



THE ART TRAIL



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In 2016, the Seven Rivers' Route Association submitted an application to the County Administrative Board of Västerbotten and the County Tourism Board, asking for funds to develop the Art Route between Borgafjäll and Saxnäs. The goal was to inaugurate two new art pieces, as well as to put up a number of information signs along the route. At the same time, a plan to restore two ancient Saami settlements, belonging to the late nomads Matts-Jon and Jon-Anders was launched. In addition, the association planned to carry out a cultural-historical survey along the trail. The end goal was to survey the entire area between Saxnäs and Borgafjäll.

The archeological survey of the area proves that it has been continuously used by hunters, gatherers, fishers and reindeerherding Saami, as well as the state and tourists from all over the world, for thousands of years.

The area, which stretches from the Marsfjäll Mountains to the north, all the way to the Borgafjäll Mountains in the south is well-known for its spectacular viewa.

The current Art Trail is superimposed on an old trail, connecting the two villages Borgafjäll and Saxnäs. The trail used to be 19 kilometres long, but due to a new road, connecting Saxnäs to the Satsfjäll Mountain, the trail has become 15 kilometres long and thus 4 kilometres shorter than before. Throughout history, both Saami and settlers have walked countless miles along the trail.



In the early 1970's, women attended annual, autumnal hikes in the area. A bus set off from Umeå in the morning, bringing the women to Borgafjäll, where they stayed at the hotel. The evening was spent in good company and the next morning, the women hiked all the way to Saxnäs, where they spent the night dining and dancing at the local hotel. The day after, the bus picked up the women and brought them back to Umeå. Sadly the annual hikes stopped after a couple of years.



The Art Trail gets its name from two art pieces along the trail, made by the Saami artists Tomas Colbengtsson and Per Enoksson.

Hiking the Art Trail will leave no-one unimpressed, especially if you set off from the Trail Centre in Borgafjäll and set off into the forest towards Matts-Jon's Saami Settlement. Once there, you can behold Per Enoksson's art piece A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP, as well as two newly constructed Saami huts.

The hut was my final resting place, close to the quagmire, down by the mountain slope. Stones were put next to each other here, becoming a wall. A neatly built foundation, designed to last a lifetime or more, and the lichen and moss, covering each stone, bore witness of times that have come and passed. The stove which was sacrificed to the rain slowly weakened, and the light which penetrated its rusty plating painted faint patterns on the mouldy floor. The items that once proved that this place had been inhabited by living, warm beings turned into empty shells, or monuments to the transience of things.

On hot summer days, from my vantage point to the west of my hut's entrance – somewhere between the stone gravel and the dwelling site – I used to observe how the quivering air from the flagstone wiped out the outlines of the hut. How it – in a way – became alive again.



Once there, the trail will take you higher up into the mountains. To the left of Matts-Jon's Saami Settlement, there is another Settlement that used to belong to the late nomad Jon-Anders, that has been fitted with a new Saami hut and a large storage building, as well as a Saami goat stable.

In order to visit this settlement as well, you need to continue along the trail upwards and then turn to the left. You'll come to see a newly constructed Saami hut, and a small stream, running through a valley. Cross the stream on the bridge and continue onwards for another 100 metres or so. By now, you will have reached the track that will take you all the way down to Jon-Anders' Saami Settlement, a couple of hundred metres away.

Once you're ready to continue your hike towards Saxnäs, you'll just have to continue ascending Gaalloe. As soon as you exit the birch tree forest, you will find yourself surrounded by towering mountains. The Art Trail suddenly appears far older than it is, due to the stone markings lining it.



The view, no matter what direction you're facing, is breathtaking. To the left, you're faced with Jiengegietjie (1 477 m), the highest peak in South Lapland, as well as Tjåelie and Onnevaerie, and behind you, you'll see both Buarkanbielie and Searkoevaartoe, and to the right, you'll see both Badtsadahke and Stoere Gæhtjere, as well as several other mountains.

As you reach the rather flat peak of Gaalloe (1 160 m), you might start to feel tired. Thankfully, there's a bothy next to the Art Trail, and if you take a look inside, you will find that it's a well-built and beautiful hut, equipped with a number of beds that you can rest on, if you feel like it.

The trail continues onwards, once you've scaled the peak of Gaalloe, but the hike is easy due to the level ground. You'll start seeing the Satsfjäll Mountain and soon you'll reach the Satsån River.

Jans Heinerud and Erik Sandén from the Västerbotten County Museum have carried out an archaeological survey along the trail. The survey discovered two ancient hearths as well as an old house ground, proving that reindeer herders have used the area for a long time. A stone circle was found on the northern slopes of Gaalloe, as well as a number of cairns, close to the Saami settlements mentioned previously in this text.

Moving on from Gaalloe is somewhat more tricky, due to a number of quagmires in the area. Close to the Satsån River, there are a number of historical remains, and next to Saadtsvaerie and Boejhke, there's an old house ground. From here on, the trail follows a slippery slope downwards, where you'll find not only the end of the trail, but the Saami artist Thomas Colbengtsson's art piece TSÏEGLE as well.

A 4 kilometres long gravel road takes you from the Art Trail to Saxnäs. At the start of the road, people tend to park, in order to start their hikes along the Art Trail.





“TSIËGLE” is a flashed glass sculpture, which acts as a guide through time and space.

Traditionally, the Saami believed that white quartz stones possessed magical powers. The sculpture can be interpreted as a metaphor for quartz minerals, that gradually grow purer from the bottom and upwards, until the sculpture and thus the mineral itself, is wholly transparent and pure.

The centre of the glass sculpture, at the top of the cairn and highlighted by auriferous quartz, is full of pictures of the humans who used to inhabit the Satsfjäll, Gitsfjäll and Borgafjäll Mountains.

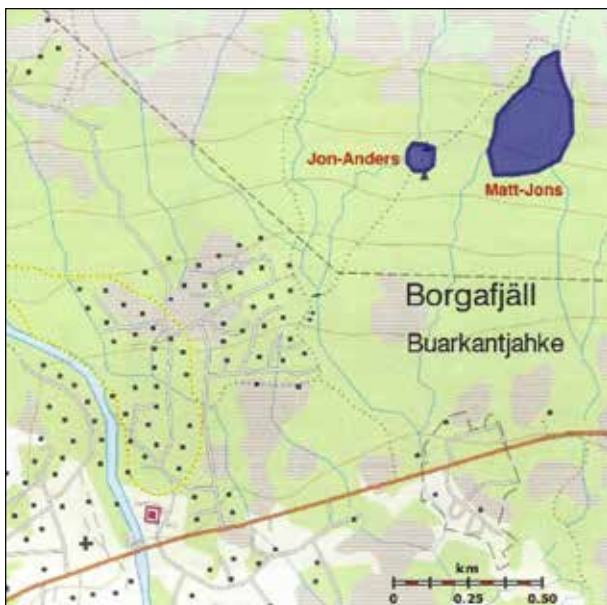
Tomas Nilsson Stamp, Elisabeth Torkelsdotter, Nils Andreas Tomasson, Magnus Virgilius Fjällström, Elsa Britta Fjällström and her children Anna, Jonas, Nils, Magnus and Tomas, Lisa Stemp, the bridal couple Sjul Abraham Larsson and Katarina “Kajsa” Larsdotter, the bridal couple Mikael Kristoffersson and Gunilla Stemp, Kristina Linnea Nilsdotter/Stångberg, Johan Andreas Stångberg.



Jans Heinerud senior antiquarian and ethnologue, and Erik Sanden, antiquarian at Västerbotten County Museum have carried out a culturalhistorical survey in the area. The survey found two hearths and a house ground next to the Satsån River, proving that reindeer herders have used the area since time immemorial. A stone circle on the northern slopes of Gaalloe was discovered as well. Find out more about the survey and look at pictures of the Art Trail on our homepage: www.konstsvagen.se.

DISTANCE FROM ONE ART PIECE TO THE NEXT





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