

# What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in October

CHELSEA

## Dag Alveng

Through Nov. 2. Deborah Bell Photographs, 526 West 26th Street, Manhattan; 212-249-9400, [deborahbellphotographs.com](http://deborahbellphotographs.com).



Installation view of “Dag Alveng: Photographs from Telemark.” via Dag Alveng and Deborah Bell Photographs

A brief, perhaps unfamiliar history lesson: Norsk Hydro, a Norwegian power company founded in 1905, built power stations, voltage masts, water stations and dams throughout the region of Telemark, in the north of Norway. Among its many innovations was “heavy water” (so named because the hydrogen it contained was double the mass of hydrogen in regular water), which during the World War II was discovered by the Nazis to be useful in creating an atomic bomb. They took over the production facility and began sending the water to Germany for use in their experiments, until February 1943, when a group of Norwegian patriots sabotaged the site in “Operation Gunnerside.”

In 2020 and 2021, the Norwegian photographer Dag Alveng photographed the region. He had been invited by the Telemark Kunstmuseum after the industrial area was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2015. By the time he got

there it was a scenic terrain — lakes and rivers, gorges and cliffs — housing a giant industrial complex. “Photographs From Telemark” features five photographs from Alveng’s exploration.

These are large-scale gelatin silver print photos in black and white showing the furiousness of water falling down rocky slopes, the immensity of metal pipe constructions running through forests, the emptiness of curving highways. “In Water Pipes, Vemork,” the engineering marvel of producing such pipes at such a scale becomes clear to the viewer. What becomes even more apparent, though, regardless of the quietness in the photographs, is the scale of violence averted by the World War II-saboteurs.

Alveng’s most famous work is “Summer Light,” a series in which leisurely Scandinavian family life and landscape are laid out in shimmering light, a record of private histories. In “Photographs From Telemark,” Alveng’s images are darker, reminding us that within quiet and even remote landscapes are possible dangers that must not be let out of our sight. YINKA ELUJOBA