



ART — NORWAY
Stamp of approval

The former post office in Trondheim in Norway has been renovated to host a new contemporary-art museum, Pomo. “It’s a spectacular building and the perfect frame for a brand-new museum,” says director Marit Album Kvernmo. Built in 1911, the art nouveau building was a proud emblem of Norway’s new identity after the dissolution of its union with Sweden in 1905. “It’s loaded with symbols of national pride thanks to the local materials and traditional handcraft,” says Album Kvernmo. “It was a community space where people got their news and socialised.”

Although the post office closed in 2012, the inhabitants of Trondheim are still fond of it. “There’s not a single day when people are not approaching me and telling me that they are looking forward to the building reopening,” says Album Kvernmo. The renovation is French architect and designer India Mahdavi’s first museum project, who worked in collaboration with Norwegian architect Erik Langdalen. They kept as many original features as they could and refreshed the building’s interiors with bright pops of colours – orange for the main staircase and pink for the museum shop.

The permanent collection will dedicate 60 per cent of its budget to female artists. The opening exhibition, titled “Postcards from the Future”, will bring together works held by Pomo with international loans in order to explore how postcards, like artworks, facilitate storytelling. “There are a lot of rituals that come with being a post office and the postcard felt like a fun and flexible metaphor to use to honour that history,” says Album Kvernmo. The museum’s opening is certainly something new to write home about. — LMT
pomo.no



MUSEUMS — ITALY

Ruff sketches

With a ticket for the hottest exhibition in town in one hand and a dog lead in the other, a choice between the two often has to be made. Rome-based company Bauadvisor, however, has developed an answer. The dog-sitting firm – headed up by owner Dino Gasperini – dispatches someone to look after your pet, allowing you to wander

stress-free while also increasing visitor numbers to key cultural sites. “The dream is to make this the new normal,” says Gasperini. “In Italy we don’t leave dogs at home. I want this to be an offering seen at all cultural venues across the country.”

To promote the initiative, every month will see a different gallery in Italy host the service free of charge for 24 hours until April 2026. This way, every dog – and its owner – gets a treat. — RJO
bauadvisor.it



ILLUSTRATOR: Tim Alexander. IMAGES: Valérie Sadoun, Wonderwhy, Amapinight, Universal Pictures



NIGHTLIFE — JAPAN
Step right up

In the clubs of Osaka, Tokyo and Nagoya, the energetic sounds of amapiano, afrobeats and dancehall are bringing new crowds to the dance floor. These genres, originating in Africa and the Caribbean, have made their mark on Japan’s nightlife thanks to the clubbing event Amapinight, which has been spreading through Japan in recent months. It’s run by a group of young women – Sakura Hosokawa, Aoi Takase and Rina Hagai. Two of them are *hafu*, a term used to describe people of mixed-race heritage.

They have created a place that is open to all but is especially appealing to the Japanese South African community. It was co-founder Hosokawa’s exploration of her Tanzanian roots that led to the first Amapinight in 2022. Since then the group has worked with many of the rising stars of Japan’s club scene. While nightlife here is more often associated with underground hip-hop parties or electronic nights, Amapinight has carved out a unique place for night owls to experience the sounds of South Africa. — NO



FILM — IRAN
Q&A

Standing up to censorship
Mohammad Rasoulof, director

New Iranian crime thriller *The Seed of the Sacred Fig* is an exploration of family dynamics amid political unrest in Tehran. Director Mohammad Rasoulof discusses the nature of censorship and the relationship between art and freedom. — SMN

How does it feel to have received so much attention for this film?

I’m very happy, especially for my cast and crew, who went to such pains to make the film – one that we thought we’d never be able to finish. To have this kind of spotlight and to reach global audiences is like a bullet against censorship.

Tell us about some of the practicalities of making it.

We decided to stick to three guidelines to minimise risks: work with a very small cast and crew; use limited equipment – less than what you use for student films; and that I should direct the film remotely to avoid attracting attention. When we wrapped the shoot, my unappealable eight-year prison sentence was announced so I decided to leave the country.

Is there a relationship between art and freedom?

Filmmaking and art more widely are a way to keep expressing myself but it is also about my identity and contributing to the struggle for freedom and democracy.

‘The Seed of the Sacred Fig’ is in cinemas now.



FILM — USA
In the frame

Brady Corbet’s small-budget smash *The Brutalist* has been lauded with 10 Oscar nominations. Most revealing, for a film about the life and work of László Tóth, a fictional architect, is the Oscar nomination for production design. Enter Judy Becker, builder of ambitious sets for detail-hungry films, such as Todd Haynes’s *Carol* and Ang Lee’s *Brokeback Mountain*. “Despite [the character] Laszlo being from a different era, attending the Bauhaus and having suffered in a concentration camp, I knew that I had to try to channel him,” says Becker of her preparation.

On set, the film’s two totemic constructions – a rural mansion’s midcentury library and the Institute, a brutalist memorial-cum-community centre and the film’s own maddening Ozymandias commission – had to be approached differently. “After paper sketches, we built the library,” says Becker. “But of course, we didn’t build the Institute; we’d have gone a little crazy trying.” Becker’s way with sets and models suggests concrete grandeur, towering ambition, fateful hubris and misunderstood genius. You’d hope that the Becker trophy cabinet is of more simple and sturdy design. — RB

For more on *‘The Brutalist’*, see page 54

MEDIA — INDONESIA
World of wonders

Media organisation Wonderwhy, which is based in Jakarta, has been documenting the quirks of everyday life in Southeast Asia online for the past three years. Now many of those insights can be found in its new magazine, the first issue of which is based around walking. “Southeast Asia doesn’t have the most pedestrian-friendly streets,” says Hanna Irena, Wonderwhy’s editor in chief. “But they are exciting.”

The issue includes stories that range from the monks who walk from Thailand to Indonesia to visit the Borobudur temple to the photographers who scour the streets of Jakarta for the perfect shot. Rather than focusing on traditional culture, Wonderwhy



puts an entertaining spin on the realities of daily life. “We’ll try to give our readers the best stories of the emerging culture in Southeast Asia,” says Irena.

The next issue will explore changing demographics as women are having fewer children. “It’s quite a taboo topic here,” she says. In the future, Irena imagines that Wonderwhy’s print editions might examine food, sleep or other daily activities. The local magazine scene is small but she is hopeful about its prospects. “I’ve seen a growing zine community and people are crafty,” she adds. “Indonesians are very creative.” And, as it enters that scene, Wonderwhy is putting its best foot forward. — SMN
wonderwhysea.com

To hear more about Wonderwhy, tune in to episode 649 of *‘The Stack’* on Monocle Radio.