



The Sámi Pavilion The Sámi Pavilion



An Historic First:
Indigenous Sámi artists transform the
Nordic Pavilion into 'The Sámi Pavilion'
for the 59th International Art Exhibition of
La Biennale di Venezia in 2022



Left to right: The artists of 'The Sámi Pavilion' Máret Anne Sara, Anders Sunna and Pauliina Feodoroff. Photo: Marta Buso / OCA

Exhibition Dates:

23 April – 27 November, 2022

Press and Professional Preview:

20 – 22 April, 2022

Nordic Pavilion, Giardini,
Venice, Italy

<https://oca.no/thesamipavilion>

Instagram: @thesamipavilion

Visit oca.no for a film trailer
previewing the three artists
of 'The Sámi Pavilion' project
at the Nordic Pavilion at the
Biennale Arte 2022, directed by
Sámi filmmaker Egil Pedersen,
with music by Sámi composer
Mette Henriette.

Venice Vernissage Programme

- Press Conference
20 April, 12:30pm 'The Sámi Pavilion', Nordic Pavilion, Giardini,
Introduction to the project with artists and curators, followed by Q&A
rsvp@evergreen-arts.com
- Official Inauguration
21 April, 11am – 12pm 'The Sámi Pavilion', Nordic Pavilion, Giardini,
'The Sámi Pavilion' to be opened by HM Queen Sonja of Norway. The President of the Sámi
Parliament in Norway, Silje Karine Muotka, will speak on behalf of the Sámi Parliaments in
Norway, Sweden and Finland.
rsvp@evergreen-arts.com
- Performances of Pauliina Feodoroff's *Matriarchy*
22, 23 and 25 April, 3pm – 4pm 'The Sámi Pavilion', Nordic Pavilion, Giardini

In an historic first, the Nordic Pavilion in Venice is transforming into ‘The Sámi Pavilion’, with a project commissioned by Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA), with co-commissioners Moderna Museet and Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma / The Finnish National Gallery in Helsinki, Finland, featuring the Sámi artists Pauliina Feodoroff, Máret Ánne Sara and Anders Sunna during the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia in 2022. This transformation of the Nordic Pavilion celebrates the art and sovereignty of the Indigenous Sámi people, whose nation extends across the Nordic countries and into the Kola Peninsula in Russia.

This project, the official Nordic contribution to Biennale Arte 2022, comes at a critical time in the history of the Nordic region, where Truth and Reconciliation Commissions addressing Nordic colonialism have started in Norway, Finland and Sweden; when the Sámi are making restitution claims for their art; and artefacts and at a time when the Arctic is experiencing unprecedented consequences of the climate crisis. ‘The Sámi Pavilion’ exhibition is curated by a group consisting of Sámi scholar **Liisa-Rávná Finbog**, director and chief curator of OCA **Katya García-Antón**, and Sámi land guardian **Beaska Niillas**; curatorial assistants: **Liv Brissach**, **Raisa Porsanger** and **Martina Petrelli**.

To mark this historic event, ‘The Sámi Pavilion’ will be inaugurated on 21 April 2022, by Her Majesty Queen Sonja of Norway. The Presidents of the Sámi Parliaments in Norway, Sweden and Finland will be present.

By appointing the artists Feodoroff, Sara and Sunna to create a project that transforms the pavilion, OCA – the lead commissioner of the Nordic Pavilion for the Biennale Arte 2022 – aims to draw attention to the excellence of these Sámi artists, as well as the international relevance of their art and experiences.

Katya García-Antón

Commissioner and co-curator of ‘The Sámi Pavilion’, comments:

These three Sámi artists are leaders of their generation. They all struggle and strive to defend Sámi world views – especially the interdependence of lands, waters and people – and have found the arts to be one of the few remaining spaces in which to make their voices heard. The increasing impact of climate change has finally focused the world’s attention on the urgent need to listen to lands and waters. This is at the core of Sámi perspectives and has been since time immemorial, which is why it is essential to pay attention to Sámi knowledges when confronting and combatting climate change.

Liisa-Rávná Finbog

Co-curator of ‘The Sámi Pavilion’ and Sámi scholar, comments:

This is the first time the Sámi people claim a sovereign space in this way. We are a people who have a long and beautiful history. But how many know that history? How many people know our present? ‘The Sámi Pavilion’ presents the artists of today, exploring ideas, images and issues that are part of our past and continue to be relevant today.

Beaska Niillas

Co-curator of ‘The Sámi Pavilion’, Sámi land guardian and activist, comments:

These three Sámi artists are heroes in today’s society. They fight with one conviction: if we take care of the land the land will take care of us! With ‘The Sámi Pavilion’ in Venice it is possible to present ourselves as a nation on our own.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The artists of 'The Sámi Pavilion'



Pauliina Feodoroff
Photo: Laura Malmivaara

Pauliina Feodoroff is an artist, theatre director, Sámi land guardian, and politician, with roots both in Keväjäu'rr (in the Finnish part of Sápmi) and Suõ'nnjel (in the Russian part of Sápmi). Feodoroff's family has experienced deep loss at multiple levels due to changing nation-state borders and forced relocations between the 19th century and World War Two, Soviet collectivisation, logging of old growth Sámi forests, pollution of Sámi land and rivers and more recently the accelerated impact of climate change. Within this crucible of geopolitical and ecological conflict, Feodoroff combines theatre, performance, visual arts, forest and rivers revitalisation programmes (in collaboration with the NGO Snowchange), and political work (such as co-drafting the mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Finland). Her aim is to free, through her practice, Sámi bodies and minds from colonially transmitted forms of existence.

Finland has treated the ancestral land we have occupied for centuries as their natural resource to exploit and sell piece by piece to any market that needs it - Sámi forests have been logged for toilet paper. I have spent my life documenting all the losses on multiple levels, but now it's vital to focus on what we still have and how to make it stronger. When the earth is transforming, life needs havens and time to adapt. My work proposes ways to protect the last remaining old growth forests and let the logged areas have a time to heal. Our message is, please do not buy our land, buy our art instead.

See a video portrait of Pauliina Feodoroff at <https://oca.no/thesamipavilion>





Máret Anne Sara
Photo: Eirin Torgersen / OCA

Máret Anne Sara, based in Guovdageaidnu, in the Norwegian side of Sápmi, comes from a reindeer herding family and has lived first-hand the struggles reindeer herders face within Norwegian colonial law, as well as the cultural and spiritual trauma experienced from the political, financial and legal violence used as a tool to force herders away from their epistemologies and traditional way of life. In addition to her work in the visual arts, Sara is also a celebrated novelist whose narratives focus on Sámi cosmologies, exploring the tensions arising in the struggle to maintain Sámi world-views in the face of modern consumer values. Internationally Sara is well-known for her monumental sculpture of reindeer skulls *Pile o'Sápmi*, presented in documenta14. *Pile o'Sápmi* draws attention to her younger brother's fight against the Norwegian State's attempts to cull his herd so drastically it would have bankrupted him and thus forced him to abandon his cultural livelihood. Sara's current thinking reflects upon the stomach as a first site of emotion to events in the surrounding environment. Her focus is to make works that help to heal the traumas inflicted by the colonial apparatus, repair the bonds of reciprocity with lands, waters, animals and resurge Sámi knowledges and spiritual values.

After the long and hard struggle our family has been through against the Norwegian state to protect our reindeer from forced slaughtering, I have a strong need to seek and manifest faith and hope. I tell my stories through the reindeer because what happens to the reindeer also happens to us. From an Indigenous perspective, I don't see humans as superior or central. As human beings on this earth, we are simply a part of an interconnection of life forms and the constant dialogue and interdependence between these. My work asks questions about what happens when outside powers enforce laws upon you that systematically force you to break your own and collective ethics and morals, epistemology and philosophy. When your sanity is criminalised, how do you counter and continue?

See a video portrait of Máret Anne Sara at <https://oca.no/thesamipavilion>





Anders Sunna
Photo: Michael Miller / OCA

Anders Sunna makes large-scale installations of paintings and sound. These are both acts of resistance and also conduits of healing. They bear witness to his family’s 50-year struggle to defend their ancestral reindeer-herding practices. He comes from a family of forest reindeer herders in Kieksiäisvaara on the Swedish side of Sápmi. The Sunna family’s rights to the use of their ancestral land and reindeer herding traditions are enshrined in several international laws protecting Indigenous peoples’ rights. Nevertheless, their ancestral reindeer herding mark has been removed, and they have been declared outlaws in their own land by the Swedish state. Sunna’s paintings, murals, installations and poetry are testimonials of his family’s experience of being hunted by the law over generations, speaking out against the colonial occupation of their ancestral lands and brutal suppression they have endured.

My paintings tell stories of what happened to my family. Today our family has no rights at all, we have lost everything. We are still working with reindeer but it’s difficult when in the government’s eyes you are illegally occupying your own land.

See a video portrait of Anders Sunna at <https://oca.no/thesamipavilion>



The Sámi: Pavilion
The Sámi: Pavilion



'The Sámi Pavilion' Extended Programme

ÁRRAN 360° features six commissions by a new generation of Sámi filmmakers and digital artists **Elle Márjá Eira, Marja Helander, Ann Holmgren, Hans Pieski, Siljá Somby** and **Liselotte Wajstedt**. It premieres at the end of August 2022 in Venice as part of 'The Sámi Pavilion' Extended Programme. **ÁRRAN 360°** (Árran in Sámi means the fire hearth around which people gather to talk) is created by the **International Sámi Film Institute (ISFI)** and initiated by director **Anne Lajla Utsi** and presents exciting creative voices from across Sápmi. Their pioneering films will be screened on a newly developed, monumental 360-degree screen that surrounds the viewers, covering the curved walls of the largest lávvu (teepee-like structure) ever built. **ÁRRAN 360°** will construct this on the Venetian island of San Servolo, bridging the Biennale Arte 2022 and the Venice Film Festival 2022. **ÁRRAN 360°** is presented in collaboration with OCA Norway, the Norwegian Film Institute (NFI) and 'The Sámi Pavilion' exhibition at the Nordic Pavilion in Venice. <https://isfi.no/arran-360/>

aabaakwad ('it clears after a storm' in the Anishinaabemowin language) comes to Venice 22-25 April 2022, as a part of, and in solidarity with, 'The Sámi Pavilion'. Originally founded by Wanda Nanibush, aabaakwad is an international gathering in which Indigenous-led conversations on Indigenous art take place between those who create, curate and write about it. For this special edition, aabaakwad honours 'The Sámi Pavilion' by featuring its artists as key participants in a four day programme, together with Indigenous artists, curators and thinkers from across the world. <https://aabaakwad.com>

TBA21-Academy Ocean Fellowship is initiated by TBA21-Academy in collaboration with 'The Sámi Pavilion', OCA, aabaakwad and Artis. The 2022 participants are asked to consider our kinship and duties of care toward the Ocean and our relationship to multi-species communities and with diverse life forms. How can thinking from the Ocean build radically inclusive environments? Indigenous perspectives are brought to the center to define resurgent values, forms, stories and intertwining knowledges of the past, present and futures of the Ocean we are all in relation with and dependent upon. The 2022 programme supports five fellows and the two mentors, Rebecca Belmore and Harald Gaski, who will conduct individual and collaborative research with an awareness of oceanic worldviews and marine histories. <https://www.ocean-space.org/fellowships>

Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA)

OCA is a co-commissioner of the Pavilion of the Nordic Countries, referred to as the Nordic Pavilion, in Venice and takes the project lead of the Pavilion in 2022. OCA is a hybrid arts foundation, supporting artists based in Norway and Sápmi, founded in 2001 by the Norwegian Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs. OCA's work focuses on two areas: curating (exhibitions, research trips, publications and discursive programmes), as well as funding and support (providing grants, research trips and residency schemes) to foster a two-way exchange with the international arts scene. Under the direction of Katya García-Antón, OCA has launched a deep engagement with the North – turning conventional thinking on its head to see this northern region and the Indigenous lands of Sápmi as a tipping point of thinking around urgent issues within the arts, such as the environment and social justice. OCA's programme works to forge creative alliances that dismantle colonial and canonical pasts and presents, including those within its own institutional structures, to imagine new forms of thinking, being and doing for the future. <https://oca.no>

The Pavilion of the Nordic Countries

The Pavilion of the Nordic Countries, designed by Norwegian architect **Sverre Fehn**, was completed in 1962 and has since been a space for collaboration between three nations: Finland, Norway and Sweden. In 2022, OCA on behalf of Norway, is the lead commissioner. The co-commissioners from Sweden and Finland for the Nordic Pavilion at the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia are **Gitte Ørskou**, director of the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Sweden and **Leevi Haapala**, director of the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma / The Finnish National Gallery in Helsinki, Finland.

A Sámi Perspective

‘The Sámi Pavilion’ exhibition presenting the artists Máret Ánne Sara, Pauliina Feodoroff and Anders Sunna, has been created through a multi-layered, collaborative approach in keeping with Sámi culture and customs.

Learning from the Elders: each of the artists has been enriched by individual dialogues with community Elders. Feodoroff has worked with Sámi educator and Professor Emerita **Asta M. Balto**; Sara with reindeer herder and Sámi knowledge bearer **Karen E. M. Utsi**; and Sunna with Sámi Professor of law and juoigi (practitioner of joik, the Sámi musical practice) **Ánde Somby**. The Sámi artist and Elder **Hans Ragnar Mathisen** (co-founder of the first Sámi Artist Collective/Mázejoavku, and a participant in documenta14) is known for his maps of Sápmi and has created hand-made Guest Books especially for ‘The Sámi Pavilion’ exhibition for visitors to leave messages and greetings.

Visual identity: A collaboration between graphic designer Hans Gremmen and artists and duojár Fredrik Prost and Inga-Wiktoria Påve. ‘The Sámi Pavilion’ logo expresses Sámi practices and cosmologies. It includes three elements that tell a story about Sámi ways of perceiving the world. The first is a symbol derived from old Sámi weaving patterns, representing the sun, which is central in Sámi culture. The second relates to the pre-Christian Sámi spiritual concept of the inhabitants of Sáivu, the inverted world, where people walk with the soles of their feet against ours and it is thus a mirror image of our world. This idea of parallel worlds is represented through the mirrored letters in the design. The third element relates to the most important star constellation in Sámi cosmology, the reindeer stag, and to a Sámi creation story involving hunting the wild reindeer, which is then tied to the fixed pole star. This also refers to the Sámi way of describing the world through the reindeer: the fur is the forest and everything that grows; the veins and the blood constitute the rivers and lakes. The pole star is the entrance to the upper world and the Sámi noaidi (spiritual leaders) climb the antlers of the reindeer to reach it.

Duodji is the philosophy from which Sámi material culture and creative practices emerge, and this informs the artists’ work. Often mistranslated as ‘craft’ by the western arts field, duodji is a Sámi epistemology that encompasses a specifically Sámi and complex worldview, combining spiritual, material and environmental knowledge, concepts of beauty and utility, and manual work, that converge in the processes of making objects and in the objects themselves. A knowledge holder and practitioner of duodji is called duojár.

Sámi Pathfinders (Sámi Ofelaččat): Sámi Pathfinders from across Sápmi will be mediators for ‘The Sámi Pavilion’ and offer visitors the points of view of Sámi youth today. Partnering with ‘The Sámi Pavilion’, this youth-programme run by Sámi University College in Guovdageaidnu and the Sámi Parliament in Norway brings Sámi perspectives to schools around Norway.

External Indigenous Advisors: ‘The Sámi Pavilion’ has also benefitted from the perspectives of Wiradjuri artist **Brook Andrew** (Artistic Director NIRIN, Sydney Biennial 2020, Australia) and Anishinaabe curator (Art Gallery of Ontario, Turtle Island/Canada), artist and educator **Wanda Nanibush**.

PRESS

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The Sámi: Pavilion The Sámi: Paviljion



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ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Left to right: The artists of 'The Sámi Pavilion' Pauliina Feodoroff, Máret Ánne Sara and Anders Sunna. Photo: Marta Buso / OCA

Máret Ánne Sara (b. 1983) is a Northern Sámi artist and author from Guovdageaidnu in the Norwegian part of Sápmi. Sara is a founding member of the Dáiddadállu Artist Collective in Guovdageaidnu and is part of a new generation of Sámi artists who work to maintain and improve the rights of the Sámi communities. She is known for experimenting with varied materials, approaches and collective art actions, and her artistic practice makes visible the political and social issues affecting the Sámi people, especially the reindeer herding communities, with a critical view on ongoing colonialism. Her sculptures and installations are often made from materials deriving from the sustainable practice of her reindeer herding family, treating the bones, hide and intestines of the reindeer in the customary manner and transforming them into contemporary artworks.

Sara is best known for the piece *Pile o'Sápmi*, an installation of 400 reindeer skulls and legal documents, showcased at documenta14 in Kassel, 2017. The installation was recently purchased by the National Museum, Norway. *Pile o'Sápmi* is also the title of an ongoing art project and protest movement involving fellow Sámi artists in solidarity with Sara's brother Jovsset Ánte Sara, in his contestation of the Norwegian government in court.

The title of this project refers to Pile o' Bones, the English translation of the Plains Cree name for Regina, Canada (Oskana ka-asastēki) and also referencing the photos of millions of buffalo heads that white settlers slaughtered in order to starve the Indigenous populations of North America. *Pile o'Sápmi* has taken various forms, as installations with reindeer skulls, and as jewellery pieces made from reindeer bone porcelain (pointing to bone china, a British invention imitating porcelain by using buffalo bones as raw material). As her brother's court cases proceeded, Sara installed various versions of *Pile o'Sápmi* in relation to the different trials, with installations outside the District Court in Deatnu/Tana, the Court of Appeal in Romsa/Tromsø and in front of the Norwegian Parliament in Oslo during the trial at the Supreme Court.

The various versions have also been exhibited at Tenthaus, Norway; The Queen Sonja Art Stable, Norway; Kunstnerforbundet, Norway and Nuuk Art Museum, Kalaallit Nunaat/Greenland. *Pile o'Sápmi Power Necklace* was displayed in the exhibition 'Let the River Flow. The Sovereign Will and the Making of a New Worldliness', curated and produced by OCA in 2018. Sara is currently featured with a new commission and a series of previous works in the exhibition 'Environmental Injustice - Indigenous Peoples' Alternatives' at Musée d'ethnographie de Genève, Switzerland.

Since studying illustration at Arts University Bournemouth, UK, the artist also works extensively with collages and prints depicting madness and anger at governmental power abuse through the expressive use of Sámi symbolic and identity markers. Sara has also worked as journalist and editor of the Sámi youth magazine *Š*, and has published two novels, *Ilmmiid gaskkas* (In between worlds), 2013, and *Doaresbealde doali*, 2014. She was nominated for the Nordic Council's Children and Young People's Literature Prize 2014 for *Ilmmiid gaskkas*, her debut novel, which was published in Northern Sámi, Norwegian and English.

Pauliina Feodoroff (b. 1977) is a Skolt Sámi theatre director, artist and land guardian from Keväjäu'rr in the Finnish part of Sápmi and Suõ'nnjel, in the Russian part. She connects various fields of knowledge – Sámi, artistic, scientific – in theatre and film projects and also in political activism and ecological restoration projects. She is known for the film *Non Profit*, 2007, and the play *CO2lonialNATION* that premiered at Giron Sámi Teáhter, 2017, which questioned colonisation and its consequences in Sápmi through a 'Theatrical Truth Commission'. She gained a Masters in theatre direction and dramaturgy from the Helsinki Theatre Academy in 2002 and has worked as the artistic director of Takomo Theatre and the Rospuutto Theatre Group, both in Helsinki, Finland. For the theatre festival Baltic Circle Helsinki in 2017 she curated the artistic and discursive programme 'Vuosttaš álbmogat / First Nations' which concentrated on colonisation in the Nordic countries. Several Sámi artists, including Anders Sunna, participated in the programme.

Feodoroff's family are Skolt Sámi reindeer herders originally from Suõ'nnjel on the Kola peninsula in the Russian part of Sápmi but were forced to move to the Finnish part when the Russian borders were re-drawn and closed in 1944. She was born in Keväjäu'rr on the Finnish side but considers the dispossessed lands as her ancestral homeland. Feodoroff is an advocate for Sámi water and land rights and has served as President of the Saami Council. She co-drafted the mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Finland in 2019.

Her current work is concerned with industrial deforestation and its role in the collapse of the biodiversity of rivers and fishing customs. Her practice is also concerned with the role of modernisation and government policies in destroying the collective models of existence and care for the land that underpin Sámi society. She has worked to preserve reindeer herding in forests on the Finnish side of Sápmi and has investigated the impact of land extraction by mining companies in the Russian part of Sápmi. Feodoroff is an active collaborator with the Snowchange Cooperative, particularly on the project 'Näätämö River Co-management Plan', where she coordinates the ecological restoration and management project of the Njâuddam (North Sámi: Njávddam, Finnish: Näätämö, Norwegian: Neiden) river system, a vital river on the Norwegian and Finnish sides of the Skolt Sámi areas. The project aims to use Sámi land-care practices and local and scientific knowledge to protect and restore the waters, fish spawning areas and the surrounding land of the river. In 2018 this inspired the cross-disciplinary project 'What Form(s) Can an Atonement Take'. In 2019 the restoration of the river Vannikkeejokk and a small rapid called Kirakkakoski in lake Kââ'rekjäu'rr was completed.

In 2015 she collaborated with Snowchange Cooperative on a performance in Sápmi entitled *Life in the Cyclic World (Our Songs Have to Change) if We Wish to Change* for the Rospuutto Group, which raised awareness of the Climate Change Risk Assessment Report and pushed for the publication of a scientific article written by Tero and Kaisu Mustonen called 'Life in the

Cyclic World'. The article provides witness statements by Indigenous peoples of the North about climate change and their interpretations of what climate change is. The CAFF Process commissioned the report, but would not publish it without editing, which the Indigenous communities involved disagreed on. With Feodoroff and Snowchange's efforts, the report was published in 2016.

Feodoroff has contributed to several book projects including *Queering Sápmi*, a project by Sarah Lindquist and Elfrida Bergman that challenges gender norms and offers storytelling about the lives of queer Sámi persons, and the *Eastern Sámi Atlas* by editors Tero Mustonen and Kaisa Mustonen, published by the Snowchange Cooperative, 2011.

Anders Sunna (b. 1985) is a Northern Sámi artist from a reindeer herding family in Kieksiäisvaara, in the Swedish part of Sápmi. Sunna's politically charged artworks narrate the history of the violence and oppression against the Sámi people and very specifically address his family's five-decade long struggle for their right and acknowledgement to be forest reindeer herders. Due to governmental politics, the family lost their reindeer ear marks, a customary practice that designates ownership of reindeer and the right to work as a herder. Sunna calls himself a 'guerrilla reindeer herder', using his artistic practice to empower the Sámi community. With powerful imagery and political satire his paintings, graffiti, sculptures and installations depict how the abuse of authority and power lead to the exploitation of land and natural resources, forced displacement, and racial persecution of the Sámi people.

Sunna was featured in the exhibition 'Àbadakone / Continuous Fire / Feu continuel', in the National Gallery of Canada, 2019, and the 22nd Biennale of Sydney, NIRIN, 2020, both focused on Indigenous artists. For NIRIN he was commissioned to make a site-specific mural at the Campbelltown Arts Centre. The mural, titled *SOAÐA*, was created on-site in dialogue with local Aboriginal elders in Campbelltown, Australia. Sunna had two solo exhibitions in 2020: in Adde Zetterquist Art Gallery, Saltdal, in the Norwegian part of Sápmi, and 'Exploration Target – Area Infected' at Varbergs Konsthall, Gothenburg, Sweden.

Sunna was part of the Bergen Festival Exhibition 2020 at Bergen Kunsthall with a painting commissioned by and in collaboration with Sámi artist Joar Nango (the main Festival Exhibition artist). Sunna studied fine arts at the Konstfack College of Arts in Stockholm during 2006–2009 and at the Umeå Academy of Fine Arts 2004–2006. He has been commissioned to create a range of public artworks, amongst others at the Sámi University College in Guovdageaidnu and the Alta secondary school in the Norwegian part of Sápmi; and notably in the courtroom in the district court in Gällivare, Swedish part, 2013, where many legal cases on Sámi issues continue to be raised today. In 2016 he collaborated with Máret Ánne Sara on stage visuals for the concert 'Lapp Affair – Unfinished Business' at the Arctic Arts Festival in Harstad, Norway. He has also collaborated with the Sámi musician Sofia Jannok with a graffiti performance for her music video 'We Are Still Here', 2016. He was selected for the Moderna Exhibition 2018 titled 'With the Future Behind Us'. When the Swedish church made an official apology towards the Sámi people on 24 November 2021 for its role in 'legitimised repression' and centuries of 'mistreatment and complacency' toward the Sámi People, Sunna created two new commissioned portraits as scenography.

Sunna's works have been exhibited widely in Sápmi and internationally. OCA presented Sunna in 2017 when he made the scenography exhibition in connection to 'Museums on Fire!', a symposium considering the entanglement of the colonial legacy of art institutions, with the spaces and processes through which Indigenous artistic practices, past and present, are addressed.

CURATOR BIOGRAPHIES



Katya García-Antón
Photo: Marta Buso / OCA

Katya García-Antón is director and chief curator of the Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA), where she has held the post since 2014. A British and Spanish national, she graduated with a BA in biology from Bristol University, UK, specializing in primatology and ecology. She conducted field work in the Amazon forests in Brazil and in the Gola Forests in Sierra Leone, before transferring into the arts with a master's degree in 19th- and 20th-century art history from The Courtauld Institute of Art, London. She worked as a curator at The Courtauld Institute of Art, Museo Nacional Reina Sofía Madrid, ICA London, IKON Birmingham, and was director of the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève. She curated the Spanish Pavilions in the São Paulo Biennial 2004 and in the 54th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia in 2011, the Nordic Pavilion in the 56th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia in 2015 and was co-curator of the Qalandiya International Biennial 2022, in Jerusalem and Ramallah. García-Antón is member of the jury for the Artes Mundi International Exhibition and Award (AM10) in 2022 with Gaby Ngcobo, Wanda Nanibush and Zoe Butt.

She has curated over 100 exhibitions of art, design and architecture; most recently she was chief curator for OCA's 'Actions of Art and Solidarity' (2021) presented in Kunstnernes Hus Oslo. Her extensive publications include, most recently, being editor/co-editor (contributing with essays) of OCA's trilogy on new Indigenous writing: *Sovereign Words. Indigenous Art, Curation and Criticism* (2018), *Mázejoavku. Indigenous Collectivity and Art* (2020) and *Let the River Flow. An Indigenous Uprising and its Legacy in Art, Ecology and Politics* (2020), as well as the upcoming *Art and Solidarity Reader. Radical Actions, Politics and Friendships* (2022). In 2021 she presented keynote lectures on decolonial and Indigenising institutional practices in The Art Institute Basel's Master Symposium 'Seeing into the Heart of Things. Earth and Equality within Indigenous and Ancestral Knowledges' and with Alserkal Foundation in Dubai World Expo 2022.

In 2015 García-Antón launched a long-term focus on the North (both in terms of climate change and Sámi perspectives and how they connect) called 'Thinking from the Edge of the World. Perspectives from the North'. She was instrumental in the creation of the Artica Svalbard Foundation, in connecting scientific and artistic practices there; OCA is a key partner in Artica's residency and curatorial activities.

At OCA, García-Antón has generated significant Indigenising practices and programmes, in particular related to Sámi art and thought, as well as facilitated greater connectivity between Sámi voices and Indigenous thinkers across the world in ground-breaking projects such as documenta14, the Sydney Biennial 2020, the 13th Gwanju Biennial 2021, amongst others. OCA is lead commissioner of the project that transforms the Nordic Pavilion into 'The Sámi Pavilion' at the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, 2022. García-Antón is part of the curatorial group for 'The Sámi Pavilion'.

In August 2022 she starts as director of the Northern Norway Art Museum (NNKM) whose headquarters are based in Tromsø, with a branch in Longyearbyen in the Svalbard Archipelago, and an upcoming branch in Bodø, near the Lofoten Archipelago.



Dr. Liisa-Rávná Finbog
Photo: Eirin Torgersen / OCA

Dr. Liisa-Rávná Finbog is a Sámi scholar and duojár (Sámi storyteller and knowledge-holder) from Oslo, Vaapste, and Skánit in the Norwegian part of Sápmi. As a long-term practitioner of duodji (Sámi practices of aesthetics and storytelling), her PhD in museology combined her practice with an Indigenous research focus that looked into duodji as a Sámi system of knowledge; the devastating effect of the colonial epistemicide on the practice of duodji; and how Sámi communities today work to re-remember practices within duodji and in the process negotiate Sámi identities; and lastly, how museums with their vast collections of Sámi heritage objects play into these processes.

Extending from this research, she curated the seminar ‘Dåajmijes Vuekie – the material expressions of Sámi aesthetics’, which was convened during the Sámi Art Festival of 2019. The same year she was also the curator of a seminar convened jointly by Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA) and Norwegian Crafts (NC) relating to the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages, entitled ‘Båassjoeraejken Tjïrr – Workshops and conversations on Indigenous languages, aesthetic practices and landscapes’.

She is currently based in Tampere, on the Finnish side of Sápmi, where she is doing post-doctoral research in connection with ‘Mediated Arctic Geographies’, a project that aims to look at how Arctic geospheres are aesthetically shaped and mediated to become vehicles of environmental, geopolitical and social concerns at Tampere University. Her specific focus is on the relation between Indigenous aesthetics in the Arctic and land. Finbog, together with ‘The Sámi Pavilion’ co-curator Beaska Niillas is also a founding member of Hásstuheadji collective, a Sámi led think-tank that gather thinkers, performers and artists to dialogue and reflect.

Finbog is a collaborator on the research project ‘The Space Between Us’ that strengthens intellectual relationships among nations with shared colonial histories in Canada, the Circumpolar and Pacific regions, connecting to digital and new media technology in the future. She is also a session leader in the upcoming Momus Emerging Critics Residency to help guide emerging critical writers develop texts that are informed by the breadth of global Indigenous art criticism, cultural protocols and citational practices.

Her written works include contributions to collective works such as ‘Research Journeys In/To Multiple Ways of Knowing’ (2019), articles in *Nordic Museology* (2015) and in the digital platform ‘Action Stories’ (2021), as well as several upcoming works, including her first book, *It Speaks to You – Making kin through people, stories, and duodji in Sámi Museums* (2022).



Beaska Niillas
Photo: Marta Buso / OCA

Beaska Niillas from Deatnu in the Norwegian part of Sápmi, is among other things a father of two, Sámi duojár (Sámi storyteller and knowledge-holder), hunter, gatherer, land guardian and politician. Nature has been at the centre of his life since childhood. Growing up, the land was his playing field and his friend. He has done a lot of different things in his life, but the only formal education he has is a certificate of apprenticeship in duodji (Sámi practices of aesthetics and storytelling). For some time, he also worked as an actor in both Beaivváš Sámi National Theatre and Giron Sámi Theatre. After that he was a teacher and then worked as a fisherman. Niillas was recently re-elected to the Sámi Parliament on the Norwegian side of Sápmi and is also elected as board member of the Sámi Parliamentarian Council. Beaska, together with ‘The Sámi Pavilion’ co-curator Dr. Liisa-Rávná Finbogis is also a founding member of Hásstuheadđi collective, a Sámi led think-tank that gather thinkers, performers and artists to dialogue and reflect.

For the last ten years he has been active in Sámi politics and also defended Indigenous land and waters in Sápmi and beyond. Niillas plays a central role in three major projects exploring

Sámi sovereignty: ‘Ellos Deatnu!’ (Long live Deatnu!), a group declaration of a moratorium around Čearretsuolu, an island on the Deatnu River in Sápmi, to oppose a new government-led fishing agreement harmful to the river and to Sámi life because it removes many local Sámi fishing rights and transfers them to outside recreational fishing; ‘SuperSápmi’, an Indigenous podcast founded and recorded with Sámi fisherman and land guardian Áslat Holmberg, bringing Sámi, Indigenous and allied voices together to discuss Indigenous knowledges as well as the impact of colonialism on Indigenous and specifically on Sámi everyday life; and ‘Siidaskuvla’, a collaborative project by Sámi scholars, artists and land guardians who seek to reconstruct the knowledge of the siida (the Sámi community structure), and discuss how it could operate as a Sámi governance structure today.



The Sámi Pavilion
The Sámi Pavilion

