



Nurperi Orunbaeva. *Sanzhyra* (detail).

In collaboration with Pikene på Broen and Safemuse, Tegnerforbundet – The Norwegian Drawing Center presents the group exhibition *Art Captures*. Through drawing, performance, film, and conversations, it features artists both living in exile and working from within authoritarian contexts. The exhibition considers exile as forced physical migration as well as a state of inner exile, a condition where artists continue to work under threat in their home countries. The exhibition will be on display at Pikene på broen in Kirkenes from May 28 to August 1, 2026.

Participating artists: Alicia Gorshenina (Russia), Anna Tolkacheva (Russia), Petr Sarukhanov (Russia/Georgia), Saba Pouyeshman (Iran), Andrei Busel (Belarus), Vera Shysh (Belarus), Nurperi Orunbaeva (Kyrgyzstan), Thinh Nguyen (Vietnam).

Artistic Space and Freedom

The theme of the exhibition goes beyond individual stories. It points to the structural conditions for the existence of art in a global landscape where freedom is being steadily constrained, and how artistic space must be continually negotiated. The boundaries of what artists are allowed to do shift as regimes increasingly restrict people's freedoms. Some artists are imprisoned or forced into exile, while others must navigate subtly within ever-narrowing spaces. Artistic freedom thus appears as a fragile, negotiated space, constantly exposed to political and ideological changes.

The diverse voices in the exhibition demonstrate that the struggle for artistic freedom is not linear, but unfolds within varying degrees of visibility, risk, and resistance. For some, exile becomes a place from which they can speak freely, though from a distance. Others continue their work from

within, in constant negotiation with those in power.

At the Intersection of East, West, and North

The project originates in Kirkenes, a border town where Norway meets Russia, and where East, West, and North converge. Since 1996, Pikene på Broen has worked at the intersection of art and geopolitics, emphasizing dialogue over isolation. After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, they deliberately chose to continue working with independent Russian artists to support those who take great risks by speaking out against the regime.

By bringing together voices from different geographies and positions, the exhibition reminds us that artistic freedom is not an abstract idea, but a struggle fought repeatedly, in concrete places, by real people, with real consequences.

Curator: Ingrid Valan / Pikene på Broen.

Coordinator and producer: Jon Lundell / Safemuse.

Exhibition producer: Hilde Lunde / Tegnerforbundet – the Norwegian Drawing Center .

About Pikene på Broen: Pikene på Broen is a collective of curators and producers based in Kirkenes, a town in northeastern Norway. Kirkenes is located 15 km from the Russian border and 50 km from the Finnish border, making it ideally positioned for cross-border collaboration and cultural exchange in the Arctic.

About Safemuse: Safemuse – Safe Havens for Artists is a non-profit organization dedicated to the fight for artistic freedom. It provides persecuted and at-risk artists with a safe place to live and develop their work. Artistic freedom of expression is a fundamental human right, essential for democracy and democratic development. Safemuse is built on the foundation of these universal principles of human rights and the promotion of artistic freedom.

About Tegnerforbundet – The Norwegian Drawing Center: Tegnerforbundet – The Norwegian Drawing Center works to show the breadth of the drawing field and to promote the discourse around drawing as an art form. The organization's activities include exhibitions with both Norwegian and international artists, the drawing program UNG I TEGNING, various drawing-related events, the magazine NUMER, and its role as a union under Norske Billedkunstnere (NBK).

The exhibition is supported by Fritt ord and the Ministry of Culture.



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