



New exhibition at Skogsmuseet/Forestry Museum

Five sections at Skogsmuseet/The Machine Era

One section at Skogsmuseet/ The Manual Era



SKOGSMUSEET

LYCKSELE · LAPPLAND

Views – as far as the eye can see

Our everyday lives and our holidays too are filled with views.

Some we have become so accustomed to that we barely see them anymore.

Others are almost symbolic in that they are shared with many others.

We humans have been utilising, visiting and talking about views for a very long time.

Trees, forests and woodland scenery are often part of these views.

Places and views bring us together, no matter how old we are or where we come from. Views are a part of our common cultural heritage.

They inform how we catch sight of experiences and desires, but also how we have changed views and thereby impacted our prospects for the future.

Welcome to a journey towards The View!

1. My views

Looking out through your own kitchen window can be a pleasant journey. The view changes from day to day, even if only through subtle shifts in the light. Looking out over a place can be restorative and restful, even if only for a brief moment.

The view does something to us. It has become part of who we are. When most people refer to a view that means something special to them, they tend to call it their own.

We preserve some views in our memories. They remain there, year after year, bringing both joy and sorrow. Many people have lost their most beloved landscapes and places involuntarily due to war, conflicts, wind farms, expansions of hydropower, mines... Loss of vision can also make a view blurred or disappear altogether, but this does not mean that you can't experience the view in other ways.

A place creates and shapes us, even long after it has disappeared, or we have left it. It can be kept alive through narratives in words and pictures. Sharing places is about sharing these narratives, and together with views of these places, are part of our common cultural heritage.

My view is also your view.

2. The traveller's view

The view is part of the journey.

The view can help us to orientate ourselves in a new, confusing place.

It can give us a physical experience of the history of the place and create a sense of context.

Around the world, there are views that are the main object of travelling there, or at least one object. They are meant to be seen at particular times, in a particular light and in particular seasons.

Views are entry points and generate restaurants and cafés, guides, souvenirs and tall tales – and an infinite number of selfies.

But the journey doesn't need to be a holiday trip and the view doesn't need to be as grand as the Grand Canyon.

There are views everywhere, all around us, if we choose to be aware of them.

The view out of the bus window on a rainy Tuesday can be beautiful.

3. The function of views

Traditional small Norrland castles and high towers have been used since time immemorial to inform, warn and watch for danger.

Views have also been used as deterrents: the gallows were placed at the highest point in the village.

High places became holy places, charged with meaning and symbolism.

Churches and castles have also been located at high points to convey power and glory.

Before maps became common, hills were essential for orientation.

Views provided a mental map that could be communicated to others.

Views can also be a draw card for attracting visitors or new residents.

Ironically, views are shrinking as we humans spread ourselves out.

High buildings provide great views for some and obscure the view for others.

Advertising sells not only the view itself, but also uses the view to entice you to buy that mountain bike, car, wind jacket or trip. You can sell just about anything with a beautiful view.

Today, unimpeded views benefit elk hunters, birdwatchers and air traffic controllers, for example. But a view is also needed for something that is difficult to put into words, that cannot be bought or sold or exploited.

On the top of a hill, we experience how small we are and the greatness of our surroundings at one and the same time.

4. Changing views

Views in Norrland have been impacted by the expansion of its rivers. Today, wind farms are upsetting some people.

The relocation of Kiruna will result in changed views.

Hjalmar Lundbohm, who laid the foundations for much of the original city, placed great emphasis on the experience of the city's surrounding views.

How will these views be taken into account when the city is moved?

In other towns and cities, good farming land is being turned into shopping centres; an open square transformed into apartment blocks.

A forest is changed by the way it is managed, and can be rapidly transformed into a clear-felled area. Storms and fires also impact the views in forests.

But even wild forest that is not directly impacted is dynamic and in some cases provides no beautiful views at all.

The view also changes when animals are let out to graze or plants start to grow. Places are abandoned and reclaimed, step by step.

Views change and it's us who largely determine how they change.

5. Taking the train to a view

By train it became possible for travellers to get to new views, in Norrland in particular. The train window offered an infinite number of views.

When the railway line was extended in the late nineteenth century, it set off a tourist invasion. The mountains became fashionable and the newly formed Swedish Tourist Association was a driving force. In the wake of the railway, the first tourist facilities were constructed out in the “wilderness”.

During World War I, alpine tourism slowed down, but took off again until World War II. Downhill skiing was introduced to Sweden in the winter of 1926–27. The first ski lift was opened in 1940 in Åre, and this was where the first World Championships in alpine ski sports were held in 1954.

Subsequently, big lift systems were constructed in Jämtland and Dalarna. Further north, the Kungsleden hiking trail had long been finished and there was a network of mountain stations and cabins for STF’s members.

Kungsleden today is over 400 km long and runs between Abisko in Norrbotten and Hemavan in Västerbotten. And it too offers an infinite number of views.

6. Views in words and pictures

Swedish author Selma Lagerlöf was given the task of writing a textbook for school children.

Views play an important role – from the back of the gander, Nils Holgersson can see and comprehend all that the country holds.

In Västerbotten and Lapland, five birds explore this foreign land.

They see forests, lakes, rivers, farms, towns, ice and snow.

The views in the north turned out to contain more than “many kingdoms can boast of owning within their borders.”

Views occur frequently in our culture. They are on postcards, in photographs, paintings and in mobile phones and movies. And until quite recently, on Swedish banknotes.