



Et A NM:s Vägled.
what left

LAPP ART

A travelling exhibition from the Nordic Arts Centre, Helsinki, April 7 - August 15, 1982.

The object of this exhibition is to focus on Lapp art and to show, among other things, how it often comes to expression in everyday objects.

Nordiska museet's permanent exhibition, "The Lapps", on the ground floor has a different aim, namely to give a picture of the Lapps and their life - ever since the time when we first hear mention of them up to the present day.

Lapp art is not a homogeneous concept. Different regions and periods exhibit different styles. In the north, for example, they have made pearl embroidery and in their carvings used floristic motifs, while in the southern areas they have embroidered with tin wire and used trellis-work design in their decorative art. As regards painting, one cannot say that it is especially Lappish, except that the motifs are usually taken from the Lapp environment.

Stand I

A 'seite' may be, for example, a hill, a mountain-top, a stone, a tree or the branch of a tree, of unusual shape and thought to be inhabited by a deity. The deity was believed to control the forces of nature in the vicinity and to have an influence over the hunter's success or the reindeer-owner's heard.

II

In the earlier beliefs and social life of the Lapps shamanism had an important role. There was a particular person who functioned as doctor, soothsayer and sacrificial priest. He was called 'nåjd' and was an intermediary link between man and the world of the gods. His chief implement was the drum. When the 'nåjd' drummed, a pointer moved and, from its movements between the various figures on the drum, he could see into the future.

- III Here are shown examples of utility and ornamental objects made from reindeer horn and bone. Reindeer horn is very hard and is suited for making several kinds of durable objects. To his sweetheart or newly wedded wife the Lapp gave a belt-clasp or a needle-case which he had himself decorated. The decorated horn spoons are reminiscent in form and style of the silver spoons of the Renaissance.
- IV The sheath-knives and especially their sheaths constitute the finest example of Lapp art handicrafts. The curved form of the sheath is practical. When the man is seated, the tip never strikes into the ground or against his thigh.
- V Bag-mountings of horn were given engraved patterns. The bag was a part of the representative festive attire. On the 'bandgrind' (weaving implement) which was often a betrothal gift, the woman could weave beautiful bindings for her man's shoes.
- VI Even the smallest objects can inspire to decoration. The Lapps have had richly decorated pipe-cleaners and even ear-cleaners for the reindeer. The clog-almanacs are real calendars of bone or wood.
- VII The Lapps made some of their wooden objects in the same way as their more southerly neighbours. This stand contains many objects made by bending of wood shavings. The large casket, 'kisan', functioned as travelling-chest and for keeping valuables.
- VIII Curly-grained wood has since olden times been the natural choice of the Lapps for making their vessels. A ladle ('guksi'. 'kuosa') - hollowed out of a 'vril' (abnormal outgrowth on the tree) - was an excellent drinking-vessel.
- IX The women were skilled fibre-plaiters. They used roots of pine, birch or fir, whichever they found to hand. They pulled the roots out of the soil and removed the branches. The roots were then cloven and softened up to make them flexible and were then plaited by twisting them together.
- X Formerly a special driving-rod was used round which the reins were wound to assist braking of the Laplander's sledge (the 'ackja') on downhill slopes. On the men's rod the knob was round, on the women's flat. On the reindeer's back a saddle could be placed and the load was suspended in the hooks on its upper part. The stand also contains loops for the lassos used for catching the reindeer.

XI

The bags in which small objects were kept were often gaudily decorated. In southern and central Lapland they were often embroidered with tin wire. They were part of the women's attire.

XII

No other Nordic people but the Lapps has used the 'ackja'. The one shown here is unusually shaped. It was made and decorated by a Lapp to bring home his bride in.

XIII

Today's Lapp art handicrafts are based on tradition. Even when they produce new types of objects, the choice of material, technique and decoration are traditional.

XIV

Woven belts for women's costumes represent the continuity in the Lapp handicrafts tradition. The pearl-embroidered belt is an example of the type of embroidery used by northern and Skolt Lapps.

'Rana' (length of cloth)

The 'rana' is woven in an upright loom from the top downwards. The web is passed through the shed and pulled tight with the hand.

Pictorial Art

1-10

Johan Turi, (1854-1936), born at Kautokeino, Norway.

Turi's drawings are akin to the Lapp art of carving. To rationalize his drawing work he had dies made for the more important figures. Sometimes he employed different techniques simultaneously: he drew, painted and used dies. In 1910 he published his book "Muittalus samid birra" (The tale of the Lapps).

11-22

Nils Nilsson Skum, (1872-1951). Sweden.

Nils Nilsson Skum made pencil and chalk drawings but also oil paintings. His great break-through came in 1938 with his book "Same sita" (The Lapp village). This brought him international renown.

23-37

John Andreas Savio, (1902-1938). Norwegian coastal Lapp.

John Savio's pictures are often used as illustrations for writings about Lapps. Many associate his name with woodcuts with Lapp motifs. He developed his own technique, in which he was partly inspired by the Norwegian painter and black-and-white

artist Edvard Munch.

38-54

Nikolaus Blind, (1926-1972), born at Ratekjokk, Norrkaitum Lapp village, Sweden.

Blind was a full-time reindeer breeder and drew and painted when time allowed. He studied at the Academy of Arts in 1946 and elsewhere and exhibited at the Annual Spring Exhibition at Liljevalchs in Stockholm in 1948. He had a separate exhibition of his own in Stockholm in 1963.

55,57

Rose-Marie Huuva, Kiruna, Sweden.

Has taken part in Scandinavian exhibitions from 1963 onwards. Is represented at the National Museum of Fine Arts, Stockholm, the Ethnographical Museum, Oslo, the Jokkmokk Museum, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and elsewhere. Art craftsman and painter.

58-62

Britta Marakatt, b. 1951. Vittangi, Sweden.

Has taken part in Scandinavian exhibitions from 1979 onwards. Has taught colour and form at the Lapps' Folk High School at Jokkmokk among other places. Textile artist.

63-66

Hans Ragnar Mathisen, b. 1964. Norway.

Has taken part in several exhibitions. Black-and-white artist.

67

Synnøve Persen, b. 1950. Masi, Norway.

Has taken part in several exhibitions. Painter. She is chairman of The Lapp Artists' Association.

68,70,71

Reidar Särestöniemi, (1925-1981). Kittilä, Finland.

Separate exhibitions from 1959 onwards in Finland, Sweden, Norway, in 1968 in Paris, Luxembourg and Murmansk, in 1973 at the Hague, and in 1978 in Hungary. Painter. Professor's title 1974.

Britt Bogren

1982-07-02

the Nordiska museet, S-115 21 Stockholm, Sweden. Phone 22 41 20