



Chilling out stirs warmth

Artistic activities from strange to spiritual to scholarly bring heat to local scene during KunstPause

There's a lot to be said about the outdoors in Svalbard. Like they're really cold and dark right about now.

So, aside from a walk and a bit of playtime where a fire pit was the centerpiece, Longyearbyen residents sought to expand their horizons by exploring a range of artistic endeavors indoors, many of which were inspired by the Arctic landscape.

The annual KunstPause festival, promoted as a break from everyday routine as the core of the local community settles in for the polar winter, featured four days of activities ranging from a concert of hymn interpretations to university lectures. Photographers and authors presented the adventures past and present, while other craft-makers offered a chance to get an early start on holiday shopping.

An art-in-progress exhibition highlighted four projects presented during the opening reception Thursday at Galleri Svalbard. The first strokes of paint for an impressionist image of Svalbard's mountains were applied to a canvas by Kari Nordheim, a native of northern Norway now living and working "in the countryside outside

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Locals warm up at a fire pit during an outdoor market and games event in Longyearbyen's central square Saturday as part of KunstPause. At left, an audience gets their first look at the main stage of the city's new culture center Friday during a theater performance.

A successful 'experiment'

Logistics, eccentric show lauded at debut of new culture center

A scream, a baby ripped from the womb, women tossing the newborn around like a hot potato before dumping it in a trash can.

Not an opening likely to qualify as a Hallmark moment, but hopefully not an omen for

the birth of Longyearbyen's new culture center as well.

The 245-seat main theater was about half full for the debut performance at the center,

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Environmental grants set record

Protection fund awards 5.1 million kroner for 26 educational and preservation proposals

A record 26 projects are receiving a record 5.1 million kroner from the Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund, the governor's office announced Thursday.

Priorities this year included creative and educational projects designed for youths, and projects studying future changes caused by pollutants and other factors, said Aud Andersen, vice chairman of the fund's board, in a prepared statement.

Examples include 280,000 kroner for Mari Tefre and Liv Mari Schei to produce a film/music project titled "Polar Eufori" ("Polar Euphoria"), and 650,000 kroner to the Tromsø Museum's Inger Greve Alsos to study invasive species.

"Furthermore, the board wishes to maintain the support given to the mining camp project at Sverdrupsbyen," Andersen said, referring to a site from the early 1900s about two kilometers from Longyearbyen. "Sverdrupsbyen is a heritage area where the environmental protection fund has previously allowed work with support for other projects."

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Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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Submitting material

Letters, columns, photos and other material are welcome, but we can't offer pay for published items since nobody here is getting paid at the moment. Submissions in electronic form (text, Word documents, JPEGs, etc.) are highly preferred, although typing and/or scanning of items will be considered on a per-case basis. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length, clarity, accuracy, libel and other reasons, but we will also make every reasonable effort to contact the author about any changes prior to publication.

Mama, let your babies be circus clowns



The 10th anniversary of Sirkus Svalnardo will feature performances on the main stage of Longyearbyen's new culture center at 3:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. Dec. 11. The ensemble from Tromsø includes jugglers, acrobats and other circus performers. Local students interested in participating can attend a weeklong series of workshops beginning at 2 p.m. Dec. 5 at Svalbardhallen. Register by Nov. 29 ay e-mailing nilsen@kulta.no.

Environmental awards set record

GRANTS, from page 1

Steve D. Torgersen at Svalbard Explorer received 400,000 kroner for the mining project.

The fund has awarded 26.6 million kroner for more than 150 projects since its inception in 2007. A total of 48 applicants sought about

18.4 million kroner from the fund for the most recently approved projects.

Andersen said another record allocation is possible next year with about 11 million kroner available for distribution. The next application deadline is Feb. 1.

Briefly

Agency: Food grinder problems not common

The mystery of Longyearbyen's defective food waste grinders continues to grow, as Norwegian officials said they have not seen the problem from similar units elsewhere.

Reports of the flawed grinders were sent to the Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning's regional office in Harstad, which stated "it has sold many of these mills in

Norway, but they have not received reports of failure of these before," according to a statement today from Longyearbyen's Bydrift Council.

"Bydrift will now seek clarification with the supplier to check if there might be defects in some mills," the statement notes.

Problems ranging from drain clogging to smoke from overheating have been reported since hundreds of the units were installed in residences earlier this year.

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

One place the Phillips Wake-Up Light ad campaign is showing up frequently: Web sites that stream movies illegally ... Tom Roger Aadland's Dylan-in-Norwegian album "Blod Pa Spora" can be downloaded as well as streamed free at his Web site by those who know a bit about HTML (no, we're not saying how and, yes, we also bought a legit copy) ... Nice to see the Radisson selling the Simen Henriksen/Inger-Johanne Mørk "Snøstjerna" CD at the front desk, but charging 125 kroner compared to 89 kroner elsewhere probably isn't making a good impression on guests ... Seems the Nazis got themselves some

seriously upgraded digs for the Svalbard campaign featured in the new record-selling video game "Call Of Duty: Black Ops," as a reality check at kotaku.com reminds us the difficulties of transport meant the Germans were freezing in spartan weather stations rather than massive fortresses stocked with nerve gas and V-2 rockets ... Newspapers worldwide are reporting a U.K. supermarket chain is being protested for selling reindeer meat leading up to Christmas, with a picture of a reindeer in Spitsbergen being used to illustrate the injustice. Apparently they aren't familiar with Svalbardbutikken's meat department (where the whale would no doubt also go over well).



The first audience at Longyearbyen's new culture center waits in the lobby before the Jo Strømgren Kompani performance of "Eksperimentet" on Friday. A cafe in the lobby is scheduled to be open daily after the official opening of the center in December.

Half-full theater enough for full test

CULTURE, from page 1

which won't celebrate its "official" opening until Dec. 2. A few shows are scheduled before then as trial runs and just the name of Friday's performance, "Eksperimentet," suggests it was ideal shakedown material.

There was no crowd – indeed, no people at all – lined up outside in the cold and wind when the doors opened at 6:30 p.m., an hour before the scheduled start time. The audience arrived gradually, most during the final 30 minutes, nibbling nuts and drinking wine in the lobby that will become a cafe open daily starting next month.

Inside the theater, the mood wasn't much more intense.

"It's a lot to organize, but I'm not stressed at all," said Kyrre Fledsberg, manager of technical stage operations at the center, about 45 minutes before the opening curtain.

It helps that setup logistics are much faster than at Huset, Fledsberg said.

"It's built for shows in 2010, whereas Huset was built for shows in 1951," he said.

A lift brings heavy equipment to the stage, for example, whereas "at Huset you had to carry things up to the (main stage) floor. I'm not going to miss that at all."

"In this room almost everything we do is ready," Fledsberg said. The most noticeable

change at the official opening will be the speakers hanging in their proper proposition – thus offering better sound – instead of being stacked on the floor.

The new center will allow modern entertainment such as 3D movies to be shown. Fledsberg said equipment and construction exceed what was called for in the specifications.

"It very much lives up to expectations with dry and controlled sound," he said. "The possibilities exceed anything I expected."

There were no grand presentations or speeches in the lobby when the theater doors opened to the public a few minutes before the show. Roger Zahl Ødegård, the city's cultural advisor, offered welcome greeting lasting a few seconds before an "up you go" sendoff to the second-floor entrance.

Electrical shorts, smoke, distorted speech and other mishaps were constant during the hour-long performance by the four women with the Jo Strømgren Kompani – but they were all intentional aspects of the unorthodox plot. Reaction to both the show and theater were generally positive afterward.

"It was great art, very expressive," said Kari Schröder Hansen, adding the theater is a plus because "it was very close to the artists."

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

New surgeon means women can get ultrasounds locally

Pregnant women may no longer have to go to Tromsø for ultrasounds, as a new surgeon with experience in maternity and gynecology is scheduled to start working at Longyearbyen Hospital in January. The hospital was seeking someone "accustomed to doing surgery on soft tissue," not one with maternity experience, but got one with "good additional qualifications," said Søren Nissen, a doctor and department chairman the hospital. While women may be able to avoid going to Tromsø during the 18th week of pregnancy for ultrasounds, Nissen emphasized they will still need to travel to the mainland for delivery since the hospital does not have the ability to deal with birth complications.

Oil is Svalbard's biggest tax source, despite drilling ban

Svalbard earns big money from coal, but last year the oil industry generated the area's largest tax revenue despite the fact drilling is prohibited. Seadrill Norge earned more than 700 million kroner in revenue and paid 115 million in taxes, while Store Norske earned 557 million and paid 89 million. Only one of the Bermuda-owned Seadrill's 6,300 employees works in Svalbard – its CEO Steinar Johansen. The office was relocated here three years ago since corporate taxes are 16 percent compared to 28 percent on the mainland. The company has 50 oil rigs worldwide, including two in Norway's North Sea.

Governor won't investigate culture center cafe contract

Terms of the contract for the cafe at Longyearbyen's new culture center will not be investigated by the Svalbard governor's office, saying there is no clear evidence for a case or desire from the city's governing board to pursue one. Jon Sandmo, leader of the Svalbardlista party, requested the probe because he believes the city risks losing 3.5 million kroner during a 10-year period. He said the governor's decision is not surprising because it's often unclear what qualifies as a criminal case, but he will keep pursuing the matter.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday

Partly cloudy. NNW winds up to 25 km/h. High -12C (-21C wind chill), low -16C (-26C wind chill).

Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00

Thursday

Mixed clouds. SE winds to 11 km/h. High -20C (-28C wind chill), low -22C (-30C wind chill).

Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00

Friday

Occasional snow. ESE winds at 7 km/h. High -15C (-20C wind chill), low -20C (-25C wind chill).

Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00

Saturday

Partly cloudy. S winds at 8 km/h. High -15C (-20C wind chill), low -17C (-22C wind chill).

Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00

Extended forecast: Sunday, partly cloudy, -20C (-28C), -24C (-32C), light 0:00h; Monday, partly cloudy, -23C (-29C), -23C (-29C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, -23C (-31C), -25C (-34C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -23C (-31C), -25C (-34C), light 0:00h.

Data provided by yr.no



Kari Nordheim, above, paints her impressions of Svalbard's mountains during the opening reception for the annual KunstPause festival on Thursday at Galleri Svalbard. Three other art exhibitions also debuted during the evening. At right, Tom Roger Aadland performs songs by Bob Dylan reinterpreted in Norwegian during a formal dinner Saturday at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel.



Polar night brings dawn to art

KUNSTPAUSE, from page 1

Oslo," according to her official bio.

She paused and pondered frequently while moving around the canvas on the floor, seemingly impervious to the groups of people clustering around at times and taking pictures. Part of that may have been due to the earbud headphones playing music from her iPod, which she said was more for isolation than inspiration.

"I don't want people to talk to me," she said while taking a break from painting on Friday, when there were no observers at the gallery to distract her. "At home I don't listen to music."

Nordheim did five paintings during a six-week stay in Svalbard, not including the new

piece she hoped to complete before departing Sunday. She said she spent much of her time taking solo tours of the mountains, but the canvas on the floor was an image of her impressions rather than a particular place.

"The mountains are so strong here there are great contrasts between the light and dark," she said.

Her paintings, which will remain on display until Dec 31, sell in the mid-20,000 kroner range. But those on more modest budgets could browse through a hallway of locally made clothes, jewelry, dolls and other crafts for sale at the gallery.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.



Local crafts for sale, above left, are displayed Thursday at Galleri Svalbard as part of the opening evening of KunstPause. Above right, Paul Olai-Olssen, a "professional vagabond," presents a photo and video exhibit of his travels in a Sami tent in the Svalbardbutikken parking lot Saturday.



What's up

Nov. 22

10:15 a.m.: Environmental and Economic Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

Nov. 23

10 a.m.: Administration Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

7 p.m.: Leif Magne Helgesen hosts a talk with Svalbard Gov. Odd Olsen Ingerø. Svalbard Church.

Nov. 26

7:30 p.m.: Concert by Kor:Z, a choir of about 45 members who will perform Joni Mitchell compositions. Debut performance on the main stage Longyearbyen's new culture center. Admission 100 kroner.

Nov. 27

6 p.m.: "Spitsbergen Up and Down" prologue hosted by Trollsteinen's Venner. Information available by contacting spitsbergenupanddown@gmail.com.

Nov. 28

11 a.m.: First Sunday of Advent liturgy with Kor:Z choir. Svalbard Church.

3 p.m.: Traditional Advent celebration with torchlight procession beginning at Huset. Procession will pass "Santa's Mine" in Nybyen before proceeding to central square. Tree lighting at about 4:10 p.m. and storytime in library at 4:45 p.m.

Nov. 30

7 p.m.: Evening gathering and open fireplace. Svalbard Church.

Dec. 2

7 p.m.: Official opening of Longyearbyen Culture Center with concerts and presentations. Admission 200 kroner adults, 150 kroner students/seniors.

Dec. 3

8 p.m.: Concert by Vamp, a 19-year-old folk, Celtic and rock band from Haugesund. Main stage, Longyearbyen Culture Center.

What's online

Icepeople.net provides daily updates of news about Svalbard and the world's polar regions, plus extras for articles from the print edition. Among the latest news:

- *Fliers in EU to see fee for climate impact*
- *Report: Drilling oversight lacking in Arctic*
- *Greenland wants \$2B bond to drill oil*
- *'Fiery ice' may be a new energy source*