

Victor Lind ble anerkjent som en sentral kunstner i Norges kunstmiljø på sent 60-tall tidlig 70-tall, i en tid da mange kunstnere var engasjert i venstrepolitikken og i debatten om kunstens rolle i samfunnet. I løpet av 1970-tallet var han en viktig figur i den radikale kunstnergruppen GRAS, en av de mest innflytelsesrike politiske gruppene i Norge. På den tiden hang GRAS miljøet tett sammen med den radikale venstrebevegelsen, påvirket av marxist-leninistisk ideologi og Arbeidernes Kommunistparti. De var kritiske til kapitalisme, imperialisme, og kunstinstitusjoner de anså som borgerlige, og drivkraften var å trekke samfunnspolitiske problemer inn i kunstnerpraksis. Dette arbeidet ble ofte presentert i form av trykk, plakater, kollektiv produksjon, og aktivistiske utstillinger.

I denne perioden arbeidet Lind med grafiske og politiske motiv, og allerede på tidlig 70-tall hadde han blitt anerkjent som en av Norges mest fremtredende grafiske kunstnere. Han hørte til en generasjon med Oslo kunstnere som så kunsten som en del av en større sosialpolitisk transformasjon. Som en av de få kunstnerne som fortsatt er aktive fra denne perioden, representerer Lind en tid hvor kunstnerpraksis og politiske problemer var sterkt knyttet sammen – en arv som er særlig betydningsfull for samtidskunstmiljøet i dag.

From the 1990s onward, Lind shifted his focus more explicitly toward questions of historical memory and ethics. He became a pioneer of memory-based historical art in Norway, particularly through long-term projects such as Contemporary Memory. This body of work, developed over more than twenty years, centres on a single wartime event and its aftermath: the deportation of 532 Norwegian Jewish families to Auschwitz on November 26, 1942. The work is closely connected to Lind's own biography. Born in 1940 and Jewish, he escaped deportation with his mother, who survived the war in Norway. Alongside his activism, Contemporary Memory stands as one of Lind's most poignant and deeply influential contributions to Norwegian cultural life.

Seen in this light, Lind's actions in recent years can be understood as part of a much longer and consistent trajectory within his practice. Last year, when the National Museum in Oslo decided to house an installation of Noa Eshkol's Mourning Carpet (After the Ma'alot School Massacre) (1974), the decision was perceived by many as legitimising Israel's occupation and the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people. In response, Victor Lind wrote two articles addressed to the museum—not only as an artist, but as a concerned citizen and human being. He argued that acts which violate international law are in a class of their own and cannot be equated with other forms of disagreement that properly belong within democratic debate. Art and curatorial practices that support crimes against humanity, he maintained, do not belong in the space of artistic expression.

More recently, the Art Not Genocide Alliance—a group comprising nearly 200 artists, curators, and cultural workers—has formally called for the exclusion of Israel from the 2026 Venice Biennale. Lind's interventions around the National Museum over the past two years should be read within this wider context of artistic and ethical resistance.

The Oslo Open Honorary Award recognises people and organizations who make conditions better for artists—not only in practical terms such as studios and production, but also by shaping the ethical and political framework in which art exists.

Victor Lind realises this aim in a profound way. From his early involvement in the GRAS collective, where artists organised to hold institutions and politicians accountable, to his long-term engagement with historical memory and contemporary injustice, he has continually expanded the space for artists to speak out, to organise, and to take a stand. His recent interventions are not a rupture with his earlier work, but a continuation of it: a defence of the ethical integrity of art as a working condition in its own right.

Honouring Victor Lind today is therefore a way of recognising not only an individual artist, but a broader movement and a legacy that has shaped—and continues to challenge—Norwegian cultural life.

Please welcome Victor Lind.