

A decorative border surrounds the central text. It consists of two vertical lines connected by horizontal lines at the top and bottom. At the corners, there are stylized speaker-like shapes. Along the vertical lines, there are pairs of triangles pointing towards each other. On the horizontal lines, there are pairs of triangles pointing away from each other.

**With Grass
Under the Feet
Kajsa Zetterquist
in Focus**

11 September, 2025
—4 January, 2026

Kin Museum of Contemporary Art

With Grass Under the Feet Kajsa Zetterquist in Focus

With Grass Under the Feet—Kajsa Zetterquist in Focus presents a dozen works by the eighty nine-year-old painter who has lived in the roadless land of Saltfjellet in northern Norway since 1967. The exhibition presents approximately one work per decade, beginning in the 1950s when she enrolled at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm. From there, we can trace her expressive idiom—from the Informalist school to the sensitive drawings of the 2020s. In addition to the works, the exhibition focuses on her unique life in the mountains with her artist husband Per Adde (1924–2020).

Artist Ingela Johansson has created a video portrait of Zetterquist specifically for the exhibition, highlighting various aspects of her work—including her advocacy for the environment and Sámi rights, as well as her role in establishing an infrastructure for contemporary art in Northern Norway. Her efforts in founding the art school in Gávvalváhki/Kabelvåg, the North Norwegian Art Museum in Romsa/Tromsø, and the Academy of Fine Arts in the same city are of lasting significance. Two new texts, by artist and writer Ilmira Bolotyan and curator Olga Shirokostup, respectively, address Zetterquist and Adde's friendship with Soviet painter Yuri Reshkin and how boundless solidarity has permeated their lives and work. The texts are presented in a separate publication.

The possibilities of painting—color, line, volume, and the interplay between surface and depth—are all central to the discipline and medium, collectively underscoring the value of sensory experience. The gaze, its wandering between the different parts of the picture, is of central importance. After studying at the Konstfack School and the private Signe Barth School of Painting, Zetterquist was admitted to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in 1957, where—under the

influence of professors such as Ragnar Sandberg, Lennart Rodhe, Bror Hjort, and Bror Marklund—she developed an independent artistic practice with a distinct and personal expression. Since the late 1960s, her paintings have taken shape in her studio on Saltfjellet, surrounded by the magical light and suggestive darkness of the northern latitudes.

This leaflet features a conversation between Kajsa Zetterquist, Ingela Johansson, and Emma Pettersson Juntti, Kin's mediator and producer. A text by art historian Joel Odebrant describes and analyzes Zetterquist's oeuvre and places it in an art historical context. In addition, the catalogue includes a list of works accompanied by descriptions of several pieces in the exhibition.

The exhibition is part of *Women in the North*, one of Kin's three thematic threads that will weave through the museum's activities over the next several years. The thematic threads are a way of using art as a basis to hold on to topics and issues over a longer period of time and thus create a context for ongoing dialogue on current issues. The thematic thread *Women in the North* is based on an expressed need to highlight the lives and deeds of women in the north.

With Grass Under the Feet—Kajsa Zetterquist in Focus is organized in collaboration with the Adde Zetterquist Art Gallery. It will also be included in Zetterquist's retrospective exhibition at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Spring 2026, which will later be shown at Adde Zetterquist kunstgalleri.

Maria Lind, director at Kin Museum of Contemporary Art

Mediation

Thursday 11 September

16:00 Opening, floor 4

—Opening ceremony with *Markerna*, a work by Carola Grahn and Nils-Johan Labba

—Welcome address by Maria Lind, director of Kin

—Conversation between Kajsa Zetterquist and the artist Katarina Pirak Sikku

Katarina Pirak Sikku (b. 1965 in Jokkmokk) is an artist working in Jokkmokk. Her photographs, drawings, installations, and text works are based on her Sámi family history and historical facts that have affected her on a personal level. Grief and pain are often present in her work. Her discreet activism aims to remind people of what is happening in the political and social spheres as well as in private and public life. In 2021, she presented her latest work *Agálaščat bivttastuvvon sohkačatti ivnniiguin/Ihkuven aajkan maadtoej klaerie-jgujmie gáárveldihkie* at the section for maps and photographs at Carolina Redivia University Library in Uppsala. In this work, Pirak Sikku has meticulously crafted and hand-sewn covers to enclose the photo albums with documentation on the Sámi people from the infamous Institute of Racial Biology. The new covers are based on the costume traditions of the areas where the Sámi people lived as documented in the albums. The materials she has used are fabric, tin wire, beads, ribbons, and lace. Pirak Sikku wants to reclaim the history of the black and white photographs by covering and re-dressing the portrayed individuals with their own history and traditions.

Thursday 18 September

18:00 Presentation by Olga Shirokostup about her research with *Women in the North*. Followed by a conversation with Kin's producer, Emma Pettersson Juntti.

Exhibited Works

Kajsa Zetterquist

1. Felicia's Dance, 2005–2006

Acrylic on canvas

In *Felicia's Dance*, the viewer encounters a body moving across the canvas, as if it were just passing by. The artist does not use models but creates the movements in her head. Drawing was a major part of her training at the Academy of Fine Arts, where vision was developed and the ability to work with movement and form in relation to each other was central. The name Felicia recurs in Kajsa Zetterquist's titles, a name with a rhythm that attracts the artist.

2. From a Woman's Life, 1986

Mixed media on paper

From a *Woman's Life* is dominated by cold tones of blue, black and white and is a compilation of figures, seemingly female bodies, overlapping each other. The size of the work adds to the sense of movement and rhythm, as if the bodies are dancing with each other.

3. Event, 2010

Acrylic on paper

This painting is an example of how colour, line, volume and the play between surface and depth constantly interact in Zetterquist's images. The form of a naked woman can be discerned with arm, hip and right leg reaching the right edge of the oblong canvas in portrait format.

4. Movement, 1981

Sketch on paper panel

The tenth and final work in the exhibition by Kajsa Zetterquist is a sketch made for a competition to decorate Oslo Central Station. The artist has made a number of public works, often on a large scale painted directly on the wall.

5. Vital, 2022

Mixed media on paper

Vital is the most recent work by the artist. The body and its movement are still central, but here they are allowed to take centre stage against an otherwise white, stripped-down background. The flowing line is typical of the artist's way of drawing.

6. Vision, 1987–1991

Acrylic on canvas

In the work, a mountain and the sun can be discerned coming down behind the peaks. The work has an added section on the right, which testifies to the artist's constant search for, and freedom in, adding elements afterwards to complete an image. Dramatic colours meet each other in sweeping brushstrokes and together create a sense of being in the middle of a seasonal change, for example when winter turns to spring.

7. Mental Image, 1973

Oil on canvas

In the work *Mental Image*, dynamic fields of colour meet in a collage-like expression. The color palette is dominated by shades of blue, complemented by pink, brown, white, and touches of green. Layers of colour create an impression of depth and movement.

8. From a Darkness, 1993–1994

Acrylic on panel

The viewer is greeted here by an image with a great contrast between light and dark. A rocky landscape can be discerned, with a bit of sky at the top left, and a diagonal downward movement in white from the upper right corner to the lower left.

9. By the River, 1965

Oil on canvas

By the River is one of several works by the artist from this period, where the green colour and nuances are in focus. Light is mixed with darkness, like seeing the river through dense green undergrowth and vegetation.

10. Still Life, 1956

Oil on canvas

The work depicts several different objects in tranquil earthy colors. The work was made while Kajsa Zetterquist was a student at Signe Barth's painting school, 1955-1957.

Ingela Johansson

The Quiet Steps Behind, 2025
Video, 42 minutes

Ingela Johansson's delicate video portrait of eighty-nine-year-old Kajsa Zetterquist was made at the invitation of Kin and captures the artist and her unique life of painting, politics, and nature in the roadless land of Saltfjellet in the northern reaches of Norway. Within the forty-two minutes of the essay film, we follow Zetterquist, partly on her life path from the Academy of Fine Arts and the years as a young artist in Stockholm to moving north to join her artist-husband Per Adde at his cabin by the mountain lake, and partly her movement between the cabins in the beautiful landscape. One of the cabins houses her studio, the interior images from there breathe reflection and an indomitable will to create a life with maximum freedom. The camera captures both the people and the landscape, the images and the sounds, and at the same time weaves in older photographs and film clips.

Johansson's narrative voice and Zetterquist's own story are mixed with people she has worked with during the nearly sixty years she has been based in Saltfjellet. It is about everyday life with animals and art, the work of creating an infrastructure for contemporary art in northern Norway, which for a long time lacked both art education and museums, the fight against the expansion of the Alta-Kautokeino rivers and against a dam on Saltfjellet itself. The youth's commitment against apartheid and nuclear weapons gradually shifted to Sámi issues and the desire to lift up northern Norway and create new cultural centers there. The proximity to the reindeer-herding Sámi, for whom Adde became a spokesperson, recurs in several episodes.

Since studying at the Umeå Academy of Fine Arts in the early 2000s, Ingela Johansson has become known for her documentary video projects. These include *Silvertunga: Den stora gruvstrejken 1969–1970*, a film about the legendary strike in Malmfälten, and *Evigt ärr*, which is based on the environmental movement's campaign against the final disposal of nuclear waste. She has also created a video portrait of the artist Gunilla Palmstierna-Weiss and in the film *Andrej's Maria* she portrays the actor Gudrun Gisladotter and her character Maria in Andrej Tarkovsky's film *The Sacrifice*. The film *The Quiet Steps Behind* was commissioned by the Kin Museum of Contemporary Art especially for the exhibition *With Grass Under the Feet*. The work is part of the museum's collection.

Ingela Johansson is a visual artist based in Stockholm who works primarily with video, installation, narrative film, textile, and text. Johansson's practice is informed by her extensive interdisciplinary research into varying subjects. For example much of her thinking within the field of art is taken from her experience being raised in a working-class environment formed by the craft industry during the peak of the welfare state. Engaging in topics such as social history and memory she is known for her work around individual and collective experiences of history writing, microhistories, and archives that focus on the organization of labor. More recently she's been busy producing work on the practice of reproduction of labor, women's histories, and storytelling that intersects eco-feminism and cosmologies.

Her most recent exhibitions, screenings and projects include: Umeå Konsthall (2024), Havremagasinet (2023), Bröhan Museum, Berlin (2022); Södertälje Konsthall; the Luleå Biennial (2021); Swedish Centre for Architecture and Design, Stockholm; Göteborgs Konsthall (2020); Moderna Museet (2019); Center for Contemporary Art Riga (2018); Kunsthall Trondheim (2017); Alternativa Gdansk; and Tranzit Bratislava (2016).

In 2010 Johansson was awarded by Iaspis an artist-in-residence grant in London and in 2020 she was awarded The Visual Arts Fund's five year working grant overseen by the Swedish Arts Grants Committee. She is represented at the Moderna Museet, Södertälje Konsthall, Hallands Konstmuseum, Umeå Konsthall, and Filmform. In 2013 she published the book *The Art of the Strike: Voices on Political and Cultural Labour During and After the Miners' Strike, 1969–70* (eds. Martin Högström, Kim Einarsson) together with Glänta Förlag.

Ilmira Bolotyan

“Poor Yuri!” Or the Story of a Friendship, 2025
Essay in the publication *Women in the North*

In 1989, in the midst of perestroika, Zetterquist and Adde, through their efforts to create an infrastructure for contemporary art in the northern part of the country, joined a delegation from Nordland County to Leningrad, where they organized an exhibition of sixteen painters all from northern Norway. During the trip, they met the realist painter Reshkin, who then took part in a trip in the opposite direction the following year, from Leningrad to northern Norway. He spent two months on Saltfjellet, where he painted and even managed to sell some of his works.

The delegation trips marked the beginning of an artistic friendship and more than thirty years of economic, social, and cultural exchange in the Barents region—an exchange that formally ended in 2024 following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. To this day, Zetterquist has two landscape paintings by Reshkin in her studio. They hang next to a poster from the 1989 exhibition in Leningrad, which is adorned by her own painting *Vision*.

Bolotyan's essay is the first known text on Reshkin's work. He lived and worked in very humble circumstances in Leningrad, where he also ran art classes for children, before emigrating to Israel in the early 1990s, where he died in 2004.

Moscow-based artist Ilmira Bolotyan is renowned as a practitioner and researcher in the field of socially engaged and participatory art. In her practice she has dealt with issues of broad inclusion of different communities in art processes, institutional critique, sexuality, and heteronormativity, violence, feminism, urban poverty, social network's media in the art sphere, gender, women's and artistic identity, immaterial and material labor, attractiveness across cultures, and aging. Working collaboratively within traditions of fine art performance and community organizing, Bolotyan has realized three long projects in Moscow, devoted to online dating and museums as venues of leisure (*Museum Date, 2016–2017*), artists' self-promotion on social networks (*Artists' Promotion Agency, 2018–2019*) and female communities aimed at pursuing attractiveness. (*Immaterial Labor, 2018–2019*).

Olga Shirokostup

Kajsa Zetterquist: A Portrait in the Middle
of a Landscape, 2025
Essay in the publication *Women in the North*

This newly written text is an attempt by curator Olga Shirokostup to portray the artist Kajsa Zetterquist across generations and in the light of cultural differences. She vividly describes several trips, in different seasons, to the artist's home in the roadless land of Saltfjellet in Norway's northern reaches. The reader gains insight into their many conversations on solidarity, art, memory, love,

and everyday life. The journeys were made together with artists Ingela Johansson and Ilmira Bolotyán, among others. The text is a subjective chronicle that rests on a feminist foundation and is carried by a desire to write dialogically and inclusively.

Shirokostup compares Zetterquist's decision to move from Stockholm to Saltfjellet with a similar situation when the journalist, archivist, and museum director Yevgenia Patsia (1945–2022) left Leningrad for the Kola Peninsula in the 1970s. She lived there for the rest of her life, working closely with the Sámi population, including for cross-border cultural exchanges in Sápmi. The text highlights her achievements, particularly her work documenting the lives of women in northwest Russia. The focus is on the importance of creating and networking with indigenous people, settlers, and other migrants. The two women show how to rethink their relationship with the land and the environment—technologically, culturally, and emotionally. One section of the text highlights the closeness and collaboration between Zetterquist and her artist husband Per Adde (1924–2020), who shared both the work of creating an infrastructure for contemporary art in northern Norway and the political commitment to the environment and the rights of the Sámi, not to mention the unusual life in the mountains. In his text, Shirokostup compares their partnership to the relationship between philosopher Julia Kristeva and writer Philip Sollers.

Olga Shirokostup (b. Severomorsk) is an independent curator, researcher, and educator. Shirokostup graduated from the Moscow Pedagogical University (Master of Pedagogy, 2011), Chto Delat' School of Engaged Art (2014), and the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences (MSSES) (MA in History, 2025). Shirokostup's approach is cross-disciplinary, initiating independent research, performative, and educational projects. Shirokostup has been a curator of the archive of the local art scene of Murmansk Oblast

for the RAAN archival network since 2023. She was chief curator of the Radiance" ("Siyanie") Center for Contemporary Art in Apatity, Murmansk Oblast (2021–2023). She was a course leader in research for the Curating program at the Garage Academy (HSE and Garage Museum) from 2020 to 2024. She is currently based in Paris.

Shirokostup participated in the *The Observatory: Art and Life in the Critical Zone's* project (Curated by Maria Lind, 2023–2024). She engaged in the group publication *As Though We Hid the Sun in a Sea of Stories. Fragments for the Geopoetics of North Eurasia* (Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), 2023). She sat on the board of experts at the 8th Moscow International Biennale for Young Art (2022). She participated in the Frame Finnish-Russian Curatorial Exchange Program (2021) and the AIR of The Mirror Institution program (2023–2024). Shirokostup was awarded a Change of Scene grant from The Robert Bosch Stiftung (2017–2019).

Her other selected curatorial projects include *Sekretiki: Digging Up Soviet Underground Culture, 1966–1985* (curator and developer of the public program events within the project, the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, 2019–2020); *Voice as a Strategy* (the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, 2018); *Field Research: Liberating Knowledge. Progress Report II and Weekend Faculty Program* (together with Snejana Krasteva, the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, 2017). She was a coordinator of the Field research program (Garage museum, 2014–2017), and curator and project manager of the independent private institution CCI Fabrika (before 2013).

Movements in Image and Life: On Kajsa Zetterquist's Painting

Joel Odebrant

Introduction

Kajsa Zetterquist's (b. 1936) painting appears still, yet it rests in motion. Lines, volumes, fields, and color generate rhythmic sequences on the picture surface that come to life with the movement of the eye across the canvas. But the movement of the painting also extends metaphorically beyond the edges of the canvas and into life. Since the 1960s, Zetterquist has lived in Graddis, in the Norwegian mountains near the Swedish border. She lives in an area with several houses, one of which contains her studio. The studio is located on the upper floor and is accessed via a steep staircase. On the ground floor, she has her bedroom, while the kitchen, living room, and guest rooms are in another house. Her late husband Per Adde's (1926–2020) studio is in yet another house. It's not important for the art that she has several houses, or that she has a studio and bedroom in one of them, but after I visited the artist in March 2024, the movement between the home's different spaces seemed to have a parallel in her art. The movement between buildings, but also between outside and inside, land and city, civic engagement and solitary mountain life, corresponded with a movement that also exists in her images. Even there, the space and the movement between rooms, both pictorial and human, were important.

In Zetterquist's painting, form is in focus. Color, line, volume, spatial relationships, material treatment, and the interplay between depth and surface portray nothing beyond their own composi-

tion—a complex and sensual whole. Even the figures that sometimes appear in her images operate in such a way. They are part of the composition's rhythm and movement, rather than signifying something outside the image. In short, it is a painting that does not represent anything other than its own composition. That is not to say that Zetterquist's paintings lack content—they are by no means trivial and cannot be reduced to a set of formal properties. Yet their content resists easy translation into words. Instead, it exists in the very act of seeing, in the eye's movement between the different parts of the image, in empathy, and in the sensory experience.

Her art can to some extent be placed within an art theoretical tradition that views the artwork as more or less autonomous, that is, somewhat independent of the conditions of the external world. According to this perspective, the artwork is understood as a closed object, independent of its surroundings, and as such it creates and constitutes its own reality. Everything that can be known about the work is also contained within the work itself. This attitude can be associated with the changes in Western modern painting during the twentieth century, though it is not synonymous with them. In simplified terms, painting during this time could be described as a movement away from the image as a bearer of stories and towards an increased interest in the unique expressive possibilities of the medium of painting. It has shifted from figuration to non-figuration and from a focus on the narrative qualities of painting to “art for art's sake”; an art that is about itself.

However, in reality this story of modern painting is more complex than merely that. Artists have worked throughout the twentieth century, as well as before and after, with a multitude of varying perspectives, techniques, motivations, and intentions, where different characteristics of the medium of painting have been emphasized, dismissed, and combined. Perhaps the modern history of painting

should therefore be understood more as swinging between different forms of expression, where the boundary-crossing achievements of avant-garde artists are just one side of the whole. The history of art is therefore never just one, but always diverse, varied, hybrid, and sometimes contradictory. Even Zetterquist's painting refuses binary divisions. It moves between different forms of expression, but with an emphasis on composition and its sensuous effects. Rhythm, movement, and life are more central than motif and concept. It is, as we shall see, many things at once.

Zetterquist has spoken about a "verticality" in the way she relates to and finds inspiration from other art. The vertical should be understood here in contrast to a horizontal—or more precisely, linear—perspective on art history. In the latter, the change in art is understood as a series of impulses, where one impulse leads to another in a linear process. However, it is not that simple, either in terms of art in general or her painting specifically. Instead, she finds artistic kindred spirits at different points in history, in a movement that goes across, vertically, through time. Raphael is as present as Matisse or Picasso, for example. For a viewer who wants to place her painting in relation to a specific time, ism, or epoch, parallels can be drawn to both the rhythm of concrete painting and the more expressive expressions of informal painting—two movements that the artist experienced up close—but never in a way that clearly places her in one category or another. It is less about being shaped by trends or working programmatically with one style or another, and more about connecting to visual languages that are independent of art historical divisions. Therefore, her artistry is independent. Even though her painting does not stand outside of history, for such a thing would be impossible, it seems largely unaffected by trends and whims.

Movements Between Life and Painting

Another reason to call Zetterquist's artistry independent is that she early on found her own and recognizable expression. Her artistic production is marked by continuity; even during her studies, she had already developed a distinct visual language. Perhaps this early artistic maturity was partly due to growing up in an artist family where art and culture, both her own and others', were present. Her parents, Märta Zetterquist (1903–1987) and Jérôme Zetterquist (1898–1968), were both artists, and her image-making was encouraged and discussed from an early age. Zetterquist has described how she gained an understanding of the relationships and overlaps between the different art forms from home. For her, the artistic value lies less in the specific qualities of the various art forms and more in a profound expressive ability that goes beyond the boundaries of the medium.

In a text, Zetterquist quoted the artist Bror Hjorth (1894–1968) with the words: "Sculpture is something in itself. Fully independent, but a sister to the other art forms. That is to say that all art forms have a mother, and it is music—that is if one takes the word music in its most far-reaching meaning. It is not only most beautiful to call them all, music, sculpture, painting, poetry, architecture, music. It is also the truest as it immediately gives one a grasp of the purely artistic."¹ The different art forms, Hjorth seems to mean, have specific characteristics but can all carry an artistic value that transcends their specificity. This value he allows music to represent. Perhaps it is music's abstract, flowing, "and wordless nature that makes it a suitable "mother" to the various art forms. Zetterquist's view of art and painting resembles the one Hjorth expresses, and she often speaks of her images in terms of music and rhythm. It is a grateful metaphor

¹ Zetterquist, Kajsa, I do not know that with words, I know that with my eye. Conversation with Jan von Bonsdorff. Own texts, (Arvika: Rackstadtmuseet, 2006), p. 53.

not only in relation to her work. Music, which can be defined as organized sound, has its parallel in the painting's organization of color, form elements, and lines. Just as in music, the finished work is a composition. When everything plays together, it is good, and no other language than that of painting itself is needed to receive it. Painting can, at this level, be understood as a bodily experience, just as music can be, which, when it moves us, reminds us of being a living, sensing, and experiencing subject.

That Zetterquist's artistry is characterized by a continuity does not mean that it is or has been unyielding. The artist herself has highlighted the significance of the renowned teachers she encountered as a student at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm, from whom she did not borrow a style but rather a strengthened desire to cultivate her own expression. After studying at the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design (Konstfack), which at that time did not offer instruction in painting, and further private studies at Signe Barth's painting school, she began at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in 1957, at the age of twenty. The professor at that time was "Göteborgskoloristen" Ragnar Sandberg (1902–1972), who left the following year. Among the teaching staff were the aforementioned Bror Hjorth, Lennart Rodhe (1916–2005), Bror Marklund (1907–1977), and Asmund Arle (1918–1990).

Zetterquist has spoken about the importance of these teachers for her own artistic development, particularly Hjorth and Rodhe, who taught drawing and painting. The emphasis in the teaching was on model studies and drawing. There are varying testimonies about Rodhe's teaching style from this time, which has been described by some as stubborn.² Zetterquist herself does not share that

² See Edling, Marta, *Free Art? Visual Arts Education at the Valand Academy of Art, the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, and the Royal Institute of Art 1960–1995*, (Gothenburg: Makadam, 2010), pp. 166–171.

view. Instead, she highlights the vitality but also the warmth that characterized both Rodhe's and Hjorth's teaching. Among her study companions were Peter Dahl (1934–2019), Olle Bauman (b. 1935), and Björn Melin (b. 1935), with whom continuous discussions about art took place both during and after class meetings. The circle also included Per Adde, who a few years later became Zetterquist's life partner. After her studies, she made several trips abroad, including to England, France, and Italy. Although she worked for most of her life from Northern Norway, there has been no lack of international outlook. The world outside has also flowed in through the yard via constant visits from friends and fellow artists.

Despite the continuity, her art has changed, both in technique, materials, and scale—from painting and drawing to public art and sculpture. However, these changes can be better described as shifts in a continuous artistic process rather than as significant swings. Zetterquist began at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in 1957 and attended for six years. These were eventful years in Stockholm's art scene. In 1958, the Moderna Museet was inaugurated on Skeppsholmen in Stockholm, which, under the leadership of Pontus Hultén, became an important venue for contemporary international art during the 1960s—an activity that Zetterquist and her classmates participated in. The artist has testified to the significance of the vibrant art life during this period, with exhibitions at the Moderna Museet, but also, for example, at the National Museum and the Swedish-French Art Gallery, as well as happenings and several major public art debates.

Regarding painting, the informal painting, derived from the French term "art informel" where "informe" means formless, gained a foothold in Sweden during the late 1950s. Its American counterpart was abstract expressionism. This was a style of painting characterized by a non-geometric and expressive visual language, and an improvised manner of execution. It emphasized gesture, the artist's handprint on the canvas,

and the painting process as a form of expression in its own right. In a Swedish context, this painting has sometimes been referred to as “spontanism,” with practitioners such as Inger Ekdahl (1922–2014), Britt Lundbohm Reutersvärd (1917–2001), Rune Hagberg (1924–2015), and Rune Jansson (1918–2014). Prior to this, concrete painting had a strong presence in Sweden. The exhibition Young Art at the Färg och Form gallery in Stockholm in 1947 is often considered the breakthrough for concrete art in Sweden, although few of the exhibiting artists were particularly “concrete” at the time. Here, eleven artists exhibited, including the later teacher Lennart Rodhe, Olle Bonniér (1925–2016), Pierre Olofsson (1921–1996), and Randi Fisher (1920–1997).

Concrete art, unlike informal painting, was characterized by a geometric language of forms and can, in its purest form, be described as a painting that does not attempt to imitate reality in any way. Concrete art does not work with any abstractions, where something real is the starting point for image creation. Instead, the painting is its own reality, and the form and rhythm of the image are at the center. It should be noted that both concrete art and informal painting are general movements and not necessarily comprehensive descriptions of actual art. In reality, the artists mentioned display wide variations in method and expression, often crossing between movements, making clear distinctions between tendencies difficult to draw.

The lively art rarely corresponds completely to the theoretical designations, and this is also the case with Zetterquist’s painting. It may, in parts, bear traits from the painterly color fields of informalism, free brushwork, and varying color treatment, as well as from the geometric rhythmic imagery of concretism, but it is difficult to label it as either one or the other. It is neither processual in its expression, where the act of painting and the image’s expression are interconnected, nor are there any “concretions” but rather associations or references to the world

outside. Although Zetterquist engaged with these different artistic trends, she remained steadfast and developed her own visual language. Her artistic process also remained firm through the 1960s’ loosening of the boundaries of the art forms, conceptual art, and the multifaceted soil of expression that we call contemporary art. This does not make her painting non-contemporary, but it is rooted in a modernist tradition. She has never been avant-garde but always uncompromising. The pursuit has been to explore the language of painting and the ways color and form can create images that are experienced as harmonious wholes that “speak” to us without words. Her works can be viewed as variations on such a theme.

Kajsa Zetterquist has lived an unconventional life in many ways, and it is hard not to mention this when talking about her painting. Although her images can be viewed and experienced just as they are, and fundamentally perhaps should be approached that way, the knowledge of her life story adds a dimension to the art. For the artist herself, painting seems to be both something closed and open at the same time. Closed, because it is not a straightforward depiction of the world or a place for agitation or, in general, any direct answers. But at the same time open, as they can be said to express a movement of life. They come to life in the relationship between the material, the artist’s hand, and the viewer’s gaze, and in this way, they reach out into the world and communicate with us. In such a circular movement, the artist’s life can also be present as a component.

Zetterquist has lived in Graddis in the Norwegian mountains since the 1960s, when she moved there to be with her life partner Per Adde, who had settled there a few years prior. Since then, she has lived and worked from there. Alongside her artistic activities, Zetterquist has been politically active. Her engagement has concerned cultural policy, environmental issues, and matters regarding the rights of the Sámi people. During the 1950s and 1960s, she participated in

demonstrations against the Vietnam War and against apartheid. Even as a student, she was involved and helped push through that students at the Art Academy could attain student union status, along with rights such as access to student loans and student housing. During the 1970s and 1980s, Zetterquist and Adde were active in the so-called Alta conflict. The struggle concerned a planned hydropower development of the Alta-Kautokeino rivers in Finnmark county, which, if implemented, would have a negative impact on nature and outdoor life in the area, particularly on reindeer husbandry. They were also engaged in the fight for Saltfjellet, where Graddis is located. This also concerned a hydropower development with significant negative consequences for reindeer herding—the struggle for the Sámi people and nature was close to the hearts of both Zetterquist and Adde.

The engagement also concerned cultural policy. She has been active in the work with artist organizations at both local and national levels, with a particular commitment to the art scene in the surrounding area. As part of her engagement in art policy, she has worked on exhibitions, participated in jury work, served as a consultant, and subsequently developed a training program in public art. She has also worked on public artworks herself. A prominent example is the monumental decoration she created at the Høgskolen in Finnmark from 1993 to 1995. She was also involved in the work around establishing an art academy and an art museum in Northern Norway. In 1983, she helped start a new art school, Kunstscolen in Kabelvåg, something that had not previously existed in the region. In the first years, she was the main teacher in painting at the school. Today, the school is no longer in operation, but there is now Nordland kunst- og filmhøgskole in Kabelvåg, whose activities partly build upon the school that Zetterquist helped establish.

Regardless of whether it has involved environmental issues, social matters, or art politics, the local connection, with few exceptions, has been a common denominator for her engagement. This has taken place

alongside the artistic work, which for the artist has been a separate activity. Even though the political work does not appear as readable signs in her images, perhaps some of the interpersonal engagement and the feeling for the silent grandeur of the mountains can be read between the painterly lines when we consider the place they were created in and the contexts that surround them. So let us now delve into her painting. How can it be described and understood?

The Movement of Painting

Zetterquist works with a semi-figurative painting style. Color, form, line, and composition are more central than concepts, themes, or motifs. The artistic focus on the formal qualities of painting means that Zetterquist can be included in a late modernist visual art tradition, but this art-historical affiliation doesn't really say much about her images. When I say that the painting is "semi-figurative," I mean that her paintings have an abstract character but are not completely non-representational. On the contrary, often recognizable forms can be discerned, frequently as a silhouette of a female body. Therefore, calling the painting non-figurative would be misleading. It is also not abstract in the strict sense, where a real form has been deformed.

The human form is not an abstract body but has emerged in a painterly process directly on the canvas. Zetterquist paints without models. The figure is part of a formal play on the surface and functions as part of the composition rather than as a motif. The painting—color, form, line, and composition—can thus be said to anticipate the motif in Zetterquist's images. What we see is a rhythmic play of color and line. Zetterquist herself speaks of the wordlessness of painting with a capacity to touch us on a deep human level. It is an experience that goes beyond concepts and beyond an understanding of the image that is entirely possible to "translate" into words. Despite this, one can communicate and

explain some of the “movements” present in Zetterquist’s painting. Not because they answer the question of what her paintings are, but perhaps it can open an understanding of how they function.

Rhythm is, as mentioned, an important concept for the artist. It should not be understood here as a kind of perceived tempo in the image, even though that can also be part of it, nor as the image elements representing one kind of sound or another. Rhythm has to do with how different parts relate to each other in a given context, and it is also an important concept in poetry. The parts, in this case, are image elements and the context is the canvas. The rhythm in the image is determined by how the equation of part plus part becomes a whole, and the way these relationships between image elements express themselves on the canvas. Consequently, rhythm also relates to a seeing process, that is, the way the eye moves across the image, from detail to overview and back again. Such rhythm can be experienced in many different ways and can vary between viewers.

Even though the image can be described in musical terms, it is more than that. Painting has a materiality that music largely lacks. It comes into being through its material, that is, the substance that constitutes its physical parts, and the way the material is assembled and perceived by the viewer as a whole with a particular meaning. Painting can be understood as a composition of materials that we perceive as something more than the sum of its parts. This also means that painting has a different temporality than music, as painting is a physical object. A painting is an object that is here and now for its viewer and as such does not need to be received in any particular sequence. All its parts occur at the same time, so to speak, and the eye can freely move over them in any order, something we often encounter in Zetterquist’s painting. Writing from personal experience, in my first encounter with Zetterquist’s paintings, I thought of them in just such a way. Joined forms, sometimes similar but always with

disparate characteristics, created a painterly whole. The individual form stood free but always in relation to adjacent forms. The forms sometimes nudged each other, highlighted one another in other cases, and made each other larger, smaller, visible, and invisible in a constant movement across the canvas. The colors functioned in the same way, along with the different surface treatments.

Zetterquist worked early with an expression that emphasizes just this. In the work *Korkek from Grimaud* (1965), which the artist painted during a stay in France, painterly fields primarily in shades of green form a dense weave that pushes out towards the edges of the image. As the title suggests, thoughts may be directed towards foliage or similar, but more interesting is the intricate movement between the fields, which both overlap each other and lie side by side. The handling is perceived as relatively free, where brush strokes are both exposed and, in other cases, form parts of other color fields. The free handling can be seen in other works from the 1960s and even later, such as *Mot Mälaren* (1968). Here, there is a brushwork that may remind one of the gestural qualities of informal painting, but which also evokes a kind of impressionistic abstraction: perhaps it is a seascape we are looking at. Whether this is the case is, however, at most a curiosity, at least for the artist themselves. It is the rhythm and the visual experience that are central, which also conceptually distances this painting from the informal vein.

To view the painting in the way I mentioned above, as relationships between image elements, is just one entry point into the works. Zetterquist’s painting is more than just a combination of parts, and it is, by the way, such a general description that it could be applied to almost any painting, figurative or not. Noting this, talking about the rhythm and the relationship of the parts, still tells us something important, namely that the movement between the different parts of the image matters, and that it constitutes an essential part of the image expression

itself. It is there that the visual experience occurs. It is not just about relationships between formal elements on the image surface, but also between depth and surface and between different material textures.

Often, a sense of verticality can be found in Zetterquist's painting. Both in the often-upright format of the paintings and in the sometimes lamellar and vertical shape of the image elements. This can be seen already in a work like *Figurasjon* (1974), where largely vertical image elements, albeit more painterly in their expression than in later works, form a central shape. The painting *Felicia's Dance* (2006) can also serve as an example. In addition to the upright format, the shape of the image seems to move in a vertical direction towards an upward spiraling sequence. Just above the middle of the image, a sort of rotational movement can be perceived, where the composition strives upward like through a whirlpool, albeit a subtle one. At the same time, there are movements in other directions, with lines and color fields that flow out in several directions or lie across the composition, thereby balancing the vertical movement. Different elements enter into and onto one another, forming painterly fields and transparent layers. Shapes press against each other, enlarge, enhance, overlap, and vary. The color is rich and clear, with both bright contrasts and more refined nuances. In short, the painting exhibits a complex rhythm, if you will, with a multitude of tonal colors in both hue and composition. In the painting, we also see the silhouette of a human form, with neck and shoulders in the upper part of the image and hips and legs in the lower part, which further unifies the diversity of the composition.

The movement of painting is made possible through the composition's structure, the materials of the painting, and the eye's interaction with it. The still image gains "life" through the viewer's empathy. In the large painting *Vision* (1987–1991), the impression is that the painting flows across the canvas. The horizontal composition in this case evokes thoughts of landscapes, the sea, light, and the richness of nature's

colors—for example, a fish with shimmering scales that glimmers for half a second beneath the surface. Zetterquist has said that she does not paint from nature but that "it is nature's own rhythm I wish to understand." Perhaps this is something that is sensed here.

Even a movement in depth occurs in Zetterquist's painting, that is, a perceived movement into the image, or between what can be perceived as the painting's surface and the picture space. The essentially flat image seems to open inward for the viewer, and the composition can be experienced as a spatiality. In this movement, much happens. Her paintings have to some extent a surface expression, as if formal elements lie flat on the surface, while the relationship between the elements, their different structures, and the way they overlap each other create paths into the image for the eye. We see forms and fields overlapping, creating a shifting sense of front and back. In *Freedom* (1990), the white color and the fields in yellow and blue that lie along the edges of the composition can be perceived as a background to an overlaying painterly form. The form itself exhibits a play between depth and surface, where its different parts both merge and contrast with one another. Here, the surface layers also play a central role. Zetterquist's painting is not particularly pastose, with thick layers of paint, but different kinds of color treatments, how the paint has been applied and worked on the canvas, still matter for the expression. In *Freedom*, the artist has scraped out lines in the paint in several places. This creates a dynamic in the image both through the movement of the lines and the shifts in transparency that arise, and also through the thereby varied texture of the picture surface.

The effect of painting occurs in the movement between its different parts. This is where the image happens. The movement is created by the artist's hand but also by and through the viewer's body, which, with its eyes and physical position in front of the work, navigates through the composition. It would be possible to try to describe exactly how

this happens endlessly. It is important to attempt to articulate what images are and do because it helps us understand them and promotes the conversation about what art is, means, and should do. But as viewers, we also know that the task is impossible. The experience of an image can never be completely reduced to words. We can approach it, but not more than that, and perhaps that is precisely what constitutes the allure of painting. It lacks answers but continues to draw us in. It is also this wordless value that Zetterquist seeks in her art.

Considering the movement that arises on the image surface, in an interplay between materials and bodies—the artist’s, the viewer’s, and the material’s—it is hard not to think of Kajsa Zetterquist’s home and the movement between different spheres that it creates. Between outside, inside, work, rest, and food. And in a broader perspective, between country and city, solitude and humanity, and between the intimacy of the studio and the publicness of the exhibition space. The various parts of existence, which we move between on a physical and mental level, constitute the complex and ever-changing whole we call life. At the farm, I see this with a particular force. Perhaps it is also something of this complexity that we see in Zetterquist’s images. The movement of painting is also the movement of life.

Joel Odebrant (PhD) is an art historian. He is currently employed as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Copenhagen in a project on art exchanges in the Nordic-Baltic region after 1989. His dissertation *Traces, Body, Time: An Investigation of the Materiality of the Painterly Gesture 1952-1965* (2024) examined the form and function of the gesture in abstract painting from the 1950s and 1960s. In spring 2025, he curated the exhibition *Efterrörelse* at Art Space Södertörn, which brought together gestural, abstract art from the 1950s to the present day. Odebrant’s research interests mainly concern modern painting, materiality and exhibition studies.

Conversation with Ingela Johansson, Kajsa Zetterquist, and Emma Pettersson Juntti

Kajsa Zetterquist: I was able to listen to my inner voice quite early on—the urge to paint, to search and find the right way of life! What has most influenced my painting practice here in the north is the phenomenal light. When I came to my husband, the artist Per Adde, in a roadless area near Erik-Larsa-tjønnna in Upper Saltdal, I was already quite grown and grounded in my searching. I had direction.

As an artist, you have freedom, don’t you? Of course, people might say, how can you live like that? But to me, it was a great freedom—a wonderful love and a parallelism in our activist engagement, a lifelong commitment, really. And we had such a beautiful place to live and work in.

Emma Pettersson Juntti: What is it about the light in the north that captured you?

KZ: The light in the north is clear. Then there’s the dark season, when the winter mountains are always covered in pure snow—and that gives light. Now, that’s changing due to climate change. It’s very noticeable up north. There used to be a consistency in how often it snowed. Even when it was darkest, we had four hours of daylight and could work using the skylights in our studios. And during the summer months, we had the fantastic light of the midnight sun the whole day through—around the clock. But it’s not just that—the intensity of the light is incredible. I don’t paint this light, and never have, but the light, the mountains, and the character of the landscape have a vitality that has influenced me.

EPJ: Does it relate to the sharp contrasts between the seasons? It's often quite dramatic.

KZ: Yes, it's quite moving!

EPJ: You can sense that in your painting—you paint with a lot of color and movement.

KZ: The movement, yes, absolutely. But my use of color was more subdued when I first came to Northern Norway.

EPJ: What was it like before?

KZ: More tranquil, more earthy tones. I don't know what it would have been like if I had stayed in the south. When I think about it, this light is something I had never experienced before. To live in a world with this light is simply invigorating. It has an indirect effect.

EPJ: The exhibition at Kin opens with a still life from the 1950s. From that still life until the work you were doing in the 1990s and 2000s, there's a big leap.

KZ: A huge leap. But wouldn't it be said if there had not been any sort of development? This still life is from Signe Barth's painting school, which I attended from 1955 to 1957 before I was admitted to the Royal Academy in 1957. I find it fun to revisit. I can see it "from the outside," and I see the seriousness in it. I really like that. There's a true search in that image, an architectural aspiration that I appreciate. That still life was made before I even traveled to Europe. I came to Signe Barth's painting school after a year at the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design (Konstfack), which I attended right after high school in Arvika—but I had already been painting for a long time by then.

Ingela Johansson: I'm curious how you work with titles. There's a painting titled *Freedom*. It strikes me as a very telling title for you. There are also literary references, for example to Gunnar Ekelöf. An acrylic painting from 1990 is titled *The Quiet Steps Behind*, from Karin Boye. That title includes a thought about the seven deadly sins, and when one knows this, it really actually becomes quite dark.

KZ: I had no idea about that when I gave the painting that title. I just thought the words were so expressive. I've never started a painting or gotten an idea for a painting from literature. The titles come afterward, like the names *Felicia* and *Shikasta*. I sit and look at the paintings before an exhibition, when they need titles, and they come to me associatively. They are born afterward, like a tonal language. There are several called *On Freedom* or *Freedom*, because to me, that's the greatest thing—in the sense I put into the word. I do know Boye's poem, but the title came after the painting was finished. There's a resonance around the words *the quiet steps behind*.

IJ: That resonance is there for me too. I breathe behind you as I make the video portrait, so I think it's a meaningful title. At the same time, we've talked a lot about the wordless.

KZ: That's lovely of you to say—for me, it's not a dilemma. Painting is visual poetry, music. But I'm not entirely trustworthy, hmm! The words must enchant me tonally, like *Felicia* in Aksel Sandemose's novels. I'd never have chosen *Around Felicia* or *Felicia's Dance* if her name had been something ordinary. What's the most interesting for me in artistic expression is the poetry, the music, the image—a heart that has to do with rhythm, tone, and a direct language.

EPJ: Speaking of titles, I'd like to mention a piece in the exhibition where bodies in motion are painted in cool colors, it's called

From a Woman's Life. That title carries a lot of meaning. Can you talk about the thought behind it?

KZ: I've always enjoyed working with models! I had drawn models at home and had also posed as one for my mother, who was an artist. We did a lot of figure drawing in my department at the Academy. It was analytical—to develop our eye and ability to shape, to work with spatial relationships and movement. I never tired of it. After the Academy, I've never had a model in front of me again—all those movements are in my head.

Even though many of my paintings have figuration, they don't start there—the image idea often begins with a movement, based on a chosen format, a diagonal, a color language. In *From a Woman's Life*, I worked with large paper and figures in a specific rhythm. When I was going to show it at an exhibition, I simply thought of *From a Woman's Life*. I wasn't thinking about abuse, divorce, #MeToo, or anything like that. I just wrote *From a Woman's Life*, and that's been the title ever since. Maybe it's a bit naïve in today's world, I don't know. But that's what it's always been called. I've had a very, how should I say, privileged woman's life. I was an adult before I truly understood that it's a damn patriarchal society with a lot of serious issues.

IJ: There's a bit of Siri Derkert's spirit in what you're saying.

KZ: Yes, perhaps. I had a father who was just as happy to have a daughter as a son. We listened to a lot of music, read a lot—I felt, in my youth, that “everything was possible” in my life. I remember at Konstfack, people would say “you're so brave,” and what was brave about it? Well, it was choosing the painting track and not advertising, weaving, or something like that, just because I was a girl. That's how it could be in the 1950s. I've been incredibly lucky—with my parents, my environment, and maybe genetics too.

IJ: Kajsa, there's something very natural in what you do. Not only were your parents both artists, but your entire family includes musicians and other creatives who are still active. You once said it felt completely natural to be in the art world, even though you had professors at the Academy that others admired—people like Bror Hjorth, Bror Marklund, and Lennart Rodhe. Major figures in the art world, to say the least!

KZ: Yes, indeed.

IJ: Yet you dared to speak up, to disagree. You weren't afraid to challenge them. It seems like it never occurred to you to hesitate—it was just natural. You already had access to that world.

EPJ: There's also something self-evident—and perhaps a bit headstrong—in your decision to move north. Can you tell us more about that place and how you ended up there?

KZ: It's Northern Norway, near Graddis in Upper Saltdal, just two kilometers from the border. That's our place, by Erik-Larsa-tjønna, where Per built the first house in 1961. Since then, we've continued building, moving old timber houses there, and in that way, we've created beautiful studios. At the time, there was no road connecting to Arjeplog in Sweden as there is now. If you wanted to drive across, you had to go south to Mo i Rana and then over to Tärnaby.

Per and I knew each other from the Academy of Fine Arts. After our studies, I was abroad, but then we reconnected and realized we belonged together. So, I went up north to visit him. I had already started to long for grass under my feet again—I grew up like that in Värmland. I was done with the city. But the most important thing was that we were so happy together. We had no money, and he had a house, so naturally, we started there. I was completely captivated by the region, the nature, and the people.

Northern Norway at that time was still a neglected part of the country. But during the 1970s, a strong cultural wave emerged with a focus on decentralization and the history and culture of Northern Norway. We naturally became part of that movement and the cultural struggle, together with friends and colleagues, even though we came from a different world.

EPJ: Ingela, I'd love to hear your thoughts—after visiting Upper Saltdal several times and having many conversations with Kajsa for your video portrait, what has stayed with you from Kajsa and Per's story?

IJ: Kajsa, you've spoken quite a bit about the freedom in your upbringing. I had that too, in my own way. One question in this work has been how I should relate to you and your practice. It's been interesting, and we've also talked openly about how people come from different backgrounds. I can deeply relate to your life choices, especially the question of what would happen if you moved away from the city as an adult.

EPJ: That's an interesting perspective. The myth that everything must happen in cities has never been true.

IJ: Exactly, and it wasn't a problem to drive things forward from Upper Saltdal either—even in the 1970s. Per was very active, traveled a lot, and had frequent meetings in Oslo, but also did a lot of work over the phone, from what I understand. He was deeply involved in the campaign against the development of the Alta and Kautokeino rivers and later in preventing the exploitation of the Saltfjellet area where you live. But I also think it's a place where you can recharge—that it's been a source of stability.

KZ: Of course, you love a place. We live there because we want to live there. It's hard to describe it in words because it was just such a natural part of our work to be active in different areas. And we had the energy! I found a funny entry in an old diary that said we were going to a party in Bodø, 160 km away. But we still hiked up to Njallo that morning to check our fishing nets—it's 6 kilometers up to our little fishing hut on the Swedish side. That was nothing unusual. That kind of vitality wasn't forced. If we didn't feel like going to the party, we just stayed home. It was all so natural—not theoretical like “should we think this way or that way.”

EPJ: What do you think it has meant for you—to have had that kind of freedom your whole life?

KZ: I saw a lot of personal struggles in my youth. All that reverence for authority, people with power, people trying to impress...

IJ: It's nice to be free of that!

KZ: I don't know... for me, many things have just been self-evident. My parents were artists, and I've never lived with a man who wasn't also an artist. So maybe I know nothing about a “normal” life—just a rather unusual one! But I did work in a hospital to earn money for art school, and I've lived on very little for long stretches. Still, Per and I managed to live and paint full-time, our whole life together. In other words, a free life—I can truly testify to what freedom can be. I haven't been worn down by bosses and schedules. You don't think about that while you're in the middle of working life, but now I'm almost ninety years old and I can look back. A friend who turned sixty recently said he was so grateful to have walked “the small path of freedoms.” I recognize that. That's the path I chose. At times I've lived with very little money, and yes, that's been an obstacle, but not a hardship for me personally.

IJ: That ties back again to “the quiet steps behind.” That’s how I interpreted the title—as a source of steadiness. You and Per were a team, I’d say. You were never really “behind”—you were beside him. Per did certain things—he was good at advocating for artistic rights, or acting as a mediator. He was a spokesperson for the Sámi reindeer herders on Saltfjellet. You were there too, but you also took care of the home, the animals, and other responsibilities.

KZ: I was never “behind.” But Per being the spokesperson—that was natural. He had the knowledge and some experience with reindeer herding. And the trust of the Sámi, who asked him to speak on their behalf in the Saltfjellet campaign. Per had a remarkable ability to communicate, engage, lead, and inspire. As a young man, he sought out unspoiled nature in the north and encountered the Sámi world. That’s how it began many years ago—a gift from life.

There was a lot of writing involved in that struggle, and we were a team. Per talked, and I wrote. We crafted the wording together. Then I also worked outwardly in other contexts, in art politics and evaluation committees. Per didn’t want to serve on juries—he didn’t want to judge other artists’ work. He worked politically, in art politics. I preferred working on juries, in artist councils, and with public art projects. It was a great combination.

IJ: You were a strong representative of the collective, within the artist community. You sat on the committee working to establish the Tromsø Academy of Contemporary Art for twenty years.

KZ: Both for the art museum and the academy. In fact, it was Per and I who initiated the art school in Kabelvåg. I taught there for a couple of years. It was fantastic. I also worked to create continuing education for art consultants and served as a visual artists’ representative in what was then KORO, Art in Public Space,

in Norway. But I must stress that we were painting the whole time, with the deepest seriousness—that was the foundation, the core of everything!

EPJ: There are clearly so many fascinating aspects of Kajsa’s life and work. Ingela, it would be lovely to hear how you’ve approached creating the video portrait. How did it take shape?

IJ: I’ve tried to follow and walk behind Kajsa’s steps. I’ve also gotten to know her family and colleagues. I met Kristin Risan, in whose house Kajsa lived when she was the head teacher at the Kabelvåg art school, and I met the first director of the North Norwegian Artists’ Centre, Lisbeth Dahlløf. I’ve also spent a lot of time in Upper Saltdal, talking to Kajsa about art, the surroundings, and the local cultural heritage. In addition, I’ve tried to get a sense of Northern Norway’s art scene, historically.

I’ve tried to understand your situation, Kajsa, when you came to Upper Saltdal, and to grasp the complex picture. All of this has given me a clear image of how strongly you both worked regionally and how much you contributed to the art life of Northern Norway. It’s truly remarkable!

The video portrait is built in layers of complexity. One thing I’ve been thinking about is how important it is today to talk about when it’s time for civil disobedience. That’s something that has stayed with me. The Alta conflict is an example where people opposed state violence through civil disobedience—an abuse by the state. Kajsa often speaks about centralization, including something very wise: when such acts of violence occur, like in Alta, it is up to the individual to say stop. That’s incredibly motivating! And it ties into today’s environmental struggles and Sámi rights—issues Kajsa is still involved in.

KZ: Per and I grew up in Gagnef and Arvika and knew nothing about Sámi life, apart from a few exoticized details. But early on he was engaged in human rights issues, against oppression and racism. I was too—it's in my bones. It doesn't require deep knowledge about Sámi realities—one already knows something about oppression. My first torchlight procession in Stockholm was against apartheid, then came the Vietnam War and nuclear weapons. When I moved north and, through Per, began to understand Sámi life, it felt entirely natural to get involved.

The Alta demonstrations led to the establishment of the Sámi Parliament, and although the dam in Alta was eventually built, the expansion of Norway's major rivers was halted. In the Saltfjellet campaign, where Per played a central role and where the Sámi cause was crucial to the outcome, the goal was achieved after five years of struggle, and the national park was established. It is, of course, an incredible part of life to have been part of that! But it is sad that the state continues to trample on both in Sweden and Norway, using the so-called green transition to legitimize the destruction of the land.

EPJ: When you talk about activism, I'm struck by the fact that while there's obviously a past, there is always also a present and a future—it keeps going. It's incredibly impressive that both you and Per have managed to stay committed for so long.

KZ: Yes, you just can't give up—if you do, then maybe you and everyone else will give up too!

This conversation took place on May 7, 2025, in connection with the exhibition *With Grass Under the Feet—Kajsa Zetterquist in Focus* at Kin Museum of Contemporary Art in Kiruna.

Colophon

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With Grass Under the Feet—Kajsa Zetterquist in Focus
11 September, 2025—4 January, 2026

A warm thanks to Anja Lande and Adde Zetterquist kunstgalleri.

With Grass Under the Feet—Kajsa Zetterquist in Focus is part of the thematic thread *Women in the North*, together with the exhibition *Meeting Aili—Lena Ylipää and Aili Kangas*, the retrospective *In the Footsteps of the Stars—Britta Marakatt-Labba's Embroidered Worlds*, *The Living Room: An Installation by Katarina Spik Skum* and the exhibition *Komtemåtta: A Pioneering Safe Space for Women*, all of which were shown at Kin in 2024 and 2025.

Kin's visual dialect has been developed by the artists Inga-Wiktoria Påve and Fredrik Prost in collaboration with the designers Johanna Lewengard and Benedetta Crippa.

Kin Museum of Contemporary Art is the regional art museum of Norrbotten, founded in 2018 by the region and the Municipality of Kiruna.

kinmuseum.se