

The release of the second volume of Scandinavian Folklore.

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I want to introduce this book, which I am happy to have been part of.

When the first book was released last year, we realised that there was an unused space in the field of books on bunads and folk costumes. There are, of course, at least in Norway, already a lot of books on the subject. There are the Bunadleksikon, the encyclopaedia of Norwegian bunads, and books specialized on particular costume areas. In these books the pictures are mainly used as illustrations. You read the text and look at the picture to see what the author explains.

In Scandinavian Folklore another method is used. Here the photos are the main media. My personal wish is that anyone who opens the book will think: "This is beautiful! I wonder what it is." And that the reader then reads the text to find out what they are looking at. To see where the costume comes from, what pieces of clothing it consists of, or just what on earth this lady is wearing on her head!

My text on the Norwegian bunads would actually go together with any kind of picture. When I choose to work with Laila it was because we share a wish to make knowledge of the traditional costume accessible. This is expressed in the language of the books, where texts are short, with a minimal use of academic terminology, and everything is translated into English.

Laila manage is to bring the bunads out of a formal context without making a parody of them. She does not hesitate to make pictures of people that are running, bathing, dressing, riding or in contact with more or less wild animals – all dressed in traditional costumes.

There is no contradiction between this and the mediation of knowledge. And I do not find it critical if a bonnet is sliding backwards or the bib is wrinkled a bit. These are costumes that have been, and still are, worn by living people. There is no point in recreating the pictures of 19th century farmers dressed in folk costume at the photographers studio, instead the photos show that these persons did work, play and maybe sometimes were posing a bit in their clothes.

I dare to say that something like this has not been done before. If this is because nobody thought about it, if they did not dare, or if they did not had the energy to all the necessary work, I do not know. Indeed there is a lot of work behind each photo. Nothing is left to chance. «This MUST be found», Laila have been saying many times in the process of making the book. And often this is true, if only you search long enough. She travels to remote places to get the correct surroundings for the picture she has imagined. She literally goes on land and water, and sometimes in the air – when picturing the gathering of reindeers this autumn – to get the prefect photo. She might go on for hours and hours until she gets it right, and then claims "We have got it!", and the models finally can relax.

Laila sets high demands on her working partners, but the highest demand is on herself. This lady has made almost everything in this book. From the photo shot including finding the right spot, the model, animals and props, until photo editing, layout and choices of prints and paper. If there is something she does not know, she finds the persons who does. She has been cooperating with a number of persons with knowledge of costume traditions, and is constantly declaring that without their assistance there would not have been a book today.

By joining our competences and forces it is our wish to give the reader something both beautiful and instructive. When you see the book, we hope that you think we have succeeded in this.