

Denmark
Finland
Iceland
Norway
Sweden

Spring 2016

www.nordic5arts.com

“Runes Revealed”

mixed-media exhibition by members of nordic 5 arts

Pat Bengtson-Jones - Olivia Eielson - Ellen Faris - Pam Fingado - Marc Ellen Hamel
Russell Herrman - Maj-Britt Hilstrom - Matlena Hourula - Debra Jewell
Kristin Lindseth - Karen Olsen - Helene Sobol - Barbara Stevens Strauss
Elizabeth Stokkebye - Diane Rusnak - Helena Tiainen - Lee Williams

July 8 - September 24, 2016

the third venue of our traveling exhibition

Scandinavian Cultural Center
Pacific Lutheran University

12180 Park Avenue South, Tacoma, WA 98447



“The Runic Stone on Frösön, Sweden” by Maj-Britt Hilstrom
Archival pigment print on canvas, 5' x 3', 2016

“Runes Revealed” - presented in its third venue in Tacoma, WA - is a traveling exhibition based on ancient runes, the script of the Old Norse and the Vikings before the introduction of the Latin alphabet in the 12th century. It was not only a simple representation of sounds, but, over time, each rune became imbued with symbolism, mystery and an association with specific gods in Norse mythology. The mystique of the runes of our ancestors appealed to our artistic sense and became the inspiration for this exhibition. Created in a variety of mediums, each work is a contemporary and personal artistic interpretation and expression.

“The Runic Stone on Frösön, Sweden” by Maj-Britt Hilstrom represents “Frösöstenen,” the northern-most raised runestone in the world dating from the 11th century. It was originally located by the sound between the islands of Frösön and Östersund and the rune inscription reads: “Östman, son of Gudfast, had this stone raised and this bridge built and Christianized Jämtland. Asbjörn built the bridge. Trjonn and Steinn carved these runes.”

“Runes Revealed” exhibition catalog: www.nordic5arts.com/pages/exhibitions.html



welcoming new member
karen olsen
by pam fingado

“I have Swedish ancestry on both sides of my family, though most directly through my father. I learned the rudiments of oil painting as a teen from my mother, an art teacher and a talented artist, but I did not take painting seriously until my early twenties. At that time I had the opportunity to learn watercolor with a fine teacher, and I took to it with a passion.”

Karen Olsen describes herself as mostly a watercolor painter. She returned to painting after pursuing a graphic design career and feels fortunate to live in California where there is an abundance of wonderful things to paint. She also loves to travel and incorporate these sights and scenes into her artwork.

Karen has family and friends in Sweden and has always belonged to a number of Scandinavian (especially Swedish) organizations and groups in the Silicon Valley area. She maintains her Swedish language skills, reads a Swedish newspaper, and belongs to a folk dance group and a Swedish women’s group. She hopes that she may expand her Swedish connections with Nordic 5 Arts.

Karen is represented by Aegis Gallery of Fine Art in Saratoga. In addition to painting, her design business and teaching watercolor classes keep her busy. Besides offering her artwork for inclusion in our group exhibits, including “Runes Revealed” at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, she has a fair amount of experience installing shows and will be happy to contribute her talents in the future.

To view her work, visit karenolsenfineart.com and her artist page at nordic5arts.com.

in memoriam Betty Rasicott Pillsbury

Born in 1922 in Wisconsin, Betty Rasicott Pillsbury left home at age 16 to enroll at UC Berkeley where she studied with internationally recognized Sculptor Raimondo Puccinelli and worked as an apprentice in his San Francisco studio learning stone and wood carving. She received her B.A. degree in Sculpture in 1950. During the 1960’s, she raised two children while continuing to draw, paint and sculpt. She had shows in Saratoga, Montalvo, and West Valley College and taught sculpture in San Jose.

Betty passed away at the age of 93 in 2015, only a few years after completing “Sea of Life,” a large wood bas relief that measured 82” in diameter (see below). She acquired this cut of a Philippine Nara tree in the early 1950s, but only started to carve it in 2009. Representing an underwater circle of mother and babies, this major work became the culmination of her 70 year career as a sculptor whose main subjects had been figurative works of the feminine form carved in wood, stone and clay cast to bronze.

Betty was a long standing member of Nordic 5 Arts and had participated in many of our group exhibitions throughout the years. She hosted a meeting in her art filled home a few years ago and we admired “Sea of Life,” her magnificent bas relief taking shape before our eyes. She will be greatly missed.

To see more works by Betty, visit her [artist page](http://nordic5arts.com) at nordic5arts.com.



Patricia Bengtson-Jones' sculpture "Rune of Destiny" will be exhibited at the International Sculpture Day, April 24, 6-9 pm, in San José. Together with other Pacific Rim Sculptors, she will exhibit at the Art Object Gallery in San José, April 3 – 28. **Colette Crutcher** is busy with several projects: Donor tile project for the Randall Museum; redoing part of the Six Days of Creation stairway in Tarzana, CA; and being a semi-finalist for the tile project at the El Cerrito del Norte BART station. **Jason Englund** latest body of work, "Seeing the Fields of Seeing," will be in exhibitions throughout the year in the Bay Area. Art writer Sarah Pollman describes his work as "performative" and "gestural photography." Themes and Projects Gallery will host his work at NEMA Artway, a pop up exhibition space located in San Francisco. **Mark Erickson** was in a group show at Robert Green Fine Arts and showed his paintings at the Miami Basel Art Fair last December. He will be participating in East Bay Open Studios in June together with his wife Elena, at their studio in Oakland. In January-February, **Ellen Faris** participated in the annual member exhibit at Arts Benicia Gallery. **Pamela Fingado** just finished facilitating a motivating, coaching workshop, "Setting Goals for 2016," to a group of ten artists in Berkeley. A follow-up workshop is scheduled for October. She's planning to curate an exhibit: "Art as Spiritual Metaphor." In December, she joined Art Table, a non-profit organization dedicated to the visual arts and to advancing women's leadership in the field. **Marc Ellen Hamel** was one of ten local artists who exhibited their work "In the Abstract" at Studio Gallery in San Francisco, February - March, 2016. **Kristin Lindseth's** sculptures were included in the February show at Sandra Lee Gallery in San Francisco, which also will be part of "Art Party San José" in September. Her work can be seen in two upcoming shows: "Full Circle" at the "9th Annual Spring Sculpture Exhibition," Oakwilde Ranch and Sculpture, Valley Springs, April 2-26, 2016, and "Inner Alchemy" at Peninsula Museum of Art, Burlingame, June 5-August 14. **Maj-Britt Mobernd's** weavings have been shown in the last major shows organized by Expressions Gallery at the Berkeley Central Arts Passage, including "Does Color Matter" and "Our Challenged Planet." **Diane Rusnak** is in a show of five California artists in St. Petersburg, Russia, June-July, 2016. She will be showing her "Food Dreams" paintings. Besides attending the opening, she will visit Finland, Vienna, and take a Danube cruise through Eastern Europe. **Helene Sobol** continues to exhibit her photography in the monthly juried shows at San Francisco Women Artists in San Francisco and has participated in exhibitions at Berkeley Central Arts Passage organized by Expressions Gallery, including "Our Many Cultures" on display through May 11, 2016. **Elizabeth Stokkebye** will be part of the "Engage Art Fair" at the Fairgrounds in Calistoga, April 30 and May 1, 2016. It is the closing event of the month long "Arts-in-April" in Napa Valley which is open to all artists from the greater Bay Area. In February, **Barbara Stevens Strauss** was the Berkeley Art Center's Featured Artist online. **Helena Tiainen** participated in the "Berkeley Art Party" in December 2015 together with Marc Ellen Hamel, Helene Sobol and Barbara Stevens Strauss. Helena continues her design collaboration with VIDA Voices and will soon be offering some of her fabric designs for sale at Spoonflower. Her art and designs are available for licensing and are printed-on-demand on home décor and personal items. **Lee Williams** traveled in Europe for nine weeks last fall and is working on a new series inspired by her travels.

kristin lindseth

"Spirit Mountain" Bronze

"Spirit Mountain," a sculpted bust, is a metaphor for the individual journey of the spirit in life. Life spirals out and many possibilities or pathways are encountered for growth of the spirit, but all lead to the same eventual goal. The spiral stairway winding up the mountain leads to different doorways of choice. There are guides along the way that can be found in life and the idea of a map is represented by the "Vegvisir," a Viking compass, and the idea of ancestral guides is represented by the Runes on the back of the bust.



jason englund

"Shifting the Frame - Coastal Memory" Photography

"I grew being shifted between the east and west coasts. Experiencing the change in social and political cultures between two places was very impactful, as was witnessing the landscapes. I was close to the ocean in both places and it became my main point of reference. One deep sea, devoid of political, social, or personal issues... I moved here permanently in the 90s and am fortunate to have the shining sun hit the Pacific waters in the afternoon. I'm happy when I shoot the sea here on the California Coast. I work almost exclusively in one seascape now north of the Golden Gate bridge near Stinson Beach.

"Café River 2" Watercolor

I travelled to China in May last year. Many wonderful sights. Art takeaway: In painting and calligraphy the relationship between the artist and media is paramount. Although that seems obvious, I had never approached painting in quite so concentrated a way. How you hold the brush, how much pressure, how much the bristles bend, which direction the stroke is going in relation to pressure, modulating pressure and speed and so on. "Café River 2" is part of a series of paintings of the Napa River in the Chinese manner - not in looks - but painting while trying to be fully aware.

loren rehbock



by helena tiainen

two events at berkeley art party

by pam fingado



On December 11-13, 2016, four members of Nordic 5 Arts displayed their work at the Berkeley Art Party (BAP), held every second Friday of the month. **Helene Sobol** exhibited her close-up photos of tree bark, plus photos of wildlife taken during her trip to South Africa; **Marc Ellen Hamel** showed her colorful abstract paintings and prints; **Barbara Stevens Strauss** showed her ceramics; and **Helena Tiainen** displayed her "Blessings" series, plus the "Enchanted Scarf." As described in the Fall 2015 Newsbrief, the Berkeley Art Party is organized and hosted by Barbara Stevens Strauss and luthier Mike DaSilva, with whom Barbara shares a Sawtooth Building space; Mike is an active participant in helping Barbara with the pop-up gallery. The intention of these parties is to create an artist community and an alternative venue for artists to show and sell their work. About ten Nordic 5 artists have shown at the BAP so far, along with a number of outside artists. At a recent professional development seminar at the Berkeley Art Center, Michele Pred, an internationally known Berkeley conceptual artist, cited the Berkeley Art Party as a model of a community building effort. If you are interested in participating with your art or want more information about these parties, you can email info@berkeleyartparty.com. The parties are public events and everyone is welcome to attend. BerkeleyArtParty.com

An Afternoon with Peter Selz

April 9, 2016

Peter Selz, UC Berkeley Professor Emeritus, art historian and curator, spoke for an hour and a half at a Q and A session hosted by Nordic 5 Arts member Barbara Stevens Strauss under the auspices of her monthly **Berkeley Art Party**. On a rainy Saturday afternoon, a group of about thirty attended the event held in the Berkeley Sawtooth Building.



Questions and an extended discussion both started and ended with the design and recent opening of the new Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. Prof. Selz spoke highly of the new museum, the collection it houses, its future exhibitions, its location and added space. Subsequent topics included his opinion on contemporary art, his part in the development of the original Berkeley Arts Museum and his visit to the New York MOMA.

Peter Selz spoke eloquently about the various 20th century art movements and mentioned the lack of a defining movement in today's art and that "anything goes." He also said that art is always changing, shifting and evolving and that Paris and New York are no longer the center for art. Mentioning Christo's "Running Fence" project and the difficulty getting it accepted by the ranchers in Marin and Sonoma County, he stated that Christo was the most imaginative and interesting artist alive. It was delightful to hear him speak. Transcripts of the talk will be available. Thank you Barbara Stevens Strauss for arranging this interesting event!

Contact Barbara, info@BerkeleyArtParty.com

artist pages and "runes revealed" catalog - nordic5arts.com

The nordic 5 arts NEWSBRIEF is published in spring and fall. Edited and designed by Helene Sobol, assisted by Olivia Eielson and Marc Ellen Hamel.

The publication supports and promotes artists with Nordic heritage in the San Francisco Bay Area. Subscription \$10; membership dues \$30.

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Thank you to those who contributed material and photos to this issue.