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Articles

- 06 "ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY"
An interview with Jóhann Hauksson and Sigtryggur Ari Jóhannsson
- 10 NO COMPROMISE, NO RULES
Eli Roth discusses filmmaking, Iceland, blood and punk rock
- 14 DON'T WORRY; THIS IS ICELAND
A column by Gabriele R. Guðbjartsson
- 18 WHALER DOWN
Looking back at the sinking of the whaleboats in 1986
- 35 SPONTANEOUS SELF-PLEASURING
Daft Punk on movies, music and texture
- 42 WAR IS A PRIORITY CONSIDERATION – PEACE A SECONDARY THOUGHT
Philosophy of non-violence

Feature

- 16 RECONSTRUCTING A CITY
How to revitalise a city centre
- 20 THE REAL FACE OF ICELANDIC MUSIC
Bubbi fires back

Essentials

- 21 THE GRAPEVINE IN YOUR POCKET
- 32 DINING, EATING AND GRUBBING
- 33 BEZT Í HEIMI
- 40 FICTION IN THE GRAPEVINE:
Uchronia by Sigrún Davíðsdóttir

Music & Nightlife

- 34 SELECTION OF OLD MASTERPIECES
A different kind of cinema
- 36 CD REVIEWS
- 38 NASHVILLE IN THE NORTH
The 2006 Iceland Airwaves was as perfect as an Altman film

Outside Reykjavík

- 44 EXPERIENCING AURORA BOREALIS UNDERWATER
The Grapevine floats on at the Reykjanes Resort

The Reykjavík Grapevine crew

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SOUR GRAPES

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Hello:
My name is Ken Maxwell and I just finished reading the article that you wrote regarding the Mormon Missionaries serving in your area.

My son Brennik (Elder Maxwell) was one of the Missionaries mentioned.

I want you to know that I appreciated the article and the fairness with which you presented it.

Brennik Loves Iceland and the people he is serving there, and we are so proud of him and the decision that he made to serve in the mission field.

I want to thank you and the Grapevine for the article. I have sent it to several people here in Arizona in the Southwestern part of the United States, and I'm sure as a result of that, many people will start reading the Grapevine.

Best wishes
Ken and Margit Maxwell

Well, from the article I gathered that communications with family members are kept to a minimum during the mission, so I am glad to be able to bring you news of your son. I can also report that the journalist who talked to him was very moved by the experience and is seriously considering joining your church. That would be my loss and your gain. -Ed.

Good morning,
as far as I know you are one of the leading Icelandic newspapers and I thought you might be interested in this:

Open letter to the Icelandic Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Einar Kristinn Gudfinnsson

Dear Sir,
Please be informed that I – and with me many of my compatriots – absolutely disagree with your decision to resume whaling. The whale you slaughtered yesterday was a fin whale, an endangered species. So your statement of “sustainable whaling” is totally ridiculous.

My husband and me intended to spend our next year's holiday in Iceland on a whale watching tour. Considering the latest development in your country we will definitely refrain from this. We cannot support a government that acts so irresponsible towards nature. Stop commercial whaling again!!
Beate Gersbeck
Frankfurt/Germany

Your intelligence gathering is outstanding. We are truly Iceland's leading newspaper and lucky for you, Einar K. Gudfinnsson is a regular reader. You can rest assured that your letter is hereby reaching him. -Ed.

Dear Icelanders
Western Australia abolished whaling over 20 years ago and tourism whale watching now generates far more jobs than did killing the majestic creatures ever did.

Iceland will do itself incredible damage through the resumption of whaling because its image is now that of a backward, ignorant and cruel society.

I for one dreamed of visiting Iceland but your resumption of whaling will keep me from your shores.

In addition many people are now refusing to buy any goods made in Iceland.

David Utting
Perth
Western Australia

Well, I do hope that you will get a chance to visit our fair country, sooner rather than later, and take a tour in one of our whale watching boats. Wiser minds must prevail eventually. When you come, could you bring me some kangaroo meat? -Ed.

I read with interest your story about whale hunting. I would consider myself a green person, in Scotland I would take my cans bottles and paper to recycling for free. I like greenpeace's save the rain forest, wwf save the tigers, pandas, I think apart from the bar maid in my local bar, tigers are the most amazing thing I have ever seen.

My personal opinion is that is that as far as I can gather the stocks are healthy and I don't see any problem with harvesting a couple of dozen whales. But I want my grandchildren and great-grandchildren, maybe to the barmaid Mmmmmmmmmmm to see tigers, whales, pandas, elephants, lions, but also the flies we swat with newspapers the mice we set traps for, but the main reason I wrote this letter is the comment at the end by the british ambassador That ASSHOLE and his government think marine management is looking after SOLDIERS

Forget about the whales... I need the address and opening hours of your local bar. It sounds as if the barmaid is the one that needs to be harvested. -Ed.

Hello,
I don't know Islenska, so I hope you don't mind me writing to you in English.

As you may know, on October 7, 2006, Magni and Dilana were in Ottawa, Canada for a concert, as part of the Rockstar show. My girlfriend, Cheryl and I taped some video of the concert and uploaded the edited video to the YouTube website.

I encourage you to see these videos and if you think they are good, perhaps you could inform your Icelandic readers to see these videos for themselves? I know you have many fans of Magni and Á Móti Sól and they may find these videos entertaining. We have a received quite a lot of positive feedback from viewers all over the world, such as, “You gave us a window to this concert... it was as if we were right there!” (this quoted from, <http://magni-ficent.com/Forums/Topic5510-9-1.aspx>).

These are the song titles and links:
Rebel Yell: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aawXr8HoYeU>
Wicked Games: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WH_5raCVJA
Cat's in the Cradle/Creep: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTZ_XCTV-5s
Time After Time: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzWEem50uDQ>
Jason: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZIMrEe3Ue4>
Plush: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJT4ITx4ysM>
Ring of Fire: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjJ23MG2ask>
Mother, Mother: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZ668CZ3Gp4>
Hand in my Pocket: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcigl6XTUK4>
Supersoul: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKYAitbcXPU>

The first song is performed with a local Canadian group, The Sam Hill Band; all the others were performed with Dilana. “Jason” is the owner of the pub where the concert was being performed outside and is a video clip of him receiving a gift from Dilana and Magni, a toad, in reference to the name of the pub, “The Thirsty Toad”. The weather was perfect for an outdoor concert, rare for October in Ottawa!

If you require any more information, I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

P.S. My family name is reputed to have Old Norse origins, so there may be some Easons in Iceland!

Regards,
Andrew Easson & Cheryl Druce
113 Goodwood Crescent, RR #2
Carleton Place, Ontario
K7C 3P2
Canada

Not many people now this, but the Easons are very closely related to the Asgeirssons. Historians believe the Easons moved to Canada after a bloody dispute with the Asgeirsson family over musical differences. The tale was immortalised in an Asterix comic. Hopefully, this can be the first step towards reconciliation. -Ed.

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EDITORIALS

Happy 50th Anniversary



Sveinn Birgir Björnsson,
Editor

I bet you are thinking that this title refers to our cover model Bubbi Morthens. You are wrong, although it seems fitting that the 50 years old Bubbi graces the cover of our 50th issue. That's right. This is the semi-centennial issue of the Reykjavík Grapevine. Congrats all around.

This summer, 06.06.06 to be exact, Bubbi Morthens celebrated his 50th anniversary with a grand show in Laugardalshöll. At the time, many people, me included, felt that the concert rather demonstrated the completion of the metamorphosis of Bubbi Morthens from a creative artist to a corporate entity. Brand Bubbi, or Bubbi Group, if you will. Our music critic at the time, Sindri Eldon, said as much in his critique of this event. Although scathing in tone, I still believe Sindri pointed out something that needed to be pointed out amidst the lovefest that surrounded the event. Sindri's piece on Bubbi Morthens created

more public response than anything we have done in the last two years. Everybody now had an opinion on both Bubbi Morthens and Sindri Eldon. The only justified response to such a public outcry was to talk to Bubbi himself. As I imagined, Bubbi felt the same way. We sat down and had a nice talk (well, he talked, I listened) about his music and his values. We still don't see eye to eye, but at least we have an understanding.

The man who in 1986 released an album under the name Freedom For Sale talked a lot about freedom, less than a week before he signed a lifetime recording deal for a record breaking amount of money.

As for other material in this issue, I was excited when I read Haukur M. Magnússon's interview with Hollywood director Eli Roth. Roth sticks to certain ethics in his filmmaking that bring to mind the DIY atmosphere, although

soon enough, he'll be 50 as well and will probably be thoroughly assimilated to the movie industry and their ways.

Steinunn Jakobsdóttir talked to city officials and downtown developers to find out how the city of Reykjavík is likely to progress in the near future. Development projects are underway in many places and it will be exciting to see how the city develops in the next few years.

We also present you with a very interesting interview with father and son, Sigursteinn Jóhannsson and Jóhann Hauksson, two veteran journalists who have just published a blistering account of Icelandic journalism in premier issue of the new magazine Ísafold.

I am not going to keep this much longer, it is the 50th issue and I am in a festive spirit. Drinks are on me.

The Old Men And The Sea



Haukur Magnússon,
Journalist

By no means do I morally disapprove of whaling. Whales are intelligent beings, yes, but so are pigs, chickens and a wide range of other life forms regularly slaughtered and kept in abysmal conditions by the very nations making a fuss about Iceland's recent efforts to hunt minke and fin whales commercially. Some of those sovereign states even regularly go to war and slaughter innocent PEOPLE. Or even, as is the case with the state of Israel, keep entire nations at gunpoint for prolonged periods of time, regularly picking off a few to keep the rest in line (earlier today, Nov. 1, mbl.is reported that the Israeli military killed at least six Palestinians in an unprovoked attack on the village of Beit Lahiya).

So I am of the opinion that we shouldn't really differentiate when it comes to treating sentient beings poorly. I am actually of the conviction that we should aim to treat all forms of life respectfully and actively avoid inflicting pain. I just feel we should be consistent in our attitudes towards the world and its beings, and while we continue treating our farm animals the way we do, and if we indeed do intend to start behaving in a more humanistic manner, that decision should encompass all species. And I do think we should strive

for that. This is what being human is all about, in my opinion: striving for something better.

However, while I do not oppose whaling on moral grounds, I still oppose the Icelandic government's rash decision to reinstate commercial whaling. I do that on the grounds that it is an unwise, irrational decision that reeks of a very specific, Icelandic-male sort of stubbornness rather than being based on any rational thinking at all. For the first part: whales are on the WWF's list of endangered species. This is a fact. What kind of politician can imagine, even for a second, that commercially hunting a species deemed in a state of endangerment is a viable pursuit?

Their grounds for doing so? Creating jobs? But of course. How many? Three? Six? How many Icelanders are currently employed by the whale watching industry? The whales are eating all our valuable fish? Will killing nine of them end their alleged abuse of our resources? We have a historic right? While we're at it, why don't we reinstate laws that let Icelanders hunt Turks down and kill them? Apparently, we have a historic right to do that, too, as it was common practice a few hundred years ago.

Our government's decision to reinstate whaling is obviously designed to get Einar K. Guðfinnsson, Iceland's Minister of Fisheries, re-elected this spring – and to draw attention from some uncomfortable events that were unfolding just as it was magically announced that now, finally, we could commercially hunt whale again. Stuff like the wire-tap controversy, for instance.

And the decision was obviously an unthought out, unprepared and rash one. When the first whale was dragged ashore, it became evident that there wasn't even a place to process it that met today's sanitation standards.

So this whole scenario is actually more reminiscent of an old, stubborn man, intent on having his way just to prove a point than any modern political discourse. It brings to mind a half-blind senior citizen recklessly driving his car down the freeway, endangering commuters because he can't acknowledge the fact that the times have left him behind. I will be old someday, so I can understand their position and even, in a way, respect it. I respect my elders, senile as they may be. I just wish they weren't running my country.

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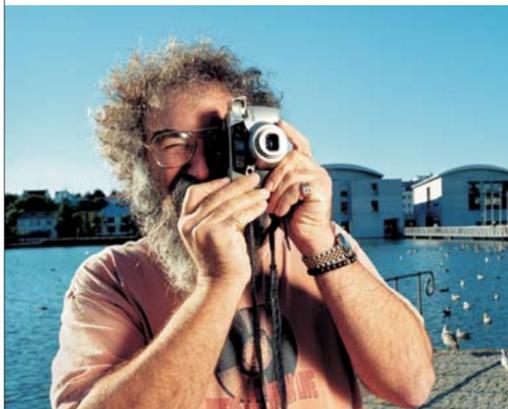
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“Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely”

An interview with Jóhann Hauksson and Sigtryggur Ari Jóhannsson

BY HAUKUR MAGNÚSSON PHOTO BY SKARI

Jóhann Hauksson and Sigtryggur Ari Jóhannsson's recent article in the premier issue of the magazine Ísafold sheds new light on the media law controversy two years ago. The article presents insider accounts of how former Prime Minister Davíð Oddsson attempted to manipulate parliament and various officials to pass his media bill, as well as evidence showing how three Icelandic media staples have been abused by their owners and/or a certain political party. They told the Grapevine all about it.

/// You are both veteran journalists.

What compelled you to delve into such investigations now, in the year 2006?

Hauksson: The media law, or at least the government's attempt to construct one back in the spring of 2004, quickly developed into the one of the biggest uproars Icelandic politics has ever witnessed. It resulted in the president refusing to sign a bill passed by parliament, the first time that has happened in the history of the republic, and the first time Davíð Oddsson had to back down in his 13-year reign of power. Many believe it was a pivotal moment in his career as a politician, which ended shortly thereafter.

I have also been interested in the media law bill for a long time. It was an attempt to make a law that would limit the ownership of certain media. Many thought it was an attempt by the PM, primarily, to put a certain media empire, Baugur, then a young company, in its place. Everyone knew that there was a war of sorts going on between these two parties, Baugur and the PM. And that's interesting: what really happened?

/// Seeing that you've worked for Baugur, and one of you at RÚV, is it a coincidence that your article is only seeing the light of day now, in a new magazine?

Jóhannsson: That's an interesting question. You might also ask if Ísafold's owners, Baugur, have in some way tried to limit our writing – which they haven't. I simply think that there is a need to delve into these matters because it was hard for Icelandic media to approach it in a fitting way when this all went down, there were too many judgement calls and a great political divide. It was hard to grasp what was actually going on. And let's not forget that the media played a part in the matter as well.

Hauksson: The dust has settled a bit now. What we are doing is to go over the whole procedure, which in a way started the fall of 2003, when Baugur bought Channel 2 TV station and the [media conglomerate] Northern Lights. It set off a bomb and soon enough a government committee dedicated to investigating and putting straps on Icelandic media was formed. The heat escalated and in May of 2004, members of parliament were openly attacking each other, one MP ripped the bill in two during his parliament speech and the PM wrote an article on how the President of Iceland is unfit to make calls on the bill... all hell broke loose, basically. Now we are gathering the fragments, in an attempt to put the puzzle together.

/// The way you portray (former Prime Minister) Oddsson's role in these events almost seems like a Greek tragedy, his hubris leading to a massive downfall. Then there are your accounts on how the media was abused...

Hauksson: What reporter wouldn't want to tell that story?

But we also asked ourselves during the investigation if the media was being abused. Was there a reason to legislate it? We came up with at least three different cases, one regarding Morgunblaðið, another regarding RÚV and the third regarding Fréttablaðið. For my part, I don't believe that a media law like the one that was proposed could have contained or prevented any of those cases because it doesn't concern itself with that kind of abuse.



/// Did Baugur ever try and influence your work at Fréttablaðið?

Hauksson: No, I had a lot of freedom. I was, however, familiar with the case of intervention we mention in our article, and it troubled me a great deal to know that the power to decide how and when certain stories would run wasn't in the editor's office. But it isn't an isolated case. One example, I was a reporter with RÚV for a long time. I can remember one occasion where political power was used, strings were pulled and I was scolded for not heeding to the wishes of certain politicians. Lest we forget, RÚV is owned by the general public.

/// Care to elaborate?

Hauksson: It happened a long time ago. They were still building City Hall, and it was a very heated subject. This actually involves a major player in the media law commotion, one Davíð Oddsson, then mayor of Reykjavík. A story I wrote about the city's budget, where one billion ISK were earmarked for the then-in-progress city hall building, made certain people very angry, resulting in me having to explain myself to my supervisors. The threads were all very obvious then, as they are now.

/// Are you saying that the man who risked everything to put a law preventing abuse of the media has at least twice abused the media, or interfered?

Hauksson: This is a pretty blatant example, from '88 or '89.

Of course this whole debacle is a source of irritation, but mainly it evokes a longing to look behind the scenes and try and figure out how it all works. Why can't we just say things the way they really are? Why don't we just tell the truth?

/// On the subject of RÚV, you state that not only did Minister of Education Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir offer Þorsteinn Pálsson (current editor of Fréttablaðið and former minister and MP for the Independent Party) the job of RÚV director before the position was advertised, but also that PM Oddsson went over her head and gave (RÚV's current director) Páll Magnússon the position – again, before applications

for the job were due. These are some heavy allegations...

Hauksson: We have very good inside sources on all of this. In our research, we honoured the three principles of journalism: verification, scepticism and perseverance, and this is what came out. The truth eventually gets out.

Jóhannsson: There are several stories here. What happened is that Gunnarsdóttir tried to surpass the lawful hiring process for that position, and Oddsson went over her head and also surpassed the lawful hiring process. This is a story I feel needs to be told, and told as soon as possible. Members of the government wilfully break constitutional law that's meant to protect civilians against corruption, and there's also the question of power play between two powerful members of a political party. The names of Oddsson and Gunnarsdóttir certainly spice things up, but I believe the main point of interest is to be that in our system of government and in our political parties, there is a chance to abuse power to this extent. You could also say that the other 22 applicants for the position of RÚV director were fooled, misled.

/// So you're pointing to a deadly fault in our system of democracy?

Hauksson: Rather a disease in our system, a curable one at that. I was discussing matters of corruption with a university professor the other day and he referred to them as a matter of public health.

/// Do you believe you'll change anything by presenting evidence of corruption?

Jóhannsson: In the end, we will have to decide how we want these affairs handled. It is interesting to note that it almost seems like everybody just takes for granted that the media is manipulated, and that corruption rules how most public servants get hired. It even seems that people generally accept the fact, even though it goes against constitutional law. I am of the opinion that laws that regularly get shunned by the populace need to be adapted to human behaviour, we are now at the point where we, as a nation, must decide for ourselves how we want things run, we have to elect politicians that we trust to change the laws – or at least abide to the current ones. But the

public won't have that chance while it opts to disregard all these massive signs of corruption we are seeing. And if no one writes about it, or talks about it, we are instigating a status quo.

/// The Independence Party is mentioned repeatedly in your article. Why do you think that is? Is it a matter of securing a position? Is it a special characteristic of said party or would others in power have behaved in the same manner in your opinion?

Jóhannsson: It's all a question of power and interest.

Hauksson: As Lord Acton said, and it's interesting to note that Independence Party influential Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson was at one time prone to quote him, “Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely.” If we want to stand a chance of fixing things, we have to tell the truth, we have to be honest. There must be one single truth in these matters. Sadly, when the situation is at its worst, those in power often set terms of truth. This truth we are telling here, however, is not on their terms, we who are writing this are taking some risk, this is all to our best knowledge and understanding and if it rubs someone the wrong way, it's not our problem. We aim to serve the public; that is the reporter's job.

/// As noted, you drop some bombs while quoting few named sources. Do you believe all of your sources to be solid; would this hold up in a court of law?

Hauksson: There's no reason not to trust them. Most, if not all, of them are people who were involved in the proceedings at the very highest level. They had a direct involvement and are in some cases testifying against themselves. We also did a lot of research and groundwork; it even got to the point of being addictive as more pieces got added to the puzzle. We scrutinise all major media along with the government, it's not a case of 'let's throw things at them and see what sticks'. Not at all. If we get ousted from their corner of society from now on, we'll just have to accept that. We are presenting the truth and the only party whose interest we are concerned with is the general public of Iceland. That's what's important.



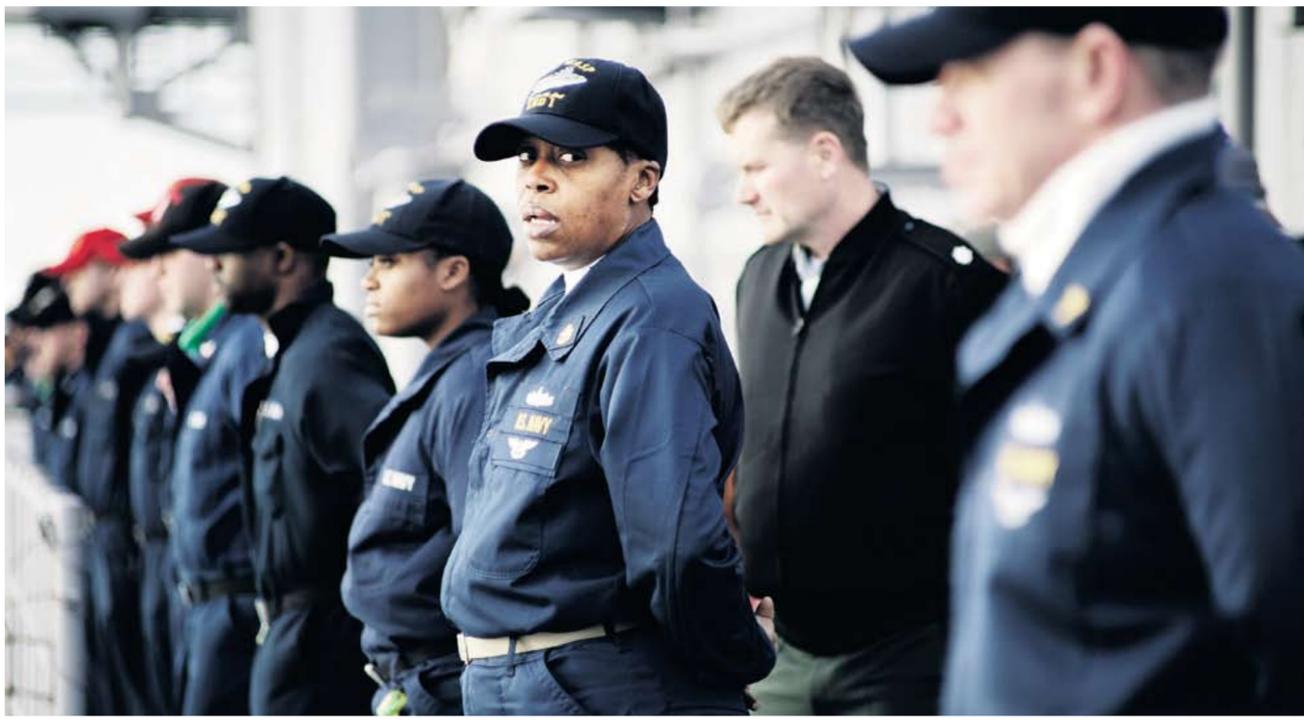
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News in Brief

BY HAUKUR MAGNÚSSON, STEINUNN JAKOBSDÓTTIR, SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON AND VIRGINIA ZECH PHOTO BY SKARI

Iceland Resumes Commercial Whaling

The Icelandic government has permitted commercial whaling, prohibited since 1989, once again. In a press release, the Ministry of Fisheries states that their quota is nine fin whales and 30 minke whales during the 2006-2007 Icelandic fishing year, in addition to the 39 minke whales that will be caught to complete the implementation of the current minke whale research plan, started in 2003. At the time of publication, whaleboat Hvalur 9 had caught seven of the allotted nine fin whales, the captures marking Iceland's first in two decades. Fin whales are the world's second largest whale species. The first brought in by Hvalur was measured at 20-21 metres long; their second spoil is reported to be smaller.

Though controversy surrounding Iceland's whaling efforts seems to have swelled with the size of the animals being caught, the Ministry of Fisheries defends the decision to resume whaling efforts for export, stating that "Iceland's position has always been that whale stocks should be utilised in a sustainable manner, like any other living marine resource" adding that the "Icelandic policy on ocean issues is based on maintaining the future health, biodiversity and sustainability of the ocean surrounding Iceland, in order that it may continue to be a resource that supports and promotes the nation's well-being. This involves conservation and management of the resources based on scientific knowledge and guided by respect for the marine ecosystem as a whole." The Ministry furthermore states that Iceland has the legal right to resume sustainable whaling and that it is likely that the whale products will be consumed both in Iceland as well as internationally.

Heavy, often negative, publicity has followed Iceland's recent fin whale catches. Anti-whaling and environmental organisations like Greenpeace continue to denounce the catches and recently, over 25 nations, including France, the U.S., the U.K., Sweden and Israel, have officially encouraged the Icelandic government to reconsider its stance on whaling. Defending their right to engage in hunting the giant mammals, Ministry of Fisheries statements note that several other countries worldwide currently engage in whaling. Nations with either scientific or commercial whale hunting programmes include the United States, Nor-

way, Japan, Greenland, Russia and ironically the United States.

"Estimated sustainable annual catch levels are 200 and 400 fin and minke whales, respectively. As the catch limits now issued are much lower, the catches will not have a significant impact on these abundant whale stocks," a Ministry of Fisheries press release states. The Ministry also points out historical examples of Iceland abstaining from whaling when stocks have been low as evidence of long-standing concern over sustainable policies in whaling.

New Icelanders' Party and Leftist-Green Party Merge

Paul F. Nikolov, founder of the New Icelanders' Party has announced that the party will merge with the Left-Green Alliance for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Nikolov explains that members of the Left-Green Alliance approached him recently and asked him to partake in the party's upcoming primaries.

According to a press release from the New Icelanders' Party, Nikolov will seek support for seats 1 to 3 in one of the three districts of Reykjavik North, Reykjavik South or the Southwest district.

"When I started the New Icelanders' Party last July, it was to provide representation for the immigrant community where there was little or none before. My hope was not just to gather support for my own party, which has happened, but also to encourage the other five parties to take immigration issues more seriously," says Nikolov, adding: "With the merging of the New Icelanders' Party with the Leftist-Greens, we take yet another big step towards reformation of Icelandic immigration law."

Immigrants' Radio to Go On-Air in November

A cooperative effort between Radio Hafnarfjörður (96.2 FM), secondary school Flensborg and the Intercultural Centre is working to bring a new Immigrants' Radio show to the airwaves in November. The station will feature international music, summaries of weekly Icelandic news in foreign languages, as well as talk radio addressing issues facing Icelandic immigrants.

The inception of Immigrants' Radio will bring to fruition an idea originally conceived by Amal Tamimi three years ago. Those currently involved in the upcoming project hail from over nine different countries. Tamimi tells the Grapevine that once Radio Hafnarfjörður became involved in the concept the planning became easier and enthusiasm rose dramatically. "Before that it was very difficult to get [interest]," Tamimi says. Once Hafnarfjörður pledged their support and advertising for Immigrants' Radio began, those involved in the idea found the local response to be "very interested... Icelanders and foreigners alike... It's just one way to build a bridge and help foreigners in Iceland."

According to Tamimi, the project has raised quite an interest among Iceland's immigrant community: "We are still having more and more people wanting to take part in this project," she stated, going on to say that those involved find Immigrants' Radio to be "very much welcomed by society" thus far.

Russian Flag-Case Solved

Early last month, two rather embarrassed young men returned a Russian flag to its rightful owners after having stolen from the Russian embassy's premises at Túngata the preceding Saturday night.

Conceived as an innocent, if inebriated, joke, the theft is considered a serious incident, as the Icelandic government is bound to protect foreign embassies' diplomatic immunity and therefore their properties. According to RÚV, the men could face up to six years in prison if they are charged for the felony – a good reminder that a night of heavy bingeing can in fact have overtly dramatic consequences.

After the police had taken a statement from the two men, they were released. As they were caught on tape and admitted to the act right away, the case is considered solved. Even though the Russians look at the case as a serious offence, the fact that the men turned themselves in and apologised for their crime is likely to ease the Russian ambassador's concerns.

Icelandic Suicide Rates Decline

Suicide rates in Iceland have declined consid-

erably in recent years, according to a statement from the Icelandic Statistics Bureau as reported by Morgunblaðið. Last year saw 33 suicides take place in Iceland, which is a great decrease compared to 50 in the year 2000.

As usual, suicide remains more common among males, with 24 men committing the act last year as opposed to nine females. Female suicide was most common in the age group of 41-60, with males occupying a wider range from 31-60. Two individuals under 20 committed suicide, and six from the ages of 16-30.

Ekstra Bladet Criticises Icelandic Investment in Denmark

The highly negative critique on foreign, namely Icelandic, investors published in the Danish newspaper Ekstra Bladet on Sunday 29 October, has been responded to by Denmark's Den Danske Bank with a memo to those concerned to discredit much of the report. The bank admits that the exchange rate with Iceland may be affected; however, they hold that Icelandic investors should otherwise remain unaffected by the contents of Ekstra Bladet's article.

Ekstra Bladet is owned by Denmark's largest newspaper publisher, JP/Politiken. Since Iceland's largest media conglomerate, 365 Media, began their launch of a free Danish morning paper, Nyhedsavisen, in September 2005, the Danish press has struck back with a flurry of their own free dailies, a Sunday celebrity paper, and by redesigning much of the print media already in distribution. Ekstra Bladet, an evening daily, is purportedly retaliating at the threat posed by 365 Media through their negative reporting on Icelandic foreign investment as much as for any other journalistic motive.

Den Danske Bank previously issued predictions of trouble for the Icelandic economy in the coming year, which it continues to stand by. Like the level of impact that Ekstra Bladet's reporting, accurate or not, will have on the tone of Icelandic investment in Denmark, or on 365's publishing decisions there, prediction of recession is an issue that remains at present unclear.

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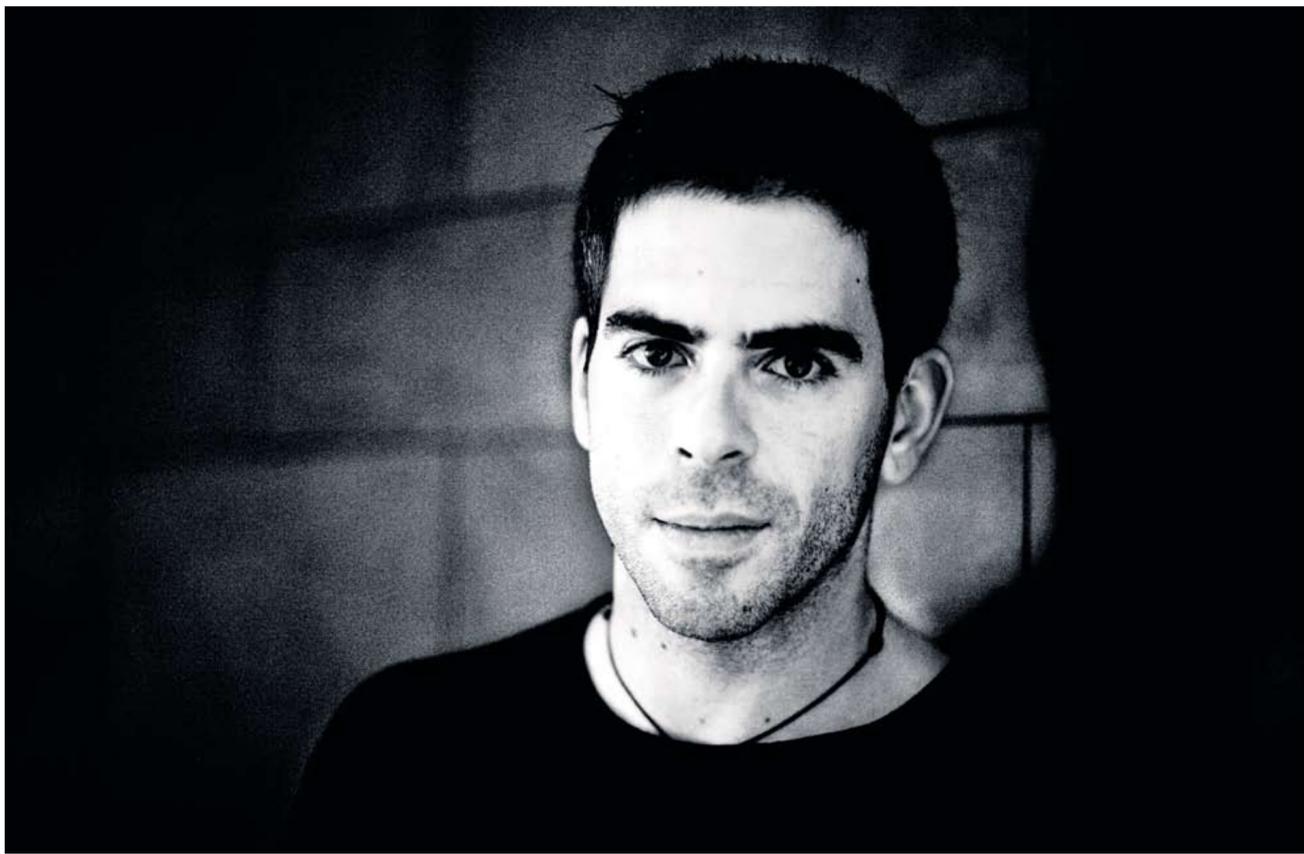
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No Compromise, No Rules

Eli Roth discusses filmmaking, Iceland, blood and punk rock

BY HAUKUR MAGNÚSSON PHOTOS BY SKARI

Infamous horror director Eli Roth, a trail-blazer in his own right, already has a highly publicised (at least around these parts) relationship with Iceland – he says the idea for his highly successful directorial debut, the now classic *Cabin Fever*, came to him during a summer stay at farm Ingólfshvöll (near Selföss) in 1991. He has since returned many times and even went as far as creating an Icelandic character (played by the charismatic Eyþór Guðjónsson) for his mainstream breakthrough *Hostel*. Last month saw him return to shoot footage for *Hostel*'s sequel. When the Grapevine met up with him, he was excitedly telling one of his colleagues about *Hostel* being chosen the top 'scary moment' movie of all time (the runner-up was *A Clockwork Orange*). We enter mid-conversation:

...well, it's certainly an honour to even be considered for the same category as Stanley Kubrick, unless it's the category of deceased directors, maybe.

/// Yeah, congratulations on that. I actually considered *Hostel* to be more nerve-racking than actually scary...

– Yeah, some people say it's the most disgusting thing they've ever seen and others were actually disappointed that it wasn't disgusting enough. I think it's directly related to your taste and what you are looking for. For instance, people were being told that *The Exorcism of Emily Rose* was the scariest movie ever, but then came out feeling indifferent to it – how a movie affects you directly pertains to how you're set up for it beforehand, especially a scary movie. If the marketing claims that it's a really scary movie, then maybe no one's gonna really be scared by it. I wish everybody could go see *Hostel* without knowing a thing about it or having any expectations.

/// I actually did that. I wasn't the biggest fan of *Cabin Fever*, even though my friends were really enthusiastic about it.

– Yeah... I mean... Tarantino and Peter Jackson loved it, so it doesn't really matter...

/// That's true. But why the fuck movies? Why aren't you a rock star?

– Well, I think if you watch my animated short films, *Rotten Fruit*, on the *Cabin Fever* DVD, where I write and sing all the music, the question will answer itself. I am a terrible singer. I love to rock out and I'm really into rock music, but I enjoy listening to it more than making it. I think you can still live like a rock star without being one.

/// Well, it's maybe a nonsense question, but you do seem to approach filmmaking in a much more punk rock way than many of your peers.

– No, I think it's a very good question. I've always felt a synergy between my favourite movies and my favourite punk rock. The movies of the of the late 70s and early 80s reflect in the music, around the time when the punk rock scene was getting started in England with the Sex Pistols and then eventually migrates to Southern California in the early 80s, with bands like The Dead Kennedys, Circle Jerks, Minor Threat, The Misfits... the entire Repo Man soundtrack, really... there's a connection. What I love about punk rock – and the horror movies from that time – is that they don't give a fuck. They're shunned by mainstream society, don't expect radio play, there's no compromising to do and thus no rules. There is a feeling and attitude in the best punk rock that's also inherent in the best low-budget movies. Someone once described *Cabin Fever* as a 'splatterpunk' movie, which is a good way of talking about it. I love the freedom, attitude and energy of the best punk rock; those elements are also evident in my favourite horror films.

/// An uncompromising attitude and freedom that perhaps follows from not being entirely dependent on the mainstream market and its standards?

– Absolutely! And I think the irony is, with the success of both of my films, that I am making movies for a very specific audience... I just had no idea of how wide that audience really was. I don't think Nirvana were making albums that were meant to go on every shelf at Wal-Mart, for instance, they were just three guys in a garage expressing these feelings they had and then it unexpectedly got caught up in a greater tide. I'm friends with the guys that made *Saw*, also a very low-budget movie, and we share the feeling that we're just basically making the movies we'd like to see. Our attitude is that they're not for everybody. The problem with movies nowadays is that everything gets watered down because they're supposed to appeal to the widest audience possible; thus, people take out anything remotely offensive. The horror movies we love, movies like *Cannibal Holocaust* and the like, they offend people. They're shocking. The goal is not necessarily to shock and offend, rather to make a movie that's not afraid of how it'll be perceived.

/// If we stick to the punk rock analogy: when you came out with *Cabin Fever*, no one in the mainstream was really doing that type of gory, bleak movie, much the same as when Nirvana came out with their take on pop-punk. Immediately after Nirvana's success, however, you got a lot of Stone Temple Pilote-like bands – are there any STP-like directors on your trail?

– There are plenty, although I won't name any names. I think the cream rises to the top, 15 years later, it's still Nirvana and Pearl Jam, but at the time there were all these other bands around following their lead that no one remembers by now. It's more of a marathon than a race, you have to be careful, like Quentin, to not be THE director of a certain moment that's soon gone. You want to have a long-term, diversified career that increases in respect as the years go by.

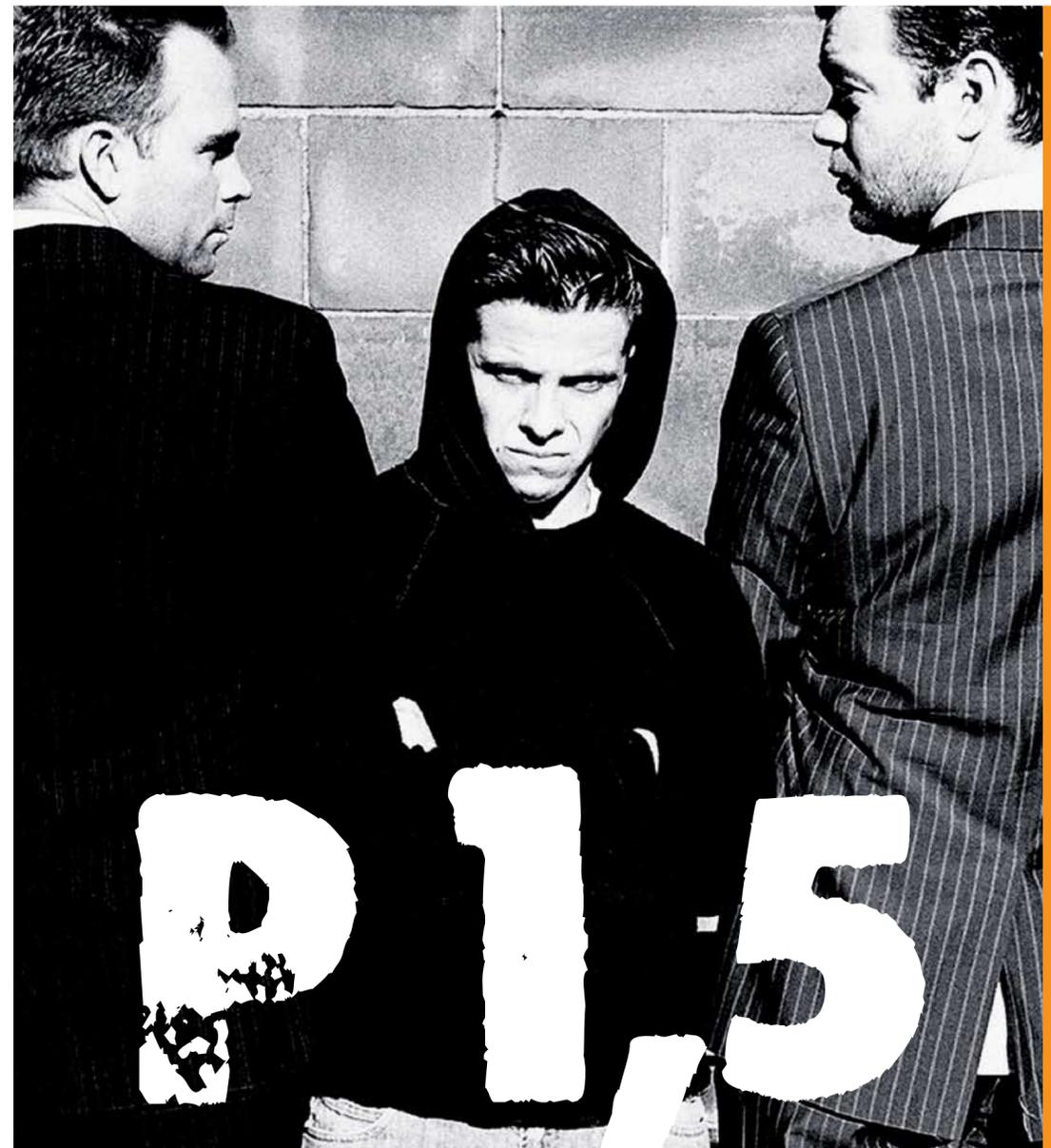
/// Defining the moment, instead of chasing it?

– Yeah. And we have both types out there, though I won't name any names. When I was doing *Cabin Fever*, the one dude out there doing the violence and nudity thing to my knowledge was Rob Zombie. I was completely blown away by *The Devil's Rejects*, I think it's a masterpiece on par with the original *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Rob was clearly not trying to make a movie that appealed to everyone. After *Cabin Fever*, I was offered a lot of films that I just turned down. I don't want to be making *Dukes of Hazzard* or *House of Wax*. It happened again after *Hostel*, I got offered movies like *Die Hard 4*, and they're also remaking *The Hulk* again... I was suddenly being offered these hundred million dollar movies that I really have no interest in even seeing. I'd much rather see a continuation of *Hostel*, with Icelandic characters, foreign languages without subtitles. The goal is ultimately to make better films and constantly improve on what you do, but there are guys I see who I know won't last. They're all smoke and mirrors, more interested in making money, getting attention and being a cool director than the things that really matter.

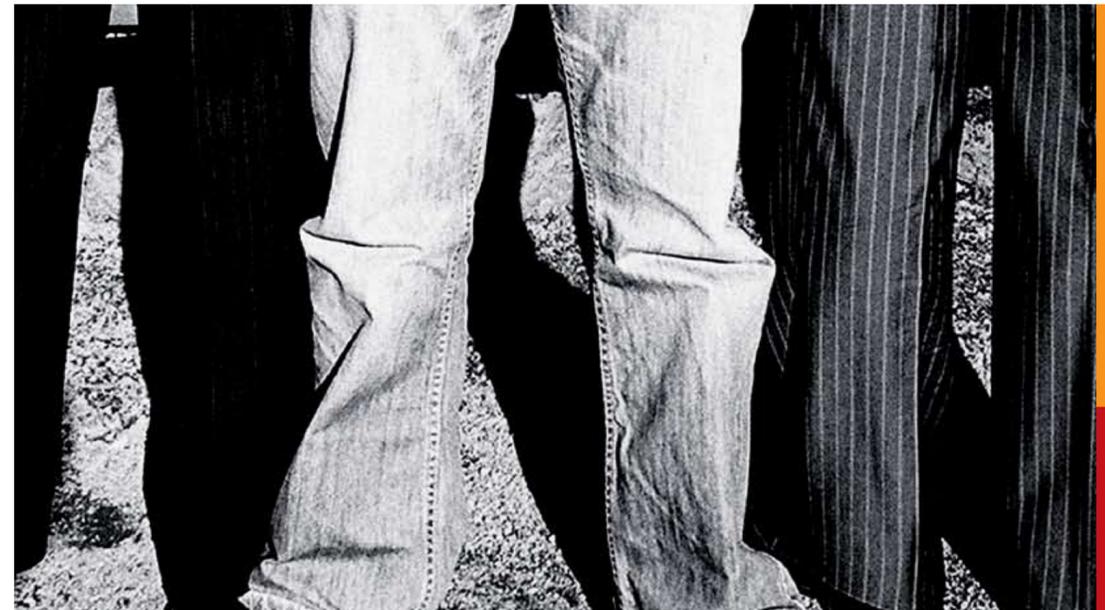
/// Carrying on with the analogy, then. Making art that you don't expect the public to buy into gives you a lot of freedom, but when it catches on and you're operating on a professional level you face all these expectations. You're suddenly defining a moment and there are all these people making money off what you do. Many get tainted by the resulting pressure, have you faced similar situations since your breakthrough?

– That's a good question. When all this money is all of the sudden being generated, you're suddenly an industry, creating jobs for hundreds of people indirectly involved with the movie making process, designing DVD covers or whatnot. For *Hostel 2*, it's weird

>>> CONTINUES ON PAGE 12



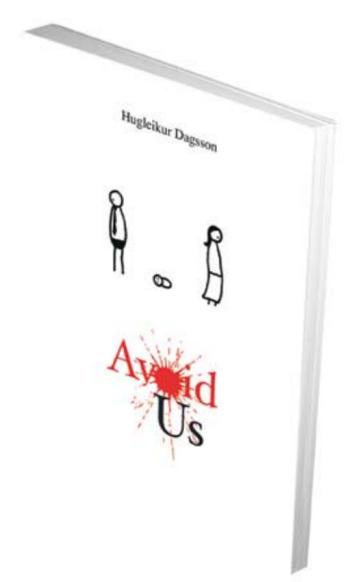
PATREKUR 1,5 SÝNT Á SMÍÐAVERKSTÆÐINU OG Í FRAMHALDSSKÓLUM



Rúnar Freyr: Þegar maður kynnir sér hlutina, skilar maður þá betur. Ef maður er gagnkynhæður veit maður til dæmis ekki svo mikið um hvernig líf þeirra sem eru samkynhæðir raunverulega er lífr en maður fer að kynna sér það. Við ferjum Felix Bergsson til okkar á eafingu og það var frábært að geta spurt hann um ýmislegt sem hefur komið upp í hugam á eafingartímanum. Maður er farnir að skilja homma betur, átta sig á lífinu þeir landa, hvaða forðumum og áhrifum þeir geta mátt. Sláji. Þegar unginguminn, Patrekur, birtist, þá finnst honum það að hvernig hann sé samur við þetta vera rétt, það er bara líft og óþeglegt. Honum finnst ekkert við þetta vera rétt, það er bara líft og óþeglegt. Hann veit ekkert um þessa hluti, en svo kynnist hann þessum mönnum, Rúnar Freyr. Starfleiðarans sýnist um það að reyna að skilja öllkar manngörur. Við erum alltaf að fast við öllkar persónur, reyna að skilja hvernig vegna þess segja eitthvað eða hoga sér á einhverri hátt. Við erum alltaf að leita að einhvers konar þekkingu og skilningi, og þess vegna hefur sú vinna að leika í leksýningu alltaf meiri söa minni áhrif á mann.



RÚNAR FREYR



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OPINION



Don't Worry; This is Iceland

GABRIELE R. GUDBJARTSSON

Her name I cannot disclose. Since it happened I've had recurring nightmares about the dialogue that took place that morning. She awoke hung-over, a smidge sheepish from the previous night's activities and utterly confused about her environment. The only problem was that her environment happened to be my living room sofa.

"Hi, do you know where you are?" I asked as I tried to comprehend how this anonymous woman ended up on the chocolate brown leather couch before me.

"No, not really," she replied. "Well, let me tell you. You and my husband shared a taxi last night. He said that you were so drunk (although this was quite an understatement from the way he described) he didn't feel comfortable leaving you alone with the cab driver."

A pregnant pause stood between us as I searched for an ashamed, "Oh yeah, that was me," expression on her face. But her face remained blank and from the stare she gave me, it was clear that my

citizens a bit naïve about the realities of the rest of the world. Which leads me to question, what are the consequences of living in such a "harmless" society?

As a foreigner in this country, it's taken me a moment to adjust and realise that just because a population is unsuspecting of one another doesn't make them illogical. There is no arguing with the fact that growing up in Iceland has its advantages. To know that your children are protected when you're not around and that your neighbours follow the Golden Rule is something to be admired. However, the thought of my daughter ending up on a stranger's living room couch, with no understanding of the full consequences of her actions, leaves me chilled to the bone. It's as if the thought of rape and murder never occurred to her. As if people were incapable of committing such crimes on this mid-Atlantic slice of heaven.

The formation of our behaviour is quite often dictated by our immediate surroundings. And the

"When it comes to exits, Elvis Presley has nothing on this girl."

"guest" was not up for a game of charades at nine in the morning.

"He told you that you could sleep on our couch last night," I pronounced a bit more directly than the other informative words that seemed surprisingly sweet considering the position I was in.

After my brilliant rendition of an after-school TV special, I finally gave up and said, "You know what, why don't you go and use the bathroom and then call someone to pick you up?"

"Yeah, okay," she quickly agreed, as she escaped to a private sanctuary free from my gaze and the awkward silence.

After about 12 minutes of shuffling around the house, she proceeded to make her big exit – I had to stop her. Trying my best to muster up my most non-judgemental voice, I said, "You know, you really need to be careful. What you did last night was really dangerous." The following statement that fell out of this young girl's mouth could not have been more shocking. She took one step out of the door, turned to look me straight in the eye and with a most comforting smile responded, "Oh don't worry; this is Iceland."

When it comes to exits, Elvis Presley has nothing on this girl.

According to most people, Iceland is a safe place to live. The country's total prison population is similar to that of a medium-sized church congregation. Young children walk around alone and oblivious to the dangers of lurking kidnappers. I see people leave their cars unattended, keys in ignition, engine running. Although living in a trusting and utopian society seems ideal, I think it may leave its

danger in carrying such careless behaviour to a place outside of one's utopia may lead to devastating outcomes. It's equally critical to concede that our societies are in constant change as immigration and emigration modifies the profile of our "ideal and safe" environment. Most people learn from their mistakes at the moment in which genuine regret sinks in. Conversely, some of us don't even get the chance to regret because we're left with something far worse – denial.

Growing up and living in America for most of my life has definitely jaded me in a couple of areas. When I moved to New York City I became disgustingly suspicious of everyone around me. It didn't matter if it was the postman or the girl at the check-out counter; everyone was capable of ripping me off and by no means deserved to be trusted. I developed a thick skin, a faster walk and no-nonsense attitude about life in general. Being taken advantage of became the worst possible crime that could be committed against me. I was stripped from the notion that relying on society to make the right decision was a realistic concept. Through this experience, I felt that I had grown and learned to read between the lines. However, it also left me incapable of believing that things could be different.

The purpose of sharing this experience is not to highlight the naïveté that plagues all Icelanders but rather for people to recognise the difference between enjoying the benefits of one's country versus taking risks that could endanger one's existence in any given society.



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Reconstructing a City

How to Revitalise the City Centre

BY STEINUNN JAKOBSDÓTTIR PHOTO BY SKIPULAGS- OG BYGGINGARSVÍÐ: LOFTMYND ÚR LUFR

The future of Reykjavík's city centre has been the subject of heated discussion since witnessing a decline in shopping in the last decade. The lack of clear urban planning policy before and incessant debates in City Council that have led nowhere have been blamed for the decline of the downtown area. Even though the ambience has been changing in recent years and new shops and unique designer stores are opening up in the area, implements to make the centre the city's main shopping district are far from fully realised.

With a new specific land-use plan for Laugavegur, new plans for the Concert and Conference Centre by the harbour area and the construction of multiple apartments around Hlemmur, Skuggahverfi, and Mýrargata-Slippsvæði, along with planned large-scale zoning proposals to revitalise the city centre and increase the quality of shopping, the cityscape is certain to change.

"Today we have a city centre with every possibility to fully develop as a central service and shopping district," says Helga Bragadóttir, head of Reykjavík City's Planning Office. She adds that newly approved planning projects present some great opportunities for the future and that in the master plan for general land use for Reykjavík, dense residential areas in the city centre, redeveloping neglected spots and intermixing new apartment buildings, shops and offices are given special importance. This, she says, will be done with the aim of increasing job opportunities in the city centre and increasing its inhabitants, in harmony with the present environment.

Bragadóttir further explains by pointing to how the city centre declined with suburbanisation: "The downtown area has been growing to the east in recent decades and with

changed shopping habits, the centre has been moving to the new suburbs, a boom reaching its peak when Kringlan was constructed in 1987. Smáralind shopping centre also had a great impact and didn't help managing this process."

Five years ago suburbanisation reached a certain climax with a depressing effect on the city centre. Large, well-established companies as well as fashion shops and utility stores closed their doors and moved their businesses to Kringlan, Smáralind or to the suburbs. Banks more or less disappeared in the centre and large spaces stood empty on Laugavegur, resulting in the area being bypassed by many residents altogether as the lack of comprehensive service was more evident than ever.

This situation is far from being resolved. In a conversation with Þórir Sigurbjörnsson, owner of the independent Visir grocery store that has been located on Laugavegur since 1915, he expressed particular discontent with the Iceland Telecom Company Síminn, which disappeared from the city centre earlier this year. Sigurbjörnsson emphasises the importance of maintaining a variety of shops in the centre. This is an opinion he shares with Einar Örn Stefánsson, managing director of the Downtown Development Society.

"We at the Downtown Development Society have protested this development and even talked to the executives at Síminn about their shocking disappearance and challenged them to reconsider the decision," Stefánsson said and pointed out that it not only applies to electronic shops but public service companies like banks and travel agencies as well. "Today, Landsbankinn is the only bank with its headquarters in the city centre."

Stefánsson continues: "It is sad to say that since 1996 the number of shops in the centre

has been decreasing and hit rock bottom three years ago with a total of 300 shops. Luckily, the city centre is slowly coming around and the number has been going up again. The large number of tourists who do a lot of shopping in the centre has helped this development. The number of tourists has never been as high as this summer, which resulted in a 22-26% increase in shopping since last year."

Even though the centre is slowly but surely shifting away from the earlier path and the number of pedestrians in the whole downtown area is increasing, the lack of large and less pricy fashion shops as well as electronic and appliance stores are keeping many Reykjavík residents away from the centre. If the Planning Office's ideas on strengthening the downtown area become a reality this may all be about to change. As an example, according to the detailed land-use plan, 60,000 square metres can now be used to construct new buildings at Laugavegur. Of that space, 30,000 square metres can be added to the 27,000 used for commercial space today. That won't be done without making some sacrifices though.

Mixing old with new

Although the current City Council majority has reached an agreement on the important role of constant revision in making a flourish, heated debates rage on about how the process should be executed in Laugavegur. Many fear that with the planned demolition, the street, as well as the heart of the city, will lose its charm. Furthermore, that when replaced with new luxury housing and stylish commercial buildings, the former charm of the old city will suffocate and gradually vanish.

Asked about building preservation and protection of the old streetscape, Bragadóttir

points out how important it is to respect and preserve the historical heritage as a window on the time in history during which they were constructed. At the same time, she says, it is important to improve housing conditions and meet modern, international standards.

Bragadóttir continues: "Around 50 houses at Laugavegur are listed, but some old ones may be sacrificed for the sake of development. At Laugavegur, the city's trading history from 1850 is reflected in its old and new buildings. The houses are diverse and all sorts of architectural styles can be seen when you walk down the street. In my view, old and new buildings can mix quite well together. Just look at the Alþingi patch. We can see how modern buildings adjust to old ones, giving us an opportunity to read Icelandic architectural history right in the city centre."

Stefánsson adds, in a similar vein, that the Development Society has supported demolition proposals noting that people have to be aware of how difficult it is to reconstruct to everyone's satisfaction. "Of course no one wants some ugly concrete clumps at Laugavegur. We need to renew as well as honour the history."

There have been talks on building a small indoor shopping centre at Laugavegur. I ask Stefánsson how that idea could help change the things.

"We have been discussing that possibility for years. Having small indoor shopping malls at both ends of Laugavegur, connecting Hlemmur and Kvosin, would in my view have a very positive impact on the city. The problem facing the downtown area has always been that Laugavegur is in a way anarchic. No one can interfere with what kinds of shops are opened up where. Not like in Kringlan and Smáralind where there's a certain mon-

archy and everything is planned beforehand. At the same time that this disorderliness is the centre's main charm, it is keeping it from developing. With an indoor mini-mall, we could maybe get multifunction shops and service companies to open up business again."

Bragadóttir herself thinks that a mini-mall could be good for the city and help bring as diverse an offering of services as possible back to downtown. "I think it could have a snowball effect and draw shoppers downtown," she tells the Grapevine.

An area called the Frakkastígur patch has been named in that context and the many potential construction possibilities have caused a stir in the City Council. The Liberal Party has stressed their worries about possible changes in the streetscape at the corner of Laugavegur and Frakkastígur. A possibility the Party members think is "a pending environmental disaster."

Ólafur F. Magnússon, the Liberal Party's representative in the Reykjavík City Council tells the Grapevine that he isn't necessarily opposing plans for a mini-mall or rejecting development plans for Laugavegur, but doesn't approve of the way things are being planned. He is worried about the democratic pathway, and finds the planned constructions, which in his view are based on far too extensive demolition plans, to be badly introduced to Reykjavík's residents. He also points out that the plans for increased shopping space can be successful even if the buildings at Laugavegur 41 and 45 remain.

Magnússon has for long fought for the preservation of Laugavegur's history and preservation of old houses in the city. In a conversation with the Grapevine he said: "The struggle now mostly centres upon the area between Vatnsstígur and Frakkastígur on the one hand and between Skólavörðustígur and Smiðjustígur on the other. A special concern today is the planned demolition of old houses at Laugavegur 4, 6, 41 and 45, where new buildings are intended to replace the old ones."

He believes these plans to be completely out of touch with the street's history. "Four-storey buildings don't belong at the bottom of Laugavegur nor at the corner of Frakkastígur and Laugavegur. In the latter

case, the construction of thousands of square metres for new buildings has been allowed and it is completely unnecessary to reject the Laugavegur streetscape itself," he explains. Magnússon furthermore raises concerns over how almost unconditional servility to building contractors has been characteristic for the work of both present and past majority in the City Council. Magnússon and the Liberal Party would like to see to it that development is "both reasonable and respectful to the city's cultural history and future generations."

Multipled residential areas

Laugavegur isn't the only thing changing in the urban landscape. New housing and residential areas around Hlemmur, where up to 1,000 new apartments are planned, the

area, which can make the city grow and blossom again," she adds.

The demolition at Hamþjóðan and areas around Brautarholt, Einholt and Þverholt has already begun, where the Student Housing Association is working on a specific land-use plan to build more student apartments. At the Mýrargata-Slippsvæði in the west-end harbour area, multi-storey apartment buildings in addition to shops and businesses are planned.

"With the influx of new apartments in the centre there will be more possibilities for employees to live close to their workplace," Bragadóttir points out. Mentioning the enlargement of National University Hospital at Hringbraut, the proposals for the University of Iceland, Reykjavík University and in

Five years ago suburbanisation reached a certain climax with a depressing effect on the city centre. Large, well-established companies as well as fashion shops and utility stores closed their doors and moved their businesses to Kringlan, Smáralind or to the suburbs.

build-up at Skuggahverfi and the construction of student apartments and multi-family houses is only a fraction of what yet to come.

"We have found a growing interest among people who want to live in the centre and want to be able to travel without relying on cars. That is why we want to offer people the chance to choose from new apartments or old houses with a history and easy access to daily service. The Development Policy for the Central Area of Reykjavík, which began in 1997, has resulted in a big turnover. After almost ten years of hard work, we can now pride ourselves on new buildings, renovated old houses and last but not least an open and vibrant debate about the future of the city's centre," Bragadóttir says.

"I think that with increased housing density, higher quality transport and more parking spaces in the centre we will have good conditions for diverse commerce in the

particular, the planned competition on the Vatnsmýri area, where ample opportunities are provided, she is positive that large workplaces like these will have a great impact on the centre.

The biggest development project at the moment is the Reykjavík Concert and Conference Centre at the east harbour. Some think this will be the city's hallmark while others have expressed concerns about waste of money and rash decisions. Bragadóttir doesn't share her opponents' view and thinks the Concert and Conference Centre will transform the city centre in a good way.

"There are 90,000 square metres of land that will be used not only for the Centre building, but also for a hotel, shops, apartments and restaurants. Around 1600 parking spots are planned, which will not only be useful for concert and conference guests but also for the whole downtown area. When the

Centre opens up in four years I think it will have an enormous effect," Bragadóttir says.

Magnússon shares a similar view about the Concert and Conference Centre and is positive as well on the planned construction from the harbour area to Lækjartorg. This, he thinks, is as an example of how compelling build-up ideas in the centre are possible without cultural values being destroyed. He also believes in the plans for increased density in the Hlemmur area, Mýrargata-Slippsvæði and in Skuggahverfi, but adds that more consultation with current residents would have been preferable.

But will all these projects, housing ideas and increased density have the effect needed to improve the city's shopping habits?

"I think that the growth in population will indeed help and for the most part contribute to a vibrant daily life in the centre. All these new residents must be a boost for shopping and restaurants in the city." Another proposal from the Development Society is the construction of a docking pier for cruise ships at the east harbour in relation to the Concert and Conference Centre. "It would have a huge effect if we could get all the tourists who arrive with the cruise ships to walk directly off the ship and into the city centre."

At last, I ask what the Development Society hopes for in the future.

"For the most part, that developments at Laugavegur will be successful and that construction will start soon. We can't wait much longer. I am rather positive since we have a lot of good ideas regarding the city's development. The main goal now is to get city authorities to carry them out," Stefánsson says.

The fact remains that even if the city centre is on the right track again, with help from inventive merchants, hard working and creative individuals, and lively events, it is up to city authorities to make the final move and carry out the project with care. But with the will and the constructive vision of good people, putting life back in the centre is an attainable project.



Whaler Down

Looking back at the sinking of the whaleboats in 1986

BY SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON PHOTO BY MORGUNBLADIÐ: ÁRNI SÆBERG

This November marks the 20th anniversary of the sinking of the whaleboats Hvalur 6 and Hvalur 7 in Reykjavík harbour and the sabotaging of the whale processing station in Hvalfjörður. Responsible for the action were two animal rights activists and members of the Sea Shepherd organisation, Dave Howitt and Rodney Coronado, who travelled to Iceland "to infiltrate Iceland for the sole purpose of causing maximum economic sabotage to their whaling industry." The event caused outrage among Icelanders, possibly tarnishing the reputation of animal rights organisations with Icelanders for generations.

Media coverage of the event was, unsurprisingly perhaps, one-sided. The action was described as an act of vandalism, an act of terrorism or the act of madmen, depending on the media. Coronado, now serving time in an Arizona prison facility for an arson attempt at a Michigan animal research facility, recently gave his side of matters in an article written for issue 28, 2005 of No Compromise, a grass-roots magazine for animal rights activists.

Describing the sabotaging of the whale processing station, Coronado says: "Our first task was the sabotage of the six huge diesel generators that provided power for the station. [...] Next, we moved onto the centrifuges that processed whale blubber into a high-grade lubricating oil that was used in missiles. Smash the delicate gear, we next located what we could not find at the meatpacking plant: the Whalemeat Mountain. We were forced to wedge open the refrigeration units and then sabotage the refrigeration units themselves so that hopefully the meat would thaw and spoil.

[...] We found the computer control room that kept the entire station's machinery fully automated. We smashed the computer panels until sparks flew and LEDs flashed and the beautiful music of machines dying all around

us could be heard. There was no time to waste, so we moved next to the ship's store, where the spare parts for the four whaling ships were kept. Taking the most expensive pieces, we walked to the edge of the docks and tossed them into the waters."

According to reports from the daily newspaper Morgunblaðið at the time, estimated damages exceeded 20 million ISK at least. Andrés Magnússon, foreman at the whale processing station at the time told Morgunblaðið that it appeared the whole plant had been the target of an air raid, adding: "It seems as if these men were controlled by their urge for vandalism rather than by an organised strategy."

After the whaling station, Coronado and Howitt moved to Reykjavík harbour, where the whaling boats Hvalur 6, 7 and 8 were tied to dock. Entering the boats in the darkness proved easy. The night watchman was located in Hvalur 8, while the other two whalers were empty. After making sure they were alone aboard the boat, they went to work.

"We began to wrestle off the 16 or more nuts that held the valve cover in place. When the cover was fully removed, the ocean water would flood first the engine room and then the rest of the ship's compartments, dragging it to a watery grave in Reykjavík's deep harbour."

After sinking the two whaleboats, Coronado and Howitt took off for Keflavik Airport to take the first plane out of the country. Some 20 minutes after a distress call was reported from Reykjavík harbour where two whaling boats were sinking, Coronado and Howitt, now on the run, were pulled over by police officers on their way to the airport.

"My first thought was, 'No, they can't be that good; they can't have been watching us this whole time...' Still, there were two ships quickly sinking and minutes ticking away before our flight to freedom would lift

off, possibly leaving us for the next 11 years to fine tune our masonry skills at the local prison. And a police officer was walking to my window while David and I sat soaked in water, with grease from engines all over our clothes."

"The officer asked me to get into his car. Looking at David as he sat with eyes forward, I got out of the car and into the back seat of the police cruiser. The officers ignored me and spoke to each other in Icelandic before finally turning around and asking me in plain English, 'Have you drunken any alcohol tonight?'"

"Almost laughing, I said, 'No, I do not even drink!' which was a lie, and he then asked if he could smell my breath. It was tempting to utter a joke, but hot coffee on an Icelandair jet was calling. So I breathed on him, and he wished me a safe trip to the airport, knowing that was where we were probably headed because of the early morning departure."

That police officer is probably still cursing himself today after having the nation's only saboteur since the Second World War into his police car and then letting him go."

Howitt and Coronado both made it out of the country and neither of them has ever been charged with any wrongdoing in Iceland, although both have admitted responsibility. According to Icelandic police authorities, the statute of limitation for the act passed ten years ago.

Speaking with the Grapevine, Sea Shepherd's founder, Paul Watson said: "I never could understand why they didn't charge, other than that they didn't want the publicity. We told Icelandic authorities that we would come to Iceland to stand trial if they wanted us to. They didn't respond to that."

Asked about the reasons for Sea Shepherd's action against Icelandic whaling at the time,

Watson responds that the organisation was responding to illegal whaling in Iceland, saying: "I consider it to be a policing act. Iceland's activities were illegal after the (1986 International Whaling Commission's) moratorium came into effect. We act in accordance with the United Nations World Charter for Nature. The U.N. Charter states under its chapter on implementation that any non-governmental organisation or individual is empowered to uphold international conservation law. I have used that effectively in my defence before."

When asked if he believes the action was effective, Watson replies: "I believe it was. It brought a lot of international publicity to illegal whaling, it shut those vessels down for quite some time and it cost the Icelandic whaling industry a lot of money. But all our victories are temporary, we have always known that."

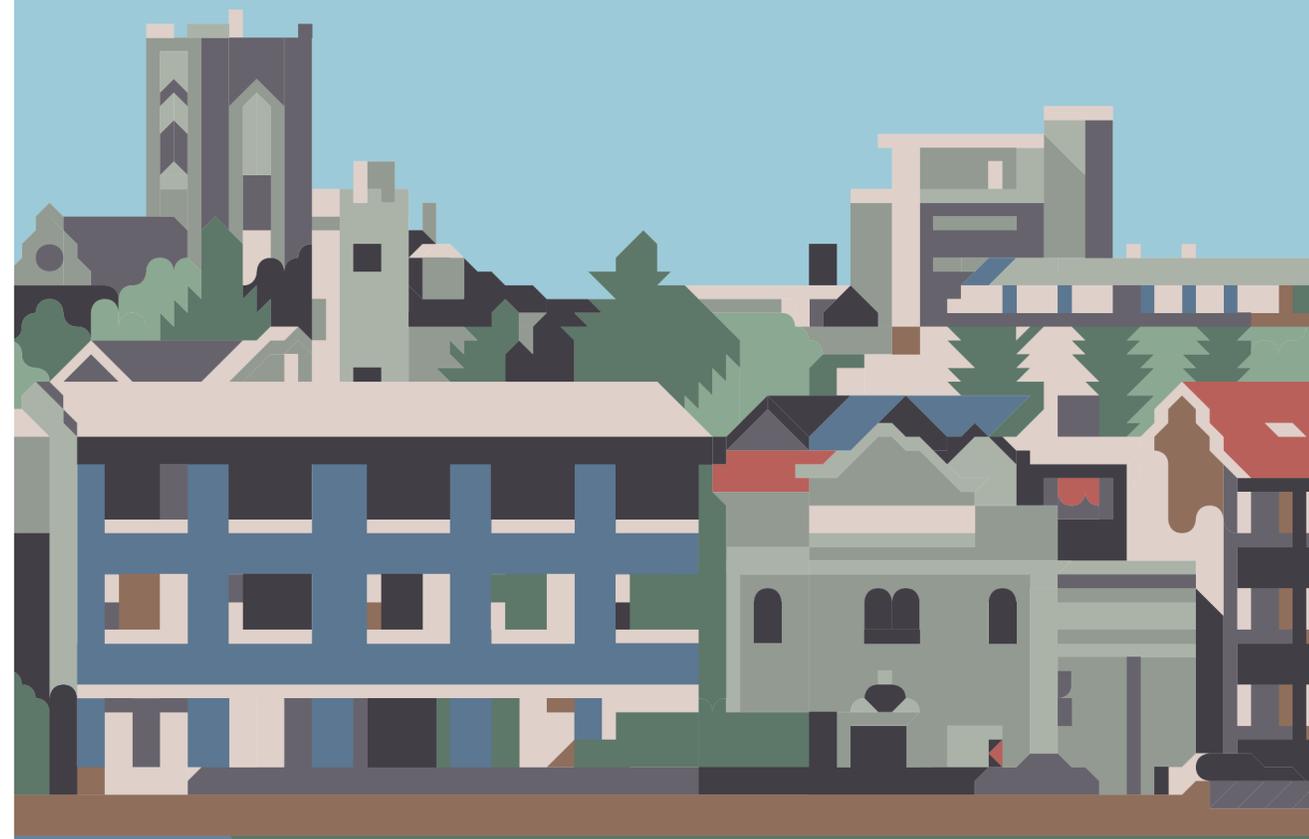
With Iceland's Minister for Fisheries announcing the decision to resume commercial whaling in Iceland last month, does Watson expect Sea Shepherd to take similar actions against the Icelandic whaling industry in the near future?

"Well, all of our energies are being directed against Japanese whaling but let's say in principle that we are against whaling in Iceland, Norway, the Faroe Islands and Japan, and it is all illegal whaling as far as I am concerned. It is illegal to export whale meat. Nation-states have got to learn how to respect international laws, before they can expect individuals to respect the law. I think action will certainly be taken against shipments of whale meat to Japan. We would certainly view any attempts to trade in whale meat as a criminal activity."

Rod Coronado's article can be found at: <http://www.nocompromise.org/issues/sinkingwhalers.html>

Inside Reykjavík

The Grapevine Guide



The only guide that tells you the talk of the swimming pools, how to find the best cafes, how to recover from all night parties, an A to Z of Icelandic music and what "Viltu kaffi?" can really mean.

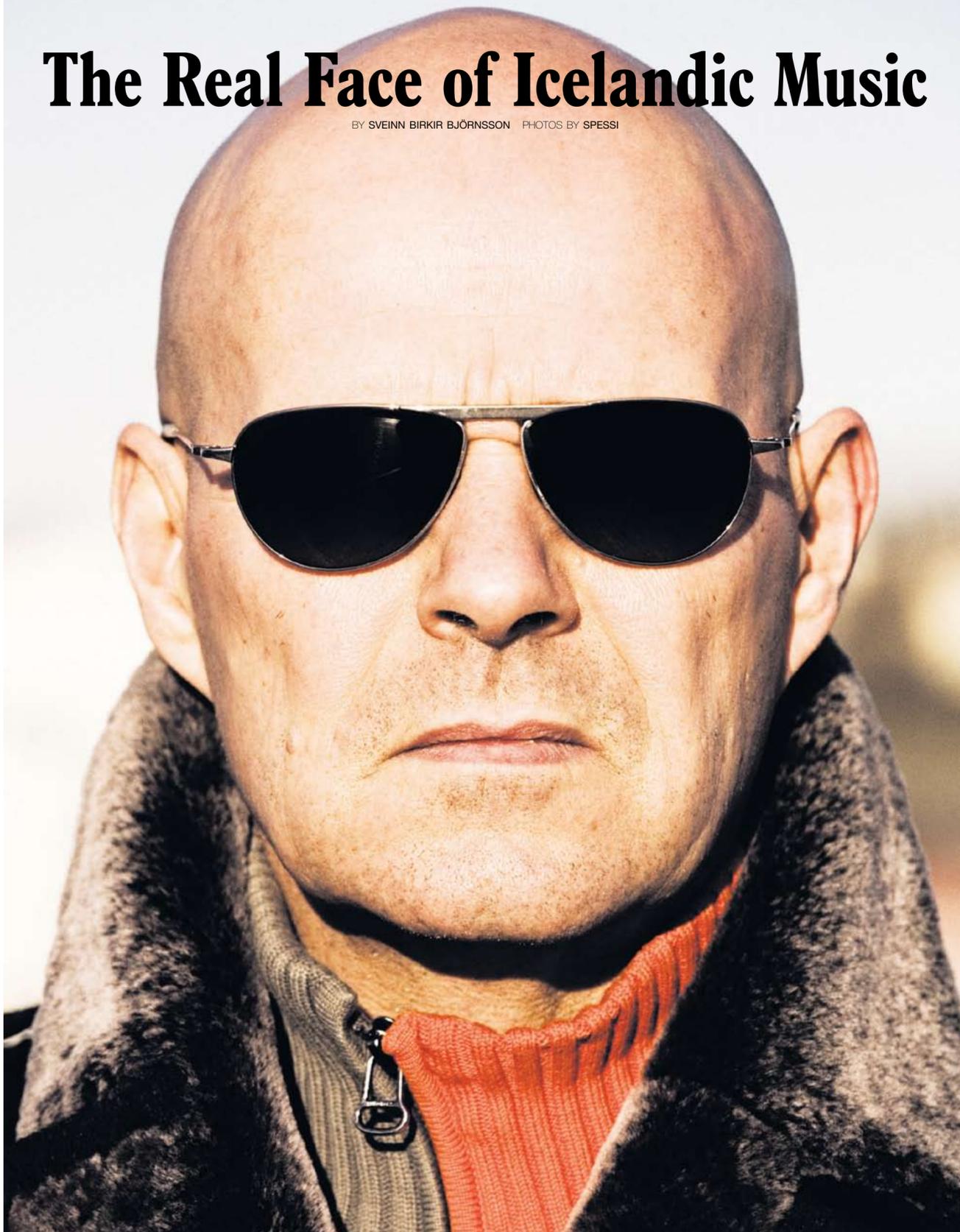
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The Real Face of Icelandic Music

BY SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON PHOTOS BY SPESSI



How would you go about explaining Bubbi Morthens to an outsider?

Lets start with a few facts. He is the biggest selling recording artist in Iceland, bar none. His career, stretching roughly 25 years and roughly 50 albums, 30 of them as a solo artist, has been marred by drug addiction and shrouded in controversy.

Emerging on the Icelandic music scene as the punk wave broke out in Iceland around 1980, Bubbi was a spokesperson for the working class. A former migrate fish worker himself, Bubbi became famous for songs about

the struggles of small Icelandic fishing villages and the people who inhabit them. Although still outspoken, Bubbi's image has changed dramatically in the last few years.

While he himself maintains that he has grown up – matured, others will tell you that he has sold out. Whether it is in his role as a judge for the Icelandic Idol competition or in his role as a spokesperson for Land Rover SUVs; whether he is making the news for his groundbreaking lifetime recording deals or selling the publishing rights to his back catalogue to an insurance company, one thing

remains clear. The persona of Bubbi Morthens has become increasingly friendlier to the marketing powers that he once held in such spite. At the same time, he has managed to alienate large parts of his former working-class fan base in small Icelandic fishing villages, by speaking out against heavy industry.

His metamorphosis seemed complete last summer when he sold his 50th anniversary concert to be used as a marketing tool for a Glitnir bank. Although universally hailed for his performance during his show, The Grapevine's music critic, Sindri Eldon, wrote a

scathing piece on the spectacle, bashing it for being about Bubbi's ego and Glitnir's marketing rather than music.

This Christmas, a new book based on Bubbi's life will be published. Although not strictly a biography, author Jón Atli Jónsson, draws a refreshing picture of his central character based on his own reflections of the man, as told to by Bubbi Morthens. In a candid interview the Grapevine, Bubbi sits down to defend himself against allegations of being a sell-out and to talk about pain, punk and freedom. >>>

it's free

the REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

◀ INFO ▶

Issue 17, 2006

8 Page Listings Section in Your Pocket



Birthday's Birthday Party Sugarcubes one-off reunion at Laugardalshöll

Seeing that the legendary Sugarcubes (Sykurmolarnir) haven't played in public together since November 1992, the news on the groups' November 17th reunion came as a pleasant surprise to fans in Iceland and around the globe. The reason for the reunion show is the twentieth anniversary of the band's first single Ammæli (Birthday).

"The twentieth birthday of Birthday is a pretty good reason for a grand celebration. Our record company, Smekkleysa (Bad Taste), is also celebrating its twentieth anniversary this year and the weirdest thing we could do to honour the two was bringing all the Sugarcubes members back together again," Sugarcubes drummer Sigtryggur Baldursson tells the Grapevine. "We've been rehearsing

for the last few weeks and trying to remember all the old songs. Much to my surprise it's all been going remarkably well. It all seems to be coming together."

After the break-up, the members all went their separate creative ways, with Björk's solo career being the biggest success of them all, but what binds them all together, apart from friendship, is their record company Smekkleysa. All profits from the ticket sales will be donated to the group's record company. Some rumours about the company's poor status have started, but Baldursson dismisses all worries claiming that Smekkleysa is not facing bankruptcy.

"Our purpose with these concerts is to refresh the

business so we can continue with our work of promoting great Icelandic music that doesn't necessarily bring home any big bucks. To continue to lose money at the speed of light. That's our motto," Baldursson adds.

The concert is sponsored by FL-Group and Icelandair is offering package trips to Iceland. According to Baldursson, at least four planes with nostalgic lunatics on board have been filled. With only a few standing tickets still available, this will be a one-off event and maybe the only chance to witness the infamous supergroup on stage.

For more ticket info, visit www.midi.is.

Music and nightlife events usually start around 21:00, unless otherwise stated. Pubs close at 01:00 on weekdays and much, much later on weekends. For those just wanting to party, the pubs and clubs don't get crowded until after midnight on weekends, although Thursday is a semi-official night out.
Compiled by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir
listings@grapevine.is

FRIDAY – 3 NOVEMBER

DJ Benni
KAFFIBARINN

The Take, Rökkurró and My Summer as a Salvation Soldier in concert
KAFFI HLJÓMALIND

Idol-Alexander followed by DJ Maggi HRESSÓ

Gísli Galdur
VEGAMÓT

Franz and Kristó followed by DJ Óli Hjörtur
PRIKIÐ

Óli Weapons
BAR 11

Exos-Night: DJ Lucca
NASA

DJ Fúsi
AMSTERDAM

SATURDAY – 4 NOVEMBER

DJ Gulli Ósóma
BAR 11

Pub-lic in concert followed by DJ Maggi HRESSÓ

The Talent a.k.a Maggi Legó
KAFFIBARINN

DJ Símon
VEGAMÓT

De la Rosa and DJ Danni Deluxe
PRIKIÐ

DJ Fúsi
AMSTERDAM

Papar in concert
NASA

TUESDAY – 7 NOVEMBER

DJ Vala
KAFFIBARINN

WEDNESDAY – 8 NOVEMBER

Don Balli Funk
KAFFIBARINN

A Girl's Night Out with DJ Maggi Legó
PRIKIÐ

THURSDAY – 9 NOVEMBER

B3 in concert
DOMO BAR

DJ Maggi Legó
KAFFIBARINN

DJ Símon
VEGAMÓT

Jón Tryggvi acoustic concert and DJ Playmobile
PRIKIÐ

Idol-Alexander and Örvar
HRESSÓ

FRIDAY – 10 NOVEMBER

DJ Gulli Ósóma

BAR 11
DJ Dóri
VEGAMÓT

DJ Baldur
KAFFIBARINN

Nyhil Poetry Festival
STÚDENTAKJALLARINN

Touch in concert followed by DJ Maggi HRESSÓ

Stranger and Toggi in concert, followed by DJ Kári
PRIKIÐ

DJ Master
AMSTERDAM

SATURDAY – 11 NOVEMBER

Tommy White
KAFFIBARINN

DJ Óli Weapons
BAR 11

DJ Benni
VEGAMÓT

Nyhil Poetry Festival
STÚDENTAKJALLARINN

Sálin in concert
NASA

Lada Sport, Retro Stefson, Bertel, Sudden Weather Change, Hello Norbert and Tonik in concert
TJARNARBÍÓ

DJ Kevin Costner and DJ Gísli Galdur
PRIKIÐ

Swiss in concert
AMSTERDAM

The Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Filmconcert
HÁSKÓLABÍÓ

Helgi Valur troubadour
HRESSÓ

WEDNESDAY – 15 NOVEMBER

Don Balli Funk
KAFFIBARINN

DJ Anna Brá
PRIKIÐ

THURSDAY – 16 NOVEMBER

The Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Mozart in Salzburg
HÁSKÓLABÍÓ

Eiríkur Orrí quintet
DOMO BAR

DJ Stef
PRIKIÐ

Troubadours Snorri and Siggí Grétars
HRESSÓ

FRIDAY – 17 NOVEMBER

Franz and Kristó followed by an ultra mega funk fusion with DJ Gísli Galdur, Addi the Drummer and bassist Guóni
PRIKIÐ

DJ Palli
BAR 11

Syurmolarnir (Sugarcubes) in concert
LAUGARDALSHÖLLIN

Sufjan Stevens in concert
FRÍKIRKJAN

Jeff Buckley Tribute
IDNÓ

Mát in concert followed by DJ Johnny HRESSÓ

DJ Master
AMSTERDAM

DJ Lazer
KAFFIBARINN

Petter Winnberg followed by DJ President Bongo
SIRKUS

SATURDAY – 18 NOVEMBER

Sufjan Stevens in concert
FRÍKIRKJAN

DJ Gulli Ósóma
BAR 11

Buff in concert
AMSTERDAM

Mát in concert followed by DJ Johnny HRESSÓ

Franz and Kristó followed by DJ Óli Hjörtur
PRIKIÐ

DJ Rósa and DJ Benni
KAFFIBARINN

Shadow Parade release concert
TJARNARBÍÓ

WEDNESDAY – 22 NOVEMBER

Don Balli Funk
KAFFIBARINN

DJ Playmobile
PRIKIÐ

THURSDAY – 23 NOVEMBER

DJ Tommy White
KAFFIBARINN

Erik Qvick
DOMO BAR

The Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Operaconcert
HÁSKÓLABÍÓ

Troubadours Snorri and Siggí Grétars
HRESSÓ

DJ Maggi Legó
PRIKIÐ

FRIDAY – 24 NOVEMBER

DJ Gulli
BAR 11

DJ Kári
KAFFIBARINN

DJ Fúsi
AMSTERDAM

Franz and Kristó followed by Blautt Malbik DJs Danni Deluxe and Dóri DNA
PRIKIÐ

SATURDAY – 25 NOVEMBER

DJ Óli Weapons
BAR 11

DJ Benni
KAFFIBARINN

DJ Kári
PRIKIÐ

Skítamóral in concert
NASA

Gotti and Eisi followed by DJ Maggi HRESSÓ

DJ Fúsi
AMSTERDAM

SUNDAY – 26 NOVEMBER

Soffía Karlsdóttir release concert
IDNÓ

WEDNESDAY – 29 NOVEMBER

Brian Jonestown Massacre in concert
NASA

THURSDAY – 30 NOVEMBER

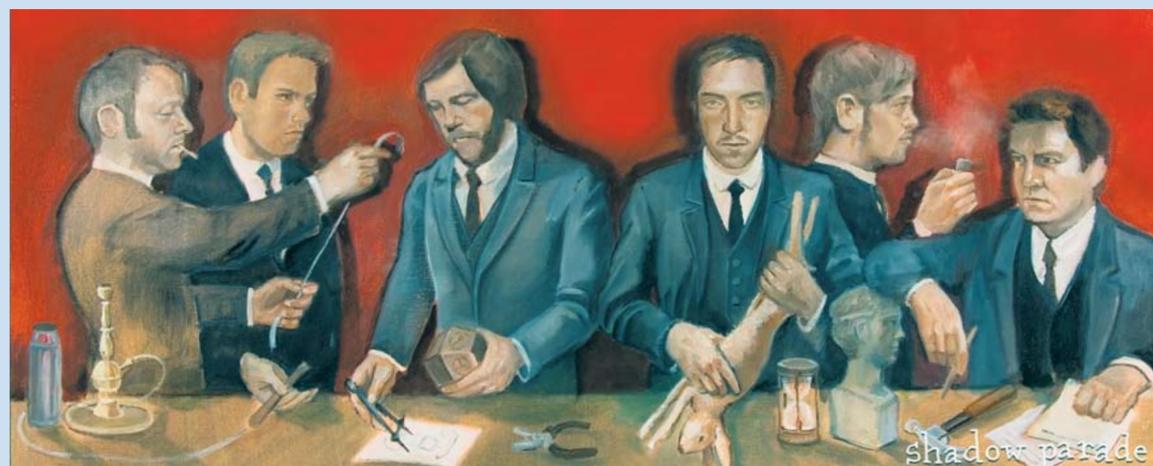
The Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Don Juan and Don Giovanni
HÁSKÓLABÍÓ

A.S.A Trio
DOMO BAR

Steinnun and Silja
KAFFIBARINN

Idol-Alexander and Örvar
HRESSÓ

DJ Maggi Legó
PRIKIÐ



Shadow Parade release concert

The melancholic folk-rockers in Shadow Parade finally see the release of debut, album, Dubious Intentions, this month. To celebrate, the band's release concert will take place at Tjarnarbíó the 18th of November. Having been compared to Jeff Buckley, Coldplay, Radiohead and even Pink Floyd, their guitar-driven, easy-listening, emotional tunes have attracted a growing crowd for past concerts and even gotten the attention of some international record companies. Their new album is supposed to be released abroad next year so the concert at Tjarnarbíó could be a good opportunity to see the up-and-coming band before they make it big.

Tjarnarbíó, Tjarnargata 12, November 18



Petter Winnberg

Petter Winnberg is probably best known in Iceland as the groovin' bass player of late reggae band Hjálmar. Returning to Iceland this month as a solo artist, accompanied by a band of three, he will be presenting his new project, entitled Easily Tricked, at Sirkus, November 17th. The album, which will see its release with Icelandic record company Pineapple Records next year, is described as pure and honest R&B music. The concert is part of the record company's monthly concert series at Sirkus, aimed to raise awareness of Sirkus's planned demolition next year.

Following Winnberg's performance will be Gusgus member and Pineapple Records owner, DJ President Bongo, keeping the party going until morning.
Sirkus, Klappartígur 30, November 17



Sufjan Stevens

More ambitious a musician in the folk scene than Sufjan Stevens would be hard, if not impossible, to track down, especially regarding his promise about releasing an album on each of the states in America. With two done and 48 to go he is slightly turning away from the project in the media, but his ambition and incredible creativity is only on the rise. Seeing that his former albums not only include up to 20 and 30 songs each, but have been released almost yearly since 2000, he's like an unstoppable music machine. Thankfully for Icelanders, Stevens is taking some time off from the studio to play two shows in Reykjavík this month. Stevens himself chose the small venue Frikirkjan for the concert so the few available tickets, considering his rising popularity in Iceland, sold out in a matter of minutes.

Those lucky ones are in for a night to remember. Accompanied by guitarist Rob Moose, Stevens's incredible songwriting, and instrumental mixture will be perfectly suited for the church's atmosphere.

Frikirkjan, Laufásvegur 13, November 17 and 18. (Sold Out)

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THEATRE

AKUREYRI THEATRICAL COMPANY

Listabraut 3
Tel: 588 0900
www.id.is

Current shows:
Karius and Baktus
By Thorbjörn Egner

Mr Kolbert
By David Gieselman

Visit www.leikfelag.is for full schedule and tickets.

AUSTURBÆR

Snorrabraut 37, 105 Reykjavík
Tel: 551 4700

Current shows:
Danny and the Deep Blue Sea
By John Patrick Shanley

BROADWAY

Ármúla 9
Tel: 533 1110
www.broadway.is

Tina Turner tribute show with Sigga Beinteins

ICELAND DANCE COMPANY

Listabraut 3
Tel: 588 0900
www.id.is

Family performance all Saturdays in November

ICELANDIC OPERA

Ingólfsstræti
Tel: 511 6400
Visit www.opera.is for full schedule and tickets.

Shadow Play

By Karólína Eiríksdóttir and Sjón.
Premiered November 18

THE NATIONAL THEATRE

Hverfisgata 19
Tel: 551 1200
Visit www.leikbusid.is for full schedule and tickets

Current shows:
Stórfengleg!
By Peter Quilter

Patrekur 1,5

By Michael Druker

Sumardagur

Jon Fosse

Skoppa og Skríttla

By Hrefna Hallgrímsdóttir

Sitji Guðs Englar

By Guðrún Helgadóttir

THE REYKJAVÍK CITY THEATRE

Listabraut 3
Tel: 568 8000
Visit www.borgarleikbus.is for full schedule and tickets.

Current shows:

Amadeus

By Peter Shaffer

Footloose

By Porvaldur Bjarni

Ronja Ræningjadóttir

By Astrid Lindgren

Viltu finna milljón

By Ray Cooney

Hvít kanína

Icelandic Academy of the Arts Student Theatre

Manntafi

By Stefan Zweig

Alveg briliant skilnaður

By Edda Björgvinsdóttir

MEIN KAMPF

By George Tabori.

Rétta leiðin

By Erla Ruth Harðardóttir

Dogma

Borgarleikhúsið Dogma-group

IDNÓ

Vonarstræti 3
Tel: 562 9700
Current shows:

Best í Heimi

By Hávar Sigurjónsson and María Reyndal

1 CAFÉ
Café Roma
 Laugavegur 118

Roma, at the far end of the main street Laugavegur, is a deli-type coffee house offering a variety of breads, soup and tempting cookies, cakes and other sweet things. Their specials around lunch time are always a bargain.

8 Tíu Dropar
 Laugavegur 27

A very nice, old-fashioned café. It's subterranean, as all traditional coffee shops should be, and this place makes you feel warm, both with its atmosphere and the generosity of the coffee refills.

15 Café Victor
 Hafnarstræti 1-3

Spelled with a C rather than the Icelandic K, presumably in an effort to seem more cosmopolitan. This place seems to be working, as the bar has become a hangout for older foreigners. The Viking ship sitting on top of the building might also add to the appeal. The crowd is very mixed, both in origin and age, and so is the music.

22 Þrævda
 Austurstræti 22

Þrævda is one of the biggest clubs/bars in downtown Reykjavík, situated in one of the more ideal locations for such an institution in the city. It's divided between two floors, although the distinction between the ambience on the top and bottom floors has faded away in recent times.

25 Ölstofan
 Vegalundstígur

Ölstofan is an unpretentious, comfortable and straightforward place to relax. It's also known as a hangout for the 'intellectual' circles of Reykjavík, as well as some media types, the opposite of 'intellectual' in this country. Music is almost never played at Ölstofan – so you can actually have a conversation.

28 Kaffibrennslan
 Þáttustræti 9

Café, bistro, restaurant, bar – whatever you want to call it, Kaffibrennslan is a consistently pleasant place to go for snacks and refreshments of whatever variety you happen to crave. They also have the largest selection of beers in Reykjavík. We recommend the Cobra and Staroprammen.

31 RESTAURANTS
Krua Thai
 Tryggvagata 14

This authentic Thai restaurant is one of the better bargains in town. We challenge you to find a better meal for the same price anywhere else. They have their menu outside with numbered colour images. Just say the number and eat the food.

34 Argentina
 Barónsstígur 11a

Perennial favourite, Argentina is a fine dining steak house. For while-steaks, you can also sample the local Minke, or excellent fish. This restaurant has maintained its reputation with three things: perfect cuts of meat, excellent service, and an excellent wine list.

37 Tapas
 Vesturgata 3b

Those with a bit of money and time on their hands would do well to spend an evening or two at Tapas, having course after course of wonderful miniature dishes served to them. Oddly, it's also a great place to get tasty and affordable lobster. If you don't feel like getting up right away afterwards, there's also a lounge.

MUSEUMS
Árhegjarstafn
 Árbar
 www.listastafnreykjavikur.is

The Culture House
 Hverfisgata 15
 www.thjodmenningis

Reykjavík Electrical Museum
 Reifstöðvarvegur
 www.raheimar.is

2 Ráðhúskaffi
 City Hall

Ráðhúskaffi, situated inside the Reykjavík City Hall, is a comfortable choice for the view over Tjörnin (the pond). It's especially convenient on Iceland's so-called 'window weather' days – the days that are only beautiful if you stay indoors. Coffee, light snacks, art exhibitions, Internet access, a topographic model of Iceland and municipal politics: all conveniently under the same roof.

9 Kaffitár
 Bankastræti 8

This is the downtown store of one of the country's finest coffee importers, and the quality of the product is as excellent as you would expect. While anything here is good, the speciality coffee drinks are truly remarkable: our favourite, the Azteca, an espresso drink with lime and Tabasco.

16 Vegamót
 Vegalundstígur 4

Vegamót (crossroads) has an appealing lunch menu, they serve brunch during the weekends, and the kitchen is open until 22:00 daily. After that the beat goes on, and you can check the end results in photos published the day after on their website www.vegamot.is. If you like Oliver, try Vegamót and vice versa.

23 Café Cultura
 Hverfisgata 18

The trendy Café Cultura is located in the same building as the Intercultural Centre, and has a distinct international flavour. A good-value menu, friendly service and settings that allow you to either sit down and carry on discussions, or dance the night away.

26 Thorvaldsen
 Austurstræti 8

This place is fancy, and it knows it. Civilian attire is looked down upon, so don't expect to get in wearing hiking boots. DJs play on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Arrive before 12 if you want to avoid the queue.

29 Glaumbar
 Tryggvagata 20

Partly a sports bar, Glaumbar is also a popular venue for live bands and DJs, but mostly it's just a good place to get drunk and party. They can host private gatherings before midnight on weekdays, and you would be hard pressed to get a better deal on a keg party than here.

32 Tveir Fiskar
 Geirgata 9

Located right by the harbour, Tveir Fiskar boasts some of the freshest fish in town – they prefer it to still be moving when they buy it. Their menu also dares to be different, and this just might be your only chance to sample the debatable delights of raw dolphin.

35 Vin og Skel
 Laugavegur 55

If you like fresh seafood and are in the mood for something a little different, this cosy but ambitious restaurant just might fit the bill. Shellfish, salmon, squid, lobster and other creatures of the deep pre-emptuate the menu here. There is no smoking in the restaurant, but if you want to have a go at sitting outside there are fleece blankets provided.

38 Sægreifinn
 Geirgata

Places recommended for their local touch tend to instantly lose any element of the exotic, but Sægreifinn (The Sea Baron) is an exception. It's a combination of a fish store and a... well, not exactly a restaurant but a place that serves prepared food – located in a harbour warehouse. Smell of fish, the view over the harbour, an old man that looks exactly like an Icelandic fisherman should. What's not to love?

45 Subway
 Austurstræti

You know exactly what you get when you walk into a Subway restaurant, and their sub sandwiches are always made from fresh ingredients – right in front of your eyes. Reasonably priced and far healthier than most alternatives – provided you show some restraint when you order.

3 Grái Kötturinn
 Hverfisgata 16a

Grái Kötturinn (the grey cat) is a cosy place that's especially popular during the morning hours. Their breakfast is legendary, but they tend not to open later in the day. A great place to nurse a hangover, or just to start the workday.

10 Segafredo
 By Laekjartorg

Italian coffee chain Segafredo seems to be doing brisk business by Laekjartorg, with locals and tourists alike flocking to sip their espressos at the conveniently placed tables outside. The staff are expert baristas, and, even though Iceland is proud of its coffee, nobody quite tops the Segafredo latte.

17 B5
 Bankastræti 5

B5 is a bistro with a Scandinavian focus on the menu. Don't be fooled by the impressive collection of design classics that you see in the window when passing by – it's neither cold nor overly expensive, but rather a cosy place with friendly service.

4 Kaffi Hljómaland
 Laugavegur 21

Despite hosting the occasional rock concert, Kaffi Hljómaland is a peaceful café with perfect windows for people watching and a lot of daylight. It's run by a non-profit organisation and only serves organic & fair-trade products. It's strictly a non-smoking establishment.

11 BARS 'N' BISTROS
Sólón
 Bankastræti 7a

Sólón is a nightclub on Friday and Saturday nights, but during the daytime it's a café/bistro. On weeknights they're a restaurant with a decent menu as well, and an art exhibition on the walls to finish the package.

18 Rósenberg
 Laekjargata 2

Perhaps the closest thing to a jazz club in town, here old instruments line the walls. People go there for conversation and to listen to music rather than dance. The place tends to have jazz- or blues-type music, and is developing a bluegrass scene.

5 Mokka
 Skólavörðustígur 3a

Kaffi Mokka is one of the oldest cafés in Reykjavík, dating back to the 1950s. Famous for their dark, smoky atmosphere, loyal clientele and some of the best waffles in town.

12 Litli Ljótí Andarunginn
 Laekjargata 6b

Known for its all you can eat fish buffet, this restaurant/guesthouse is also a fine place to sit down and relax with a laté or some beer when suffering from a case of severe hipster-burn.

19 Grand Rokk
 Smidjustígur 6

As the Viking-style garden and logo accurately signal, this hardcore chess hangout is no place for the weak. Yes, chess bars are that tough in Iceland. Even if the downstairs atmosphere can feel a bit ominous at times, it's one of the best venues for live music in town. If you speak Icelandic you can also take part in the pub quiz on Fridays at 17:30. Participation is free and the winner walks away with a case of beer!

6 Ömmukaffi
 Austurstræti

The name literally means "grandma's coffee shop", but here you can find people of all ages and all nationalities. It has a very friendly, down-to-earth feel to it. Affordable prices on coffee, cakes and the lunch menu. Try their speciality, the South African latte.

13 Kaffibarinn
 Bergstaðastræti 1

Kaffibarinn has a reputation as a hangout for artists and others who think they are hip. Friday and Saturday nights serve as the weekly peaks of claustrophobia, while weekdays and afternoons can be comfortable, if banal.

20 Bar 11
 Laugavegur 11

While the place is only open on the weekends, Bar 11 is a popular rock bar on Laugavegur and one of the main late-night party venues in town. You'll feel the floor jumping every Friday and Saturday, and it's neither you nor an earthquake. Live concerts and a nice football table upstairs.

7 Babalú
 Skólavörðustígur 22a

One of the youngest coffeehouses in Reykjavík is also the homiest. Almost like a living room away from home, Babalú keeps it simple, quiet and cosy with coffee and the occasional crêpe.

14 Sirkus
 Klappargata 30

Of absolutely no relation to the trashy culture guide, or trashy TV station that stole its name, Sirkus is worshipped like few other locales in Iceland. Elements of the odd and alternative cultural institution include an upstairs that looks and smells like a bus, a garden, a flea market and a queue on weekend nights that looks never-ending.

21 Hressingarskálinn
 Austurstræti 20

The celebrated site of one of the more famous coffeehouses in Iceland, this bar/café/bistro brings a European flair to the city. That is until about 11, when things get to rockin', and you can see the true character of Reykjavík.

24 Þríkið
 Bankastræti 12

Þríkið has changed noticeably in character in recent years, as it used to be an old-fashioned and traditional downtown coffeehouse. Somehow the younger crowd caught on and transformed the place to its present form: a diner during the day and a rowdy nightclub on weekends. You can also borrow board games there, such as backgammon or chess, and it is a popular breakfast spot early in the morning.

27 Kaffi Amsterdam
 Hafnarstræti 5

Kaffi Amsterdam is a cosy tavern located in the centre of Reykjavík. Known mostly for its rambling late-hour drinking crowd, Amsterdam recently established itself as a fresh new venue for the city's music talent.

30 Dillon
 Laugavegur 30

Legendary Icelandic rockers have been known to DJ at this place from time to time, and Þróstur from Mímus has even tended the bar. You can pretty much guarantee this place will be rocking any time you walk in on a Friday or Saturday night.

33 Hornið
 Hafnarstræti 15

Means "the corner" and the place lives up to its name by... well, being on a corner. This is actually the oldest Italian restaurant in town, celebrating its 27th year, and it always seems to be consistently popular. Excellent quality pizza, pasta and salads – all priced affordably.

36 Tjarnarbakkinn
 Vonarstræti 3

Tjarnarbakkinn is right above the Íþróttahúsið, so it's an ideal place to go before shows, or during if you prefer a more quiet atmosphere. If you sit by the window you get nice view of the pond, and in the summers you can enjoy your meal outside. The lamb comes especially recommended; it's one of those rare traditional Icelandic dishes that aren't an acquired taste.

43 Bernhöftsbakari
 Bergstaðastræti 13

The oldest bakery in Reykjavík, founded in 1834. If you are particular about your bread this is about the best place in central Reykjavík to stock up on a variety of freshly baked loaves – they also do a particularly moist and juicy version of the ever popular vinarbráud pastries. You can even call ahead and have your favourite items reserved, if you're afraid someone else might beat you to that last snúður or kleina.

50 Vitabar
 Bergþórsgata 21

Actually a bar, but best known for its hamburgers. A burger with fries for 500 is one of the best meal deals in town, but special mention must go to the Forget-Me-Not blue cheese and garlic extravaganza.

Babalú
 Skólavörðustígur 22a
 Tel: 552 2278

Probably the cosiest coffeehouse in town, Babalú is a genuine haven in the city centre. Antique furniture, chaotic kitchen and shelves full of books to browse through while waiting for your espresso.

tveir fiskar
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 Owner of Tveir Fiskar
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 at Tryggvagata close to the harbor

OPEN: mon-fri 10:00-23:30 / sat-sun 11:00-23:30

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 Tel: 544-4448
 Reservation line: 867-4448
 www.galbi.is
 Bar opens from 12pm
 Restaurant open 6-10pm daily.

online **GRAPEVINE**

WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS

RADIO

Rás 1
Government radio station often featuring talk shows, radio soap operas, and traditional music.

Rás 2
More progressive government radio station, featuring a variety of music as well as news discussion programmes.

Bylgjan (98.9 FM)
Light pop music.

Útvarp Saga (99.4 FM)
Iceland's oldest station, featuring both Icelandic and foreign music from decades past.

Talstöðin (90.9 FM)
Talk radio station, in Icelandic.

Létt 96.7 (96.7 FM)
Office pop, easy listening.

FM 957 (95.7 FM)
One of the "hnakkistöðvar," playing pop-rock geared towards urban clubbing youth.

XFM (91.9FM)
Iceland's rock station, often playing cutting-edge releases.

Lindin (102.9 FM)
Christian broadcasting station, available all over the country.

TV

Big Love
Mormon society in the suburbs of Salt Lake City is the setting for HBO's comedy series Big Love on Stöð 2. The ideal citizen and successful businessman Bill Henrickson is living a life of polygamy. Married to three women, father of seven children with the task of supporting three different households, his life could be pretty damn good if it weren't for all the complications, dilemmas, jealousy and emotional demands Henrickson constantly must deal with. While trying to fulfil his wives' needs he struggles to make ends meet at the same time while keeping his lifestyle a secret in the Mormon society. The show has stirred things up among many Mormons, who aren't pleased with making polygamy a subject of entertainment. Pointing out the perversions and old stereotypical ideas about the religion that the show reveals, the Mormons emphasise their modern-day distance from polygamy and claim to be concerned about the illegal practice of polygamy in some communities. Whether the discontent has been good publicity for the show or not, its creators are at least working on season two.

Little Britain
No need for introduction, but always a reason for a reminder. For those who tend to forget all the great episodes on RUV, the third season of Little Britain

is in full swing at the moment, mocking British society and insulting whoever thinks the show is far too offensive to deserve the slightest squeak. But we love it. High quality British sketch comedy and Matt Lucas and David Williams are better now than ever. As politically incorrect as one show can be, the third season features the same surreal characters as viewers have grown to adore, like the ultra-gay Daffyd Thomas, the ridiculously looking transvestites, hand-capped Andy and his ever-caring and patient friend Lou, Mr. Mann and his impossible demands at Roy's shop, plus some new twisted and ironic characters. Brilliant humour.



Tekinn
Our Icelandic Ashton Kutcher, Auðunn Blöndal, takes on the Icelandic elite in the Punk'd replica Tekinn on Sirkus TV. With barely a need to explain the plot, with the help of a hidden camera and some bystanders, Blöndal mocks local celebs. They get irritated and he laughs hysterically. In the end everyone laughs hysterically. Although highly unoriginal and mostly irritating to TV viewers who are reminded once again how sterile, unimaginative and cheap local programming tends to be, revolving around commercial sponsorship and low-budget fixings, not to be all negative, the show has its moments, if not only Blöndal's new Kutcher-style cap.



The Grapevine lists exhibitions from galleries throughout Iceland. If you would like to be included, free of charge, contact the Grapevine by email at listings@grapevine.is.
Compiled by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

101 GALLERY
Hverfisgata 18
Thu.-Sat. 14-17 and by appointment
www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery/

Oct 29 - Nov 24 NEW
Sigrún Inga Hrólfssdóttir exhibition

AURUM
Bankastræti 4
Mon. - Fri. 10-18
Sat. 11-16

THE EINAR JÓNSSON MUSEUM
Eiríksgata
Tue.-Sun. 14-17
www.skulptur.is

Permanent exhibition of the work of sculptor Einar Jónsson

THE CULTURE HOUSE
Hverfisgata 15
Open daily 11-17
www.thjodmenning.is

29 June 2006 - 27 Feb 2007
Icelandic Fashion 2006

Permanent Exhibits
Medieval Manuscripts; The National Museum- as it was; The Library Room

DWARF GALLERY
Grundarstígur 21
Opening Hours Vary
this.is/birta

GALLERY 100 DEGREES
Bejarháls 1
Mon.-Fri. 8:30-16
www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100

GALLERÍ ANIMA
Ingólfsstræti 8
Tues.-Sat. 13-17
www.animagalleri.is

03 Oct - 04 Nov
Hjörtur Hjartarsson

GALLERY FOLD
Rauðarárstígur 14-16
Mon.-Fri. 10-18
Sat. 11-16
Sun. 14-16
www.myndlist.is

Oct 28 - Nov 12 NEW
Málverk/Painting
Einar Hákonarson exhibit

GALLERÍ SÆVARIS KARLS
Bankastræti 7
www.saevarkarl.is
Mon.-Fri. 10-18
Sat. 10-16

GALLERY TURPENTINE
Ingólfsstræti 5
Tue.-Fri. 12-18
Sat. 11-16
www.turpentine.is

GEL GALLERÍ
Hverfisgata 37
Mon.-Fri. 10-19
Sat. 10-17

GERÐUBERG CULTURAL CENTRE
Gerðuberg 3-5
Mon.-Thu. 11-17
Wed. 11-21
Thu.-Fri. 11-17
Sun-Sat. 13-16
www.gerduberg.is

23 Sep - 12 Nov
Reykjavík - Úr lausátri / Reykjavík - From an Ambush
Ari Sigvaldason photo exhibit

23 Sep - 12 Nov
African souvenirs in Iceland: Dialogue

between two worlds

GYLLINHÆÐ
Laugavegur 23
Thu.-Sun. 14-18

Students from the second year of the Academy

HÚN OG HÚN GALLERY
Skólavörðustígur 17b

21 Oct - 17 Nov NEW
Same time, another place
Sorin Dan Cojocar art exhibition

I8 GALLERY
Klappurstígur 33
Tue.-Fri. 11-17
Sat. and by appointment 13-17
www.i8.is

21 Oct - 25 Nov NEW
Snjóbreiti og hjálmur/ Snowboards and Helmets
Katrín Pétursdóttir Young

ICELANDIC LABOUR UNION'S ART GALLERY
Freyjugata 41
Tue.-Sun. 13-17
Free Entrance

KLING & BANG GALLERY
Laugavegur 23
Thur - Sun 14-18
Free Entrance
www.this.is/klingandbang

14 Nov - 10 Dec
Helga Óskarsdóttir and Kristinn Már Pálmason

LIVING ART MUSEUM
Laugavegur 26
Wed., Fri.-Sun. 13-17
Thur 13-22
www.nylo.is/

THE NATIONAL GALLERY
Frikirkjuvegur
Tue.-Sun. 11-17
Free Entrance
listasafn.is

Oct 7 - Nov 26
Málverkið eftir 1980/Icelandic Painting after 1980

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM
Suðurgata 41
Open daily 10-17
natmus.is/English

30 Sep - 26 Nov
Ókunn sjónarhorn/Unknown perspective & Myndir úr lífi mínu/Images from a life

Temporary Exhibitions:
Photography from Iceland, 1938
Invisible women in Icelandic art
Archaeological research and Iceland's new view of history

Permanent Exhibitions:
The Making of a Nation

THE NORDIC HOUSE
Sturlugata 5
Tue.-Sun. 12-17
www.nordice.is/english

NÆSTI BAR
Ingólfsstræti 1a

14 Oct - 11 Nov
Undir meðvitund / Beneath Consciousness
Bjarni Helgason art exhibition

REYKJAVÍK 871 +/- 2 : THE SETTLEMENT EXHIBITION
Aðalstræti 16
Open daily 10-17

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - ÁSMUNDUR SVEINSSON SCULPTURE MUSEUM
Sigtún
Open daily 10-16

Admission ticket is valid on the same day for all three museums.
www.listasafnreykjavikur.is

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS
Tryggvagata 17
Open daily 10-17

10 Jun 2006 - 07 Jan 2007
The Erró Collection: Graphic Works

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSSTAÐIR
Flokagata
Open daily 10-17

08 Apr - 03 Dec
Let's Look at Art: A series of exhibitions especially designed for children

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM
Kistubylur 4
www.arbaejarsafn.is

THE REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY
Gröfurbús, Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor
Weekdays 12-19
Sat.-Sun. 13-17
Free Entrance
www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is

30 Sep - 19 Nov
POLSKA 1969-1989 - Poland under communism
Chris Niedenthal

28 Sept - 22 Nov
Golli photo exhibit

SAFN
Laugavegur 37
Wed.-Fri. 14-18
Sat.-Sun. 14-17
Free Entrance
www.safn.is

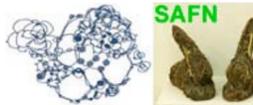
Until Nov 30
Ping Pong Dance
Egill Sæbjörnsson installation

Nov 18 - Dec 2006
Surrogate
Hildur Bjarnadóttir exhibition

Works
Tilo Baumgärtel and Martin Kobe exhibition

16 Sept - 05 Nov
Tilo Baumgärtel & Martin Kobe

SIGURJÓN ÓLAFSSON MUSEUM
Laugarnestangi 70



Tue.-Sun. 14-17
Permanent exhibition of the work of sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson

UNGLIST FESTIVAL
Unglist, the annual youth art and culture festival, will take place at various venues around Reykjavík from November 3rd to 11th. The diverse schedule consists of concerts, performances, exhibitions, an art marathon and everything in between, organised by the young contributors themselves with help from Hitt Húsið, a culture and information centre for young people located at Pósthússtræti 3-5. For more info visit www.unglist.is.

>>>OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK

Hveragerði:
HVERAGERÐI LIBRARY

23 Oct - 9 Nov NEW
Rúna K. Trezschner exhibition

Seyðisfjörður:
SKAFTFELL
www.skaftfell.is

Hafnarfjörður:
HAFNARBORG
Mon.-Sun. 11-17

Keflavík:
SUÐSUÐVESTUR
Hafnargata 22
Thu.-Fri. 16-18
Sat.-Sun. 14-17
www.sudsudvestur.is

Akureyri:
DALÍ GALLERÍ
Brekkgata 9
Mon.-Sat. 14-18

GALLERÍ +
Brekkgata 35

JÓNAS VÍÐAR GALLERY
Fri.-Sat. 13-18

AKUREYRI ART MUSEUM
Kaupvangsstræti 12
Tue.-Sun. 12-17
listasafn.akureyri.is

28 Oct - 17 Dec NEW
Dröfn Friðfinnsdóttir retrospective



Casino Royale
With Daniel Craig starring as the 007 spy in the secret intelligence service, Casino Royale is the 21st James Bond flick. Based on Ian Fleming's first novel about the secret agent, this one takes the audience back to the beginning, when young Bond is first taking on the task of becoming a 00-agent. To stop his enemies, a terrorist organisation planning world domination, his mission takes him to La Casino Royale in Montenegro where he must win a nerve-racking poker game while the new Bond chick, played by Eva Green, occupies much of his attention. Directed by Martin Campbell, the movie will be in theatres November 17.



Borat
Although some may think that Sacha Baron Cohen's creation of the lovable Kazakhstan TV reporter Borat Sagdiyev is beyond all limits of decency, his popularity grows like wildfire. Absolutely nothing is sacred in Borat's sarcastic comments about own home country and his hilarious behaviour has caused a great conflict with Kazakh authorities. All helping with the PR of course. The movie follows his journey from Kazakhstan to America and manages to shine a whole new light on the American nation. Undoubtedly the most controversial comic of last years, Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan, premieres November 3.

THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA
In which a naïve young country girl tackles an über-bitch magazine editor played by Meryl Streep. It's nice to have you back, Meryl. *Smárabíó, Regnboginn*

THE DEPARTED
Supposed to be Martin Scorsese's best film since Goodfellas. Starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Matt Damon, Jack Nicholson and Mark Wahlberg it's a violent gangster drama no one should miss. *Kringlubíó, Háskólabíó*

FEARLESS
Starring Jet Li as the legendary martial artist Huo Yuanjia in an action movie, taking place in 20th century China. *Regnboginn, Smárabíó*

TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE: THE BEGINNING
The origins of THE CHAINSAW MASSACRE are explored in this shockfest gorestravaganza. *Laugarásbíó, Borgarbíó*

BEERFEST
Another half-witted comedy from Super Troopers director. Now there's beer. In Germany. And a group of nerdy Americans are gulping it. *Selofsóbíó, Kringlubíó*

THE GUARDIAN
Kevin Costner is back! This time, he's serving in the Coast Guard alongside a

reckless young hothead played by Ashton Kutcher. *Kringlubíó, Háskólabíó, Sambíóin Álfabakka*

THE THIEF LORD
A German English-language production based on Cornelia Funke's fantasy novel. Supposedly avoids the trappings of the colonies' family adventure movies. *Smárabíó, Regnboginn, Laugarásbíó, Borgarbíó, Sambíóin Álfabakka, Sambíóin Akureyri*

WORLD TRADE CENTER
Oliver Stone is responsible for this non-conspiracy theory take on the events of September 11. Allegedly tasteful and moving. *Sambíóin Álfabakka, Sambíóin Keflavík*

THE WILD
You know the score by now: CGI-based action comedy featuring some lovable shiny animals, celebrity voice talent and William Shatner. Probably very amusing. *Sambíóin Álfabakka*

STEP UP
Some dancers dance around a lot. Should be awesome, if you're into that whole scene. *Sambíóin Álfabakka*

FLYBOYS
Bombed up airplanes, dramatic love scenes and heroic young Americans caught in a WWI battle, even though all they wanted was to learn how to fly. Clichés guaranteed.

MÝRIN
Director Baltasar Kormákur and a team of Iceland's finest actors in a thriller based on Arnaldur Indriðason best-seller Mýrin. With Ingvar E. Sigurðsson taking on the role of a middle-aged detective, it has been highly praised as one of the best Icelandic movies ever made. *Smárabíó, Regnboginn, Laugarásbíó, Borgarbíó, Selofsóbíó, Háskólabíó, Sambíóin Keflavík*

HALF LIGHT
Demi Moore plays a novelist who moves to a small cottage to deal with life after losing her son. No less tragic are the days to come. *Sambíóin Álfabakka*

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
A comedy involving a museum guard played by Ben Stiller who wakes up a lot of creatures one night. Our Icelandic Robbie Rotten Stefán Karl Stefánsson

lends his voice to some Icelandic Vikings. Supposed to be quite hilarious.

CHILDREN OF MEN
This Alfonso Cuarón adaptation of a P.D. James novel is set in 2027... where no one can have children! Supposedly manages to be both apocalyptic and entertaining.

THE LAST KISS
Zach Braff is facing the I'm-turning-thirty-and-haven't-lived-yet crisis and not willing to grow up just yet, starts doubting all decisions he's made in the past. Sound familiar?

Visit www.kvikmyndir.is for regularly updates on new films and showtimes.

Regnboginn
Hverfisgata 54
101 Reykjavík
Tel. 551-9000

Sambíóin
Álfabakka 8
109 Reykjavík
Tel. 575-8900

Smárabíó
Smáralind
201 Kópavogur
Tel. 564-0000

Háskólabíó
Hagatorgi
107 Reykjavík
Tel. 525-5400

Kringlubíó
Kringlunni 4-12
103 Reykjavík
Tel. 575-8900

Selofsóbíó
Eyrarvegur 2
800 Selfoss
Tel. 482-3007

Laugarásbíó
Hagarási
104 Reykjavík
Tel. 565-0118

Sambíóin Akureyri
Ráðhústorgi
600 Akureyri
Tel. 461-4666

Nýja-Bíó
Hafnargata 33
230 Reykjanæsbær
Tel. 421-1170

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American Creativity at Reykjavík Art Museum

The opening of exhibition Uncertain States of America – American Art in the Third Millennium at Reykjavík Art Museum should be a good continuation of previous arty party in the city centre as last month's Sequence festival proved to be. Organised by Daniel Birnbaum, Gunnar B. Kvaran and Hans Ulrich Obrist, the exhibition, which is now going around the world, is a unique presentation of young and emerging American artists and consists of more than 120 works by 40 different contributors. Examples of video art, film projects, as well as installations and paintings will be on display at the museum for the next three months. **Reykjavík Art Museum (Tryggvagata 17). Open daily 10-17. On display until January 21, 2007.**



Icelandic Goðar at Kaffi Mokka

One of the oldest coffeehouses in Reykjavík city centre now offers its customers a photo exhibition of the works of young Ísafjörður resident Sigurður Gunnarsson. Entitled "Goðar Íslands" the subjects are Icelandic chieftains (goðar) in The Pagan Association of Iceland (Ásatrúarfélagið) and their beliefs in the Nordic folklore and pagan religion expressed in black and white photographs Gunnarsson shot this year. The reason the old coffeehouse Mokka was picked as a showroom is that the first meeting on the formation of Ásatrúarfélagið took place at that same spot. The exhibition can therefore be a good opportunity to experience religion and inhaling old folklore and ancient traditions. **Kaffi Mokka (Skólavörðustígur 3a). On display until December 6, 2006.**



Snowboard Prints

Katrín Pétursdóttir Young's exhibition Snowboards opened up last month as a part of the Sequences visual art festival. Her interest in figures, animation, nature, morphology and fantasy intermix in her project of snowboard prints as can be seen above. Her works relate to the connection and boundaries she finds evident between sports, design, art and fashion. Young describes her work as trying to draw her thoughts: "My works are almost accidental and created by intuition rather than reasoning," she explains. **i8 Gallery (Klapparstígur 33). Open until November 25, 2006.**

/// So you gave Jón Atli complete artistic freedom to present your story?

– Absolutely. All the way. There is stuff in this book that I am not thrilled about and other stuff that I find skewed. Like the (50th anniversary) concert. I thought the concert was very good, and I think no other Icelandic musician has ever been shown the honour I was shown that day. No matter if a bank sponsored it or not. But I can see now that once again I am blazing new trails in Iceland in certain matters. Now the Sugarcubes are branding their 20th anniversary reunion concert in exactly the same manner, while other musicians, Barði in Bang Gang for example, are creating companies to take care of their business. All this started when I made a publishing deal with (the insurance company) Sjóvá and [got sponsorship for] the anniversary concert. Maybe this is the new renaissance in arts. I don't see anything wrong with doing things this way. I would, however, draw a clear line if it were a beer company or, say, Alcan, sponsoring me. Over my dead body. I would never let a company like that near me.

But I was very happy with the way Jón Atli wrote it. I understand what he is doing. But this is his point of view, and I don't agree with it at all. (CEO of Glitnir Bank) Bjarni Ármannsson is a good friend of mine and Jón Atli attacks him in one chapter of the book, I could have stopped it. Told him that he was writing about a friend of mine, and that I wouldn't be a part of attacking him. But, I made the decision at the beginning that I would give him the freedom to write this as he saw fit, unless there some major factual errors that needed to be corrected.

At the end of the day, the book was uncomfortable, entertaining and ambiguous, probably a lot like myself. But I think I made the right decision, to let him do this, you need certain bravery to give people a carte blanche like that. But I think the Ballad of this Bubbi is pretty well done.

/// You say "this Bubbi." Is Jón Atli describing a different Bubbi than the one sitting before me?

– No. Not anymore. I realised soon that we change. Over a seven-year period, we renew every cell in our body. Seven years ago, I was a completely different person. From the year 1972, when the story begins, until 1980, that period he captures really well. The character is pretty damn close to what I was like back then. Then the period from 1980 to present, it is divided. From '80 to '96 was like an odyssey for me. I was lost and battling all sorts of demons; in me mostly. From '96, I was a different person. It was the beginning of a new chapter for me when I started focusing on eating right, sleeping right, exercising and thinking about spiritual matters.

I have ascended fully now. The runway is not far away and soon I will be told to put down the landing gear. If I am lucky, I will land. This is life, and I am at a place in my life where I am starting to hear the tower. This is a new chapter in life for me.

/// Has this been one continuous flight, or have you had many layovers and transits?

– It's been many flights. Some of them I just crashed and burned, man. Sometimes when I look back...

Recently, I reviewed some old interviews with me on the Internet. Reading some of them, I just thought: "Wow! Who is this unhappy, angry and arrogant person?" Amazingly, there is a group of people in this society that doesn't seem to be able to accept that you grow. They just want you to stay in this box, this category and keep you there. (Former Grapevine editor) Valur Gunnarsson is one example, (former Grapevine journalist) Sindri Eldon is another example, some website I came across the other day – dindill.is. What I read between the lines is that these people are in bad place in their lives, they are unhappy, but at the same time, they have the drive to express their discontent, and then I am a pretty good target. I am probably the biggest target they can imagine. It's like boxing. Who wouldn't want to get a shot at the Champ? Who wouldn't want to take him down?

But I can see in their writing that they are not feeling well, whether that is because of something personal in their lives or if it is

alcoholism and drug addiction. Myself, the period in my life where this group of people seems to think I was the most productive, the most powerful, was that time in my life when I drove myself as hard as possible on drugs and hadn't begun to resolve my personal issues. When you get through shit in childhood, if you are not lucky and if you are not strong, it will ruin you for life. If you get through that, you can get through a lot of shit. I did this, and I understand these people, because I can see myself in them. But all I can do is to shrug, and hope they work their shit out.

/// Is there nothing in their criticism that you take to heart? Do you not see anything from their point of view? Do you understand the criticism when people say that you have sold out to the financial powers?

– Yes. In a way... But what they don't realise is that from my first record, I sold out to the financial powers. I could not make records

What I am saying is that there are young and angry people, and then there are young and angry, and there is an ocean between them. Young people who say I have no relevance for them, fine, that is a part of growing up. But there are young people who are angry and fucked up and they are experiencing hell.

without making deals... and in the beginning, I lost a lot of money because people simply hustled me. One day I finally realised this and said: "Hey, I won't take this anymore. I have let people abuse for this long, but no more. Now I'll be in control of my destiny." Another thing is the deal I made with (the insurance company) Sjóvá, people don't seem to understand that every band and every musician makes a publishing deal, which is what I did. No one can do anything with my songs without my permission. No one can use my songs without my permission. I am still the author of these songs, but they get revenue from the songs and revenue from the music. This is a simple publishing deal. But this is a small society and this deal got a lot of attention. It probably created some envy too. I think it's very likely that it made some people envious.

The Old Bubbi, that is the demand that I make Ishjarnarblus for the rest of my life. Fuck you! You know, Fuck you and your crew! This is a joke and shows how people are completely stuck in their own prejudice.

But, yes – sure. I understand them. I understand them because I've been in that pit where you are driven by fear, and the more frightened I was, the harder I hit, the more ferocious I was, the more I would mouth off, etc.

But I've always said, everyone is entitled to their opinion of me. They can say what they want. I don't give a shit.

/// But the thing that stood out with this publishing deal is not the deal per se. It was the fact that you were dealing your publishing rights to an insurance company, the archetype of a greedy capitalistic company.

– It is all like that. What is a record company other than a machine that tries to milk its artists to the bone, chew them up and spit them out? It is very rare that an artist becomes so big that a record company decides it is in its own interest to keep him signed for life. If I had lived anywhere else than in Iceland, I would not have had to make a deal with an insurance company. I would be a multi-millionaire many times over if I had the same kind of sales numbers behind me proportionally in Denmark for example. In Denmark, I would have sold around 40 mil-

lion records. I'd be filthy rich.

/// So, the money is something that drives you?

– No. I have never known how to handle money. It doesn't mean anything to me besides that I have to feed my family, make sure that my kids can get an education and that I can enjoy my golden years. But is that goal per se, to make money? No, then I would do something else than be a musician. I consider myself lucky to have been able to make a living of my music for 26 years. Of those 26 years, I've had a steady income the last ten years.

/// Another thing is the New Bubbi vs. the Old Bubbi.

– The Old Bubbi, that is the demand that I make Ishjarnarblús for the rest of my life. Fuck you! You know, fuck you and your crew! This is a joke and shows how people

are completely stuck in their own prejudice. This is like asking Dylan to do The Times They Are A-Changing over and over again. Through my career, very few albums don't have a political message. I have always been socially conscious and I have written about everything that I have felt that mattered. People don't see this. They don't listen to the records; they know the old stuff, but none of the new stuff and have no idea as to what I am doing. I was making the biggest recording deal in the history of Iceland. I mean, an insurance company? I would have made a deal with a funeral parlour for that kind of money.

The thing is, people make up their own assumptions. You read someone's biography and you find out that this person is not what you thought she was like. I mean sure, for a while, I was going to allow this criticism bug

me. I'd be lying if I said I didn't. But, finally I thought to myself, Let Go, Let Go. I can't hold myself responsible for how others feel; I can only be responsible for how I feel. I made the decision, not to let this bug me. But I understand this criticism to a certain point.

/// What do think Bubbi Morthens 25 years ago would have to say to Bubbi Morthens today?

– It would depend on what drugs I was on at the time. It would depend on the mood I was in. I never criticised Dylan for example. Most of my friends gave up on him, but I always said: "You aren't listening to the music. You are just holding your personal prejudice against Bob Dylan against his music." If I am to be honest, knowing what I was back then, I would probably have criticised Bubbi for the music and the lyrics, not whether he had some publishing deal or not. I would have focused on the records. It didn't change anything for me when Dylan sold his songs to be used in commercials. I think I would probably have focused on the music. The same thing with the Clash, it didn't matter at all to me what Joe Strummer and the others were doing, as long as I could connect

with their music. Maybe I am strange in this way. It is the same with authors. It makes no difference to me if an author has murdered someone, fucked a mule, you name it... If I have a book, and the book is good, that is what I am after, not what he is like as a person. I don't go into a gallery exhibition and think: "Shit man. I wonder how much money Georg Guðni made from that deal with Viggo Mortensen." I'd probably just be thinking about how he uses the light on the mountainside, or that is a beautiful blue...

/// Today, that is easy for you to say. You are 50 years old now, have all this experience behind you. You are not the same man you were 25 years ago.

– No... Maybe not. You are right. But I can look at myself, you know. The music is something I've been consistent with. You know, when Dylan did his religious stuff, I didn't agree with that direction, but the music was still brilliant and so were the lyrics. I think I would have thought about it that way. If I had idolised Bubbi... If the persona of Bubbi Morthens had been some sort of a pillar in my life, I would probably have said: Fuck you! You fucking capitalist! That goes without saying. But I think I would have focused on the musician Bubbi Morthens.

The reason I attacked (Icelandic country-pop band) Brimklo back in the day [One of Bubbi's older lyric's goes: "I am a certified moron, I listen to Brimklo and HLH"], it had nothing to do with them personally. It was because they made pathetic music.

But I can understand this perspective. People always want to climb the highest mountain, so I am glad people are criticising me. It just tells me that I am doing something right.

/// Does the musician Bubbi Morthens have any relevance to young people today?

– You bet. Just come to my concerts. Look at the audience, look at the demography. There are kids so young that they need parental guidance to get into the show, teenagers, middle-aged people and old people. That has been my luck.

Yes. No question. But I might not be singing about the same things that young people emphasise today, but I mean does (Nobel Prize winning Icelandic author Halldór) Laxness have any relevance for young people? (Icelandic author) Gunnar Gunnarsson? You read someone's biography and you find out that this person is not what you thought she was like. I mean sure, for a while, I was going to allow this criticism bug

/// Well, the difference is that you used to be old AND angry. Do you still have something to say to people who are young and angry?

– Many people are young and angry and I can teach them a lot. Five times a week I go to place where there are young and angry people between the ages of 15-20 and they come up to me and say: "What should I do?" I can tell these young people, who are fucked up, "There is a solution to your problem. It is not complicated and it is called a 12-step program." But for you to be ready to deal with that program you need to experience unending pain and unending humiliation, before you are ready to give up and accept that you have to start from the beginning.

I mean, young and angry? That is just in the nostrils. It is a part of growing up. I think it was Mark Twain who said something to the effect that if you are not radical before you turn 30, then there is something wrong with you. If you are still radical after you turn 30 then there is also something wrong with you. What I am saying is that there are young and angry people, and then there are young and angry, and there is an ocean between them. Young people who say I have no relevance for them, fine, that is a part of growing up. But there are young people who are angry and fucked up and they are experiencing hell.

/// You seem to be in a place in your life where you seem to be happy.

– Totally.

>>> CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE



/// **Do you regret anything along the way?**
– No, there is nothing in my life I wish I had done differently right now. Considering how things turned out, this is how it was meant to be. I've had to do a lot of apologising through the years, we should never forget that words have effects, and once you have said something it is out there, you can't really take it back.

I don't spend a lot of time wondering about things though. I've gone through life, and I've had to apologise to for a lot of things, and similarly, I've had to forgive a lot of people. As a young kid, I experienced things that people agree children should never experience and all that, things that could easily have ruined me for life. But somehow, I was strong enough to ask others for forgiveness and to be able to forgive people myself. At some point in my life, I realised I was not the person I wanted to be and that I really needed to change. That's not a nice experience to go through, when you realise that: "Wow, I'm not just an asshole, I am a monster." I did some really intense introspection and I've managed to work out most of my faults. Some of them are genetic and I try to keep them in check. It wasn't easy, but at the end of it all, I experienced freedom. I was a free man.

/// **One of the things that Sindri Eldon criticised you for during your anniversary concert was the presentation. The whole thing came off as a PR spectacle for Glitnir bank rather than a celebration of your birthday.**

– Of course they were using this as a PR moment. They would be stupid if they didn't after sponsoring the whole event. It would be bad business on their behalf. That was totally

their business. The only thing that mattered to me was to get on stage and perform. It didn't make any difference to me when I saw the Volkswagen logo beside the Rolling Stones when I saw them. I just came to see the Stones. I will go see the Sugarcubes for sure, although the FL Group logo will be plastered everywhere.

But of course, this was a massive marketing circus. I mean, it was probably the biggest marketing campaign for a concert

Of course this was a massive marketing circus. I mean, it was probably the biggest marketing campaign for a concert in Iceland. The set-ups were one of the best ever in Iceland as far as lighting and sound goes. There was one thing I could have done without: (The nights presenters) Simmi and Jói. I left them of the Live DVD.

in Iceland. The set-ups were one of the best ever in Iceland as far as lighting and sound goes. There was one thing I could have done without: (The night's presenters) Simmi and Jói. I left them off the live DVD.

/// **The rock musician Bubbi Morthens, is he still alive?**

– Yes. You won't find a more powerful stage performer than me. I am 50 years old, if you can take anyone of these cats out here, take away his drugs, put him on stage for three hours like I did that night, I'll take my hat

off. I am the most powerful performer in the Icelandic Rock n' Roll history. End of discussion.

I am a big rocker. But I find it just as exciting to be alone with my guitar. It is harder than being in a rock band. With the guitar, you are the whole show. In a band, you are just a member.

But maybe I needed a few years away from rock music while the poison was leaving my body. Being a rock musician is a very

tough lifestyle. Drugs and rock n' roll are so intertwined. I just needed a few years away from that scene to get another perspective. Today I am okay with that. I'll rock again for sure. My next record will most likely be a rock album. I have already come up with the title: Fear is the Move. I want to crank the amplifier up to 11 and play three-chord rock music in the spirit of (on of Bubbi's many former bands) Das Kapital. That was always one of my favourite bands. I think it was the best stuff I played during the anniversary concert. It made me so glad to hear how

wonderful raw punk rock can sound. But, what do I know. I could be dead tomorrow.

/// **There is a biographical novel about your life coming out now, two years ago there was a documentary on your life, 18 years ago there was another biography, there have been countless media interviews... When will we have enough of Bubbi Morthens?**
– You have yet to see a movie based on my life, and probably a play based on my life, you are that much younger than me. But kidding aside, this book coming out now is a sort of Manga version of my life. You can always find new sides to the phenomenon that is Bubbi Morthens, and take note, I say the phenomenon Bubbi Morthens because it leads a separate life. I don't know. Often I think it is enough but what can I say... I sell out all my shows, I am here, and can't do much else, but I try to be more humble than I was at the beginning of my career. People can't forget that primarily I am a musician. That often gets lost when people talk about Bubbi Morthens. I have written over 500 songs on so many different subjects. There are so many different versions of me. I can't do anything else than be who I am. Today, I try to protect my freedom above all. I made a lot of sacrifices to attain that. I am at this point in my life, a point where I think most people should consider if the would not want to be in their life. To be free. It cost me a lot of pain to get to this point, but in this case, that pain was a blessing. At the end of the day, I can honestly say that looking back, I can see that my biggest losses were really my biggest victories.

Nýhil Poetry in the Grapevine:

Steinar Bragi

Author/poet Steinar Bragi (b. 1975) is regarded as one of Iceland's promising young writers, although it could be argued that his four novels and five books of poetry have far surpassed the claim. His latest book of poetry, *Liti Kall Strikes Again* was released by Nýhil this summer as part of its Nordic Literature series – many claim it is his best so far.

3. A day for G8-protesting in Edinburgh.

Today was a very strict day in protesting against the unjustness of monetary spreadability in the world with stars in the city (Edinburgh) fighting against this. The subject has been developing for quite a time and I remember Bob Geldof spearheading it on many a gathering once while he travelled more ;(. The subject enjoys cross-political benevolence except for Bush, now I'm going to wring my neck, no, carry on with the story. I was confiscated!!!! I was at some protest alone, Emma was at school, Vidar and Daff were protesting elsewhere – EH!!!!?? why didn't they just protest there at town where I was also protesting!!!!?

When we turned a corner and walked into a long alleyway open at both ends the cops suddenly sprang from hiding – with masks and sticks and shields and all, and shut us all in in the alley and said: "No, no, you can't leave, just stay here for the whole of the day because we say so" WHAT!!!!???????? SAY AGAIN!!!!????

Eat shit penguin

, crawl back into the hole you crawled up from you shit revolting muscle of the fascist state which is the West today Fuck off democracy, crawl back down the hole disgusting democracy you're sham democracy, you should be named deathcracy, dickcracy Stay off my case fucking penguin let me out of this alleyway hell moran, I don't have the time to stick around for the whole of the day you disgusting fucking penguin Shall I smash through your shield little scared penguin??? Shall I wring your neck Muscle-cell, capitalist blister? O.k., the state has confiscated me but I'm slick, you can't hold me here for the rest of my life idiots. When I escape I'll destroy your system All of us protest, idiots

I noted what happened at what time in the alleyway:

12:35 PM. Shut inside the alleyway, ridiculously boring, obscenely free subjects of the West FALSE

13:40 An anarchist crawls up on the roof, legal advisors come and advise us. "Be cool," says legal to me when I'm exploding I'm so afraid the police will hit me

14:30 start of sipping with rope, the anarchists are a bit lame but I support their cause which is the destruction of community as we know it but I'm less sure about some of their other stuff. But don't judge the fold by it's black sheep, not everyone wants this, only DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED WESTERN GOVERNMENTS who want to destroy communities of other communities.

14:38 been staying here for ever. The speaker is broke says a guy, we don't know anything, someone is taking a nap and someone says the police are trying to put us to sleep as if they won't manage with beer, football and television og need something else.

15:14 SHIT!!! The cops have started moving in on us!! Suddenly they step twenty steps ahead with arms locked and their shields and are going to CRUSH US!!!! I'm disgustingly scared, can't understand why they do this. I WAS JUST PROTESTING MORANS!!!!

15:40 Is this the best you can do nitwits, come for me idiot, I'm not going anywhere, come and I'll blast your face shit.

15:47 Penguins make a line, five-man-deep, everybody with their little cute shields doing something sneaky behind them.

16:25 "If you want to leave form an orderly queue," says the main-penguin into the speaker. Fuck off.

16:35 been "cordoned"; suddenly we've all formed a line to get out.

16:37 a girl retrieved from the line and arrested. "This is what democracy looks like" all sing. – Democracy is like a guy, feet broke on both sides, trying to stand up to hit an arab.

16:43 Police eat Mars chocolate bars disgustingly fast. Then they plastic-bag all junk from the street and scarves and hats. The police is from Mars, protesters from Venus hehe.

16:55 Interrogated by two cops who also do a body search all over, they say I was held up by the power of Section 60. Exactly, section 60 explains all of this, I'm so glad you told me why you shut me up inside an alleyway for many hours, section 60 saves the day.

Ow, it's finished. I had to tell you about this. It's a great victory for me to be able to tell you this because I made notes. Conclusion. The main subjects of the report are the following: Everybody continues watching the TV-news with great care and diligence and then voting their representatives for parliament every four years but instead do it every 40.000 year and choose geographically, voting for example the Eurasian-plate to cheer it against the Asian-plate and if they move a bit TO SIGH (SAME SHIT DIFFERENT DAY!!!!).

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Bryndís Ísfold

bryndisisfold.com



I'm running in the Social Democratic Alliance's primary election, seeking **6th place**. The primary will take place on the 11th of November 2006 in bróttur Sports Centre in Laugardalur between 10 AM and 18 PM. If you are not a member of the SDA you can participate by signing a declaration of support for the party at the polling station.

You can read my manifesto in your own language at my website. I hope come and take part in the pre elections.



BERGSTAÐASTRÆTI 13
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Oldest bakery in Iceland
since 1834



Hressingarskálinn

Hressingarskálinn (Hressó) is a Classical Bistro, located in the heart of the city at Austurstræti 20.

Food is served from 10 until 22 every day. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, after the kitchen closes Hressó heats up with live music. Weekends, DJs keep the party going until morning, with no cover charge.



Reykjavík

871 #2

Landnámssýningin

The Settlement Exhibition

Step into the Viking Age

How did it all begin?

Multimedia techniques bring Reykjavík's past to life, providing visitors with insights into how people lived in the Viking Age, and what the Reykjavík environment looked like to the first settlers.

The Settlement Exhibition 871#2 is located at Aðalstræti 16

Reykjavík City Museum
www.reykjavik871.is

City of Reykjavík

DINING, EATING & GRUBBING

By **Haukur Magnússon** and **Steinnur Jakobsdóttir** Photos by **Skari** and **Julia Staples**

KAFFI HLJÓMALIND

Laugavegur 21, 101 Reykjavík
Tel.: 517-1980



Located on the corner of Laugavegur and Klapparsígur, the organic and cultural coffeehouse Kaffi Hljómalind prides itself on its non-profit, co-op status and on sending a positive message to society. Being a popular concert spot for the local hardcore scene, Hljómalind also hosts poetry nights and lectures and serves as a popular hangout spot for many locals who like to slurp down organic drinks while downloading music

to their eBooks in a cosy and smoke-free environment.

The organic tea and coffee isn't the only draw though. With all ingredients (without the butter, cream and cheese) not only organic but most of it free trade as well, the coffeehouse is ideal for those who like quality coffee and juices as they were meant to be made and eat healthy and nutritious meals.

Although the drink selection takes up much more space on the menu than the edible parts, the selection of cold and warm dishes is quite satisfying. The soup of the day, various sandwiches and home-baked cakes fill up the list of appetising treats.

After deciding whether to sit at a small table in the corner or choose to lounge in one of the old sofas facing the window, we ordered the vegetarian lasagne. It would have been a complete vegan dish if it weren't for

the cheese we chose to put on top. Mango and apple juice, organic of course, as well as a bottle of ginger ale were served for drinks.

Made just as you would do at home, the flavourful lasagne came with some salad, pumpkin and sunflower seeds, both very healthy, just as all other ingredients used for the cuisine. The plates and silverware, as well as all furnishing inside are second-hand, a mixture of here and there things, making the atmosphere even more relaxing than it would be lying in your own living room.

With full and satisfied stomachs, we unfortunately didn't have the appetite to even look at the cake list. That delicacy will have to wait until next time. *SJ*



JÓMFRÚIN

Lækjargata 4, 101 Reykjavík
Tel. 551-0100



Imagine Danish cuisine in all its glory. Then imagine a trimmings-heaven where you can choose all the meat and garnish you could ever dream of, piled atop of a slice of rye-bread. Add a bit of friendly service and Icelandic quality ingredients and you'll get the roomy and charming restaurant Jómfrúin at Lækjargata, the only place to get traditional Danish smørrebrød (open sandwiches) in Reykjavík.

With its 11:00 to 18:00 opening hours the major rush hour is during lunch. Then it

seems like all the working residents downtown meet to eat their lunch. When my companion and I arrived at one o'clock in the afternoon, the place was at least packed. Every table was fully seated with locals feasting on yummy bread with all sorts of spreads or the warm lunch dishes offered every day. The diverse menu consisted of various desirable courses, such as frikadeller with onion, biksemad, fish dishes, as well as the obligatory smørrebrød with salmon, herring, eel, ham and roasted lamb as examples of delicious meals cooked and prepared in an old-fashioned Danish style. After carefully scouting the endless selection, my companion ordered the pastrami sandwich. I was so confused by all the choices I allowed the nice waiter to make the pick.

After bringing us two shots of Danish akvavit (a traditional Scandinavian schnapps)

along with large Danish beers to satisfy our thirst, only appropriate for the big Danish meal awaiting us, the waiter arrived with large, hearty plates of bread and trimmings. My fried plaice served on rye bread with tartar sauce, smoked salmon and caviar, shrimp, asparagus and lemon to give it an extra decoration, was especially delicious and I instantly understood why it's the most popular dish on the menu. My companion was equally satisfied with his pastrami, which came on white bread with smoked and marinated beef, sauerkraut, Dijon mustard and fresh herbs. A precise proportion to satisfy the afternoon hunger, the meal was not only delicious but fully competitive with the standards set by the pristine Danish food tradition. *SJ*



MARU

Adalstræti 12, 101 Reykjavík
Tel: 511-4440



Maru's website claims that the Japanese restaurant emphasises take-out orders. This is fitting, as their near flawless take on sushi and Japanese cuisine in general is somewhat at odds with the all-too homey feel one encounters when dining there. Case in point: our first course, an unrelentingly delicious and thoughtfully presented tuna sashimi salad, was served about three minutes after our aperitifs. While Maru's take on Pink Mojito was perfectly competent, its sugary flavour did little to complement the fine dish.

One of four waiters (!) who tended to us that night soon came to the rescue however, and brought us lovely bottles of Asahi and white wine, altogether more fitting drinks. The courses kept on coming in an equally untimely fashion, our table soon brimming with plate after plate of fishy delights (and one noodly, meaty delight) that tasted really good, but would certainly have benefited from a more thoughtful presentation; the haphazard style in which the food was served doesn't reflect Maru's seemingly upscale aspirations (as indicated by its decorations).

However, I stress that nearly all the food sampled was of the highest quality, and the fish was extremely fresh, even if some courses were decidedly better than others. A spicy tuna maki was just a dash away from perfect, as were salmon, white fish and tiger shrimp nigiri. The miso was well up to standard as

well, leaving a rather bland noodle affair as the one dish that didn't particularly impress our otherwise pleased taste buds. It was still pretty good, however. A dessert menu limited to blueberry sorbet, vanilla ice cream and chocolate cake, although all fine courses in their own right, was perplexing in light of Maru's otherwise Japanese-style menu. Even infusing the ice cream with some green tea would have made for a more authentic end to the delicious meal.

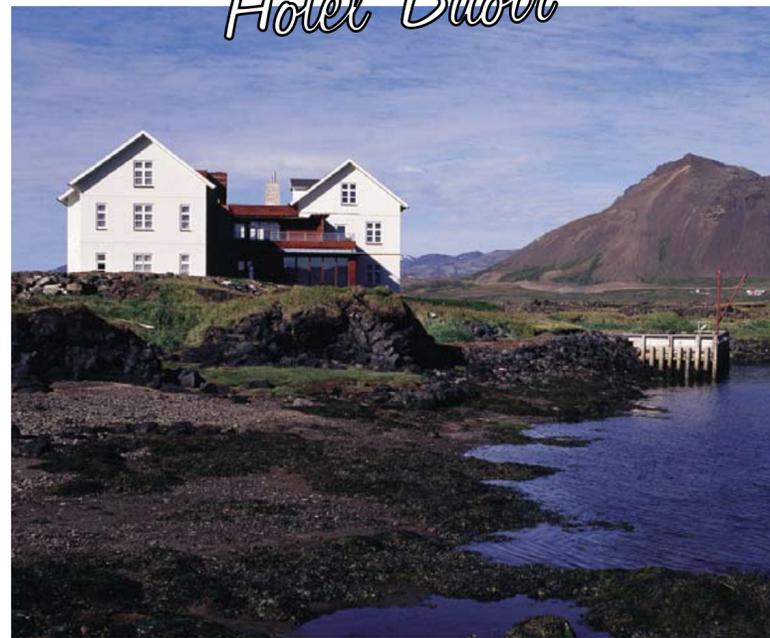
A single piece of sushi at Maru will set you back about 2-400 IKR, well comparable with what other sushi places in Iceland offer. For a full meal, without drinks, one can expect to pay about 2,000-4,000 ISK, which seems fair. *HM*



WE RECOMMEND

BEZT Í HEIMI

Hotel Búðir



The Place Deserves Its Fame

BY BART CAMERON

Hotel Búðir is one of the world's best hotels – Condé Nast Traveler has said so, as have a few other magazines. And they're all right. What is more, if Búðir were a four-dollar tent with a sleeping mat, it would still be one of the world's greatest hotels. Located on a natural inlet along the country's best beach on the southern coast of the Snæfellsnes peninsula, Búðir boasts both the best coastline, and the best view of Iceland's most famous glacier, Snæfellsjökull. To complete the view, Búðir also overlooks one of the few traditional countryside black chapels, a modest but surprisingly evocative structure.

As it happens, one of the magazines that thinks Hotel Búðir is one of the world's greats is the design magazine Wallpaper. Attractive as the surroundings are, and as handsome as the outside of Búðir is, and it is unusually tasteful, the interior gets featured in design magazines. When we arrived, we headed straight for the hotel lounge, a timeless, a dream hunting-lodge style bar. The walls are decked with tasteful mountings, Audubon-style paintings, and old National Geographic, the bar outfitted with the country's best Scotch and Port selection. Truthfully, we chose Búðir solely for the lounge, as we had headed out to the bar last year for a retreat.

To complete the Búðir experience, the hotel also houses an outstanding restaurant, featuring the modern, French-inspired take on Icelandic cuisine that you'd expect at a four-star hotel.

The hotel is the dream getaway for couples, and they made up the bulk of the residents when we visited this year. A hotel this good and this relaxing can serve multiple purposes, though. With the views and the many public spaces, and with the hiking and overall solitude – the hotel is two hour's drive from Reykjavík, but it feels like a different world – we found Búðir perfect for our purposes, a quick work retreat.

Ours will only be one small article in the arsenal of Búðir praise you'll see if you're a fan of Iceland. As you come across the write-ups, it may feel like this is the most over-hyped institution in the country. All we can say is that we've checked it out. If there were anything negative to say, we, of all people, would say it. This hotel is as good as it gets, and a little better than that.

Hotel Búðir, 365 Snæfellsnes, Tel.: 435-6700, www.budir.is.

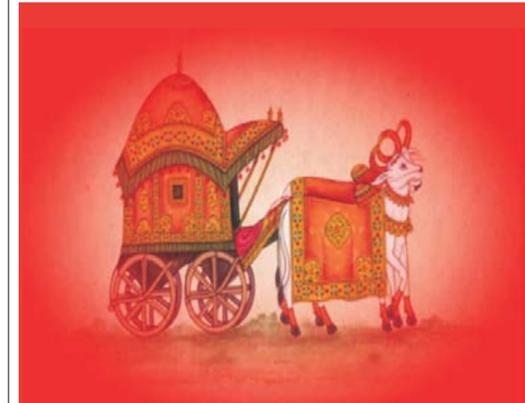
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UPCOMING CONCERTS

<p>THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH @ 7:30PM FILM CONCERT Conductor :: Frank Strobel D.W. Griffith/Carl Davis :: Intolerance</p> <p>SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11TH @ 3:00PM FAMILY FILM CONCERT Conductor :: Frank Strobel Charles Chaplin :: The Kid Charles Chaplin :: The Idle Class</p> <p>THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH @ 7:30PM MOZART IN SALZBURG Conductor :: Robert King Soloist :: Gillian Keith Choir of Hamrahlíð W. A. Mozart :: Regina Coeli, K. 127 W. A. Mozart :: Sancta Maria, K. 273 W. A. Mozart :: Exultate Jubilate, K. 165 W. A. Mozart :: Symphony nr. 34 W. A. Mozart :: Regina Coeli, K. 108</p>	<p>THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD @ 7:30 OPERATIC CONCERT Conductor :: Johannes Fritzsich Soloists :: Kristinn Sigmundsson, Kolbeinn Ketilsson, Wolfgang Schöne and Petra Lang Mixed Choir Choirmaster :: Árni Harðarson Richard Wagner :: Tristan & Isolde Richard Wagner :: Prelude & Liebestod</p> <p>THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH @ 7:30 Conductor :: Rumon Gamba Soloist :: Sergei Aleksashkin Male Choir of Föstbrædur Choirmaster :: Árni Harðarson W. A. Mozart :: Don Giovanni, Overture Richard Strauss :: Don Juan Shostakovich :: Symphony no. 13, Babi Yar</p>
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Selection of Old Masterpieces

A different kind of cinema

BY ANDREW CLARKE PHOTO BY SKARI

After two film festivals in quick succession, the discerning film fan can find the rest of the cinematic year offers slim pickings. But the little-known Kvikmyndasafn Íslands (the National Film Archive of Iceland) in Hafnarfjörður comes to the rescue, with its rep programme, which runs from September to April. I say little known because attendances struggle to hit double figures.

Like Tjarnarbió, the cinema itself feels like a cinema ought to, rather than the characterless if comfy boxes elsewhere. And the price is just 500 ISK, well worth paying to see an oldie the way it was meant to be seen, on the big screen.

Sadly it shows only one film twice a week but its selections are eclectic to say the least. As this is an English-language paper, I'll leave out the films by Tarkovsky, Truffaut and Fellini and give a rundown of the English language flicks showing before the end of the year.

Comedy of Terrors (7th & 11th November) is a feast for fans of tongue-in-cheek, gothic horror. The film's pedigree is impeccable. It's directed by Jacques Tourneur who made the classic *I Walked With a Zombie* and *Night of the Demon*. The script is by Richard Matheson who wrote *I Am Legend* and *The Incredible Shrinking Man*. And as for the cast... Vincent Price, Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre and Basil Rathbone. What more could any horror fan want? It's a shame it isn't programmed for a week earlier as it would

make the perfect Halloween treat. Oh and the plot concerns undertakers Price and Lorre indulging in murder to drum up business, but that hardly matters.

Cross of Iron (21st & 25th November) is one of Sam Peckinpah's strongest and most respected films. It's set on the Russian front during the Second World War and it tackles big themes: honour, loyalty and the senseless atrocity of war. Thirty years haven't dimmed its power. Peckinpah was a true tyro director who mixed in real character development with slow motion hails of bullets in films like *The Wild Bunch* and *The Getaway*. James Coburn, Maximilian Schell, James Mason and David Warner make a genuinely heavyweight cast too.

In Joseph Losey's *Eva* (8th November and 2nd December) Stanley Baker's Welsh writer travels to Venice where he falls into the clutches of an exotic foreign woman played by Jeanne Moreau (British films of this era sometimes showed a strange fascination and perhaps fear of licentious foreign women – Simone Signoret in *Room at the Top*, Eva Bartok in *Spaceways*). The undoubtedly talented Losey, blacklisted in Hollywood, was seldom afraid to push his films in slightly deranged directions (*The Servant*, for example), so if a melodramatic, pot-boiler is your cup of tea...

Films are shown on Thursday evenings at 20:00 and on Saturday afternoons at 16:00.

For more information, visit www.kvikmyndasafn.is.



Fiery Love Affair and Icelandic Chauvinism

English-language theatre on Icelandic stages

BY STEINUNN JAKOBSDÓTTIR PHOTO BY SKARI

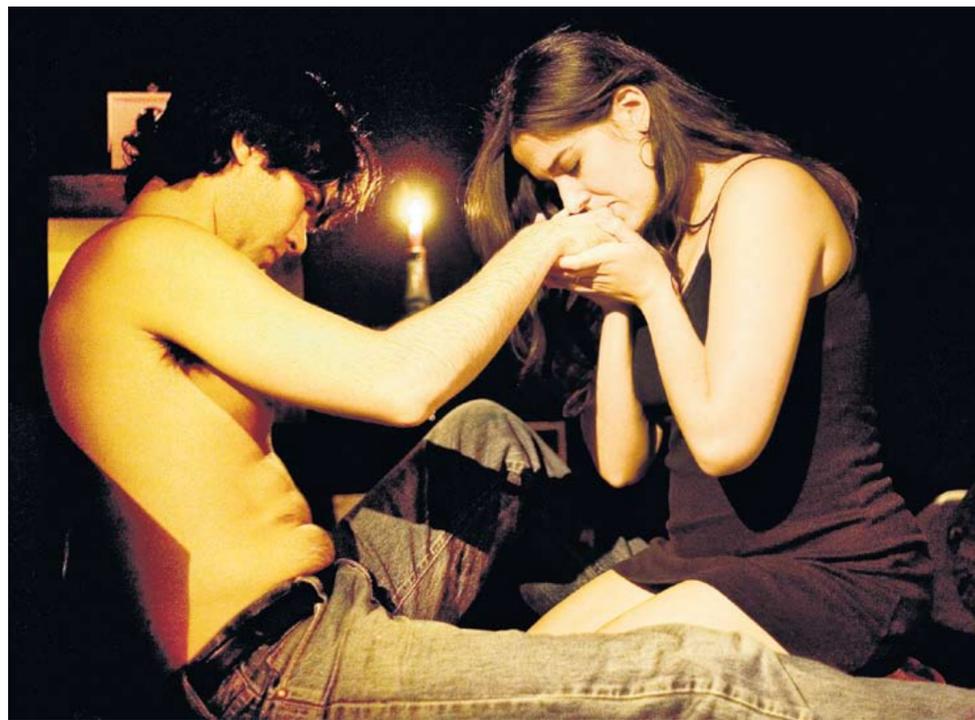
This November will see the premier of two new plays aimed at the English-speaking audience: *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea* at Austurbær Theatre and the brand new Icelandic play *Best í Heimi* (Best in the World) at Iðnó. Foreign actors take on the leading roles in both pieces but direction is in the hands of young local talents.

Described as a punked love story, the play *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea* by New York playwright John Patrick Shanley, now being performed at Austurbær Theatre, is directed by Jón Gunnar Þórðarson. British husband and wife Matthew Hugget and Nicolette Morrison play two disturbed lower-class underachievers (Danny and Roberta) who are quite out of touch with reality. Danny is a violent deadbeat and Roberta the single mother of a screwed-up teenage son. When the two lost and lonely souls meet at a shabby bar they slowly start connecting with each other through their mutual hatred of life. The play is in all humanly emotional as well as romantic. Even though Danny and Roberta might seem rough on the outside, in the end, they just want some warmth and affection.

Performed at various theatres around the world, critics have described *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea* as "a wrenching love story" and "one of the most visible, concrete examples of Shanley's dedication to exploring the infinite contrasts of human relationships."

The impro play *Best í Heimi* not only differs quite a bit from the aforementioned play in its storyline, but it is in Icelandic with English subtitles. Directed by María Reyndal and collaboratively written by Reyndal and Hávar Sigurjónsson. After a year of preparations, time mostly spent in collecting material and interviewing numerous immigrants, the results are finally coming to fruition.

Being a comic satire on Icelandic society the play revolves around the relationship between Icelanders and immigrants. National



pride and local chauvinism as well as the humorous and sometimes sad sides being an immigrant in Iceland can have expressed in multiple ways. "We are making fun of all the old clichés and stereotypical ideas about Icelanders and their relationship with foreigners. We try to do so with both a funny and critical perspective," María Reyndal tells

the Grapevine.

Actors Caroline Dalton from England, Dimitra Drakopoulou from Greece, French Pierre-Alain Giraud and Tuna Meyta from Turkey all have had their fair share of the country's residents and their own experiences with the Icelandic society reflect in performances. A curious piece for foreigners

as well as for Icelanders themselves, *Best í Heimi* will be shown until the end of this year.

For further information on both pieces, see the Theatre Listings section in the Grapevine.

Spontaneous Self-Pleasuring

Daft Punk on movies, music and texture

BY HAUKUR MAGNÚSSON

Meeting up with legendary electro hitmongers Daft Punk backstage at NASA for a short interview, just minutes before one half of the eclectic duo took the stage to perform a rare DJ set, the pair made abundantly clear just how French they really are. They took time to contemplate every question, their answers cloaked in thick accents and served up in the thoughtfully abstract and wordy manner that has for the past century been a staple of French thought. The reason for Daft Punk's visit to Reykjavík wasn't of the sonic variety, however, rather they were here as guests of the Reykjavík International Film Festival to follow up a screening of their recent film *Electroma*, which chronicles two robots' quest to become human.

It became clear early in our conversation that Thomas Bangalter does most of Daft Punk's talking, his companion, Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo, sporadically offering helpful comments while silently contemplating his surroundings (when asked why he doesn't talk more he replied, "We are on the same wavelength, for the most part"). The pair is legendarily reluctant to be photographed without some sort of mask or robot costume hiding their faces, so it seemed natural to begin by asking if it was really them.

"No, we kidnapped the real Daft Punk in Paris and came here pretending to be them. [Laughing.] Daft Punk is actually a group of 10-15 people in Paris; we are just their spokesmen. But no, not really. We are Daft Punk, the one and only." Bangalter then turns the subject to their motivation for making *Electroma*, and why they deliberately decided against using any of their own music for the dialogue-free film's score. "We've done lots of music in the past, but have always been interested in the visual aspect as well. To that end, we've directed videos and designed a table, for instance. For *Electroma*, we basically wanted to do the opposite of what we usually do as a pair and immerse ourselves in the visual aspect itself. Working on the film as a whole is enough work without composing the music as well, writing the story, directing, doing the cinematography, choosing the right music... ensuring our vision, basically."

We discuss their foray into filmmaking further, and compare it to their successful career making music. They tell me *Electroma* could be interpreted as their attempt at making "a kind of music for the eyes", and that it is probably less accessible than their music because of the format. They add, however, that there are similarities in the way they approach the creative process of each. "It maybe lies in working with the raw material, processing it. At a base level, everything we do is linked to technology, so when we started to make music we worked with textures and frequencies and



the like, really physical elements – just the same as in the move we focused on the film's grain and texture. It is, for example, like the way you view a painting: half of you will research the grain of the canvas and the way it interacts with the paint, a very down to earth thing that is not the abstract part of the creative process. It has to do with the elements you really use, the wood, the film or something like that. In that way we approach film and music similarly, because we approach it not so much in a conceptual way, rather a physical one."

They tell me that an important aspect in anything they do is spontaneity, even projects such as *Electroma* that will eventually take a number of years to conclude. "We try to do everything we do in a spontaneous manner; through it we are able to share our world view with the people. The ideas may take a long time to execute but are in their essence always spontaneous. It may take two years to realise a creative endeavour that was conceived in seconds, it doesn't mean that two years of creating were involved.

"We try and please the spontaneous desire that started us on our way, we stick to this desire and it's important to keep ones eyes on it. The problem with creating with technology is that has grown limitless, in a way. A computer can help you make both the best and

worst things that lie in your possibilities, with 16 million colours at your disposal. It's almost a problem with the creative process now, how limitless computers have made it. Limits and boundaries are, in a way, important to creation."

/// Is there, in your opinion, a big difference between the artistic fields of filmmaking and music?

– Well, filmmaking is definitely one of the most collaborative art forms. When we're making music by ourselves, it is a rewarding process but one very different from making films, where there may be fifty or sometimes even hundreds of people involved. You get to collaborate, learn new things. Working on movies is a good thing, it gets you out of your cocoon or shell or something.

/// Making a movie under the Daft Punk moniker invites the question if you conceive the project as a continuation of your work in music, and if you prefer to work together at all times?

– We've done many things under the Daft Punk name. We want to tackle different art forms and learn as much as we can in the process. It's definitely true that we've had a lot of success and exposure with making music, but we don't want this attention to restrain us

or forbid us from work on other projects that are exciting. And we mostly work together, but not always."

/// Assuming that music is a way to communicate sentiments that cannot be said with mere words, what, if anything, are you trying to get across with your music? Are you theorising, even?

– Exactly, our music is about expressing the things words cannot say, but without theorising too much. As I said, we work with a very spontaneous concept of communication, one that is at the same time conscious and unconscious. Music making is a therapy for us, which means expressing our unconscious, but it is at the same time a conscious attempt to do so. Then again, I don't know if what we do can really be referred to as communication because it is very self-involved. We do it for ourselves, we share it later, but our main motivation for making music is a selfish one. A lot of musicians have the talent and ability to communicate to a mass of people and express their emotions. People like Bob Dylan or John Lennon are really frank and gifted like that. I think we are more in our own room, and revolve more about a sound. When we write something, we can take years to finish it before we share it. At that point we are only speaking to ourselves and pleasing ourselves.

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GRAPEVINE ALBUM REVIEWS



Skakkamanage
Lab of Love
Worth 3 1/2 beers

Supposedly there's a whole generation of young artists and musicians who all have the same perspective on their work to justify the title "the cute generation". The pillars of the "movement" are often named as Sigur Rós and mím. Let's add Skakkamanage to the list. This lo-fi minimalistic music is cute as hell, partly recorded in bedrooms and apartments in Reykjavík. Nice, odd and sometime catchy folk songs that have some weird attraction that's hard to pinpoint. But somehow the album

never reaches greatness and after a few listens left me annoyed. Annoyed because Skakkamanage could have done better, judging from their live shows. They seem to have fallen into the pit that's marked: lo-fi makes everything great. Which is a bad pit. On the last track, Colonial, they finally crawl out of that pit and show us something amazing. Despite its shortcomings though, it's probably one of the most interesting Icelandic albums this year. *PH*



Various Artists
Pældu í því sem pælandi er í
Worth 2 beers

This is the second Megas tribute CD ever to surface in the history of mankind. Thirteen various artists and bands have a go at his songs with similar results. Each artist puts his own mark on the songs but mostly adds nothing new. A good cover song should add something to the original, not just a new arrangement that sounds almost the same. These are all talented artists and it's an enjoyable CD to listen to

but, apart from one track, it doesn't add anything of value to the songs. It's a great reminder of Megas's genius though. Nobody matches his lyrics and it made me want to dig into my record collection for his work, maybe that's the point of the whole deal. The track that makes this a worthy buy is Trabant's great version of Björt ljós, borgarljós. That cover makes the album – the rest is pleasant but forgettable. *PH*



Regina Ósk
Í djúpum dal
Worth 1 beer

This is an album filled with love and religious songs. Regina Ósk is more than a capable singer and producer Barði Jóhannsson of Bang Gang is a competent producer. The result though, is yet another acoustic guitar and piano-oriented, slow, unoriginal CD for middle-aged people of all ages. Which is not necessarily a bad thing. There are a few tracks that show some minor variations from the formula and hint

at something greater. Most notable is the melancholy and eerie Hvað tekur við, which is incidentally the only track Barði cowrites. Í Djúpum Dal (In a Deep Valley) is not an album that will make its mark on music history. But it does what it tries to do fairly well: to provide the world with more slow love songs sung by a female angelic voice. Buy this for your grandmother on your father's side as a Christmas present. *PH*



Bubbi
06.06.06
Worth 4 coffees*

This 2-CD set is the live recording of Bubbi's 50th birthday concert, which he managed to sell out in at least two different ways. The venue was packed with people who bought tickets and some bank bought some hefty advertising space. But let's not get into that. It's an ambitious project for any artist to race through a two-hour program with six bands and some solo performances. It may have taken its toll on Bubbi that night, or maybe it's because the im-

perfect recording – the guitar sound is at times way too low and generally the bands are too far back in the mix. The best moments are when Bubbi is free from his old bandmates and just sits down with the guitar – the new song Grafir og Bein ranks among his best works. Buy this if you were one of the 5,000 people who had a great time at the concert – if not, get something else from Bubbi – there's a lot of good stuff to choose from. *PH*



Lay Low
Please don't hate me
Worth 3 1/2 beers

Lay Low's country blues is a breath of fresh air into Icelandic music life. Especially considering the fact that girls of her age hardly ever produce anything this original. Lay Low's strength lies in composing fine tunes but it's the lyrical department that could use some quality control. Songs mostly about love and regret with a fair bit of hymn-like lyrics that at times suffer from

the syndrome so many artists trying to express themselves in a non-native tongue suffer from – not knowing the language they're working with. But the songs are excellent, the production good and the guitar playing fine. An honest, somewhat original (at least by Icelandic standards) album that doesn't sound like a debut at all, but the work of an experienced artist. A fine CD. *PH*



Hildur Vala
Lalala
Worth 1 beer

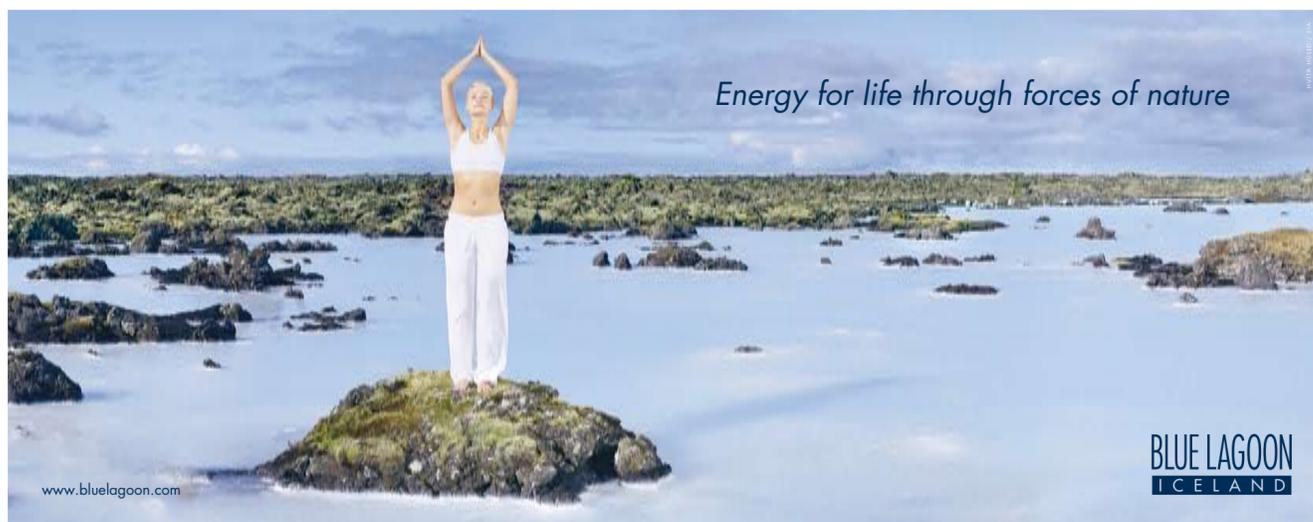
Hildur Vala, the winner of the hugely popular TV show/singing competition Icelandic Idol, is back with her second album and this time it's not an album of covers but all new songs by various Icelandic musicians. It's called Lalala. Here's an Icelandic lesson for you: lala means so and so. Lalala could be translated Na na na (as in

Hey Jude by the Beatles – for another example see The Offspring's nineties smash hit Self Esteem). This album is more so–so than na na na: easy listening jazzy pop that leaves no mark, but is extremely radio friendly. Buy this for your grandmother on your mother's side as a Christmas present. *PH*

Guide to the rating system:

In prison, you deal in cigarettes. In Iceland, you deal in beers. We don't condone this, we just accept it as fact. One beer = 500 ISK at the seedy bars we frequent. That means a mainstream release costs us to 2500 ISK... or \$40. Yes that much. That's why we do the beer thing.

*This issue only, in honor of Bubbi Morthens, who would never want to have his name associated with beer, we have decided to rate his album in cups of coffee. The average price for a cup of coffee, is 250 ISK, half the price of a beer, so: 1 beer = 2 coffee cups. Reviewed by Páll Hilmarsson



2003							2004
			2005				
					2006		
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Nashville in the North

The 2006 Iceland Airwaves was as perfect as an Altman film

BY BART CAMERON PHOTO BY SKARI

In explaining the success of Iceland Airwaves, the organisers, Mr. Destiny, surprised me by explaining that 9/11 had a strong effect on the festival. Coming up on 2001, Airwaves featured large acts, and that year they planned on featuring the Gorillaz. Instead, with their international audience not willing to get on a plane, they went local, went small, and found themselves with a gorgeous little festival that featured the city of Reykjavik as much as anything else. They found gold.

This year, Mr. Destiny seemed to perfect the elusive formula that they started developing in 2001. Without any central stars, without any one attraction other than the city, the 2006 Airwaves proved to be as perfect a festival as Iceland has seen. In fact, judging by the comments of our visiting writers, the 2006 Airwaves was as good music festival as has been put together in the last decade... anywhere. By the end of the weekend, I had started thinking of Airwaves as the ultimate ensemble cast Robert Altman film; this year's 147 bands were arranged to capture the imagination, to show a glimpse of intelligence, but they were also left to keep their individuality, and, honestly, none were allowed to steal the show.

Location, location, location...

While we're working the film analogy, the locations, or venues, were the most talked about aspect of the festival, at least at our offices. The Gaukur á Stöng of this year may have been the single most hated venue this side of Rhode Island. (Yes, that's a Great White concert joke, and yes, it is too soon.) To explain the hatred, here's an anecdote from our own Steinunn Jakobsdóttir, who was assigned to take over reporting from the venue after yet another reporter said, "I'll cover anything, just get me out of Gaukurinn." Our hearty Icelandic reporter took over,

wedged herself into the audience, only to notice that the man a few feet to her left had overimbibed. As he threw up on himself, she realised that not only could she not flee, but the heat of the overpacked venue and the lack of ventilation would in fact keep the smell of the man's stomach acid at its most pungent.

Gaukurinn was such a bad venue that it became a story, somewhat celebrated. MTV was rumoured to have fled the venue during the We Are Scientists gig on Wednesday, fearing for their safety. There was the above vomit story. By the time visiting writer Nick Catucci, who made his reputation covering the indie scene throughout Brooklyn and New York for the Village Voice, declared that Gaukurinn was "the most dangerous venue I have ever entered" we started thinking of the place as supernatural.

For the record, I caught wind that Gaukurinn is allowed about 600 people, according to fire code. Of course, as it is a two-floor bar usually, and as during this festival it only used the first floor, that figure should have been revised. It was cute and funny to suffocate at Gaukurinn this year, but if someone tries this again, it will be simply criminal.

A few bands managed to perform well despite Gaukurinn, especially We Are Scientists, The Whitest Boy Alive, Wolf Parade and Whomadewho, and, on Sunday, Patrick Watson and local bands My Summer as a Salvation Soldier and time-tested live acts Jan Mayen, Jeff Who?, Hólt Hóra and Hairdoctor.

Þjóðleikhúskjallarinn (listed as National Theatre Basement this year) and Iðnó were the gems of the festival. Featuring less well-known line-ups, these venues charmed audiences, reporters and bands. Maybe the best example of how much a venue affects a band, affects an experience, was Ghostigal's set this year at Iðnó, compared with their

frustrating, truncated effort last year that blew out Gaukurinn's old sound system. Last year, Einar Örn came off as a punk iconoclast loner, this year, as an artist comfortable at on the edge, in very good company here in Iceland.

Finally, regarding location, the off-venue shows complemented the festival perfectly this year. 12 Tónar hosted decent events, though the cancellation by Brazilian Girls was a letdown, Smekkleysa gave a few local bands an extra venue and Kaffi Hjómáland, which feels like it has been the centre of Reykjavik music for decades, not months, injected life into the festival, first with a day of hardcore, and then with a surreal performance by Tilly and the Wall.

Top billing

The concept for this article is that this year's Airwaves reached a level that a truly brilliant Altman movie reaches, that inexplicable moment when excellent performances, scene, nuance, come together for a massive, unique whole. The most obvious reason for the analogy: the cast list. If you had a pleasant time at Airwaves this year, you likely enjoyed eight bands, two of whom you expected to see, one that you had actually heard long before you started getting ready for the festival.

This year, it seemed as though Mr. Destiny had sent out a memo to the visiting bands, all of them save one performed without ego, treating locals as casual friends, many even getting involved in extra performances. Erlend Øye of The Whitest Boy Alive seemed to jump into any show in town, as did Islands frontman Nick Diamons.

The local and visiting performers who decided to play with different bands, who decided to take chances and play casually, fit in best. Benni Hemm Hemm found himself performing with at least four bands, among them Skakkamanage, Jens Lekman and his

own celebrated show. Árni Plúseinn's shows with both Hairdoctor and FM Belfast were pitch perfect, as were Lovisa's shows both as Lay Low and with the Benny Crespo's Gang.

Compared with these bands who seemed so excited about music and performing that they likely would have played a bus stop lavatory had they been offered a mic, the Kaiser Chiefs, this year's resident divas, came off as bigger assholes than they probably actually are. They famously brought their own entourage and isolated themselves. To their credit, isolation for the Kaiser Chiefs seems like a good strategy. Their show, which felt to me a lot like karaoke on bingo night at an old folks' home, demonstrated that beyond their ability to write an occasional hook, the band is without stage presence, style, humour or charisma. And, had they let people talk to them, someone may have asked why their record has 30 guitars, but their live performance just sounds like someone pushed the demo on a Casio keyboard while beating on a kickdrum and asking their soused uncle to recite nursery rhymes.

To repeat, it is likely that the Kaiser Chiefs are not bad people. But for the purposes of this year's festival, it was absolutely thrilling to watch the one band who acted like stars perform as badly as they did, just as it felt somewhat life-affirming to see how well some of the members of Islands played as they joined Patrick Watson for an extra, free show to close out Airwaves.

Like an Altman film, the festival even seemed to have a loose kind of moral that so many of us picked up on. Like the moral in an Altman film, it's best not to oversimplify and distil this moral... it was there, it had something to do with the reason behind beauty, and the reason things get corrupted, and somehow, in the odd week of Iceland Airwaves, the people who deserved to do well did.



Airwaves Highlights

The Best of the Best from the Best

COMPILED BY BART CAMERON PHOTO BY SKARI

The star of the show in almost every way was Valgeir Sigurðsson, whose new Bedroom Community label served as the evening's thread and whose performance – egoless, seated off to the side of a large group including strings, laptops, and drums – captured every ear in the room when it was loud and when it wasn't.

Subdued and slowly captivating, Sigurðsson's compositions – his first since stepping out of the shadows as a producer/collaborator with Björk, Bonnie 'Prince' Billy, and others – play out like breathing little symphonies, pulsing with classical energy but infused with enough rock life that they never get dull. It's that rare music perfect for sitting in a darkened bedroom or shuffling in a big club. *Jobb Modell on Valgeir Sigurðsson.*

Those able to see Mugison (for some reason the police stopped people from entering the venue just before he took the stage at 23:00) was treated to a gorgeous set highlighted by pedal steel guitar player Pétur Hallgrímsson, playing only his second show with the band. Mugison danced his way through older material and a new track that he called "the best song he ever wrote," before blowing his load on I Want You. The song has an immediacy in a live setting that leads you to believe he might file it in the non-fiction section of his mind. Raw and moving, it is infused with the horrible desperation that comes a moment after you realise it's too late. *Don Bartlett on Mugison.*

Helgi Valur and his backing band the She-Males took the stage next with an eclectic mix of blue-eyed soul and covers of American hip-hop staples like Snoop Dogg's Gin and Juice and Onyx's Slam, both of which will appear on his forthcoming faux-LP The Black

Man Is God, the White Man Is the Devil. Described by attendee Stephen Frew as "the David Beckham of the alternative Icelandic music scene" on account of his messy blond locks and rugged good looks, Valur came off as Chris Martin with a sac and a sense of humour, as adept at writing pensive love songs as he was at covering Montell Jordan. *Joel Hoard on Helgi Valur.*

Mr. Silla and Mongoose had a tough act to follow, and they delivered to a nearly ridiculous degree. Whatever her name might be, Mr. Silla illustrated that when channelled properly, there is no more potent weapon in the musical lexicon than the female voice. With the smoky sweetness of Billie Holiday working in tandem with the sharp elbows of Björk, Mr. Silla had the overflow audience in the palm of her hand. *Don Bartlett on Mr. Silla and Mongoose.*

The pleasant surprise of the night belonged to locals Benny Crespo's Gang, who looked great and knew when to hold back and when to lay it on – a welcome change after three sets of little variation. *Jobb Modell on Benny Crespo's Gang.*

Most bands probably feel that goading audiences into cheering is cheesy, and most of the time it is, but if that's what your band is all about... Then you're called The Go! Team, Britain's five-to-seven-piece (depending on the song) musical answer to the peppiest gang of cheerleaders ever assembled. Their album, the fun, engaging, sample-tastic Thunder, Lightning, Strike, can't really be re-created live, so The Team – led by a ridiculously enthusiastic singer named Ninja – grab crowds with sing-alongs and enough driving rhythm

to hide the fact that one song rarely sounds much different than the next. That matters none to a crowd that just wants to jump around, and Ninja held the sweaty room in her palm. She worked for it with excess pep and vigour, and she got there. *Jobb Modell on The Go! Team.*

The easy highlight was Stórsveit Nix Noltes, fresh-faced kids manning two trumpets, tuba, trombone, accordion, violin, cello, two guitars and drums. They blasted ahead with action-packed Eastern European rave-ups that managed to sound both virtuosos and soused at the same time: Prog-y rhythms, cut up Klezmer beats, rapid-fire solo sections and multi-layered interplay. The drummer rocked. Couples danced. *Christian Hoard on Stórsveit Nix Noltes.*

From France came straight-edgers Gojira. They joined in a prayer, popped a sugar cube and hit the stage hardcore. Fronted by a Fabio-kind-of-handsome frontman, featuring a bass player who defied logic, and a drummer who managed to reach impossible speeds on the double kickdrum, Gojira are likely the tightest band on the planet. Spot-on in the political debate, they started their show with the sound of whale song. They created the first real movement of the night with an actual mosh-pit erupting centre stage. In fact, said pit affects the writing here as I was stuck in the pit. At one point, I had to retrieve my notebook from the floor, resulting in cigarette burns and maimed fingers... As the venue slowly filled up, Gojira got the brunt of a NASA ovation. *Sveinn Birgir Björnsson on Gojira.*

Only the rarest of acts can pull off an uptempo song about leprosy without sounding schtick,

but Cocktail Vomit did it with style. The quartet's disco-techno set could have easily devolved into a farce with lines like "He had a really cute boner" and "I have a fatal disease / My skin is smellin' like cheese," but legendary producer Þórhallur Skúlason's disco-techno tracks kept the focus from falling too heavily on the goofy lyrics. Also featuring a guitarist in a purple tracksuit and two platinum-blonde beauties on vocals, Cocktail Vomit capped off a hit-or-miss evening with a bang. *Joel Hoard on Cocktail Vomit.*

From his very introduction "Hey! I am DJ Platurm from Oakland, California... but I originally come from Stykkishólmur!" DJ Platurm had the credibility to bring some irony into the night. In an abstract and deconstructive set, largely played on funky breaks and aggressive breakbeat, he succeeded in finally capturing the growing crowd with an overwrought and doped-down remix of DJ Platurm's "Organ Donor". *Fabrizio F on DJ Platurm.*

The lack of oxygen inside overly crowded Gaukurinn might be a key factor why half of the people flushed out after Wolf Parade's show, but those who stuck around for the last two acts of the night were in the mood to party. So was Jan Mayen. Kicking off with Shut Up Shut Down, Jan Mayen blew the crowd away immediately, drawing the now sweaty and intoxicated bodies closer to the stage with a vivacious performance, dynamic sound and one punchy track after another. Singer Valli, blessed with a voice twice his size, might not seem like a rock star when passing him on the street, but he sure as hell looks like one when fronting a band that must rank with Reykjavik's best. *Steinunn Jakobsdóttir on Jan Mayen.*

Uchronia

BY SIGRÚN DAVIDSDÓTTIR

A FAIRY TALE

Once Upon a Time...? And what happened then? What came first, the fairies or the fairy tales? Who knows, but those who grow up with the tales live in fairy tales for the rest of their lives. Invariably sad, the tales are about longing but their sadness is just one thread in the colourful tales – not sadness that should be cured. The fairies lived in a big rock, close to the farm, which must have been in the South East of Iceland where the tales come from. They were tall and looked like you and me, though more beautiful than any human can ever hope to be. They always seem far away even when standing close by, perhaps because they dress in blue – the colour of distance – and never follow trodden roads.

They lived a life of plenty and brought luck to the farm. When the farmer's wife had been fetched to assist at a difficult fairy-child-birth or the farmer had saved a fairy child from drowning they were rewarded with precious gifts, a silver belt or a silk scarf. Kind words were honoured with a bowl of fresh milk or a piece of salted mutton. Some of those who had seen the rock open said it emitted enticing light, permeated with music, others that the enticing music was permeated with light.

The tiny rooms at the farm were filled with dim light and fumes from cod oil lamps. The only music came from the squeaky organ in the tiny church, accompanying the hoarse voices of the churchgoers. With plenty of everything, even sugar, raisins and coffee, yes even rock candy, the fairy life would be much sweeter than on the farm. On the farm each day was firmly tied to the seasons a repetition of the past. Fairy tales belong to Uchronia, beyond time, where hope of better things lives – better in an unimaginable way because there have never been such times. Those who were lured by the luminous harmonies were never seen again: the sweet life of light, music and hope would be lived in an eternal separation from the human world and the loved ones there.

But if provoked, fairies were vengeful and cruel. The people on the farm knew they were always watched and the children were taught not to climb the rock or play anywhere near it. But on the day when spring jumped from the calendar into the gentle breeze, the adults might ignore the playing children, even join them – until someone looked back and saw the farm on fire. Shouts of joy turned into cries of fear and despair, but when they reached the farm there was no fire. Fearful, they fixed their eyes to the ground – surely, the sinking sun reflecting in the tiny windows had not fooled them.

After a cold summer or when a child had been born the grass on the rock looked buttery. For days they would comment on it, until the farmer himself, without uttering a word, would take his scythe and slowly cut the grass around and on the rock. The farm-girl who had a crush on him and was hated by his wife followed him with her rake. At supper no one said a word – words brought deeds to life and silence undid them. But as morning broke and the wife got up to milk, she found the best cow stone dead.

These were the tales my aunt told me. They were in me, and my language long before I imagined I could live elsewhere and in other languages than Icelandic. I had seen the rock, close to the vicarage where my grandfather served. Now, no one lived there but the tales were as true as the farm was real.

I knew the names on every tombstone in the tiny churchyard – it was like visiting distant relatives: faceless when out of sight but familiar when present. Reading the names I would calculate, with some difficulty, how long they had lived. Their age was always the same though mine increased between my visits. The female names with the shortest lives, some shorter than my own, made me shudder.

The low green mountain above the farm was flat at the top like the other mountains in sight. Even a little girl could walk all the way up – I could. The clouds, too lazy to hang in the sky, languished on the horizon until the mountains swallowed them to reveal the sky, blue as fairy clothes.

My father had told me that rocks, like icebergs, only show their tips, extending much further down than I could imagine. The rock was the size of a turf cottage surrounded by the meadow that fed the few cows on the farm and each day in the life of a cow gave tepid milk that kept someone alive. I only drank cold milk from our American fridge.

The rock was as tangible as the tales. Though they contained death, fire and the threat of disaster, I wanted to hear them again and again: there was always the chance that this time everything would be all right. It never was and yet I longed for them because they came with my aunt's embrace, her smile and warm scent of stale eau de cologne.

I would ask her to sing the song about the rock. It started with 'My grandmother told me...' – I understood that my great grandmother, then only a child, had seen the rock open at sunset on a Sunday, when the fairies celebrated mass. She ran away and later told my aunt never to go near the rock at that time.

Whenever I heard the song I was relieved she ran away; otherwise, my aunt would then have been a fairy with no tales to tell – you cannot tell tales of yourself. My mother, my aunt's youngest sister, would have been a fairy as well and never have met my father, who grew up in a different part of the country, where reportedly there were no fairies – at least not in tales I heard. And I would not have been born and more than I can imagine had never happened.

Yet, the fairy world did reach me. My aunt told me that her grandmother loved music above all else and had claimed that whenever she heard music she would hear the sound of the fairy music. When my aunt moved from the farm to Reykjavik, she learned to play the piano. She played for me and her music was unlike any music I have ever heard full of light and melody, but also of profound longing, which – as I later understood – kept her alive; longing she instilled in me. She lived in her tiny flat in Reykjavik with a piano and my other aunt, and only had what she owned. I left, found music, light and the hope of unknown things. Yet, like everyone who lives in fairy tales I never escaped the inherent sadness of my aunt's tales – but that is nothing to be sad about.

1. PHOTO: THE LENS

'I'm an accident waiting to happen. But don't worry, I won't be caught on camera – of course I'm behind the camera!' Quite out of character, perhaps because asleep he was completely serious as he explained this to Lisa, sitting on the bed in their Lower East Side studio. In his dream she was as awake as was he and no doubt happy to hear what he was saying also how he said it: she always complained that he was never serious about anything, least of all serious about his love for her.

But how could he be serious about love? Awake or asleep: love is lightweight, pure oxygen; and just like oxygen, completely essential – especially physical love. Lisa, however, was hooked on talking about love. He kept trying to teach her that life is about seeing and sensing, love being the proof – or so he thought at the time.

As with oxygen there is not much to say about love: it either is – and then there is nothing more to say – or it is not and then you cannot talk it into your life anymore than you can talk yourself to oxygen if you are out of breath. Love is like that, beyond words; if it can be caught in words it is not love. Love is tactile, olfactory, visual, visceral and not substantial enough to be photographed. It does not make sense in music because it does not make any sense at all – if it makes sense it is not love.

No, he neither had the words for all this nor for his love of Lisa. He was only madly in love with her: the fun-loving yet responsible, clever, bossy and beautiful Lisa. And since the three words – 'I' 'love' 'you' – turned her on he used them frequently; there and then he was equally sure he seriously loved her and that love was never serious. He was waking up just as he preferred: drifting from sleep through lucid dreams into conscious thoughts. Or as conscious as is possible for someone who is more of a doer than a thinker.

His unlive life this particular sunny April morning started with a sense of wetness: his back and chest were sweaty a warm stickiness in his crotch. He liked the elusive moment of wet dreams when the sensation was there but he was still unaware of it being only a dream. This time there was also a slight sense of guilt – a distant face, not Lisa's, had been in his mind that moment – a tickling feeling of being unfaithful. Though not actively so, he would keep quiet about it – to Lisa.

The dilemma of unconscious unfaithfulness would be the right topic to discuss with ever-clever Tony, nine years his senior, eloquent since the day he was born, brought up on the way from museums to concert halls, visiting relatives all over the world, as stereotypically cosmopolitan as he himself was provincial. They were both late-starters; Tony had gone into journalism after a failed career in his family's investment company.

As he opened his eyes, the lens drew him into his New York reality: the bed where Lisa slept next to him. He reached for the camera, the last thing he had looked at before falling asleep – ever since he first held a camera, as a boy, it had given him an existential right and wiped out his shyness. Like an actor before a performance he was always nervous before shooting portraits. Especially today, it was his first commission for a book. Shooting the widow, who had to be an expert on both photos and photographers.

'JÓN' – the black plastic strip with his name in white letters sat next to the lens, the dot over the O painted. When he took the cap off the lens dimly reflected his square face: his sharp cheekbones and high forehead hovered over the big, deeply set eyes, tightly framed by the dark limp hair – he brushed it behind his ears with both hands; a nervously comforting habit. He was reasonably tall though two cm shorter than Lisa, who was unusually tall, even for a Danish girl. Her portfolio stated: height 181 cm, bust 85 cm, waist 62 cm, hips 89 cm.

His bony body under the duvet was a variation of his square face. In spite of his 33 years it still held on to the all-legs-and-arms teenage proportions. Not even Lisa could make well-cut clothes sit properly on him. His usually unshaven face and careless way of dressing gave him a barbaric look. She said he looked as if he came from some savage place. She was right: in comparison to New York he did come from barbarian lands – she seemed to resent it but he found it comforting: it saved him from merging with the masses of the megacity.

He looked up at the window above the bed: closing his eyes he visualised the morning light on street outside. During the first months in New York he was enchanted by the city – until the images from the countryside, where he spent the summers of his childhood, re-emerged: the low summer sun intensified the colour-scale of the Icelandic wilderness, lava-black, glacier-white, sea-grey and foggy bluish distance until the winter darkness wiped them out. The land fanning out from the tiny capital was made of long shadows, or, for most of the year, of darkness and no shadows, of few words but many tales he had mostly forgotten; the tales grew out of a landscape too barren for anything else.

Photos had brought him to New York. After dropping out of college several times in Iceland, working in a fish factory, on a trawler and at a building site as he partied away his earnings, he was no longer failing aimlessly and not caring about it. New York was turning him into someone who, frame by frame, was building a life out of just the things he lived for almost like in one of his granny's fairy tales.

His new life was connected to the old one by a five-hour flight and telecommunications and yet disconnected from it all. Life in New York was easy for an Icelander: either, people had no idea where Iceland was or knew the nature was fantastic and the islanders barbaric enough to eat whales. He had learned the word 'patronymic' to explain that Icelandic surnames are not family names. It had only taken him a few months to loose his ability to sleep in – the city was so intensely demanding that he needed only four to six hours sleep as everyone else he knew there.

Six years of New York life had deepened his understanding of who he was but coming from a landscape of strikingly few words he had no passwords to access his accumulating knowledge. Beside words, good manners were also missing in his original landscape; Lisa resented that he forgot to hold doors for her or wipe the raindrops off her chair in an outdoor café. But why should he? In this crowded place there were always plenty of others to do it – especially for a gorgeous girl like Lisa.

One night just after they had met, they were walking home from a party. Furious, Lisa claimed he had ignored her the whole evening. As usual, he kept quiet: other people's anger is like a storm – nothing to do but wait it out. His silence fuelled her anger. Less drunk than he was, she talked loudly, gesticulating with her umbrella, when she suddenly hit him on his thigh with it. He hardly felt it, but her silly behaviour annoyed him; he had only been thinking about some photos he had messed up. Irritated, he wrenched the umbrella out of her hand, broke it over his knee, threw the pieces over a fence and walked on. She gasped.

Lately, she said he was getting better at talking. No wonder: in New York, everyone he knew regarded silence as an embarrassment.

Lisa was lying on her stomach. The light from the windows accentuated her striking features. Her fine nose under the long, thin almost straight brows in her oval face, her closed almond eyes and the faint smile on her thin lips displayed her photogenic qualities that the camera could use to create whatever illusion needed.

Taking photos of her was a kick: she did not just pose in front of the camera to be pretty but moved and had fun. Things were going well for her. She had come to New York only two years earlier, already twenty years old, without contacts or brilliant photos in her portfolio. Strong-willed, she had been able to make the best of what she had. He admired her abilities though her scrutiny could be taxing – he himself had the tendency to drift around hoping things would turn out well. So far, they generally had.

He was not arrogant, but knew what he wanted and hated to be told what to do; he had never considered anything but being freelance. When friends and family asked how his career was going he was still not sure if this series of happy accidents merited the word 'career', but his professional life seemed to be moving on.

The book commission was a major break – he had hardly believed his own eyes when he saw the first e-mail from Tony on his screen – but he knew that no single commission secured him. It was all

about catching attention, creating substantial work and getting published every month. The stress kept him intense and excited. He knew he had been lucky – his friendship with Tony was pure luck though 'Tony's version was: 'the harder you try the luckier you get.'

He sat up in bed and reached for a folder with photos: the same familiar and friendly face on all the photos, taken over about a quarter of a century.

The chair-series was the first he had seen of her – at an American photo-exhibition at the Art Museum in Reykjavik. Thirteen years old and already a walking encyclopaedia of all things photo-technical he was convinced that technical specifications made photos good. Later he learned that photos are good in spite of the camera, not because of it; he still found it difficult to comprehend that photography is about exposing what others do not see, so he focused on what he himself saw.

The chair-photos were the only ones he remembered from the exhibition, which he visited every day it lasted: he had heard about the exhibition by coincidence – art had been beyond his horizon at the time. When the staff noticed it a journalist came to interview him and one of his own photos was printed with the interview: a photo of Skeiðarár-sand. His granny had been very proud of the interview. Others in his family found his obsession ridiculous or even embarrassing though no one mentioned it; no one said much about anything.

His relatives were all farmers apart from his father who had been forced to move to Reykjavik because of hay fever. His parents would have liked him to study law or engineering, like his three older brothers: at his age, his brothers had all been doing well, living with their children and childhood girlfriends-turned-wives in big houses in attractive parts of Reykjavik.

The first photo exhibition he saw in New York was a Roberto Nettuno retrospective. Women had been Nettuno's favourite subject especially his wife. The chair-series and other photos of her filled the main hall. That was where he met her again, in the photos – long before he would discover that life is laced with incidents, which at first appear coincidental.

Looking at the chair-series he spread out on the duvet was like meeting an old friend. Tony had told him that they were Nettuno's first photos of her, taken before they got married. Her dark dress, stretched over her knees, had short sleeves and a boat-shaped neckline. Its soft material blurred her outlines against the white stiff fabric draped over the easy chair she sat in broken by the weight of her body. The series was called 'Edda'. Tony said she was Icelandic but had been living abroad since her youth; it had amused Nettuno, himself Italian, that Edda was also an Italian name.

The seven pictures were frontal, taken from the same spot. On the first she leaned towards the camera with a straight back, crossing her arms over her crossed knees, her fine hands tapering down. Her long legs, close together, leaned to the right. On the next ones, she had her legs over the arms of the chair, her toes pointed like a ballerina. On the last one she sat as on the first, her legs to the left.

Years ago when he had tried all the technical tricks he could think of to emulate this airiness he had finally concluded that there was no trick. The inherent heaviness of Nettuno's deep focus and diffused light, accentuated by the monochrome dark background, contrasted her shiny and clear face but the lightness emanated from the radiant girl. He also saw this now, when he scrutinised the clippings.

The pointed chin exaggerated the oval shape of her small girlish face. She had high cheekbones, a fine nose and a somewhat pouting mouth. Her thick blond hair was held back in a high ponytail, a few escaped curls framed her face. The round cheeks gave the impression of a chubby girl but she was in fact slim. Judging from the chair she was probably not tall but her long limbs and long neck were well proportioned – a miniature of a model.

She was tangible, at ease and frank, like children are in photos – as if she belonged to no time but her own. With her eyes on the camera, she had the teasing candour of a girl who is showing off, while giving nothing away. Though serene the vibrant tension in her slender body created an intriguing ambiguity – the perfect model.

Jón replaced the photos in the folder and observed Lisa through the camera: her long sleek hair lay like a white chiffon veil on the dark blue pillow. He pushed the button several times, she did not move. She might not like the pictures, but they would surprise her; usually, she woke up first.

It was a series of Lisa, called 'A Girlfriend', which had won him the commission: a portrait to accompany an introduction by Nettuno's widow in the book Tony was writing on Nettuno. She had seen his series at the graduation show the previous year and asked Tony to contact him. Now that Tony was about to finish the book the day of the shoot had come – the day but not the hour.

The above is an excerpt from Sigrún Davíðsdóttir's upcoming novel Uchronia.

War is a Priority Consideration – Peace a Secondary Thought

Philosophy of non-violence

BY SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON PHOTO BY SKARI

Professor Kit Christensen of Bemidji State University in Minnesota holds a doctorate in philosophy from Purdue University. His main academic focus has been political philosophy and philosophy of peace. Prof. Christensen recently taught a seminar in the philosophy department of the University of Iceland on the philosophy of non-violent actions. The Grapevine sat down with Prof. Christensen to learn a little more on war and peace.

/// Perhaps you could describe the contents of the course you are teaching in a few words?

– Well this is actually a concentrated version of a full-semester course I teach at my university back home. It is an attempt to take a philosophical look at peacemaking activities. There have been many organised institutional efforts to look at means of conflict resolution and to minimise violence in the world. I try to take a step back from that concern with peacemaking, and look at some of the underlying values at work. The course is really about non-violence and its relationship to peacemaking and how that relates to social justice. People are always linking peace and justice, and I look at how all those terms are interconnected, but again, from a philosophical standpoint. We look mostly at moral concerns. It is kind of like a course in applied ethics.

/// So it is a course on war and peace?

– We do talk about war quite a bit of course, and how peace can be a better alternative and what is wrong with war and how people justify war and how that is not convincing most often. But we also talk about interpersonal violence, and institutional or structural violence, which is sort of an odd concept. Basically it refers to stratified social systems where some people are more vulnerable to other kinds of violence because of where they are in the social hierarchy, so basically, poor people are more likely to be victims of violent crimes, but also they are likely to have greater health problems. This is directly related to where they are in the social hierarchy and they are being made vulnerable to injury, to harm, just by their place in a stratified social system, and that is to be victimised by violence too in its own right.

/// So this would link back to the justice factor?

– Yes, very much so. The critique of unjust social systems tends to point to what is often called institutional violence.

/// You mentioned different definitions of peace, maybe you could explain that a bit better, are there many definitions of peace?

– People often make a distinction between negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace is merely the absence of war or violence, which is a good thing, but for sustainable peace, you want to create positive peace, which is a situation of social justice. In his Letter from the Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King, Jr. talks about negative peace as simply putting a lid on the problem, but of course, when you use that image, like putting a lid on a pot of boiling water, it will eventually boil over. So negative peace is to just avoid tension and confrontation, but positive peace is to change society so that people can live in mutual respect, and equal opportunity to exercise their potential. Positive peace is always the real goal.

/// So social justice is really the goal?

– Well you may have heard the slogan 'No Justice, No Peace'. It is meant as a kind of warning by the exploited or the oppressed. Until there is justice, in some meaningful way, there can be no peace. It is a precondition. But if you think about it there are a number of mutually re-enforcing phenomena here. Non-violent conflict resolution sets up a situation where you can have a peaceful environment, which enhances the opportunities for the

growth of social justice, which then re-enforces non-violent approaches to future conflict resolution, which then makes for more peace or establishes the conditions of peace more firmly, which enhances social justice, so really, you can start anywhere with that circle and work towards the other end.

/// How do you answer people like professor Ward Churchill, who has taken a very critical stance of the pacifist doctrine, labelling it as ineffective, and has said that all the major victories of pacifism could have been achieved much earlier in an armed struggle?

– Well it can be difficult to answer. Frantz Fanon is another one, in his book *The Wretched of the Earth*, he makes a compelling case for a pacifist. He was originally from the Caribbean, and ended up living in Algeria during the liberation from France where the French systematically... well, there were of course such massive atrocities on both sides. Anyway, he was a psychiatrist and ended up interviewing a lot of Algerian torture victims and he concluded that at some point, you need to take up the gun. There is no other way. It is really a compelling case that he makes and it is tough for pacifists to deal with. I struggled with that myself.

I must admit, I do not take an absolute view on pacifism by any means. I am still trying to decide for myself, and I am constantly evolving in my thinking regarding when you get to a point when some sort of organised armed response to oppression or violence – it would have to be a defence action of some sort – can be justified. But I do not take an absolute view that would say that all organised group violence is always wrong. But I think the burden of proof should always be on those who argue for violent means, not the other way around.

If we know one thing about any kind of war, it is that it will involve carnage, it will involve flying body parts, people screaming and death and destruction, not just for military personnel, but for innocent civilians as well. So, assuming that this is a bad thing that should be avoided whenever possible, if it is to be used, there better be a very good reason. Now, that may seem obvious, but the way the policymaking and public pronouncement works in the modern world, the burden of proof is always on the pacifist. The burden of proof has been shipped back to those who are against war, and those who argue for war seem have a sort of priority consideration. That seems perverse to me.

/// What would be a justified war?

– That is the tough question. Many people point to World War II as really the only example of a justified war in modern times. The war against fascism(s). If anything was a good war, that one was. But at the same time, if you only look at that period, from 1939-1945, then you really ignore what led to WWII, which is World War I, an unjustified war by most standards.

In a sense, the German response was a response to the defeat of WWI and the awful economy during the depression that followed. If other things would have happened during the 1920s and 1930s, the Nazis would never have come to power and it would not have been an issue. Italy was not going to try to take over the world on its own, and there was a good chance the U.S. and Japan did not have to go to war. The Pacific war was less justified in some sense, the fact that Japan bombed a colony of the U.S. and killed a lot of Americans, that was seen as the pretext for retaliation, but again, according to just war theory, revenge and retaliation is never a good reason to go to war. Ever.

/// What you are saying is that WWII was created by an institutional violence on a global scale?

– Yes, I would say so.



/// I wonder if you could draw the analogy between how the institutional violence in Germany pushed them into the WWII and how things are developing in the Middle East at the moment? Are we creating a similar situation?

– Well, of course now we are predicting the future, but I think you are right. It is certainly possible. Recently a report came out of the U.S., by the combined intelligence services of the U.S., which basically said what many critics of the war in Iraq had said all along, that basically, the Iraq war has not diminished the threat of terrorism, but has in fact increased it, creating more terrorists and jihadists. So, it has made the problem worse. So certainly, there is evidence that would point in that direction. You would think that people who study history and end up in politics or the military would learn their lesson.

But then again, maybe that is not the whole point, to bring about peace. There is always that possibility. I mean, war making

is very profitable for some. In a number of European countries, as well as the U.S. and Canada, there are corporations that make a lot of money not only by providing materials for the so-called Weapons of Mass Destruction, but more importantly for the basic conventional weapons, plus all these little creative things like Napalm and Daisy Clusters, who mostly end civilian lives. Private entrepreneurs, good capitalists, sell them all over the world.

We can think about institutional violence in a global sense, there are populations that are predictably low down on the economic ladder, and often there is racial divide or an ethnic divide as well. And they seem to be predictably more vulnerable to these kinds of violence than the more affluent peoples, who also tend to be white, in the northern part of the world. So there is kind of a global stratified society where this concept also applies that makes for an unjust world.

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Experiencing Aurora Borealis Underwater

The Grapevine floats on at the Reykjanes resort

BY HAUKUR MAGNÚSSON PHOTO BY JULIA STAPLES

Four hours of driving unkept gravel roads, over mountains, across fjords, will take you from Reykjavik to Iceland's other Reykjanes peninsula, the one that's happily free of international airports, chav culture and naval bases. This peninsula's claim to fame is an Olympic-sized outdoor swimming pool (hot tub, really) filled with geothermal water and other pleasantness that, when at its best, really doesn't compare to anything else Iceland has to offer. Add to that the fact that at certain times (around midnight, for instance) Reykjanes and its charmingly rustic hotel/campsite offer the kind of peace and quiet most tourists will happily travel across continents to reach and you start wondering why the resort is one of Icelandic tourism's best kept secrets.

No amount of words or pictures could possibly capture the Reykjanes pool in optimal conditions. Its raw concrete structure fits surprisingly well with the area's rugged geography, underwater wooden benches provide a place to rest and contemplate the fact that while the wooden fencing blocks a potentially great view, it does provide convenient shelter from the wind. Plus, one side is unfenced and thus allows one to imagine the warm water blending in with the clear, clean sky, the sometimes-angry ocean or even the mountains looming afar.

Floating in the pool during sunlit summer nights invites many a curiosity; some whip-poorwills and ducks may decide to lounge there with you or a drunk French tourist will choose to inform you of his nation's immigrant policy. Or, on crisp winter evenings, clear, starlit skies may suddenly transform into a bright canvas displaying the amazingly vivid aurora borealis that, reflected in the water's shiny black surface, seems to envelope you completely. You may of course encounter none of those things, but still leave satisfied due

to some nice company and a few drinks kept poolside. Most folks tend to soak themselves for several hours at a time.

The pool was built in 1934 to replace the older 1889 rock-and-dirt-based model (although there are references to swimming lessons being given there as early as the beginning of the 19th century – an Icelandic anomaly), remnants of which are still visible. It was, until early last year, Iceland's 'longest' swimming pool; although it was originally meant to be a modest 25-metre length the carpenters apparently got confused with their measurements. As previously noted, it,

“Although baby seals are indeed beautiful, taking care of them can be a real bother. And they get pretty big when they quit being babies.”

much like the rest of the area's structures, is geothermally heated, resulting in a comfortably inconsistent average temperature and a warning sign gracing its banks: pool may be extremely hot, patrons enter at their own risk.

Reykjanes is actually one of the few geothermally active regions on the West Fjord peninsula, Iceland's oldest geological area. Its potency has long been known; it was the site of Iceland's first professional salt refinery, which was in operation from 1770-90. It even saw a successfully operated, geothermally powered greenhouse (much like the ones in Hveragerði) for half a decade in the 1930s, until its progenitor lost interest in the project for whatever reason. Reykjanes also hosted a spa-like resort some 50 years ago, but among Icelanders, it is best known for the boarding school operated there for the greater part of

the 20th century (whose buildings now house the hotel).

Accommodation at the Reykjanes hotel is of the standard Icelandic former-boarding school variety, both in terms of pricing and comfort. There are a number of double rooms available along with four fully functional apartments, ideal for families or smaller groups. Budget travellers may seek refuge in sleeping bag accommodations or the accompanying campsite, although that is not a feasible option for fall or wintertime visits. The hotel's restaurant and bar are also reasonably priced, offering breakfast and cake buffets along with

standard Icelandic road fare such as cheese-burgers and fries. Bringing alcohol and food to consume at the premises seems to be generally tolerated, although the usual civil rules apply, the resort being a private enterprise. The fabled swimming pool is luckily free of charge and open 'round the clock.

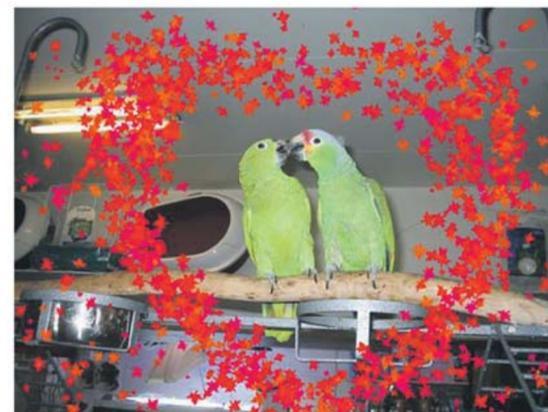
While the joys of the Reykjanes pool can't be overemphasised, there are of course other things to do while staying there. The area boasts a varied (for Iceland, anyway) fauna, and is therefore an ideal retreat for bird-watchers and other nature enthusiasts. A five-minute walk to the nearby shore may expose one to overtly friendly baby seals that are known to follow tourists around in the hope of making friends (a bad idea: although baby seals are indeed beautiful, taking care of them can be a real bother. And they get pretty big

when they quit being babies). Hiking paths around the peninsula and the nearby mountains are numerous and meticulously marked and mapped out (information can for instance be acquired at the hotel reception).

Another point of interest for the average aqua enthusiast is the fact that the surrounding fjords boast some of Iceland's more excellent 'hidden' geothermal hot tubs popular among in-the-know locals who like to relax there, drink in hand, occasionally taking dips in the cold North Atlantic to stay awake longer in the hot water. As they are in essence 'hidden', a widely read publication such as the Grapevine can't really divulge their location, although most locals will be happy to give directions when approached.

Although the accompanying photo provides an accurate portrayal of how Reykjanes looked when the Grapevine paid its visit in late October, the surrounding scenery and conditions changed many times that day. Among other things, the West Fjords are famous for rapidly changing weather and Reykjanes is no exception. During the day we spent there, we experienced bouts of sunshine, interspersed with rain, sleet, a calm and a storm – every hour the area's appearance changed dramatically. Worse luck was the fact that the much-hyped pool was in the process of being re-filled after cleaning (as no chlorine is used, the water needs to be drained occasionally), which unfortunately rendered it useless for the duration of our stay. We made do with the homely sauna-shack and the numerous secret pools, vowing to one day return for the full experience that has thus far failed to disappoint.

More information on Reykjanes can be found at www.rnes.is or by calling 456-4844.



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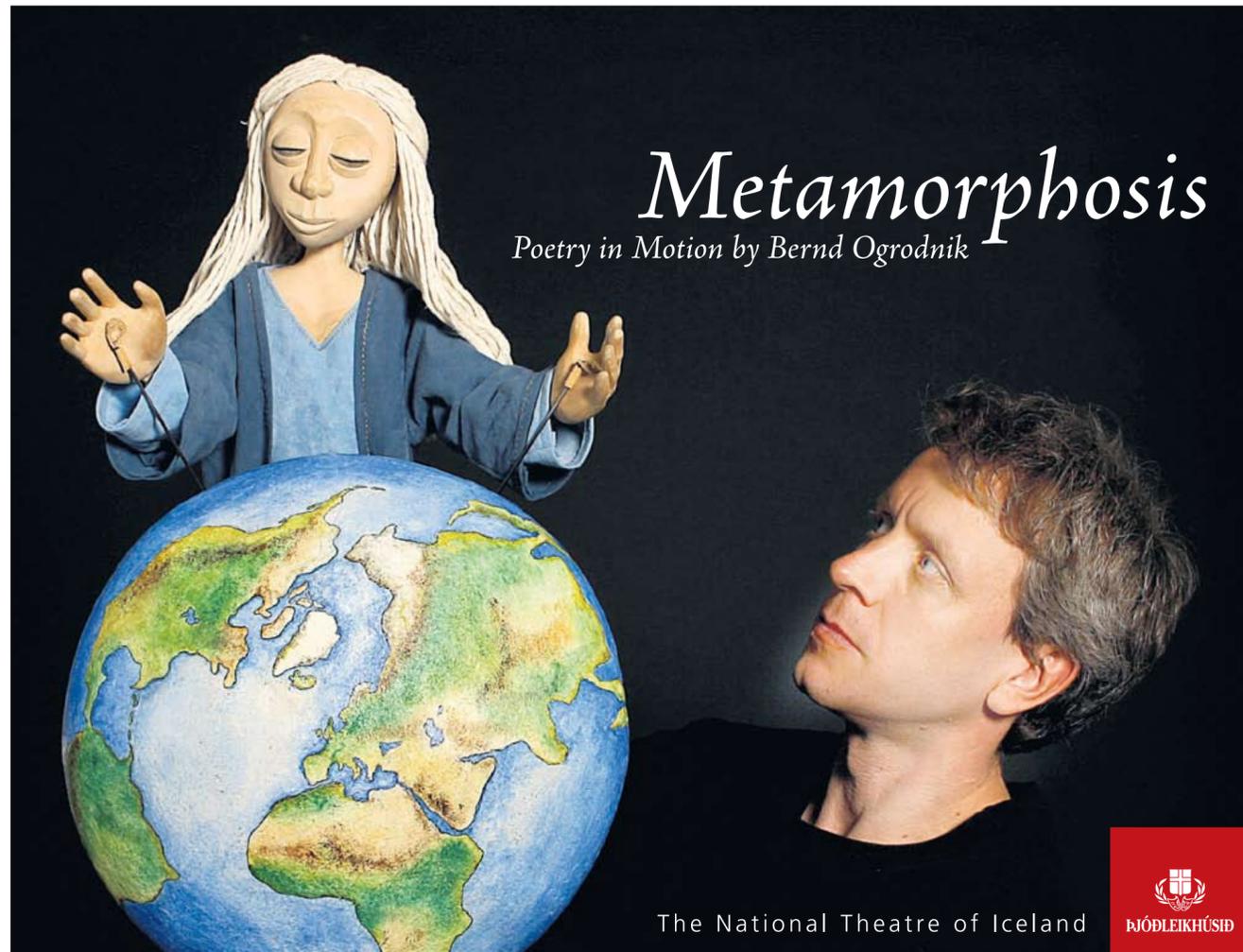
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Kristján Loftsson, CEO of Hvalur HF, contemplates what to do with his whale carcass. Photo by Skari.



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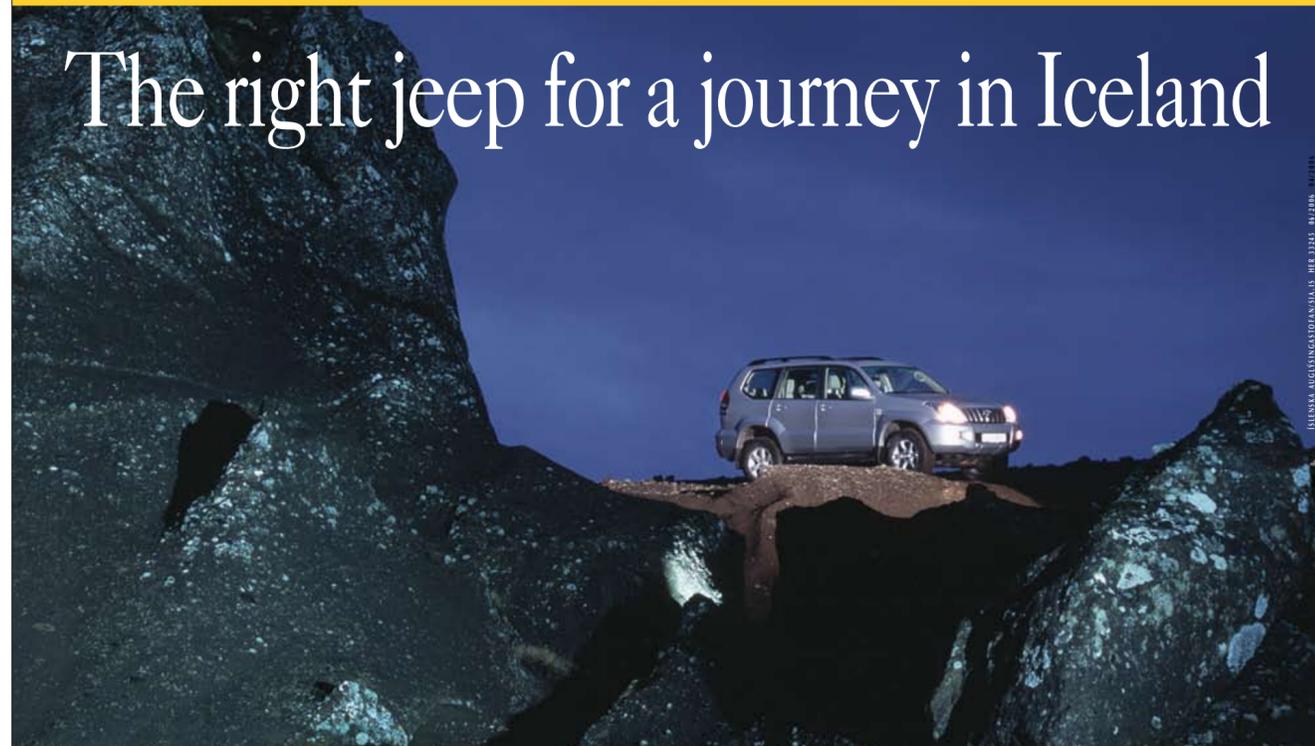
Grapevine Ad Index

Accommodation	O Sushi	32
Grundarfjörður Hostel	Shalimar	25&33
Guesthouse Salka		46
Guesthouse Móar	Shopping	46
Vík Hostel	101 Gæludýr	45
	66° North	3
Activities	Cintamani	7
Blue Lagoon	Music	45
City Center Tourist Info	Naked Ape	12
City Centre Booking Service	Thule, Light beer	15
Reykjavik Excursions		9
	Transportation	
Galleries and Museum	Budget-Car rental	35
Gljúfrasteinn, Halldór Laxness Museum	Hertz-Car Rental	47
Reykjavik Art Museum	Sixt Car Rental	17
Safn Laugavegi 37		27
Settlement Museum	Other	31
	Best í Heimi	12
Restaurants, Bars and Cafés	Bryndís Ísafold	12&33
2 Fiskar	The National Theatre of Iceland	11&47
American Style	Iceland Symphony Orchestra	33
Bernhöfts Bakery	Icelandic Dance Company	14
Café Roma & Segafredo	JPV Publishing	14
Galbi	The Sugarcubes Concert	48
Hressingarskálinn		31

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Stuffed with stuff

If the persona of Bubbi Morthens had been some sort of a pillar in my life, I would probably have said: Fuck you! You fucking capitalist!

Bubbi Morthens on Bubbi Morthens
Page 20

It is interesting to note that it almost seems like everybody just takes for granted that the media is manipulated, and that corruption rules how most public servants get hired."

Journalist Sigtryggur Ari Jóhannsson, on the Icelandic way of doing things.
Page 6

"No, we kidnapped the real Daft Punk in Paris and came here pretending to be them."

Daft Punk Thomas Bangalter jokes around
Page 35

"I actually have an idea for a horror film I want to shoot entirely in Iceland. It'll be called Culture Night. I was here for the last one, and I'm basically going to get a camera and walk up and down Laugavegur... No, not killing anyone, just documenting the insanity."

Director Eli Roth is fascinated by the oozing culture
Page 10

"Nation-states have got to learn how to respect international laws, before they can expect individuals to respect the law."

Sea Shepard's Paul Watson discusses international politics
Page 18

"It is sad to say that since 1996 the number of shops in the centre has been decreasing and hit rock bottom three years ago with a total of less than 300 shops."

Downtown developer Einar Örn Stefánsson is concerned
Page 16



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