



# The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

Reykjavík  
Winter Lights Festival  
FULL SCHEDULE INSIDE

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IN THE ISSUE Issue 2 • 2012 • February 3 - March 9

+ COMPLETE CITY LISTINGS - INSIDE!

POLITICS **Haardegate? WaterGeir? Is there a crook involved?**

REYKJAVÍK **What's happening to NASA?**

MUSIC **Reviewed, rated, ravaged**

ART **Is Santiago Sierra EVIL?**

BEER **We drink a bunch... for journalism's sake!**

## BRING THE NOISE!

GIVE A WARM ICELANDIC WELCOME TO HARPA'S LATEST RESIDENT, CONDUCTOR EXTRAORDINAIRE ILAN VOLKOV



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On the cover:  
Ilan Volkov  
Photo by: Baldur Kristjánsson  
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**Editorial | Anna Andersen**

HELLO  
MY NAME IS

ANNA ANDERSEN

**Anna's 3rd Editorial**

Well, this is exciting. I wrote a couple of these last summer when Haukur went on vacation, but here I am writing my first editorial as 'Managing Editor' of The Reykjavík Grapevine.

As you may have gleaned by now, Haukur left his position as Editor, where he was posted up for the last three years making this wonderful magazine. I am now officially sitting at his desk (the one by the window with all those screaming kids just outside), getting to work on printing more articles by Hannes Hólmsteinn (See page 14).

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Anna Andersen. I walked into The Grapevine offices as an intern after Haukur's first year as editor. I had just flushed my return ticket to California down the drain and signed up for a few classes at the university thinking I would stick around for six months. But the few classes turned into a master (thesis, still outstanding), and the internship position turned into a journalist position (reason said thesis is still outstanding), and here I am two years later. This is a fairly typical story amongst expats in Reykjavík.

Anyways, Haukur has taught me a lot over this time and I expect that he'll teach me a lot more because he hasn't actually left though he left his desk and this country (See: 'Continental Rift'). And as Editor-in-Chief, he

will make sure that I don't turn this magazine into soft-core tourist porn or an ultra right-wing journal of some sorts. No there won't be any of that.

Some things are of course bound to change. You will probably see fewer references to The Simpsons and fewer "y'all's" in this very particular space, but we'll make sure to stay fun and fresh and serious and critical at the same time. Egg our offices and dump stacks of our magazine in the street if you must, but The Grapevine will not go soft or easy. However, dear disgruntled egg/paper thrower, I recommend you make yourself an omelet and you might as well use our paper as kindling—it sure has been a cold enough January.

That said, our intentions are certainly not malicious. Quite the contrary, our intentions are to keep this magazine honest. Now here's to our collective forces making The Reykjavík Grapevine even better as we continue into its TENTH year of publication.

Happy Porri and I'll see you next time!

And if you're looking for something fun to do in the meantime, you might check out some of the great festivals happening this month, starting with The French Film Festival (See page 24), followed by The Winter Lights Festival (See the super duper fat program pullout inside), and conductor Ilan Volkov's new modern music festival after that (See page 17).

**CONTINENTAL RIFT**  
Notes from across the Atlantic

Observing Iceland from afar, say through Facebook or the local media, is interesting. A perspective is granted. There is a spasm in the discourse. People are so heated, they get intensely inflamed about every issue, ready to scream and knock down buildings with the sheer force of their frustration. Yet nothing ever seems to happen, nothing gets done, nothing is accomplished, nothing changes; we are left with nowt but a foul taste in our mouths and a disgust for our compatriots. Worked up to the point of rambling irrationality and mindless anger, we scream and prod and post and poke. And then nothing.

A case in point would be any of the BIG BIG FIASCOS we dealt with through January and have now completely forgotten. Poisonous breast implants or gendered ice cream or industrial salt or snow plowing or pubic grooming or banker revelations (those keep on coming) or whatever else ruined our lives in the last month are all in the past now, having made way for whatever is ruining all our lives today or will ruin them tomorrow.

There's something broken in the way we handle things, the way we communicate and talk to one another. We scream for a day and then forget. Life on a sparsely populated and uneventful island perhaps requires that we never solve anything or move forward—what would we then have to talk about?

We are a very eager people, but perhaps we would do well with just shutting up and getting on with it. The

**TRACK OF THE ISSUE**

**Michael Dean Odin Pollock & Siggí Sig: 'Squeeze'**

Download the FREE track at [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)

Here's a little treat for you, a track from the new Michael Dean Odin Pollock EP, out now on Synthadelia Records. A terse, folksy number, with the harmonica of Siggí Sig dialled all the way up to 11 and verbose, beatific lyrics to boot, it's a right little stormer.

It's not surprising that there is a little bit o' experience behind these musical thrills. Michael Dean Odin Pollock knows his way round the neck of a guitar and the barrel of a pen alright! He's been at this game for years now—writing poetry since he was ten, and performing in and with the Pollock Brothers, Utangarðsmenn (with Bubbi Morthens way back in 1980) and Megas.

So how about you give this lemon a squeeze and see if the juice runs down your leg, yeah?

wave of indignation we confront ourselves with every other day seems pointless and only serves to make our lives worse and more boring. SO BORING!

Of course we need to get involved. But maybe we need a better way to involve ourselves. Perhaps it's time for less talk, more action? I'm not saying we need to go out and bomb the PMs offices or anything (sort of been done by now), but if we managed to harness our frustrations and ride through some sort of path to somewhere we might actually accomplish something, and move forward. And not HATE LIFE whilst doing so.

Love to you.

Haukur SM  
Editor In Chief

**Comic | Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir**



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Say your piece, voice your opinion, send your letters to: [letters@grapevine.is](mailto:letters@grapevine.is)

## Sour grapes & stuff

### MOST AWESOME LETTER:

Dear Bart Cameron,

I will attach "Laxness in Naples". The old bard is still on the move.

Best regards,  
Niels Hav  
<http://www.othervoicespoetry.org/vol41/hav/bio.html>

Laxness in Naples

In Naples I chanced upon Halldór Laxness. It was strange, because he had died that spring. He smiled, delighted beneath his newly-trimmed moustache and walked quickly through the spacious room, an unostentatious restaurant with white tableclothes near Piazza Garibaldi.

He seemed in good health, dressed in light pants and a plaid tweed jacket, just like the photos from Iceland in the fifties. He sat down at a table occupied by a woman and a man, and the three of

**MOST AWESOME LETTER**  
**FREE GRAPEVINE TEE HEE HEE!**



There's prize for all your **MOST AWESOME LETTERS**. And it's a scorcher! Whoever sends us THE MOST AWESOME LETTER each issue will receive a cool new **REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE T-SHIRT**, featuring the majestic G that adorns our cover. So you should make sure to keep writing us fun and/or interesting letters. This new Grapevine tee surely is the **SHIZNIT** (whatever that means)! It was designed by our very own art director man, **HÖRÐUR KRISTBJÖRNSSON**, and it's good for posing in front of a mirror, impressing folks with your impeccable taste or picking up men or women of all ages (no minors). **DON'T PANIC** if your letter wasn't picked AWESOME LETTER. You can still get a tee for a low, low price over our website, **WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS**. Now, if you're in the market for free goodies next month, write us some sort of letter. Give us your worst: **LETTERS@GRAPEVINE.IS**

them spoke spiritedly to each other in Italian, while the waiter served wine and various courses for them; first pasta, then fish, bread and salad.

Halldór Laxness ate with gusto, his laughter braying, and he waw engaged in the conversation. That pleased me, I had heard he'd grown senile and, besides, he was dead.

When their meal was almost over, I felt like going over to say hello, tell him how glad I was to see him hale and well. But I lacked the words, and perhaps he wouldn't like being recognized in a strange country, now that he was dead. Instead I listened intensely to their conversation, when suddenly I managed to catch an utterly clear reply: "The God of humans is of varying greatness, just like they are," Laxness said. "Small people have small gods, and the small-minded look in vain

for Him in a microscope." He laughed heartily.

In the end the two Italians got up from the table. The woman gave a little speech, while she brought out a parcel, the size of a book and gave it to Halldór Laxness. He opened the parcel with great care. It turned out to contain a pair of socks, possibly silk. Halldór Laxness was moved, tears welled in his eyes, and he said something in a soft slurred voice. I couldn't make out every word, but his Italian was beautiful, and I understood him to say: "Thank you, that is a good gift. And it's not even my birthday!"

© Niels Hav  
Translated by P.K. Brask & Patrick Friesen

Dear Niels Hav,

Thank you! This is just beautiful, it really is. Enjoy your meal and send more!

Hey Grapevine!

Like the great Gil Scott-Heron once said: I'm new here. Been around a couple of months now and quite enjoying it. Like most of the music, been able to make friends at the bars and clubs although I often wish there was one quiet bar there where you could talk to people instead of nodding your head at them over the loud music and I got a nice place to stay. Complaints are the regular, everything is expensive and people can be cold, but it's nothing I can't deal with. I've a feeling this winter will be good for me. I even love all the snow!

You guys have been a great resource ever since I first thought about coming. I might even have gotten the idea from reading an article of yours for all I know. I like the news and the music coverage along with the variety of articles even though not all of it is interesting to me. There is one thing that I think you're lacking however and this is ME! I would love to contribute to your fine publication. What do I do? How do I go on about it? Do I get paid?

Also it would be great if you could make me letter of the month so I can go eat that banquet. Btw what is up with Bakkus? Its been closed the last few times Ive gone by there.

El Scorcho

Dear El,

thank you so very much for your letter, and your kind words. It's cool to know we might have inspired you to come over, lord knows we need more people over here. Lots and lots more people, so we can one day win the

Olympics and Eurovision (strength in numbers and all that).

Also, it's great that you want to contribute! If it's one thing we can always use more of, it's writers, photographers illustrators and people that can make that's worth printing or publishing on-line. You don't specify whether you're a writer or videographer or whatnot (if you're good at making videos you should definitely be in touch—we would love featuring more video content!) but the answers are sort of the same for everyone. Read on:

Firstly, you need to contact our fancy new Managing Editor, Anna Andersen, by emailing [anna@grapevine.is](mailto:anna@grapevine.is). Tell her you want to contribute. She gets lots of emails, so it's a good idea to keep your missives brief and to the point (preferably containing one or more direct questions that can be answered (without needing to be inferred first)).

If you're interested in writing something, why not include an idea for a story in your letter, along with a brief explanation of how you would execute it and how much space you would need (this is called 'a pitch'). Including a writing sample isn't a bad idea; if nothing else make sure your pitch letter is sort of properly spelled and mostly coherent. If you can't write a proper email when applying for a writing job... well...

If your idea is good and we can read through your letter without wanting to tear our eyes out, we will in turn send your our submission guidelines (mostly stuff about formatting and spelling). We will also assign you a rough wordcount and a deadline to work with (and offer help with any resources you might

need to accomplish whatever it is you want to accomplish).

We pay all of our contributors as much as we can, which unfortunately doesn't amount to a lot. Do not expect to make a living freelancing for the Grapevine. Think of it more as extra beer money. First time submissions generally get paid less (and if we wind up not printing your article for whatever reason, we will pay you a small 'kill fee'—don't worry, we'll publish almost anything unless it's like total BS. Sometimes we might even print that too because FUN!).

If you're not a writer (but like a photographer or whatever), you should still send us an email. Tell us what you want to accomplish, send samples of your work and be cool. We will get back to you.

As for Bakkus: it's moved to Laugavegur!

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# Time And Tides And Hotels

*How NASA ended up on the chopping block*



Although it is by no means a young city, Reykjavík has very few structures older than a century left standing. Perhaps it is for this reason that Icelanders feel a special affection towards those public places that have been around for decades. NASA, a nightclub that sits on the corner of Ingólfstorg square, is one such place. Not that Reykjavík has any shortage of nightclubs, of course, but NASA has been around in its current incarnation and present location since 2001, which is an historical feat in a city where the same building might host five different clubs in as many years.

*Originally built in 1870 as a girl's school, it became a centre of operations for the Independence Party in 1943.*

## Words

Paul Fontaine

## Photography

Páll Hilmarsson

Contributing to that success is probably the space itself. With an enormous dance floor and stage, NASA can easily host big-name concerts and Eurovision parties. This versatility, as well as being located downtown, but not forcing patrons to queue up on a busy sidewalk, could in theory lead to long-term success.

However, it was announced in early January that come June, NASA the nightclub would be no more—that it would be torn down to make way for a hotel. Ingibjörg Örlygsdóttir, the manager of NASA, told reporters that it was "tragic news," adding that not just she but many others, including numerous musicians, make their living through NASA. Indeed, a number of musicians expressed their regret at NASA's impending doom, with singer Páll Óskar going so far as to say he would chain himself to demolition machinery to prevent it from happening.

The man behind the decision is the building's owner, Pétur Þór Sigurðsson. After public outcry to the news, he stepped forward and told the press that a) there would be an "idea contest" hosted by city council for what to do with NASA, and b) the club had been behind on their rent for some time.

However, The Grapevine learned from Reykjavík City Council Planning Committee member Torfi Hjartarson that Pétur wanted to tear NASA down during the previous city council government, which balked at the idea. In addition, the "idea contest" being hosted by city council is being bankrolled by Pétur, who also sits on the jury for the contest.

## FROM CONSERVATIVE HQ TO AIR-WAVES

The building itself has a very rich history. Originally built in 1870 as a girl's school, it became a centre of operations for the Independence Party in 1943. Believe it or not, this was to be the germination of its form as a nightclub—apart from political meetings, the party would also host dances and live music there. Nobel Prize winning author Halldór Laxness was a regular. In the '70s, under the name Sigtún, the club would be the first in Iceland to have strippers. Over time, it grew to be one

of the most popular nightspots in the capital.

However, even then developers had their eyes on NASA. In 1978, the conservative-led city council had bold ambitions to tear down a number of old houses in the area to make way for more modern buildings. The conservatives were ultimately defeated in municipal elections before their plans materialised, and the leftists who replaced them in 1994 had a strong desire to preserve the old buildings downtown.

## IS THIS REALLY SUCH A GOOD IDEA?

Torfi has previously argued that the city ought to simply buy or rent NASA, but this was not the opinion of the city council majority. He is strongly opposed to NASA being torn down, and thinks that replacing it with a hotel would create a number of logistical problems. For example, many of the surrounding houses are legally protected from demolition due to their historic value, so they would need to be dismantled and moved.

"The problem with the hotel idea, as I see it, is the location," he told The Grapevine. "To me, it would break up the beauty of the old houses around the square. Not to mention the fact that a large building would block the southern exposure." As Ingólfstorg is the preferred spot in the summertime for enjoying the sunshine, many city residents would likely not be pleased with a hotel there, either.

Torfi concedes that whether or not the city needs, the trend is to build hotels downtown. "That's where the tourists want to stay."

Having said that, he mentions a number of places downtown that could be better suited for creating hotels, with structures already in place for conversion. "There are so many other plots in the city, also close to the centre, that would be better suited; even old buildings with great charm that could be turned into hotels."

## MORE ABOUT PRESERVING HISTORY THAN A CLUB

NASA's fate is no island. The development of towering modern apartment buildings on Skúlagata in



2005—blocking the harbour view that residents in smaller, older houses enjoyed—was fiercely resisted. In 2009, squatters who called themselves Af-taka took over an abandoned house on Vatnsstígur whose owner intended to tear it down to build a more modern structure (while the squatters were driven out by police, the abandoned house still stands). Regardless of the pride many average Icelanders take in the older buildings you see downtown, developers are seemingly always looking for a way to replace them with tall, steel-glass-and-concrete structures.

Still Torfi believes that it is still possible to stop NASA from shutting its doors for good in June. "Our ambition over the last few decades has been to conserve and strengthen remaining houses and street views from the old town still apparent in the city centre," he says. "It would be a terrible mistake

to remove or demolish old houses at this historical spot, not to mention the cultural value of a unique music scene in NASA. If the city wants to prevent this, it can." ❧

1. NASA today
2. Advertisement for a concert at Sigtún in 1979. No jeans allowed.
3. Disco at Sigtún in 1972. All the popular songs in Europe will be introduced, including the song *Aprés Toi* by Vicky Leandros, who won the Grand Prix competition (Eurovision).

Emil

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## Small, odd and extremely cold

In a small fishing village called Sandgerði we found this 80 year old freezing room. It is almost as old as 66°NORTH for this year marks our 85th anniversary. According to modern standards of quality the freezing room is too humid to store food in so now it is used to store bait for fishing. The temperature in the room is close to -20° celsius or -4° fahrenheit. We thought it would be an ideal location for a photoshoot featuring our clothing for it reminded us of Iceland, small, cold and dark but with a quirky attraction to it.

» See more on [magazine.66north.is](http://magazine.66north.is)

# A Watergate Of Our Own

*Parliament to dismiss criminal charges against former PM Geir H. Haarde?*



**The Watergate scandal was both a low point and a high point in American politics. The downside was that the President turned out to be a crook. The upside was that it showed that no one was above the law, not even the President himself.**

Nixon was forced to resign in 1974, but the results were not as one might have hoped. Bright young people did not rush into politics to prove that they could do a better job than Nixon did. Instead, people who wanted change seemed to have largely lost faith in the system. Arguably, American politics never recovered, leading to Reagan, the Bushes, the Tea Party and (God help us) Newt Gingrich. Perhaps Ford's decision to pardon Nixon as soon as he succeeded to office played a major part in this disillusionment. The former President, it turned out, was above the law after all.

**THE RESULTS OF A REVOLUTION**  
Much the same now seems to be taking place in Iceland. The economic collapse in 2008 laid the flaws of the crony-

based Icelandic political system bare. Many rushed to the streets to demand change, others wrote columns, blogs, even books, made comments, analysed and tried their best to understand what had happened. Prime Minister Geir H. Haarde was forced out of office along with the government he presided over, but change has been slow in coming.

A committee was set up by Parliament to find out the roots of the collapse. The findings were seen as authoritative and laid the blame equally on the political and financial systems. Eventually, the MPs themselves were forced to act, voting on whether to indict four of its own members, two from the Alliance Party and two from the Independence Party, including the former PM himself.

**THE TRUTH WILL COME OUT...**  
The results of the vote were a disappointment to anyone expecting change. Parliament failed to rise above its squabbles, largely voting along party lines. The result was that only one man, the former Prime Minister, was indicted. This made it easier for Geir's

supporters to portray the indictment as politically motivated.

Nevertheless, he was undeniably the man in charge in the years leading up to the collapse, and if someone was to be held accountable, it seemed reasonable to start with Geir Haarde. Even more importantly, the trial would force many of the most powerful people in Iceland to take the stand, and this in itself might force much valuable information on the reasons for the collapse out into the open.

**...OR MAYBE NOT**  
Of course, much of this information would be sensitive, if not downright incriminating, for many of those still in Parliament. Small wonder then that Independence Party Chairman Bjarni Benediktsson recently put forth a motion to suspend the trial. This requires a double vote, first on whether his motion is to be submitted to a vote, and then the vote itself. So far, Parliament has voted in favour of putting his suggestion to a vote. Whether they then will vote in favour of suspending the trial, remains to be seen.

What is clear, however, is that if Parliament votes to shield the former Prime Minister from accountability, then this will lead to further disillusionment with the political system as a whole. Our elected leaders will have proven to be truly above the law, and those desiring change will want nothing to do with such a system. Perhaps this is exactly what the Independence Party is counting on, for it is the best way to make sure that nothing will truly change. 🍷

✍ VALUR GUNNARSSON

# Waiting To Thaw

*Iceland in the international eye - January*

According to the figures on the table, things in Iceland are looking up. Yes, I know we've heard this numerous times before, and it seems that some of our politicians and statisticians have a propensity to play up the good numbers and play down the bad ones. So is there any truth to it?

Standard & Poors recently upped Iceland's outlook from negative to stable, didn't it?

In its January global property investment guide, NuWire Investor, says yes, "Iceland's Real Estate Market is Warming Up." Since October 2011, real estate transactions have surged more than 60% since October of 2011 and the house price index rose 6.28%. "House prices are now just below levels seen in Q1 2008."

The Washington Post (WP) states in a January 17 article that Iceland's inflation has fallen, consumers are spending more cash, that there are new investments in geothermal projects, and that there's no lack of Audis, Mercedes or BMWs on the streets. It reports that Iceland's exports last year were apparently 11 percent higher than the year before—and yet, as we were recently

made aware of by Bloomberg and other sources, corporate failures rose by 11 percent. Ingólfur Bender, an economist at Íslandsbanki, told Bloomberg: "The huge number of company failures indicates that the economy is still severely impaired after the crisis."

Meanwhile, Julie Kozack, chief of the IMF mission in Iceland, is optimistic. She says, "For a country whose entire financial system collapsed, Iceland is doing remarkably well." But there is a note of caution in her voice as she concludes that the country is "not out of the woods yet."

One of the problems appears to be these darned capital controls. I mean, who wants to invest in a country where you can't convert assets to free-flowing cash? Investment Europe, an online fund investment publication, recently cast quite a shadow over the current investment environment, saying that Iceland is presently not much of an option. Capital controls represent "by far the biggest challenge as it stops all additional allocation to foreign assets... if money is repatriated [to Iceland], it cannot find its way out again." This accumulation of domestic funds is not

scheduled to ease until 2020, and all of this "threatens to create an asset price bubble."

Is there someone out there carefully thinking all of this through?

In a story featured in the Sydney Morning Herald, Australia's Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation, Mr Bill Shorten says: "...Comparing us [Australia] to Iceland...Walt Disney couldn't have dreamed that one up...the idea that we are becoming like Iceland when we can buy three times as much Icelandic króna as we used to...the only thing we have in common with Iceland is we are both an island."

Obviously Mr Shorten doesn't see Iceland in a particularly optimistic light. I guess he has too many of his own woes to consider our tenderfoot 'successes.'

And it's here the WP story steps in again. "Beneath the façade, real problems and deep uncertainty remain.

Continues on page 18

# WHY I BOTHER, PT. IV

*Parliament to write a bill legalizing surrogacy "as soon as possible"*

Late in 2010 an Icelandic couple made the news. A surrogate mother in India, paid for by the couple, had given birth to a baby boy but Icelandic law prohibited them from bringing the baby home. Surrogacy isn't legal in Iceland so the couple could not be considered the baby's legal parents. It took them three to four months to gain citizenship and a passport and all the other legal documents needed for the baby. Up until this point, surrogacy as a topic had been somewhat ignored by the media and parliament. This was about to change.

In early 2011, a parliamentary resolution was proposed to legalise altruistic surrogacy (as opposed to commercial, meaning the surrogate mother is not paid beyond reimbursement for occupational and/or medical expenses). Subsequently, comments were sought from various companies and public offices (including those dealing with human rights and children's rights), as well as loads of unions (nurses and doctors), associations (almost all of the formal women's movements) and local as well as global organisations (the Icelandic division of The Red Cross and Save the Children). Long story short, al-

most all responses were either negative or highly sceptical.

Apparently, parliament doesn't care. Last month, on January 18, a resolution was passed stating that a bill shall be written "as soon as possible" (for real) to legalise surrogacy, regardless of the opposition of various experts. The bill is more than likely to pass through parliament without much opposition.

Now, I don't want to waste more space writing about legal issues or the history of research on surrogacy in this part of the world or any other. What I do want to address is the moral aspect, my reservations, my opposition, as a woman and as a human. The first question we automatically ask ourselves (or at least I did) is: how can it be a bad thing in a prosperous society for healthy women to help out some poor barren person or persons, by lending our body if we feel up to it and want to do it?

Here is what I came up with: I feel the idea in itself reduces women to machines of reproduction. I sense objectification:

Continues on page 18

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# Work Is Humiliation

*Santiago Sierra comes to Iceland and brings a giant NO with him*

Spanish artist Santiago Sierra brings with him a giant NO to Reykjavík. It's the main piece of the 'NO: Global Tour,' which has finally reached Reykjavík. It's simply two giant letters, N and O, each twice the size of a grown man, that travel the world, to places where there is a reason for saying NO. "It works perfectly in every context. It's like a magnetic field. It attracts attention and attracts its own context," Santiago tells me when we sit down at Hafnarhúsið, which will host his exhibition until April 15. "This island had a silent revolution. People were saying no to a lot of things," he continues and when I tell him that perhaps the main anti-establishment website during the protest was called "The Daily No" (Dagblaðið Nei.), he smiles and says: "Perfect."

While he's now bringing us a giant No, Sierra has made a career out of making people say yes to the strangest requests, often using money to persuade people to do things that most of us would always say no to. There are almost fifty videos and photographs of his work at the exhibition (and also on [santiagosierra.com](http://santiagosierra.com)) and often the description of the work says it all:

*Eight people paid to remain inside cardboard boxes in Guatemala.*

*Sixty-eight people paid to block a museum entrance in South-Korea.*

*Veterans of the wars of Afghanistan, Iraq and Northern Ireland facing the corner in a Manchester gallery.*

*Ten inch line shaved on the heads of two junkies who received a shot of heroin as payment in Puerto Rico.*

*Ten black men penetrate 10 white men.*

*Six unemployed young men from Old Havana were hired for \$30 in exchange for being tattooed.*

*Ten people paid to masturbate in Havana, Cuba.*

And in Iceland he's looking for a bank employee with a guilt complex, but when we met nobody had applied yet. "All he has to do is stand facing a corner, just like in detention," Santiago says.

## THE ARM OF LIFE

For him this is all a way to make art

## Words

Ásgeir H. Ingólfsson

## Photography

Alisa Kalyanova



connect with real life. "To pay people is nothing new, it's always being done. When you enter an art gallery a lot of people have been there, cleaning, hanging up lights, selling tickets, getting things ready. Art is part of the world and everybody participates, whether they are inside the gallery or not," he says. He mentions a piece that illustrates this, described as "A worker's arm passing through the ceiling of an art space from a dwelling." Says Santiago: "Behind every work of art there is life and in that case, the life was the people living above the art museum. There is always some connection, the people at the museum are no different to those outside it."

This is something most people will agree on, but what about exploiting people for art—is that any better than exploiting them for capitalism?

"We don't hire people forever, just for a day. I'm trying to make things look worse than they are. And what we're doing is symbolic—but I also live in the capitalist world, I have to sell my art. In Cuba I paid men 30 dollars to masturbate—30 dollars are a decent monthly wage in Cuba."

But isn't that the same argument Western companies use when they pay people much less, say, in Chinese factories then in Western ones, that they're still getting better paid than the average Chinese farmworker? "If I pay more I'll

look like a good person—but that is not the purpose of my work, to make myself look like a good person. It's to talk about how things are, which is why I cannot pay with equality or fairly."

## PAID HUMILIATION

And the amount of pay is actually crucial to many of his works. Sometimes the subjects realise this. One of

*You have to convince yourself that what you're doing is wonderful, meaningful...*

the pieces is described thusly: "Two women took turns during a week, for three hours each day, tied down from their ankles to a wooden block. They were paid 5,000 pesetas an hour, some \$24, the equivalent to the fixed price for sexual services in the streets of this zone. One of them, aware of the possible commercial workings of the piece, requested, as a condition for doing the job, 10% of the profits the artist might receive."

And sometimes the artist puts the

words in their mouth, as he did when he hired a beggar in Birmingham to say the following words to the video camera: "My participation in this project could generate a \$72,000 profit. I am paid \$5."

Yet, what is the justification for getting people to humiliate themselves for the sake of art? "This is very common. To feel humiliated working—to work is humiliation in itself," he says. "You have to convince yourself that what you're doing is wonderful, meaningful... maybe for you it's terrible to masturbate in front of a camera, but others do far worse things and call it work."

Does that apply to Santiago's work? "I'm not a worker, I haven't worked since 1995. I'm not working. A person who's working has to depend on a salary, has to work to make somebody else rich, and that is humiliating. I think that the dictatorship is the workplace. The only way is to find a collaborative system, with equality. You have a boss, there is a structure there and exploitation, even if we have different ways of hiding it."

And how does he manage not to work? "It's all about organisation, to work for oneself instead of having a boss to answer to. Those who work manual labour could structure their work so that they take turns. There really isn't that much work to be done, it just has to be evenly distributed. Some

call it anarchism, but I think it's just about doing what's right."

So I ask him if he is doing what's right. "I try to, with my ideas and what I do," he says. "But I live in this society and you don't always have a choice. But the goal is always to do right and be true to myself."

## MEDIA DISTORTION

But how do others feel about his work? "I often get criticised in the media. Not because of the works, but because the media has a preconception of what they should say. And they are not always independent; there are often advertisers and owners to answer to. And the media often creates hype around my work when there is none, when everything is peaceful around the exhibition they make up a drama. Which is a shame, I want to have a dialogue with the media, but it's not going too well."

But outside the mainstream the reaction is different. "I find that independent media are the best—bloggers etc. There I find voices that I connect to. And the people that come to my shows are well educated and they understand. That's not the problem but the distortion in the media," he says, leaving The Grapevine very nervous that it will somehow distort his work and his words. ☺

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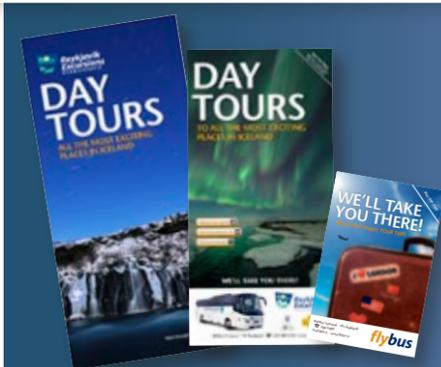
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# A Vicious Cycle Of Victimisation

Two feminists discuss their critique of mainstream feminism

In late October last year, a group of burka-dressed women who called themselves Big Sister, announced that they had “gone underground” to collect a list of 56 names and 117 numbers of alleged prostitution purchasers, which they then handed to the police. Under a clear but self-denied Orwellian slogan “Big Sister is watching you!” they called for legal action to be taken against these prostitution buyers.

Little to nothing has been heard or seen of Big Sister since then, but their one and only act did certainly have a stirring effect as it snowballed into a discourse, from which two female voices have particularly stood out due to their critique of the mainstream feminist agenda projected by Big Sister.

Not professing to predominant feminist attitudes on issues like prostitution, porn, gender quotas, stereotypes, rhetoric and men, to name a few, these two women, author Eva Hauksdóttir and anonymous blogger Móðursýkin (“The Hysteria”) have deepened the discourse with an often thankless layer of challenging ideas. To better understand their stance, I met up with them and began by simply asking why they take part in this discourse.

## EMPOWERING ERRORS

“I shudder at the mere thought of the woman’s general victimisation,” says Móðursýkin, a self-described anarcho-feminist. “I see it as a big error within feminist theory, which has to undergo a debate inside the feminist milieu.” Eva, who doesn’t like to label herself, but says she relates most to the existential-feminism of French feminist Simone de Beauvoir, agrees with Móðursýkin. “A woman should be allowed to exist on her own terms she should be allowed what is good for her as long as it doesn’t violate others.”

But isn’t the woman subordinated in the society we live in? I ask. “Some claim so but I really disagree,” Móðursýkin says. “And why should she always be a victim? I started to feel like my ex-boyfriend was violent towards me in our sex life, after spending too much time on victim-feminist ideas like penetration being violent in itself. Then I was shocked, realising how sick these thoughts were and how important it is to

## Words

Snorri Páll Jónsson Úlfhildarson

## Illustration

Inga María Brynjarsdóttir

Defining prostitution as human trafficking is thus as wrong as defining chocolate production and consumption as slavery

break away from them.”

Eva and Móðursýkin see this general victimisation working against women’s ability to see and feel themselves as strong beings, eventually creating a vicious circle. “Feminism is all about empowering women, but how can a woman be empowered when constantly undermined as a victim?” Móðursýkin asks. Eva continues, bringing up the lack of women in the media and political discourse. “Of course we should ask ourselves how women’s position in those fields can be strengthened, but we don’t do that with a comfortable settlement in the never-ending victim role.”

## SEX, COFFEE AND COALMINES

Back to the original discussion on Big Sister and their campaign against prostitution, I ask them about the link between prostitution on one hand and violence and human trafficking on the other. It seems widely recognised that those phenomena go hand in hand, for instance in one of the openly stated aims of Feministafélag Íslands (Iceland’s Feminist Association), which is “to fight against any manifestation of gender inequality,” including “the pornification, aggressive, derogatory advertisements, violence, human trafficking and prostitution.”

“It is true that human trafficking and other forms of violence can thrive well where prostitution occurs, especially in poor areas,” Eva says. “But the same applies to coffee and cocoa production and so many other industries. Defining prostitution as human trafficking is thus as wrong as defining chocolate production and consumption as slavery. The two might cross, but it doesn’t make them one and the same. Absolutely not. We hear it all the time that we shouldn’t accept the fact that there is a need for prostitution in society. This argument implies that prostitutes are all women in distress. Some of them surely are, but

not all. So shouldn’t we first try to create a society where women worldwide can make a living without being forced to use such a method, before we take it away from them? It isn’t possible to forbid poverty.”

Móðursýkin goes on about jobs that could be considered slave labour, such as coal mining, and says that if she had to choose between those two fields, prostitution would be her choice. “What mostly shocks me, Eva says, “is how women who work in this field are not listened to, but instead defined as victims, even if they stand up against such a definition themselves.”

## WHERE ARE ALL THE HAPPY PARLIAMENTARIANS?

But are there any substantial examples of women rising up in order to protect their honour as prostitutes? Isn’t the happy whore just a mere myth as repeatedly stated, for instance by Big Sister? “I have never understood this demand for the prostitute to be happy. Why isn’t she just allowed to do her job as most other people?” Móðursýkin says. I admit that a demand for the happy doctor, the happy bank employee “or the happy parliamentarian,” Móðursýkin adds isn’t very commonly heard, but at the same time I I’m not aware of prostitutes rising up to defend their reputation.

Eva blames the stigmatisation of prostitution and particularly the small

size of Iceland’s society. “But I like to refer to Susanne Møller, a spokesperson for the Danish Sex Workers Interest Group, who in 2008 squeezed into a conference on prostitution and human trafficking, which she had not been invited to take part in,” Eva says. After finally being allowed to join, Susanne was not introduced as a spokesperson for this association but as a representative of the happy prostitute. “She started her speech,” explains Eva, “by criticising the use of this concept as it doesn’t come from prostitutes themselves but from their opponents, seemingly in order to humiliate them. Susanne pointed out how prostitutes simply experience good days and bad days, just as any other employees.”

The two believe that the concept creates a marginalising polarisation of the vulnerable victim and the happy whore. However, Eva is sure that most prostitutes are located somewhere on the large spectrum in between these two margins. She says that in most Nordic countries, members of sex-workers’ associations find the shame and stigma surrounding prostitution being the worst elements of the discourse.

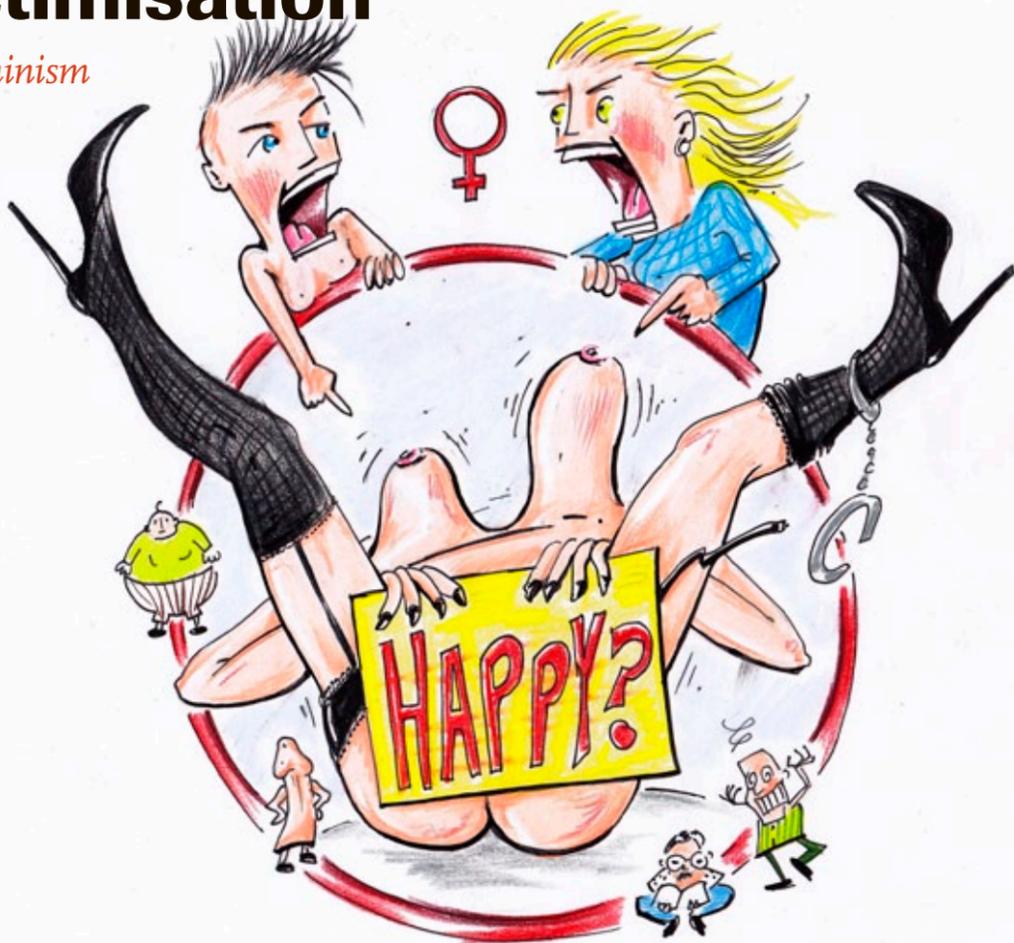
## A NECESSARY POISON

“The stigma is strong and dangerous,” Móðursýkin says, “especially in light of the victimisation. I have witnessed discussions where people seriously ques-

tion prostitutes’ ability to judge their own happiness.” Eva continues: “In discussions on the web I have seen people state that prostitutes in defence of their jobs are too brainwashed to even know and understand what they themselves are saying.”

Recently, in a widely circulated article, Eva was accused of adding weight to anti-feminist attitudes. Eva says the author asked her “not to poison the discourse.” So I ask them if they aren’t afraid of actually entering an anti-feminist rhetoric, satisfying misogynist men and thereby destroying the work of those fighting for gender equality. “No doubt, some idiotic men can interpret my writings as such,” Móðursýkin says. “But as I find today’s mainstream feminist discourse very unwelcoming especially for men, who of course have to be included in that discourse I am trying to open up a conversation about feminism and its discourse.”

Eva adds: “It will always be possible to find something against feminism, and everything coming from feminists can be abused in a dishonest purpose. The only thing I ask is for people to back up what they say with arguments and be willing to look at things from more than one perspective. If that demand means “to poison the discourse,” then I would feel ashamed of myself for not poisoning it.”





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AH33 Northern Lights Mystery - Csabai wrote: Thursday, January 26, 2012:

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# Twists And Turns In The History Of The Icelandic Communist Movement

*From Copenhagen via Moscow and Reykjavík to Havana*

The Icelandic communist movement began earlier, had closer ties with The Kremlin, lasted longer, and was more influential than had previously been recognised. These are the main conclusions of my book, 'Íslenskir kommúnistar 1918–1998' ("Icelandic Communists 1918–1998"), which was published in the autumn of 2011 and has been provoking heated debate amongst Icelandic historians.

The Icelandic communist movement can be traced back to November 1918 when two Icelandic students at Copenhagen University, Brynjólfur Bjarnason and Hendrik S. Ottósson, became political radicals after participating in a Copenhagen street riot. They were in touch with the main Soviet agent in the Nordic countries at the time, Fredrik Ström, who sponsored their trip to Moscow in 1920 to attend the second Comintern congress. There they heard Vladimir Lenin discuss the strategic importance of Iceland in a coming war in the North Atlantic and met some future leaders of the international communist movement, such as the famous German propaganda master Willi Münzenberg, who would later mentor Joseph Goebbels. The two young Icelanders also received some funds to use for propaganda in Iceland.

## COMMUNISM ARRIVES TO ICELAND

In the next few years a small, but determined, communist nucleus—consisting mostly of young intellectuals who had studied in Denmark and Germany—formed in Iceland as the radical wing of the Social Democratic Party. Those communists had close ties to the Comintern, sending representatives to all its congresses, not only in 1920, but also in 1921, 1922, 1924 and 1928. Moreover, the Comintern sent agents to Iceland to help organize a communist party: Olav Vegheim in 1925, Hugo Sillén in 1928 and 1930, and Haavard Langseth, Harry Levin and (possibly) Viggo Hansteen in 1930.

Finally, the Icelandic Communist Party was established in November 1930 with Brynjólfur Bjarnason as its chairman. During The Great Depression, the communists organised a number of violent clashes with the police, mostly



in connection with labour disputes. A Comintern agent, Willi Mielenz, was sent to Iceland in 1932, probably to advise on illegal activity (which had been his specialty in the German Communist Party). The Icelandic communists even organised a fighting force, modelled on the German Rot Front (Red Front, the communist fighting force), and sent around twenty Icelanders for revolutionary training in Moscow. One of those trainees, Hallgrímur Hallgrímsson, later fought in the Spanish Civil War. Archives in Moscow reveal that the Icelandic Communist Party was closely monitored and financially supported by the Comintern, by then tightly controlled by Stalin and his clique. The Party faithfully followed the changing directives from Moscow, fighting against Social Democrats as "social fascists" until 1934, but trying to establish a "United Front" with them after that.

Unlike its counterparts in other Western European countries, it succeeded in luring some leading Social Democrats into its camp, and in October 1938, the Socialist Unity Party was established. Its first chairman was the Social Democrat Héðinn Valdimarsson, but the communists controlled the party, which became evident in 1939, when Héðinn and some of his followers left in disgust over the communists' unwavering support for Stalin's politics. The communist Einar Ólgeirsson then became chairman of the Socialist Unity Party.

## SECRET TIES TO MOSCOW REMAIN

Their close ties to Moscow remained. Leading members of the Socialist Unity Party, such as Kristinn E. Andrésson and Einar Ólgeirsson, went to Moscow, gave reports and received advice (and funding). The Party also followed the Soviet line in international affairs, defend-

ing the notorious show trials in Eastern Europe and the communist invasion of South Korea. The socialists staged violent demonstrations in the spring of 1949 when Iceland joined NATO.

Archives in Moscow reveal that in the 1950s and 1960s, the Socialist Unity Party received substantial financial

## The Icelandic political pilgrims had hopes of seeing the dictator, Fidel Castro

support directly from the Soviet Communist Party, and important assistance from it and from other communist parties in Central Europe, in particular the East German Socialist Unity Party, SED. Needless to say, this was kept strictly secret. The only example I have found of the Socialist Unity Party not adhering to the Moscow line was that it refused to condemn those communist parties that had fallen out with Kremlin leaders, such as the Yugoslavian party in the late 1940s, and later the Albanian and Chinese parties.

After the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, those Icelandic socialists who wanted to sever ties with Moscow gained the upper hand in the Socialist Unity Party. In the autumn of 1968, the People's Alliance (which had previously existed as a loose electoral alliance) began to operate as a party, and the Socialist Unity Party disbanded. The considerable properties that the Socialist Unity Party had accumulated, most likely with Soviet money, remained in the hands of the old leadership of the Socialist Unity Party, but were later sold



to solve a financial crisis in the People's Alliance.

Some leading members of the People's Alliance, including Lúðvík Jósepsson (chairman 1977–80) and Svavar Gestsson (chairman 1980–87), discreetly maintained ties to the Soviet Union, for example with visits to Moscow. From 1967 to 1968, Svavar Gestsson had attended a special cadre school in East Berlin, called Institut für Gesellschaftswissenschaften bei ZK der SED (The Institute for Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party), which was supposed to be the highest educational institution for the country's communist elite. After 1968, however, Svavar Gestsson and other leading socialists increasingly turned to Ceausescu's Romania and Castro's Cuba for inspiration.

During its lifetime, between 1938 and 1968, the Socialist Unity Party was stronger than its counterparts in most other Western European countries. It received, for example, 19.5% of the votes in 1949 and 16% in 1953. Its chairman to the end, Einar Ólgeirsson, remained a staunch supporter of the Soviet regime. The People's Alliance, mostly controlled by the socialists, participated four times in government during the Cold War, 1956–58, 1971–74, 1978–1979, and 1980–1983, and some of its ministers were old Stalinists, including Lúðvík Jósepsson and Magnús Kjartansson,

neither of whom ever repented publicly. The Icelandic socialists were also very influential both in the labour movement and in Icelandic cultural life (partly, as the Moscow archives show, due to generous support from The Soviet Union).

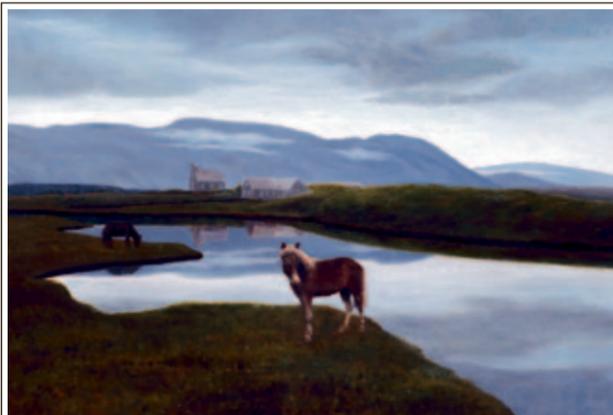
While The Socialist Unity Party was in effect a communist party, the same cannot be said about the People's Alliance, which operated as a party between 1968 and 1998. However, many in the People's Alliance were sympathetic to the communist states. Some of my left-wing colleagues at the University of Iceland even volunteered to harvest sugar cane in Cuba in the 1980s, proudly defending the oppressive communist regime there. Significantly, also, the last act of The People's Alliance ("Alþýðubandalagið"), in November 1998, was to accept an invitation from the Cuban Communist Party. The Icelandic delegation to Cuba included the former chairman, Svavar Gestsson, and the last chair Margrét Frimannsdóttir (chair from 1995). The Icelandic political pilgrims had hopes of seeing the dictator, Fidel Castro, who did not however bother to receive them. Thus, the history of the Icelandic communist movement ended, in the poet's words, not with a bang, but with a whimper. 🍷

## Words

Hannes H. Gissurarson

1. This is an historic photograph from the personal archive of Einar Ólgeirsson at the National Library of Iceland. It shows a young communists' meeting in Moscow in July 1920 in connection with the 2nd Comintern congress. The two Icelanders, Hendrik Ottósson and Brynjólfur Bjarnason, are standing in the second row farthest to the right. Stalin later had at least three of the people photographed here killed, including Lazar Shatskin (front row, 3rd from left), Willi Münzenberg (front row, 6th from left), and Otto Unger (second row, 4th from left). Max Barthel (front row, 7th from left) became a Nazi, and Ruth Fischer (front row, 8th from left) a fervent anti-communist working with the CIA.

2. Ingi R. Helgason, the executive director of the Social Unity Party from 1956–62, delivers a message from his party to the 1966 congress of the Soviet Communist Party. For many years, Ingi R. Helgason was the party's grey eminence. His daughter, Álfheiður Ingadóttir, is currently a Left-Green member of parliament.



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*“The establishment’s role is always to object. But the artists and free-thinkers need to ignore all of this bullshit completely and try to overcome it”*

After an exhilarating performance of Giacinto Scelsi’s ‘Hymnos,’ the conductor turns to the audience and tells us that because we will probably never hear the piece performed again, we should pick a new spot in the hall and they will do it one more time. He turns back around again, and the audience shuffles to their new seats to experience an acoustically variant take two.

I make my way up to the second floor balcony of Harpa’s Eldborg Hall and find a seat behind the orchestra with a rare view of the conductor in action. Ilan Volkov is Iceland Symphony Orchestra’s new conductor and music director. The thirty-four year old from Israel began working as a conductor at the early age of nineteen and became the youngest conductor of a BBC symphony orchestra at twenty-seven.

From my new seat, I feel the organ vibrating and I hear fidgeting that the composer probably did not intend for me to hear, but the experience is altogether enlightening. Ilan thrusts his baton violently in one direction, while he glances in another,

and motions in yet another. As the piece becomes more intense, he even opens his mouth as if to let out a big roar over the musicians.

In many ways it is readily apparent that Ilan is not your typical orchestra conductor. But sensing that he has a whole lot more than a game of musical chairs up his sleeve, we meet up with him to chat about his philosophies, his ideas for the orchestra, and his plans to collaborate with local composers, musicians and artists, not to mention, the new modern music festival he is launching this March on John Cage’s centennial anniversary.

It’s a short walk from The Grapevine offices to Harpa, where I will be meeting Ilan Volkov this afternoon. I had been told that his schedule would be tight as he is only in the country for a week and, as we sit down, I notice that he hasn’t had time to eat the sandwich on the coffee table in front of him. Ilan begins his story by telling me that his father was a musician. He recounts his early exposure to music, beginning with the violin and piano at an early age. His formal education in conducting began when he was thirteen, and by seventeen, he says conducting had become his passion. At nineteen, fresh out of school in London, Ilan took on his first conducting job in Newcastle.

“But conducting is not really something you can go to school and learn,” he says, “you have to learn a lot of it on your own. You learn repertoire, history of music, and theory—it’s a big field of stuff—at school, but you also have to learn how to work with a group and this comes with experience. It takes a while to realise what you have to do, psychologically and physically. You need to understand what you’re doing and why you’re doing it, and then how to criticise yourself, to make sure you know if you do something wrong.”

But what exactly does a conductor’s job entail? This is mystifying to most of us who see little more than the conductor’s back. Surely it’s more than waving a baton at a group of musicians.

#### The conductor demystified

“It’s a variety of things,” he says. “It’s an organisational role of directing a big bunch of people who sit quite far from one another and lack an overall picture of what’s going on.” This, he says, can be divided into the practical element of making sure that the orchestra starts and finishes together, and the spiritual element of guiding and motivating a big group, which is accomplished through talking, and a lot of gestures.

He compares the role of a conductor to that of a choreographer or a director, noting similarities in their jobs. “But the conductor differs in that conducting is a physical thing done in real time,” he says. “The conductor does a lot of things that are unspoken, that even the

orchestra doesn’t really realise because there is a lot happening at the same time—the brain is working full time.”

Nonetheless, he doesn’t consider the conductor to be like the striker of a football team. “Part of the problem is that perceptually there appears to be a hierarchy, the conductor is big in the picture, but still part of the group and most of the responsibility lies with the musicians,” he says. “Even if you do a good job conducting, if the musicians don’t play well, it won’t happen. There is a lot of psychology involved. You have to be humble in what you’re doing, even if you’re convinced that you are right. You have to understand the difficulties that others are having because without their will to do it, nothing will work. You’re dealing with a lot of individuals, and each of them can have a bad day.”

I ask him if it isn’t difficult to come in and conduct a new orchestra composed of a large group of people that he doesn’t know very well. “When you go to a new group you have to convince them that you know what you are talking about,” he says. “It takes time.”

Despite being only twenty-seven when he was appointed chief conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony—the youngest chief conductor appointed to a BBC Orchestra—Ilan was able to convince the orchestra that he knew what he was talking about and he says they didn’t mind his young age. He tells me that he looks forward to continuing to work with them as their Principle Guest Conductor. “This is quite rare after you finish your contract,” he says. Usually a conductor packs their bags and says thanks very much, see you in ten years. For me it’s nice to keep a relationship with them. There is a lot about trust and respect. It’s a nice feeling.”

# LIGHTING A FIRE UNDER THE ORCHESTRA

By Anna Andersen  
Photography by Baldur Kristján

## Icelanders are free-thinking

He has yet to reach this stage with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, but he is optimistic. In fact he accepted the position at Iceland Symphony Orchestra because he was keen on being somewhere he could develop his ideas more freely.

"There is no big tradition here hanging over me and telling me I can't do something," he says. "When you are in the first few seasons in a new hall, there is a lot of freedom as nothing is set in stone. For me that was part of the appeal and the fact that the culture here is open and interested in new things. People don't think, 'oh that's a modern piece, I'm not interested in it.'"

I ask him if Icelanders are more freethinking than others and he continues to elaborate on his impressions of the country. "There is a willingness to do things, which I find refreshing," he says. "When I worked at the BBC Scottish, I initially faced a lot of 'No, we can't do that.' There's a lot of that in the orchestra world, there's a lot of wanting to work 9-5. They know what's good; they don't need to be told, to learn something new."

So far, Ilan says that the Iceland Symphony Orchestra has been receptive to the challenges he throws at them. For instance, he has had them rehearse a complicated piece by composer Benedikt Mason, in which each musician has four music stands and they have to turn in circles on an office chair to play different parts. "It was written for an ensemble rather than an orchestra, and it requires a lot of movement," he says. "Even though people didn't know what to expect, and didn't understand a lot of it because it's very tricky, there was a willingness. The attitude that I have felt is great; people are curious and they don't have a negative impulse. This means that I can ask them to do things that I wouldn't otherwise be able to do."

Yet, everything is very new and Ilan says they are still learning about each other, noting that there are a lot of other changes to get used to given the orchestra's new home in Harpa, Iceland's new concert hall and conference hall, which opened last year.

## Moving to Harpa

Before last year when Harpa opened, both the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and Icelandic Opera resided in Háskólabíó, which is also a movie theatre. I recall going to see an opera and being distracted by the smell of popcorn that came seeping through the vents in the middle of the performance. Not to mention, the listening experience has been greatly enhanced.

"Yes, I think the audience is amazed to be in a place where acoustically you really hear things. This is a big change, and it makes the orchestra play much better," he says. "It's also great that the audience has come. At first the orchestra didn't know how many concerts to put on; it was really only at the end of last year that we could tell that it would be really full." Now he says the goal is to keep the audience coming. "We need to keep the audience interested in what we are doing, not only the nice location."

Ilan points out that the orchestra is also now very much at the forefront of the city, a more prominent part of the cultural life. "There is now an opportunity to attract a larger audience and to organise more concerts and education programmes," he says. "There is potential to go on a journey of discovery in a place like this where there is little tradition, an open audience, and a fantastic music hall."

## A new philosophy

I mention that I get the sense that he is being marketed like a rock star conductor, and ask whether classical music needs a facelift, so to speak, to attract a wider audience. While he doesn't necessarily see it that way, he definitely has plans to breathe life into the orchestra.

"There is a tendency for people to think it is necessary to have famous international guests, but often a real connection with the audience is established closer to home," he says. "In the first year that I'm here, I want very much to collaborate with the young talent that grows here. I also want to develop relationships with artists, non-musicians that would collaborate on a more regular basis. I want to expand the view of what the concert is, which does not have to be just one thing."

Despite the fact that Ilan says people have increasingly short attention spans in an age of instant gratification, he is optimistic that he can reach a wider audience. "I think there are ways of get-

ting around this by offering a diverse repertoire of material and working with different kinds of artists and music," he says. "That's why in the Tectonics festival we are doing so many collaborations with people who would otherwise never work with an orchestra. It creates a completely new dynamic where things are unexpected. That's an important part of what music is and what orchestra life is—that's the way it should be anyways."

Ilan says he is pleased that his ideas have been received so well. "I can keep a very traditional orchestra with repertoire and conductors on one hand, while developing a whole new strand of concerts on the other, which will gradually mean a different kind of audience too. Variety is important to me; I hate when I open orchestra brochures and they are almost always the same whether you are in France, England, or America."

The brochure for Tectonics—the new modern music festival that he is launching in March—will certainly not be your standard orchestra fare. It will feature a wealth of John Cage and collaborative pieces with local musicians from a variety of scenes, including electronic, improvisation, and noise.

## Oh Jesus, modernism

Now, I take the opportunity to ask Ilan to explain modernism, which is at the forefront of the new festival. "Oh Jesus, I would say, beginning in the twentieth century, people—like Duchamp, like Cage, like Dada artists—started to look at things and ask totally different questions. And this resulted in a whole bunch of different strands within new music and modern art," he says. "Take for example an old piece by Cage that takes a piano and decides that it is going to be something else. It is still played as a piano, but he completely turns upside down what the player is doing, what the composer doing, and what the listener expects when they look at the instrument."

And the conversation turns to John Cage, a real pioneer in modernism. "I think what's really fascinating about him is that he decided very early on to constraints on his own power to get more out of his music. He was a composer trying to take himself out of the composition process, with less and less control of the outcomes, but the funny thing is that it always sounds like Cage, even if there is almost nothing there, you still know it's Cage," he says.

"It's kind of a whole way of thinking, not only about music, but also about the world. It's very philosophical. From the beginning, he has been understood more by artists than musicians, and he has been more respected in the art world than the music world. Fewer musicians know his music than artists, who learn about it in art classes. In that sense, he was really a new fig-

ure in the world of music and he is still incredibly influential. In many ways a lot of his work is a kind of critique of the powerful structures and he was able to take the rug away from underneath by showing things from a different perspective. It's difficult to explain, but for me, that's most interesting."

## Breaking boundaries

One of John Cage's concepts centred on relinquishing control, and in a number of his pieces he has removed the conductor from the equation completely. As a conductor, I ask Ilan how he feels about this. "Well I've done a lot of his pieces," he says. "In one of them, 'Concert for piano,' the conductor part was a clock. I just stood there and did the clock with my hands, sometimes moving the second hands at the right time, but sometimes speeding up or slowing down. It's a game, like everything he does. He's taking rules about music and turning them upside down. He's of course not interested in having a conductor show off their great expression. He is more interested in the sound being what it is."

I take this opportunity to ask the silly question I had been harbouring. So you don't have to wave a baton? Can it be anything? Like a flashlight? I question. "Oh yeah," he laughs. "I've done it once in Denmark. It was very funny. But it was kind of a disaster. They gave me a flashlight and it stopped working in the show and it became completely dark and nobody could see anything. Yeah people do all sorts of weird stuff now."

I ask him if there any boundaries, and whether there is any point that experimentation goes too far and becomes ridiculous, and he points out that people used to think Stravinsky was too ridiculous. "Once upon a time, 'The Rite of Spring' was impossible. All the orchestras in the world thought this was an impossible piece to play. And now, even youth orchestras play it very well and suddenly you are supposed to play bassoon very high when it was never done in the past," he says. "It is part of a composer's responsibility to push players to a place that they have never been before, and hopefully that is a never-ending process. The establishment's role is always to object. But the artists and free-thinkers need to ignore all of this bullshit completely and try to overcome it."

## Expect the unexpected

As for the orchestra over the next three years, Ilan plans to continue to deliver an exciting and diverse repertoire of material and hopes that the audience will grow to trust his artistic vision. "It's important to me that we keep what we are doing fresh and that we continue on this journey of experiencing new things together with the audience," he says. "Ideally the audience trusts the artistic vision of the orchestra, understands it and takes risks with it, perhaps going to a concert not knowing very much or any of the music, because you can trust that it will be a powerful experience."

Indeed, after an hour of chatting with Ilan, I walk away trusting that we can, at the very least, expect the unexpected. ☺

## Launching Tectonics March gets a new modern music festival

This March, Ilan Volkov is launching a new modern music festival that corresponds with John Cage's centennial anniversary. In addition to being an annual event on Reykjavík's cultural calendar, he will also bring the festival to a new location starting next year with Glasgow with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Read on for some highlights of this exciting programme of fifteen concerts and events involving featuring more than 150 musicians, composers and amateurs...

Ilan tells me he has spent a lot of time researching John Cage, and there will be a day in the festival dedicated to his work. "Two pieces are really interesting that day. One is 'Fifty-eight', which is a piece for a big wind brass band, and we are having young musicians from Iceland play that. It will be the big opening performance of the festival in the foyer area of Harpa on Thursday. It's an un-conducted piece so everybody will be taking a lot of responsibility for the performance. The players will really be making composing decisions as performers. So it will be nice to get a different kind of energy and audience."

The selections of John Cage pieces range the gamut from his early to late works. John Tilbury will be performing one of his really early pieces—a piano concerto—which Ilan says involves hours of preparing the piano to sound like a huge percussion instrument, with every note being specifically modified with different materials—sometimes rubber, sometimes coins. From his later works, the orchestra will perform a selection of time bracket pieces, which Ilan explains, have almost no score. "The musicians basically have to decide for themselves when to come in, and when to stop. Sometimes they have to decide the volume, and only the pitch is notated."

Other Cage performances not to miss include 'Improvisation III,' which is a piece for cassettes that will be performed by musicians including Reptilicus, Slowblow and Stilluppsteypa, and 'Music for Piano with Amplified Sonorous Vessels' which involves sound amplifying vibrating vases in the hall.

There will also be a full day devoted to the Icelandic composer Magnús Blöndal. A pioneer in modernism during the Icelandic '50s and '60s, you could call him Iceland's John Cage equivalent. "I decided in advance to focus on Magnús Blöndal's music," Ilan tells me. "People know it, but they never really hear it in a serious context." After the orchestra performs a few of his pieces, local musicians—Ríkharður Friðriksson, Jóhann Jóhannsson, Kira Kira, and Auxpan—will pay homage to Magnús' electronic music.

Finally, there will be a couple of world premieres over the weekend. One of them is a piece composed by Frank Denyer, especially written for Eldborg Hall. "We tried all kinds of acoustic things; he asked me to whistle and sing while he sat in the hall," Ilan says. "It's like doing something that fits the place and the orchestra, not just another kind of tick on something. It's far more personal and you feel that right away."

And Ilan himself will be debuting his collaboration with Oren Ambarchi, a piece for electric guitar and orchestra. "We are thinking about doing something with very little actually written. I will be using gestures to react with the orchestra to what he's playing on the electric guitar. It's kind of a new way of trying to do something," he says, also admitting that he "has no clue how it will work yet."

The festival takes place March 1–3 at Harpa. Tickets available at [midi.is](http://midi.is) ☺

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Advice | For you!



Don't Ask Nanna!

**Disclaimer:** This is The Grapevine's BAD ADVICE column. It's where Nanna Árnadóttir answers questions from our readers about traversing the Icelandic cultural jungle. She is usually nice, but really rather bad at giving advice...

Dear Nanna,  
Recently I saw in my local supermarket that they were selling "Boy" and "Girl" ice creams where the "Girl" ice cream wrapper was pink and the "Boy" ice cream wrapper was blue! My girl (my youngest) picked the pink also and my daughter made fun of him! I was so shocked. I never expected that my girl was so stuck on stereotypes. I've really tried hard to teach my kids that boys can like pink and girls can like blue but it doesn't seem to have gotten through. Any advice?  
Best, Gender Construction Sucks

Dear Gender Construction Sucks, I'm shocked you didn't give your daughter a medal for putting your wussy pink-loving son in his rightful place (are you sure he even has a penis?). Boys are supposed to love blue and girls are supposed to love pink and the only people who don't think that way are fat, ugly and easily offended hard-line feminists.

I know this because once upon a time I had the misfortune of meeting a feminist. She kept saying things like gender binary and hetero-normity and I swear it had adverse effects on my manicure. In fact just hearing the phrase social construction splits the seams in my girdle.

I felt deep shame when Iceland insisted on negotiating with these gender terrorists and pulled this product off the Icelandic food market following a public outrage. We are playing with fire here lady, first the pink and blue ice creams, then they'll let women become prime ministers and boys become nurses! Wait...

My advice for you is to whip your boy into shape. Force him to play with cars and toy weapons, if he reaches for a doll, hit him in the face with a cooking appliance. If we don't ensure our children live up to stereotypes we risk instilling in society a sense of equality and mutual respect between the genders and who the hell could possibly want that? Not me, that's who.

Best,  
Nanna

Hi Nanna,  
I read that in Iceland you have elves and

hidden people. In one YouTube video a girl even talked about how she had sex with them. If I wanted to meet a hidden person or an elf, how would I go about it?

Thanks,  
Elf Hunter

Elf Hunter,

Listen, I don't know how to break this to you so I'm just going to give it to you straight. You aren't about to give any elf blowjobs. Hidden people don't exist, loser. Árni Björnsson, ethnologist and author of 'Saga Daganna' (Icelandic Feasts and Holidays), has suggested the whole myth was started by—what else—home made liquor.

In the olden days on Christmas Eve, someone was usually left behind to watch the farm while everyone else went to church or to some awesome house party. Sometimes the poor sod who got left behind would then be approached by a lonely homeless drifter looking for a good time with some sweet nectar. Given a choice between getting drunk with a questionable hobo or sitting quietly and waiting around for everyone to come home most people went for the dodgy drinking binge. Then by the time everyone got home and found the guy in charge pissing himself and acting a fool, they made the only logical jump, that elves drove him temporarily mad. But yeah, you're not going to make any elf friends, you could make friends with some homeless people though.  
Nanna

Continued from page 8

## Waiting To Thaw

Businesses and households remain mired under crushing debt, thanks in part to the mortgage system that ties loan balances to the soaring consumer price index. People tell tales of friends seeking antidepressants and families foregoing trips to the dentist...half of a nation's households find it difficult to make ends meet.

It's a well-known fact that people are scampering off to other countries. Social-welfare-rich Norway is a popular destination for Icelandic émigrés. "There's a significant threat to brain drain going forward," a business professor from the University of Reykjavík told the WP.

In the words of one Arion Bank employee, this Icelandic mortgage system is nothing more than feudalistic serfdom.

Isn't there something seriously asked with this picture? So, the IMF is generally happy, real estate sales are up, export sales were up by 11 percent, Standard & Poors upgraded Iceland's financial standing, yet unemployment still

(officially) hovers at around 7 percent, companies are falling like bricks, and the people are slow-steaming, waiting to thaw for a full-on spring pot-bashing. Or are we missing something entirely?

Someone has money stashed away somewhere. On January 7, Baltic Business reported that the owners of Iceland's IKEA franchise, Sigurður and Jón Pálmason (brothers of Jón Ásgeir Jóhannesson's wife, Ingibjörg Stefánía Pálmadóttir), are building an IKEA store in Vilnius and are in the process of expanding their empire into Estonia and Latvia. Their Lithuanian company "has acquired 15 hectares of land and plan to start construction this spring for a 25,000 square-meters [sic] store... the total investment is expected to exceed 100 million Euros."

Don't tell me that there are exceptions to the capital control regulations.

In a recent over-the-counter chat with an Íslandsbanki employee, I myself asked the question. "So things ARE looking up, right?"

"You gotta be kidding me," she said.

"All over the world, the media is praising Iceland's hardiness, steadfastness. An example of a little fish out-swimming the sharks."

"Pah!" she snapped.

"People are spending more money, aren't they?" I countered.

"Do you believe everything you read? Many of us have already used up our pension funds. We have too much pride to go on unemployment."

Pride. There's that five-letter word again.

Heimir Hannesson, a student at the University of Iceland, told the WP: "The smaller the country gets, the bigger the national pride, the bigger the soul. Here we are on a tiny island, with nothing but our pride."

Now how much is that worth on the open market? ♡

MARC VINCENZ

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## Making Digital Waves Across The World

*Yatra Arts seeks a wider audience for Icelandic electronic music in 2012. That can't be a bad thing, can it?*

In December 2011, local industrial act Reptilicus released 7" single 'Initial Conditions,' after a thirteen-year hiatus. This important event in Iceland's electronic music scene happened in no small part due to the work of Praveer Bajjal, a Canadian who heads Yatra Arts, a record label and event promoter looking to spread word of Iceland's experimental electronics scene beyond these shores. The Grapevine met up with Praveer to find out more about Yatra Arts, and how he helped to get Reptilicus back on the music making horse.

**When did you first become aware of and interested in Icelandic music?**

I first became aware of Icelandic music in the '80s through familiar names such as KUKL, Björk and The Sugarcubes.

In my usual quest to discover new records, I came across 'Crusher Of Bones' LP by Reptilicus. I could only imagine that there wasn't a whole lot of music being imported to Iceland at the time, so the fact that these guys were active in this area of music was exciting in itself.

**Reptilicus have been on a long hiatus until now. How did you manage to get them active again?**

Back in 2009 I was communicating with Danish-Icelandic musician Rúnar Magnússon, who asked me if I could set up some concerts for him in Toronto, which I did. We got to talking and I found out that he was very good friends with Jóhann and Gummi of Reptilicus. It had been a while since I had spoken to them so I got in touch and started a

dialogue, just friendly chitchat. Then I heard in 2010 that they were performing at the Donaufestival festival in Vienna. I watched clips from their show

*I've seen a whole range of talented artists in an area of music that not very many were aware of in Iceland*

and quickly realised that what they were doing really appealed to me. Their sound was really dubby, minimalist and industrial—a winning combination in my books.

Then Jóhann commented on Facebook that he was a massive fan of German electronic artist Senking, a Raster Noton artist who I had worked with. I spoke to him about it and I basically said to him that I was restarting Yatra Arts and the timing was parallel to their comeback.

**There was synergy then...**

Oh definitely. I wanted to release a 7" from them and they said they were interested in doing it. Jóhann had actually posted an early demo version of 'Initial Conditions' on Soundcloud. I heard it and thought 'This is a fantastic track!' so I told Jóhann that I wanted to release it and told him to pull it from Soundcloud ASAP, which he did.

**What are your overall thoughts on the experimental electronic scene in Iceland?**

I've seen a whole range of talented artists in an area of music that not very many were aware of in Iceland. Take Auxpan, for example. I first heard him on a compilation through the Austrian label, Laton, which also had the likes of Mika Vainio, but few in Iceland know this.

There's also really great work being done in the realm of visual arts here. I don't think that there are many labels looking into that sort of thing. It's given me a clear vision of what I want to do with Icelandic artists.

**Now that you've released material from Reptilicus, what else can we expect from Yatra Arts in 2012?**

We'll be producing more releases in 2012. We're looking to do a split release with AMFJ and Auxpan on limited release followed by a split release with Thoranna Björnsdóttir, aka Trouble, and Björk Viggósdóttir on cassette. And then we're working on a compilation CD titled 'Quadrant,' featuring tracks by four Icelandic artists: Rúnar Magnússon, Auxpan, Thoranna and Jóhann Erikksson, solo.

So Yatra Arts is working hard at fusing some of the power electronics with some of the minimalist sounds in Iceland. The new Reptilicus single is a reflection of that. ♡

BOB CLUNESS  
YATRA ARTS

not entitled to children. Much like we are not entitled to sex, should we not be able to find a willing partner.

Here's where things get a little confusing. I don't like the idea of renting a woman's womb or whole body and mind for your personal gain. BUT altruistic surrogacy implies, as so many other ideas in our culture, that women's bodies are supposed to be used for good, women are supposed to want to give up control of their bodies and mind to please. Not for financial gain, just to please other people. Just because they can.

A popular argument for surrogacy states that the women who undergo it are not in any way connected to the child growing in their womb and therefore have no trouble giving it up at birth. They say it like it's a good thing. When children would routinely die at

birth or at a very young age, parents were accustomed to not bonding with their babies; they couldn't really expect them to live. This is a survival mechanism, reinforced by nature and encouraged by culture. It's not acceptable or sensible or right or fabulous. It's sad. It's something we should avoid. Let's not try to disconnect people from their bodies. Let's try to encourage a strong and healthy relationship between our bodies and minds rather than discouraging it.

HILDUR LILLIENDAHL

Continued from page 8

### Why I Bother, Pt. IV

disregard of everything but the female body's ability to carry children. Take a look at prostitution. Woman can be fucked—man can't find fuck. Why should we object to said man reimbursing said woman for said fuck? We shouldn't care whether or not woman wants to fuck: we know she can. God forbid that we should ask: why does she want to? Most women are repelled by the idea. Still, we shouldn't question their motives, wonder about their social situation or if they might be in need or under pressure. We, as a society, don't generally consider it to be a human right to have children. Those who can either do or don't, and those who can't may try to find other ways—but they're

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**Tómas R. Einarsson**  
**Strengur**  
[myspace.com/tomasreinarsson](http://myspace.com/tomasreinarsson)  
Not an everyday album

'Strengur, the latest work by string musician Tómas R Einarsson, uses the metaphor of 'strengir' "strings") to tie together what is basically a concept album, based around the idea of the 'strengir' on a double bass, the 'strengir' (the word can also mean "water currents") in rivers and other bodies of water around Iceland, and the 'strengir' that connect him with his forefathers.

The album, beautifully dedicated with a poem to his late daughter Ástriður, is thus built around recordings taken up of rivers and streams all over Iceland, and then overlaid with a double bass and percussion that 'follow' the movements and rhythms of the water. Though potentially 'Strengur' is based on a concept which could very well cave in on its own complexity, it is so simply and beautifully done that it does the opposite, and using these three 'strings', a fine album has been crafted.

✂ - BERGRÚN ANNA HALLSTEINSDÓTTIR



**Daníel Bjarnason/Ben Frost**  
**Sólaris**  
[www.bedroomcommunity.net](http://www.bedroomcommunity.net)  
Freezy listening

SÓLARIS is inspired by Stanislaw Lem's book of the same name and the subsequent film by Tarkovsky. Its initial performance also featured electronic manipulation of the film by Brian Eno and Nick Robertson.

Realistically you'd expect it to be stunted when detached from its visual other. This album though...this album is pretty damn good. Pretty, pretty damn good. A slow surging cacophony of sounds clustering and compacting in space, making it so dense and thick that it's almost hard to breathe, then release when the piece ends and the space is clear. Sigh of relief.

It's one for the headphones. Or ear-phones. Or whatever the hell you use to block out the outside world. One for the dark. Lock the door, phone off, turn out the lights, lie in bed, close eyes, open ears, nothing gets in but the sounds coming through the speakers. Immersion therapy.

Just shut up and listen, ok?  
✂ - CLYDE BRADFORD



**Megas og Strengir**  
**Aðför að lögum**  
[myspace.com/megasogsenuthjofamir](http://myspace.com/megasogsenuthjofamir)  
Difficult

An Icelandic legend, a veritable local Bob Dylan/Tom Waits/eccentric troubadour, Megas is a staple of many Icelandic homes; I am certainly not alone in having been raised with the sound of his strange voice filling the living room at regular intervals.

For his latest album 'Aðför að Lögum,' Megas worked with a string quintet and used music composed by his son Þórður. Apart from his usual clever lyrics (which will be missed by those who don't understand the language), the music itself is difficult and not something that will be gracing my cd player regularly. The opener is a particularly discordant track, which if played instrumentally could be from the soundtrack of a horror film. The rest of the album moves along the same lines, and while it could possibly be considered interesting by those inclined to these things, it is not for the faint-hearted.

✂ - BERGRÚN ANNA HALLSTEINSDÓTTIR



**Náttfari**  
**Töf**  
[www.nattfari.bandcamp.com](http://www.nattfari.bandcamp.com)  
This is an album

'Töf' is Náttfari's debut even though they formed way back in 2000. This is because Náttfari had been on hiatus since 2002 and only reunited to play Airwaves 2010.

'Töf' itself works best when listened to as a whole. It doesn't seem like just a bunch of songs thrown together like most albums; it sounds like a collection of songs intended to have their own specific place within the album. Initially songs seem a little unfinished insofar as they don't seem to go anywhere, but as the album unfurls they start to make sense within the context of the whole.

This album will likely get lumped into the Post-Rock category, which is what you get for having little to no vocals, but there is a strong Kraut-Rock vibe going on too. 'Töf' also has a really nice sense of space. Individual parts are allowed to breathe and partly because of this 'Töf' reminds me fleetingly of Earth's 'Hex' album with its sparse, reverb guitars chiming almost Country-Rock like across some imaginary plain. This album isn't mind-blowing, but it is pretty good.

✂ - CLYDE BRADFORD



**HAMLETTE HOK**  
**VÍKARTINDUR**  
[www.myspace.com/hamlettehok](http://www.myspace.com/hamlettehok)  
I don't get it.

I always feel insecure when I try to re-view music like this (probably because Ben Frost yelled at me about it when I was nineteen), but I just fail to see the point of improvised experimental noise if it's just random clattering that can't stand up on its own. I mean, I could easily see this working well on repeat at an art exhibition, or accompanying some kind of documentary or short film, but when noise really is just noise—no atmosphere, no layers, no general cohesion of any sort—it's just boring. Only '10. Kaffli' contains the barest hints of what could have been depth, with its slow, ominous build of drums, synths and distorted guitar drones.

I don't know, maybe I'm just some sort of pop-addicted, traditionalist reactionary with no imagination (feel free to take that last part out of context if I ever run for office), but I really do not understand why anyone would want to spend hours in a studio, days in a graphic design office and weeks waiting for their label/distributor to do their fucking job (I've put out an album or two before) to make, well, this.

✂ - SINDRI ELDON



**Dead Skeletons**  
**Dead Magick I & II**  
[www.deadskeletons.com](http://www.deadskeletons.com)

This review was written in addendum to a previous review published by The Grapevine, to accompany the complete physical release of "Dead Magick I & II" last month.

These days, it is fairly commonplace for neoclassical/ethereal darkwave bands with albums comprised of many differ-

ent styles to slap on that dreaded "concept" moniker, and leave the rest to the hard drugs. Although 'Dead Magick I & II' is an album that seems to disregard categorisation almost on purpose (pulling inspiration from everything from Lycia and Bauhaus, to Tibetan ideologies and spiritual mantras), I never felt like I was being "forced" to experience these things in the same way as the musicians. I felt free to encounter the philosophies for myself, with or without the aid of aforementioned psychotropic substances.

'Dead Magick' comes right out of the gate with the lengthy track, 'Dead Mantra,' an eight and a half minute summons reminiscent of early Sisters of Mercy, with the idiom, "He who fears death cannot enjoy life," repeated throughout. Dead Skeletons musician and creator, Jón Sæmundur, explains: "I was dealing with my fear of dying after being diagnosed with HIV in 1994—medications at that time were not the

same as today, and I had been drinking and using hard drugs like there was no tomorrow. I was doing an art show in Minneapolis, and one night I was visiting a friend's house—in the living room was a large altar made by local Mexican people. It had a saying in Spanish, 'Quien teme la muerte no goza la vida'—I asked my friend the meaning, and he

*Art is never finished, only abandoned*

explained: 'he who fears death cannot enjoy life.' I instantly connected to it, because at that time it was either die or live. I took the decision to live, and stopped drinking."

The first portion of the album is extremely enjoyable, highlights be-

ing the ricocheting, reverb-drenched 'Om Mani Padme Hung,' and the heavily Cult-influenced 'Kingdom of God'—however, the middle third of 'Dead Magick' falls a bit short, lacking the obvious enthusiasm and confidence of the first and last parts. Thankfully, the simpering guitars on 'Ljósberinn' pick things up nicely, and the uptempo track 'Live! Lifðu' is every bit as fresh and motivated as the Sister's 'Temple of Love' was nearly thirty years prior. The final track, 'Dead Magick II,' features a nonlinear combination of nature sounds, and thundering Tibetan trumpets reminiscent of early '90s Elliot Goldenthal—and is downright creepy.

Nearly all the songs found here feature some pretty cool music videos to go along with them as well. "I see the songs visually, like a film," Jón explains. "Art is never finished, only abandoned—therefore, it is very important for me that the songs are recorded here in my studio, The Dead Temple. There are

strong spiritual energies here that seem to find their way easily into the music, and sometimes I get the feeling that we are merely channelling the messages." These videos can all be found on YouTube by searching for Dead Skeletons. Albums like this are extremely difficult to do well without piling on heaping layers of conflicting ideologies and spiritual cheese, yet 'Dead Magick I & II' is a convincing, original, and highly enjoyable experience. Check this album out if you are in the mood for something distinctly different, need a soundtrack for your next trip, or simply just want to creep yourself out in the dark.

✂ - BOWEN STAINES

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## EXPLORE: The Home Of Peat, The 'Fuck-You-House', etc.

*How Reykjavík got to be what it is, part IV*

**The area known as Bústaðir and Háaleiti was once one of the most important sources of peat for the residents of Reykjavík. While peat has since lost most of its allure, Bústaðir and Háaleiti have assumed a new, no less important role: as one of the city's main shopping areas.**

Bústaðir and Háaleiti is one of the ten districts in Reykjavík city. It currently hosts 14,000 inhabitants and encompasses the postcodes 103 and 108. In the not too distant past, the area was characterised by its wetlands and its bountiful peat reserves (peat was used for kindling and fuel, the harvesting and use of it thus played a large role in everyday life until around 1920).

The name Bústaðir comes from a farm that was located in the area. The farm's original name was Bútsstaðir, named after a man called Bútur, but at some point in history it got misspelled as Bústaðir, which has stuck ever since

(Bústaðir can be loosely translated as "dwelling place"). The name Háaleiti (literally: "High hill") comes from the fact that it is a hill and geologists tell us that 11,000 years ago it was actually an island—one of the few spots in Reykjavík that was actually above sea level at that time.

Right up until 1930, everything outside 101 Reykjavík was considered to be 'the countryside.' This started changing with the great depression of the '30s, when an impending lack of food instigated radical action. It was decided that the wetlands that made up the area should be dried up and distributed as land plots to the residents of Reykjavík, who were encouraged to grow their own vegetables on the piece of land they had been assigned. Some residents even built dairy farms, as a shortage of milk started to be a problem in Reykjavík at the time. The cows are long gone, but some buildings that used to host dairy farms can still be found in the neighbourhood.

### THE SMALL APARTMENTS NEIGHBOURHOOD

When the UK (and later US) began occupying Iceland in May 1940, the area again underwent radical changes. Reykjavík's population grew 60% between 1940 and 60. The city was by no means

prepared for such a sharp increase in population, and lack of housing became a serious problem. It did not help that due to a currency crisis in 1950, strict investment rules were set in place and restrictions were put on construction work. Special permission was needed to build houses, with one exception: if the house you planned on building was really small, it was legal. Thanks to this loophole, a

*Right up until 1930, everything outside 101 Reykjavík was considered to be 'the countryside.'*

new neighbourhood called Smáibúðahverfið (literally "The small apartments neighbourhood") was planned and built in what is today known as 108 Reykjavík.

In 1960, a new plan was introduced, in which shops, private cars, parking and business-centres played important

roles. One idea was to transform a part of Bústaðir and Háaleiti into a new city centre with businesses, hotels, restaurants, The Icelandic National Broadcasting Service (RÚV) HQ, movie theatres, and The Reykjavík City Theatre. The plan also put an emphasis on the private car, allotting large areas for parking spaces and traffic structures. The delay in determining the precise location of this new city centre caused the construction to be postponed for years, and eventually new shops sprouted up all over the district to meet the demand and needs of the growing number of residents in Reykjavík. Therefore, the idea to centre all of the shops in one specific area was never fully implemented. The stores ended up mostly around Suðurlandsbraut and Skeifan. In the 1960 plan, Skeifan was meant to be an industrial zone but instead became a somewhat important shopping centre.

### THE FUCK YOU HOUSE

Finally, after deciding the location for the so-called new city centre, the first building was finished in 1981. With fourteen stories, it became the tallest building in Iceland, housing the chamber of commerce and The Icelandic Federation of Trade, amongst other businesses. Amongst children and teenagers, the building soon got the nickname "The

Fuck You House," inspired by its shape (which resembles a couple of fingers, with the one in the middle sticking up). In 1985, the first shopping mall in Iceland, Kringlan, opened next to it. With Kringlan, Icelanders lost a certain innocence and it did not help that the credit card invasion started around the same time. For the first time, Icelanders could buy food, clothes, drinks and go to a movie theatre and restaurant, all under a single roof while paying for it with a plastic card. This marked the beginning of a new life-style that has been fairly popular in Iceland ever since.

Myths and stories about elves and ghosts are rampant in Háaleiti and Bústaðir, as they are in every district of Reykjavík. One interesting story claims that Iceland's first settler, Ingólfur Arnarsson, is buried there with his ship. Nobody knows if this is really true, but if you are not in the mood to go native—being a shopaholic in Kringlan—you can always check out what some believe to be Ingólfur's tomb. It is located 1.2 kilometres southeast of Kringlan, next to a primary school called Breiðagerðisskóli. Don't blame me if can't find Ingólfur's helmet, but if you do, please share it with us. ☺

### Words

Gerður Jónsdóttir

### Photography

Hvalreki

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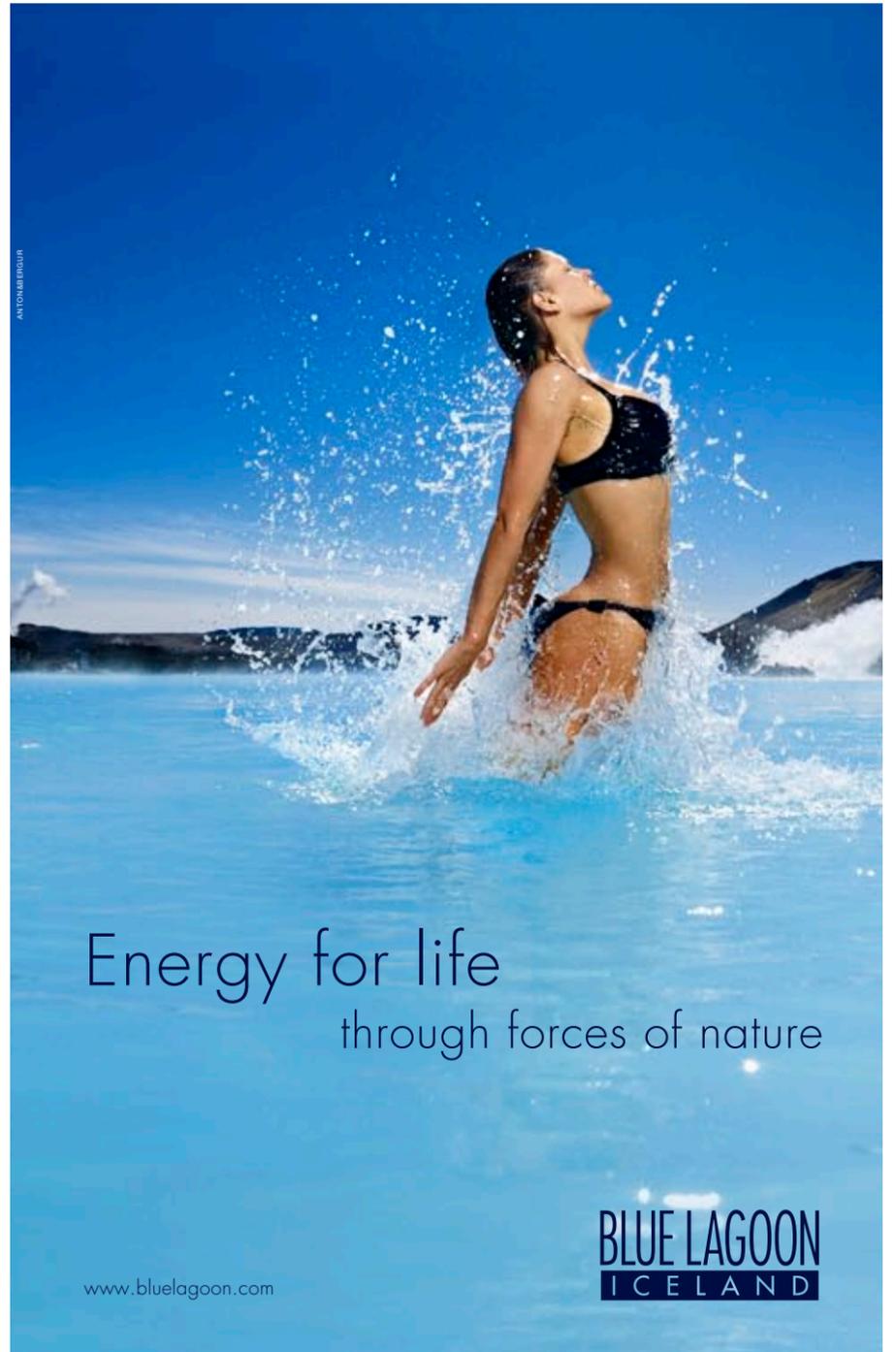
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## Problems In The Eurozone

*A look at this year's French film festival*

One of the challenges of covering a film festival is finding a unifying theme. Sure, most of the films here are recent and French, but even this does not hold true for all of them. Some are from 2009, and there is one from Chad and another from Canada. So far, I have found that many films star either Diane Kruger or a small dog. Other than that, of roughly half of the festival films I've seen, most seem to focus on upper middle class people fallen on hard times. Perhaps this is no coincidence, since this is probably the first French film festival to include films entirely conceived after the economic crash of 2008.

The opening film is the much-hyped silent film 'The Artist,' probably the first such big budget film to be made since Mel Brooks' 'Silent Movie' in 1976, which was the first one to be made since the late '20s. 'The Artist' is set in Hollywood during the end of an era and is, in fact, as much fun as they say it is. The story is reminiscent of 'Singing In The Rain,' about an actor who has problems adjusting to talkies. On top of this, he also loses his life savings in the stock market crash of 1929, and the story does a good job of actually making you care about people who make bad investments. There is also a lot of Hollywood trivia, and the sets provide a stunning period piece.

### WAR AT HOME AND ABROAD

The other much anticipated film of the festival is 'La Guerre Est Déclarée' ("Declaration Of War"), which is not a war movie, but instead about a young couple from a wealthy family that loses everything when their newborn child has to undergo prolonged radiation therapy. The film starts where most love stories end, the young couple (called Romeo and Juliet, of course) are quickly whisked through their dating period before the troubles begin. The story is based on real life experiences and the couple in question write, direct and star themselves. It's hard not to empathise, but the story of Romeo, Juliet and their terminally ill baby might not be every-



one's idea of a great date flick.

Unlike the aforementioned film, 'Forces Spéciales' is in fact a war movie, set in modern day Afghanistan and Pakistan. Diane Kruger is a journalist, reminiscent of Norwegian war correspondent Åsne Seierstad, who is captured by the Taliban and has to be rescued by the Special Forces of the title. If you don't mind cartoonish villains and

predecessors. If Arcand continues his naming scheme, his next film should be called 'The Renaissance.' Can't wait. 'Le Refuge' is again about a couple of rich parentage who lose everything, this time because of drug addiction. He dies of an overdose, she survives, finds herself pregnant and leaves Paris to recover. Slow moving, but the scenery is lovely.

### THE GIRL WHO LOVED JESUS TOO MUCH

Slow moving too is 'Hadewijch,' about a nun who is too devout for the convent and is sent back into the world. There she hooks up with a group of Islamic radicals. The film explores a range of themes, including the sexuality of a young girl in love with Christ as well as the connection between all religious fundamentalists, but doesn't really do any of them justice. Nor does it answer why her parents (again, on the wealthy side) don't seem to worry very much when she goes with her new friends to a conflict zone. In fact, the idea of liberal parents and religious teenagers is better dealt with in the Stieg Larson thriller 'The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo.'

As always, the French Film Festival features considerable variety, and it is gratifying to see the festival blossom. It has become a staple on the Reykjavík cinema scene, providing some much needed relief from standard Hollywood fare while we wait for the next RIFF festival.

All films are shown with English subtitles, apart from 'Forces Spéciales,' 'La Guerre Est Declare' and 'The Artist,' but in the last case, this probably won't matter much. ☺

*The film is a mildly amusing story of a man who learns to outgrow his fictional girlfriends*

the gung-ho machismo of the French elite soldiers, the film works well for what it is.

### DIANE KRUGER IN THE DARK AGES

Diane Kruger shows up again in 'The Dark Ages' (also known as 'Age of Ignorance And Days Of Darkness'), which is Denys Arcand's follow-up to the wonderful 'Barbarian Invasions' from 2003 and 'The Decline of the American Empire' from 1986. Sadly, this is the only Québécoise contribution to the festival this year and it was released in 2007 and has been available on rentals for years. That said, the film is a mildly amusing story of a man who learns to outgrow his fictional girlfriends, but it is lightweight compared to its illustrious

### Words

[Valur Gunnarsson](#)

### Photo

[Stills from The Artist](#)

  
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## Frontiers of Another Nature

Celina Lunsford came to Iceland last month for the release of the book 'Frontiers of Another Nature: Pictures from Iceland' ('Ný náttúra: Myndir frá Íslandi'). The book is the latest release from Crymgea, and published on the occasion of the arts and culture programme "Fabulous Iceland—Guest of Honour of the Frankfurt Book Fair 2011"; accompanying the exhibition 'Frontiers of Another Nature – Contemporary Photographic Art from Iceland' which was shown at Fotografie Forum Frankfurt from August 19–October 16, 2011. Celina Lunsford is the artistic director of Fotografie Forum Frankfurt, and photographic editor of the book.

The title of the book is borrowed from the first photography book from Iceland. This is not another monograph, rather a dialogue between contemporary and historical photographs showing traces of man's interventions and interaction with the expansive landscape of Iceland. The book is a selection of fifty Icelandic photographers spanning the first 150 years of pho-

tography. The book is sequenced like beat poetry, with the historical records playfully juxtaposed with contemporary photography. Topography took precedence over the artist biography in the selection process. Celina wanted content that would sustain ongoing interest. Photographs were rigorously culled from the collections of the National Museum and the Reykjavík Museum of Photography resulting in an amazing survey that creates a visual narrative around a vast landscape, or loss thereof.

I had the opportunity to speak with Celina after the lecture. We both originate from similar parts of rural America and spoke about the decline of the native landscape. Both being expatriates for over a decade, our witness to the rapid acceleration of this process is not skewed by the creeping normalcy that blinds a local populous. With each visit to our homeland, the suburban sprawl of ubiquitous concrete blocks seems more epidemic, nearly beyond the point of recognition. I ask, do you remember back in early Hanna-Barbera cartoons when animators repeated the same background over and over during a travelling scene in order to save time? Tom chased Jerry through a house that seemed to go on forever with the same coffee table, vase, window, door every three seconds. America is beginning to look like this to me. I can no longer rely on my vision to gauge location when driving past Walmart, Starbucks, McDonalds, Walmart.

### Why Iceland?

I visited Iceland for four days in 2006. I briefly studied geology, and was fascinated by the landscape. Iceland seemed to be set back in time, and that was a beautiful thing.

### It reminds me of what we lost not so long ago. Is there a relationship between conservationism and landscape photography?

It is not an old idea. Of course, Ansel Adams made us aware of the beauty of our surroundings, but learning to respect our environment is a rather new concept.

### What does the future hold for the next 150 years of landscape photography?

Up until now it has been a reflection on preciousness. Perhaps landscape is viewed in a symbolic sense, with a focus on detail in the future.

### Our choice of lens will certainly become more narrow as the natural landscape diminishes.

### Words

Ryan Parteka

### Photo

Hvalreki



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Travel | North - Words by Clyde Bradford and photography by Alísa Kalyanova



## GET IN THE VAN

*How to not dress appropriately...*

**It's 7:15 on a cold December morning, a horrific time to be out of the house whichever way you swing it. But there is good reason; intrepid Grapevine photographer Alísa Kalyanova and I are embarking on a tour of the Lake Mývatn area and its many delights. After an uneventful forty-minute flight from Reykjavík to Akureyri, the capital of the north, we meet our guide for the day, Þórður Björn Steinke or Björn for short. He guides us to the van that would protect us from the cold for most of the trip.**

We make our way through three mountain passes to our first stop at a farm, where we head swiftly into the warmth of a workshop and then a high-tech cow milking facility. After watching the milking, petting some newborn calves and meeting some rad dogs, we head back to the van. It is 11:00 and the sun is only just making an appearance.

Next up is Goðafoss ("Waterfall of the Gods"), which Björn told us was so named because law-speaker Þorgeir Ljósvetningagoði Þorkelsson hurled statues of Norse gods into it upon converting Iceland to Christianity in 1000 AD. We trudge through knee-deep snow to get a closer look at the waterfall—half of it is frozen whilst the other

half is a crushing mass of water, howling as it plunges towards Skjálfandaflijt river below.

### IT'S FREEZING

At this point the screen of my phone decides that it will freeze in solidarity with my surroundings and I feel a bit under-dressed. We rush back to the van before the cold takes hold properly and advance into the overwhelming white expanse, which is occasionally punctuated by farms and houses. Few people seem willing to venture outdoors on a day like today.

Stopping at a vantage point overlooking Mývatn ("Midge Lake") so named due to the fly's prevalence during the summer, the wind rages and tears at the skin. Time to put on my gloves! Björn informs us that the temperature is -18 C and my fingers on my left hand inform me that I should have put gloves on sooner. It takes them a good thirty minutes to feel normal again.

The snow covers much of what makes Mývatn impressive and as it stands it's just a lake surrounded by snow... and lava pillars and pseudo craters. So not exactly shabby! As the journey continues along the now barely visible road, Mývatn on one side and lava pillars and walls on the other, I begin to cheer up. My fingers are regaining feeling, and our next stop will be at Dimmuborgir

("Dark Cities") followed by food at a nearby café.

### FIRST FOOTPRINTS

Walking down a slope, surrounded by bushes that look like over-sized snowflakes, we make the first footprints in the snow. At the bottom we enter Dimmuborgir, so called because the lava pillars and walls resemble the wreck of an old city. It is an incredible sight. The solidified lava reaches towards the sky, about ten metres high—evidence of a churning, popping, burning creation of land some 2000 odd years ago. Back in the café it is easier to see how gigantic the lava flow that created Dimmuborgir and the surrounding landscape must have been.

Fully fed and fuelled with two jólabjór (Iceland's special Christmas beer), we set off; ten minutes down the road I need a toilet. It will be a good two hours before I can find relief.

Time to look at a crack. Ok, technically it's a rift—the point at which two tectonic plates are being pulled apart—so it's a pretty impressive 'crack'. It seems to stretch into infinity in both directions. Were it not so snowy I would probably have been that idiot who jumps back and forth over it shouting "look, I'm in America...now I'm in Europe" ad infinitum ad reductio ad absurdum.

Our penultimate stop, the bubbling pools, is the

coldest part of our trip. The wind is ravaging now, blustering up snow into our faces, tearing at the seams of our clothes, anxious to attack our skin. I think how it must have been for those settling Iceland. They didn't exactly have access to modern clothing technology. They must have been brutes. We on the other hand are kinda pathetic—afraid of the elements, molly-codded, a phobic lump.

### THE FINAL HURDLE

As we head towards our final destination, Björn shows us geothermal plants used to harness Iceland's natural resources, a ski-slope down the side of a volcano and an art installation, which is a shower next to a toilet. By now my bladder is screaming. The shower works, the toilet does not. Just my luck.

The last stop is a nature pool. They have a toilet! After my dash to the toilet we are told that we can go in the pool. Appropriate attire can be borrowed. A fellow traveller accepts. Happy sharing, buddy. Alísa and I are told how lava bread is made, eat Christmas skyr and enjoy the view. Jólabjór is also for sale. I am tempted, but my bladder shouts at me to learn from my mistake and sensibly I heed its advice. There is always jólabjór back in Reykjavík. 🍷



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## Light A Pyre In The Sky

*The hunt for green ember*

**You know those pictures you see of the Northern Lights? The ones where they engulf the night sky and the hues of green and red are really intense...You know they're not exactly accurate, right?**

Of course it's the Northern Lights you're seeing in the photographs, but camera trickery is afoot! A bit like touching up the photo of a model, techniques are used to make the lights appear even more spectacular. The pictures are often 'hyper-real.' The lights are still pretty spectacular, but you need to know this information before you set off on your big adventure in search of them. You're not necessarily going to see what the pictures show you.

Our guide Snorri Valsson makes sure to inform us of this fact as we embark from the BSÍ bus terminal. Snorri and our driver Guðjón Bogason will be aiding and abetting our hunt this evening. Another thing you need to know is that the lights don't come out just because you decided you wanted to see them. They're no dancing monkey. But tonight holds the promise of the largest solar storm in seven years so we should be in for something spectacular!

The reason for this is that the lights are caused

by the Sun emitting charged particles into space. When they reach Earth, they head towards the poles because the poles are magnetic. For this reason there are Northern (Aurora Borealis) and Southern (Aurora Australis) Lights. When they're in the Earth's atmosphere (in the Auroral zone to be precise), these charged particles bash into oxygen and nitrogen particles in the air, which creates green (oxygen reaction) and red (nitrogen reaction) light.

### FIRST CONTACT

A solar storm means lots of charged particles, which means lots of Northern Light activity. This explains why there are five coaches full of people on the tour tonight. However, Iceland is currently being battered by storms. And with storms come clouds, the sworn enemy of any Northern Lights hunter. Snorri tells us that we will be heading to the hopefully cloud free Reykjanes peninsula, close to the international airport in Keflavík.

Thirty minutes down route 41 (the main arterial road between Reykjavík and Keflavík), we stop and Snorri jumps out to take a better peak at the night. "We need to head west," he says and with that we're off, Guðjón's eyes on the road and Snorri's eyes fixed firmly on the sky.

We're now off route 41 and taking our chance

on some less well lit roads... You don't want pesky man-made light when you're searching for the Northern Lights. Then murmurs start to pick up, heads peer skyward and eyes strain through coach windows—we have first contact.

### I WAS THERE AND HERE'S THE PROOF

Piling out of the coach, the throng assembles and aims their cameras towards the sky. No comment. I head closer to the lights and watch them undulate about the atmosphere. It seems like we've hit the sweet spot and we get a good twenty minutes worth of action. But minutes later the lights begin to fade. The clouds are foiling us.

Snorri takes this opportunity to get us all back into the coach and we head towards the picturesque village of Hvalsnes—a prime Northern Lights viewpoint that also happens to appear in the film 'Mýrin' ("Jar City").

As we approach town, we get a better view of the column of light streaking across the sky. It appears from behind the church and houses of Hvalsnes, and I crane my neck back to follow its route. Quickly giving up on that approach I spin around only to see the column disappearing behind the clouds.

The horizon catches my eyes as man-made light makes its attempt to vie for attention. A far

off town obscured by hills throws up its lights and they bounce off the clouds that cover it from above. It looks as though the horizon is on fire. Good, but no dice... I spin back around and keep my eye on the Northern Lights until they fade from view.

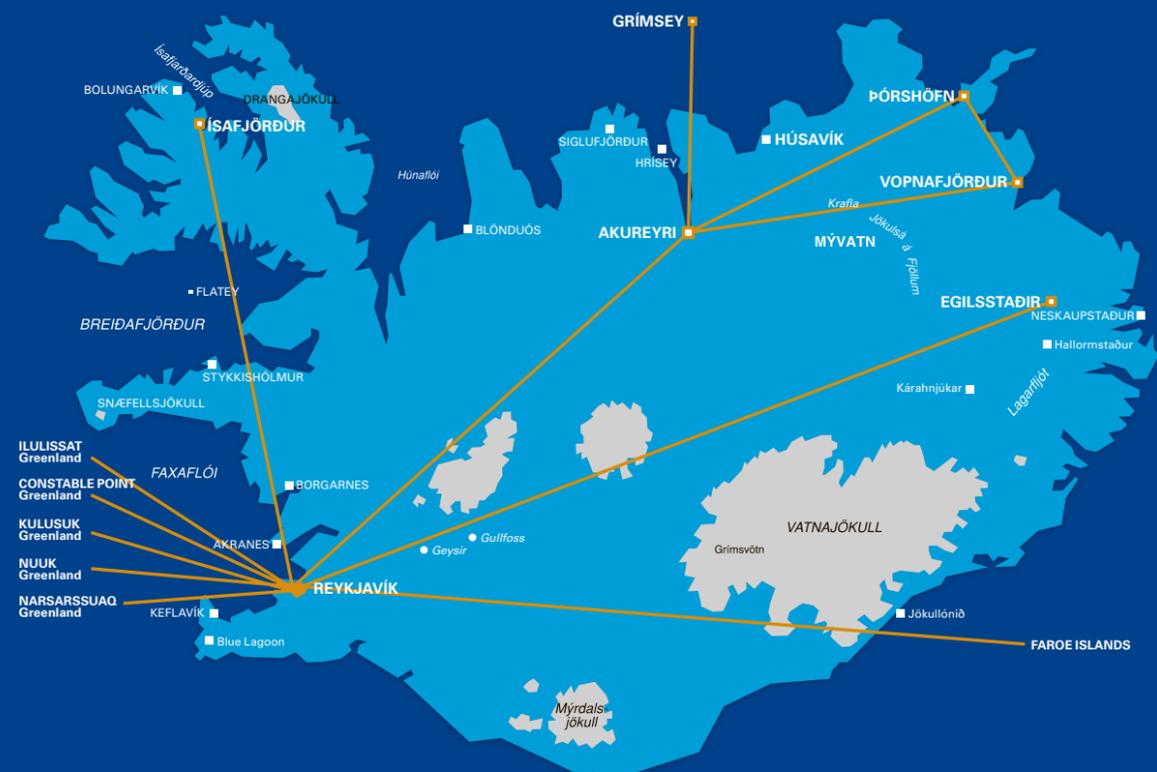
### NO DICE

The clouds have closed in again and as we all look hopefully to the sky, catching only glimmers of green light, a 4x4 arrives on the scene. It's a local on his way to destination unknown and he needs to get by our coach. As he attempts to squeeze past, his 4x4 slides off the road. Disaster. Like a turtle on its back the guy needs help. Snorri, Guðjón and some of our group (myself included) give him a push back on to the road. It's a tense few minutes, but real disaster is averted!

That brief bit of excitement out of the way, we go back to searching the sky for lights, but a few glimpses aside, we have no dice. It's getting late so Snorri hustles us back into the warmth of the bus and we make our way back to our hotels and homes. Lights were seen, japes were had and a little bit of excitement even when the lights were hidden, but in the end we were mostly foiled by the clouds. ☹️

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destinations.



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# GRAPEVINE BEER-OFF 2

A PENETRATING DIALOGUE ABOUT THE MERITS AND DEMERITS OF SELECTED ICELANDIC MICROBREWS



## BJARTUR BLOND NR. 4 (5%)

**BORG BRUGGHÚS**  
A blonde ale made from German and Slovenian hops.

**FIRST IMPRESSION!**  
We all agree it has an unusually harsh and sharp aftertaste for a blonde. Left a dry palate, but not without its merits.

Ryan: A plain brown wrapper and unassuming bottle. Reminds me of IKEA packaging.

David: Would like more info about the beer. It doesn't even have a best before.

Ragnar: When would a beer in Iceland ever need a 'best before'??

### CONCLUSION?

Ryan: Not a session beer by volume, but it kind of fools you. In danger of turning into a dirty session.

David: Wouldn't take it over Ölvisholt beers, but I'd try it again.

Ragnar: I'd give it another go (anyone else feeling a buzz?)

**RATING:** 🍷🍷🍷



## EL GRILLO (5%)

**ÖLGERÐIN EL GRILLO**  
A clear lager named after a sunken oil tanker that still lies in the Seyðisfjörður bay.

**FIRST IMPRESSION!**  
David: Ragnar, give that bottle to me, you need to learn how to pour a beer. You gotta tip the bottle at the end—give

it a little head...oh, God.  
Ragnar & Ryan: Hehehe. Yeah, we bet you'd like to give some head.

Thick, chocolaty, caramely, medium to high sweetness. Also quite dry. No real development or curve in how the flavour progresses. Flat in and flat out. A little too expensive for a session beer, but still suitable.

David: I still say the guy on the bottle looks like Hitchcock.

Ryan: I've noticed it's often not in stock.  
Ragnar: I know it comes in a can now.

### CONCLUSION?

Solid session beer and could go well with a meal. Could go well with a nice burger or some Mexican food. No bells or whistles.

Ragnar: I don't often drink beer but when I do, I prefer El Grillo.

**RATING:** 🍷🍷🍷



## PILS ORGANIC (5%)

**VÍKING ÖLGERÐ\***  
Golden Czech pilsner. Organic, we guess.  
\* Not strictly speaking a microbrew

**FIRST IMPRESSION!**  
Nice green label! Looks like a picnic. Florid, with a nice fruity smell.

Ragnar: I think KEX is the only place that has this on tap. Didn't like it when I tried it there.

### CONCLUSION?

Not much to say. Middle of the road beer.  
David: Leaves me wanting.  
Ragnar: Tastes like licking the yellow line in the middle of the road.  
Ryan: Would any of us order this again?  
Nope.

**RATING:** 🍷🍷



## GÆDINGUR PALE ALE (4.5%)

**GÆDINGUR BRUGGHÚS**  
A pale ale courtesy of a tiny, new contender from Skagafjörður

**FIRST IMPRESSION!**  
Lot of head. Very frothy. Good portion left behind in the bottle. Lot of sediment. Milky. Cloudy. Plays on the

tongue. Nice curve.  
David: Enticing lacing. Want to peel the stocking back and see what's underneath.

Ryan: Tart, citrusy. Tastes like grapefruit coming in and lingers as a Bosc Pear.

Ragnar: Gay. Smells like every scratch and sniff.

### CONCLUSION?

Best so far. Best in show. Definitely try it again.

**RATING:** 🍷🍷🍷🍷



## STINNINGSS KALDI (4.6%)

**BRUGGSMÍÐJAN**  
Ale with angelica herb

**FIRST IMPRESSION!**  
Ragnar: At what point do they add the angelica? I don't taste it.  
Roasted. Not as dry as the others. Clean finish.

**CONCLUSION?**  
Good to throw back a six pack with some wings. Good for rinsing the mouth with but too bitter otherwise. Would choose over Gull or Thule, but nothing to call home about.

**RATING:** 🍷🍷🍷



## GÆDINGUR STOUT (5.6%)

**GÆDINGUR BRUGGHÚS**

**FIRST IMPRESSION!**  
Ryan: Ah, now that's a beer to go with a 90% cacao chocolate in front of the fireplace.  
David: Fetch me my slippers and I'll read to you from Kipling!  
Woody. Smoked birch. Very roasted to

the point of burnt. Black as sin. High alcohol volume for a stout.

**CONCLUSION?**  
A lot going on there. Intense beer. Good beer to end the evening with.

David: The kind of flavour you want to take home with you.

Ragnar: Christ I'm drunk.

**RATING:** 🍷🍷🍷🍷



## FREYJA (4.5%)

**ÖLVISHOLT BRUGGHÚS EHF**

**FIRST IMPRESSION!**  
Ragnar: It's a lady beer!  
David: Don't you know what Freyja means? Fósturlandsins Freyja?

Ragnar: It's got a lady on it! With boobs!  
**CONCLUSION?**

Milky honey colour, wheat beer, fruity, sweet, Belgian tradition, strong coriander taste, Summer beer, something for a hot day.

David: That's a quenching beer and has pretty good lacing.

**RATING:** 🍷🍷🍷🍷



## ÚLFUR (5.9%)

**BORG/EGILS ÖLGERÐ**

**FIRST IMPRESSION!**  
David: Grapefruity, not much head.  
Ragnar: Don't really feel the 5.9%.  
An IPA with low filling, low bitterness.

**CONCLUSION?**  
Excellent beer. Strong first impression with that grapefruit pow!

David: Many of these beers are getting too boozy for the way Icelanders drink.

Ragnar: Yeah but Icelanders value the alcohol content very highly.

**RATING:** 🍷🍷🍷🍷



## SKJÁLFTI (5%)

**ÖLVISHOLT BRUGGHÚS**

**FIRST IMPRESSION!**  
Ragnar: Smells like a jockstrap and has colour of rusty urine (I totally mean that in a good way!)  
**CONCLUSION?**

David: Skjálfti IS one of my favourite beers in the country.

Ragnar: Mine too. And Ölvisholt was a trailblazer, one of the first proper microbreweries in Iceland.

**RATING:** 🍷🍷🍷🍷



## MÓRI (5.5%)

**ÖLVISHOLT BRUGGHÚS**

**FIRST IMPRESSION!**  
Ragnar: Goes really well with 'The Wizard' by Black Sabbath.  
David: A red beer, sweet and skunky smell. Good deal of carbonation. Named after a ghost, which is cool.

Ragnar: Terrible label, but we love it anyway. Quite sharp and works well on its own, but can't mix it with other drinks in a session. I'm a one-beer man when it comes to Móri.

**CONCLUSION?**  
David: You expect dark and heavy, but you get bubbling, sharp and spikey.

Ragnar: It's like a wizard tricking you. It's a ghost. It's a troublemaker. Like Ozzy!

**RATING:** 🍷🍷🍷🍷



## BLACK DEATH BEER (5.8%)

**VÍKING**

**FIRST IMPRESSION!**  
Ragnar: Aimed at the tourists and about as subtle as a heart attack. An Icelandic name would have been nice. Can't find it in the stores because there was some minor controversy about the label. You can get it at the bar Prikið though.

**CONCLUSION?**  
It's the Hard Rock Café of beers. Gimmicky, rich, thick, sweet and overdone. It's heavy on liquorice. Alcohol taste is prominent. Looks cool on the shelf, but can't say it does much.

**RATING:** 🍷🍷🍷🍷



## SURTUR

**BORG/EGILS ÖLGERÐ**

Surtur is a stout. The name can be traced back to Norse mythology to the fire jötun Surtur or any of the place-names in Iceland that take after him.

But look it up in a dictionary or ask any Icelander and they will tell you that the word is primarily a derogatory term for black people. Surtur is the Icelandic

N-word. It's as simple as that. The beer is black. The people at Egils Ölgerð must have thought this was a fun way to court controversy. I don't buy that this was done by accident and I'm not amused. I haven't tasted it and I'm not reviewing it. Simple as that. 🍷

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# HOW TO MANAGE A CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

*A one-act play about community communication*

## THE PLAYERS

The Corporation  
The Friends  
The Nature  
The Philosophers  
The State  
The Warden

The Farmers  
The Locals  
The Narrator  
The Researchers  
The Tourists  
The Worker

In a room—a small room, a bedroom—live three-hundred-thousand people with their pets and plants. Outside of the room is THE NATURE. THE NATURE is also inside of the room. THE NATURE is also the room. THE NATURE is also the people, but the people may or may not be aware of this. It is possible THE NATURE listens to the people at all times. At all times, it is possible the people do not listen to THE NATURE. People have opinions. The people have opinions about THE NATURE. It is possible THE NATURE has opinions about the people.

THE TOURISTS: You have all of this beautiful nature right here.  
THE LOCALS: We do own this.  
THE STATE: We let you own this.  
THE PHILOSOPHERS: Do we own this?  
THE NARRATOR: "...one of the greatest natural disasters of all times..."  
The people exit the room. They walk in THE NATURE, view hyoclastite ridges near Langisjór and pick at red scoria in Eldgjá. Rain is constant in this moment. Boulders perch on steep skriða slopes, gravity pulling their weight toward an inevitable descent. They walk with eyes toward boulders, toward hulking threat of THE NATURE. The people think THE NATURE threatens them and this makes them feel alive. THE NATURE feels alive. The people return to the room.

THE NARRATOR: "... habitat loss..."  
THE LOCALS: We know something much worse is on its way.  
THE NARRATOR: "... overharvesting..."  
THE TOURISTS: The moon looked blood red behind the ash.  
THE NARRATOR: "... pollution..."  
THE FARMERS: Poisoned meat.  
THE NARRATOR: "... invasive species..."  
THE RESEARCHERS: Masculinity and racism hand-in-hand with fortress conservation.  
THE NARRATOR: "... disease..."

The people exit the room. They walk in THE NATURE, wind gusts forcing Systrafoss to curl its falling water skyward. Rain is constant. Introduced tree species bend their towering spines as wind hurries the people toward THE NATURE. The people feel intimidated by THE NATURE. The people return to the room.

THE FARMERS: We don't trust you.  
THE STATE: But we trust you.

## Words

a.rawlings

## Illustration

Megan Herbert

THE FARMERS: You have too many faces. You change people like moods.  
THE STATE: But we trust your tradition. THE NATURE is silent.  
THE FARMERS: You change people and laws. You change people and laws could change.

The people exit the room. They walk along the moraine and into the newly exposed bottom of the glacial lagoon. Land sags with each step. Moss blooms in mud scattered between rhyolite and feldspar. The people walk on moss buds. THE NATURE measures each footstep as tattoo, and flora eyes these marks with curious distrust. Once trodden, twice dry. The people return to the room.

THE STATE: You cannot drive off-road.  
THE WARDENS: Sometimes, they drive off-road.  
THE TOURISTS: It looks like a road so we drive it.  
THE FARMERS: We drive with sensitivity to round up the sheep.  
THE NATURE is silent.  
THE STATE: It is not a road. You cannot drive there.  
THE TOURISTS: It is a road.  
STATE: You made it a road. It is not a road.  
THE WARDENS: Define road.  
THE TOURISTS: Dessine-moi une carte. (Make me a map.)  
THE FARMERS: You change the laws.  
THE CORPORATION: Forget about nature; change the cars.  
THE NATURE stays ominously silent.

The people exit the room. They walk onto the glacier. Rain slicks blue and clear ice, sprinkled with volcanic ash, tephra, sand. The people walk with careful steps—breath caught in throats, in anticipation of bodies breaking on ice. THE NATURE throws the people into relief. The people return to the room.

THE NARRATOR: "...glacial outburst tore through power-line structures..."  
THE STATE: We don't trust the sustainability of your tradition.  
THE FARMERS: You changed.  
THE STATE: You should also.  
THE FARMERS: You change your face and your rules with frequency. How can we trust you when you lack consistency?  
THE STATE: Change is inevitable. In thirty years, you will all be extinct.  
THE NATURE seems permanent.  
THE RESEARCHERS: We're moving away from fortress conservation.  
THE PHILOSOPHERS: "What a long time the

life of a stone lasts."  
THE NATURE erupts.  
THE NARRATOR: "... ice tumbling like toy building blocks in the flood..."

The people sit in their small room—nervous of ash fall, lava flow, jökulhlaup; they do not notice when THE STATE exits the room. THE STATE boards a tourist helicopter and flies

THE NATURE is neither timeless nor ancient. THE NATURE will not do what it is told, though it may have an awareness of time, an in-built sense of duty.  
THE STATE: Do this.

The people exit the room, disgruntled. The people walk in different directions. THE RESEARCHERS push north through ash-fall. THE CORPORATION walks northwest near flood-destroyed bridge. THE STATE wades west through fluorine-enriched water. THE FARMERS hulk southwest past horse death. THE PHILOSOPHERS head southeast toward bird death. THE TOURISTS slink east past retreating glacial tongue. THE WARDENS pass northeast by weather-ravaged hut. THE WORKER cleans the mess. THE NATURE senses nonsense. The people return to the room.

THE WARDENS: Conserve, preserve, protect, save, sustain, enlarge.  
THE PHILOSOPHERS: Save? Protect?  
THE RESEARCHERS: Conserve, sustain. THE STATE: Manage.  
THE FRIENDS: Support.  
THE FARMERS: Sustain, grow.  
THE CORPORATION: Grow, sustain.  
THE WORKER: Consume.  
THE LOCALS: Love.  
THE PHILOSOPHERS: Love?

The people exit the room. The people walk through heath where sheep graze woolly willow to non-existence. THE NATURE erodes. The people erode into melodrama, reflecting themselves through apocalyptic metaphor in what surrounds them. What surrounds them? The people may not sense what is in them. THE NATURE listens to authoritative voice-overs by bodiless men—ends of sentences dropping to finite, terrible statements. The people return to the room.

THE CORPORATION: Can we divert the Kreppa?  
THE NARRATOR: "... the destruction of nature was immense..."  
THE CORPORATION: Dessine-moi un hydro-power dam.  
THE WORKER: I used the 50-tonne digger. I cleared the hardest path, not much space on the mountainside. I'd strapped myself in. And I cleared this mountain. The hardest part.

And the next day, the foreman—he rolled it. Rolled his digger. I'd already done the hardest part. Strapped in. I was ready to die. So when we meet now, the foreman and me, we greet with the left hand. Like dead people.  
THE CORPORATION: Here is money in atonement.

THE NATURE is moved. THE NATURE moves into the people, moves them out of the room. Suddenly, THE NATURE realizes the vibrant contrast between white glacier, green vegetation, blue lakes, red and yellow geothermal areas, black sands and the economic lenses of the humans. THE RESEARCHERS sense the wealth of knowledge to discover and disseminate. THE STATE senses opportunity for management and ownership. THE PHILOSOPHERS sense nonsense. THE TOURISTS sense aesthetic euphoria and spiritual aphasia. THE FARMERS sense the potential for agriculture. THE CORPORATION senses the potential for development. THE WARDENS sense damage done. THE WORKER senses the ability to subsist. THE NATURE has greater sensitivity than the people realize. The people return to the room.

THE RESEARCHERS: You're missing the point.  
THE FRIENDS: Tourism makes money.  
THE FARMERS: Where is money for local product?  
THE STATE: Here is money for infrastructure.  
THE WARDENS: Where is money for education?  
THE CORPORATION: Here is money. Hush, hush.  
THE RESEARCHERS: Where is money for research?  
THE FRIENDS: Here is money for research and education.  
THE TOURISTS: Do I give my money? Where do I give my money?  
THE PHILOSOPHERS: Do you take that money? Why do you take that money?  
THE LOCALS: In our small room, everyone plays more than one role.

The people walk on THE NATURE, through black sand patched with green moss. The people do not notice the delicacy of THE NATURE. The people walk through sandstorm, rainstorm, windstorm, snowstorm, and they raise their voices debating money, infrastructure, power, laws, ownership. Their argument overwhelms the soundscape, and yet the loudest voice is the silence of THE NATURE.

THE NATURE howls silence into their doom.

THE FARMERS become extinct. THE STATE changes its face. THE PHILOSOPHERS become THE LOCALS. THE LOCALS change their points of view. THE RESEARCHERS become THE FRIENDS. THE WORKER exchanges power for money. THE CORPORATION becomes THE NARRATOR. THE TOURISTS change their travel plans. THE NATURE listens to the constant voiceless alto of river rush as swans trumpet their arrival. ♡





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**PAGE 6**

“A number of musicians expressed their regret at NASA’s impending doom, with singer Páll Óskar going so far as to say he would chain himself to demolition machinery to prevent it from happening.”

Will you join Páll in the fight for your right to party?

**PAGE 8**

“Nevertheless, he was undeniably the man in charge in the years leading up to the collapse, and if someone was to be held accountable, it seemed reasonable to start with Geir Haarde. Even more importantly, the trial would force many of the most powerful people in Iceland to take the stand, and this in itself might force much valuable information on the reasons for the collapse out into the open.”

...And Justice For All.

**PAGE 16**

“There is no big tradition here hanging over me and telling me I can’t do something”

We interview Iceland Symphony Orchestra’s new conductor, Ilan Volkov

**PAGE 27**

“Then murmurs start to pick up, heads peer skyward and eyes strain through coach windows—we have first contact”

Not them pesky aliens invading again. No, it’s the Northern Lights!

**PAGE 28**

“But look it up in a dictionary or ask any Icelander and they will tell you that the word is primarily a derogatory term for black people.”

Even reviewing beer can be problematic sometimes.

**PAGE 30**

“THE CORPORATION: Can we divert the Kreppa?”

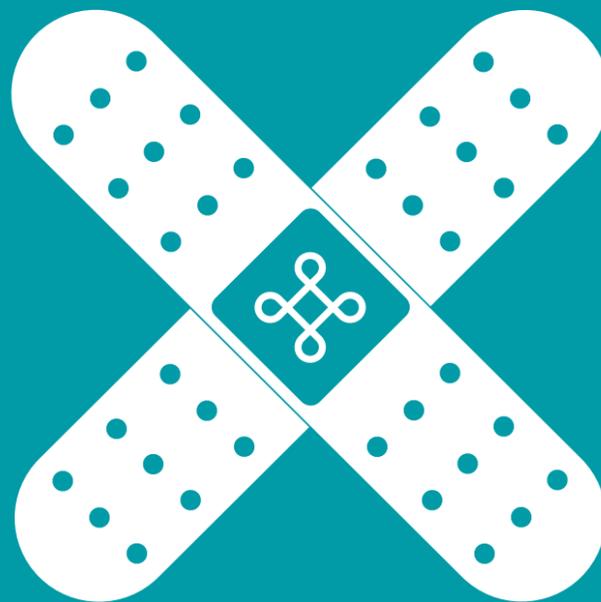
THE NARRATOR: “... the destruction of nature was immense...”

THE CORPORATION: Dessine-moi un hydro-power dam.”

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www.macland.is



**Living in Reykjavík?**

- Information on city services
- Online service applications
- News and events

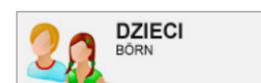
[www.reykjavik.is/english](http://www.reykjavik.is/english)



**Zycie w Reykjavíku?**

- Informacja o usługach miejskich
- Złożenie wniosku on-line (komputerowo)
- Wiadomości i wydazienia

[www.reykjavik.is/polska](http://www.reykjavik.is/polska)



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# The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE iNFO



**G** Music, Art, Films and Events Listings + Eating, Drinking and Shopping + Map

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL AND  
ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

Issue 2 - 2012

[www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)



# Porrablóti!

*Come one come all, the Icelandic winter festival Porrablót is upon us. And you know what that means!  
A chance to celebrate the ancient, dark month of Þorri with loads of drinking! dancing! and eating!  
If you fancy a taste of rotten shark (hákarl), boiled sheep head, (svið) and congealed sheep's blood wrapped in  
a ram's stomach (blóðmör), then pop along to your preferred eatery or local grocery store and dig in!  
And well, if that doesn't take your fancy, you can just put your dancing shoes on!*

# Experience Icelandic Art and Design

ROUTE 40



**Kópavogur Art Museum-Gerðarsafn**  
Hamraborg 4, Kópavogur  
Tel. +354 570 0440  
Open 11-17  
Closed on Mondays  
[www.gerdarsafn.is](http://www.gerdarsafn.is)



**Hafnarborg The Hafnarfjörður Centre of Culture and Fine Art**  
Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður  
Tel. +354 585 5790  
Open 12-17  
Thursdays 12-21  
Closed on Tuesdays  
[www.hafnarborg.is](http://www.hafnarborg.is)



**Hönnunarsafn Íslands Museum of Design and Applied Art**  
Garðatorg 1, Garðabær  
Tel. +354 512 1525  
Open 12-17  
Closed on Mondays  
[www.honnunarsafn.is](http://www.honnunarsafn.is)

To the Blue Lagoon

# MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN FEBRUARY

PRESCRIBING WITH LOVE  
MUSIC FOR YOUR LIVE  
EXPERIENCE

How to use the listings  
Venues are listed alphabetically by day.  
For complete listings and detailed information  
on venues visit [www.listings.grapevine.is](http://www.listings.grapevine.is)  
Add your listings: [www.listings.grapevine.is](http://www.listings.grapevine.is)

## 3 FRI

**Austur**  
22:00 DJ Danni Deluxe

**Bar 11**  
21:00 Endless Dark + DJ Omar

**B5**  
23:00 Live DJ

**Café Rósenberg**  
21:30 CD Release concert Vadim Fyodorov Trio

**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hylur Mastermix

**Faktorý**  
23:00 Peyttur Rjómi

**Gaukurinn**  
22:00 Dust and guests

**Glaumbar**  
22:00 DJ Egill

**Hemmi og Valdi**  
21:30 Norn, Hylur, Mass (UK)

**Hressó**  
22:00 Svava Knútur

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Nonnimal & Captain Fufanu

**Prikið**  
02:00 Lopapeysan þorablót: Sweater Festival

**Salurinn**  
20:00 Rúnar þór  
2500 ISK

**Trúnó**  
23:00 Murder On The Dancefloor: House DJ

**Vegamót**  
23:00 Live DJ

## 4 SAT

**Austur**  
22:00 House DJ

**Bar 11**  
22:00 DJ Matti

**Café Rósenberg**  
21:30 CD Release concert Vadim Fyodorov Trio

**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hylur Mastermix

**Faktorý**  
23:00 Kvíksynði #2: Vurt, Hypno, Bypass, Captain Fufanu

**Gaukurinn**  
22:00 Skálmöld

**Glaumbar**  
22:00 DJ Einar

**Hressó**  
22:00 Dalton, VJ Fúsi

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 DJ Kári

**NASA**  
23:00 Kamara, Exos vs Atl, Oculus, Hugarastand, Six Pence Vs Leif Spagetti  
1500 ISK

**Prikið**  
00:00 DJ Gay Latino Man

**Trúnó**  
23:00 House DJ

## 5 SUN

**Harpa**  
20:00 Kiri Te Kanawa  
3900 - 14900 ISK

**Faktorý**  
21:00 Live Jazz

**Trúnó**  
15:00 I Know What You Did Last Night: offers on hot and cold drinks

## 6 MON

**Café Rósenberg**  
21:00 Fuglabúrið

**Trúnó**  
22:00 Manic Monday

9  
Feb



## Think You Know Elephants & Outer Space?

Go test your knowledge at The Grapevine and Bakkus pub quiz!

February 9, 21:00

Bakkus

500 ISK

Calling all brain-boxes, info-nerds, and fact-geeks! Put your knowledge to use by entering The Grapevine and Bakkus Pub Quiz! Show us what you're made of...make women and men swoon, grown men cry, and crush the souls of those with lesser knowledge than you. Conquer all and you take home the jackpot and some free booze to boot.

What's more, happy hour runs the whole night and loveable trivia friends Sindri Eldon and Ragnar Egilsson are at the helm, asking the questions. What's not to love?

The theme for the evening is Elephants & Outer Space. Start swotting!

## 7 TUE

**Hressó**  
21:30 Live Jazz

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Paul Evans

**Trúnó**  
21:00 L'Acoustique: Acoustic evening

## 8 WED

**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 Extreme Chill

**Trúnó**  
22:00 Wednesdays Are The New Thursdays

## 9 THU

**Bar 11**  
21:00 Texas Muffin + DJ Orri

**Café Rósenberg**  
21:00 Siggí Sig

**Faktorý**  
22:00 Gummi P (upstairs) and Dj Randomistic (downstairs)

**Gaukurinn**  
22:00 Becks: Live Concert Series

**Glaumbar**  
22:00 DJ Egill

**Harpa**  
19:30 Hilary Hahn, 2000 - 6500 ISK

**Hressó**  
22:00 Klukk, þú Ert Ann

**Prikið**  
22:00 Dj Krúsi

**Trúnó**  
22:00 Thursday Thunder

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 HúsDJús: FKNHNDMSM

## 10 FRI

**Austur**  
23:00 DJ Jónas

**Bar 11**  
22:00 Blues Willis + DJ Orri

**B5**  
23:00 Live DJ

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Hannes Blöndal

**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hylur Mastermix

**Faktorý**  
23:00 DJ Logi Pedro (Retro Stefson)

**Gaukurinn**  
22:00 Ultra Mega Technoband Stefán

**Glaumbar**  
22:00 DJ Seth

**Hressó**  
22:00 Timburmenn, DJ Fannar

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 DJ Hunk Of A Man

**Prikið**  
22:00 Freyðibaðið & Dj Egill

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ICELAND SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA



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Tryggvagata 15, 101 Reykjavik  
Opening hours:  
12-19 mon-fri, 13-17 weekends  
[www.photomuseum.is](http://www.photomuseum.is)

**Trúnó**  
23:00 The Party Has Already  
Started: House DJ

## 11 SAT

**Austur**  
23:00 House DJ  
**Bar 11**  
21:00 DJ set from Pink & Floyd  
**B5**  
22:00 DJ Simon  
**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hylur Mastermix  
**Faktorý**  
23:00 Dj Jón Eðvald, Sean Danke,  
Tommi White  
**Glaumbar**  
22:00 DJ Einar  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Silfur, DJ Solid  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Alfons X  
**Prikið**  
00:00 Benni B Ruff  
**Trúnó**  
23:00 We Are All Queens: House DJ

## 12 SUN

**Faktorý**  
21:00 Live Jazz  
**Prikið**  
22:00 Hangover Cinema  
**Trúnó**  
15:00 I Know What You Did Last Night:  
offers on hot and cold drinks

## 13 MON

**Trúnó**  
22:00 Manic Monday

## 14 TUE

**Café Rósenberg**  
21:00 Fleetwood Mac Tribute Eve-  
ning  
**Hressó**  
21:30 Live Jazz  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Hallivalli  
**Trúnó**  
21:00 L'acoustique: Acoustic eve-  
ning

## 15 WED

**Café Rósenberg**  
21:00 Björggi Gísla  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Hellert  
**Salurinn**  
20:00 The Music of Bergþóra Árna-  
dóttir  
2900 ISK



### Kicking And Riffing With Muck

Album Release Concert

March 3, 21:30

Gaukur á Stöng

Entry: 1000 ISK

The hardcore powerhouse that is Muck will be celebrating the release of their debut album 'Slaves' at Gaukur á Stöng on March 3. The album has been at least a year in the making and this promises to be a great show. Always a solid live band, Muck will kick your ass with a little help from their friends Celestine, Mammút and The Heavy Experience, who will warm up the crowd at this special show.

If you like your music with a bit of bite to it, then Muck's riffing, kicking, instrument slamming whirlwind is most definitely for you. What's more, for 2000 ISK you can get entry to the show and a copy of the album, and for 3000 ISK, you get entry, a copy of the album and Muck t-shirt. Top Notch!

Listen to their new album at Gogoyoko: <http://www.gogoyoko.com/artist/muckmusic>



### GO TO CLYDE'S SHOW!

Norm, Hylur, Mass (UK)

February 3, 21:30

Hemmi og Valdi

Free

Do you like your music loud and heavy? Are the clothes in your wardrobe mostly black? Do you like evil things...and beer, lots of beer? If so, you should cram yourself into Hemmi and Valdi and watch three bands steam-roll everything in sight, whilst simultaneously scaring the hell out of passers by on Laugavegur.

Norm will bring you some blackened-crust metal, Hylur will utterly crush you with their doom juggernaut and Mass from the UK will be dropping some mid-paced down-tuned punk—all for your listening delight and all for free.

Small disclaimer: A member of one of the bands is an ex-intern for The Grapevine.

More information can be found at their Facebook event: <http://www.facebook.com/events/268327679903049/>

**Trúnó**  
22:00 Wednesdays Are The New  
Thursdays

## 16 THU

**Bar 11**  
21:00 Live Music + DJ Omar  
**Café Rósenberg**  
21:00 Erik Qvick  
**Faktorý**  
22:00 Þeyttur Rjómi (downstairs)  
Prins Póló (upstairs)  
**Gaukurinn**  
22:00 Etta James Tribute  
**Glaumbar**  
22:00 Live DJ  
**Harpa**  
20:00 The Lord Of The Rings Sym-  
phony  
2000 - 6500 ISK  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Jógvan  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 HúsDJús Alfons X  
**Prikið**  
22:00 DJ Gay Latino Man  
**Trúnó**  
22:00 Rainbow Reykjavík Festival  
Celebration

## 17 FRI

**Austur**  
23:00 DJ Danni Deluxe  
**Bar 11**  
21:00 Live Music + DJ Matti  
**B5**  
23:00 Live DJ  
**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hylur Mastermix  
**Faktorý**  
23:00 DJ KGB  
**Gaukurinn**  
22:00 Brain Police  
**Glaumbar**  
22:00 Dj Krúsi  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Hetjur, DJ Geir Flóvent  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 DJ JB & Viktor Birgisson  
**Prikið**  
22:00 Beggi Blindi, Elva Dögg,  
Breakbeat Iceland  
**Trúnó**  
23:00 Rainbow Reykjavík Festival  
Celebration  
**Vegamót**  
23:00 Live DJ

## 18 SAT

**Austur**  
22:00 Danni Deluxe  
**Austur**  
23:00 House DJ  
**Bar 11**  
21:00 Live Music + DJ Omar  
**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 KK & Maggi Eiríks  
**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hylur Mastermix  
**Faktorý**  
23:00 DJ Atli Kanilsnúður

**Gaukurinn**  
22:00 Killer Queen  
**Glaumbar**  
22:00 DJ Seth  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Goðsögn, DJ Fannar  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 DJ B Ruff  
**Prikið**  
22:00 DJ Danni Deluxe  
**Trúnó**  
23:00 Rainbow Reykjavík Festival  
Celebration

## 19 SUN

**Faktorý**  
21:00 Live Jazz  
**Harpa**  
20:00 A Festival Of Song  
3000 - 5900 ISK  
**Prikið**  
22:00 Hangover Cinema  
**Trúnó**  
15:00 I Know What You Did Last  
Night: offers on hot and cold  
drinks

## 20 MON

**Café Rósenberg**  
21:00 Pub Quiz  
**Trúnó**  
22:00 Manic Monday

## 21 TUE

**Hressó**  
21:30 Live Jazz  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Óli Dóri  
**Trúnó**  
21:00 L'acoustique

## 22 WED

**Café Rósenberg**  
21:00 Jói G.  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Sverni Solo  
**Trúnó**  
22:00 Wednesdays Are The New  
Thursdays

## 23 THU

**Bar 11**  
21:00 Live Music + DJ Matti  
**Café Rósenberg**  
21:00 Þórunn Pálína  
**Faktorý**  
22:00 DJ Ernir Eyjólfss  
**Glaumbar**  
22:00 DJ Krúsi  
**Harpa**  
19:30 Baroque Favourites  
2000 - 6500 ISK  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Timburmenn  
**Kaffibarinn**

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• Tuesdays •  
Live music and Beer Bingo night

• Wednesdays •  
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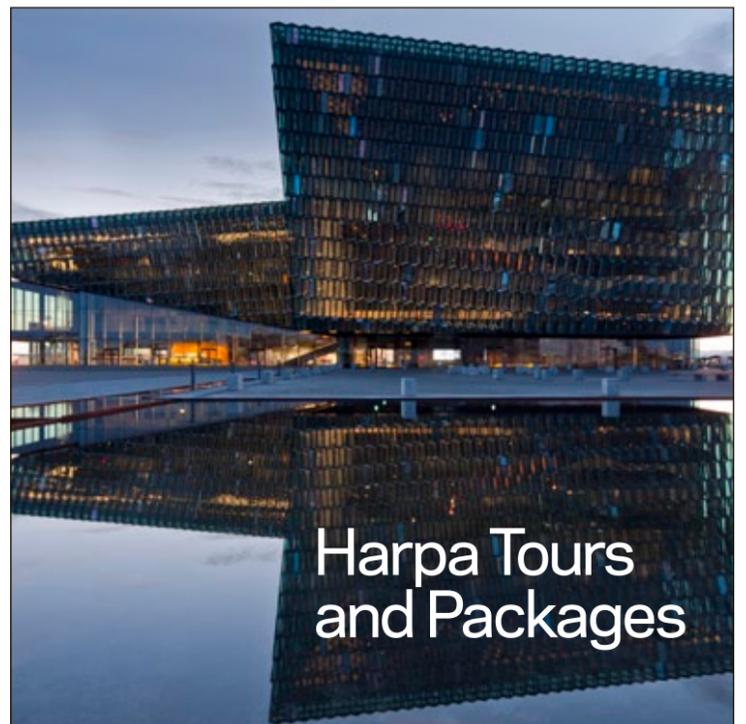
• Thursdays •  
Live Music / Scandinavian nights

• Fridays •  
Live music / Sing-along nights

• Saturdays •  
Live music / Sing-along nights

• Sundays •  
Hangover & Live music night Really good prices on drinks

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[www.danskis.is](http://www.danskis.is)



## Harpa Tours and Packages

VISIT HARPA THIS WINTER. Take a guided tour of the building and peak behind the scenes. Enjoy the glass facade, elegant halls and different floors of genius design.

Reykjavík was featured in the New York Times as amongst the top four places in the world to travel to in 2011, with Harpa as one of its main attractions. Harpa is definitely a must-see on any Iceland travel agenda.

REGULAR GUIDED TOUR - daily this winter

Weekdays at 15.30. Price 1500 ISK ( Around 10 Euros).

Weekends at 11.00 and 15.30. Price 1500 ISK (Around 10 Euros).

GUIDED TOUR PACKAGES

Book a tour package for small or large groups, for example professional groups.

All tours can be booked at the box office desk, at [tours@harpa.is](mailto:tours@harpa.is) or via telephone +354 528 5009



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# MUSIC

## CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN FEBRUARY

22:00 Gísli Galdur  
**Trúnó**  
 22:00 Thursday Thunder

### 24 FRI

**Austur**  
 23:00 DJ Jónas  
**Bar 11**  
 21:00 Live Music + DJ Orri  
**B5**  
 23:00 Live DJ  
**Café Rósenberg**  
 22:00 Varsjárbandalagið (Warsaw Pact)  
**Esja**  
 22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hylur Mastermix  
**Faktorý**  
 23:00 DJ Gísli Galdur  
**Glaumbar**  
 22:00 DJ Egill  
**Hressó**  
 22:00 Böddy, VJ Fúsi  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 22:00 Alfons X  
**Trúnó**  
 23:00 House DJ  
**Vegamót**  
 23:00 Live DJ

### 25 SAT

**Austur**  
 23:00 DJ Danni Deluxe  
**Bar 11**  
 21:00 Live Music + DJ Omar  
**B5**  
 21:00 House DJ  
**Esja**  
 22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hylur Mastermix  
**Faktorý**  
 23:00 DJ Logi Pedro (Retro Stef-son)  
**Glaumbar**  
 22:00 DJ Seth  
**Hressó**  
 22:00 Penta, VJ Fúsi  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 22:00 Árni Sveinsson  
**Salurinn**  
 17:00 Arias and Poetry  
 3500 ISK

### 26 SUN

**Faktorý**  
 21:00 Live Jazz  
**Gerðuberg Cultural Centre**  
 12:15 Lunchtime Classics: Barber & Copland - An American Resonance  
**Trúnó**  
 15:00 I Know What You Did Last Night: offers on hot and cold drinks

### 27 MON

**Café Rósenberg**  
 21:00 Pub Quiz  
**Trúnó**  
 22:00 Manic Monday.

### 28 TUE

**Hressó**  
 21:30 Live Jazz  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 22:00 DJ B Ruff  
**Trúnó**  
 21:00 L'acoustique: Acoustic Evening

### 29 WED

**Café Rósenberg**  
 21:00 M.A.S.  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 22:00 HalliValli  
**Trúnó**  
 22:00 Wednesdays Are The New Thursdays

### 01 THU

**Café Rósenberg**  
 21:00 Jón Svavar & his band  
**Harpa**  
 19:00 Tectonics, Festival Of Modern Music



### Rainbow Reykjavík

February 16-19

All over Reykjavík and Iceland

Reykjavík will become a multi-coloured explosion of joy and happiness as it celebrates Rainbow Reykjavík on the weekend of 16-19 February! Rainbow Reykjavík is Iceland's International LGBT festival and it's gonna be a fun-packed weekend for sure. Definitely a great way to brighten up a gloomy February!

As Eva María Thorarinsdóttir Lange, Managing Director of Pink Iceland states, "the Rainbow Reykjavík program provides a colourful mixture of various events, including tours to see the Northern Lights, geysirs [or gaysirs as they've been nicknamed :)], waterfalls and the Continental Divide, great meals, cocktail receptions and dance parties...as well as pure wellness and relaxation in the world famous geothermal spa of the Blue Lagoon."

On top of that there is going to be a 'Queer Concert' at the fabulous Harpa hall. It will feature an array of famous names including Lay Low and Páll Óskar...it's the cherry on top of the cake.

Bitch please, if you're not excited about this...well, you're just not right!

For more information see: <http://pinkiceland.is/>

**Gaukurinn**  
 22:00 Becks: Live Concert Series  
**Glaumbar**  
 22:00 Live DJ  
**Prikið**  
 22:00 Breakbeat Iceland  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 22:00 DJ CasaNova  
**Trúnó**  
 22:00 Thursday Thunder

### 02 FRI

**Austur**  
 23:00 House DJ  
**Café Rósenberg**  
 22:00 Ljótu Hálfvitarnir  
**Esja**  
 22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hylur Mastermix  
**Gaukurinn**  
 22:00 Högni (Faroes Islands)  
**Glaumbar**  
 22:00 Live DJ  
**Harpa**  
 19:00 Tectonics, Festival Of Modern Music  
**Prikið**  
 22:00 House DJ  
**Trúnó**  
 23:00 House DJ

### 03 SAT

**Austur**  
 23:00 DJ Danni Deluxe  
**Esja**  
 22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hylur Mastermix  
**Gaukurinn**  
 22:00 Muck Release Concert, Celestine, The Heavy Experience, Mammút - 1000 ISK  
**Harpa**  
 16:30 Tectonics, Festival Of Modern Music  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 22:00 DJ FKNHNSM

### 04 SUN

**Faktorý**  
 22:00 Live Jazz  
**Trúnó**  
 15:00 I Know What You Did Last Night: offers on hot and cold drinks

### 05 MON

**Trúnó**  
 22:00 Manic Monday

### 06 TUE

**Hressó**  
 21:30 Live Jazz  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 22:00 Óli Dóri  
**Trúnó**  
 21:00 L'acoustique: Acoustic evening

### 07 WED

**Kaffibarinn**  
 22:00 Extreme Chill  
**Trúnó**  
 22:00 Wednesdays Are The New Thursdays

### 08 THU

**Kaffibarinn**  
 22:00 HúsDJús: These Fists  
**Prikið**  
 22:00 Live DJ  
**Trúnó**  
 22:00 Thursday Thunder



### Happy Restaurant Day!

Restaurant Day comes to Reykjavík

February 4

Around the city

Prices vary by restaurant

Restaurant Day—which has been wildly successful in Finland—will come to Reykjavík for the first time on February 4. On this day, people are encouraged to open their very own restaurant, café or bar at the location of their choosing.

We'll just relay the festival organizers' message: "The quirkier the concept, the better. No permissions, no rules, just plain fun. Why? Because you're worth it, because we love food, and because every city needs more no-strings fun. Hop on board and join dozens of enthusiastic restaurateurs – now catering to thousands of food and fun lovers all around Finland, and hopefully around the world!"

For a detailed list of pop-up restaurants around the city visit, visit <http://www.restaurantday.org/>. If you're going to set up your own restaurant, be sure to register it there!



## Birds Of A Feather

... and of the same name

The Birdcage series

February 7, 21:00

Café Rósenberg

Price: 1500 ISK

In most cases when a musician finds another artist operating under the same name, they take the cue to come up with an alter ego (see: David Bowie). But it can also lead to fortuitous pairings and serendipitous encounters, as is the case with musicians Margrét Kristín Sigurðadóttir (Magga Stína, also known as Fabúla), and Margrét Kristín Blöndal (aka Magga Stína). In addition to sharing the same name, they grew up in the same neighbourhood and went to the same music schools, but somehow never properly met until last year.

The pair will be doing us the great honour of performing together at the next installment of The Birdcage concert series, hosted by FTT with collaborators Rás 2 and Yours Truly. We got in touch with Fabúla to get the skinny.

### So how did you two meet and come to collaborate?

A 200-year old composer brought us together last year. We attended the same "classical composition" course at the Iceland Academy of the Arts and were assigned to do a lecture on Beethoven together. So after a passionate study of our beloved composer, and a lot of laughs after sleepless nights, we got to know each other pretty well!

### Have you ever taken part in a collaboration like this one before?

Never exactly like this, when someone else decides to put different songwriters together on a stage. This Birdcage

idea is fun, putting together people with different styles or at different ages that have never played together before and seeing what comes out of it.

### What can we look forward to about your performance?

We will do our own stuff and perform each other's songs as well. That is the really fun part. We will also do a song or two together.

### What are you looking forward to the most?

I'm hoping for an evening of unpredictable moments. We have to throw ourselves off the cliff and take the audience with us. Don't worry about the landing; it's the flight that matters.

### Do you hope to play more together after the show?

Well this will start as a one-night stand, but you never know

-Rebecca Louder

# ART

## IN FEBRUARY

### 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](http://www.grapevine.is) Send us your listings: [listings@grapevine.is](mailto:listings@grapevine.is)

## OPENINGS

### ASÍ Art Museum

Feb 10

#### Sara and Svanhildur Vilbergsdottir Exhibition

The sisters Sara and Svanhildur Vilbergsdottir combine forces in painting. They have different approaches to the subject but together they come to a result that is often a wonderland in which unexpected things happen. More info: [www.listasafnasi.is](http://www.listasafnasi.is)

Runs until March 4

### Borgarleikhúsið

Feb 04, Feb 12, Feb 26

20:00 Minus 16

New dance performance 3800 ISK

### Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

Feb 4

#### Glittering Firm

An exhibition of works by Páll

Guðmundsson, sculptor and artist, dedicated to the late author, Thor Vilhjálmsson

Runs until April 4

### Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

Feb 05

#### Desire

An exhibition of oil paintings by Lilja Þorsteinsdóttir

Runs until April 15

### Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Feb 10

#### Milestones: Sigurjón Ólafsson's Key Sculptures

Opening at Museum Night in Reykjavík at 19:00.

Guided tour at 20:00 and 22:00

Exhibition with some of Sigurjón Ólafsson's key works from different periods of his prolific career as a sculptor. The earliest work on the exhibition is a newly acquired relief of two sisters which he made at his first year at the Royal Academy of Art in Copenhagen. This relief has not been exhibited in Iceland before

Runs until October 1

### 7factory Gallery

Feb 11

#### CHRO-MOTION | HULDA HLÍN MAGNÚSDÓTTIR

The exhibition runs until March 10 and is open weekdays from 10 - 16 and Saturdays from 12 - 17. The exhibition is a visual journey through the world of colors

Runs until March 11

## ONGOING

### The Culture House

#### Medieval Manuscripts Eddas and Sagas

It includes principal medieval manuscripts, such as Codices Regii of the Poetic Edda and Prose Edda, and law codes and Christian works, not to forget the Sagas of Icelanders.

On permanent view

#### Child of Hope - Youth and Jón Sigurósson

Exploring the life of Icelandic national hero Jón Sigurjónsson, made especially accessible to children, families, and school groups

On permanent view

#### Medieval Manuscripts - Eddas and Sagas

Some of Iceland's medieval manuscripts on display. Guided tour in English on Mondays & Fridays at 15:00

On permanent view

#### Millennium - phase one

Selection of pieces from the collection of the National Gallery displaying a variety of works by Icelandic artists in the last two centuries.

On permanent view

#### The Library Room

The old reading room of the National

we are **#10 of 120** restaurants in Reykjavík

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i8

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Iceland  
[info@i8.is](mailto:info@i8.is)

T: +354 551 3666  
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i8 was founded in 1995 and represents an eclectic mix of Icelandic and international contemporary artists.

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| HREINN FRIDFINNSSON  | EGILL SAEBJÖRNSSON   |
| KRISTJÁN GUDMUNDSSON | KARIN SANDER         |
| SIGURDUR GUDMUNDSSON | HRAFNKELL SIGURDSSON |
| ELÍN HANSDÓTTIR      | IGNACIO URIARTE      |
| RONI HORN            | ÍVAR VALGARDSSON     |
| RAGNAR KJARTANSSON   | THÓR VIGFÚSSON       |
| EGGERT PÉTURSSON     | LAWRENCE WEINER      |

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HAFNARSTRÆTI 5 & SKÓLAVÖRDUSTÍGUR 10

## Café Loki in front of Hallgrímskirkja

Icelandic traditional homemade food



Open 10-18 Mon - Sat  
Open 11-17 Sundays

## HORNIÐ

Restaurant - Pizzeria



Hornið opened in 1979 was the first restaurant of its kind in Iceland, a restaurant with a true Italian atmosphere. Hornið is known for good food made out of fresh raw materials, good pizzas baked in front of the guests, good coffee and comfortable service.

Lunch offers every day.

Open every day from 11.00 to 23.30  
For reservations call 551-3340



# MAP

## Places We Like

### 1 Hressó

Austurstræti 20

You know, Hressó is basically the only place I go for coffee. Why? Their coffee is decent to excellent, but their forte is surely their wonderful patio, where you can enjoy the spring breeze in the sun, wrap yourself in a blanket beneath an electric heater in January and at all times: smoke.

### 2 Laundromat Café

Austurstræti 9

At the Laundromat Cafe you can do laundry, drink a beer and have a grandma read to your children all under one roof. This kid-friendly restaurant opened this spring in Reykjavik and prides itself on its full menu, cool concept, 5,000 books (that you can buy or trade), board games, and up-to-date newspapers and magazines (including a WALL OF GRAPEVINES).

### 3 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.

### 4 Tapas

Vesturgata 3B

For those with a bit of time on their hands, the evening is well spent at Tapas, where you can indulge yourself feasting on course after delicious course of miniature dishes served in true Spanish style. If you feel like hanging around, there's also a lounge.

### 5 Café d'Haiti

Geirsgata 7b/Verbúð 2

Now in a spacious new location, Café d'Haiti is surely one of Reykjavik's best cafés (and this is no mean feat, as the city has some nice coffee on offer). Go there for an excellent cup whenever you feel like it, or indulge in beer and low-key concerts at night.

### 6 Boston

Laugavegur 28

Like an older sibling to the fabled (now deceased) Sirkús, Boston is a warm and mellow second-floor bar on Laugavegur that plays host to the arty party crowd. The baroque wall dressings and deep, rich coloured décor make this bar feel pretty swank, but Boston also serves up some reasonably priced food earlier in the evening, so it's not too swank.

### Useful numbers

Emergency number: **112**

Medical help: **1770**

Dental emergency: **575 0505**

Information: **118**

Taxi: Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir: **588 5522**

BSR: **561 0000**

### Tax Free Refund

Iceland Refund, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400

### Tourist information

Arctic Adventures, Laugavegur 11,

tel: 562 7000

City Centre, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

Iceland Excursions - Grayline Iceland,



### 7 Pingholt Bar

Pingholtsstræti 5

Located in CenterHotel Pingholt, Pingholt bar is tucked away just outside of the mayhem that is Laugavegur on a weekend night. For a quieter evening, Pingholt bar is definitely worth a closer look. Show up between 17-19 for the daily happy hour.

Hafnarstræti 20, tel: 540 1313

The Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti 2, tel: 522 4979

Trip, Laugavegur 54, tel: 433 8747

### Pharmacies

Lyf og heilsa, Egilsgata 3, tel: 563 1020

Lyfja, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045 and Lágmúla 5, tel: 533-2300

### Coach terminal

BSÍ, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10,

tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

### Domestic airlines

Air Iceland, Reykjavíkflugvöllur,

tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

Eagle Air, Hótel Loftleiðir, tel: 562-4200

### 8 Den Danske Kro

Ingólfsstræti 3

The Danish Bar is located on Ingólfsstræti, just off Laugavegur where Q Bar once stood. The bar serves up Danish favourites, such as open-face smørrebrød sandwiches, Danish Tuborg beer and Aquavit schnapps. How to ask for a large beer in Danish: "Hej, jeg vil gerne have en stor øl, tak".

### Public transport

The only public transport available in Reykjavik is the bus. Most buses run every 20-30 minutes (the wait may be longer on weekends) and the price per fare is 350 ISK for adults and children. Multiple day passes are available for purchase at select locations. Complete route map available at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700. Buses run from 07:00-24:00 on weekdays and 10:00-24:00 on weekends. Main terminals are: Hlemmur and Lækjartorg

### Opening Hours

Bars and clubs: According to regulations, bars can stay open until 01:00 on weekdays and 05:30 on weekends.

Shops: Mon.-Fri. 10:00-18:00, Sat.

### 9 Nikita

Laugavegur 56

The Icelandic skate design brand Nikita now has a flagship store in Reykjavik and girl, it is awesome! The hot pink exterior is only the beginning; inside you'll be treated to some of the coolest and most comfortable ladies street and skate wear on the market.

10:00-16:00, Sun. closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

Swimming pools: Weekdays 06:30-22:00 and weekends 09:00-17:00, although each pool varies plus or minus a few hours. Banks in the centre are open Mon.-Fri. 09:00-16:00.

### Post Offices

Post offices are located around the city. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5, open Mon.-Fri. 09:00-18:00. Stamps are also sold at bookstores, gas stations, tourist shops and some grocery stores.

Raggi from the band Árstíðir is the unstoppable...

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**LEGEND**

# EATING   # DRINKING   # SHOPPING

For a map of outside downtown Reykjavik visit [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is) or the Icelandic phonebook website [www.ja.is](http://www.ja.is)

**13 NEW IN TOWN**

**20 BÉ**  
Laugavegur 20B

In 'The Devil Wears Prada', Nigel informs Andy (and therefore us) that fashion is extremely important because it is art that we wear. We carry it with/on us every day. The newly opened 20 BÉ houses both fashion and art for the discerning eye. Located just off of Laugavegur, 20 BÉ is home to fashion labels Helicopter clothing and Begga Design, as well as art courtesy of Muses and other artists. Pop along and indulge in some retail therapy and culture to take away the winter blues! Open Monday – Friday: 11:00 – 18:00, Saturday: 11:00 – 16:00



**A Day In The Life**  
Guðmundur Steingrímsson  
What's up, Guðmundur?

These days I'm mostly focusing on two projects. With the help of The Best Party in Reykjavik and many individuals from all around the country, I am forming a new political party on a national level. It is called Björt framtíð, or "The Bright Future Party." We will be holding an inaugural meeting on February 4 and after that we will aim for a bright future.

The other project is about a better future for disabled people. I am in charge of a committee within the Ministry of Welfare that is developing a system of personal assistance for disabled people in Iceland. It would give the disabled the ability to hire their own assistants and gain the same independent living that everyone else enjoys. This is something that we are going to start, as an experiment, in February.

So these two projects take a lot of my time these days, but there is also a lot to do in Alþingi, and of course being a father to my children and a proper husband.

**BEFORE NOON >**

My typical day starts around 8:00. Then I, or my wife Alexia, take the children to school. Often I have a meeting around 9:00, sometimes in the Ministry of Welfare or in Alþingi. Between meetings, if I can, I grab a bite at St. Pauls on Tryggvagata. The sandwiches there are excellent. Gourmet stuff. And the chef is also a drummer in my band Ske. Great man. Solid.

**AFTERNOON >**

Usually after lunch there is a parliamentary session. But often in the afternoon I go up to Brautarholt, in the eastern part of town, where Bright Future has an office. There we have a lot of things to discuss these days.

Then I usually try to find time to go to the gym. I go to World Class on Seltjarnarness. It's a nice gym that's not too crowded and the swimming pool is excellent.

**LATE EVENING >**

If it's Friday I sometimes end the week by having a pint or two with the guys in the band, and recently we have really enjoyed the vibe at KEX (Skúlagata).

But usually I simply try to be at home, working on the computer, doing something with the kids and being a proper husband. Alexia and I also feel obliged to follow several television series very closely. We are extremely worried about the mental health of Dexter Morgan for example, and Gregory House. Not to mention Liz Lemon.

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**10 66° North**  
Bankastræti 5

Highly fashionable and highly practical, 66° Norður is a classic outdoors store in Iceland for everybody. Nearly every Icelander has a 66° sweater or two. Their quality apparel is made to last and keeps the elements out. You may also find their products in high-end stores around the world.

**Public phones**

There aren't many public payphones in the city centre. The tourist information centre at Aðalstræti 2, City Hall, Kolaportíð, entrance at Landsbankinn and in Lækjargata. Prepaid international phone cards are recommended for int'l callers.

**Internet Access**

Most cafés offer free wireless internet access. Computers with internet connections are available to use at:  
Ráðhúskaffi City Hall, Tjarnargata 11  
Ground Zero, Frakkastígur 8, near Laugavegur 45  
The Reykjavik City Library, Tryggvagata 15

**11 Borgarhjól**  
Hverfisgata 50

For those that want to soak up the city sights and surrounding countryside at a more leisurely pace, then you should really check this place out. It's a really old school bike shop that mends as well as rents out bikes, and at really reasonable rate too. They also sell helmets, safety gear and accessories if you really want to go all out.

**Swimming Pools**

There are several swimming pools in Reykjavik. The one in 101 Reykjavik, Sundhöll Reykjavíkur, is an indoor one, located at Barónsstígur. That pool features a nice sunbathing area and some outdoor hot tubs. Opening hours: Monday to Thursday from 06:30–22:00, Friday from 06:30–20:00, Saturday from 08:00–16:00, and Sunday from 10:00–18:00.

**12 ÁTVR (Liquor store)**  
Austurstræti 10a

In Iceland, alcohol isn't sold in the grocery shops (that stuff in the shops that looks like beer—it isn't beer. Trust us). You can buy alcohol in the state-owned liquor stores named ÁTVR, usually referred to as Ríkið ("The State"). One store is located in the city centre. Opening hours for the downtown one are: Mon.–Thu. 11:00–18:00, Fri. 11:00–19:00, Sat. 11:00–18:00.

**Public Toilets**

Public toilets in the centre can be found inside the green poster covered towers located, for example, at Hlemmur, Ingólfs-tortorg, by Hallgrímskirkja, by Reykjavik Art Museum, Lækjargata and by Eymundsson on Skólavörðustígur. Toilets can also be found inside the Reykjavik City Hall and the Reykjavik Library.

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## Elding Whale Watching schedule – all year round

| EL-01 / EL-02 / EL-03 |       |        |         |       |         |        |         |
|-----------------------|-------|--------|---------|-------|---------|--------|---------|
| Jan-Mar               | Apr   | May    | Jun     | Jul   | Aug     | Sept   | Oct-Dec |
|                       | 9:00  | 9:00   | 9:00    | 9:00  | 9:00    | 9:00   |         |
|                       |       |        | 10:00   | 10:00 | 10:00   |        |         |
| 13:00                 | 13:00 | 13:00  | 13:00   | 13:00 | 13:00   | 13:00  | 13:00   |
|                       |       |        | 14:00   | 14:00 | 14:00   |        |         |
|                       |       | 17:00* | 17:00   | 17:00 | 17:00   | 17:00* |         |
|                       |       |        | 20:30** | 20:30 | 20:30** |        |         |

\* From 15 May to 15 September  
\*\* From 15 June to 15 August

## Viðey ferry

Viðey Island is situated just few minutes from Reykjavik by ferry. It is interesting to visit any time of the year and each season has its own charm. The ferry's winter schedule runs through three seasons; autumn, winter and spring with departures on Saturdays and Sundays from Skarfabakki pier.



ENINEMU/SA/IMAGOP99

elding.is

Library. Displaying books of Icelandic cultural history dating from the 16th century to the present. Works include oldest published versions of the Sagas, Eddic Poems, and more  
*On permanent view*

### The Einar Jónsson Museum

**Einar Jónsson**  
The museum contains close to 300 art works spanning a 60 year career: carvings from the artist's youth, sculptures, paintings and drawings. A beautiful tree-clad garden adorned with 26 bronze casts of the artist's works is located behind the museum  
*On permanent view*

### Gallery King & Bang

**Powerful Pictures: Erling T.V. Klíngenberg**  
Rather than the typical art tools – brushes, pallet knives, etc. – Erling uses a motorcycle in creating these works on canvas by placing a container of paint under its rear wheel before hitting the accelerator to unleash its raw horsepower. The resulting paintings are accompanied by others made through variations on this process that is steeped in overt clichés of masculinity  
*February 19*

### Gerðuberg

**Stone, scissors, paper and the keys to heaven**  
The exhibition Steinn, skæri, pappír og lykjar að himnarkí features Icelandic stones, scissors of various shapes and sizes, paper (in the form of biblical pictures and bibles) and keys, some of which (who knows?) may unlock the doors of heaven itself.  
*Runs until June 22*

### Gerðarsafn – Kópavogur

**Sæborgin: Kynjaverur og ókindur**  
The works on show reflect our fascination and fear of the machine and its presence in contemporary culture.  
*February 29*

### Knitting Iceland

Come and knit at Laugavegur 25, 3rd floor, every Thursday, 14:00 – 18:00  
*On permanent view*

### Latin Dance Studio, Faxafen 12

**Guided Practica – Argentine tango**, Sundays from 17:30-19:30  
Register by phone 821 6929 or email tangoadventure@gmail.com, 500 ISK for students, 800 ISK for others. Six week courses are also available

### Listasafn ASÍ

**Anna Líndal** – The works of Anna Líndal are built in several layers and therefore call for different approaches. The outcome is a pattern of the artists life and surroundings.  
*Runs until February 5*

### The National Museum

**The Making of a Nation** – Heritage and History in Iceland  
This exhibition is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.  
*On permanent view.*

### The Nordic House

**The Library**  
The collection centres on new Nordic literature, both fiction and non-fiction. The library lends out novels, academic publications, audio books and more  
*On permanent view*

### Reykjavík Art Museum, Ásmundarsafn

**From Sketch to Sculpture** – Drawings by Ásmundur Sveinsson. The exhibition offers a first insight into the rich collection of drawings by the sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson, as the Reykjavík Art Museum has recently completed the digital registration of about 2000 drawings that the artist

bequeathed to the Museum.

*Runs until April 22, 2012*

**Magnús Árnason – Homage**  
Árnason's works, whether in his sound-pieces, sculptures or performances, stand on a vague line between the real and unreal, fiction and facts. In his recent work, he has worked with nature and natural history; moving away from the mythological references seen in his earlier work.  
*Runs until April 22*

### Hafnarborg

**Still Life** – The exhibition focuses on still life paintings by Icelandic artists of different generations, some better known for other types of work. Artwork from the Hafnarborg collection will be on display as well as works from other public and private collections. This is an opportunity to see works by some of the country's most important 20th century artists.  
*Runs until February 26*

### Hafnarhús

**Erró – Drawings**  
The exhibition consists of 180 drawings Erró has done since 1944 until the present day  
*Runs until August 26*

### Kjarvalsstaðir

**Kjarval – Key Works**  
Reykjavík Art Museum draws on its extensive collection of works by Jóhannes S. Kjarval for ongoing exhibitions at Kjarvalsstaðir. The exhibition in the Kjarval Gallery features key works from the museum  
*Runs until January 15, 2012*

### Architecture And Time Travel

An open and informative art workshop for families set up in connection with the exhibitions 'Snøhetta: Architecture, Landscape, Interior' and 'My dreamland in the North' – Karen Agnete Þórarinnsson, presently in the West Wing  
*Runs until March 4*

### My Dreamland In The North: Karen Agnete Þórarinnsson

The painter Karen Agnete (1903-1992) was one of many Danish women who married an Icelander and moved with their husbands back to Iceland from Copenhagen in the first half of the 20th century, after both having studied at the Danish Art Academy. She was fascinated by Iceland and Icelanders, and for six decades she painted and exhibited her works all over Iceland and became a respected and well known painter here.  
*Runs until March 4*

### Snøhetta – Architecture, Landscape, Interior

The international recognition that the architecture firm Snøhetta has received is quite unique in a Norwegian context. The firm has won two open, international competitions: Bibliotheca Alexandrina and Oslo's new Opera House, which have become landmarks in their countries. On the firm's 20th anniversary in 2009 a major exhibition opened in Oslo's new National Museum – Architecture. This exhibition at Kjarvalsstaðir displays highlights from the original exhibition.  
*Runs until March 4*

### Reykjavík City Museum –

**Reykjavík 871 +/- 2**  
**The Settlement Exhibition**  
Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre, open daily 10:00-17:00, 600 ISK per adult, 300 ISK for children (children under 12, free) and 450 ISK per person in groups (10+)  
*On permanent view*

# Weekend Brunch

February 4th – 30th April  
Every Saturday and Sunday  
11:00 – 13:00

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## Art | Venue finder

### ART67

Laugavegur 67 | **F7**  
Mon - Fri 12 - 18 / Sat 12 - 16

### Artótek

Tryggvagata 15 | **D3**  
Mon 10-21, Tue-Thu 10-19, Fri 11-19, Sat and Sun 13-17  
www.sim.is/Index/Islenska/Artotek

### ASÍ Art Museum

Freygata 41 | **H6**  
Tue-Sun 13-17

### Árbæjarsafn

Kistuhylur 4

### The Culture House

Hverfisgata 15 | **E5**  
Open daily 11-17  
www.thjodmenning.is

### Dwarf Gallery

Grundarstígur 21 | **F4**  
Opening Hours: Fri and Sat 18-20

### The Einar Jónsson Museum

Eiríksgata | **G6**  
Tue-Sun 14-17  
www.skulptur.is

### Gallery Ágúst

Baldursgata 12 | **G5**  
Wed-Sat 12-17  
www.galleriagust.is

### Gallery Fold

Rauðarástígur 14-16 | **G8**  
Mon-Fri 10-18 / Sat 11-16 / Sun 14-16  
www.myndlist.is

### Gallery Kaolin

Ingólfstræti 8 | **F4**

### Gallery Kling & Bang

Hverfisgata 42 | **E6**  
Thurs-Sun from 14-18  
this.is/klingogbang/

### Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

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

### Hitt Húsið

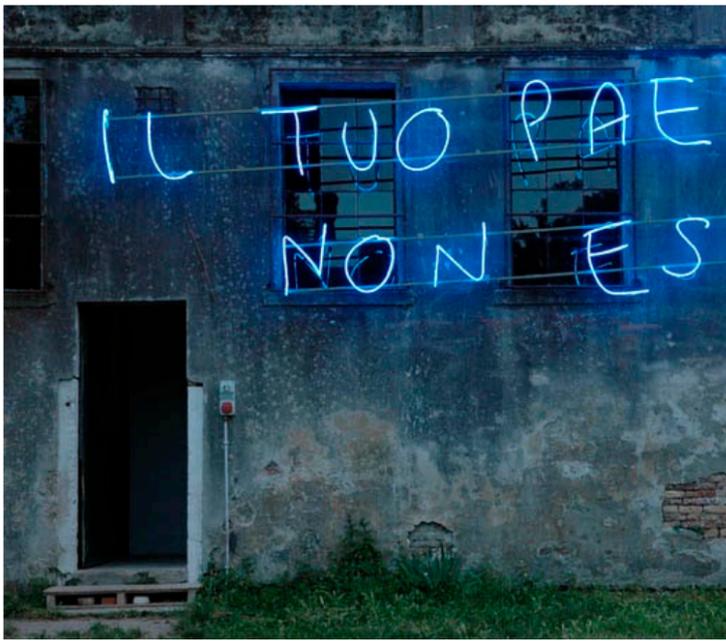
– Gallery Tukt  
Pósthússtræti 3-5 | **E4**  
www.hitthusid.is

### i8 Gallery

Tryggvagata 16 | **D3**  
Tue-Fri 11-17 / Sat 13-17 and by appointment.  
www.i8.is

### Living Art Museum

Skúlagata 28 | **E7**  
Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17 / Thu 13-22. www.nylo.is



## Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson: Under Deconstruction

Runs until February 19

National Gallery of Iceland

800 ISK (500 ISK for concessions)

Under Deconstruction will be on exhibit at the National Gallery of Iceland until February 19. This most recent collaboration between Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson is a combination of older collaborations and new works. In fact the neon 'Landið þitt er ekki til' ("Your Country Does Not Exist") is part of an ongoing Libia & Ólafur campaign that began back in 2003 and has made its way around the world in various permutations.

Libia & Ólafur collaborations explore the political, socio-economic, and personal forces that affect life in the present day. They provide an interesting, colourful and thought-provoking insight into post-Kreppa Iceland (and indeed a post-crisis world in general). Take advantage whilst you can.

More information at: <http://www.listasafn.is/>

### Reykjavík Maritime Museum

#### From Poverty to Abundance

Photos documenting Icelandic fishermen at the turn of the 20th century

On permanent view

#### The History of Sailing

Iceland's maritime history and the growth of the Reykjavík Harbour

On permanent view

#### The Call of Sagas

An exhibition from Finland about an adventurous voyage in an open boat from Finland to Iceland, honoring the old viking shipping routes.

On permanent view

#### The Watercolours of Ólafur Thorlacius

Ólafur Þór worked with the Icelandic Coast Guard for many years as a map-maker. He is now retired and paints beautiful watercolours in his free time.

On permanent view

### Reykjavík Museum of Photography

#### Echo

Charlotta Hauksdóttir & Sonja Thomsen look at time and the reproduction of the past

Runs until May 6

#### Calendar Breaking Christians

Christian Scheirbeck's photos from the early 1900's capture moments in the lives of local people during work and play.

Runs until May 6

### Samtökin '78

#### Queer Is Where The Heart Is -

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[natmus.is](http://natmus.is)

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Sigtún  
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Tryggvagata 17 | D3  
Kjarvalsstaðir  
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Grandagarður 8 | B2

#### Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Tryggvagata 16 | D3  
Weekdays 12-19 / Sat-Sun 13-17 - [www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is](http://www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is)

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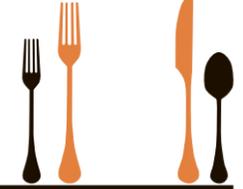
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## Painted Ship Upon A Painted Ocean

### Munnharpan

Harpa Concert Hall



**What We Think:** They do the smørrebrød well and I'd recommend them. The rest is firmly based in Danish cuisine but you will be able to find better. Some strange attempts at redefining established culinary terms on the menu.

**Flavour:** Danish cuisine with the inherent French influence and a little more French sprinkled on top.

**Ambiance:** Too exposed for lounging, but adequate for a quick bite before a show.

**Service:** Well staffed, carry themselves well but could have been more responsive.

**Price:** (two people): 20-25,000 ISK for going all-out. 8-10,000 ISK for grabbing a smørrebrød and a drink.

Back in the Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Centre. Back in The Borg starship (see Kolabrautin review). Except the place is shifting in my eyes every time. One moment it is a lifeless, futuristic cube and the next it is a lively and entertaining (if somewhat gaudy) airport terminal. That may not sound like much of an improvement, but the place is slowly growing on me.

Still, it provides a unique set of problems to anyone trying to run a restaurant in the building. There is a great deal of empty space, which can be taken as an opportunity to explore new and interesting concepts, but the lack of dividers can easily make the diner feel exposed and uneasy. However, this problem is really no different from that which museum eateries must contend with (the "how to not look like a food court in a shopping mall" conundrum).

Munnharpan is owned by the same people that run Jómfrúin, a long-

standing favourite in the local scene, which focuses on Danish open faced sandwiches. A particularly popular place with groups of ladies, 30 years and older, I thought it was fitting to bring mom along (she still doesn't look a day over 40).

Arriving at 19:30 on Saturday night, the place was empty. It wasn't until 20 that people came flooding in, which is not unusual as Munnharpan was clearly built with the intention of attracting concert guests for a light meal before the show. So Harpa must respond to these bursts of activity before sinking back to idleness like Coleridge's "painted ship upon a painted ocean." But despite our off-peak arrival, I would have expected the service to be a little more attentive.

The meals are mostly suitable with plenty of light courses. As with Jómfrúin, they offer a selection of smørrebrød (Danish open faced sandwiches) mixed with classic French courses. I must say that we were both a little confused how to assemble a full meal out of the selection. I felt like trying the smørrebrød, but wasn't sure if that would substitute a starter or work as a main course. I ended up treating it like a main course and started with the smoked lamb's liver with apples and almonds (1990 ISK). They called it a "ballotine," but it was basically forcemeat on a bed of lettuce. Actually I quite liked it mostly thanks to the apples and lightly roasted almonds.

Mom had the smoked salmon on potato galette with fried lobster and basil cream (2750 ISK). Again I would have to say that "galette" was stretching the definition a little too far, as there was nothing particularly cakey about it. The salmon worked very well, lightly smoked with nice colouring. The large piece of lobster tasted delicious, but it was surrounded by bits of lobster that were bland, and left an unpleasant aftertaste. The basil cream left no impression either way.

For the main course I had the "beef tartar, the classic way" (2750 ISK). The addition of rye bread meant that this could only be called "classic" in the Danish tradition (called "tartarmad").

Otherwise it was a good steak tartar by the numbers: capers, raw onions, raw egg yolk and a nice heap of freshly minced beef. The meat was a little lacking in flavour, which can be attributed to what I see as a general lack of quality beef in Iceland. The mincing should also have been a little coarser.

The "woman who hath birthed me" had the pork confit side with lemon, thyme and Jerusalem artichoke (3590 ISK). When I hear "a side of pork confit" I think of some kind of rogue pancetta, but it turns out they were playing fast and loose with the definitions again. The Jerusalem artichokes were a nice touch (you don't see that much—they must be using the same supplier as Kolabrautin), but they can be tricky to handle and those had lost their delicate flavour. The pork was understandably very fatty, but the texture didn't work in its favour. Mom ended up leaving half the plate uneaten. The pork belly was a letdown.

For dessert I had a meh Irish coffee and mom ordered the French apple tart with cinnamon ice cream (1450). The cinnamon ice cream was delicious, but the tart was soggy and easily overpowered by the butter. A crisper, lighter tart would have resulted in an excellent dish.

On the way out we ran into a certain infamous, corpulent strip club owner who was out on the town with his harem of morose women trying their hardest not to freeze to death while outside smoking in mini-skirts. So much for keeping it classy, Harpa!

 RAGNAR EGILSSON  
 ALÍSA KALYANOVA

#### A NOTE ON OUR RATINGS SYSTEM:

Ratings run from zero to five Gs and reflect the overall experience of the reviewer. A fast food place will be compared to other fast food places and rated accordingly. Note that 2.5 Gs is not a failing grade—it means 'average'. A solid 5 Gs means 'as good as it gets'. Zero means food poisoning. You get the idea.

# REVIEWS



## That Place Above The Seafood Cellar

### Geysir Bistro & Bar

Geysishúsið, Aðalstræti 2



**What We Think:** Not a disaster, but the kitchen lacks enthusiasm. A smaller and more focused menu might be a good idea. The trout, the Camembert and the service were good. The steak and dessert weren't at all.

**Flavour:** Some French influences, but hardly orthodox. Diner food meets spirited bistro.

**Ambiance:** Perfect location but would benefit from softer lights, louder music and a livelier dining experience.

**Service:** Charming and friendly

**Price:** 15–20,000 ISK for three courses and drinks

So we've covered a bistro and a brasserie in the same issue. Look at us getting all French!

Geysir proudly displays their TripAdvisor review on their website and they have little tabs with messages such as "wine and real coffee" and "don't forget the desert" (sic), which give me the impression that it was a laid-back place and a labour of love. Nobody needs to put on a suit to impress me. Besides, the fact that it claims to be a bistro should tell you that right away (bistros with dress codes bother me to no end).

A bistro should be a friendly café/bar with simple, crowd-pleasing food and a decent selection of wine and beer. It should be a place to hang out and have a chat without having to vacuum the wallet. Bonus points for serving local or French cuisine and for being family-owned. It's only fair to hold Geysir bistro to that standard.

Geysir has a lot of stuff geared towards groups and private parties and I could see the place working for that, suitably located in Geysishúsið, a glass building built around the remnants of what used to be the oldest commercial building in Reykjavík. In 1992, the building was taken over by the city and turned into a city information & visitor centre. Ever since it has housed some kind of tourist-friendly operation. One being Geysir, which is located above the Seafood Cellar—an unenviable position as the Seafood Cellar is generally considered one of the best restaurants in Iceland.

The main room at Geysir is heavy on wood and quite open. I could definitely see the appeal of renting the space out for a small group. The prices aren't too bad either considering this is Iceland we're talking about, but for those kinds of prices I would expect a pretty solid bistro menu. That's why I'm sorry to say I was let down by my expectations.

It's a scattershot menu, offering crêpes, chicken pasta, gravlax, cheeseburgers, seafood specials and wiener-schnitzel. The idea probably being that everyone in the family would find something to their liking, like a TGI Friday's.

I should mention that I really liked our server—one waitress, the owner herself, serving the entire room, yet maintaining a fast, professional and light-hearted service—full marks there.

I chose the seafood and snails in white wine sauce starter (2355 ISK). And a friend had the deep-fried Camembert with redcurrant jelly (1755 ISK). Anything as rich as a deep-fried Camembert is unlikely to fail and it's safe to recommend. The portion size for the seafood and snails was good and the seafood worked but the snails had a terrible texture.

For main course I had the Arctic trout with braised fennel, oyster mushrooms, lobster and hollandaise (3355 ISK). Four lonely scrapings of lobster proved pointless, but the fennel and mushrooms worked wonders and the trout was cooked right. The hollandaise did not taste fresh. My friend had the beef entrecôte steak with mushrooms, potatoes, pearl onions and bacon (3955 ISK). Again the sides worked fine, but the steak had no claim to the name "entrecôte." A true entrecôte is a beefsteak cut from between the ninth and eleventh rib, or at least a very tender premium cut rib eye. This steak was flattened, bloodless, flavourless and gloomy. And the bacon was pointless.

We finished with a Jack Daniel's chocolate cake with deep-fried ice cream (1495 ISK). The ice cream was all right, but the cake had a texture of a grainy baked cheesecake and tasted of nothing—definitely neither whiskey nor chocolate.

We came in a good mood, hungry, ready for a couple of drinks and a basic meal, we weren't expecting much and were feeling very forgiving. Somehow we ended up talking about nothing but the food for all the wrong reasons. I guess it was wrong of me to compare Geysir to Friday's—at least their Jack Daniel's dishes taste of whiskey.

Now, it is possible that we chose the wrong things on the menu. I had heard good things about the mussels, but neither of us was in the mood. The service was also excellent and the ambience could be great with a few minor changes. But I want to know what kind of food-loving person would put out these dishes without realising how much better they should be.

A dependable stream of tourists is no excuse for getting this sloppy.

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