

PRESS RELEASE

Iver Jåks

Material Sensitivity and Material Power

28.10 - 22.12.2022



Iver Jåks. Norway's Arctic University Museum, UiT© Iver Jåks/ BONO 2022. Photo: Olga Kvalheim.

Tegnerforbundet – The Norwegian Drawing Center is proud to present the exhibition *Material Sensitivity and Material Power*, featuring the Sámi artist Ánddir Ivvár Ivvár/ Iver Jåks (1932-2007) in Oslo. The exhibition opens on October the 27th and is mainly focused on Jåks' drawings, several of which have not been previously displayed. The contemporary Sámi artists Laila Labba (1995), niilas helander (1983) and Kurt Hermansen (1948) will contribute to the exhibition with new works that engage in dialogue with Jåks' artistic practice. The exhibition is curated by Hanne Hammer Stien and Kristoffer Dolmen.

An advocate for Sámi culture

Iver Jåks is considered one of the most influential artists from Sápmi and Northern Norway.

Sámi culture, tradition, religion and philosophy are the cornerstones of his work, and he has been of great importance for subsequent generations of Sámi artists. Jåks was an advocate of Sámi culture and contributed extensively to many areas of Sámi and Norwegian society, from the educational system to organizational life and museum work. Particularly important was his contribution to Sámi society during a time of momentum for the revitalization of the language and culture. His practice is therefore very diverse, and he has left a deep mark.

Drawing as a form of cognition

Iver Jåks is primarily known for printmaking, sculpture and installation, but drawing was an important aspect of his artistic practice. He consistently used drawing as a tool to map, systematize, think, understand, assemble and create. The exhibition at the Tegnerforbundet is based on the premise that drawing is its own form of cognition, and will display a selection of Jåks' drawings together with other pieces from his prolific catalog of works.

Duodji as a central theme in Jåks' drawings

A central theme in the extensive drawing material Jåks left behind is duodji. Duodji generally refers to traditional Sámi crafts and handicrafts using traditional materials and techniques. Jåks referred to a definition of duodji that included all creative activity. Among other things, the material shown in the exhibition includes documentation of duodji taken from museum collections, different areas of Sápmi and sketches for his own works. The drawings he left behind demonstrate the breadth of his work.

About Iver Jåks

Iver Jåks was from Kárášjohka (Karasjok), where he lived most of his life. He worked with duodji, drawing, printmaking, painting, relief, sculpture, handicraft and design. Drawing from Sámi tradition, he made use of materials like wood, horn, bone and leather in his work. From the 1950s on, Jåks also illustrated a number of school books, children's books and fiction, as well as contributing to children's programs for Norwegian public television. He made his debut at Den Nordnorske Kunstutstilling (North Norwegian Art Exhibition) in 1959, marking the start of a career of over 40 years of consistent participation in numerous exhibitions, as well as various public commissions.

Jåks is also represented in a number of public collections, both in Norway and Sweden. In Norway his work has been acquired by most of the prominent museums, including the National Museum, Northern Norwegian Museum of Art and Arts Council Norway. He has received multiple awards for his artistic work, among other things the Arts Council Norway's honorary prize, the Polar Circle festival's honorary prize, and the Sámi Councils honorary prize. He was appointed Knight of the first class of the Order of St. Olav in 2002.

Dialogue with tendencies in today's contemporary art

Three contemporary Sámi artists have been invited to the exhibition, Laila Labba, niilas helander and Kurt Hermansen, showing newly produced work. They belong to different generations and have very different artistic practices, but individually contribute to expanding the exhibition space and creating connections to Jåks across time and space. Inspired by Jåks' printmaking,

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Labba has created a window work that acts as a prism for the exhibition. In a performance created especially for the opening of the exhibition, helander engages in dialogue with Jåks' thinking. Hermansen, for his part, has created a lighting design for the exhibition to aid in the establishment of a conversation between the material presented and the surroundings in the gallery.

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The exhibition contains works generously on loan from the Inger and Iver Jåks Foundation, Kárášjohka gjelda/Karasjok municipality, Norway's Arctic University Museum, UiT Norway's Arctic University, Sámiid Vuorká-Dávvirat/The Sami Collections, Tromsø Municipality, The University Library UiT Norway's Arctic University, and Gunn Harbitz.

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