

7A

DANCING AROUND THE MAYPOLE

Twelve human figures, dancing around the midsummer maypole, sport colourful folk dress, unique to their various regions in Scandinavia — (left to right) from Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Finland, and Sweden.

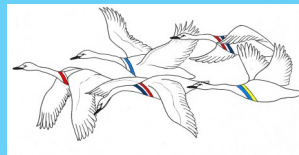
Meanwhile, amid the maypole's top boughs scamper a handful of little visitors from the fairy world: How many of these 'nisser' can you find?



Scandinavian Cultural Centre
764 Erin Street
Winnipeg, MB
R3G 2W4

Phone: 204-774-8047
Email: scandinaviancc@shawcable.ca
www.scandinaviancentre.ca

Mural designed and painted
by Charles Johnston
C5 Artworks
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A 'Map' to our

Heritage Mural



Scandinavian
Cultural Centre



Photo by Leif Norman

Map to the Mural

1) In Finland, indigenous **Sami people** have their own parliament and celebrate a thriving culture through colourful textiles and the management of 200,000 domesticated reindeer. This herder wears the distinctive 'Four Winds' hat, a *Gákti* tunic, and fur mitts.

2) A girl, sporting a white robe and candle-crown, depicts **Sankta Lucia** for the annual Dec. 13 festival, honouring a 4th century Italian martyr and marking the winter solstice. The Swedish Cultural Association's Lucia Fest is a treasured holiday tradition.

3) Everyone loves the stories by Danish author **Hans Christian Andersen**, such as 'The Ugly Duckling,' 'The Little Mermaid,' and 'The Emperor's New Clothes.' He opens a glowing book to represent the illumination of knowledge that comes with reading.

4) A 'wood panelled' **sauna door**, complete with a birch whisk on the wall, welcomes visitors to the Scandinavian Cultural Centre. Finland's sauna culture was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2020.

5) The **Fjallkona** (Maid of the Mountain) is the personification of Iceland. A notable woman is chosen as Fjallkona annually for her long-standing community service and support of Icelandic culture and heritage. She wears a gold crown consisting of a star above a rising sun and the Icelandic coat of arms.

6) A skier slices through Norway's mountain snow while nearby a young woman, in a Valdres district ***bunad* outfit**, welcomes the light. Norway embraced traditional costumes in the late 1800s, to bolster nationalism and celebrate the country's distinct regions.

7) A garlanded **maypole** anchors the mural as a cultural element common to the five countries: Midsummer celebrations featuring dancing and revelry. The large mounted circles can symbolize fertility or the Norse axis of the underworld, earth, and heaven. (See 7A on brochure fold.)

8) A **Viking's** solemn gaze pierces through a maypole ring, symbolizing Odin's all-knowing eye and acknowledging Nordic journeys to the New World, first in 1021 to L'Anse-aux-Meadows, Newfoundland, and later in 19th and 20th centuries to North American destinations.

9) A dragon-headed **Viking ship**, with ghostly shadows, foretells the arrival of settlers from the 'old' world to the 'new,' where immigrants settled on Treaty 1 and 5 territories in Manitoba. Odin's raven marks the sail. One shield holds a rune; the others hold flag colours from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland.

10) **Five Flying Swans**, inspired by a poem by Denmark's Hans Hartvig Seedorff, show cooperation among the five Nordic countries at the Scandinavian Cultural Centre. The swans each sport an individual neck band to reflect unique nationalities, yet fly as one.