

A Cross-Border Celebration and Knowledge Sharing:

Bergen-Greenland: The Forgotten Histories

Background

Arctic Frontiers and the University Museum of Bergen will host a number of activities to celebrate the exhibition 'Bergen-Greenland: The Forgotten Histories'. The celebration will bring together artists, curators, visual anthropologists and researchers from Greenland, Norway and Denmark, who have contributed to knowledge sharing about the history and connection of Bergen and Greenland.

Through a combination of historical documents, art, and more recent research material the exhibition invites the audience to reflect on how the connections between Bergen – and the whole of Norway – and Greenland have been shaped, and what these connections mean today. It broadly covers the development from the 17th century, the era of Egede's colonial and mission enterprise, financed by wealthy Bergen merchants, to our own time. The exhibition project not only aims at bringing forth new knowledge but also challenge established understandings of the past.



The exhibition's point of departure is the little-known portrait of Maria Epeyubs daughter – a young woman from Paamiut, who was brought to Bergen by the Norwegian missionary Arnoldus von Westen Sylow in 1746. The portrait, from the University Museum's own collection, painted by Mathias Blumenthal in 1747, is among the earliest representations of a Greenlander in the history of European painting. More importantly, it bears witness to the complex relations between



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mission, colonialism, trade and representation. It opens for questions about how Maria was used as symbol and what are missing in the stories that are told about her. On a broader level, it spurs reflections on how Greenlanders have been understood and represented in Norway in the past as well as the present. Importantly, it also brings forth questions about how her history, and its colonial entanglements, is currently conceptualized by Greenlandic historians.

Activities

Sharing Circle

A closed-door sharing circle will start the celebrations with invited artists, visual anthropologists, museum creators and researchers from Norway, Greenland and Denmark. Sharing circles are safe spaces traditionally used by various Indigenous communities across the Arctic, to foster dialogue and knowledge sharing. This event, by invitation only, will increase collaboration and cross-border cultural exchange amongst the guests.

Guided Exhibition Tour

The University Museum of Bergen director and curators will guide the invited guests around the exhibition. Those who have worked on the content of the exhibition will present their sections and describe their process for creation and showcasing.

Open Panel Discussion

A panel discussion, which is open to the general public, will give the opportunity for the invited guests and exhibition creators to highlight their work, and raise awareness of the forgotten stories of Bergen and Greenland's long history. A series of keynote talks will begin the evening activity. A series of panel discussions will focus on various aspects of the exhibition, from colonialism to seal skin trade, to contemporary art displays, and how museums and galleries play a vital role in education and storytelling.

Open Reception

A reception which will take place amongst the visual pieces will then close the celebrations. This will give the general public access to the exhibition and give them opportunities to speak to the panelists and visiting artists. Join us for an evening of cross-border cultural sharing and celebration.



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