible. Their shape and size seems to have been very standardized.

Scythe blades for cutting turf (torfljáir) are, most of the time, relatively thick and long. They are fastened to a handle called a short-snath (skammorf). The tang (þjó) is fastened to a short handle (short-snath/skammorf) at a right angle. The most common version of the handle is boomerang shaped. In its ideal version it is made of naturally bent wood, such as self-bent birch branches or driftwood roots. The shape of the scythes can vary quite a bit. They can be very bent or almost straight, and thickness and width can also vary between scythes.

The most common type of scythe blade for cutting turf, with respect to the length of the blade, is sometimes called a two-cutter (tvískeri). As the name implies, this scythe is used to cut from both sides where the cuts

meet in the middle. In this way one can slice a turf strip which is between 40 and 60 centimetres in width. The scythe is often around 40 centimetres long, though it can be even longer or shorter.

Other kinds of turf scythes have sturdier blades and their length can be between 60 to 90 centimetres. These scythes are intended to be used by two persons at a time. Most of the time there is therefore a loop at the end of the scythe blade to make it easier to use. Sometimes the blades are even double handled. These scythes are called one-cutters (einskerar), or whole-cutters, because the turf strip is cut in one go from both sides at a time.

Turf spades (pálar) are tools with a very strong formalistic presence. They have a very low centre of gravity, which can often be a good quality when cutting turf. The shafts of the surviving turf spades are very similar. They often seem to be around 65 centimetres long with a diameter of about 7 centimetres closest to the blade. The diameter of a typical shaft on a turf spade decreases upwards until it ends in a horizontal handle which is fastened to the shaft with a wooden nail. The lower end of the shaft is most often partly girded with a piece of iron or a ferrule.

The length of the blade of turf spades often seems to be around 20 centimetres excluding the tang. The width is somewhat different between blades, from 11 to 22 centimetres at the end. Often people refer to the length of the blade of the turf spade as a unit of measurement when discussing the cutting of turf. The form of the blades can vary quite a bit. In the most common form, the blades widen significantly towards the edge. The edge itself is often nearly straight but in some cases noticeably oval. Pointing horizontally out from the upper part of the blade of the turf spade and the lowest end of the shaft is often a robust iron stirrup. Some turf spades, however, do not have a stirrup. When cutting with a turf spade the weight and length of the tool plays a significant role so that one's height and bodyweight is used as beneficially as possible during the job at hand.

With these ancient tools, one cuts and slices strips and chunks of turf from damp and stringy marshes. The turf craft revolves around applying these tools, and some others as well, and then developing the skills to build turf houses from the chunks and strips. The way to that goal is, like in so many cases, to read history backwards, and then lie down on your knees in the moist marsh and slip the well-sharpened scythe underneath the turf, or put your hands solidly on the handle of the turf spade, step firmly on its blade and listen for the appropriate sound as the edge slips into the ground.



The origins of knitting are lost in the mists of time. Pieces of true knitting exist that can be dated to the 15th century, but when the technique reached Shetland, and from where, is unknown. Archaeological evidence tells us that sheep have been present on the islands from Neolithic times. Combine this information with a practical population with strong links to Scandinavia and its nålbinding tradition, a need for warm clothing and a constant source of new ideas from passing seafarers, and it seems likely that Shetlanders acquired the skill early. Fair Isle, the most southerly of the island group, is located where the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea collide, 25 miles from the Shetland mainland. Its community is seemingly isolated by its geographical position and the ‘very impetuous Tides’ (Kay; c 1680) of its surrounding waters. Far from the sprawling urban centres, perhaps, but when the seas and waterways were the highways of the world, the island lay at the meeting point for a diversity of cultures, customs and ideas. The name Fair Isle has become the generic term for colourful geometric patterns used in knitwear, though the same designs can be found in embroidery, tablet weaving, knitted and woven textiles and decorative wood and metal work produced globally and throughout history. The label ‘Made in Fair Isle’ is a designer’s dream tag, marketing quality and individuality in a long tradition.

Study and research into the origins of these designs proves a large and complex piece of detective work; evidence found so far shows we will never know who created the first ‘Fair Isle’ pattern. Much effort has been made by researchers and academics in the habit of centralising historical theories to ascribe credit to outside influence, presumably in the belief that nothing so widely linked to other northern textile traditions could arise from such a small ‘isolated’ island. There is absolutely no hard evidence to back up theories that this is a transplant tradition, that island women copied the designs for which they became famous. Fair Isle knitters could have been the instigators of that worldwide phenomenon, the Fair Isle pattern!

Decoration became a vital part of all cultures as soon as communities could provide themselves with basic essentials. Whether driven by beliefs, the necessity to identify with others of the same tribe, a need to indicate status, a desire for beautiful surroundings or just the discovery that colour, texture and variety were possible and/or desirable, aspiration linked with imagination and innovation was bound to result in the opening of the door into a wider world of creativity; handcraft is a global endemic. In the case of Fair Isle, as in that of communities every-



where, financial considerations were key—the knitwear produced on the Isle, mainly by the female population as a private enterprise, and bartered with passing shipping for cash or goods put food on the table in the majority of houses. Until the beginning of the 20th century, the fish caught and dried by the Isle men were the property of the laird, considered to be part of the rent and of the invidious ‘Truck’ or barter system carried on in Shetland long after it became illegal. The knitters residing in the other Shetland Islands were not so fortunate, as their fine spinning and lace knitting was tied in financially with the catching and curing of fish, the whole controlled by the laird or his factor.

In 15th-century Shetland, the Hanseatic trade links joined Bergen and the Danish ports; Scotland, the Faroes and Iceland; the Baltic ports from Lubek to Danzig (now Gdansk) and the northern ports of Germany and the Netherlands. The movement of textiles was part of the Isle’s economy even then. Pattern designs and colour combinations indigenous to the different regions bear a striking resemblance to each other, but whether this is due to regular contact between communities and traders or to the inherent nature of pattern construction and available dye materials is impossible to determine—in reality, it could be both. That said, the traditional fishermen’s cap of Eiland Marken in the province of Noord-Holland is exactly the same in construction, pattern and colour combination as that of the fishermen from Fair Isle. Here we don’t need to speculate on the connection, as our link with the Dutch is a well documented one spanning centuries.

In 1588 the Gran Griffon, a supply hulk from Rostock requisitioned into the fleet of the Spanish Armada, was wrecked on Fair Isle. The ship, carrying 300 men, was on the verge of sinking; the captain attempted to beach her, but she was driven ashore against cliffs. All those on board clambered to safety and were marooned on the Isle for seven weeks. Fifty men died of starvation. Subsequent writers advanced the idea that the ship’s company taught the women the arts of dyeing and pattern design—this story appears as an 18th-century invention. The only contemporary account refers to the use of wool for clothing; nothing is said of knitting or dying. I suspect that any concoction of plants, roots or leaves gathered and processed would have been consumed by the starving company. Under the harsh conditions described by the Spanish diarist marooned on the Isle with the men, it is difficult to imagine cosy evenings around the fire exchanging dye recipes and knitting patterns, though it is certain that the islanders would have used their eyes and their artistic senses to utilise any design ideas that suited them.



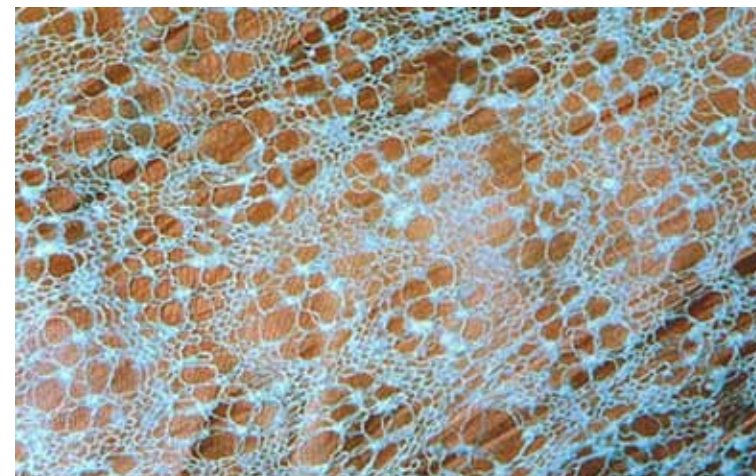


#### Left page: Mimi Stout, Busta, Fair Isle

At work on a Fair Isle woollen sweater, wearing a fashionable top which she had knitted in the latest style using 'knitting silk' (rayon) of red and blues on a cream background, and sitting in a traditional Fair Isle straw-backed chair.

#### Right page, top: Jerseys

A small selection of the many jerseys knitted by Annie Thomson, Fair Isle, for some of her great-grandchildren. The lighthouse in the background is Fair Isle South.



#### Right page, middle: Trade routes

Map of trade routes clearly indicating the central location of Fair Isle & Shetland.

#### Right page, bottom: Otter Cape lining

Lining knitted for a cape made from otter skin, c. 1920. The lace design replicates the footprints of otters.

By the 17th century, barrelfuls of 'course stockings' were part of Shetland's exports. By the 1800s we find several mentions of the knitting done on Fair Isle. Janet Schaw, on her way from Dundee to the Carolinas in 1774, watched as the 'light, pretty, neat Vessels' of the Fair Isle men came to trade goods, which included 'Knit caps, mittens, stockings and the softest cloth I ever saw made of wool'. Low observed that 'The women are industrious, constantly at work knitting Stockings and Gloves, or spinning lint and woollen yarn'. By the end of the century the Rev. Barry of Orkney would report of the Fair Isle women: 'They spin also excellent yarn, and discover much dexterity in manufacturing their fine soft wool into stockings, gloves, nightcaps and other wearing apparel.' He also comments on their 'sweetness and modesty'!

At the beginning of the 19th century Patrick Fotheringham wrote a report for the laird on conditions in Fair Isle. There were about 900 spindles of linen yarn spun by the female inhabitants from lint furnished by the proprietor, for which he paid them at the rate of 8d per spindle. This counted as part of their rent; no money changed hands. 'By these means the rent of the island amounting to £64 sterling is paid and the proprietor has a considerable profit over and above from the produce.' He also mentions that 'the wool is of a very superior quality and is usually manufactured into stockings and gloves which are sold to the shipping'.

Throughout Shetland the levels of skill in spinning, design and construction grew with the demands of fashion and economic need. The 19th-century desire for fine but warm undergarments and lace shawls produced many new lace patterns and a degree of spinning and knitting so delicate that a large shawl could be pulled through a wedding ring (Unst became famous for the fineness of its knitted lace). This meant an increase in the earning power of households throughout the isles, although the Truck system was still prevalent and lairds kept profits to the knitters very low. The women themselves wore haps (shawls) knitted of thicker yarn and the darker natural colours of the native sheep—moorit (brown), black and greys.



Meanwhile in Fair Isle, though the production of knitted garments and the use of variegated colours is well documented, the first piece of physical evidence available to us today is a piece of knitted fabric donated in 1857 to the Scottish Museum in Edinburgh. We have no idea when it was actually knitted, but here we have the 'OXO' patterns and the colour combination so typical of the hosiery (the general term used for all knitted garments) produced in Fair Isle, and of the patterns found in the Marken hat. This characteristic design structure changed very little in the years leading up to the 1914–18 War. In 1886 the Edinburgh International Exhibition included a stand dedicated to the promotion of Shetland lace and Fair Isle knitwear under the auspices of Sheriff Thom, Vice Admiral of Orkney and Shetland, who was somewhat of an eccentric individual but also a passionate advocate for the advancement of indigenous crafts. Fair Isle received a further boost in 1902 with an order for 'jerseys, also long stockings, short stockings, mitts, gloves with and without fingers, helmets to cover all the head and neck with open face, mufflers for the neck, etc., 100 of each - - -'. This was for the crews and explorers on the Bruce Expedition to the Antarctic, and the Fair Isle girls had only six months to come up with the goods. They did. At 22/6 each jersey and 5/- for a pair of socks, this must have seemed like a lottery win to the households full of daughters.

By 1918 the market for lace knitting had drastically declined. Its economic importance within the fishing communities and in Lerwick had not, and Fair Isle patterned knitting became prevalent throughout the rest of Shetland. In the 1920s, Edward, Duke of Windsor made the 'Fair Isle' popular by wearing an all-over patterned long sleeved V-neck sweater while golfing, a style still in vogue. To protect its own unique product, Fair Isle applied for a trademark in 1921. The Shetland Woollen Industries Assoc. Ltd. objected strongly and Fair Isle eventually agreed to a combined trademark, issued in 1925. Fashion and practical sense dictated a move from the brightly coloured, larger patterns knitted close together to more muted natural shades and smaller patterns spaced further apart. This speeded up production

considerably. The very poor rates paid to knitters over the years and the coming of oil-related jobs in the 1970s has meant a steep decline in the number of hand knitters, but Shetland still has a thriving knitwear industry, mostly in machine-made garments. Shetland College plays a vital role in tutoring young knitters in innovative fashion design and techniques. Wool from our indigenous sheep is still sought after for its warmth and colour qualities. Shetland knitters are still renowned worldwide along with their easily identifiable characteristic knitwear.

While knitting for pleasure and for the family is still done by hand, to enable production on a larger scale suitable for marketing a knitters' co-operative, Fair Isle Crafts, was established on the Isle in 1980. Garments are now made on hand frame machines but are still individual, each machinist producing his or her own pattern and colour combinations, ranging from the old style to modern fashion shades; each article is finished by hand and double checked, then labelled with a trademark which is exclusively Fair Isle's. The traditional skills of endlessly varying pattern and colour grouping, design and shaping and the ability to produce the fabric itself will not be lost or forgotten. Fair Isle remains unisolated; this striking evolution of knitwear has a future wherever its knitters, the economy and shifting trends lead it.


Fair Isle  
19th century Fair Isle. C 1880.

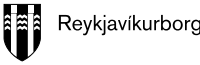


Fair Isle Crafts jumper  
One of the first jumpers knitted by Fair Isle Crafts in 1980.



Colophon

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## Exhibitions

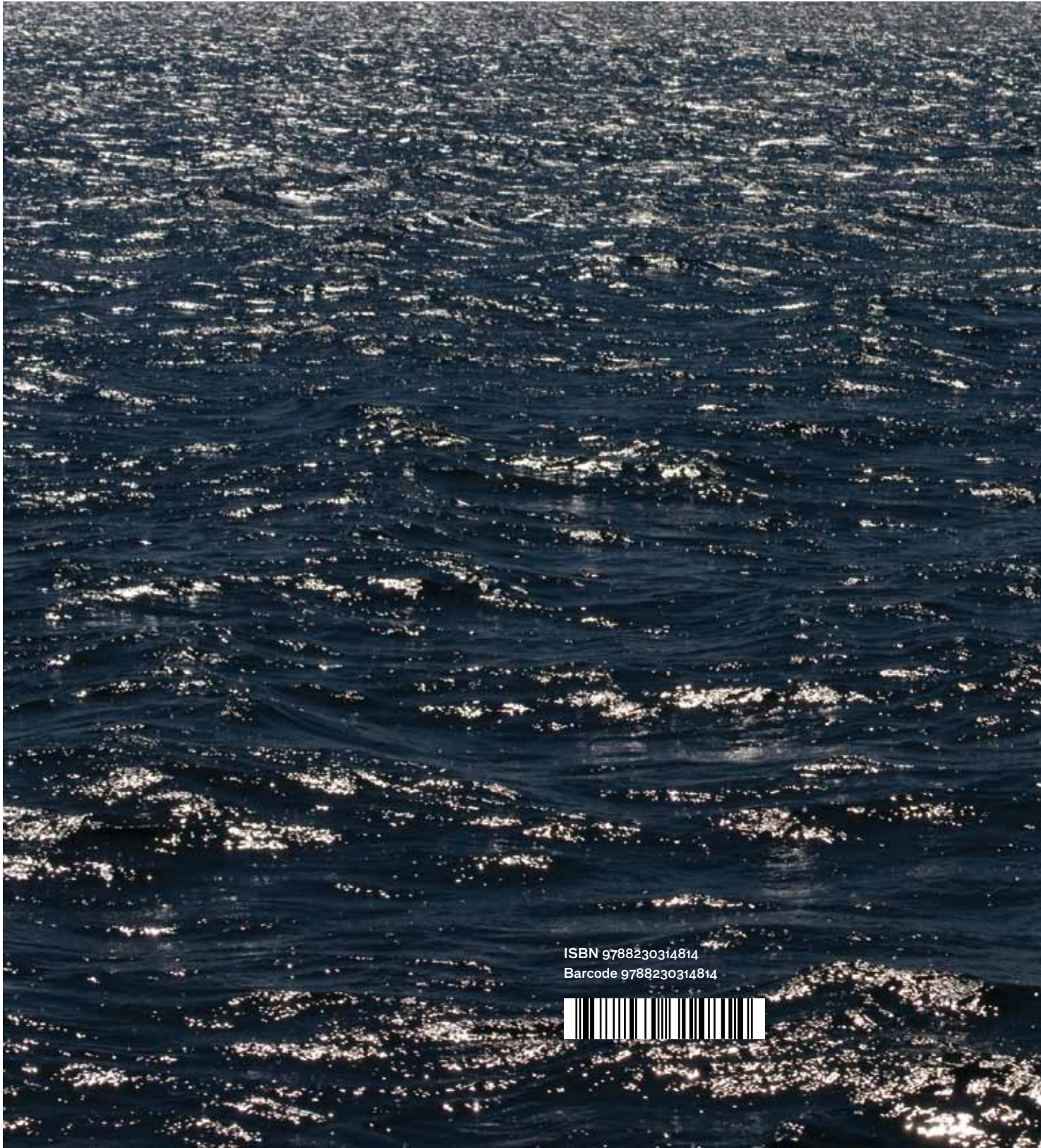
**Norway** Kunstmuseene i Bergen  
Avd. Permanenten 20.02. – 11.04.2010

**Faroe Islands** Norðurlandahúsið  
30.04. – 24.05.2010

**Denmark** North Atlantic House in Copenhagen  
05.08. – 30.08.2010

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