



Project Description

Without Them I Am Lost: Storytelling as Survival

Project Summary

In 1944, the German army displaced 75,000 Northern Norwegians. Today, the remaining survivors who remember that time are dying before their stories can be told. We will collect and archive these stories of survival from Troms and Finnmark and Nordland Counties to create an intimate, feature-length documentary film.

Logline

Sharing memories is an act of survival. *Without Them I Am Lost* braids three layers of inquiry: oral histories of WWII in the northernmost part of Norway, the influence of landscape on the imagination, and the materiality of remembrance.

Project Objectives

We will create a feature length documentary to record and transmit Northern Norway's oral histories of survival from the WWII era. Our objectives are (1) to give voice to underrepresented stories from Norway's northernmost regions; (2) translate the stories for Norwegian, U.S., and other English-speaking audiences; and (3) foster intergenerational dialogue and exchange among and between Norway's northern and southern regions, specifically those in Troms and Finnmark and Nordland Counties, in addition to Norwegian-American communities in the United States.

Artistic Approach

Without Them I Am Lost will juxtapose the sweeping landscapes of Northern Norway against images and artifacts that hold memories for our subjects. Alongside traditional interview framing techniques, we will film the interior locations of our subjects' homes using macro shots of objects and gestures that will pull viewers into a new, intimate relationship with the material objects and people's connections with them. The work of Dutch still-life vanitas painters and Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi serve as visual references in our approach for capturing objects and the human experience of them.

Filming is scheduled to begin in 2022.

Distribution and Marketing Strategy

The film will bring widespread attention to this remarkable time and place in Norwegian culture and world history via its worldwide film festival screenings, subsequent community screenings in 5 Norwegian cities (Kjøllefjord, Tromsø, Narvik, Bergen, Oslo) and 3 American cities (Spokane and Seattle, WA, and Minneapolis, MN), and elsewhere via online distribution. We will seek U.S. broadcast distribution via POV — U.S. public television's premier showcase for independent, nonfiction film — and similar public broadcast arrangements in Norway.

Additionally, we will archive the unedited interview videos and bi-lingual transcripts in an online repository so that the oral histories are widely available to researchers and the general public in Norway, the U.S., and elsewhere.

Intended Audience

Although this documentary film focuses on collecting and presenting stories from individuals in Troms and Finnmark and Nordland Counties, the target audience lives in the major population and cultural centers in Norway, as well as cities in the Northwest and Midwest regions of the U.S., where significant populations of Norwegian-American communities thrive. As such, this project promotes cross border collaboration and the sharing of American and Norwegian cultures. It also provides rich opportunities for intergenerational outreach among diverse populations in Norway and the U.S.