



Pavilion of Nordic Countries
 Joar Nango – *Girjegumpi: The Sámi Architecture Library*
 at the **18th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia**

For over fifteen years, architect and artist **Joar Nango** has been assembling an archive of books about issues relevant to Indigenous architecture. This year Nango, alongside a team of collaborators, unfolds *Girjegumpi: The Sámi Architecture Library*—a structure, social space, and source of knowledge around architecture in Sápmi—at the Nordic Countries Pavilion at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. The pavilion officially represents Finland, Norway and Sweden through the Museum of Finnish Architecture, The National Museum of Norway, and ArkDes – The Swedish Centre for Architecture and Design.

Girjegumpi is a spatialisation of conversations and research initiated by Joar Nango over two decades of practice at the intersection of architecture and art. As an itinerant, collective library, the project has evolved and expanded with site-specific adaptations as it has travelled to different locations in Sápmi and the broader Nordic region. This journey involves multiple collaborations, including artists and craftspeople such as **Katarina Spik Skum, Anders Sunna, Ken Are Bongo, and Anders Rimpi**, among others.

Central to *Girjegumpi* is the archive that it contains and shares – from rare titles to contemporary books, the collection of more than 500 editions embraces topics such as Sámi architecture and design, traditional and ancestral building knowledge, activism, and decoloniality. This archive also comprises artworks, materials, design details, and found objects. As a gathering space, it hosts large groups of people. As a reading room, it offers an environment for solitary study and reflection. As a critical project, it builds spaces for Indigenous imagination.

Nomadic by design, *Girjegumpi* is a living project addressing the relevance of Indigenous culture in architectural discourse and construction today: the importance of collaborative work, building techniques and use of resources in rapidly changing climate conditions, the use of locally grounded material flow and sensitive approaches to landscapes and nature. It highlights the architect’s position towards a more polyphonic understanding of the world.

The Nordic Countries Pavilion, designed by Sverre Fehn in 1962, was conceived to represent forms of cooperation across the Nordic countries. In this context, *Girjegumpi* opens to an international audience to continue building bodies of knowledge, collaboration and solidarity that transcend national boundaries.

About *Girjegumpi*

The word *Girjegumpi* is derived from two Northern Sámi words: ‘girji’, meaning book, and ‘gumpi’ – a small mobile reindeer herder cabin on sledges, often pulled by a snowmobile. This wordplay refers to a library, an archive, and the construction in which these are stored and transported. *Girjegumpi* has unfolded in many locations since 2018. When it is not travelling, it is based at the **Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš** (Sámi Centre for Contemporary Art) in Kárášjohka/Karasjok. A sister version of *Girjegumpi* is held by the National Gallery of Canada in Odàwàg/Ottawa.

***Girjegumpi*'s collaborators include, among others:**

Håvard Arnhoff, Ken Are Bongo, Petter Bratland, Stefano Crosera + Margherita Pasqualato (Cantiere Daniele Manin), Mathias Danbolt, Ole-Henrik Einejord, Astrid Fadnes, Jenni Hakovirta, Eirin Hammari, Elin Haugdal, Petri Henriksson, Tone Huse, Robert Julian Hvistendahl, Iver Jåks + Jon Ole Andersen, Anne Kare Kemi, Annik Kristiansen Hagen, maka design, Grete Johanna Minde, Karen Inger Anne Nango, Nils John Nango, Anne Henriette Nilut, Ole Thomas Nilut, Raisa Porsanger, Tobias Aputsiaq Prytz, Anders Rimpi, Katrine Rugeldal, Wimme Saari, Sámi Architecture Dictionary Group, Arne-Terje Sæther, Katarina Spik Skum, Mary Ailonieida Sombán Mari, Četil Somby, Anders Sunna, Anna-Stina Svakko, Eystein Talleraas, Petter Tjikkom, Magnus Antaris Tuolja

Collaborating institutions include: Ájtte, Arctic Arts Festival – Festspillene i Nord-Norge, Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš (SDG), RDM – Sámiid Vuorká-Dávvirat, UiT – The Arctic University of Norway

Timeline and Locations of *Girjegumpi*

- **2018:** Hárstták/Harstad, Arctic Arts Festival; Márkomeannu, Sámi Culture and Music Festival; Kárášjohka/Karasjok, Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš (Sámi Centre for Contemporary Art)
- **2019:** Dálvvadis/Jokkmokk, Jokkmokk's Market; Gällivare; Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada
- **2020:** Bergen, Bergen Kunsthall; Kárášjohka/Karasjok, Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš (Sámi Centre for Contemporary Art); *Virtual Girjegumpi*, ArkDes
- **2021:** Hárstták/Harstad, Arctic Arts Festival; Kárášjohka/Karasjok, Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš (Sámi Centre for Contemporary Art); Oslo, Nasjonalmuseet Norway
- **2022:** Helsinki, Kiasma, ARS22; Montréal, Canadian Centre for Architecture, *ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ / Ruovttu Guvlui / Towards Home*; Kárášjohka/Karasjok, Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš (Sámi Centre for Contemporary Art)
- **2023:** Nordic Countries Pavilion, 18th International Architecture Exhibition – *La Biennale di Venezia*; following Venice, *Girjegumpi* will continue to travel

About Joar Nango

Joar Nango (born in 1979, Áltá) is an architect and artist based in Romsa/Tromsø, Norway. His work is rooted in Sápmi – the traditional Sámi territory covering the northern regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula in Russia. Through building, site-specific interventions, design collaborations, photography, publications and video, Nango's work explores the role of Sámi and Indigenous architecture and craft in contemporary thought.

Nango's work, including the long-term project *Girjegumpi*, is nurtured by parallel collaborations with other artists, architects, and craftspeople. Among many other initiatives across two decades of practice, he is a founding member of the architecture collective FFB (2010). He has recently collaborated with choreographer and director Elle Sofe Sara on a dance performance with Carte Blanche, which premiered at the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet in 2022. Following a winning proposal in 2021, Nango alongside Snøhetta, Econor, and 70°N arkitektur are designing the new Sámi National Theatre and Sámi High School and Reindeer Husbandry School in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino, currently under construction.

Trained at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, Nango graduated in Architecture in 2008. Since then, his work has been presented at documenta 14, Bergen Kunsthall, National Museum Oslo – Architecture, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Chicago Architecture Biennale 2019, Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš (Sámi Centre for Contemporary Art), and Kiasma.

Notes to Editors

- The 18th International Architecture Exhibition – *La Biennale di Venezia* takes place between 20 May and 26 November, 2023
- The Nordic Countries Pavilion in Venice is co-owned by Sweden, Finland, and Norway; in 2023, ArkDes (The Swedish Centre for Architecture and Design) is in charge of organising the project on behalf of commissioners Kieran Long (ArkDes), Carina Jaatinen, (Museum of Finnish Architecture/MFA), and Stina Høgvist (The National Museum of Norway)
- The team at ArkDes includes curators Carlos Mínguez Carrasco and James Taylor-Foster, project manager Luba Kuzovnikova, with support from Elisabet Norin, Stefan Mossfeldt, and Johanna Fogel
- Production support in Venice is provided by M+B Studio and eiletz ortigas | architects
- *Girjegumpi* is a project first initiated in 2013 by Joar Nango and Festspillene i Nord-Norge

Media Contacts

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ArkDes

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