



The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

Issue N° 13 – August 28 – September 10 – 2009

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+ COMPLETE CITY LISTINGS – INSIDE!



HANNES HÓLMSTEINN:

Architect of the Collapse?

Can a set of well argued ideas lead a nation straight to bankruptcy?

+ Experience Mývatn Via Pizza: **Tasty Nature**

An Icelandic Slasher Flick: Finally

Blönduós: Breeding Confusion

Culture Night: Lots Of Waffles

Sailing To The Faeroes: No Mean Feat

+ **Complete Reykjavík Listings** Lots Of Cool Events

Opinions!

Reviews!

Comix!

Political science professor Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson is often referred to as the Independence Party's chief ideologue, and has been credited with laying down the lines for the massive de-regulation and privatisation process Iceland underwent during the past two decades. Some thanked him for the prosperity, now he is being blamed for the downfall.  PG. 19.

Haukur's 13th Editorial!

Please Tourists, Don't Leave



So, this has been a pretty good summer, all things considered.

We enjoyed some pretty good weather, drank some pretty good beers and saw some sights. We travelled around the country and pitched our tents, hiking up hills and mountains, seeking out seclusion, serenity and warm streams to bathe in.

We stayed in the city for the weekend, going to shows, spending money at bars, pissing away our youth along with our brain cells and our souls.

We hung out with our families and friends, sharing memories and creating new ones, enjoying talks and walks and snacks. We hung out by ourselves, watching TV, reading books, listening

to the rain or to our massive collection of illegal mp3s.

It was a pretty good summer.

It's not over yet, not quite. But it's fast drawing to a close. And if I am to believe the local media and the general discourse, we are slowly sinking into what will be a harsh and ugly and evil winter. A long, cold and potentially deadly one. Unemployment rates will rise. Folks will file for bankruptcy. They will lose their homes, their cars. They will all become alcoholics, and their children will all drop out of school and become terminally depressed dope fiends. Now we will finally start feeling the full, dull force of Kreppa in our faces.

Summer was a welcome relief, as it often is in Iceland. We had our nice weather and we had our days off and we were maybe able to coast along financially OK, even though our economy is just as collapsed as it was at the start of the year and stuff keeps getting more expensive by the day.

We also had steady influx of currency – sweet, sweet currency – to the country courtesy of you guys, the tourists. This, I am told, helped. A lot. But hey, guess what. The main tourist season is drawing to a close. This means there will be fewer and fewer of you lovely folks and your lovely money around. Your lovely conversation and asking for direction. Your lovely fluorescent outdoorsy wear and your lovely letters to us.

You will all be missed immensely. In fact, I find myself compelled to plead to you guys: please, don't go! Don't leave! Come back! We need you! We miss you already! You and your fun ways and your sweet currencies. You enrich our lives, our wallets, and you make us feel like we live in an actual operating city. And that is a nice feeling.

Should you decide to leave despite

my pleading, I nevertheless implore you to ponder the consequences. Just think about all the poor kids that won't be able to attend music school this winter because their homeland is bankrupt and lacks foreign currency. Think about Kreppa-ravaged Iceland, the poor, poor folks that rely on your patronage to make ends meet.

Please don't go.

Also, if you stay, there's plenty of fun and interesting things happening here in the winter. Despite what some folks might tell you, Iceland is actually quite nice in the wintertime. It's got snow and aurora borealis and beautiful frosty mornings where time seems to stand still along with the air and atmosphere.

You can go skiing. We have excellent ski slopes. And you can go hiking if you are properly equipped to do so. Not on the highlands, pray tell, but a lot of other places.

Icelandic winter is also an excellent place for drinking cocoa, feasting on food and fine wine by candlelight, burying oneself in the snow.

It's outright excellent, I tell you. Please don't go! Tourist season, don't end! We need you!

Also, there's all the festivals. All those excellent festivals. There's the Iceland Airwaves festival. That awesome pile of awesomeness, good music, good drinking and general debauchery. There's the Reykjavík International Film Festival. That's pretty awesome as well. Aldrei fór ég suður. Crazy January shows, Christmas and the New Year's Eve that has seen Quentin Tarantino fly over repeatedly to gorge on liquor that he hates.

Please don't go, tourists. We need you and your currency and your company.



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MUSIC
&
NIGHT
LIFE

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THE ISSUE

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Egill S.

When I Walk

egillsaebjornsson

Download the free track of the issue
WHEN I WALK at www.grapevine.is

So Egill Sæbjörnsson finally released a new record. This is of course great news for folks that love music. Egill Sæbjörnsson – or Egill S. as he now prefers to be known for some reason – made the most awesome Tonk Of The Lawn some years back. It was jam-packed with great tracks and had one of music's catchiest lines ever. "I love you so, I find you crazy."

We just got a copy of his eponymous new one, and it sounds real good on our computer speakers, and we are really looking forward to digging into it. Go fetch our track of the issue to find out for yourself.

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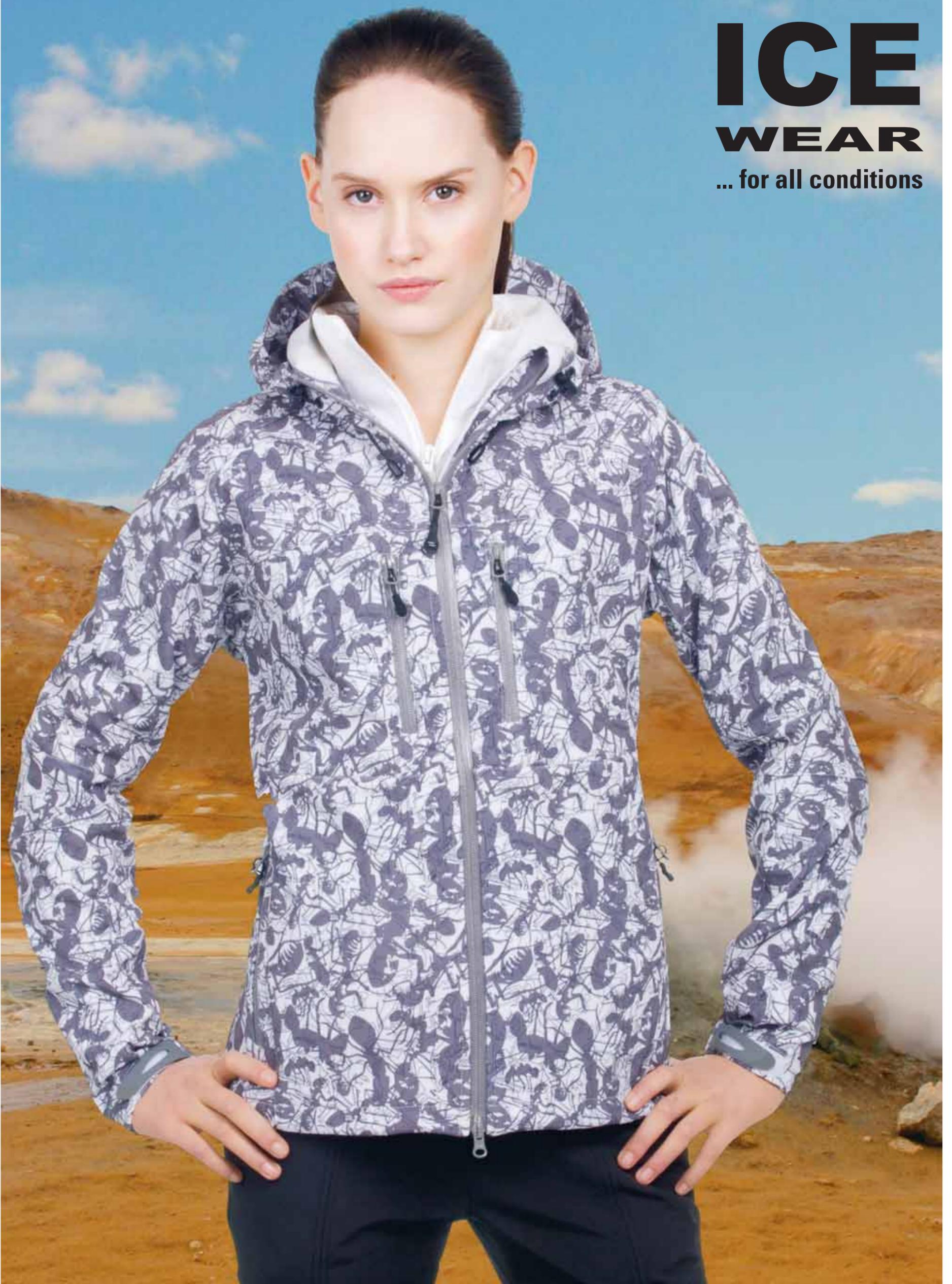
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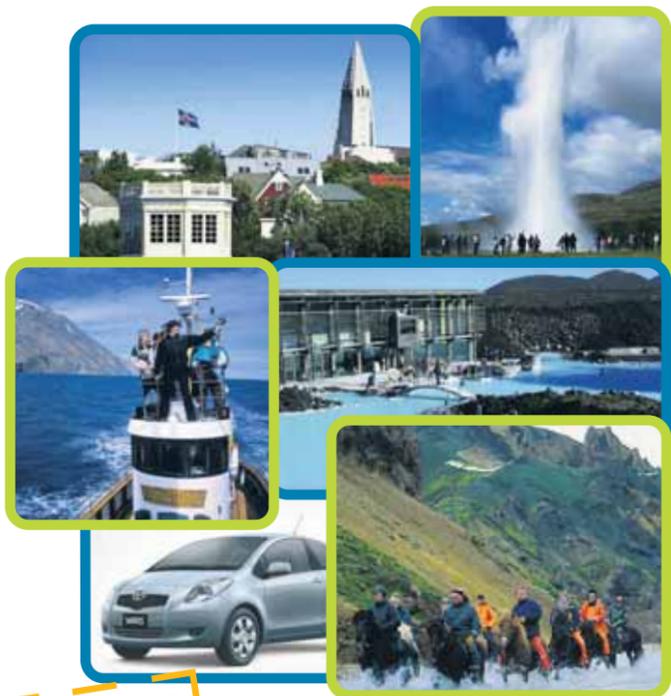
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Sour grapes and stuff

Say your piece, voice your opinion, send your letters to letters@grapevine.is

4 Letters

Hi,
Just a comment on Sari Peltonen's review of Íslenski Barinn, in the current issue. El Grillo is named after the wreck in seyðisfjörður, but it sure isn't brewed there. Before it was sold, sure, but ever since it's public release it's been brewed by none other than Ölgerðin, right here in Reykjavik. I'm sure they're very happy having you think it's a from a nice arty town out east though :)
Still, glad to read about beer reviews in a restaurant review :)

Cheers,
Karl P

Dear Karl,
Thank you for clearing that up. Gosh, I hope that was the *only* mistake we made in our last issue.

Hello,
at the very beginning thank you for your paper- it was really fine thing to read it before our trip to Island, during it and now, when we're back home. Really great, great job!

Anyway, I just wanted to ask you if it is possible to get a dvd release or anything else, of the dreamland documentary. I read the interview with the director in May's edition of grapevine, managed to get the book and now very eager to see the movie. On the internet I could only watch the trailers.

My friends are going to spend their holidays in Iceland and I wondered- maybe you could tell me if it is possible (and if yes- where) to get the movie somewhere in Reykjavik.

Thank you in advance and all the best from Poland :)
Regards,
Ania

p.s. Didn't want to mention it at all, cause it sounds like a cliché, but can't help to write that Iceland rules!! Definitely the most beautiful and amazing place I have ever been to.

Dear Ania,

Thank you for your letter and for your kind words about the paper. Lord knows we try our best. You know. A lot of folks stay up all night making this thing,, so it's good that some of y'all appreciate it.

Anyway. We checked with the Dreamland folks, and they tell me the film won't be out on DVD for a while to come. So sorry about that, I guess, but once its out, you can surely order it from somewhere on the Internet. That place has lots of stuff going for it.

Also, I had the good fortune of sitting in a bus that rode through Poland in February. I missed my flight from Berlin and had to catch one from Warsaw. I had to get to Warsaw via some budget bus. It was actually a pretty shitty experience all in all, the bus was cold and it rained in there for some reason, and I had to spend a lot of money to get back to Reykjavik. Still, I was pretty happy to have ridden through Poland, the folks I met there were extraordinarily nice, and I got a real good kebab at some rest stop. And what I saw of it looked real cool. I plan on going back.

Sour grape of the month A case of POLAR BEER for your thoughts.

We're not gonna lie to you: we really love us some beers. Some folks would call it a problem, but beer never gave us any problems. In fact, over the years, it's solved most of 'em. A frosty glass of cold, frothy, bubblicious, golden-tinted beer has consistently failed to let us down. In the immortal words of Homer J. Simpson: "Mmm... Beer..."



Now, since we're real pleasant and giving folks here at the Grapevine, we thought we'd share some of that wonderful POLAR BEER with you, our readers. Henceforth, until the end of days (or our Polar Beer- sponsorship program, whichever comes first), we will reward one MOST EXCELLENT LETTER with a case of the Polar Beer. You read right. A full case of beer. At your disposal.
Give us your worst: letters@grapevine.is

MOST AWESOME LETTER:

Iceland as a front in the war on human existence
Dear editor,

Feel free to publish this letter in your magazine. It is written mainly to follow the initiative of the "In Defence Group" that encouraged people to explain the Icelandic point of view, when it comes to the diplomatic clash with the countries of EU in the wake of the banking collapse. I have been trying to get my articles published in a series of papers now, but sadly few of them benefit from the truth getting out about the attacks on Iceland.

I have been warning the Icelandic government and the media for the last couple of years now that a fierce attack on Icelandic sovereignty has already been launched and war has been going on for a while now. This attack, now in the height of it's devastation, has been carefully plotted for years now and is a significant part of an elaborate scheme to bring Icelanders to their knees.

Why Iceland? Why are the English and Dutch suddenly so hostile towards Iceland and why do they insist Icelanders surrender to slavery because of Icesave? I will tell you, and although it might sound surreal and even a bit crazy, I insist that you open your eyes to the conspiracy that is taking place right here, right now, but has been going on for thousands of years. The conspiracy of the Beast against mankind.

Whales are highly intelligent creatures with an ability to communicate that even surpasses our own. What is more, they effectively practice mindcontrol on lesser human subjects. I have countless proofs of this, none though as blatantly obvious as the one embodied in the traitor Captain Watson of Sea Shepherd, who under the spell of whales has been tireless in terrorizing his own kin for decades now, to the benefit of whales.

Although we do not with the tools we now possess, fully understand how, we can clearly see that whales actively practice mind control, so when it comes to lobbying and political maneuvering, no beast is more capable than the whale.

The Icelandic foreign ministry offers no resistance. Not surprisingly so, as the ministries strongest asset has long been the ability to throw good cocktail parties for International bankers, much rather than mobilizing to secure Iceland's image and interests around the world.

So the whales have had an easy task on that front. They have with the aid of Green Peace and other similar terrorist groups, manipulated the world media, the international finance sector and the rest of the international institutes to work against us in the war on whales.

The Dutch and the English are simply acting on behalf of the Beast, just like they did when Iceland started fighting back to break the siege of whales in the summer of 2006. Embassadors were summoned and the governments of these two countries made their allegiances clear. They were teaming up with the whales in their battle against Iceland.

Iceland is fighting on more fronts though. Polarbears invaded last summer. As they are the largest of all land predators on earth and more dangerous than most, we must be considered lucky that we suffered no casualties. Thanks to the heroic effort of Icelandic policeforce the monsters were slain.

But that did not stop them from carrying out their mission, as the incident caused public outrage. The police was in fact heavily criticized for offering the last line of defence for our country. As obvious as it might now seem, the polarbears were sent here for precisely that purpose. A suicide mission to divide our ranks as well as rallying traitors to their cause.

Is it a coincidence that only months prior to the attack, ALL major international media were bombarding people with cute childhood photos of Knut the white spawn of Berlin, the latest successor to the throne of Hell. Appearing on covers of more than a 10.000 newspaper and magazines worldwide in a matter of days, he became the most famous german since...

All of a sudden, the world was in love with polar bears. The masses became bewitched by Knut's shiny fur and innocent appearance and surely enough, hostility towards Icelanders grew to new heights as reports emerged that we were slaughtering polarbears for sport. The Beast had won another perfectly executed PR-battle, and Knut the White Demon of Ba'al Moloch, grew stronger and more influential than ever before, sitting on his throne in Berlin, the heart of United Europe.

I hope we will be able to turn the tables in this fight but the enemy is formidable. We cannot expect to win if people don't know the enemy. Those who want to get more information on the conspiracy, get more articles and study the history of the Beast going back to the dawn of man, can send questions and comments to ConspiracyoftheBeast@gmail.com.

Regards,
Dr. Berthold Manz
Co-Founder of the Albrecht foundation against Animal influence in the EU.

Dear Dr. Berthold,
Holy fucking shit. This is unnerving information. Hope the free beer helps you drown out your worries. Since THE BEAST is taking over and all, we might as well party down during our last days of freedom, right? Hope you don't mind it's POLAR BEER you'll be using for the last skáls.
Also, have you seen Zeitgeist and Zeitgeist Addendum? Or Nine Eleven Loose Change? Do these beasts have anything to do with those conspiracies, ya think?

Hressingarskálinn

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

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10:00	10:45	11:15	12:00			14:15	14:35
11:00	11:45	14:15	15:00				
13:00	13:45	15:15	16:00				
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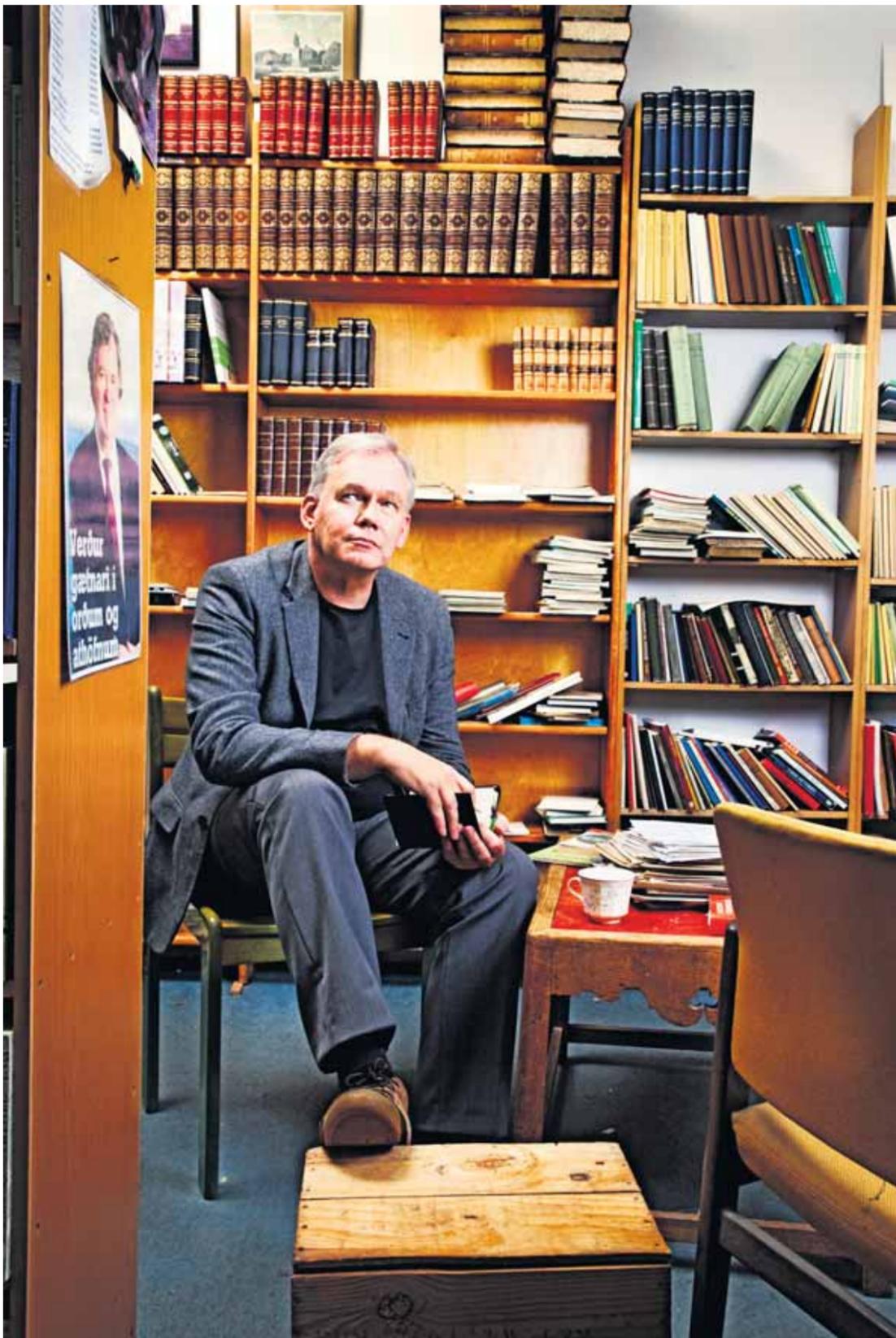
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The Architect Of The Collapse? - The Professor Professes



Political science professor Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson is a peculiar fellow. An ardent follower of the free market teachings of F.A. von Hayek and Milton Friedman, he is often referred to as the Independence Party's chief ideologue and has been credited with laying down the lines for the massive de-regulation and privatisation process Iceland underwent during the past two decades. Indeed, he openly and loudly takes credit for it, and the ensuing era of prosperity that Iceland seemed to experience as a result.

Now, of course, 'Icelandic prosperity' and 'economic miracles' seem far removed and distant, dark dreams from the past.

So did the professor's plan go wrong? Is the collapse a result of his teachings and influence within the Independence Party, the party who's eighteen year reign of governing Iceland saw the island grow from humble fishing outpost to de-regulated free market paradise to rapidly sinking death rock?

Are the ideologies flawed, or were our implementations of them flawed – or is the collapse perhaps caused by something completely different? We caught up with Gissurarson, an excellent conversationalist, and had a chat about the whole thing.

Most of our readers are likely not familiar with you. Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

My name is Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson, and I am a professor of Political Science at the University of Iceland. I am also an independent writer; I have written several books, fifteen in all, on diverse subjects: biographies, books on property rights and fishery managements, and on political philosophy, my real field. I finished my doctorate in political philosophy from Oxford University in 1985 and have since then worked in Iceland.

You have also worked with the Independence Party for a long time. You've often been referred to as the party ideologue.

You could say that I had a lot of opportunities to implement my ideas and ideologies in the years 1991-2004, when Davíð Oddson was Prime Minister, because we are good friends and collaborators. I will gladly acknowledge that I supported a lot of the changes that were made in our economic system during that time: We increased freedom of trade and of the individual, lowered taxes, opened up the economy, privatised and deregulated. I think it was a great success. When we left the scene in 2004, Iceland was one of the richest and most free nations in the world.

So you were in a position to influence state policy and implement your ideologies because you are a friend and accomplice with the former Prime Minister?

It's a bit more complicated than that. What happened here in Iceland was that we had for long lived under a closed economy and were stagnant in many areas. Eventually a new generation became influential around and after 1990, and I was part of that generation. I wrote books and translated books by great free-market thinkers, such as Milton Friedman and Friedrich A. Hayek. It all amounted to something, and in 1991 a new government started implementing a lot of what I had fought for in my youth.

Maybe in light of all that influence, some have lately taken to calling you 'the architect of Iceland's economic collapse'...

That's absurd. If you think about it for a second. Who would want to aim for or instigate economic collapse? Nobody wants that, but things may well collapse if they aren't well built.

What we did in those years is that we brought Iceland to a similar standard that many of our neighbouring countries enjoy, countries such as the UK, Australia, New Zealand, the US and Canada. Iceland became one of those wealthy, free societies.

As for the collapse, bear in mind that the world is undergoing a deep recession that did not start in Iceland but in the United States, with the subprime loan market, etc. The question we should be asking isn't what caused the depression: rather, what made it come down harder on Icelanders than any other nation? My answer to that is that there are three reasons. Firstly, a system error surfaced in the EEA treaty, because the Icelandic banks' operational field was the whole of Europe while their reinsurance system was confined to Iceland, and Iceland couldn't back up such large operations. They grew too big. This is a system flaw: the fields of operations and reinsurance should coincide.

The second reason is the bullishness of the Brits, which isn't discussed much in Iceland. For a while, they put our Ministry of Finance and our Central Bank on a list of terrorist organisations like the Taliban and Al Qaeda. You can see how ridiculous that is when Iceland doesn't even have an army. Some say they did this to prevent the Icelandic banks from siphoning funds away from the UK, but right before this happened Lehman Bros went bankrupt and they transported a lot of funds from the UK back to the US. Still, the Brits didn't put the US government or Central Bank on a list of terrorist organisations. Why? Because Iceland is small enough to push around. The US is too large to be bullied like that.

Lastly, the third reason is the recklessness of Icelandic bankers. This is the only thing that's being discussed in Iceland, although I am not of the opinion that it's the main reason for Iceland being hit harder than any other nation. But it is something everyone can have an opinion on, and this is why it's such a big part of the discourse. But I think these three reasons explain why Iceland is hit harder than any other nation.

If everything went so great in Iceland until 2004, when Davíð Oddson stepped down as PM, what went wrong after that?

Firstly, there was weak political leadership and secondly, the nation's balance of power was upset. In a civilised society, no one party may hold too much power. You need to have a certain counterbalance between different parties, mutual restraint and supervision. And in Iceland it happened that Goliath beat David; the tycoons, aided by the President of Iceland, acquired ownership of all the media in Iceland—except for the Grapevine—and simply secured total media power over the country. Iceland in the years 2004–2008 turned into Klondike, a gold rush town where capitalists were completely unrestrained and unsupervised.

I am of the opinion that capitalists can be very useful, but only under the right rules and regulations: then they benefit others with their great capabilities and diligence. Between 2004 and 2008, this wasn't ensured, for instance because the media did not provide any sort of supervision or criticism and supervisory authorities such as the Financial Supervisory Authority did not fulfil their roles well enough. Politicians egged them on and the President was a cheerleader for these men. Here in Iceland we danced around the golden calf, as the Bible says.

Iceland should not have been run from yachts and private jets. It should have been run by many different power centres. An independent judicial system, diligent media, honest politicians and hard-working capitalists, and of course the public.

There were really only two players of the game that opposed this evolution, but for different reasons. On one

hand there was Davíð Oddson, who warned that this could happen and lost the battle with Goliath. Goliath beat David in the battle of the media law [a controversial bill Oddson's government attempted to pass that would have severely constricted ownership of the Icelandic media. The law, which many believed was aimed directly at Fréttablaðið and Baugur's move into the media world, was passed in parliament before President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson refused to validate it]. That battle was in many ways about intellectual and political hegemony in Iceland.

Then of course the Left Greens opposed this development: they are against the accumulation of wealth. The rest of us are not against that, we just don't want the wealthy to rule everything, sending us decrees from their yachts and private jets with those cell phones of theirs. That's not the society we fought for. We fought for a society where the power is distributed among everyone.

But I fail to understand how everything could just... go to hell in 2004. That year, after everything had been deregulated and the banks sold off, you wrote a column in the Wall Street Journal, proclaiming that Iceland was the world's most successful laissez faire capitalism experiment...

And I stand by that statement. Nothing went wrong in 2004, but the roots of 2008's defeat lie in the power structures that were upset in 2004.

But if we can boast of the most successful free market capitalism experiment, if we are in that good a standing in 2004... And we've in your opinion implemented most of the deregulation and governmental changes that we could handle at the time... how can you say that what we're experiencing now isn't a result of that?

What happened here was that a plutocracy was created. The ancient Greek philosopher Plato differentiated between tyranny, democracy and plutocracy. We went from pluralistic democracy to plutocracy after 2004.

Say you're right. Couldn't that shift be directly attributed to all the deregulation and privatisation you fought for, supported and boasted of?

Our regulatory environment is exactly the same as in other EEA countries so that isn't the explanation. The main explanation of how badly the credit crisis hit us is the EEA system flaw which I pointed out and the Brits bullying. The recklessness of Icelandic bankers, which is only a small part of why things went wrong, can be attributed to a lack of oversight by the authorities, from politicians, the judicial system and the media. They did not get the right message, that they should show restraint.

All the media played along with the tycoons. And so did most politicians. The leader of the Social Democratic Alliance defended the tycoons in her Borgarnes speech in 2003. So you see, the parties that were meant to be keeping them in check did not do so.

That explains their recklessness. Personally I think they are mostly hard-working men that mean well, but things went wrong because they need to be monitored, like the rest of us.

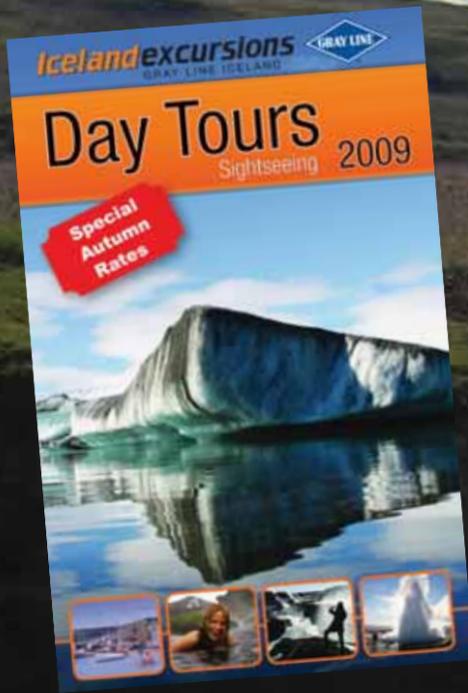
You mean that society failed?

What happened is that the banks grew very rapidly. And they were only reinsured in Iceland, and it was discovered that this wasn't sufficient in such a credit crisis. That is nobody's fault. This is the main reason why things went the way they did. I am merely trying to explain the third reason to you, the recklessness of the bankers. And that was because Goliath beat David.

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Articles | Interview

CONTINUED FROM PGG

So it's Fréttablaðið's fault? The economic collapse can in part be traced to the media bill not being passed?

The fight over the media law is maybe mostly symbolic for a certain battle in society between people like Davíð Oddsson, who wanted tycoons to stay in their place, being useful and making money, and their opponents. What was the battle of 2004 about? It was about whether tycoons should own all the media and control all the opinion making in the country. We went through a great struggle between David and Goliath, where Goliath was the president of Iceland along with the tycoons; the people on the private jets and yachts. And they won.

I've been reading your articles and watching you on television for almost twenty years, on talk shows and on the news. I've heard your criticisms and suggestions and ideas on how to improve society, and how our communities are best run. And I've heard you boast about how successful we've been, as late as last year you boasted that the deregulation and privatisation of everything—the climate you claim to have helped create—contributed to the well being and wealth of the Icelandic nation. You said that we owed our prosperity to the changes that your party implemented in our system of government.

Then everything goes to hell, we find ourselves in the final chapters of 'The Road To Serfdom' and it's suddenly the fault of your political opponents. You had no problem taking credit, ideological or otherwise, when things were going well, yet now you refuse to accept any responsibility whatsoever or attribute it to the system you implemented. This doesn't make sense to me. It sounds like a huge cop-out.

I've already explained to you the three reasons for why the credit crisis hit Icelanders so badly, and two of them have nothing at all to do with the changes and progresses we made during the nineties and early 2000s. The third reason, the recklessness, can be explained by lack of supervision, but that doesn't explain anything.

The nations that are most free in the world are the ones that offer the most prosperity. It is not free market capitalism's fault that we had a subprime loan crisis. That can be directly attributed to state intervention in the market. You cannot blame the free market for the subprime crisis, flaws in the EEA regulation or the Brits invoking terrorist law against Iceland.

As for the lack of oversight and supervision, I think that was an accident that happened, but I think that the critics of capitalism should agree with me that capitalists need to be monitored and supervised. And they weren't between 2004 and 2008.

But isn't deregulating the market a key factor in creating prosperity, according to you?

I am personally of the opinion that capitalists fare best when they are creating wealth. They do not fare well controlling a society and they should not buy entire political parties and media outlets, so as to avoid their criticisms.

The Social Democratic Alliance did everything the magnates wanted them to. The media did their biddings and the courts did as well. And is that the fault of libertarianism? How can you blame libertarianism for Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir saying in her Borgarnes speech that you couldn't criticize Kaupbingi?

There is a misconception going that since Davíð Oddson and his supporters were powerful between 1991 and 2004, they kept control after that, and steered the development after that. But he quit in 2004.

What is your opinion on ideological responsibility?

The answer is that everyone that has favoured the free market, a freedom of choice on consumer products and everything else... I don't think that people who favour consumer choice and freedom of trade can be held responsible for the fact that capitalism fluctuates and goes through periods of instability. It's thankfully not as stable as a system where everyone is equally poor, and where nothing happens. I would say that it's very strange if the free market thinkers are blamed for world recession.

That being said, as soon as you create freedom, you create a risk, do you not? As soon as you leave your parents' house as a young man, you are at a risk. But if you get yourself in trouble, is that somebody else's fault? The main thing should be to limit the damage to the one that causes it.

And that's one of the reasons I feel it's absurd for us to accept responsibility for the damage that Landsbanki caused with Icesave. We never signed any commitments. I believe that those that do well should reap the benefits, and those who do ill should equally suffer the consequences. The Icelandic nation should therefore not cover Landsbankinn's debt. How can a nation be expected to pay the debt of private companies?

But speaking of responsibility, are we, then, responsible for letting things go too far?

If I make a mistake, I freely admit it. And I think I've been wrong in two or three instances. I did not believe the men behind Baugur [father and son team Jóhannes Jónsson and Jón Ásgeir Jóhannesson] were such bad businessmen as we are now witnessing. I thought their investments were sensible. I was

shocked by their ruthlessness and aggressiveness, but I assumed they were smart businessmen. That was one mistake.

Another thing that surprised me was that Landsbankinn invested so much money in them. Lastly, I believe I should have better supported Davíð Oddson when he criticised the magnates. I grew up on Hayek and Friedman, on their beliefs that wealthy capitalists were useful for society. As I said before, that is still my conviction, and it is backed up by centuries of experience and evidence.

But I still should have supported Davíð more strongly in his fight against Goliath.

Which Icelandic party bears the most responsibility for our current state of affairs?

The Baugur team. It is obvious, and I am not saying this out of personal hatred or dislike. They are the biggest debtors; we have a credit bubble and who took these loans? It was them and their friends, the men with the cellular phones on the yachts and in the private jets.

You've been quoted as saying that everyone, save for Davíð Oddson, is responsible for the recession...

I used one reference from the Bible earlier, about the dance around the golden calf. There is another reference relevant here; the voice in the wilderness. I feel at times that Oddsson was the voice in the wilderness. I am not saying that he was infallible or perfect, or that everything he did was right—he made his mistakes like everyone else, he is frail and human. But he was the first to see the dangers of the ascending plutocracy.

But doesn't that place an unfair burden on him, even?

But who else...? I'll ask you a simple question, who else, on normal premises instead of a sick hatred for the wealthy, warned about the dangers of the Icelandic plutocracy?

Sick hatred for the wealthy?

Yes, I am talking about the Left Green party. They are against the wealthy, because they dislike them. But answer me this, who else warned of the plutocracy?

Is it fair to make it a condition to have supported tycoons that weren't the Baugur father-son team or their friends?

Other people's success doesn't bother me; it doesn't deprive me of sleep. I think the Left Greens are a completely different story. 'Distribute misery equally,' that's the leftist creed.

HAUKUR S MAGNÚSSON
BALDUR KRISTJÁNSSON

Opinion | Valur Gunnarsson

Capitalism: Its Last 100 Years



Capitalism is dead. This may come as news to no one, but the implications are vast. In fact, it changes everything. We have always known that capitalism was a brutally unfair system of distributing society's wealth. What we did not know was that capitalism would be so bad for the capitalists themselves, or that they could be so incompetent when it came to creating wealth. We did not know that the capitalists had no clue when it came to making money.

In fact, capitalism has never created anything (bar misery). All the technological wonders that have changed our lives so much these past 100 years have been created by gigantic government institutions. Perhaps there was a time when independent entrepreneurs such as Edison or the Wright Brothers could come up with something new, but that time is long past. Inventions these days are so costly and time consuming that it is only governments on a war footing that have the resources to commit to them. The jet engine, the computer, the internet, GPS and GSM are all compliments of World War II or the Cold War. They are then handed over to private enterprise, which makes inferior versions that need to be upgraded every other week.

This is not to say that war is good, only to stress that capitalism cannot do anything right. It corrupts our bodies and our environment, and in the end it even does the one thing it said it would never do, it destroys the market itself.

THE 100 YEAR WAR

So, capitalism, as we all know, is dead. In fact, we can soon celebrate the 100th anniversary of its demise. For you see, the capitalist system broke down in 1914.

By the early 20th Century, capitalism was spinning towards its inevitable conclusion. Every part of the world had been colonised and the magnates wept for there were no new markets to conquer. All of the five richest men in history had amassed their wealth and were alive during this period, according to Forbes magazine. The American oligarchs Rockefeller, Carnegie and Vanderbilt controlled US industry. Even tsar Nicholas II of Russia was infinitely richer than his predecessors, while his countrymen remained destitute. The fifth, Asaf Jah VII of India, was under the protection of the British until India became an independent country and deposed him in 1948.

The Germans wanted colonies of their own to squeeze, but the British

and the French were busy squeezing and in no mood to let others in on the game. And so the major industrial countries, Germany, Great Britain, France and eventually the US, along with the industrialising Russian Empire, invented a new kind of warfare, total war. By its nature, this led to a breakdown in trade and massive government intervention on every level. The war, which was partly fought over access to markets, led to their demise. The backbone of capitalism, the Pound Sterling, went off the gold standard. After the end of hostilities, an attempt was made to resurrect capitalism. The gold standard was reintroduced in 1925 but eventually abandoned in 1931. The attempt to revive capitalism had led to financial collapse and even a Great Depression.

THE END OF THE CAPITALIST EXPERIMENT

Most thinkers at the time realised that the capitalist experiment was over. It was only saved by the timely outbreak of World War Two. This again led to massive government intervention and technological advancement. After the end of the war, no attempt was made to revive unregulated capitalism. Instead, regulation became the order of the day. This was partially because of the lessons of the Great Depression, partly because the fear of communism led the leaders of capitalist countries to adapt some of communism's attributes. In fact, this system worked so well for almost 30 years that it seemed this strange hybrid of government regulated capitalism might prevail.

But it was not to be. In 1971, as a consequence of the Vietnam War, the US Dollar went off the gold standard. Nothing had any real value anymore, and governments gave up all attempts to control markets. We are now seeing the logical conclusion. Even if it may temporarily revive this system, which has been kept artificially alive for almost a century, it is in its death throes. In two or three or five years time, another crisis will hit and the people will again be called upon to bail out banks and corporations that have become too large to be allowed to fail without dragging the whole world down with them. But these solutions are temporary. The time will come when there will be nothing left to squeeze out of the pockets of taxpayers or even out of the soil itself. This system cannot stand. It is time for another.

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Dance Party!

What's on tap for fall? (Surprisingly, no tap)



Iceland is well known for boasting an impressive art community of every sort and for every walk of life, and dance is no exception. Although the size of the dance community is directly proportional to the size of the country, the quality and breadth of options is nothing to shake a stick at. After taking a nice summer vacation, the city's movers and shakers are coming back this autumn with new shows, new artists and the gumption to power through the tough times.

THE BIG KAHUNAS

Last April, the Iceland Dance Company's 2008–2009 season closed with a momentous performance in the Blue Lagoon choreographed by Erna Ómarsdóttir. The audience were literally immersed in the show's physical setting, raising the bar on drawing the spectator

into the performance. This has set a tall order for the company in the upcoming season, but they are not shying away from the task, going onward and upward. "The season ahead is quite ambitious," says Jóhanna Pálsdóttir, marketing director at ID, "what we're trying to do is offer something for everyone, for young and old, for people who have just started to attend dance and people who are really into it."

They kick off in September with their annual Family Performance, which puts together a collage of their best shows and favourite pieces. The family oriented, kid friendly show will be on Sunday afternoons in September and October and free for children under 12, making it a great weekend activity. They will also travel up to Akureyri in October for two performances, bringing

three of their most popular pieces to the Northern capital. In November, they'll delve deeper into the avant-garde with Jam Week, a four night run of two-for-one performances. These performances will be more experimental and unpredictable, where the choreographers will have to work with whatever happens. It may appeal to a more experienced dance fan or to the daring uninitiated who is up for a more challenging and exciting show.

Throughout the month of December, ticket holders at the Reykjavík City Theatre will be treated to a twenty minute dance appetizer prior to the play they have come to see for only 490 ISK extra. This will give the theatre lover a chance to become a dance lover as well. The Company will then take a brief lull as they prepare for their big February show choreographed by Alan Lucien Oyen, one of Norway's bright young talents. Oyen is reputed for a very lyrical style, incorporating elements of speech into his beautiful, flowing pieces. Finally, something to look forward to in the long-term will be the closing performance in May 2010, Jóhann Jóhannsson's *Fordlandia* with the Reykjavík Symphony. This performance will be put on during the Reykjavík Arts Festival and will be a spellbinding way to close the year and start next summer.

GOTTA DANCE NOW?

The first week of September will be a big one for the little guys. The Reykjavík Dance Festival is coming back for its 7th year from September 3rd to the 7th at the Hafnarfjörður Theatre. With independent choreographers and performers out the wazoo, and presenting no less than six new Icelandic dance pieces, they will also continue their goal of bringing contemporary dance into

the public eye with two Dance Parades in downtown Reykjavík.

In addition, it will be attended by several directors of international dance companies and festivals. The festival is one of the few opportunities that independent choreographers and dancers in Iceland have to show their work, so it is a great chance for them to be seen by the big wigs, as well as a great chance to expose new people to modern dance who might not get to otherwise.

Halla Ólafsdóttir, a founding member of Samsuðan & Co., has been involved with the festival for the past two years and will be performing in 'Grease, The Deleted Scenes' this year. She describes the festival as a true celebration of dance and a way for the dance community to collaborate and pool their resources. "What I think is very exciting about the Icelandic dance scene right now is that people are extremely willing and excited about doing things," says Halla, "the community really wants to share and make things happen."

It is still a matter of economics though—they only received funding from the municipal government, but not the state—so they are operating on a much smaller budget than previous years. All the performers are volunteering their works, and all the shows will be free with a request for donations to help fund next year's festival. For those without wheels to get to Hafnarfjörður, there will be a free bus departing from downtown at Karamba (Laugavegi 22) forty-five minutes before each performance and coming back after. 🍷

REBECCA LOUDER

An Open Letter to the Guy Who Tried to Run Me Over



Dear guy in the black SUV,

Maybe you missed the memo, but it is fairly common knowledge that the order of movement at an intersection is pedestrian-car-pedestrian-car. It might have gone to your junk folder. It happens. Still, I don't really understand why you felt the need to go pedal-to-the-metal on my ass when I had patiently waited for the car in front of you to go by and started scuttling across Pósthússtræti.

First of all, you were tailgating the person in front of you, which is a pretty dickish move to begin with. I mean—unless you enjoy breathing in extra carbon monoxide and exhaust fumes from other cars—what's the point? You might as well just grab a paper bag, huff some gas and chill out (note: I do not in any way condone huffing gas. It's beyond gross). Second, I know I am incredibly short and there is a chance you can't see the top of my head up there in your two-storey high driver's seat, but that ain't my fault either. If you did your driver's education right, you should be watching out for tiny moving things like myself no matter what the size of your car. Truck drivers seem to avoid killing me, so why can't you?

But I know you saw me! I fucking made eye contact with you as I started crossing and right before you tried to plow me down! YOU EFFING SAW ME. Thanks tons for stopping before breaking my hip. Even at the quick pace I walk, I wouldn't have been able to dodge your massive bumper. So yeah, I stopped and gave you the 'I'm walking here!' look and refrained from smacking the hood of your car and actually shouting it.

So what is your problem anyway? Nearly all motorists in this city have good enough reflexes to stop when they see a moving human in front of them, and most are kind enough to wave us through ahead of them. I build my karma by giving them all a gracious nod in return. So who are you trying to be? The exception that proves the rule? Some kind of colossal jackass? Were you just busy and stressed and preoccupied by your very important life?

Chill out man. I would appreciate not getting killed.

Yours,
Rebecca

CATHARINE FULTON
JULIA STAPLES

Doing it For Themselves

Students help students help Iceland, as it were



Students of the University of Reykjavík have been doing good by their peers. This spring five of them—Haukur Guðjónsson, Peter Rydahl Mols, Þórunn Jónsdóttir, Jóhanna Dýrunn Jónsdóttir, and Þórdís Katla Bjartmarz—identified a need among young people for something to do during the summer, so they dedicated their time to creating a course so that they, in turn, can create jobs for themselves and others. Organised in cooperation with Innovit and KLAk, the entrepreneurial course brought young people together twice weekly to brainstorm and bounce ideas off each other, listen to input and advice from

business owners, entrepreneurs and teachers, and go through the process of starting their own companies. More than 200 people attended the first lecture at Hugmyndahús on May 18th and attendance stayed strong throughout the summer.

"It's the situation in Iceland now, I'm in school and most of the people organising this class are as well. We noticed that there aren't a lot of opportunities now, it's difficult to get a job now over the summertime," explained course creator Haukur Guðjónsson. "We saw that a lot of students have nothing to do over the summer and thought about what we could possibly do to help the situation. We had a little bit of background in starting companies ourselves, so we thought it would be a good idea to help people start their own companies so they could be using their time wisely."

A business student, Haukur, 27, started his first company in 2005: a small service business that leased

coffee machines and water coolers to other companies. He has since been involved with several entrepreneurial endeavours in Iceland and abroad. After some rough calculations, Haukur and his peers were optimistic in May that the course they organised would result in the establishment of approximately 50 new companies and, a few years down the road, the creation of nearly 200 new jobs in Iceland. Once all was said and done the reality is that more than twenty companies are in the process of being established, some of them having already started up.

"We're hoping that if those companies continue to grow, the number of jobs may increase to 400 or so in the next two years," Haukur projected. "The average aluminium factory has about that many people and the government is always implying that big companies are the solution, but we at the seminar agree that the solution lies in the small ones."

The course is considered to have been a great success. It wrapped up at the end of July with a small ceremony to present certificates to those participants who had submitted completed business plans.

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- 05/09 Foremost Poets w. Maggi Lego & Óli Ofur
- 11/09 Fukkk Offf...
- 19/09 E&E Crew with Ham Party
- 26/09 Breakbeat.is Presents: Hudson Mohawke
- 03/10 Aaron Carl

....this is just the cream of what Jacobsen has to offer this winter.

Jacobsen

AUSTURSTRÆTI 9

Radio To The Other Side

In search of the Real McCoy

Words

Marc Vincenz

Illustration

Inga María Brynjarsdóttir

A word of warning: This one could end up being a real mind-bender. Hold on to your seats.

First, to put things into crystal clear perspective, here are a few significant facts:

- 1) The Milky Way galaxy holds something to the tune of 100 billion stars
- 2) There are probably around 100 billion galaxies in the observable Universe
- 3) Guess how many planets there might actually be?

How could there bloody well not be life out there?

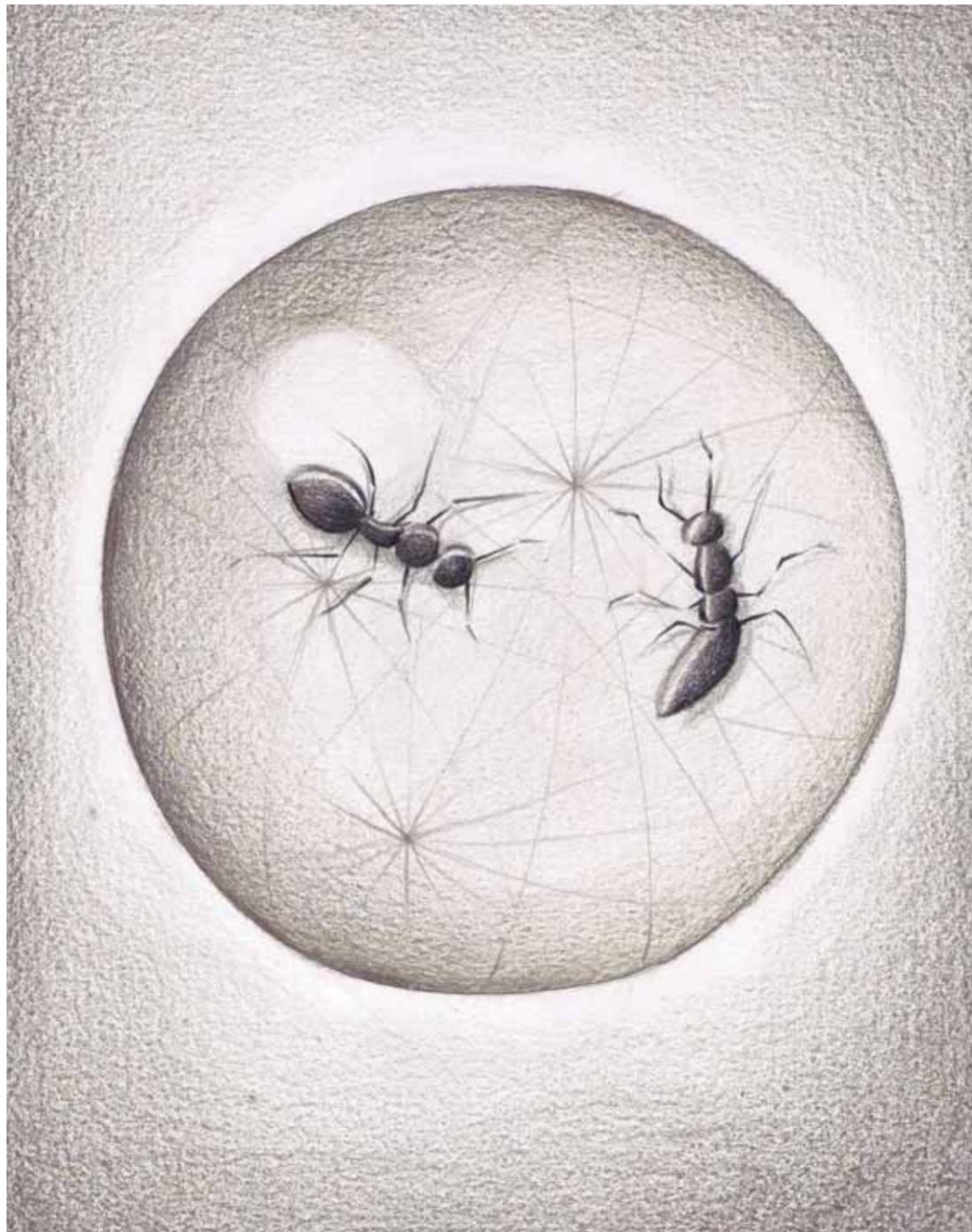
One thing we do know is that energy is absolutely everywhere, and every darned thing is here because of energy. What we don't know exactly is where the stuff comes from originally, and, in many cases, where precisely it goes; what we do know is that it's always present, constantly reinventing itself. This may be one of the very fundamentals of the Universe. Unless there's something were entirely missing which is, of course, entirely possible.

Kristbjörg Elín Kristmundsdóttir is an alternative chemist. I call her a modern day alchemist; she says she taps the purest form of emotional energy from flowers which she then goes on to provide, diluted in crystal clear Icelandic water, to her clients. She's quite cryptic as to how she procures these healing forces:

'Ah, that's a secret. No, seriously, I have a special method for each plant, but it depends on many factors: the Sun, water, the Moon, a little bit of my own special... Alchemy? Magic? Energy-harnessing device based on some cryptic Da Vinci code?

In contemporary physics, energy is a measured quantity that describes the amount of work that can be performed by a force. According to the Law of Conservation of Energy, energy can neither be produced nor destroyed, only transformed. And, total energy always remains the same. So, the energy which existed at the very beginning of the Universe is still the same amount it always was—it may have transmuted, but it's still here seething in all its wondrous quarks and sparks—everywhere: in flowers, humans too.

And, remember: every living organism here on Earth relies on some



external source of energy, even those weird tube worms down near those geothermal vents. The Sun, ultimate life-giver, starts a whole shebang chain-of-events; plants gobble pure sunlight—possibly the closest thing to pure energy around—producing our own life-giving oxygen. Unseen, but truly felt. Breathe in, breathe out.

And although Kristbjörg doesn't really reveal anything, I do a bit of soul-searching-earth-digging myself, and find a little old man who worked in the original Bach flower essences factory (yes, factory) in 'ye olde' England.

Edward Bach, medical-professional-turned-holistic-pioneer, invented the whole flower essence thing in the early 1900s. He never touched the flowers, simply collected the morning dew that lay shimmering opalescent on their petals. Bach believed that early morning sunlight transferred the healing power of the plant into the dew water. He only used one drop mixed in with litres of tap water to create his famous elixirs. I'm assuming that Kristbjörg's process is not dissimilar.

But can it really be as simple as all that? No bat's wings? No cauldron?

Guðbjörg Sveinsdóttir, the clairvoyant,

says, 'All disease begins on an emotional level. We create weaknesses in our systems because we are not in tune with our chakras [our energies]. Create a stable flow of energy, through meditation, through connection to your emotional-self, and disease is much less likely to rear its ugly head.' Being one with the Universe is what it's all about.

Even modern medical science, although extremely wary of holistic practices, acknowledges the power of positive thinking. Even if it's just placebo effect, it has been known to miraculously cure cancers and other deathly diseases.

'It's all in vibration, like a grand symphony. Everything in the Universe is vibrating energy. Healthy life is about being in synch with the primal energy source,' says Kristbjörg.

So maybe, just maybe, energy is not only about creating the ideal conditions for basic life, the speed of light, and a Weight Watcher's diet; perchance energy is also about creativity, some form of Cosmic will or divine force; about the Universe's ultimate drive towards complexity. Here's an idea: Perhaps the energy itself is the communicator of the Universe's innate intelligence?

Then, is there a message hidden in all that energy? And what about that dew water?

Yokohama's Emoto Masaru talks to water. He claims that emotions directed at water will result in representative images in the water when frozen: The word 'beauty' creates stunning water crystals; the word 'evil' creates gnarled, troll-troglodyte crystalline lumps. And of course Kristbjörg knows Emoto, this is all a small circle; in fact, shortly, Emoto will be conducting his experiments with her own flower essences.

And then, coming back to the big picture, there's the ever-evasive Dark Matter.

Recently cosmologists report that the Universe consists of more of what they call 'Dark Matter' than anything else. Thus far, Dark Matter cannot be seen, only inferred by its gravitational pull. It is, for all intents and purposes, entirely invisible.

While trying to unravel the underlying mechanism of the Cosmos, why gravity is present everywhere and planetary systems cluster rather than shoot off into space, Dark Matter was discovered, er, inferred. Some speculate Dark Matter may be the reason why Einstein never got beyond his Theory of Relativity and managed to close in on his ever-elusive Unified Theory of Everything.

So, next time you snigger at an Aunt who says she has just had tea with Huldufólk, or scoffed at a Granny who knitted a sweater for her favourite elf, remember: not even Stephen Hawking knows what that ominous Dark Matter is... yet. Perhaps it's right there, in the dark of the unseen Dark Matter where all those invisible folks are hiding – energetically?

The message I infer from all of this is: Where there's energy, life is bound to arise, and where there's life, sooner or later intelligence will evolve, and communicate. Stay in tune with it, and the Cosmos is your own bloody oyster.

For those of you who would like to send fan or hate mail to Marc, or might be willing to share their own ethereal experiences, please feel free to drop him a line at: mysticmarc@gmail.com. 🍷



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Purging Some Past At The Reykjavík International Literary Festival

Sofi Oksanen on international sex trade and the USSR



Finnish-Estonian writer Sofi Oksanen will read at the Reykjavík International Literary Festival this September. Her latest novel, *Purge*, was Finland's bestselling book last year and the translation rights have been sold to 23 countries. The Grapevine met up with the 32-year shining star of Finnish literature in Helsinki a couple of weeks ago to discuss – amongst other things – the Soviet Union and international sex trade.

"I have always known that writing is my thing," she says without hesitation as we meet in Helsinki.

Her first novel, *Stalin's Cows*, came out in 2003 and was an instant success. *Baby Jane* followed two years later. But it was with her latest novel, *Purge*, that Oksanen hit the jackpot, selling over 130,000 copies in Finland alone (to offer some perspective, Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code* sold 150,000). Among the many awards bestowed upon *Purge* was Finland's premier literary award, The Finlandia Award 2008, making Oksanen the youngest author ever to win this prestigious prize.

Purge takes place in Estonia and its main characters are an old Estonian woman in her seventies, Alide Truu, and twentysomething Estonian girl Zara. The novel revolves around ideas of power, nationality, sexuality and estrangement.

Those of you that haven't been keeping up with their Finnish/Estonian history, Finland got its independence 1917 and Estonia in 1918. In World War II, Finland lost the war against Soviet Union, but kept its independence. Estonia's destiny was much worse. It was occupied by the Soviet army, which was the start of the cruel 'Sovietisation'—concentration camps, torture, sexual

violence and mass killings. Estonia regained independence only after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

While *Purge* is set in Estonia in 1990s, the novel also flashes back to Estonia's period of Sovietisation in the late forties and early fifties. In it, Oksanen explores Estonian reality, including the inevitable shadows of both the Soviet Union and, later, Russia. Nevertheless, the fundamental themes are universal. The author examines how history informs not only a nation's development, but also the individual's spirit and life choices.

Purge tells the story of two women of different generations, exploring their experiences with the loss of freedom.

The year is 1992. Alide Truu lives in the Estonian countryside. One day, Alide discovers a young woman lying unconscious in her front yard. The Russian-Estonian Zara turns out to be on the run from the Russian mafia, a pawn in the global sex trade industry who sought a well-paid job in the West like so many others. Her fate is reflected in her host's history, a time of nighttime interrogations, when thousands of families were shipped off to Siberia and partisans hid in the forests.

By interweaving these two women's lives and destinies, Oksanen examines the searing wounds of the post-war period and also brings the country's recent history into sharp focus. While reading the book, it became clear to me that Finland's destiny could have been the same as Estonia's and my life could have been like the protagonist, a modern-day slave of sex trafficking. For me, *Purge* was a physical experience. I nearly threw up three times. The horrible violent scenes are told through the victim's experience.

"Violence porn would have been too easy solution. I wanted readers to be able to identify with the victim. Clinical description of a rape do not tell you anything about the victim's experiences," Oksanen explains.

Purge was initially a play Oksanen wrote for the Finnish National Theatre. When the play was practiced in the theatre, Oksanen began turning the story into novel.

"I do a lot of associative work when I write. And I must say that the text for this novel came out pretty fast, since the story and the characters were already there from the play," says Oksanen.

"*Purge* actually has its roots in a story that I heard when I was a child. An Estonian mother and her daughter found a wounded soldier close to their house. They took him in and hid him into their home. Somebody from the neighbourhood talked, and so Soviet authorities took the daughter to interrogation. After the interrogation night she stopped talking," she summarises.

Besides all the stories heard from Estonian relatives, Oksanen also researched *Purge* by reading Estonian women's magazines from 1920s. "After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Estonian used bookstores started selling old Estonian magazines. It was amazing to see the 1920's and 1930's in photos, since there was hardly any visual material available from these times up until then. When I was reading these magazines, it looked the same as Finland in the times of gaining its independence. It was very confusing."

All the Estonian magazines were prohibited during the Soviet occupation, from World War II to the collapse of the Soviet Union. "Who was hiding these magazines all those decades? It is a mystery. But it's great that they did."

"However, there was not so much material regarding human trafficking. I used the material I had, for example Viktor Malarek's report *The Natashas*, which is a covering report of modern sex trade in Europe."

Trafficking women and children for sex industry is an ugly aspect of modernity. It's the third biggest black market business, after drugs and the weapons trade. Should governments criminalize buying sex?

"Absolutely not. The more visible prostitution is, the safer the situation for the weakest participant. If a western country criminalizes prostitution, it means that sex tourism increases. People will go abroad to buy sex. It's not fair if welfare countries like Finland outsource their problems to poorer countries like Estonia or Russia."

In Oksanen's opinion, the most effective way to prevent the illegal sex trade and trafficking is to stabilize the economy in the poor countries, where the poorest ones have little choice.

"It's stupid to moralize the decisions that poor people living in poor conditions make to survive," she adds.

An Icelandic translation of *Purge* will be out on Forlagið in 2010. 🍷

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The Reykjavík Int'l Literary Festival

Sofi Oksanen joins a long list of acclaimed international wordsmiths who have graced the fine city of Reykjavík with their presence over the twenty-four years and nine instalments of the Reykjavík International Literary Festival. The most prominent of its kind in Iceland, the festival has been visited by the likes of Haruki Murakami, Kurt Vonnegut and Fay Weldon in the past, and September 6th through 12th will play host to such international literary

talents as David Sedaris, Luis López Nieves, Naja Marie Aidt, Kader Abdolah, Jóhann Hjálmarsson, Ingunn Snædal, Steinar Bragi and Thor Vilhjálmsson and Griffin Poets Robert Bringham, Dionne Brand, Don McKay and Michael Ondaatje, among others.

The Reykjavík International Literary Festival is a volunteer-run bi-annual presentation of author readings, interviews and panel discussions, and also features a publisher's symposium

and a segment dedicated to the Griffin Poetry Prize, featuring speeches and readings of the noted international poets in attendance. The 2009 festival events will take place at the Nordic House and Iðnó. For more information about the Reykjavík International Literary Festival and its programme see the Listings section of this very publication. 🍷

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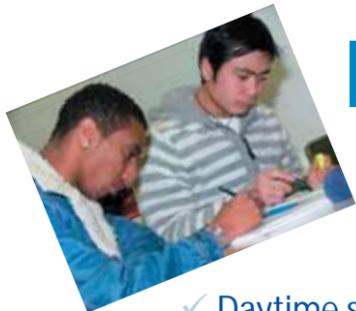
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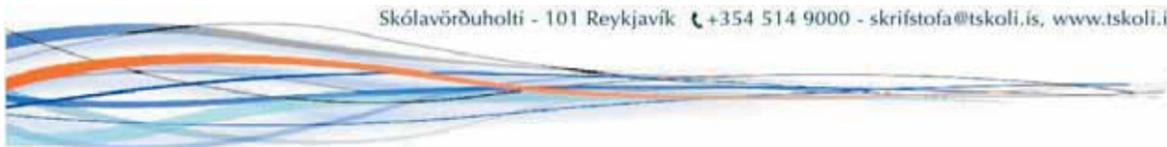


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SLASH, KILL, BLOOD, GUTS, LOVE, AWESOME

Július Kemp Premieres the first Icelandic slasher flick



Finally! The first Icelandic slasher flick! Icelandic films have hitherto been characterized by bleak and gloomy stories of depressed Icelanders trying out every option available to turn tails from their down-in-the-dumps existence: There's been a lot of drama, a lot of drinking, and a lot of sex.

But isn't there something missing? Any imbecile can see that essential accessories to the aforementioned sex, drama and drinking are blood and gore. Luckily, *The Reykjavik Whale Watching Massacre*.

The man behind it all is the notorious Július Kemp, both famed for making controversial guerrilla flicks such as *Blossi 810551* and *Veggfóður*, but also films that address societal issues such as *Strákarnir Okkar*. We caught up with the good man at his headquarters.

Whale Watching Massacre, you say. How did you guys come up with such a project?

It all began about five years ago, in 2004, when we were working on a different screenplay with Sjón, RWWM's screenwriter. He attended a conference, some sort of animation gathering, where he met some enthusiastic Danes that just kinda put forward the question why anyone hadn't already made a movie called *Whale Watching Massacre*, where this controversial issue was addressed in this horrific way. The blame can probably be placed with them. When

Sjón returned, he asked us if we'd want to participate in a project with that kind of theme. Naturally, we jumped at the chance.

The project was originally meant to boast a budget of 200 million dollars, but you might say we hit a few obstacles right away. In time, we decided to lower the guillotine and make it more local and just go for it, instead of letting it fade away in an endless hunt for money.

And are you passionate about these kind of films? Are you a big fan of splatter?

I go all around the circuit, but yeah, I've stood steadily on the sideline of the splatter biz through time, especially during my adolescence years. In those days, westerns and splatters were my bread and butter. But Sjón definitely has a more extensive background in these areas; I would even bet he'd seen every single movie ever made. *Whale Watching Massacre* goes all around though, and doesn't only pass as a splatter; you can find references to every single existing genre in film history, one way or another.

Tell me about the plot and its origins, is the story based on any myths or urban legends—or is it just a fabrication?

It's no folktale, it's merely make-believe fabricated by Sjón. The basic idea was to create a platform where the two worlds would collide; the whale watching business and the whale-hunting racket. It might be an overstatement to call what's going on turmoil, but there sure

is quite a conflict. The story isn't biased in either direction, and isn't political at all. The hunters are of course illustrated as foul, but the tourists are as well. Everyone has their dark sides, and in the end everybody deserves to die. As they do.

How about the funding, was it more strenuous to gain funding for a feature of this genre rather than a more "sophisticated" one?

It really came as a surprise when the Icelandic Film Centre, as well as the other Scandinavian patrons, didn't have anything against our slasher flick. The co-producers also saw potential in distribution, which is the main thing in all this: potential. The moneybags proved to be pro-splatter, eventually. The mainstream movie industry keeps getting more and more bloody, movies such as *Angels and Demons*—featuring Tom Hanks—parade these immensely gory scenes, so you know the crowd must be supportive of this evolution.

And how gory is it exactly? What's the actual body count in WWM?

Well. Everybody dies except, one person. You could just count the names on the poster and subtract one. It's as basic as that, a genuine splatter flick.

Producing a gore-fest such as this must include procedures different from the ones in, well, less bloody filmmaking, especially in terms of producing the

sound, etc. How would you describe the difference?

There is of course a vast difference between these kinds of productions and more regular ones. We had to ship in a British sound technician who'd previously worked on projects like *Alien vs. Predator*, building up a sound library with ludicrous budgets behind him. He basically brought his sound library over. We're lucky to miss out on the lawsuit-hide and seek involved in the sound business, with the big studios overseas, so we could utilize previously fabricated sounds.

In my previous works I'd always used Icelandic sound guys and always gotten top-notch results, so I undoubtedly had some cynic feelings about handing it all over to a foreigner. In this situation, though, I felt I had to. The sound and aural ambiance amounts to about 80% of horror flicks like these, so it had to be superb. And I am happy to say it is. The production as a whole was a very slow process, the film took over forty days to shoot. It's set on a boat in a rural area, so it always took at least two days to get there and get things going before the cast could be transported over. Weather is also important, but we were really lucky.

How do you think the Icelandic crowd will react to this new genre in Icelandic film?

It's an unwritten book to me, of course I hope they'll like it, but who knows? One thing I'm sure of is that the whale watching business will be busy once the movie's been distributed overseas. It's definitely a positive injection for those tourist companies.

How do you look at this film compared to your previous two, are they similar in any way. Is there perhaps a red thread running through your work?

This is of course a totally different thing from what I've done before as a director; we now have professional actors, a genuine crew, some money behind us... So it's black and white. Incomparable. But in this one, as in my previous work, you could say I'm valiant. I've always liked to take chances. *Blossi* was a big risk, where we wanted to make a flick about teenagers that really didn't tell any story. It's of course a cliffhanger to produce a splatter movie, as well as making a film about role-playing youngsters such as in *Astrópía* and a gay soccer team, as in *Strákarnir Okkar*. So you could maybe say my flair is to take risks. And if RWWM causes some kind of outburst and gets people mad, it would of course be great! 🍷

SIGURDUR KJARTAN KRISTINSSON
JULIA STAPLES

Kemp's Top Ten All Time Favourite Horror Movies

1. TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE



2. ALIEN



3. THE HILLS HAVE EYES (THE ORIGINAL ONE)



4. HIGH TENSION



5. THE THING



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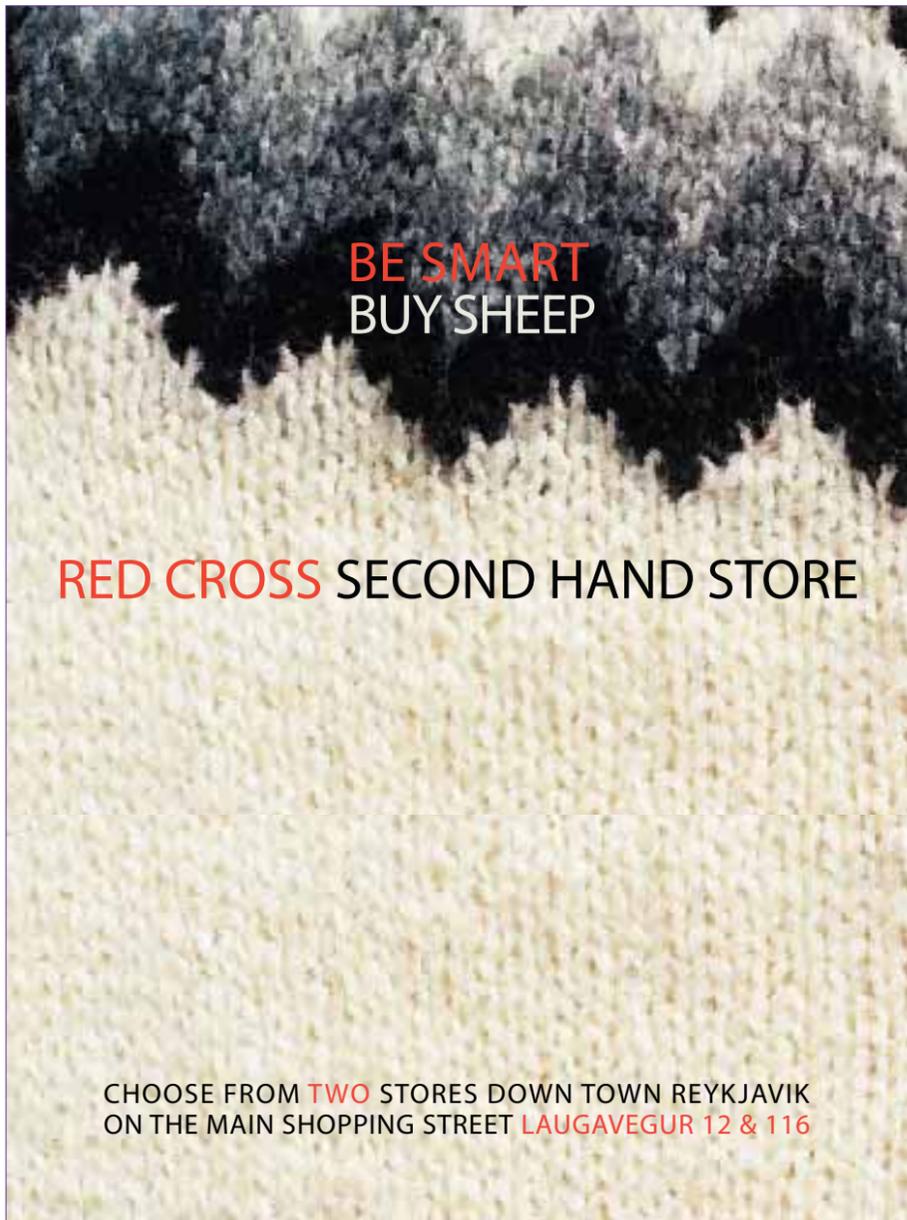
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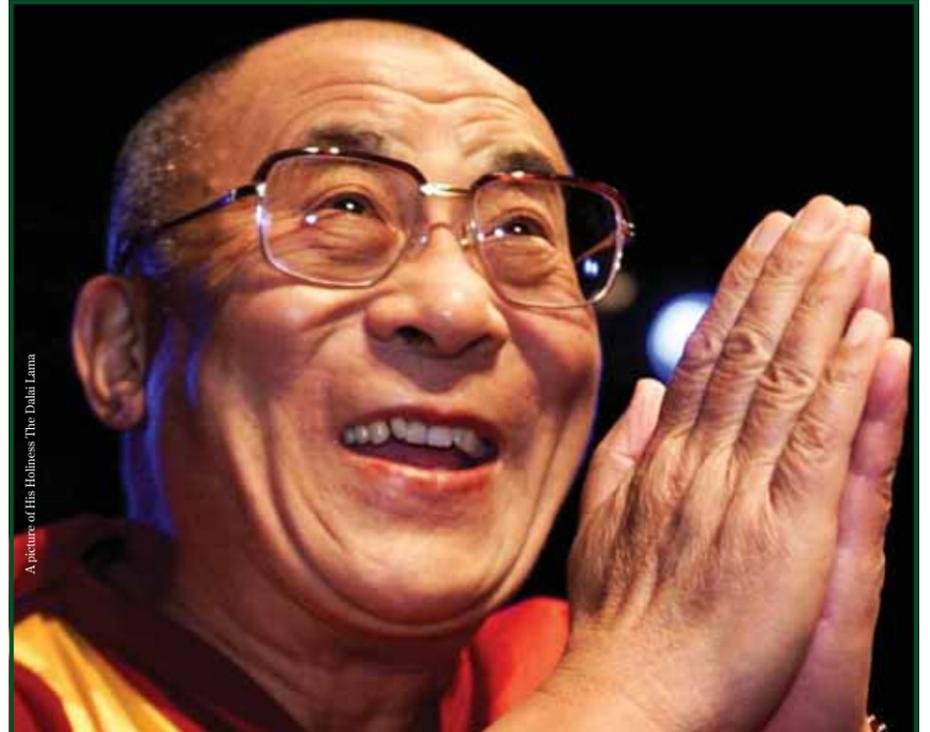
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Feature | Re-living the past, sorta

Scenes From Menningarnótt

See Smell Touch Taste Hear - Recounting a day and night of purported culture in Reykjavík

At the Grapevine, we love us some culture and arts and music and poetry and literature and waffles and intoxication and vomiting and drunken stumbling. So naturally, we are quite fond of Menningarnótt. It has all of the above, and more.

Recounting the whole experience isn't an easy task. There is a LOT going on, as you may have noticed if you were there (and if you were not, check out our last issue for an overview of the huuuuuge programme on offer). We can't do that. But you can still get a glimpse of what the whole thing was about by reading the following: two different accounts of how two different redheads in their early twenties experienced Menningarnótt. You should also look at the pictures. Enjoy.



VALGERÐUR ÞÓRODDSDÓTTIR:

In the morning it was very quiet and I was very hung over. The apartment was unusually still and so, it seemed, was the downtown street outside its windows. It could have been any other day, really, a thankfully tranquil, restful, Saturday morning, and to my drowsy eyes it almost was. But outside the shaded window something was already brewing; close to 1/3 of the country's population would be flooding these streets by the day's peak, providing the biggest crowds, the most noise and eventually the most vomit the streets of Reykjavík would see all year.

The muted serenity of these surroundings betrayed the reality of what lay ahead, and it was clear that the day would be a long one; according to the Culture "Night" program, the agenda began at 10:00 in the morning and stretched on for over thirteen hours. What wasn't clear, conversely, was what on said schedule could possibly entice me out of bed on this particularly wretched weekend morning.

What it was, it turns out, was waffles. Free waffles, and coffee, to be precise. At four different venues even, in case I was so inclined and appropriately ambitious. Right through the darkly blotted newsprint of the Culture Night schedule God seemed to be winking at me, promising that the indiscretions of the past could be forgiven and forgotten with a sweet patterned cake and plenty of jam and whipped cream. And so it was that I set out more determinedly than I would have thought possible of my ailing state, towards waffles, emphatic and resolute.

As I made my way through Þingholtin down towards the pond the day proved to be way ahead of me. Various promotional vendors had set up on a small square a block down from my street and traffic had been closed off in all directions. A few people had gathered on what was

usually a minor four-way crossing and on a fairly large stage someone sat and was playing a flute.

The waffles promised in the day's program were mysteriously, though perhaps not unexpectedly considering who was promising, missing from Landsbankinn in Austurstræti, replaced instead by bowls full of stale kleinur standing sadly near a wall in a corner of the building.

But there was no turning bank. No bank's deception was going to keep me from having my waffle and eating it too. At the local Amnesty International headquarters on Þingholtsstræti the waffles were bountiful and the kleinur fresh and voluptuous. The

main room was clean and well-lit, and around every table sat people chatting and signing human rights petitions and postcards. Feasting on eager generosity, drinking kóko mjólk and coffee, I shamed myself for having ever thought that Landsbankinn would have been the right place to start.

It was now 3 P.M. and the crowds had grown significantly, the thickening mass not yet oppressive but existing nonetheless as a dark foreshadow, a reminder of how packed and impossible the day had been at its peak last year. On Lækjartorg Square a group of middle-aged women were wearing cowboy hats and line dancing to the song Somethin' Stupid, joined

by what must have been their teacher, Óli Geir. The beat of the song was unhurried and steady and the dancers, cool and composed, glided in various arrangements across the low stage while the surrounding crowd watched attentively, smiling, delighted.

On Ingólfsstræti it began to mist through the sunlight as Orri and, according to the program, "his friends" displayed the Art of Graffiti on a wall behind Prikid while a group of people sat on the pavement and looked on. Further down the street, on its opposite end, a Garden Concert was in full swing. After a perfectly pleasant couple of songs from a young band whose name I did not catch, Retro



Stefson played four songs very quickly, apparently their second set during the concert and apparently as consolation for the absence of FM Belfast who were scheduled to play last but who had not come. As per usual, the kids were full of energy and their songs full of cowbell, a combination that has done a world of good for them as well as their big-brother-band Belfast.

It is either a testament to or a condemnation of Culture Night that I had to fight my way through crowds around the Michael Jackson tribute band in order to get to my neighbourhood store and procure a litre of Coke to nurse my hangover. The band was on the stage below Hallgrímskirkja Church on Skólavörðustígur and I could hear them through an open window when I got home. I remember thinking that the singer actually sounded a lot like Michael Jackson, right before I shut the window and closed the blinds.

Back at square one. Evening had finally fallen by the time I left the house again and there was a sort of winter holiday feeling in the air, conjured by a range of people coming together to stroll in the evening glow.

At a backyard FM Belfast concert on the corner of Bergþórugata and Frakkastígur this mood prevailed and was only enhanced by a youthful charge. A large crowd jumped and pulsed and sang along and Retro



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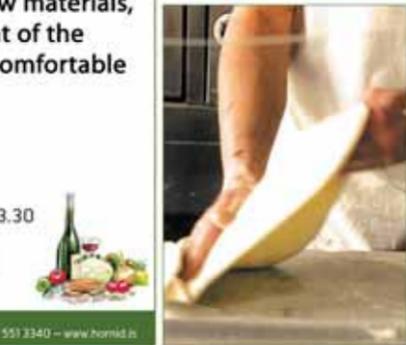
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22:00 Silfur and DJ Maggi.
Jacobsen
22:00 TATATAT and Friends.
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23:45 Terrordisco.
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Melodica Acoustic Festival
18:00 Hemmi & Valdi. Svavar Knútur, Markús Bjarnason, Emma Ævarsdóttir, Steindór Ingi, Bjarni Þór and Bergþór Smári.
18:00 Hljómáland. Gísli Kristjánsson, Kjartan Arnald, Stefán Örn, Sebastian Storgaard, Böðvar Reynis and Haraldur Davíðsson.
21:00 Rósenberg. Geir Harðar, PikkNikk, INSOL, Heiða og Daniel, Ian Hooper (USA), Elíza and María & Mama's bag.
NASA
21:00 I HEART RVK dubstep night with Skream, Kanio, Equalizers and more.
Prikið
22:00 VIP Weekend with house band and DJ Danni Deluxxe.

Reykjavík Jazz Festival
16:15 Open house at Efstaleiti 1.
Beint Live Jazz on RÚV 1.
20:00 Nordic House. The HDV Trio.
22:00 Iðnó. Salsaball with Kristin Bergsdóttir, Jussanam Dejah and Tómas R Einarsson Band.
Sódóma
22:00 Böddi Dalton and guests.

29 SAT

B5
22:00 DJ Funky Fleivur.
Bar 11
22:00 DJ Óli Dóri.
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Hressó
22:00 Napoleon and DJ Maggi.
Jacobsen
22:00 Már & Nielsen Party Zone DJ Set.
Kaffibarinn
23:45 Alfons X.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 DJs Nino and Dramatík.

Melodica Acoustic Festival
16:00 Hemmi & Valdi. Heiða Dóra, Tinna Marína, Gummi Frændi, Ian Hooper (USA), Friday Night Idols, The Cedar (UK), Hjalti Jón, Guðrún Lára Pálmadóttir and Halla Norðfjörð.
16:00 Hljómáland. Jonathan Pointier (FR), Valur Gunnarsson, Sunday Parlous (GER), Lydia Grétarsdóttir, Fúsaleg Helgi, Áslaug, Mysterious Marta, Elín Ey and Múgsefjun.
21:00 Rósenberg. Misery Loves Company, Skúli Þórðar, Árstíðir, The Cedar, Sverrir Norland, HEK and Lights on the Highway.

Prikið
22:00 VIP Weekend with Gísli Galdur and Benni B-Ruff.
Reykjavík Jazz Festival
15:00 Kjarvalsstaðir. Leifur Gunnarsson
20:00 NASA. Arve Henriksen, Jan Bang and Anna María Friman.
22:00 NASA. Varp and Jagúar.
Sódóma
22:00 LEX Games Show with Dr. Spock, Sykur and Broðir Svartúlfs.

30 SUN

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 Movie night.
Prikið
11:00 VIP Weekend Hangover Cinema, screening Rambo 2! Free popcorn.
Reykjavík Jazz Festival
12:00 Dill Restaurant. Live Jazz at Noon.
15:00 Nordic House. Piano only! Iceland's finest jazz pianists.
21:00 Rósenberg. The Reykjavík Big Band vs. Toshiko Akiyoshi Big Band, led by Össur Geirsson.
23:00 Múlinn. Bop 'till you drop.

31 MON

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
Kaffi Hljómáland
20:00 Audiobook Night.
Kaffi Zimsen
21:00 Best Friends Day. 2 for 1 beer.
Nordic House
20:00 The Nordic Verse Family.
Prikið
22:00 Chill Night with Introbeats.
Reykjavík Jazz Festival
20:00 Djúpið. Jazz Quiz 3 & 4.
21:00 Rósenberg. The Reykjavík Big Band.

1 TUE

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
Reykjavík Jazz Festival
20:00 Djúpið. Jazz Quiz Finals with prizes, Icons of Jazz.
21:00 Rósenberg. Passport Check.

2 WED

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
Kaffi Hljómáland
18:00 Ghetto Yoga.
Kaffibarinn
21:00 Bedroom Community.
Rósenberg
22:00 Misery Loves Company.

3 THU

Bar 11
22:00 Kreppa Nights with DJ Óli Dóri and live music.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Hressó
22:00 Jogvan & Vignir.
Jacobsen
22:00 Breakbeat.is.
Kaffi Hljómáland
17:30 Ghetto Yoga.
Kaffibarinn

Music & Entertainment | Venue finder

Amsterdam Hafnarstræti 5 D3	Dubliner Hafnarstræti 4 D3	Nýlenduvörurverzlun Hemma & Valda Laugavegur 21 F5
Apótek Austurstræti 16 E3	English Pub Austurstræti 12 E3	Næsti Bar Inngólfstræti 1A E5
B5 Bankastræti 5 E4	Glaubar Tryggvagata 20 D3	Óliver Laugavegur 20A F5
Babalú Skólavörðustígur 22 F5	Grand Rokk Smiðjustígur E5	Ólstofan Vegamótastígur F5
Batteri Hafnarstræti 1-3 D3	Highlander Lækjargata 10 F3	Prikið Bankastræti F5
Bar 11 Laugavegur 11 E5	Hressó Austurstræti 20 E4	Rósenberg Klapparstígur 25 F6
Barbara Laugavegur 22 F6	Hverfisbarinn Hverfisgata 20 E5	Sódóma Reykjavík Tryggvagata 22 D3
Bjarni Fel Austurstræti 20 E4	Jacobsen Austurstræti 9 E3	Sólón Bankastræti 7A E4
Boston Laugavegur 28b F6	Kaffi Hljómáland Laugavegur 23 F6	Thorvaldsen Austurstræti 8 E3
Café Cultura Hverfisgata 18 E5	Kaffi Zimsen Hafnarstræti 18 E4	Vegamót Vegamótastígur 4 F5
Café Paris Austurstræti 14 E3	Kaffibarinn Bergstræðastræti 1 F5	
Balthazar Hafnarstræti 1-3 D3	Karamba Laugavegur 22 F6	
Celtic Cross Hverfisgata 26 E5	London/Reykjavík Tryggvagata 22 D3	
Dillon Laugavegur 30 F6	NASA Porvaldsenstræti 2 E3	

23:45 Gísli Galdur.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 Ólafsvaka night. Beer for 490 ISK.
Rósenberg
22:00 Svavar Knutur.

4 FRI

Bar 11
22:00 DJ Óli Dóri.
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
Grand Rokk
22:00 gogoyoko presents Grapevine Grandrokk #9 with Dr. Gunni, Hellvar, INSOL and Blóð.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 DJs Nino and Dramatík.
English Pub
22:00 Live music.
Hressó
22:00 Penta and DJ Bjarni.
Jacobsen
22:00 Thank God It's Friday with Gísli Galdur & Sammi Jagúar. Free drink with entry fee.
Rósenberg
22:00 Guðmundur Nordahl.

5 SAT

Bar 11
22:00 DJ Biggi Maus.
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Jacobsen
22:00 Foremost Poets, Maggi Lego and Óli Ofur.
Kaffibarinn
23:45 Sexy Lazer.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 DJs Nino and Dramatík.
Nordic House
20:30 S.L.Á.T.U.R. final show of The Nordic Tour.
Rósenberg
22:00 Hrafnarspark.
Sódóma
22:00 Northern Music Night with Klive, Kira Kira and guests.

6 SUN

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 Movie night.
Prikið
11:00 Hangover Cinema. Free popcorn.
Rósenberg
22:00 Live music.

7 MON

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
Kaffi Hljómáland

20:00 Audiobook Night.
Kaffi Zimsen
 21:00 Best Friends Day. 2 for 1 beer.
Rósenberg
 22:00 Blúsfelag Reykjavík.

TUE

Dubliner
 22:30 Live Music.
Rósenberg
 22:00 Mike Pollock and guests.

WED

Dubliner
 22:30 Live Music.
Kaffi Hjómáland
 18:00 Ghetto Yoga.
Kaffibarinn
 23:45 DJ Benson is fantastic.
Rósenberg
 22:00 Live music.

THU

Bar 11
 22:00 Kreppa Nights with DJ Óli Dóri and live music.
Cultura
 22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
 22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
 22:00 Live Music.
Jacobsen
 22:00 CoxButter Night.
Kaffi Zimsen
 22:00 Ólafsvaka night. Beer for 490 ISK.
RóseRósenberg
 22:00 Vadim Syodorov Trio.
Sódóma
 22:00 Lights on the Highway album release show.



Deep waters indeed

Hafnarborg

28th of August to the 1st of November

Art exhibition.

"In Deep Water" (Lífróður), will debut in Hafnarborg on August the 28th, displaying works by artists who have drawn inspiration from the sea. The aspects the artists have chosen are both the sea as a natural phenomenon and also as way of life. The sea of course plays a huge role in the Icelandic national spirit and has been a shaping force through our history. The show is also a reflection on how our basic livelihood began and still continues to be embedded in our language, thoughts, society and politics. The exhibit will show works from a wide range of artists, including Ásmundur Ásmundsson, Birgir Andrússon, Ólafur Elíasson, The Icelandic Love Corporation, Sigtryggur Bjarni Baldvinsson, Ragnar Kjartansson and many many others.

The name of the exhibition comes from an old Icelandic saying that describes going through hard times. A saying that has frequently been used to describe the hardships the nation is enduring right now.

The show is curated by Dorothee Kirch (who also curated the Icelandic contribution to the Venice Biennale) and Markús Þór Andrússon.

RJH

4 Sept. **Dr. Gunni og Sala varnarliðseigna kynna: Geggjað gigg!**

Funheit frá Ref: **HELLVAR**
 Frá Káp, hinn goðsagnakennandi og engumlíkj trúbador: **INSOL**
 leikur INNIHELDUR (í fyrsta (og eina?) skipti)
 TITRANCI AF OFBELOSÞINGI: **BLÓÐ**

Á Grand Rokk föstudagskvöldið 4. sept kl. 23 - 1000 kall inn

gogoyoko presents Grapevine Grandrokk #9 with Dr. Gunni, Hellvar, INSOL and Blóð

Grand Rokk 🕒 22:00PM

1000ISK

It's that time again! Yours truly is putting on another show with our good friends gogoyoko. This time we'll be curing the back to school blues with the help of Dr. Gunni, playing us his new album 'Inniheldur'! Fun! Before we get to see the doctor, we'll have our vitals taken by Keflavík's Hellvar, who have just released the ultra-catchy song 'Falsetto,' get a sponge-bath from songster INSOL and a nice big dose of angst and dissent from Blóð. They will leave you feeling in tip-top shape and amped up for autumn. **RL**



Lights on the Highway Album Launch Show

Sódóma

Possible admission fee

After quickly forming in 2003 and a whirlwind rise to success in the following year, Lights on the Highway have just released their sophomore album, Amanita Muscaria, through gogoyoko. The group are having a proper celebration for the occasion, giving everyone a chance to get a gander at the goods and hear their beautiful songs, equal parts lush and twangy, slightly reminiscent of The Band, perfect for a night on a desert road. The addition of keyboardist Stefán Örn Gunnlaugsson has added a delicious layer of icing on the already fantastic cake. You should not leave this show empty handed. **RL**

28 Aug. 29 Aug.

Melodica acoustic festival

28 - 29

Ágúst

Melodica Acoustic Festival 2009

Various locations

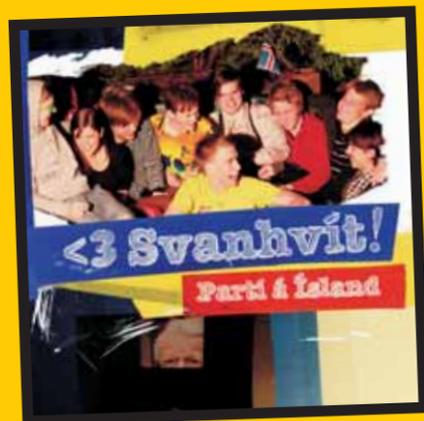
Undercover Music Lovers are once again putting on the Melodica Acoustic Festival. Taking place over the course of two nights at three venues (Rósenberg, Hjómáland and newly added Hemmi & Valdi), this jam-packed festival will have you running in a triangle to catch all the amazing crooners and finger-pickers. In addition to the huge selection of local troubadours to hear, the festival will have international darlings Ian Hooper from America, The Cedar from the UK, Jonathan Pointier from France and Sunday Parlours from Germany. The whole thing kicks off with Reykjavík's reigning jester, Svavar Knutur, getting you well tuned for the weekend. **RL**

Indie & Hardcore



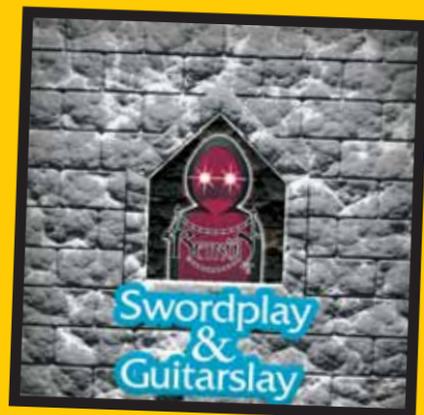
HJALTALÍN / Sleepdrunk Seasons

★★★★ / The Guardian



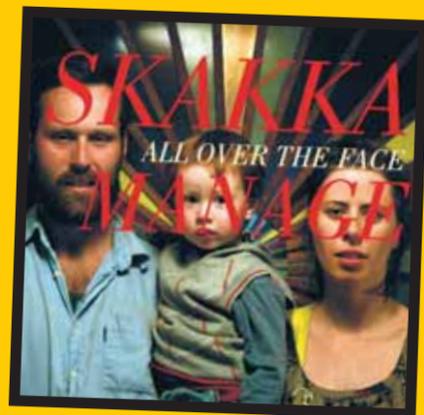
<3 SVANHVÍT / Partí á Íslandi

BRAK06 - Just released!



RETRÖN / Swordplay & Guitarslay

Released July 7th



SKAKKAMANAGE / All Over The Face

★★★★★ / Morgunblaðið

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MUSIC
AUGUST/
SEPTEMBER

– continued –

**OUTSIDE
REYKJAVÍK**

Akureyri

Botanical Garden
August 28 Akureyri Town Festival
Opening Ceremony

8pm
Free entrance

Akureyri Church Museum

August 29 The Kammer Choir
6pm and 9pm
Free entrance

Húsið

August 29 Nursing a Semi, final
show

7pm
Free entrance

Akureyri Artist Alley

August 29 Sickbird, Hundur í
Oskilum, Manhattan and Runar Eff
and Hvanndalsbrædur

8pm
Free entrance

Akureyri Church

August 29 Orkustodin
10pm
Free entrance

Græni Hatturinn

August 29 Inga Eydal and Band
10pm
Free entrance

Strikið

August 29 Kristjan Edelstein
10pm
Free entrance

Sjallinn

August 29 The Bravo Beatles and
Comet
Midnight
Possible admission fee

Keflavík

Paddy's
August 29 The G-Strings
Midnight
Free entrance

September 3 Trúbatrix
10pm
Free entrance

September 5 Green Bug
Midnight
Free entrance



28
Aug.

I Heart RVK

NASA ☺ 22:00PM

2500 ISK in advance, 3000 ISK at door

The resurgence of dubstep into the mainstream has come hard and strong over the last year, burning up dance floors all over the UK, America and Reykjavík. Now one of the biggest crews on the block, ATG (Ahead of The Game) is dropping into town. Headlining are the guys everyone is talking about: Skream (recently famed for his killer remix of La Roux's 'In For The Kill'), Kanio ('The Dirtbag' producer) and breakbeat duo producers The Equalizers. A buttload of world-class acts wanted all over the world right now and they plan to make it get dark and dirty up in there. Wot! GO THERE! RL



5
Sept.

S.L.Á.T.U.R. Tónleikar
Horræná húsinu
10U9QRd09inn 5 SEPTEMBER KI 20:30

BRÉNNISTQÐIR / PÁLL IVON PÁLSSON
QTÁMQS / GUÐMUNDUR STEINN GUÐARSSON
CONSTANT / ÞRÁINN HJÁLMARSSON
FÓLIÐ / HLYNUR A. VILMARSSON
LOVE / INGI GARDAR ERIENDSSON
LOVENDER OF SORROW / DÁVIS BRYNJAR FRANZSON
315° / ÓKI ÓSGEIRSSON
GREEN GREEN YELLOW / JESPER PEDERSEN
FIYTTJENDUR: FRQNK QQRNINK O9 SIÁTUR
QÐ9Qn9UR ÓKEYPIS

S.L.Á.T.U.R. Final Show of Nordic Tour

Nordic House ☺ 20:30PM

Possible admission fee

After a weeklong trip through the Scandinavian mainland, the sonically challenging collective S.L.Á.T.U.R. is wrapping up its Nordic Tour with a much deserved homecoming show. Over the course of the week, these self-described "artistically obtrusive" composers have performed eight new pieces of music composed especially for this tour on a wide variety of instruments, from the homemade to the traditional, high technology to historical. They will now wrap up this great endeavor playing original pieces by the collective's members, as well as pieces by Davíð Brynjar Franzson, Hlynur Aðils Vilmarsson and Þráinn Hjálmarsson, for a truly memorable and subversive artistic experience. RL

Art | Venue finder

<p>101 Gallery Hverfisgata 18A F6 Thu-Sat 14-17 and by appointment www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery/</p> <p>Artótek Tryggvagata 15 D5 Mon 10-21, Tue-Thu 10-19, Fri 11-19, Sat and Sun 13-17 www.sim.is/Index/Islenka/Artotek</p> <p>ASÍ Art Museum Freygata 41 G10 Tue-Sun 13-17</p> <p>Árbæjarsafn Kistuhylur 4</p> <p>The Culture House Hverfisgata 15 F6 Open daily 11-17 www.thjodmenning.is</p> <p>Dwarf Gallery Grundarstígur 21 H8 Opening Hours: Fri and Sat 18-20 www.this.is/birta</p> <p>The Einar Jónsson Museum Eiriksgata G9 Tue-Sun 14-17 www.skulptur.is</p> <p>Fótógrafi Skólavörðustígur 4a F7 www.fotografi.is</p> <p>Gallery 100° Bæjarháls 1 www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/ Open weekdays from 08:30-16:00</p> <p>Gallery Auga fyrir Auga Hverfisgata 35 G7</p> <p>Gallery StartArt Laugavegur 12B G7 Tue-Sat 1-17 www.startart.is</p>	<p>Gallery Ágúst Baldursgata 12 F9 Wed-Sat 12-17 www.galleriagust.is</p> <p>Gallery Fold Rauðarástígur 14-16 J9 Mon-Fri 10-18 / Sat 11-16 / Sun 14-16 www.myndlist.is</p> <p>Gallery Kling & Bang Hverfisgata 42 G7 Thurs-Sun from 14-18 this.is/klingogbang/</p> <p>Gallery Turpentine Ingólfstræti 5 F7 Tue-Fri 12-18 / Sat 11-16 www.turpentine.is</p> <p>Gerðuberg Cultural Centre Gerðuberg 3-5 Mon-Thu 11-17 / Wed 11-21 / Thu-Fri 11-17 / Sat-Sun 13-16 www.gerduberg.is</p> <p>Hitt Húsið – Gallery Tukt Pósthússtræti 3-5 E6 www.hithusid.is</p> <p>i8 Gallery Klapparástígur 33 G7 Tue-Fri 11-17 / Sat 13-17 and by appointment. www.i8.is</p> <p>Living Art Museum Vatnsstígur 3 – G7 Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17 / Thu 13-22. www.nylo.is</p> <p>Lost Horse Gallery Skólastræti 1 F6 Weekends from 13-19 and by appointment on weekdays.</p> <p>Hafnarborg Strandgötu 34, Hafnarfjörður</p> <p>The National Gallery of Iceland Frikirkjuvegur 7 E8</p>	<p>Tue-Sun 11-17 www listasafn.is</p> <p>The National Museum Suðurgata 41 C9 Open daily 10-17 natmus.is/</p> <p>The Nordic House Sturlugata 5 C11 Tue-Sun 12-17 www.nordic.is/</p> <p>The Numismatic Museum Einholt 4 K9 Open Mon-Fri 13:30-15:30.</p> <p>Reykjavík 871+/-2 Aðalstræti 17 D6 Open daily 10-17</p> <p>Reykjavík Art Gallery Skúlagata 28 H6 Tuesday through Sunday 14-18</p> <p>Reykjavík Art Museum Open daily 10-16 www listasafnreykjavikur.is</p> <p>Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum Sigtún Hafnarhús Tryggvagata 17 E5 Kjarvalsstaðir Flókagata K11</p> <p>Reykjavík City Theatre Listabraut 3</p> <p>Reykjavík Maritime Museum Grandagarður 8 C3</p> <p>Reykjavík Museum of Photography Tryggvagata 16 D5 Weekdays 12-19 / Sat-Sun 13-17 www.ljosmyndasafnreykjaviku.is</p> <p>Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum Laugarnestangi 70</p>
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National Museum of Iceland

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WWW.SJOMINJASFN.IS

**Grapevine events
September**

- 4 Grand Rokk**
☺ 10 pm
gogoyoko presents: Grapevine Grand Rokk
Dr. Gunni
Hellvar
INSOL
Blóð
1000ISK Admission
- 18 Hemmi og Valdi**
☺ 9 pm
gogoyoko presents: Grapevine Grassroots #8
TBA
FREE CONCERT

ART

GALLERIES & MUSEUMS

COCKTAIL PLEASURES AND VISUAL STIMULATION

How to use the listings
Venues are listed alphabetically by day.
For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit www.grapevine.is

OPENING

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

29 ☺ 5pm
ASÍ Art Museum

Directions and Non-Directions
Valgerður Hauksdóttir exhibits new drawings and graphics. Artist talk Sunday September 13th at 15:00.
Ongoing until September 20th.

2 ☺ 8pm

Gerðuberg Cultural Centre
Arts and crafts at Café Gerðuberg
Knitting on the internet: Ragnheiður Eiríksdóttir takes guests to the world of knitting.

3 ☺ 5pm

Reykjavík Art Museum
Hafnarhús
Erró - Japanese Love Letters (1979-1980)
The series Japanese Love Letters is not typical of Erró's art.

ONGOING

The Culture House

Permanent exhibitions:
Medieval Manuscripts
March 28 - Jan 10 2010
ICELAND::FILM
This exhibition traces for the first time the development of Icelandic filmmaking from its origins around 1904 to the year 2008.

The Library Room.

Current exhibitions:
August 12 - ongoing
National Archives of Iceland - 90 years in the museum building.
Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Culture House.
Sheepskin, Saffian and Shirting
It shows the tools and equipment used in book binding.
Exhibition Series:
Paintings by Hulda Viljálmsdóttir.

The Einar Jónsson Museum

Permanent exhibition: **The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson.**

Gallery Agust

SHARP
Artist Andrea Maack introduces her third perfume, Sharp, in an exhibition that explores aspects of the fashion industry while still connecting to the art world.

Gerðarsafn Art Museum

(Kópavogur)
June 27 - Aug 31
The Kópavogur Art Museum Summer Exhibition

Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

August 20th - October 18th
Headlines...
Caricatures by Halldór Baldursson 2007-2009
August 20th - October 11th
Stories without words
Ólöf Erla Einarsdóttir exhibits photo-manipulated pictures

Gljúfrasteinn Laxness Museum

Gljúfrasteinn was the home and workplace of Halldór Laxness (winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955) and his family for more than half a century. It has now been opened to the public as a museum, unchanged from when Laxness lived there.

Iðnó

September 6 - 12
The Reykjavík International Literary Festival 2009
The bi-annual festival is one of the major literary events in Iceland and has been attended by many of the world's best known authors.

Kling & Bang Gallery

Object d'Art
Artist Kolbeinn Hugi Höskuldsson exhibits his works.

Listasafn Mosfellsbæjar (Mosfellsbær)

Spjóld
Artist Kristín Jónsdóttir exhibits her

works.

Living Art Museum

Ongoing - Exhibitions from Runo Lagomarsino, Yiva Westerlund and Olivia Plender.

National Gallery of Iceland

Hidden Treasure: Treasures In Public Possession?

Works from the three Icelandic state-owned banks' collections, along with some works from the National Gallery.

The National Museum

Permanent exhibition:
The Making of a Nation
Heritage and History in Iceland is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.
Jan 31 - Nov 30.

Encounters.

Archaeological excavations at many locations around Iceland have been funded by Kristnihátíðarsjóður (the Millennium Fund). Finds from some of these excavations are on display in an exhibition suitable for the whole family.

The Nordic House

Current exhibitions:
July 25 - August 30
The Ocean.
Features exhibitions from photographers Bjarne Riesto, Helga Cl Theilgaard and Kaare Espolin Johnson.
September 6 - 12

The Reykjavík International Literary Festival 2009

The bi-annual festival is one of the major literary events in Iceland and has been attended by many of the world's best known authors.

The Numismatic Museum

Permanent exhibition:
The Central Bank of Iceland and the National Museum of Iceland jointly operate a numismatic collection consisting of Icelandic notes and coins.

Ráðhús Reykjavíkur

Dulín Himintungl
Kim Linnet exhibits her 360° panorama photos of Iceland.

Reykjavík 871 +/- 2

Permanent exhibition:
The Settlement Exhibition

Reykjavík Art Museum

Ásmundarsafn
May 2 - April 30 2010
Rhyme - Works by Ásmundur Sveinsson and contemporary artists
This exhibition showcases contemporary artists that tackle similar issues as Ásmundur did in his time, but in the context of a new age.

Reykjavík Art Museum

Hafnarhús
May 28 - August 29 2010
Erró - Portrett
A dedication to Erró.
Sept. 3 - Oct. 18
Children of Nature vs. Antichrists.
Consisting of twelve large paintings of selected frames from films by Lars von Trier and Friðrik Thor Friðriksson, and a multi-media installation by Ari Alexander Ergis Magnússon.
Sept. 3 - Oct. 18

D 13 Ingibjörg Birgisdóttir
The D project is a series of exhibitions at Hafnarhus, drawing its name from one of the museum's galleries. For the ongoing series, the Reykjavík Art Museum commissions new work by promising artists who have not had prior private exhibitions in Iceland's major museums.

Reykjavík Art Museum

Kjarvalsstaðir
May 15 - August 30
The House of Una And West 8th Street
The life of Icelandic artists Louisa Matthíasdóttir and Nína Tryggvadóttir and their connection with artists from Iceland and New York.
May 09 - August 30

Kjarval and Animals
An exhibition focusing on Kjarval's depictions of animals.
May 15 - August 30

Icelandic design, furniture, architecture and product design.
August 16 - September 1

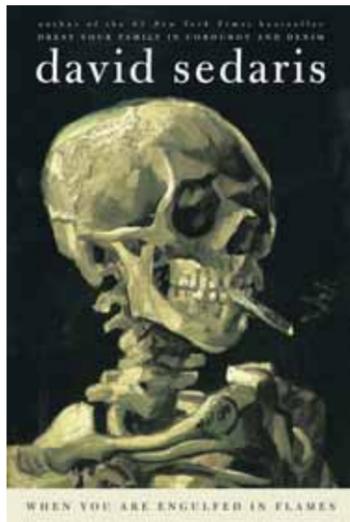
The Reykjavík Jazz Festival presents **Ode To Jazz!** An exhibition featuring jazz in Icelandic art.

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Current Exhibitions:
Living Museum by the Sea; Arterial for Country and City; From Poverty to Abundance; The Shark - Light and Life Energy; Hidden Craftsman.

The Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Current Exhibitions:
May 16 - Aug 30



Reykjavík International Literary Festival

Here at the Grapevine we often promote some music event or another that we're looking forward to and in states pure, unbridled excitement we have been known to use such terms as "expect shit to get royally ripped up" and to liberally reference bodily fluids and explosions thereof. Despite what such examples or our word craft may imply, we are a highly intellectual and literate bunch at this here publication and we are seriously excited about the forthcoming Reykjavík International Literary Festival that will be going down at Iðnó and the Nordic House from September 6th to 12th.

This year marks the ninth instalment of the bi-annual event that has, in twenty-four years, become the most popular festival of its kind in Iceland and well respected among literary happenings in Europe. The prestige of the Reykjavík International Literary Festival has drawn such noted wordsmiths as Haruki Murakami - a favourite in the Grapevine offices - Gunter Grass, Isabel Allende, Jose Saramago, A. S. Byatt, Kurt Vonnegut, Fay Weldon, and Paul Auster in previous years. Joining the ranks this year are ten Icelandic authors; 16 international authors from the United States, Puerto Rico, Kenya, Finland, Norway, Lithuania, the Dominican Republic, Germany, India, Iran and the Faeroe Islands; and nine Griffin poets, including this year's prize winners Albert Frank Moritz and Carolyn D. Wright.

The festival program features daily readings by the authors at Iðnó from commencement until the 11th, and panel discussions and interviews at the Nordic House on the 7th, 8th and 9th. A concert titled "The Music of Language" will be performed at the Iðnó Theatre September 11th following the day's readings. Finally, the festival will be wrapped September 12th with a Publishers Symposium examining the future of Icelandic publications and the state of literature in the age of e-books, among other things, and the Griffin Poetry Prize event at the Nordic house that afternoon, at which prize founder Scott Griffin will address the crowd and prize winners will present their works.

The weeklong event is a rare chance to experience modern literature from the mouths of its creators and perhaps acquaint yourself with pieces that you would otherwise not encounter. It promises to be an enriching experience. For more information on the Reykjavík International Literary Festival check out www.bokmenntahatid.is. **CF**



Life isn't just a game

— it's also a bed of roses...

16. May - 29. August 2009



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MAP

Places We Like

1 Kaffi Hljómalind

Laugavegi 23

The only true activist-friendly, community servicing co-op in town, Kaffi Hljómalind lends a breath of fresh air and a welcome alternative to Reykjavík's beer-stained, decadent cafés. Offering up a fare of vegetarian-to vegan friendly courses, some pretty good coffee and an awesome selection of tea. As well as a free, anarchist library. What else do you need? SKK

2 Á Næstu Grösum

Laugavegi 20b

Á Næstu Grösum is an all vegetarian restaurant right in the city centre that features a friendly atmosphere and fair prices. There is always at least one vegan soup on offer and the daily special portions are big and always satisfying. There is even some organic wine on offer. HSM

3 Babalú

Skólavörðustíg 22

Located on the second-floor of a quirky little building on Skólavörðustígur, Babalú is an inviting, quaint and cosy café serving up a selection of tea, coffee and hot chocolate along with delicious baked goods and light meals. Food and drink aside, Babalú boasts colourfully decorated and super-comfortable surroundings and a genuinely friendly and likeable staff. CF

4 Ban Thai

Laugarvegur 130

Even though the service at Ban Thai may get a little flaky, the food is always to die for and the place also offers a very pleasant dining atmosphere that puts you right in a comfortable Thai sorta mood. It's really Reykjavík's only "fancy" Thai restaurant. Ban Thai has remained a true Reykjavík treasure for the longest time, and is truly one that should be celebrated. HSM

5 Kaffitár

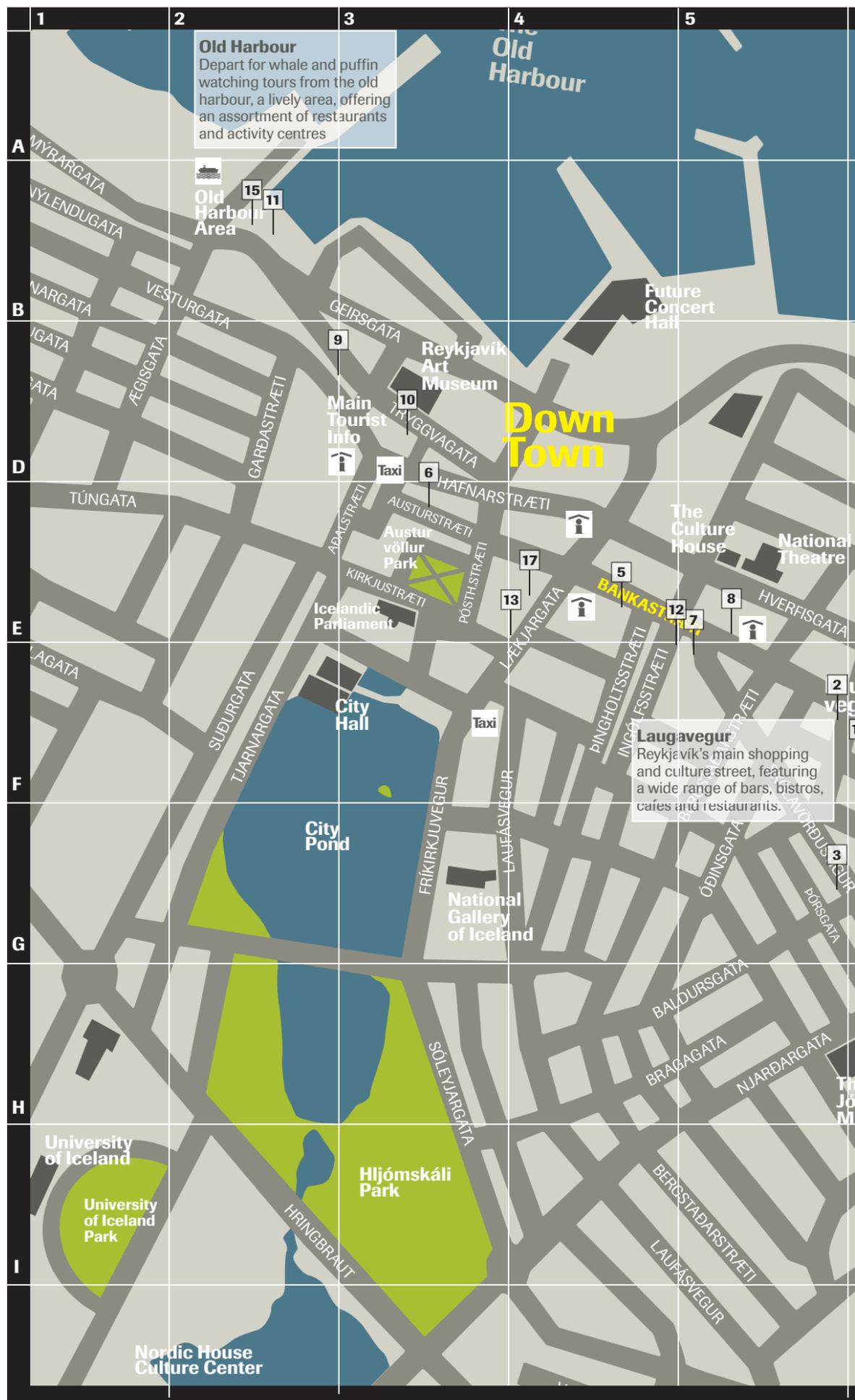
Bankastræti 8

Kaffitár on Bankastræti is a comfortable little café with a great selection of coffee, tea and baked goods on offer. Since Kaffitár is also a big-name Icelandic roasterie the caffeinated beverages on the menu are quality. The wi-fi makes this a nice place to sit and chill with your laptop as well. CF

6 Jacobsen

Austurstræti 9

A fairly new venue in town, Jacobsen is owned by some nouveau riche Swedes, and has been providing a non-stop party over the last few months. Besides its importing foreign big-shot DJs and other niceties, it is probably most appreciated for its loooong hours; it doesn't matter if you stop partying at 2AM or way-too-much AM, Jacobsen is always forking out shots and cocktails. SKK



7 Deli

Bankastræti 14

Getting a good slice of pizza on the go can be an utter ordeal. If you're not careful, you'll frequently wind up paying good money for a cardboard wafer that has been sitting in a heater box for a week. Not at Deli, however. Their slices are consistently awesome and fresh, the topping selection is intriguing and tasteful and, best of all, they're really cheap. HSM

8 Kisan

Laugavegur 7

This store is incredibly cool. It's stocked with really unique and quirky clothes, outerwear, accessories and handbags, plus they have an adorable section of kids clothes, kitschy vintage toys and books and even interior design items. Wicked place; definitely worth a visit. CF

9 Café Haiti

Tryggvagötu 16

The first time I entered this exotic little joint, meaning to buy myself a take-away espresso, I ended up with two kilos of fresh and roasted coffee beans due to some language complications and way too much politeness. Since then I have enjoyed probably way-too-many wonderful cups of Haitian coffee, but they're always as nice, so the two kilos were definitely worth it. SKK



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POLAR BEER POLAR BEER POLAR BEER
THE ENGLISH PUB
at Austurstræti 12





10 Sódóma Reykjavík

Tryggvagötu 22

Newly opened Sódóma on Tryggvagötu is already a hit with party crowds and gig-goers alike. An extensive venue, filled with reasonably priced beverages and reasonably good looking people. Some of Iceland's finest musical ventures have played in recent months, and their schedule looks promising too. Also, make sure to visit their men's room for a glance at the "Pissior of Absolution". JB

11 Sægreifinn

Verbúð 8, Geirsgata

Down by the Reykjavik harbour, Sægreifinn fish shop and restaurant is truly a unique establishment. The menu features various fish dishes (including most of the "crazy Icelandic food" you'll want to tell your friends you had) and a rich portion of the best lobster soup we've ever tasted. Good food and welcoming service make this place a must-try. HSM

12 Prikið

Bankastræti 12

Prikið is one of those places that shape-shifts. It's a warm café with photographs of their senior frequenters on weekday mornings, a hung-over hangout on weekend afternoons, and during nights it's filled to the brim with what remains of Iceland's hip hop scene. Go there in daytime for the cheap burgers; enter at night for some OTT hip-hop debauchery, old skool and the latest bangers alike. SKK

13 Korníð

Lækjargötu 4

How about filling your face with cakes at the delightful Korníð. They taste so good, you would gladly push your own mother over for even the slightest of sniffs. Not a sweet tooth? Well, try their delectable sandwiches then, I recommend the egg and bacon ciabatta! At only 590ISK plus all the Pítu Sósa you could dream of, what more could you ask for on your lunch break? JB

14 Karamba

Laugavegi 22

New hotspot in town Karamba is a colourful and eclectic bar on Laugavegur with a comfortable atmosphere, typically great music and a chill crowd. This is a good place to relax or to do some serious drinking or to relax. Plus, their decors are done strictly by Grapevine-friendly artists, such as Lóa (who does our comics), Huggleikur Dagsson (who illustrates the monster column) and Bobby Breiðholt (who's done a lot of nice illustrations for us); they are truly a sight to behold. CF

15 Sushimiðjan

Geirsgötu 3

This is a seriously great place to grab a quick and quality sushi lunch. Pre-prepared boxes of maki and nigiri are reasonable priced and really well made, amply filled with deliciously fresh ingredients. The indoor seating area is limited to some stools and outward-facing wall-mounted tabletops but there are a couple of tables and chairs set up outside the front door for those wanting to watch the ships and tourists in the harbour while they eat. CF

16 Barbara

Laugavegi 22

At Laugavegur 22, above Karamba, Barbara serves up a lively atmosphere for Reykjavik's gay community and anybody else who just wants to dance and have a good time. The first level is made for dancing and is often packed with sweaty bodies, while the second level of the bar offers a place to sit, drink and chat and another in which to smoke. CF

17 OSUSHI

Lækjargötu 2a

Great place to satisfy your craving for raw fish and vinegar rice. The selection on 'the train' is wide and varied and the atmosphere is relaxed. Also, the colour-coded plates make it easy to keep tabs on your budget while scarfing down your maki and nigiri. CF

18 Segurmo

Laugavegur 28b

This place was something we all needed, a cheap and scrumptious bistro, right inside one of our favourite bars: Boston. The cuisine really is Icelandic, because of their cornerstones: the meat soup and the fish stew, but the rest varies between weeks, so their menu could even pass as international. So, if you don't like the current meat dish, you might in a week. SKK

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ART GALLERIES

— continued —

Life is not just a game- it's a bed of roses...

Show curated by Guðmundur Oddur Magnússon and Guðfinna Mjöll Magnúsdóttir.

Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum

Permanent Exhibition:

The Shape of Line.

A new retrospective of works by Ásmundur Sveinsson. The exhibition focuses on abstract works from 1945 onwards.

May 01 - April 30 2010

RHYTHM- Ásmundur and Our Age

This exhibition showcases contemporary artists that tackle similar issues as Ásmundur did in his time, but in a context of a new age.



The Armoury Opens!

Hólmaslóð 4

JULY 29

Since Sruli Recht arrived here in Iceland he's been up to a string of miscellaneous deeds, and now he's launching the next in line. This most recent project is a co-production with artist Megan Herbert. Together they've created The Armoury, a peculiar shop boasting Sruli's arsenal collection as well as the illustrated topographic narratives of Megan. Check out the shop, lost amongst the retrofitted once-rusting ships and abandoned fisheries of Reykjavík's Fishpacking District – but if you bring your children remember that the Armoury is a place of both sharp and delicate objects. **SKK**



Art from the blind

On Saturday the 29th a new exhibit will premiere at the National Museum of Iceland, showing art created by blind and visually impaired children that recently finished a seminar at the Reykjavík School of Visual Arts.

The goal of the seminar was to make a catalog of diverse works and set up an exhibit using unexpected materials. The kids used everything from ropes, threads, chords and plaster to colours, paper and elastic chords. The seminar's alternate goal was make references to modern art and thus encourage and strengthen the abilities of each and every student.

The exhibit is located on the "square" of the National Museum, which is right next to the coffee shop. **RJH**



Erró - Japanese Love Letters (1979-1980)

Reykjavík Art Museum, Hafnarhús

September 3 - January 3 2010

In the early 1970s, Icelandic artist Erró embarked on extensive world travels, bringing him, among other places, to Japan. There, in a second-hand book store, he was captivated by an illustrated book and a series of old photographs and facsimiles related to the people and subjects in the book. After persuading the shop owner to let him photocopy the material, Erró returned to Paris and began to work, collaging the foreign printed raw material with the paintings he created. Using mainly shades of grey and variations of brown, this muted but startling display is a far cry from the Erró that most are familiar with. The exhibit is running for four months, so there is no reason to miss it. **RL**

OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK

Hafnarfjörður

Hafnarborg
Aug. 29 - Nov. 1
In Deep Water

The sea and the self-consciousness of a nation in Icelandic contemporary art. This exhibition displays works by artists that have used the sea as an inspiration both as a natural phenomenon and way of life; the sea both takes and gives life.

Borgarnes

The Icelandic Settlement Centre
Permanent exhibitions:
The Settlement of Iceland; The Saga of Egill Skalla-Grímsson.
Current theatre productions:
Brák - a monologue by Brynhildur Guðjónsdóttir
Mr. Skallagrímsson - a monologue by Benedikt Erlingsson
Storms and Wars - a monologue by Einar Kárason

Stykkishólmur

Library of Water
Permanent Exhibition:
Roni Horn installation. The artist has replaced stacks of books with glass columns containing water gathered from Iceland's glaciers and glacial rivers.

Akureyri

Akureyri Art Museum
August 29 - October 18
The Selection. Icelandic photography from 1866 to 2009.

Café Karólína
August 1 - September 4
Icelandic Geography. An exhibition of works by Þórgunnur Oddsdóttir.

DaLí Gallery
August 28 - 29
Edda Þórey Kristfinnsdóttir, Steinn Kristjánsson and DaLiurnar exhibit works as part of the Akureyri Town Festival.

GalleríBOX

August 29 - September 20
Container: an exhibit showing the new works of Finnish artists Kalle Mustonen, Atte Uotila, Antti-Ville Reinikainen and Petri Eskelinen.

Kunstraum Wohnraum
July 5 - Sept 20
Exhibition by Guðrún Vera Hjartardóttir

Seyðisfjörður

Skaftfell
June 21 - August 31
Exhibition by Kristján Steingrímur Jónson

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LÓKAL – An International Theatre Festival In Reykjavík

Iceland's first and only professional theatre festival, Lókal, will take place in Reykjavík for the second time at the start of September (note: the Act Alone festival in Ísafjörður, while being an international theatre fest, only caters to monologues). The festival brings Icelandic artists to the stage with cutting edge performances, as well as acts from all over the world. The Nature Theatre of Oklahoma, New York City players and Vivarium Studios will be taking the stage at the festival, to name a few. There are many other interesting theatre companies participating. Last year's theme was to present the most interesting things happening in the theatres of Europe and the US. This time around, the festival will focus on local performers who have been pushing the limits of the theatre lately, taking it to unknown frontiers.

Off Target (Utan Gátta), by local playwright Sigurður Pálsson, is one of festival's highlights. Dealing with the human condition and the apparent addiction we all have to drama, unhappiness and pain, the show won several Icelandic prizes at the Icelandic Theatre Awards in 2009, including best play and best production.

Off Target has been showing since 2008 at the National Theatre and will raise its curtain on September 4th for Lókal.

Several amateur acts and underground theatre companies will also take part in the festivities. The Professional Amateurs, for example, are a group of artists that have taken an interest in pushing the boundaries of theatre, making it a reflective medium for both audience and performers to enjoy. They will be staging three plays at this year's Lókal; An Eternal Piece on War and Peace, An Eternal Piece on the Art of Manipulation and An Eternal Piece on Relativity. Their vision is to make the act an open dialogue between the performers and the audience.

Although the theme of this year's festival is the local scene, some foreign artists will also grace us with their presence. On the fifth and sixth, Pat Kinevane's show Forgotten will be performed at Batteríð. This performance is an 80-minute collage of dance and Irish storytelling, and is performed by the Irish theatre company Fishamble. Fishamble has been going strong for 20 years, and this act has become an international hit as they have toured through the UK, Ireland, France and the US.

This festival is a sure hit for all those who appreciate the art of theatre and the evolution of its form, with performances of the highest calibre and richly innovative acts on offer for everyone.

The festival will show pieces at several theatres situated around Reykjavík. It will start on Thursday the 3rd of September and run until the 6th.

For more information, visit www.lokal.is. **RJH**

Outside Reykjavik | Venue finder

Keflavik
Suðsuðvestur
www.sudsudvestur.is
Hafnargata 22
230 Reykjanesbær
421-2225

Hafnarfjörður
Hafnarborg
www.hafnarborg.is
Strandgata 34
220 Hafnarfjörður
585-5790

Borgarnes
The Icelandic Settlement Centre
www.landnam.is
Brákarbraut 13-15
310 Borgarnes
437-1600

Stykkishólmur
Vatnasafnið / Library of Water

Akureyri
Akureyri Art Museum
www listasafn.akureyri.is
Kaupvangsstræti 12
600 Akureyri
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poptrem.blogspot.com/
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483-1727

Listasafn Reykjavíkur
Reykjavik Art Museum



Revisited Frames

Hafnarhús

September 3 – October 18

Paintings of selected frames from the film directors Lars von Trier and Friðrik Thor Friðriksson and a multi-media installation by film director Ari Alexander.

Diverse programs will be running throughout the exhibition period. See www.artmuseum.is

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F O O D

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REVIEWS



Hearty Affair

Kryddlegin Hjörtu

Skúlagata 17

What we think: Healthier stuffing for low cost

Flavour: Hearty, fresh

Ambiance: Highway-feng shui

Service: friendly



Opened almost exactly a year ago, restaurant Kryddlegin Hjörtu (Spicy Hearts) is currently busy preparing for its first birthday party.

Inside, decoration is heavy on Feng shui, with crystals, mirrors and running waterfalls – a valiant attempt to disguise the drab grey office building.

Outside, it is less serene: on a supremely windy day we watch people

fight their way through pizza boxes, rubbish and other random stuff flying through the air.

At dinnertime the restaurant is almost full with hungry tourists enjoying wide views of the storming sea, Mt Esja and the highway.

The menu is a simple, modestly priced vegetarian-omnivore affair. Unlimited soup and salad for 1450 ISK, add another 1000 ISK and you get the catch of the day thrown in too.

Unusual for a 'stuff yourself to the gills' kind of place, Kryddlegin Hjörtu emphasises the quality of ingredients, a good proportion of which are organic.

The highlight of the otherwise basic, fresh salad bar was a green apple and grated ginger salad. Deliciously sour, I shall be stealing the idea for home. For dressing we opted for the house drizzles—the basil was good, the coriander not so much. Also on offer was home-baked bread with overly

spiced hummus and bright orange garlic butter.

The soup bar had two meat and two vegetarian choices. My friend found the mushroom soup on the thin side and scarce in mushrooms but good in taste, while the organic-red pepper soup was a hit. I tried the peanut-chicken soup, which made for good, hearty fare.

While my vegetarian companion occupied herself with soups and salads, I got stuck into the daily catch. The cod was covered in fresh coriander and the bed of couscous and green beans—with the aid of more butter than I care to think of—melted in the mouth.

For dessert, my friend downed a heart-shaped cupcake with chocolate centre that looked too healthy but tasted acceptably sinful.

☆ - SARI PELTONEN

Food & Drink | Venue finder

3 Frakkar Baldursgata 14 F9	D6/E6 Bæjarins Beztu Tryggvagata E6	Grái Kötturinn Hverfisgata 16A G7	Jómfrúin Lækjargata 4 E6	Pisa Lækjargötu 6b E6	Sushibarinn Laugavegur 2 F7
Aktu Taktu Skúlagata 15 K8	Brons Pósthússtræti 9 E6	Grillhúsið Tryggvagata 20 E5/ E6	Kaffi Hjómaland Laugavegur 21 G7	Pizza King Hafnarstræti 18 E6	Svarta Kaffi Laugavegur 54 H8
Alibaba Veltusund 3b E3	Café Cultura Hverfisgata 18 G6	Habibi Hafnarstræti 20 D5	Kaffitár Bankastræti 8 F6	Pizza Pronto Vallarstræti 4 D6	Sægreifinn Verbuð 8, Geirsgata D5
American Style Tryggvagata 26 E5	Café Loki Lokastígur 28 G9	Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar ("Bullán") Geirsgata 1 D5	Kaffivagninn Grandagarður 10 D1	Pizzaverksmiðjan Lækjargötu 8 E6	Tapas Vesturgata 3B D5
Argentína Steak-house Barónstígur I8	Café Paris Austurstræti 14 E6	Híolla Bátar Ingólfstorg D6	Kebabbúsið Austurstræti 2 E6	Prikió Bankastræti 12 F6	Thorvaldsen Austurstræti 8 E6
Austurlanda-hraðlestin Hverfisgata 64A H7	Café Roma Rauðarárstígur 8 J9	Hornið Hafnarstræti 15 E6	Kofi Tómasar Frænda Laugavegur 2 F7	Ráðhúskaffi D7 Tjarnargata 11	Tíu Dropar Laugavegur 27 G7
Á Næstu Grösom Laugavegur 20B G7	Domo Þinghóltsstræti 5 F7	Hótel Holt Bergstaðarstræti 37 F7	Krua Thai Tryggvagata 14 D5	Santa Maria Laugavegur 22A, F7	Tívoli Laugavegur 3 F7
B5 Bankastræti 5 F6	Einar Ben Veltusundi E6	Humarhúsið Ammatmanstígur 1 E7	La Primavera Austurstræti 9 E6	Segafredo Lækjatorg E6	Vegamót Vegamótastígur 4 G7
Bakkus Tryggvagata 22 D3	Eldsmiðjan Bragagata 38A G9	Hressó Austurstræti 20 E6	Lystin Laugavegur 73 H7	Serrano Hringbraut 12 I3	Við Tjörmina Templarasund 3 E7
Basil & Lime Klapparstíg 38 G7	Fiskmarkaðurinn Aðalstræti 12 D6	Icelandic Fish & Chips Tryggvagata 8 E5	Mokka Skólavörðustígur 3A F7	Shalimar Austurstræti 4 E6	Vitabar Bergþórugata 21 H9
Babalú Skólavörðustígur 22A G8	Geysir Bar/Bistro Aðalstræti 2 D6	Indian Mango Frakkastígur 12 G6	Nonnabiti Hafnarstræti 9 E6	Sílfur Pósthússtræti 11 E6	
Balthazar Hafnarstræti 1-3	Garðurinn Klapparstígur 37 G7		O Sushi Lækjargata 2A E6	Sjávarkjallarinn Aðalstræti 2 D6	
	Glætan book café Laugavegur 19 F5			Sólón Bankastræti 7a F6	



Vegetarian Volvo

Á næstu Grösúm was the first vegetarian restaurant in town. It is now well into its second decade and has a loyal following and a bold branding strategy: on their street sign, Bill Clinton himself claims that this is the best restaurant in the entire world. And here I always thought he was more of a pylsa-guy.

The dining room is located on the 2nd floor just off the main street. It has a lunch café look with bright orange

Á næstu Grösúm

Laugarvegur 20b

What we think: It's like a Volvo—a dependable classic that gets you there safely

Flavour: Vegan and vegetarian

Ambiance: School lunch

Service: Fast, friendly and refreshingly aware of what the portions consisted of



walls and a canteen service desk.

At 5pm I was alone, but as the dinner hours unfolded the place filled up steadily.

The menu includes a lunch soup—different each day of the week—and a couple of daily specials. There is always at least one vegan option

GRAPEVINE FOOD REVIEW KEY

- 0 God-awful
- 1 Awful
- 2 Passable. Much room for improvement
- 3 Good, but not great
- 4 Really rather good
- 5 Extraordinary

The food is rated in three categories:
Fast food: Pizza, pylsa and kebab, food on the go (0-2000 ISK)
Mid-range: Everyday eateries, sit-in. (mains 2000-4000 ISK)
Fine dining: Fancy, expensive-type food. (3-course dinners 6000 and up)

To best judge the restaurant experience, the Grapevine conducts its reviews anonymously. The sole exception is the payment

and on our visit the majority of dishes qualified.

One can either pick a single dish or sample up to five from the canteen-counter. Both my vegetarian dinner companion and I went for the four-dish plate (1.890 ISK for a mountainous portion) including rice, dressing, particularly tasty lettuce and home-baked bread with cinnamon date-chutney.

On my friend's recommendation I went for lasagna with tomato dressing—a good call on her count. The accompanying green barley salad with red onion and herbs was also very good, but portions of the day—noodles and the chickpea carrot casserole—proved less exciting. Guacamole sauce had too much lemon and none of the sumptuous richness of avocado.

My friend was happy with the lasagna, agreed on the boredom of the noodles and liked her filled red pepper.

Most interesting was the dessert, a delicious slice of barley cake (650 ISK) that we "shared" (i.e. I ate, she watched). The crust of whole-wheat crackers was an inch too hard, but the filling of barley-apple-coconut milk mix topped with fruit jam was light and sweet with a curious texture.

"I've had better cakes, but I have had a lot worse too" said my friend. Once again, she was right on the money. **✶ - SARI PELTONEN**

method: When the bill arrives, the reviewer presents a written statement, previously signed by the restaurant management, allowing the reviewer and one companion a meal on the house for review purposes.

Using this approach, we aim to best preserve the reviewer's objectivity (and the restaurants' consistency), within the humble means of a free newspaper.

The Grapevine does not favour foie gras over fast food. Restaurants are reviewed for what they are; both burger and beluga can be extraordinary in their own right. In all evaluations, the food is key: Does it taste good? Is it properly prepared? Are the ingredients fresh and of high quality? Secondary considerations include setting, service and value for money.

All opinions expressed are the critic's own. **SP**

SHOP AND EAT: VEGETARIAN, VEGAN, ORGANIC

1 YGGDRASILL

Much like its eponymous mythological counterpart, organic shop Yggdrasill stocks most of what one needs in life. Everything is organic, including Bio-Bú butter, yogurt and skyr and fresh bread from Brauðhúsið. If you're on a budget, check their reduced shelves.

Skólavörðustígur 16

2 ECSTASY'S HEART GARDEN

A health food shop supplying harder-to-find items on vegetarian, vegan and raw-diet shopping lists. The small family run Garðurinn lunch restaurant next door has healthy lunches and impressive cakes on offer.

Klapparstígur 37

3 BÓNUS

The almighty Bónus is good for the basics at cut-price, including tofu for a bargain 229 ISK. Bónus also stocks the Himnesk organic range from local health guru Solla.

Multiple locations

4 MAÐUR LIFANDI

The organic market on Borgartún has a great selection including fresh fruit and veg. There is also a lunch restaurant with dish and soup of the day.

Borgartún 24

5 FRU LAUGA

A rare treat on the island—a farmers market stocking products of the season. Located in Laugardalur, open Wednesdays through Saturdays. Doors are open 12-6pm, but go early—the store gets busy and the goods go quickly. For information on new batches, check them on Facebook.

Laugalækur 6

6 JURTAAPÓTEK

A herbal pharmacy with a huge selection of all kinds of natural remedies. A great place to pick up Icelandic herbs such as angelica, yarrow and Icelandic moss—or the topical hit-product Mímir, which at 2.140 ISK could help to counter even the swiniest of flu.

Laugarvegur 2

7 GRÆNN KOSTUR

A vegetarian canteen-restaurant hidden away in the backyard of Skólavörðustígur. Raw cakes and hearty portions of lasagne on Mondays.

Skólavörðustígur 8b

8 GLÓ

Organic restaurant, a collaboration with the Rope Yoga studio at Laugardalur, offering daily dishes, soups and salads as well as a juice bar.

Engjateigur 19

For full restaurant and food listings and venue finder visit www.grapevine.is for detailed information.

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Stefson, literally dancing on the rooftops, drummed joyously along with various percussions.

After the concert ended I began to notice flocks of inebriated kids milling about dubiously in the streets. The first time I enjoyed Menningarnótt in earnest I was sixteen and was on Ingólfsstorg for the fireworks display. It was right around the time of night when the ground seemed to become covered in shattered glass and everyone around me was throwing up. It was a little bit exciting in a gross and pathetic kind of way, to be derelict and part of a faceless crowd. But after a while, I remember, the aggression and chaos started to actually scare me.

When I eventually ended up downtown long after the fireworks display had ended this time, I didn't see even a hint of what I had experienced back then, although I made sure to stay far away from Ingólfsstorg. It is comforting to think that my habits may have matured beyond all that, and I really did think this to myself as I was downtown, awake and inebriated at an unreasonable hour, barely recovered

from a day-long hangover, dishevelled and dancing at a bar amongst a faceless crowd. Creator of my own chaos.

CATHARINE FULTON:

It's bright outside. Lækjargata is flanked by imposing chain link barriers, marking the route of the marathon running simultaneously to Menningarnótt, and ensuring a drunkard-free space in which the runners can execute their task. Loud cheers emanate from a crowd too small in appearance to be making them as two glistening bodies hurl themselves over the finish line. Pedestrians have been relegated to a 30-cm wide strip of pavement between the metal fencing and the raised planters in front of Menntaskólinn í Reykjavík and those not interested in watching the final marathoners trickle in are instead traversing the school's lawn. Point A to Point B.

Save for the excess of paper plates and pylsa wrappers littering the interlocking pavement, Lækjartorg looks similar to any other day this summer, perhaps in the height of



the tourist season. On the most popular festival day where, pray tell, is everybody? A walk up Laugavegur is busier than the everyday but depressingly sparse in the wake of the festivals that came before. Jazz ensemble overlaps convincing Silversun Pickups covers overlaps happy pre-teen electronica overlaps hardcore pönk. Backing melodies for the dance of an ocean of discarded blue Síminn popsicle wrappers.

A sign advertising "FREE WAFFLES!" lures a crowd to the park adjacent to Hemmi og Valdi, but the sign has been erected prematurely and there are, in fact, no waffles to be had. Still, a man in his mid-thirties, noticeably lubricated, demands a full waffle, not just a quarter or half. He's willing to make a donation if his demands are met. Jars of strawberry, apricot, cherry, and raspberry jam and a plastic tub of marmalade wait to seep into hot craters, fresh off the press. Cherry looks promising.

Across the park, far removed from the prominent Domino's kiosk and nothing else, colourful attire shrouds the form of a mysterious man. Turbaned head, painted on eyebrow, painted on moustache, authentic Scottish accent. The mystic is reading palms for 500 ISK. I'm unlucky in love. I think more than is good for me. I will be working two jobs simultaneously at some point. I may die soon but mysteriously come back to life. I've loved three people, none of them as deeply as I should.

The jaunt back down Laugavegur smells. The sun has been out long enough to heat the detritus that is carelessly strewn about the streets, releasing the stench once contained therein. It reeks of trash. Pizza, pylsa, cigarettes, alcohol, rot. The hours wear on and the crowd grows in size and inebriation. The increased number of people in varying states of chemical enhancement, save for the children one hopes, increases the depth of the layer of garbage being churned together by stomping feet. Broken glass shines like diamonds, pops like explosives, cuts into treads, is everywhere.

A brief escape from chaos is found for many in the photography museum on Tryggvagata, where a more family-oriented crowd browses through black and white photographs of Reykjavík in the years of World War II and large foam-core mounted images of 1960's glamour. Children and light-hearted adults alike take their turn at dressing up in the attire of antiquity and posing for souvenir photographs in front of a painted backdrop depicting a valley and lake bordered by a lush forest. Red velvet and woven gold accents gives everyone instant class.

Ingólfsstorg is boiling over at 9 pm, a welcome change to the patchy crowd taking in Retro Stefson



and Sprengjuhöllin earlier in the afternoon. An awkward and odd couple motionless bodies and clapping, dancing, smiling performers do make. The masses slap their hands together repeatedly for Hjaltalín and scream with high-pitched joy. Adidas tracksuits generously adorned with metallic reliefs of the brand's corporate logo seem to be a popular fashion statement among the <20 crowd, as does holding hands, forming a chain and running through the other patrons without regard for the persons being violently shoved by their actions. Oh, to be young and inconsiderate. The pungent odour of cigar smoke hangs low in my general vicinity, mingling toxically with the sharp spice of Ali Baba and the too-much-cologne of the man in front of me.

Inside Edition aired an exposé in the early nineties in which a finger-wagging mom-jeans clad reporter examined the evils of pre-teen and public drunkenness thriving on the late night and early morning streets of downtown Reykjavík. On Saturday, once the fireworks had detonated, accompanied by screams and ohh's and ahh's, and the crowd vacated the harbour and migrated to a watering hole of their choosing, the overflow transported 101 to 1992. Too-young girls slouching in corners with too-

drunk friends at a loss for what to do. Too-liquidly-confident men clashing violently with too-liquidly-confident men on every corner. Too-emotional girlfriends holding back too-liquidly-confident men on every corner. Too many people everywhere. A field day for an American reporter in mom-jeans. A piece of nostalgia for Icelanders who recall nights when bars would close early and streets picked up the slack in the good old days of reckless youth. Those were the days and this is their rebirth. Beer, white wine, gin, Red Bull, gin, tonic, gin, gin, gin. Garbage still litters the ground but the smell fails to permeate drink-numbered nostrils. People are still too rowdy and too much in one another's personal space but, goddamnit, everybody's a friend in the liquid haze of morning.

The party could be heard long after the density of the streets lessened. The din of the crowd surges on as revellers wait their turn and don't wait their turn at the taxi stand. In the hours that would on any other day be punctuated by an alarm clock the city is finally drifting off to sleep. Another successful Menningarnótt. 🍷

Music | Interview

Advanced Retrön & Dragons

Bringing the vision of Roberta & Ken Williams into the 21st century



RETRÖN is a strange animal. Loved by hipsters and metalheads alike, there's much to be said about this unique band. With their debut, *Swordplay & Guitar-slay*, on the streets via Kimi records, we got Retrön guitar god Kolli to tell us about the band, its ideology and what the hell they're on about.

"This is actually sort of our third attempt at making this record," says Kolli. "The first two were unsuccessful, because we didn't really know at the time that the band was supposed to be a rock band. We were stuck in the beginning as an IBM PC Speaker 8-bit sort of thing. We didn't have a drummer then and didn't know how to make things sound good without them being rock. So now, almost three attempts later, we have a drummer and a bunch of synthesizers complimenting what we thought the band needed for extra awesomeness plus it rocks cancer into your balls, GWAR-style – with extra volume. I want my rock as well as my shampoo with extra volume!

You been working on this record for what seems to be aeons now. How has it affected the band and your feelings towards the material?

I think it has been good for the band. If the record had come out earlier, it would have been way too immature and aged badly. Now we sort of know better what Retrön is and what the band can be. Also the record would be by this time older and therefore less virgin!

MUSIC FOR PC SPEAKERS

So, this idea of a band playing a computer-influenced music or just to cover songs from computer games it isn't a new one. There are plenty of bands doing that. However, you guys seem to have forsaken the idea in lieu of doing more original

material. What is the reason for this development and what do you offer that other computer-bands do not?

Well I don't want to say that our band is any better or worse than other videogame based outfits out there, but we don't consider ourselves a totally videogame based band and maybe we never have. The thing that is different with Retrön and maybe some of the other bands is that we actually started out as a computer game. Kári and I actually made a mini game with a bunch of levels that was called Retrön. There was a bunch of music in the game that was all made in a text file on a program that Kári wrote. That music was all made with the PC speaker (the thing that goes bleep when you turn on your old computer). Then people started to hear the music and started asking us if we could play the music live. So we started thinking, 'How can we play this music without it being a boring laptop band?' That's where we decided to pick up the guitars and learn the music for the game. So it's all kinda backwards.

The first bunch of songs that we performed live were all written for the PC speaker. After that we started to implement the computer more as a part of a band, and that's how we played for a long time. Made the PC speaker mostly do drums and some leads. So, we were not only trying to be a rock band playing video game cover songs, it was sort of just means to be able to play the Retrön game music live.

There are still remnants from the game in one of our visual programs that we use in concert sometimes. And we have only ever covered one video game song, Koji Kondo's theme from *Zelda*. This record will go a long way to terminate the misunderstanding that Retrön is a videogame cover band. But we have



gradually been going away from using pre-programmed stuff, so now we have a drummer and try to capture the atmosphere of the old game inspired songs with synths.

REAL MEN LOVE THEM SOME METAL

The music has become considerably more metal sounding. Why is that? I know all you guys are real men, and thus love your metal, but please give me a more educated insight into this development.

The real reason is that getting a drummer made everything sound heavier. We have not knowingly changed our approach to writing the guitar riffs. It used to be me and Kári chugging away on unplugged electric guitars, but now we can try out instantly what sounds right.

Has your background as a performance artist at all bled into Retrön?

I think you can't escape what you are, but Retrön is supposed to be a rock band, not a fucking performance piece, goddamnit! Art performances can be great, but in most people's mind they are just a perverted weak evilness made to burden people. I would rather say that a bunch of Retrön has leaked into my performances than the other way round.

Anything else?

Buy our album and ride a wave of success. You don't want to be the person left standing behind with no copy and "Necroloser" written all over you. Also. Take it slow. ♪

✍ BIRKIR FJALAR VÍÐARSSON
📷 RETRÖN

The History of Icelandic Rock music: Part 9

Hard Rockin' In The Early Seventies



The Icecross album from 1973 has in recent times fetched high prices on the international psych record market. This is due to the fact that various noteworthy collectors have raved about the "legendary and mysterious" album. For instance, the Dead Kennedys' Jello Biafra is quoted in the tome *Incredible Strange Music Vol. II* (1994) saying: "Iceland has produced one of the darkest, grimmish and most brutal psych records I've ever heard: Icecross. At times they even remind me of the early Meat Puppets, especially the song 1999."

The truth, naturally, isn't all that mysterious. The band rose from the debris of Tilvera ('Existence') in 1971. Tilvera had been bound for glory, as it contained some heavyweight Icelandic stars, but the band's output only amounted to two passable singles. Icecross played dance balls and was successful even though they only performed original songs written by guitarist Axel Einarsson and bassist Ómar Óskarsson. They both sang, while the power trio line up was completed by drummer Ásgeir Óskarsson. The band got known for being gloomy, even though the members never dabbled with the occult. They were also without doubt the noisiest band in Iceland. The band had eight Marshall boxes with four ten-inch speakers in each, and Ásgeir had built his own drum kit out of aluminium.

In 1972 the band moved to Copenhagen where they were very favourably received when they played at the main club of the time, Revolution. Says Axel: "When The Who played in town, the members came to watch us play. There must have been some reason why Pete Townsend stayed and watch us for 55 minutes. He sat facing the stage with his beer and didn't move until after we had finished our set."

1. Icecross
2. Icecross LP
3. Svanfríður LP

Icecross recorded their eponymous and only album in Copenhagen with Danish pop star Tommy Seebach on the mixing board. Only 1000 copies were made of the album that reached Iceland early in 1973. By that time the band had split up because of tensions that built during their stint in Copenhagen. The album has never been officially re-released, but many bootlegs, both on CD and vinyl, have been made. An Icecross comeback—and even a second album—have been discussed, but nothing has materialised as of yet.

Ævintýri, the former bubblegum band lead by pop star Björgvin Halldórsson, got hard and heavy on a 7" single in 1970 (two songs, *Evil/Depression*, in Icelandic). The band made more original songs and wanted to do a LP, but split before carrying out their plans. Two Ævintýri members, guitarist Birgir and drummer Sigurður, went on to form the similarly hard and heavy Svanfríður, named after a barmaid at Club Glaumbær. Other Svanfríður members were bassist Gunnar from Tilvera and vocalist Pétur Kristjánsson, who had sang with Pops and Nátúra. Svanfríður called their music "rock" which hasn't been a fancy name to drop for many years, as it reminded too much of the corny fifties rockers.

Svanfríður was a popular ball band during 1972. The band played the hits of the day with jam sections in-between to keep things interesting for the members. In the summer Svanfríður went to London and recorded nine songs, which ended up as the album *What's Hidden There*. The music is progressive and hippy-ish in parts, especially the lyrics, the transaction from hippy innocence to rock toughness not wholly complete. That transaction would come through in 1973 when Svanfríður split and Pétur and Gunnar went on to form Pelican, Iceland's most popular seventies rock band. Svanfríður's album is though considered a rarity amongst psych collectors and has been bootlegged severely, as no official reissue exists. ♪ - DR. GUNNI

By Dr. Gunni, based on his 2000 book *Eru ekki allir í stuði?* (Rock in Iceland). A revisited update of the book is forthcoming in 2010.

Music | Review



Sunn o)))

Monolith & Dimensions (2009)

flighttothebehemoth

If you want truly thought provoking, challenging music that sounds like the end of the world, it's a plus. If your favourite band is Hjaltalín, then...

Trúbatrix – Taka 1 is a compilation of all female musicians (both known and unknown) that are brought together with the idea of creating a unified network in which they can work to raise their profiles and create a supportive working environment. The album is pretty relaxed and cosy. It wouldn't be what I would listen to in order to motivate myself in the morning, but I enjoyed it nonetheless, even if on a slightly frivolous level. The album covers a variety of sounds, ranging from singer/songwriter/folk to blues, with some light poppy tracks in there too. This gives the album an air of variety, while the styles are similar enough that it still sounds pretty cohesive. On the whole it's a good album and worth listening to, but maybe a bit lacking in substance at points. It is however nice to be able to lend support to this new artistic community. **-BOB CLUNESS**



Trúbatrix

Taka 1 (2009)

trubatrix

One for the morning after, rather than the night before.

Trúbatrix – Taka 1 is a compilation of all female musicians (both known and unknown) that are brought together with the idea of creating a unified network in which they can work to raise their profiles and create a supportive working environment. The album is pretty relaxed and cosy. It wouldn't be what I would listen to in order to motivate myself in the morning, but I enjoyed it nonetheless, even if on a slightly frivolous level. The album covers a variety of sounds, ranging from singer/songwriter/folk to blues, with some light poppy tracks in there too. This gives the album an air of variety, while the styles are similar enough that it still sounds pretty cohesive. On the whole it's a good album and worth listening to, but maybe a bit lacking in substance at points. It is however nice to be able to lend support to this new artistic community. **-BERGRÚN ANNA HALLSTEINSDÓTTIR**



Lights on the Highway

Amanita Muscaria (2009)

lightsonthehighway

Get for the hits and when they decide to rock. For the rest, just stick to the Neil Young.

Even though their 2nd album has just been released, LOTH's hit single "Paperboat" has been part of the radio rock landscape for what seem like forever now. And it's fair to say that the album is pretty frontloaded with stuff you've probably already heard. The opening track, Katrina, is the highlight of the album, with



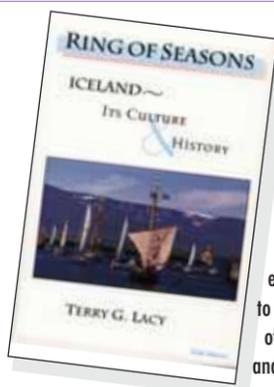
menacing overdriven guitars and rolling drumbeat, evoking pictures a storm on a Nevada highway. After this they quickly settle into their US influenced brand of desert blues-rock. And indeed where the album works is when they stick to this template (Heart of Moon, Paperboat), the sound has substance is worth listening to. But after the hits, the rest of the album seems to meander into drawling, sub-Eagles west coast acoustic territory, and I found myself caring less as the album went on. **-BOB CLUNESS**



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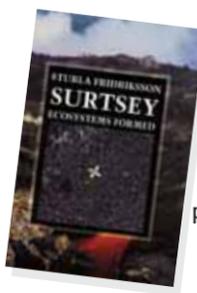
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RING OF SEASONS. ICELAND - ITS CULTURE AND HISTORY

Terry G. Lacy brings both the perspective of an outsider and the familiar eye of a long-term resident to this delightful exploration of all facets of Iceland, past and present. She conveys her story with a skillful interlacing of history, religion, politics, and culture to paint a vivid picture of the way Icelanders live today.

"This fascinating book is a must for anyone who is interested in Iceland." - Dick Ringler



SURTSEY - AN ECOSYSTEM FORMED

Dr. Sturla Fridrikson describes the birth of the island in 1963 and how in itself it became an interesting geological phenomenon and a biological laboratory, where scientists could investigate how organisms disperse across the ocean to remote islands and how plants and animals colonize completely barren areas such as Surtsey. Available in English, French and German. Surtsey was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2008.



THE MANUSCRIPTS OF ICELAND

In this collection of articles scholars present the story of Icelandic manuscripts, their medieval origins, the literature they contain and its influence up to the present day. This book is a tribute to the central role that medieval Icelandic literature played in forging national identities in N-Europe.

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Friðrik Tryggvason, curator.

Jón Páll Vilhelmsson
fine art photography

Myndmál
Photo Galleri Laugavegi 86

Music | Live review

Skátar's Self Inflicted Death Blow

So long, goodbye, auf wiedersehen, adieu



Talk about leaving a gap in the Icelandic independent music landscape. Skátar have decided to throw in the towel and I'm not too stoked about that. I could always count on these guys to surprise me when it came to their fried as shit musical ideas. Never a dull moment and in a city of considerable musical pretentiousness, every Skátar release was a breath of fresh air and every recorded song performed on stage had the potential to become something different and twisted, depending on where their heads were at any given moment. This unpredictability and recklessness often lead to some not-so-hot performances, but what would it be this fateful night?

The show started with Skátar's frontman Markús playing a humorous yet plenty musical solo performance—him, alone with his guitar and the between song banter got everybody giggling. Good for him. I'd been looking forward to Me The Slumbering Napoleon as they had left a good impression on me earlier this summer.

SURPRISED FROM THE SLUMBER

So many bands come to mind when these guys play their dirgy, thought-out and surprising take on experimental indie rock (or whatever you wanna call it). It's like the 90s of daring and hectic music never happened, and the scene here is better for it. I'm Being Good, Melvins, Shellac, Metroshifter, Skátar and Graveslime are all points of reference. These guys are oddly surprising to the point that they seem to surprise themselves sometimes while playing. But it never becomes too fragile. Wild stop-and-gos, a nasty Purple Haze cover and a bunch of attention grabbing moments that outnumbered the few not-so thought provoking ones. My rad-o-meter slanted well into the red section, so go see those guys and pick up their stash for further inspection when it comes out.

You can say all the jaded shit you want about Sudden Weather Change, but one should be thankful for a young indie band that echoes Unwound instead of The Killers and Sonic Youth as opposed to the fucking Strokes. Joy! I've seen them pull better sets out of their collective cute asses but they still made me want to listen due to the sweet connection and flow that seems to be connecting these boys. The bass sound was big and gnarly and their set ran smoothly. Too bad the sound guy didn't realise there were three guys singing.

YOUR IRONIC SHOES ARE NO GOOD FOR STAGEDIVING

Reykjavík! were up next and it didn't take them long to get everybody over into their realm of jangly, noisy and

explosive rock debauchery. They have it all figured out now, to the point one is anticipating a false move or a crappy set but it just doesn't happen. These merry men of grease are oiled up to such an extent it's like a train of fun and outbursts that cannot be stopped. I'm not gonna bother with naming highlights, but while they were playing all the goodbyes of Skátar were packing the house and things got intimate as shit. Good times. Too bad indie rock kids in their ironic shoes don't know how to stagedive.

By this point the house had a large number of malnourished indie heads and normies that just got off from work. A great mix, might I add. We were even graced with the presence of the annoying longshoreman that yelled "SLAYER!!" between every song. Good lord. Also there was a considerable high number of drunk, under aged kids in attendance, which only added to the party-like atmosphere. What about the boy that was crowd surfing with a bottle of Jägermeister in his hands? Guess the security didn't give a damn. Stellar.

SWAN SONG

There was a lot of love for Skátar in the room and people anticipated their swan song with shining eyes, which is pretty amazing considering it was getting much too fucking late. Skátar began their set with an anti-bang. The drummer broke, and they had to start the song over. Oh well. It was certainly forgivable. The die-hard Skátar fans were eating it up, and a joyous chaos ensued and it was fun to witness. Crowd surfing, stage invasions, crappy stagedives and Markús' unpredictable stage antics plus plenty of funny banter between songs.

The fact remains that Skátar failed to do their own material, and their last night on stage, any justice. It's rather sad, really. A lot of mistakes were made, the band sounded torn and untight for an alarming portion of the set, and there were way too many awkwardly long pauses between songs that stretched the set to the point where it was almost unbearable to stick around for the not-so glorious end. But hits were played, tons of people had fun, Skátar looked humbled but they were having a fucking blast. I truly am saddened that there won't be any new Skátar material. Let us all marvel and digest their recorded legacy, 'cause there's so much unique brilliance in their body of work that we will have plenty to sink our teeth into for years to come. A band of nerds for the nerds. You will be missed. ♪

✍ BIRKIR FJALAR VIDARSSON
📷 JULIA STAPLES

Music | Live review

To Ride, Shoot Straight...

...and have every one out of three shows kick-ass, while the others leave a lot to be desired



Entombed

Sororicide

Dr. Spock

Brain Police

lðnó 21.08.2009

Sóðóma 22.08.2009

Entombed are holed up in their dressing room, busy rehearsing a stand-in bassist, as mainstay Nico Elgstrand had a baby just the previous Monday. Not needing the practice, singer Petrov, by his own admission drunk since the AM, is sat on a bench outside lðnó amusing himself with drink and a cell phone recording of himself playing the piano (rather virtuously I might add).

Inside, stoner rockers Brain Police are serving a slab of stoner rock in the key of stoner rock. That being the case, it all sounds like an endless stoner rock medley, stoner rock being too damn lazy ever to have evolved to the level of song-writing. The thought strikes that they're perhaps too perpetually stoned to realise they're over. The audience though—by dint of not showing up—must have. Next, please.

Dr. Spock, proud purveyors of novelty and nonsense, are first and foremost a raging live act, and as such truly a sight to behold. Two singers strong and armed with gimmicks galore, the band rip the near deserted venue several new ones. Moustachioed string bean vocalist Óttar Proppé looks like he's leading a Bavarian hoe-down while his squealing counterpart, recovering fat fuck Finni, looks like the live performance cardiovascular workout burns more obesity per hour of vocal outburst than any fiery furnace in hell.

Their drummer, armed with more chops than the entire Icelandic lamb farming industry, regularly paces the stage as if never having been taught his proper place. The band often lapse into what might be called a more mainstream version of early D.E.P mixed with any random Patton project, and only stray from their path of aural transgression when launching into bluesy Beach Boys laden fare and the odd, bizarre, passage of left field reggae renderings.

Sororicide, legacy and legend wrapped in a neat brutal bundle, are performing tonight with something resembling the original line-up for the first time since... since pretty much the first couple weeks of the Icelandic death metal scene. Their shit being ancient, I fear the material could be merely a heap of over-hyped lore. Seldom have

I been so wrong. Uncommonly tight and old school as a all hell, they pull out a show so fluid and utterly groovy that the sheer technicality and hairpin turns of modern death metal seem by comparison oh so boring. Leaving Entombed with a fuckload of work cut out for them, Sororicide turn back time to the blastbeat's heyday, all the while bewildering the audience by featuring a guitarist dressed and coiffured such that egregious Britpop ought to issue offensively from his strings.

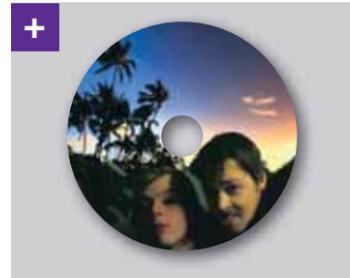
Entombed, plagued by awful sound and minimal atmosphere, disappointed horribly. As this Friday show's slow fizzling burn gave rise to harsh criticism, and the sold out Saturday performance exploded like a series of clusterbomb blasts, we'll pretend Friday night never happened and launch right into a review of their incendiary Saturday night onslaught.

Stand-in bassist Victor Brandt of Satyricon and Totalt Jävla Helvetes Förbannat Svart Skit Mörker För Fan, now three gigs deep and hitting his stride, contributes his fair share of damage to the all consuming obliteration perpetrated by the band, and the stellar sound production lent added force to the gravity of frightening doses of death n' roll riffage cast in lead. The sold out venue teems with aural orgasm and a pit erupts like equal parts violence, chaos and mayhem reaching a boiling point. Life and limbs flail every which way and from the depths of a rapturous melee of ecstatic flesh and bone, spread with a layer of hell-bent crowd surfing, bodies are randomly and unexpectedly catapulted at chairs, tables and fellow citizens. Keeping drinks safely confined to glasses becomes akin to a herculean feat, as liquid spurts everywhere like high velocity splatter born from collision atop jarring collision.

Entombed, sitting on a huge discography, run the gamut of releases, pulling off a masterful balance act of a set that combines old with new with raw with crushing. Opener "Chief Rebel Angel" kindles more audience passion than most numbers, but tracks off of DCXLXVI: To Ride... fall like a rain of bricks and satisfy at least your humble narrator. Interspersed with early Left Hand Path era material the barrage culminates with "When in Sodom," a track all the more potent tonight when being wielded at a club bearing the name Sóðóma. ♪

✍ BOGI BJARNASON
📷 HÖSKULDUR HÖSKULDSSON

Music | Review



Skelkur í Bringu

Húðlitað Klám (2009)

skelkur

Discordant and diverse, in a cool way

Irony is definitely my cup of tea. If it's discordant, I'll usually like it. If it's homogeneous, I generally won't. Therefore Húðlitað Klám, being a discordant and diverse album, worked out pretty well for me. It is an impressively varied album, so much that I'm not even going to try and slap a label on it. LastFM describes them as a 'five piece rock/comedy outfit', but even if you don't understand the lyrics or the jokes, it's easy to appreciate the light-hearted approach they bring to a heavy sound. It gets intense at times, but the whole album is really worth a listen whether or not intensity is your thing. And if you don't like one song on it, it doesn't mean you won't like some of the others. So, if you are open of mind and pure of heart, listen and enjoy. -BERGRÚN ANNA HALLSTEINSDÓTTIR



Joe Pug

Nation Of Heat EP (2009)

thejoepug

Country-blues from the Dylan/Springsteen stable. Nothing new under the sun, but the sun shines still.

"I've come to say exactly what I mean," sings Pug on the statement-of-intent opener, Hymn #101, "And I mean so many things." That tale of stubbornness, love and adventure showcases the 23-year-old's inherent knack of framing a raw and emotive acoustic-country with often self-searching lyrics. It's poetic, too: Call It What You Will's resonant imagery and matter-of-fact descriptions of life-changing experiences are simple, brilliantly observed and shruggingly fatalistic as you like. The influence of Springsteen's expansiveness reigns supreme in Nobody's Man and the excellent I Do My Father's Drugs, whilst the blues harp-driven Hymn 35 sounds a lot like Fields Of Gold as sung by Bob Dylan. The fact that the harmonica is probably deliberately flat (as it is on the EP-ending title track) adds atmosphere. Emotive and naked, independent and occasionally hard-eyed, Pug's uncomplicated arrangements give him authenticity and power. -JOE SHOUMAN



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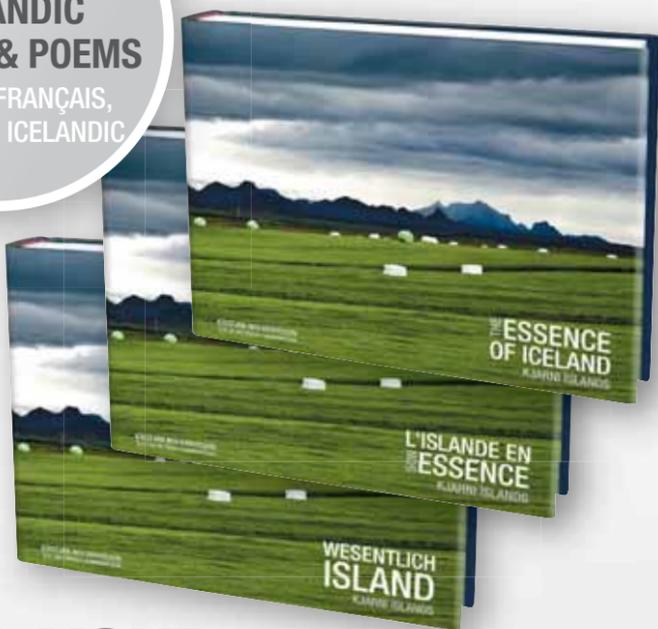


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Comix | Reviews



Must Love Zombies

The Walking Dead

Robert Kirkman & Tony Moore

There is something very addictive in this ongoing, apparently non-stop series. What can it be? Its 10th paperback volume is out now, and still there is no apparent plot, the characters are kind of regular and the dialogue is kind of regular too. It's too regular. Reminds you of real life. Except for the fact that it takes place in the aftermath of a zombie apocalypse.

In the last ten years or so, zombies have risen in popularity like nobody's business. In movies, they've been the ultimate monsters. Perhaps because they represent the end of the world in a way, another popular subject these days. Although recently, it looks as if the always fashionable vampires (also known as "zombies for girls") might be taking over. Still, once bitten, forever smitten. Zombie lovers will love The Walking Dead.

After a couple of volumes, you'll realize Kirkman's goal. Here is a zombie lover who hates the fact that all zombie

movies tend to end at some point. So he writes a comic that never ends. That's the hook. It just goes on and on and you are forced to watch the protagonists endure all the horrors a regular zombocast survivor goes through. You'll watch them age. You'll watch them bleed. And you'll love it. If you love zombies, that is. If you're a vampire lover, go watch the mediocre shampoo commercial that is Twilight.

TWD is illustrated in glorious black & white by Tony Moore, who knows how to draw zombies. The zombies here are the walking kind (a la Romero) not the running kind (a la Boyle). Which zombies do you like better? Zombies, zombies, zombies.

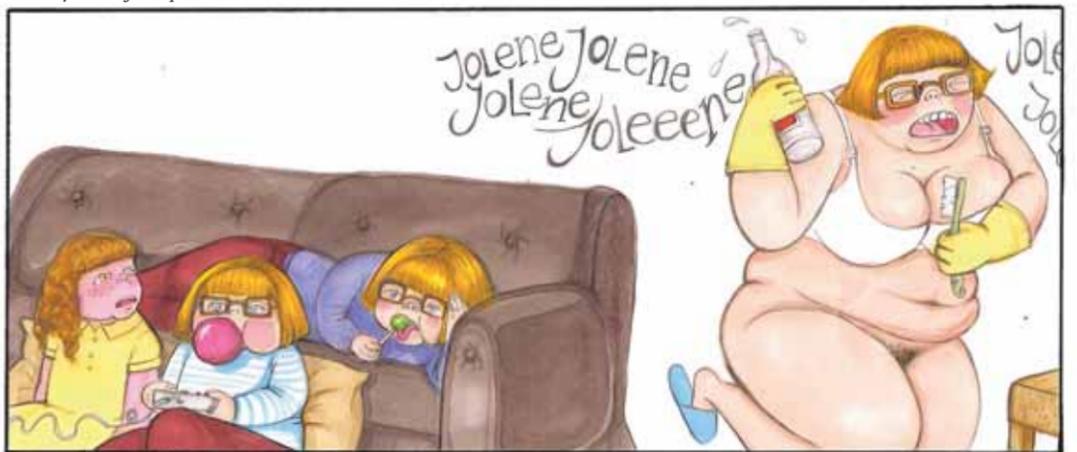
Hey, they recently announced that there will be a TWD TV series. Hopefully, it will be in black & white as well. Well, Frank Darabont is producing, and he loves black & white (his special edition of The Mist was in black & white). After all, a zombie infested world is pretty black & white. Black & white, black & white, black & white. ♡

HUGLEIKUR DAGSSON

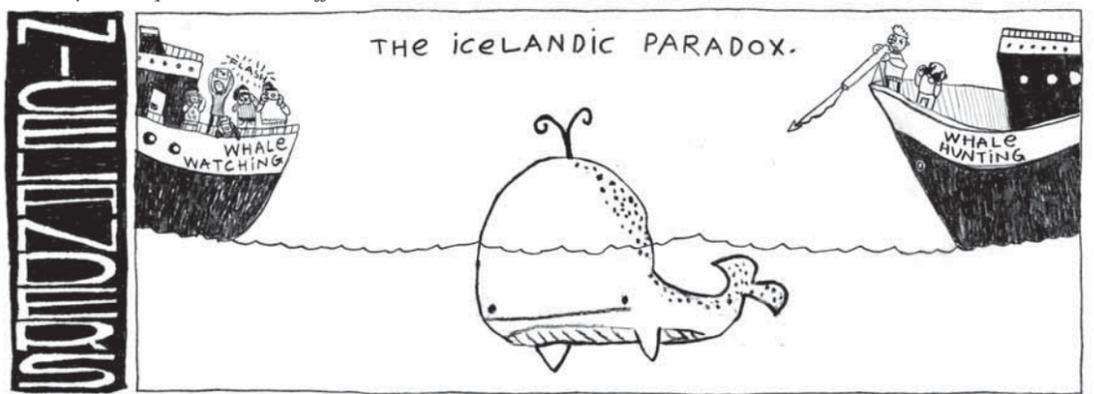
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The Metaphysical Art of Sailing the North Atlantic

Sailing from the West Fjords to the Faeroe Islands; there and back in one piece - almost; and then, somehow making friends with Father Sea



THE SEA, THE SEA, THE UNENDING SEA

There is something elemental that happens when you face an unbridled ocean. It's something so primal; it affects the very core of our DNA. Herman Melville wrote: '[The sea] is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all.' How bloody apt he was.

Stare that roaring North Atlantic straight in the eye from the edge of a sailing boat, no land in sight, watch it breathe, swelling in and out like the gigantic living creature it is, and you truly realise who you are; and it ain't that much, believe me.

STRAIGHT INTO THE UNBRIDLED

Ísafjörður's Borea Adventures and their ship Aurora are a must for anyone who wants to experience adventure on the North Atlantic, in the Westfjords, Greenland, the Faeroes, or even all the way to the Arctic (they scaled the 2770m active

Beerenberg volcano on Jan Mayen just last year). Think an Icelandic version of Jacques Cousteau, only without the woolly red caps and the beards, and you're getting warm, only sometimes they sail straight through blizzards and alongside icebergs.

Sigurður Jónsson (Siggi) and Rúnar Karlsson procured Aurora from Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, the first man to single-handedly circumnavigate the globe non-stop. Sir Robin conceived the Clipper Around the World Race, in which Aurora raced four times. The lady Aurora is quite a lass; and, as I find out the hard way, she knows these waves and winds by their first names. Aurora is presently the only deep ocean sailing boat of its class in Iceland, now in her fourth summer of adventures on the high seas.

"We see Aurora as our mothership, our portable mountain cabin. During the day, our tours set out across wild country, but in the evening, our guests come home to a piping hot stew," says Siggi, Aurora's seasoned skipper. "Our philosophy is threefold: firstly, to be one

with nature—the elements, the wildlife; secondly, to learn about local cultures—the food, the life around the fire; thirdly to experience nature through outdoor activities—sailing, skiing, kayaking, climbing, hiking. We try to make it a complete experience. And, being that it is an adventure, there's always something unexpected. But of course, that's part of the fun. Aurora never stays in one place too long. The adventure, you see, always continues."

Speaking from personal experience by now, I ask, "Do you often see people go through some kind of personal transformation by the end of the trip?"

"Sometimes when they board, you see this strange glimmer of surprise on people's eyes, like: Are we really going to sleep there? Is the toilet really going to be working? Or perhaps there's a snowstorm outside, and for a moment they're wondering what the hell they got themselves into. Normally after three days or so, people start to find the rhythm. On their third or fourth day, they're enjoying it more than they thought they ever



would."

"But oftentimes," says Rúnar, "when they leave, they're sad it's coming to an end. I don't know if you'd call it metaphysical, but we often get people telling us that the trip has somehow given them some new insight on things."

G-FORCES, THE BENDS, THEN, FINALLY, BLISS

Looking back on the three and a half days spent sailing from Húsavík to Fuglafjörður in the Faeroes, I can't help but smile. I could never have guessed what it would be like shooting across the icy Atlantic. Most of the time, there was nearly no sleep at all. In a bunk with a safety net, if tied properly, you won't fall on the floor like I did; but try and find a sleeping position with Aurora pitching, tossing, rumbling, creaking.

Sometimes, when she's sailing at twelve knots or more, it sounds like someone is desperately shaking a maraca directly over my head all through the



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night—only they have no bloody sense of rhythm. There are times when I want to stick up my hands and give up and beg Siggí to pull in at the nearest oil rig; of course, between Iceland and the Faeroes, there's nothing at all, just rolling ocean, killer whales, skuas and kittiwakes swirling on updrafts. And when it rains and the waves rattle over my back as I stare out at sea transfixed, all I can think of is my warm bed at home, far away.

The first leg of the trip starts gently, not much wind, so we chug leisurely from Ísafjörður crossing the bays of Fljótavík and Hornvík, get daringly close to a number of bird cliffs, including Straumnes, and Hælavíkurbjarg where I snap some killer shots of kittiwakes, arctic terns, tons of guano, and a the occasional bobbing puffin. Of course many of us know of the puffin problems in the Westman Islands, but later, when I visit the tiny island of Nólsoy in the Faeroes, I learn from a Danish taxidermist that puffins all over the North Atlantic are facing serious issues—apparently there

are not enough sand eels to go around.

My first real test of courage is the overnight sail to Húsavík; this cost me three or four bruises and a fluttering heart. I kiss the dock when we arrive, but after a few glasses of wine I am ready to tackle the big crossing. Watching humpbacks and minke gleefully blowing their saltwater jets across Skjálfandi bay helps steady my nerves too.

Now we are finally crossing the great expanse of ocean. In my mind, I liken it to traversing the Sahara. Three and a half days of 30 knot winds, sometime five metre squalls—well, at the time, I believe it's nearly the end of me; in actual fact, it's just the beginning. When we finally reach the tiny fishing village of Fuglafjørður on Eysturoy's east coast in the Faeroes, I crack open my best bottle of whiskey and celebrate—the whole bottle. If ever there was an initiation on becoming a man, this is it, only for me it's twenty years too late. Still, better late than never. Finally, I can get on with what I've come for, to explore the Faeroes.

A FAEROE SHIMMY AND SHIBOODLE

For the next five days, all is smooth sailing, and on the second day, when we leave Fuglafjørður to Klaksvík in the Northern Islands, the sun comes out and all the grassy-mossy cliffs in the Faeroes shimmer. Even the sheep look virtually spiritual. The Faeroe people are beyond hospitable and talkative; and just like Icelanders, they're a well-travelled and curious bunch. Most speak excellent English. Often in these small villages when I look for a pub I'll ask a local, and they'll say, "What do you need that for? Just knock on the nearest door, they'll give you a coffee, a cognac and some chocolate biscuits."

This proves to be entirely true, for in Tórshavn, while meandering the winding lanes in-between quaint, grass-roofed houses, I stumble across a local poet who invites me back home for a couple of beers, a poetry reading, and a

gift of two of his collections. Towards the end, he tells me he's looking for a manager, so maybe he has an ulterior motive. In Tórshavn there is no shortage of great restaurants, bars, pubs and coffee shops. There's plenty to see here, and you can easily spend days checking out museums and wandering the cobbled alleyways, or squelch over the moorlands of Stremoy to the famous Kirkjubøur where a medieval cathedral looms in the middle of the village. Everywhere we see teams training for the Tórshavn Festival races in their typical six-man rowing boats called seksmannafar.

From Tórshavn, we move on to Gota to experience the G!Festival, where many Faeroe bands such as Teitur, Orka and Lena Andersen are headlining (Eivør Pálsdóttir is conspicuously missing this year). The festival is a like a mini Glastonbury, with tents and seagulls whirring overhead for scraps, red sunsets, and mind-blowing music. We'll be doing a full report on the festival and a Faeroese take on Icelandic music in an upcoming edition of Grapevine.

The day after the festival, I'm invited back to Sigvør Laska, Eivør Pálsdóttir's manager's place, for brunch. Sigvør produces the dreaded Faeroe speciality, wind-dried mutton (skerpikjøt), which looks much like Spanish Serrano ham but tastes more like old shoe soles (not surprising the literal translation is 'belt's meat'); it kind of rounds off my experience here. As I walk down the hill from Sigvør's house, through the waterlogged grass and past dozens of hearty Faeroe sheep, I remember I'm sailing back to Iceland tomorrow and about to see my new friend the North Atlantic again.

Not quite to wax lyrical, but there's absolutely nothing like it. It's cold, it's un-



comfortable; at times you might imagine a killer whale could reach over the side of Aurora and tug you in at any minute. But join Siggí and Rúnar in any of their adventures on the high seas and I guarantee you, you'll come back an entirely new person.

In the words of Herman Melville in Moby Dick: 'Methinks that what they call my shadow here on earth is my true substance. Methinks that in looking at things spiritual, we are too much like oysters observing the sun through the water, and thinking that thick water the thinnest of air.' ☺

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Deep Down Dirty: Mýrabolti Matures



The spectacle of it—just outside the picturesque town of Ísafjörður in the West Fjords, there are hundreds of locals dressed up in Halloween style outfits covered in mud, shivering, drinking from large cans of beer in the rain. To pull up to this, passing a dozen teenagers limping and splattered with mud walking down the highway away from the event, I think at first there has been an accident, that something has gone horribly wrong.

This is Mýrabolti, or Swamp Soccer, the phenomenon that has taken over the West Fjords during the holiday that the rest of Iceland dedicates to music, sing-alongs, and dating rituals that won't be explained here.

I have returned this year to see how far Mýrabolti has come. Three years ago, the event was the domain of a few maniacal souls, among them a leather pants-wearing, trash-talking guitar player and singer for the band Nine-Elevens. Three years ago, this gentleman, who looked and smelled as though he'd just left a ritual sacrifice, escorted me to a hilarious six-hour tournament of running in deep deep mud and drinking heavily.

Three years later, my old host lives with a modern dancer in Holland. I think he smokes a tobacco pipe and wears a hat without irony. I'm told he even bathes in water instead of the blood of rams.

And three years later, I am told Mýrabolti has changed. As I arranged to fly in for the event from Seattle, I am told this is now a three-day tournament. A worldwide phenomenon. When I say I'd love to

get into a few games, I'm told this is nothing to take casually.

When I arrive, I am ushered to an hour-long organised presentation of the rules of Mýrabolti, complete with Microsoft PowerPoint slides.

Standing among neatly-dressed, athletic Icelanders in a large ballroom at the Edinborg House before PowerPoint slides, I die a little on the inside.

I have travelled 3500 miles to support mayhem and madness. I've landed in what looks like a Microsoft morale event.

Then magic happens. Okay, liquor happens. From 9 PM to 4 AM, my Icelandic compatriots shed their facade.

I have the following conversation with my old goalie just before I leave to go to bed to get three hours sleep:

"You are here again. You are here for a fucking dirty party."

"Yeah, I guess I am. Are you playing?"

"Hell yes. You are too. You are playing. You're playing."

"They said I should sit this out."

"No. You're playing. You are going to get dirty. It is a dirty weekend. Everybody is going to be dirty and horny. So fucking dirty!"

And so it goes.

All the buttoned-down planning is a show with limited correlation to the actual tournament. In fact, most of the people I meet at the pre-tournament party don't get to Mýrabolti itself. Even my editor reacts with "You're seriously going out there?" when I leave a house party a few hours after sunrise.

Closing my eyes for sleep, hearing the screaming through the

"You are here again. You are here for a fucking dirty party."

streets of Ísafjörður, I am positive of one thing: Mýrabolti will always be exactly as it was on day one. Gloriously dirty and stupid. Ecstatic and subverbal. Bukowski said sex is like trying to climb a muddy hill. The Mýrabolti tournament in Ísafjörður is custom made by people who deeply sympathise with that analogy.

I drive in early with a car full of Reykjavík natives who shake their heads at the sight. It is 8 degrees and raining and muddy.

There is, as I said, the spectacle. There are costumes, cheers, and mud. But walking from team to team, nobody has anything to say about Mýrabolti as a sport other than "it is very very cold." One man says he'll feel better when he gets another beer and warms up, but as he is getting his beer, I am slammed into and covered with mud by a large, angry woman in a pink cape who is looking for Hilmar.

As I leave the Mýrabolti tournament, a team of mini-skirted women is shouting "Are we men, or are we WOMEN!" and beginning their penalty phase—they have committed a foul and are now wearing black bags over their heads, charging at women in black tights, in the mud, before a cheering crowd of grandparents in rain gear.

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If you're ever in Blönduós, don't just go to the gas station. There's a rather pretty town to explore. And the gas station is random and boring. So check out the innards. And get confused.



Blönduós, Mother Of All Confusion



I do not know what it is about Blönduós that brings on confusion. If I did, I could bottle it and sell it as bottled misunderstanding. I would become very rich indeed. Bottled misunderstanding would no doubt make a good party gift and become popular at stag and hen parties that frequently dish out the most outlandish forms of humiliation and torture to the recipients. Everything taped and shown on reality TV infiltrates everything, also weddings and Christmas parties, with its inglorious intimacy, like smelling someone else's socks.

But back to Blönduós. A few years back I received some Christmas presents from my sister living in Blönduós. She asked me if I could do her a favour and deliver a couple of other presents that arrived with mine. I would deliver them to her husband's niece, whose name is Stefania. "No problem," I said, and she gave me Stefania's number. I ring the number:

Hi, is this Stefania?
'Yes, this is her,' she says. I respond: My name is Sigtryggur, I am Dís's brother and she asked me to get some Christmas packages to you! There is an unnerving hush on the other end of the phone. Then she says, ambiguously: 'What did you say your name was?'

I am getting a little weirded out by this conversation. I have met this woman at my sister's family functions.... also, I am at least a semi-celeb in Iceland and am used to being recognised. Is she fooling with me or could it be that she is actually deranged to some extent, maybe drunk or on some kind of prescription drug?

I say: 'Sigtryggur Baldursson is my name, you know. Dís's brother! My sister Dís who is married to your mother's brother Gísli!' I am getting a little heated...

She goes: 'Huh!?? Who's Gísli?' I am sure she is deranged, her voice sounds a little sluggish. Doesn't it?

I say: 'Your mother's name is Sígga, is it not?'

She replies with a very curt: 'No.'
I say: 'Your name is Stefania, right?'

She says: 'Yes it is, but not the one you are looking for.'

It dawns on me that this is perhaps a bizarre coincidence. I beg my pardon and put the phone down.

I call my sister. Lo and behold, there is one digit askew in the number she gave me. But that's not all.

All this came back to me earlier this summer, as I was going to my niece's wedding in Blönduós.



I had just been fishing nearby and managed—with the help of a rocky road leading to the river—to put a hole in the exhaust pipe of my car, which tends to be in denial of the fact that it is not a jeep.

I ask my sister Dís whether she knows the local mechanic and she says 'no.' But Gísli does.

Too bad Gísli is at the wedding rehearsal and I need to get this fixed pronto. It is a Friday afternoon, and my wife and daughter are coming early evening. I want to get this fixed now.

I call directory enquiries. 118. I ask them for a car mechanic in Blönduós. They hook me up, the phone rings and a guy answers on the other side.

Hi, is this the garage? I hear kids in the background and have a feeling I have the wrong number.

He responds: 'Well, I'm the mechanic, but I am at home. What do you want?'

'Well, my name is Sigtryggur. I am Gísli's brother in law, and am going to his daughter's wedding tomorrow. I managed to put a hole in my exhaust and need some help fixing it today. Can you help me?' I tell him all this to try and establish a personal contact with the man, hoping he is a friend of my brother in law, and will thus treat me like a local. And not rip me off.

'Well, you should call Gunnar at the garage, he can help you...'

I take down the number and call Gunnar. Gunnar gets the same stupid introduction from me, pleading close connections with locals. He gives me a friendly hum hum, and tells me to come at three o'clock.

I ask my sister where the garage is located. She says it's somewhere up the hill by the N1 station and tells me I can't miss it. Then she pulls a strange, almost worried look and says that I better check with the guy, since she thinks there are more than one garages in town.

'No problem,' I say, 'I still have his number written down.' I put on my shoes and make a move to get on my way.

I go and get some gas at the N1 station. I decide to call Gunnar the mechanic from there, to see where he is located: 'Hi it's Sigtryggur again,

I called you earlier about fixing my exhaust!'

'Yeah, man, how are you?'
'Yeah, good man. Good. How can I find your place?'

'Well, I'm just up the hill on Dyngjuvegur.'

'I'm sorry but I don't know where that is. 'Is it close to the N1 station?'

'What N1 station?'

'Well, the one up on the hill... (To the guy at the counter, I remark, 'isn't this a N1 station?' He points at the sign outside the window. It should be obvious).

I carry on and ask the guy at the counter where I can find Dyngjuvegur. He just shakes his head and says there is no such street in Blönduós.

It's finally happened. My phone has hit a secret line in a parallel universe. Obviously. The damn microwaves have altered my brainwaves after ten years of heavy cellphone abuse.

There is an ominous silence on the other end.

'I'm at the N1 station alright, where can I find you?'

'There is no N1 station here. Where are you?'

I cannot believe this shit. Is this a hidden camera show? Damned reality TV again!

I blurt out: 'Ha ha ha man. I'm standing in a middle of a N1 station here in Blönduós and I swear to you, it is very real. At least to me!' I produce a stifled cough.

There is a silence. Then he says: 'You better check your map, man. I am in Bolungarvík [a small town, hundreds of kilometres away].'

I feel semi violated, like being shat on by a bird.

To the right of the N1 station is something called Jóhann's garage. I walk in there and speak to the first person I see. A lanky youth examining the underside of a beat up jeep.

He recognises me immediately and asks me if I am going to the wedding tomorrow.

Blönduós.

SIGTRYGGUR BALDURSSON
 JULIA STAPLES

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Come to Daddi's!

The Lake Mývatn region explored via a pizza menu.
Yes, a pizza menu.



"Out of the 500,000 tourists that give Icelanders the honour of their presence every year, 80 percent visit this mind-blowing natural treasure hidden in the North called Mývatn, so mind what you see." Those were the first words our guide uttered at us Grapeviners when we finally arrived at this legendary haven, after nearly six hours of stuffy car-atmosphere, bad coffee and way too much gas. The truth is though that the alleged guide wasn't really a guide, and our aim was definitely not to collect material for a cliché-ish tourist piece. Plenty of that to go around elsewhere.

A SODOM ABYSS AND WOEFUL HOTEL EMPLOYEE

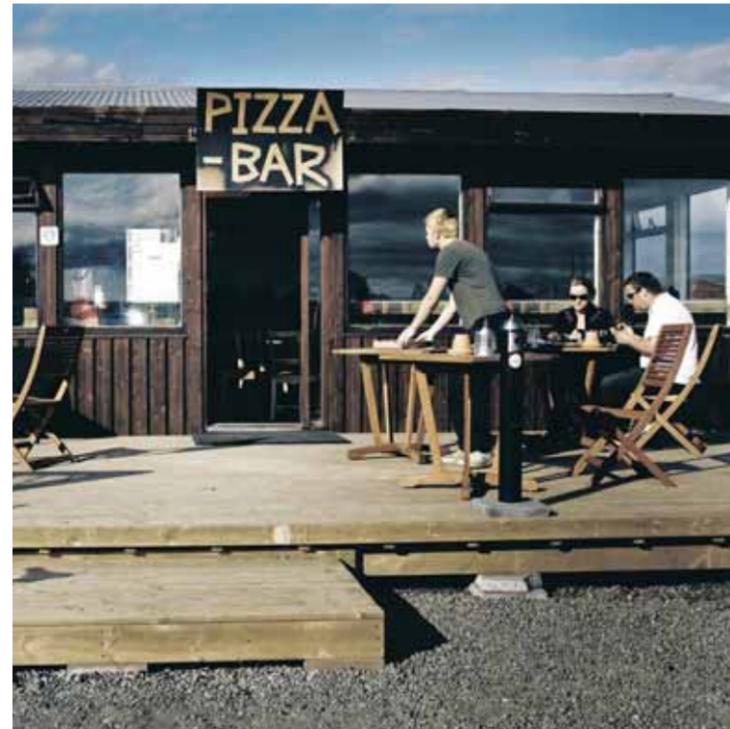
Full disclosure: our "guide" and his spouse are rather good friends of ours, and one of our reasons for travelling up there was to check out their pizza parlour, Daddi's, that they recently opened there in the wilderness. And to take in the amazing sights, of course.

After glancing over the menu and rolling down a slice of the Grjótagjá, the idea of documenting the area through the menu came up. Let's elaborate: the good people of Daddi's have named every single pizza on the menu after every noteworthy sight in the area. Each pie's name is meant to indicate their demeanour, appearance and vibe. This was of course an upright task to research, that is if they succeeded in replicating the sights with the pizzas and if a tasting menu of pizzas could even replace the sightseeing completely. Eat your way through Iceland. Ha.

Since we'd already tasted the, well, the plain weird pizza Grjótagjá (which boasts of featuring the absurd topping combo of tuna and bacon), we'd of course have to dip our toes into the abyss. The locals call it Sodom Abyss, and they like to jump in there regularly—stripped to their toes—to sit in the boiling water buried in a cave. Like the pizza, the combo seemed odd. But the pizza was also surprisingly tasty, so we had hopes for Sodom Abyss.

As soon as we had let the water boil our bare butts for few minutes, we discovered what all the fuss was about; the calm drone was genuinely soothing, the warm water softens your sturdy limbs and the nudity takes on an air of irrelevance. You couldn't achieve an erection even if you really tried. Seriously.

We got invited to a party at the local hotel after we'd dried the euphoria off us and gotten our heads straight. Thank god they don't have a pizza named that party. It was packed with woeful kids that had obviously travelled to the country to detoxify the accumulated city ramshackle, but as in a slasher flick, their fantasy had



gone horribly wrong. Simply put, there was a lot more boozing and debauchery than I'd ever witnessed in Reykjavík's sloppiest after-parties. I can even think of a topping the pizza would have on top of it. But I won't tell you what.

FÊTE IN THE "CLEARING" AND NORWEGIAN BLACKMETAL

After gulping the second day's pizza portion, we had a lot on our hands: Dim-

muborgir and Skútustaðir had to be explored, gnats needed to be unearthed, Höfði had to be conquered and the notorious cowboy had to be found. Skútustaðir is an eminent farm near the village where they produce smoked trout, which is, alongside their rye, an area delicacy. Surprisingly, its pizza didn't boast of any smoked trout at all, but it did have some mincemeat and bacon.

The pizza was definitely a crowd-pleaser, but if old Daddi is going to replace the

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pouring rain in radiant sun and the pizza made sense; carefully chosen mushy vegetables—appeasing and fulfilling. After we visited our dear abyss that night, we moved over to something every local cherishes—a party at 'The Clearing.' The party place lived up to its name, although it might sound a bit cliché. A cosy bonding fire, nice guitar tunes and jolly people. That eventually morphed into wobbling drunken unfortunates, falling on their own pee spurts, playing folk songs lying on their backs too drunk to hold them steady sitting up. At seven AM, a few were drunk and cockeyed enough to decide upon a repeat visit to the abyss, yours truly included.
Note to self: five people, a two-person-Renault Smart, way-too-many beers, a few bottles of vodka, climbing down to a cave and boiling hot water is never a good mix.

beat with his pizzas, he might wanna pair them up better. The gnats weren't hard to locate, the lake is of course named after those little bastards. They might seem a bit cosy at first, but they'll turn on you. As for the pizza of the same name, it seemed to follow a similar maxim: the smoked trout and cream cheese begun by busting your taste buds, but after a few bites you'd rather move over to something like Dimmuborgir.
The lava statues that greet you at Dimmuborgir easily explain why a (formerly) brutal black metal band is named after the phenomenon. They are quite intimidating. For me, as a man who normally doesn't take pineapple on his pizza, the eponymous pie was also intimidating. But once you lay off the prejudices you realize that there's nothing demonic about it, just an absurdly formed cosiness. That goes for both the pizza and the place. Next up was Höfði, a secret garden full of mystique and lust. As soon as one stepped over the fence, it was as a calm wind subdued all your thoughts and everyone got quiet. We walked through the

GEOTHERMAL WONDERS AND THE ENDLESS JOURNEY HOME

It was a wise decision not to knock down a pick-me-up beer when we woke up hung-over off our asses 'cause what we had in store was hulking: the volcano Krafla was to be visited, as well as the geothermal area Námskarð. The volcanic Krafla pizza, brimful of various melted cheeses, clearly reminded you of the raunchy surroundings of the still-active volcano, but Námskarð was positively the best replica. The bubbling hot springs represented the pepperoni and jalapeno filled pizza, and the colour scheme fit!
On the endless, dark and murky way home, we had some time to contemplate our journey. We thrashed out a mutual conclusion: although the pizzas were grand and rich you should definitely accompany the tasting menu with a sight-seeing tour. And maybe a beer or two. ☺

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Catharine Fulton:
Hey Louder!
What should we
have for lunch

today?

Rebecca Louder: Hey Fulton! Let's go to Nonnabiti!

Fulton got the prawn sub, substituting mushrooms for green peppers and adding pickles to the bunch. Everything is good with salted pork.

Louder opted for the beef and cheese sub, with lettuce and pickled red peppers – though she couldn't really taste the cheese. Disappointment.

CF: I've never had Nonnabiti sober, this is going to be quite the test.

RL: Me neither, actually. I've eaten it once and I was really hammered.

CF: It's a convenient place to come drunk. I loves me some salted pork!

RL: Is that what it is?

CF: It's pork.

RL: I thought it was ham.

CF: It's pork. Same animal.

RL: Same magical animal! How can one animal produce so many good meats?

CF: You know what else it produces? Since pigs don't sweat, butchers will sometimes cut into an exploding ball of puss and mucus trapped inside the flesh.

RL: This is really good conversation for eating.

CF: I loves me some salted pork.

RL: I'm glad I'm eating beef right now.

CF: I don't like beef.

RL: Do they have pumpkins here?

CF: mm-mm (that's 'no' with a mouth full of Nonnabiti)

RL: Then how the hell would I make pumpkin pie? Do they have canned pumpkin?

CF: mm-mm (also 'no' with a mouth full of Nonnabiti)

RL: Damn!

CF: You'd have to settle for sweet potato pie in that case.

RL: Motherfuck...

CF: Have you ever had it?

RL: Actually, sweet potato pie is delicious.

CF: It tastes the same as pumpkin pie, with spices and shit.

RL: Lots of cinnamon.

CF: Yup.

RL: Lots of whipped cream.

CF: Yeah. As every pumpkin-slash-sweet potato pie should have.

RL: Uh-huh!

CF: A little bit of nutmeg. Some all spice, if you will. Moist, buttery crust.

RL: Why aren't we having that right now?

At this point in the conversation we developed an elaborate business plan that may very well lead us to great riches. Keep an eye on us; we're moving on to bigger and better things. Things that involve pumpkins.

CF: I've hit a wall.

RL: I'm hitting a wall too. It's not the same when you're not drunk. There's something about alcohol that gives you a completely hollow leg and you can just pack food in there until you don't know what's what. But when you're sober you know your limits and you don't have to eat the full twelve inches of Nonnabiti sandwich.

CF: Thirty centimetres. I shouldn't have gotten the carbonated beverage with my sandwich, it's taking up too much space in my stomach.

RL: Carbonated beverages actually make more space in your stomach.

CF: Liar.

RL: It's true.

CF: Really!? Huh.

Super Canadian Verdict:

It's no poutine, eh, but it'll get 'er done after a 2-4 o' Molson's. 🍷

✍️ **CATHARINE FULTON**
✍️ **REBECCA LOUDER**

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Things I Learned At The Gay History Walk



When I first heard about the gay history walk, I wasn't sure what to make of it. In all honesty I didn't really think there were that many places relevant to gay history in a burgh as small as Reykjavik. Boy was I wrong.

What I learned on the one-hour walk was that Reykjavik is sprawling with significant gay history sites, buried beneath decades of conservative history writing.

'But what is the gay history walk?' you ask. Let me tell you. It is an annual sightseeing walk through Reykjavik that takes you through sites and locations significant to the history of gay culture and the gay rights struggle in Iceland.

Upon showing up at Ingólfsstræti, I was surprised to see how many people had actually showed up for the walk. A hundred and ten, to be exact. That's a lot of people. Standing there amidst the crowd was a rather small man dressed in civil attire, a cheap flower lei around his neck, shouting out to the people that the show was about to start. That was the walk's conductor, professor of political science Baldur Þórhallsson.

What I learned more and more was that many buildings I had previously not taken any notice of seem to have

a great significance in the gay history of Reykjavik. One of the reasons probably being that in the early years of Samtökin 78—the National Queer Organisation—they had to move location quite frequently, since very few were willing to rent space to the organisation. Their first headquarters were located at Garðarstræti 2, which is a very simple apartment building near Ingólfsstræti.

Gays have had to fight diligently for their rights in Reykjavik, and it wasn't until 1987 that Samtökin 78 started to receive public funding. In what came as a surprise to some, it was actually Iceland's former Prime Minister, then mayor of Reykjavik Davíð Oddsson, who administered the funding.

One of the more interesting characters Baldur told of about during the walk was Þórður Sigtryggsson, a flamboyant homosexual artist who had his heyday during Reykjavik's more conservative era. This is a man I have never heard of before, although he shared a fellowship with some of Iceland's most famous artists at Unuhús. There he drank coffee with the likes Halldór Laxness and Þórbergur Þórðarson, two of Iceland's most beloved writers. Over drinks, Þórður used to tell the residents of Unuhús tales of his active sex life and his many partners, who apparently span some of the most very important men and women in the history of Reykjavik. Elías Mar, a famous Icelandic poet, wrote his biography together but they are yet to be released, as to this day his stories and their revelations of well-known Icelanders and their sexual preferences seem to cause outrage.

The walk also brought new perspectives to old historical events that are rarely thought of as relevant to gay

history.

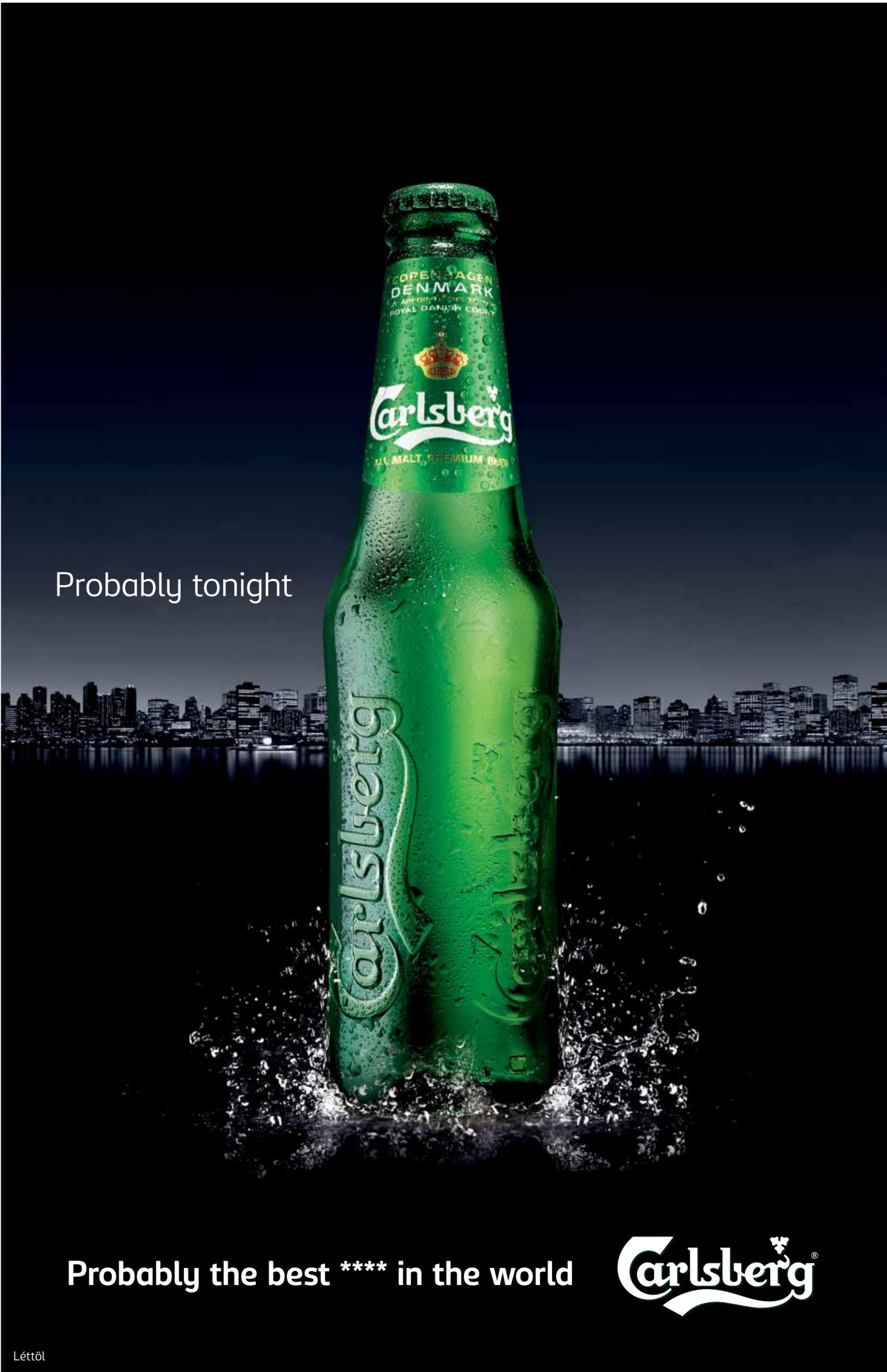
There were, for instance, the times of WWII when British and American soldiers inhabited the country. Thousands upon thousands of uniformed soldiers swarmed the young city's nightlife, and the men of Iceland screamed bloody murder as the girls swooned at their advances. In our history books, the only thing mentioned about this is the fear every man in Iceland harboured of losing his wife to a soldier. They never mention what a euphoric fantasy world this must have been for a gay man in Reykjavik. 'A friend of mine that now resides in a retirement home always talks of these times with tears in his eyes,' proclaimed Baldur.

Notable by its absence was the lesbian input in the walk. Of course, history has been written by men that are reluctant enough to put gay men in history books, let alone gay women. Or as Baldur explained: 'Men in older times hadn't even thought of the notion that two women could be together.'

Probably every city in the world has a similar history. A hidden one, of people who weren't accepted in their societies, and had to find ways to live their lives knowing they were part of a group that was not accepted. I learned afterwards that some of the things mentioned in the walk were historical gems due to how unattainable they are. You wouldn't be able to find most of these facts when just merely browsing, you would have to look deeper, conduct interviews, talk to people.

This gay walk wasn't just entertaining; it was also sort of a revelation. 🍷

✍️ **RAGNAR JÓN HRÓLFSSON**
✍️ **HÖRÐUR SVEINSSON**



Probably tonight

Probably the best **** in the world





Three hundred and fifty thousand, seven hundred and fourteen verses. Twenty lines per verse, and every line rhymes with the following one. That's how long Andrei Gheorghe's poem is. It's almost four times longer than the Mahabharata of ancient India. Forty times longer than The Iliad and The Odyssey combined and twenty times longer than Dante's Divine Comedy.

It's (appropriately) called The Longest Poem in the World and it's composed by aggregating real-time public twitter updates and selecting those that rhyme. Every day the poem grows longer by about 4000 verses. Some of it sounds inane ("Playing hide and seek at the park. :) / Waiting on Heather and Mark!") A lot of it sounds funny ("im hoping that its easy and i can finish it quickly / They made porcupine love, so stiff and stuck and prickly" and "Had a great gala evening and won lots of prizes / And also simulating penis sizes"). But most of it's actually fantastically mundane. Boring. Stupid. People waiting for their favourite TV show to start. People twittering about God during the sermon. People announcing their hangovers like victories. People regurgitating sayings and Oscar Wilde quotes.

Gheorghe's has called it a collective consciousness. And in effect it is—it brews an essence of human thought and if you read it for too long you'll be moved. You'll get angry. You'll feel every ounce of wasted life like somebody was yanking your haemorrhoids with a tire-iron.

But perhaps this is humanity. Perhaps this is the essence of our being, making The Longest Poem in the World one of the most relevant pieces of art around. One that mirrors (a part of) reality in a one to one correlation. One that, if read in its entirety, would annihilate the little that may still be left of our souls and leave us completely aware

of the emptiness that envelopes our lives.

The poem consists of what hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of people deemed most worthy to communicate to the world and/or their friends at a given moment (in real-time). And it rhymes, which somehow accentuates the inherent nihilism of this deranged and disturbing poem.

I don't blame twitter. The results would probably have been the same (or worse) if the material had been small-talk. In person. Offline. And I'm not sure my own statuses and/or small-talk would've been any more interesting. Yet perhaps the sensation it evokes is false—not based in the reality it stems from. Perhaps the world is not as empty and meaningless as The Longest Poem in the World makes it seem. Perhaps these lines of poetry — these bits of small-talk — are beautiful and filled with meaning when experienced in their natural habitat.

The soldiers in Homer's Odyssey were never turned into swine. Not really, I mean. We suspend disbelief and allow Homer to take us there, and so the soldiers indeed turn into swine. Gheorghe has in some way (perhaps) turned an innocent humanity into swine, and just maybe that does not detract an ounce of worth from the poem itself (at least if we allow for the artistry of Gheorghe's poem to be purely conceptual—as formally it's mostly horrendous). This non-relation to reality might also make it the perfect representative for reality, in Georgia O'Keefe's words: "Nothing is less real than realism. It is only by selection, by elimination, by emphasis that we get at the real meaning of things."

And so regretfully I must admit that (once again!) I cannot yet say whether or not there is meaning in the world. Oh, the nihilism! ☘

Children's Reykjavík

Salka, 2008



By the time adults have children, they're often out of touch with kid culture and need help figuring out

what to do all day with their three-foot wonders. Even once things get going reasonably well, it's easy to get into a rut and forget about fun things that are just around the corner but missing from our mental map of town.

Parents need a regular stream of new ideas for their kids. These can come through word of mouth, serendipity, the newspaper, or looking in the telephone book. They can even come from a guidebook to things that kids and parents can do. There are already guidebooks like this for many cities. Now there is one to Reykjavík, called Children's Reykjavík / Reykjavík barnanna.

Children's Reykjavík is small and thick, with over 400 nicely designed spiral-bound pages, perhaps forty of which are given over to advertising. The rest is divided into ten chapters that are labelled with colours and numbers but no titles, so to find a particular subject you have to hunt a bit in the table of contents or index. The content is bilingual, with English usually on the left side of each opening and Icelandic on the right.

There's a lot of information in here. The book covers a really good range of topics, including some that can be hard to find out about. For example, the book tells you where you can take your child for a haircut or family photograph, where you can hold a pre-packaged birthday party, where to find art and music courses, and where kids can go to summer camp.

The book also includes a few profiles of semi-prominent Reykjavík parents, who describe how they spend their time with their kids in ways that range from honest to slightly saccharine.

The book's English translation and proofreading is imperfect—not enough to spoil the information, but enough to make reading it a bit awkward (in one great blooper, we're told about an astrology club which meets at the telescope in Seltjarnarnes.) Also, the English usually translates only a part of the original Icelandic text, making the English entries markedly shorter than their Icelandic counterparts across the page.

The reviews themselves are most helpful when they appear to reflect the authors' honest opinion. At other times, they have a bit of a promotional feel to it and use marketing language sometimes seemingly derived from the brochures of the places reviewed. For example, on page 188 we are told that "Adams Kids aims to provide you with a unique and rewarding shopping experience that we're sure you'll never forget."

Trolls' Cathedral

Ólafur Gunnarsson

English translation by David McDuff and Jill Burows.

JPV Publishers Reykjavík 2008.



Trolls' Cathedral (original Icelandic title Tröllakirkja) is the first part of an acclaimed trilogy by author Ólafur Gunnarsson (the two other

being Potter's Field and Winter Journey, respectively). The novel was published in 1992 and nominated for the Icelandic Literary Prize the same year. The story takes place in 1950's Reykjavík and tells the tale of architect Sigurbjörn Helgason who has high dreams for building a massive and imposing cathedral on top of Skólavörðuholt (where Hallgrímskirkja church now stands) that will echo the shapes of the Icelandic landscape. He starts his own construction firm along with (and mostly financed by) his friend Guðbrandur, who is a master carpenter. Their first project is for the first franchised department store in Reykjavík. But things do not go according to plan, and Sigurbjörn soon finds his world crumbling as his marriage starts failing, his family life falls to pieces, the debts pile up, and yet Sigurbjörn strives to keep up appearances.

The novel has received almost unanimously good reviews, both in Iceland and abroad. It paints a very clear and interesting picture of Iceland's and Reykjavík's growing pains as the Icelandic society rapidly changed and the capital transformed from town to city. The story of Sigurbjörn is an epic tale of one man's downfall, and his fate follows a universal theme that could surely be translated and understood in any culture.

That said, I have to admit that although Sigurbjörn's fate is tragic, I did not feel for him very much. Perhaps it is one of the traits of the epic that the narrative seems to hold the reader at arm's length, creating distance between reader and characters. But maybe it was just because I found Sigurbjörn's character to be self-centred, nasty and extremely dislikeable. And the same goes for other characters in the novel. Even when Sigurbjörn's obnoxious eleven-year-old son is sexually assaulted and beaten, I could have cared less. The only character I felt remotely sympathetic towards was Guðbrandur, who is truly a victim of Sigurbjörn's extravagant dreams. But perhaps it is this distance from the characters that gives the underlying narrative the universal appeal that it has. Rather than being a tale of one man's ruin, Trolls' Cathedral has wider connotations that give it fable-like qualities.

Bottom line: A vivid picture of Iceland's growing pains in the 1950's.

☘ - HILDUR KNÚTSDÓTTIR

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PAGE 6:

We went through a great struggle between David and Goliath, where Goliath was the president of Iceland along with the tycoons; the people on the private jets and yachts. And they won.

Professor Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson spouts a lot of Bible references in our cover story.

PAGE 29:

I do not know what it is about Blönduós that brings on confusion. If I did, I could bottle it and sell it as bottled misunderstanding. I would become very rich indeed.

Drummer-slash-crooner Sigtryggur Baldursson is confused by Blönduós

PAGE 16:

Well. Everybody dies, except one person. You could just count the names on the poster and subtract one. It's as basic as that, a genuine splatter flick.

Július Kemp has us all looking forward to the Reykjavík Whale Watching Massacre

PAGE 2:

Is it a coincidence that only months prior to the attack, ALL major international media were bombarding people with cute childhood photos of Knut the white spawn of Berlin, the latest successor to the throne of Hell?

We sure get some weird letters here at the Grapevine

PAGE 20:

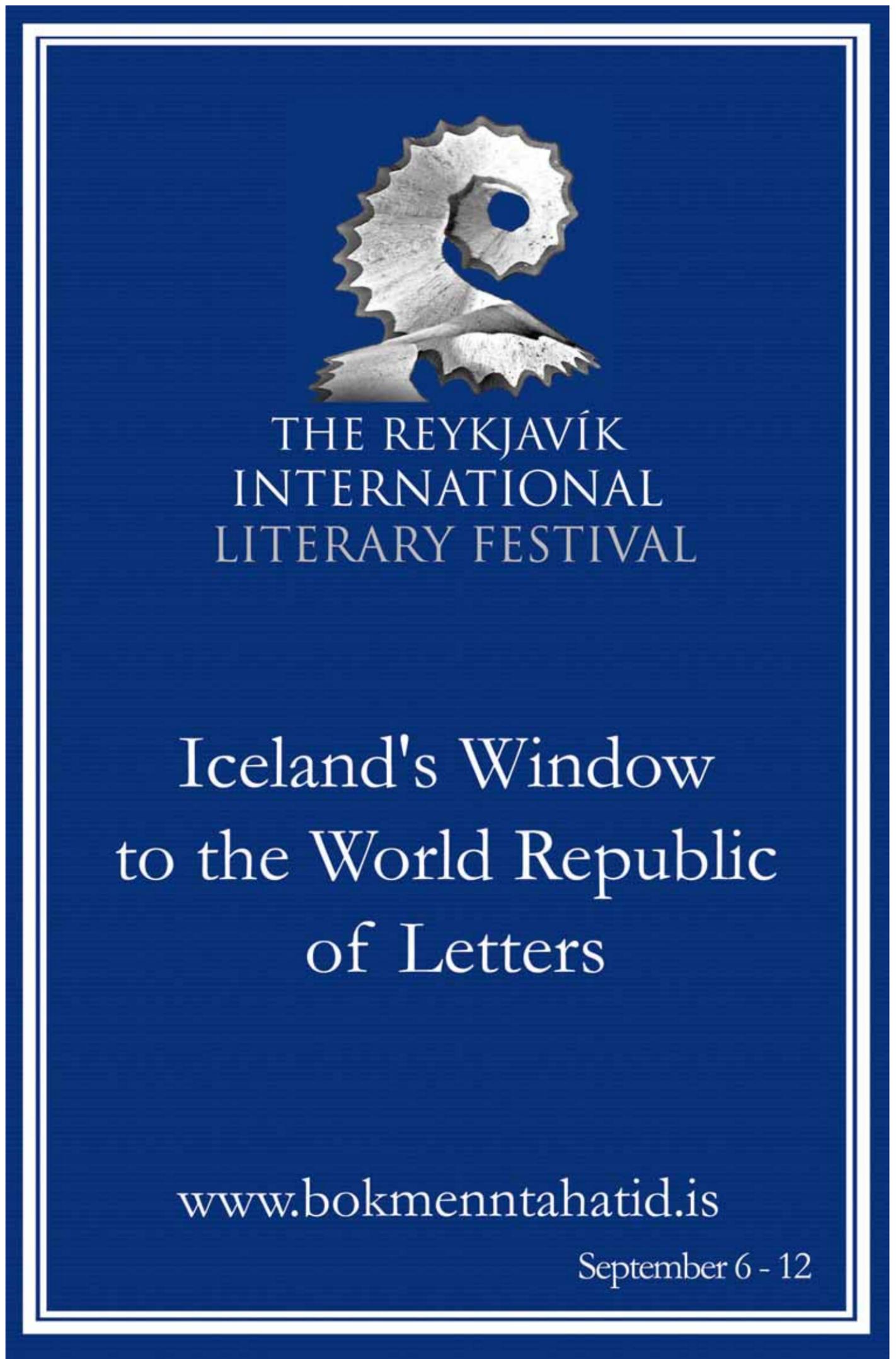
Art performances can be great, but in most people's mind, they are just a perverted weak evilness made to burden people

Performance artist-slash-Refrón guitarist Kolli has him some opinions

PAGE 14:

Violence porn would have been too easy solution. I wanted readers to be able to identify with the victim. Clinical description of a rape do not tell you anything about the victim's experiences.

Finnish author and Reykjavík International Literary Festival attendee Sofi Oksanen has her say



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