



The highly recognised Sami visual artist Josef Halse exhibiting at Sisa gallery.



Hadima at Tulip massage centre demonstrates Clec.



Linda and Aisha with locally produced foods at Kaffekjellern.

# Sisa

## — welcome in

**Kulturhuset Sisa is an important multicultural meeting place established in Alta municipality in Finnmark, at the very top of Norway. Here, you are welcome in to not only discover beautiful scenery and friendly people, but also to find local art, get help establishing your business or experience festivals, concerts and happenings all year round.**

By Ingrid Opstad | Photos: Claus Jørstad

“The word ‘sisa’ is actually taken from the Sami language and means ‘in’. We use the word in that sense to say ‘welcome in to us’, but also to welcome the diversity that characterises our community and reflect on how we feel inside,” says manager John-Tore Martinsen. Kulturhuset Sisa was established 11 years ago with help from Extra stiftelsen, Rådet for psykisk helse, Arbeids og velferdsdirektoratet og Alta kommune.

Today, Kulturhuset Sisa is so much more than just a normal cultural centre. “We have also become the base for people who want to establish their own businesses, and we help with job training for anyone who needs qualifications for the workplace,” says Martinsen. A place for innovation, it was here at the culture house

that Norwegian Karl Helge Vannebo Senior came up with the idea for Clec. “Clec is a tool designed for people with back pain, who need assistance when putting on footwear, and anyone else who needs help. We are proud that he invented this in our facilities and now sells them to hotels, shoe stores, and hospitals in Norway and several other countries,” Martinsen explains.

There is a strong focus on the local community and its nature, expressed through art and food. “Not only are we inspired by the beautiful nature around us, as evident in our gallery and craft shop, but we also engage the city through school classes and retirement groups to harvest local herbs and spices that are then used in the food served in our cosy cafe Kaffekjellern,” the manager says.

Kulturhuset Sisa is also proud to support Bossekop cultural trail, a fun and unique way to get to know Alta’s history through 26 different stops. “The cultural path is made by different artists from Norway and Russia and led by Linda Zina Aslaksen, who lives here and has her studio in the cultural centre. Bossekop has great potential to spread to other municipalities and become a new tourist attraction in Finnmark. We are happy to help others who wish to participate,” Martinsen smiles.



Linda Zina Aslaksen in front of lvebåten at the Bossekop cultural path.

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