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Prize Prints: The Queen Sonja Print Award, an exhibition of contemporary Nordic prints from the recipients and founders of the prestigious international prize for artists working in the graphic arts, opened at Scandinavia House in April of 2015.

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Featuring work by the 2012 and 2014 award winners Tiina Vikinen and Svend-Allan Sørensen, as well as select works by the award founders, Her Majesty Queen Sonja of Norway, Kjell Nupen and Ørnulf Opdahl, the exhibition offered an intimate view into contemporary printmaking in the Nordic countries.

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The Queen Sonja Print Award was established in 2011, and has since been presented every year. Initially limited to Nordic artists nominated by Nordic art museums and printmaker's associations, as well as the board of the Queen Sonja Print Award, it later opened up to international candidates nominated by an expanded circle from around the world.

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The exhibition at Scandinavia House featured a diverse selection of artworks from the five Nordic artists. The prints of Finnish artist Tiina Kivinen, the first prizewinner of the award in 2012, are crafted in delicate nuances of gray and black tones.

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Working primarily with drypoint, monotype, and mezzotint techniques, Kivinen creates lyrical and semi-abstract renderings of landscapes and figures, in works such as her prints "Bold Stockings" and "Below Zero."

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The 2014 prize winner, Svend-Allan Sørensen, works with a variety of printmaking techniques, including lithography, linocut, and woodcut. His graphic works, often imbued with a certain whimsy or playfulness, operate at the intersection of text and image, where meaning is doubled, expanded, and complicated.

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In the series Animal Soup of Time, named from a phrase in Allen Ginsburg's poem "Howl," Sørensen interweaves text-based linocuts of literary snippets from Henry David Thoreau, William S. Burroughs, and Ginsberg, with abstract renderings resembling arrowheads or seals.

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In addition to the works by Sørensen and Kivinen, the exhibition features a selection of works from the three celebrated Norwegian artists who founded The Queen Sonja Print Award—Kjell Nupen, Ørnulf Opdahl, and H.M. Queen Sonja—including the collaborative 24-work portfolio Three Journeys, Three Landscapes that launched the prize.

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Comprising eight graphic works by each artist, the portfolio takes the Nordic landscape as inspiration, and illustrates the unique technical and thematic explorations the artists undertook throughout its creation.

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Kjell Nupen is represented by a diverse selection of collages, aquatints, and etchings that reflect his characteristic use of expressive color and tone, such as in these two Untitled works from 2011, made with aquatint and polymer plate.

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The works by Ørnulf Opdahl included a number of intimately scaled aquatints and etchings contemplating the varied expressions of the Nordic winter landscape, such as the 2014 etchings “Reflections” and “Bridge.”

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And works by Her Majesty Queen Sonja featured a series of otherworldly aquatints originating from photographs taken on a 2006 trip to an ice cave on Svalbard, including the works “Lava II” and “Foula II,” both etchings on polymer plate.

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Prize Prints was accompanied by a 176-page catalogue entitled “The Queen Sonja Print Award,” published by Arvenius + Orfeus Publishing and edited by art historian Karin Hellandsjø. The catalogue contains interviews with Kjell Nupen, Ørnulf Opdahl, and H.M. Queen Sonja along with short texts on the prize winners Tiina Kivinen and Svend-Allan Sørensen, as well as reproductions of a number of the artworks on view in the exhibition.

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Throughout the exhibition’s run, “Prize Prints” was accompanied by programming including a symposium with artists, printmakers, and curators, as well as workshops for children led by art educators.

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“For the past 40 years I have dreamed of establishing an award for the purpose of encouraging young artists,” Her Majesty Queen Sonja has said of the award. Scandinavia House was honored to celebrate this worthy biennial prize.