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PRETTY VACANT

**HOW EMPTY HOUSES ARE
KILLING THE CITY CENTRE
– AND WHAT WE CAN DO
ABOUT IT**

The Murky Waters of the Blue Lagoon • Icelandic Heroes in Literature • Bob Dylan's Glasnost
Iceland and Estonia - More Similar Than you Might Think • Shopping Aluminum Foil With Martha Schwartz

+ **info.** A Complete City Guide and Listings: Map, Dining, Music, Arts and Events *Issue 06 // May 23 - June 5 2008*

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The Reykjavík Grapevine

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www.grapevine.is

grapevine@grapevine.is

www.myspace.com/reykjavikgrapevine

Published by Fröken ehf.

Editorial:

+354 540 3600 / editor@grapevine.is

Advertising:

+354 540 3605 / ads@grapevine.is

Publisher:

+354 540 3601 / publisher@grapevine.is

The Reykjavík Grapevine Staff

Publisher:

Hilmar Steinn Grétarsson

publisher@grapevine.is

Editor:

Sveinn Birgir Björnsson / birkir@grapevine.is

Assistant Editor:

Steinunn Jakobsdóttir / steinunn@grapevine.is

Contributing Writers:

Haukur Magnússon / haukur@grapevine.is

Ian Watson / www.ianwatson.org

Páll Hilmarsson / pallih@gmail.com

Editorial Intern:

Sigurður Kjartan Kristinsson

Art Director:

Gunnar Þorvaldsson / gunni@grapevine.is

Photographer:

Gunnlaugur Arnar Sigurðsson (GAS)

gulli@grapevine.is

Marketing Director:

Jón Trausti Sigurðarson / jontrausti@grapevine.is

Sales Director:

Aðalsteinn Jörundsson / adalsteinn@grapevine.is

Distribution:

Þórir Gunnar Jónsson / thorir@grapevine.is

Proofreader:

Jim Rice

Press releases:

listings@grapevine.is

Submissions inquiries:

editor@grapevine.is

Subscription inquiries:

+354 540 3605 / subscribe@grapevine.is

General inquiries:

grapevine@grapevine.is

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You may not like it, but at least it's not sponsored. (No articles in the Reykjavík Grapevine are pay-for articles. The opinions expressed are the writers' own, not the advertisers').

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From the Editor's Chair

Ish 6 is here and summer is underway. Rejoice.

There are some changes in preparation here, our five-year anniversary is just around the corner, and that's going to be a huge celebration. We will use that opportunity to launch a new website and a new look for the magazine, so keep an eye out for a new Grapevine in the coming weeks.

This issue we focus on the demise of downtown Reykjavík. There is a great disagreement over how this city should develop its centre, and the victim of this battle is the city itself. We can not afford to waste time, allowing the centre to deteriorate any further while we wonder if this house should be torn down or that house should be rebuilt. The most important thing is to bring life to

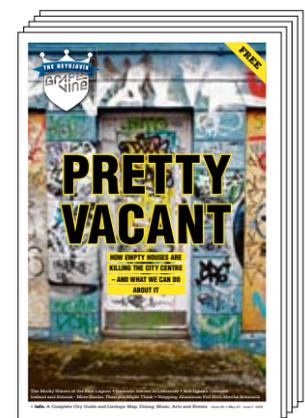
the city centre, and that is impossible when every third house or so, is boarded up and vacant. Bring life to the city.

We encourage you to check out the Reykjavík Art Festival. There is an abundance of interesting exhibitions and live concerts to enjoy in the coming weeks. Soak yourself in culture and be inspired. Do something that you have wanted to do for a long time but always put off. Write that novel, fix up that bike, do the dishes. Be inspired.

To our foreign guests I have this to say. There is a recession in Iceland. Make sure you spend you Euros and Dollars and Pounds to support the local economy. It has gotten to the point where local communities no longer feel they can offer

refugees from Iraq improved conditions from the refugee camps they are escaping. This is obviously a very dire situation. We need you currency.

And finally, it is the Icelandic goat. It needs to be put on the endangered species list. Trust me on this one. It is unique, pure of race and there are only 400 animals left. Support the goat.



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GAS



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Sour Grapes

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

Hi You guys,
My sour low pH is following: I got a job here in Iceland a fairly good one, considering I am a útlendingur (Nomad (in my case)). I've been traveling all over the world; therefore I take the bus a lot. Here comes the problem: Icelandic bus drivers! Are we at Formula 1 track from Vesturbær to Hilton Nordica? I have been traveling with buses Thailand, USA, Norway, England and so on. (Environment thinker also). I have never come across something like this before, risking my life on a bus? During the wintertime was very scary, but also NOW during spring since the drivers can go even faster, my neck and head is going all-over.

Therefore ill leave this island. Must have my neck until I'm around 80 (and not suffer from whiplash on a public bus)
Yup, I am a sour old grape... No wonder everybody has a car

Best Regards
Mr D

(Great paper during my 9 months visit here)

Dear D,
My theory is that the only people crazy enough to willfully choose to drive in circles are indeed race drivers and bus drivers. Sometimes, when the bus drivers get bored they like to pretend they are race drivers. This is both common and understandable. Very much like ordinary Icelandic police officers that sometimes get bored and like to pretend that they are members of the French riot police and beat on demonstrators. However, your complaint is highly unusual. Round these parts, we usually complain over how long it takes to commute with public transportation, not that it moves too fast. This is an anomaly that is difficult to account for. Therefore, either you must be mad, or not in a hurry to get from point a to point b like the rest of us, which ultimately also means your mad. Ergo...

Editor

Dear readers,
I'm extremely interested in the amazing world of Whaling. So I would love any readers - from Iceland or anywhere - to write to me about what whaling means to you or your community or nation.

I wonder whether we land dwellers are hunting whales - after a relatively short intermission - because we're envious of superior intelligence. This is after all a new millennium. Is not the Earth degraded and polluted and brutal enough without hunting the peace loving kings and queens of the oceans ???
Just a thought.

Blessings
Eco
econowl@gmail.com

Dear Eco,
Given your interest in whaling, you will be glad to know that Iceland has resumed whaling, yet again, with the Minster for Fisheries just having released a quota of 40 minke whales to be hunted this summer. Obviously, this is great news for a country that is currently undergoing a serious period of recession. With the oil prices being what they are, I can see great future in building car engines that run on whale oil. That's something, right?

Editor

Dear readers,
Hello! I have recently returned to Sweden from an excellent Icelandic adventure. I absolutely loved everything about it... the landscape, the people... everything. On March 8th I went out with a group of locals. We went to Solon, Hresso and ended up at Celtic. This is where I lost my camera with all my amazing photos... I know its a long shot but I am hoping someone has it and can return it to me, and if not the camera but at least the memory card. I would love to be able to remember the trip clearly for years and the photos I took would surely help me do that. Please if someone found a Silver Canon Sureshot Camera in the Celtic Bar please return it, please!

Thank you,
E. Hurford

Address:
E. Hurford
PO Box 641
Squamish, British Columbia
Canada
V2C 6N2

Dear E,
Support the local economy and invest in books of photography from Iceland. That's my advice to you. The professionals are much better than you at it anyway. But, in case anyone has seen your camera, they now have your address, although, if you lost it at the Celtic Cross, a have a feeling you'll never see it again. You know these barbaric Celt types.

Editor

Dear Editor,
I want to declare my great displeasure over the music writing in the Grapevine. All music coverage in the paper is superficial and aimless. As a testimony to this claim I want to point out that this spring, Guttormur Sigfússon, farmer in Kross in Fell released a CD to celebrate his 70th anniversary. On this CD you'll find a selection of great accordion tunes written by Guttormur and performed by a famous foreign accordion player. This CD has already been mentioned as the best accordion release of the year in Iceland.

The Grapevine has completely failed to mention this remarkable event. The National Broadcasting Service has already aired a long interview with Guttormur, where many of the songs were played and it was a pleasure to hear. The Grapevine should rectify this situation immediately.

Björn

Dear Björn,
I was sadly unaware of this release by Guttormur. Usually we receive promotional copies of CDs from the labels, or overzealous DIY-types, but Guttormur does not seem to fit either group. I will gladly give Guttormur's CD to one of my reviewers, as soon as I get my hands on a copy. I'm excited about this. Tingling.

Editor



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EXPO



Reykjavik Excursions
KYNNISFERÐIR

Former MP and Liberal Party spokesman Magnús Þór Hafsteinsson is not a great believer in integration. Photo by GAS



Where Do These People Come From?

“I’ve been pointing to practical things like our language is completely different, our alphabet – do these people understand the alphabet we use? I don’t know, I haven’t received any information about it. Don’t we need to teach them everything from scratch regarding these things?”

Former Liberal Party MP and current Liberal Party VP Magnús Þór Hafsteinsson has for the last two years – ever since his party announced its newfangled standpoint on immigration reform – valiantly defended himself against several claims that he is a xenophobe, racist or rapid opportunist. He made the headlines this month whilst managing to get himself ousted from the Akranes Town Council, when he disputed the government’s plans of placing sixty Iraqi refugees in the town. He told the Grapevine all about it.

Tell me your version of the Akranes refugee disputes that lead to the Liberal Party (and yourself) being ousted from the town council.

It started when we got an informal request from the Ministry Of Social Affairs about receiving a group of refugees, or two groups of refugees – the number was sixty refugees from the outset, thirty to arrive this year and another thirty the next. It rolled around in the system for a while, we were visited by representatives from the ministry and the Red Cross and there was very little they could tell us.

They couldn’t tell us anything about where the people were from, which is an important factor. People come from different situations and cultural contexts, and they have different backgrounds. Those of us who have to make decisions about the case and prepare it need that information so we can start doing our homework. There also wasn’t any sort of survey about the situation in Akranes, how the town was fit to host sixty refugees in regards to our social structure; schools, healthcare, housing, employment, etc. Hosting refugees is a complicated and difficult task, one that needs to be well prepared. But they couldn’t give us any information, just told us that we were to host these groups.

So I summarize my thoughts on the case in an article and argue my standpoint, which is that the town is ill equipped to handle it, especially with such short notice. I draw that conclusion in light of my experiences as chairman of the Akranes Social affairs council. I am not claiming that we shouldn’t host refugees; I’ve never said that. I’ve just said that I do not think it’s timely to do it now. We need to think this through and do it decently, if Akranes is to accept refugees we need to do it 150%. That has been the core of my discourse, which has of course been twisted by the opposition, and turned into a mudslinging contest. But I knew that was to be expected.

Why do you emphasize the importance of the refugees’ background?

We need to know where these people are coming from. We had to learn it from the media that these were single mothers from Iraq. And that’s important, these refugees are coming from Iraq – we need to keep in mind that Iraq has seen three wars in the

last two decades – this factors in when making decisions about the case, we need to realize what group we’re talking about. These people have been refugees in Iraq, maybe since 2003 and they could be in various conditions, mentally and physically, that we need to be equipped to deal with. I don’t think there’s anything wrong with asking those questions.

Another thing I would like to note is that I can’t see that the government has in any way mapped out the social situation in Akranes, there hasn’t been any analysis of how Akranes is equipped to welcome refugees.

Isn’t Akranes equipped to welcome this group of refugees?

It needs to be carefully studied and prepared. The schools are full; the day care centres are full. They are building a new primary school, but that won’t be ready in another year or two. And they’re building a new day care centre that’s still under construction. Our social support system is very loaded, and that can be proved. We are far beyond our budget, supplying social services to those in need. The employment situation has gone haywire in Akranes, especially for women, because of layoffs in the fishing industry. There are all kinds of problems that we have been facing this term; as a town we have been fighting a defensive battle to maintain the services that we are legally obligated to provide.

Then you’re saying that Akranes isn’t capable of hosting refugees?

I think that if Akranes were to do so, then there would have to be a thorough study beforehand. I think that the town isn’t able to do it without any advance warning.

The town of Ísafjörður welcomed a group of thirty refugees in 1996, during what can only be called a major recession in the area. That was in the wake of three horrifying avalanches, the unification of the neighbouring townships into a larger one, and the closing of every fish factory in town. The people of Ísafjörður had no problem in welcoming the refugees, and by all accounts the project was a success. Why should there be problems now?

I’ve heard varying accounts on how that project went. It may well have been a success, and then that’s fine. I haven’t studied it thoroughly. But those were families, weren’t they? That’s different than single mothers; the fathers must have gotten jobs quickly, so their adjustment to society must have been smoother. You can’t compare the two groups because they come from such different backgrounds.

But you’re not against welcoming refugees?

No, no. And I do not oppose that they be helped. What I am saying is that if we take on these tasks, we need to do it well. This particular case comes with too short notice, and thus isn’t feasible.

Another thing I’ve said is that it would’ve been smarter to send emergency supplies to these areas. They are spending 120 million ISK on thirty individuals. All right then. But that’s a lot of money; we could have done a lot of good for that money in the Middle East. By aiding refugee camps and at a later point taking in refugees. And it also has all sorts of ethical questions attached; OK, if we’re taking in thirty people, what about the rest that’s left behind? Why don’t we bring them here, too?

It seems to have gone fine in other Icelandic towns that have welcomed refugees.

Like I say, I’ve been hearing differing accounts of that. People have been calling me from those towns and telling me different stories about how it went.

What stories?

Just that it didn’t go particularly well in those places and that there were several problems with welcoming the refugees. And that the refugees usually left town as soon as they had the chance to.

But is that a problem? Haven’t the people left the war-zones and refugee camps, isn’t that the aim of all this?

I don’t know what happened to the people that came here as refugees. Some went back home, I know.

So why are you the first man in Iceland to protest welcoming refugees from war torn regions?

I am not protesting that. I’m just saying that in light of the present circumstances it isn’t timely for the town of Akranes to accept refugees, and that as head of the Social Affairs council I can’t recommend it. The thought is that the people should adjust in a period of 12-24 months - that we can teach them and help them to be self-sufficient and adjusted to Icelandic society in that amount of time. That they’ll be able to provide for themselves after that period of adjustment. That’s good and fine, but I ask in return: how can we expect that this group, which comes from a completely different environment than Iceland, can enter society so quickly. Single mothers with children need to stay home a lot, just to take care of their kids. Like they should. Therefore, this is much more complicated than it looks. I’ve been pointing to practical things like our language is completely different, our alphabet – do these people understand the alphabet we use? I don’t know, I haven’t received any information about it. Don’t we need to teach them everything from scratch regarding these things?

When is the right time to welcome refugees, and where should they come from?

It’s very hard to answer that question, when is the right time and where should they come from...

Text by Haukur S. Magnússon



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“Aussie Adventures in Iceland!”

“In Iceland, when the temperature rises above 10 degrees and the sun pokes its head out, people get rather excited and proclaim that ‘summer is in the air.’ Whilst in Australia, when the temperature drops below 25 degrees, people grab their jumpers and declare that ‘winter is just around the corner!’”

Australia and Iceland are probably as different as two countries can be – one big, the other small; one hot, the other cold; and at the opposite ends of the world from each other. And yet here I am... an Aussie girl who has travelled from “down under” to the top of the world on a one-way ticket... to live in Iceland.

Having already spent five months in Iceland last year, I feel much more comfortable this time round. And once I master the language, in about 40 years or so, I will probably feel truly at home and call myself a ‘local’

Australia and Iceland do have a few things in common. According to the ‘Human Development Report,’ they are both ranked within the top three countries in the world with the highest quality of life, with Norway ranked number one, followed by Iceland and Australia respectfully. Icelanders and Australians are also ranked among the happiest people in the world, according to the ‘International Happiness Scale.’

So, besides the 25°C, obviously, what is the difference between Australia and Iceland? Whilst Australia has sun, surf and sand, Iceland has mountains, glaciers and most importantly, no killer spiders, cockroaches or snakes! And for someone who has a cockroach phobia, that suits me very well!

There are two big challenges an Aussie (and I imagine many other foreigners) face when moving to Iceland – the weather and the language. I find Icelanders have a strange perspective on the weather. When the temperature rises above 10 degrees and the sun pokes its head out, people get rather excited and proclaim that “summer is in the air.” Whilst in Australia, when the temperature drops below 25 degrees, people grab their jumpers and declare that “winter is just around the corner!”

It definitely rains a lot more in Iceland than it does in Australia too. Australia has been gripped by severe drought for over ten years now, with water restrictions in place for most of that time. The restrictions involve things like people being banned from washing their cars and people not being allowed to use hoses to water their gardens. The councils also have extensive advertising campaigns requesting people to “watch every drop” and suggesting people only have two-minute showers. So it is very nice to come to Iceland, where there is an abundance of water, and have loooooong hot showers without feeling guilty! I can even live on the edge and have both a shower and a bath if I want!

Considering that it rains quite frequently in Iceland, I was surprised to see that no one really uses umbrellas here. I learnt very quickly however the reason for this. How silly of me to actually think that rain falls from above! The rain blows in from every direction... other than from above! It seems that Icelanders and Aussies have different terminology for ‘wind’ too. What an Aussie would call ‘cyclonic winds’ seems to be referred to as ‘a mild breeze’ here.

The second biggest challenge facing a foreigner is the language barrier. I am finding that learning the Icelandic language is quite “erfiður” or should that be “erfið” or “erfitt?” What is with the complicated grammar?! So here is a quick summary... Nouns are inflected in four cases (nominative, accusative, dative and genitive) and in singular and plural form. The same is true for most pronouns and adjectives. Nouns are also inflected in three genders (masculine, feminine or neutral). Come on, stay with me now! Verbs are inflected in three persons (first, second and third), two numbers (singular and plural), two simple (non-compound) tenses, three moods (indica-

tive, subjunctive, imperative) and two voices (active and medio-passive). Did you get all that? And that was just Icelandic 101... I was just scratching the surface!

So let’s do a quick comparison between the English and Icelandic language then... just for fun! Let’s use the word “day” for example... just for fun. In English, in any context, the word can only be written two ways - day or days (singular and plural). In Icelandic however, it can be written 16 different ways (depending on the context) - dagur; dagurinn; dag; daginn; degi; deginum; dags; dagins; dagar; dagarnir; daga; dagana; dögum; döggunum; dagar; dagarnna. To a simple foreigner who speaks English, this makes one feel defeated, deflated and discouraged. But alas, I have a plan – foreigners take note! When speaking Icelandic, say the beginning of a word in a normal tone / volume, then drop the volume and muffle the last bit of the word (i.e. by placing your hand in front of your mouth and/or looking away), so that no-one can make out if you are saying the grammar correctly. This way, they hear enough of the word to pick up the gist of what you are saying, without laughing at “the stupid foreigner.”

So where to from here for the little Aussie girl living in Iceland? Can she survive this cold harsh climate? Can she learn this strange language called Icelandic? How will she find her groove? How will she bring sexy back? ...To find out the answers to these spine-tingling questions, stay tuned for the next chapter of “Aussie Adventures in Iceland!”

Text by Iris Goemans

One Reporter’s Opinion

“This is an opinion column, not a news report. So I can allow myself to be as biased and unfair as I want to. In that grand spirit, here is a list of things I currently believe, in no particular order, followed by a much shorter list of things I know to be true.”

The Below is True:

- A reporter should strive to be fair and balanced.
- He should never let his own views and opinions colour his reports, articles or interviews.
- And he should strive to always include every relevant viewpoint in a report, so that his readers may make an enlightened, informed decision as to where they stand on a given subject.
- And he should always give his subject the benefit of the doubt, no matter how contrived, conceited or downright dumb his views may be. If they are indeed contrived, conceited and dumb, if they are plainly wrong, self-serving or hurtful, the reader will be able to figure that out by himself.

The above is true, and it should be self-evident, even though it is not always practiced by every member of the press. As a sometimes-reporter, I try and go by it, and it’s usually pretty easy. Sometimes it’s difficult, however. Say when conducting a Q&A with a person that’s presenting a view that at its core goes against everything I believe, in a way that my conscience finds potentially harmful. A Q&A whose format doesn’t allow for you to invite adversaries to comment or reply to what’s being stated as truth.

As a reporter, you let your subjects speak their minds, then subject them to the esteemed reader’s judgement, letting them dig their own graves if they want to. That should be that, but what if you are dealing with a master rhetorician, one who says one thing whilst clearly implying another. One who seems clearly interested in fanning certain flames, say, for his own purposes, but doing so in such a vague and fuzzy manner that he can never be called on it.

As a reporter, I have occasionally come across people who clearly presented foul agendas that they couldn’t be called on, because they knowingly refuse to call a spade a spade. Hah.

And sometimes, I’ve had no choice but to let their quotes stand unchallenged, hoping that someone will write an intelligent letter to the edi-

tor opposing it in the next issue of whatever publication has printed it. Sometimes, I have argued with these people mid-interview – “just say what we all know you want to say” – and cut it out of the final story, for I should not present an opinion in my reports.

But this is an opinion column, not a news report. So I can allow myself to be as biased and unfair as I want to. In that grand spirit, here is a list of things I currently believe, in no particular order, followed by a much shorter list of things I know to be true:

List of Things I Believe:

- I believe that people in general are thoughtful and well intentioned.
- I believe that while the above is true, thoughtful and well-intentioned people may be manipulated to support irrational (and sometimes dangerous) agendas. Just look at advertising, and advertising psychology. (Sidenote: I also believe “psychological methods to sell should be destroyed”).
- I believe this to be especially true when an apparent crisis strikes – when people start fearing for their livelihoods and safety. An economic one, for instance.
- I believe fear is a key ingredient in this regard.
- I believe a certain breed of career politician – the populist, opportunistic kind – will try and harness the above for the sake of their various careers and/or agendas.
- I believe that promoting fear and anger in the general populace for one’s own self-serving purposes is not only morally deplorable, I believe that it is outright evil.
- I believe that you can express overtly racist views without using overtly racist lingo.
- I likewise believe that you can be a fascist whilst denouncing fascism, that you can be Nazi without sporting a swastika.
- I believe that if the Western hemisphere were to enter an era where fascism, Nazism and racism

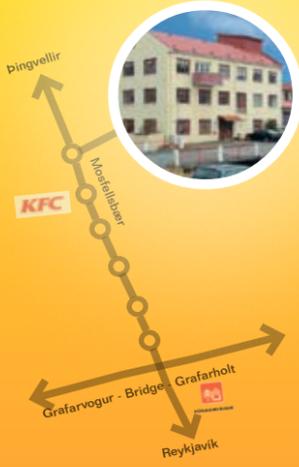
were acceptable anew (if it hasn’t already), those isms would not go under any of their former monikers. That a Hitler for the 21st century, if that fellow ever shows up, will not necessarily sport a funny beard and a German accent. Not that I’m calling anyone a Hitler, mind you.

– Finally, I believe that as my fellow Icelanders and I were fortunate enough to be born in one of the most prosperous countries on Earth, we have a huge responsibility to the millions of humans who weren’t – and suffer for it every day. I believe the same goes for the rest of the world’s hyper-privileged contingent.

List of Things I Know to be True

- It is true that thirty Serbian and Croatian refugees were welcomed in my hometown of Ísafjörður back in 1996, during a long and painful bout of recession for the town, were a fine and welcome addition to the population. I shared a class with some of them, and even though a couple had to go through the trouble of acquainting themselves with the Western alphabet, none of them have thus far turned to crime or otherwise tried to tear down the fabric of our great society.
- It is true that the welcoming of other such groups of refugees to other such small towns in Iceland over the last decade has been nothing less than a complete success.
- It is true that at the time of writing, Iceland is one of the richest, most prosperous nations on Earth.
- It is nevertheless true that, Iceland’s track record of welcoming refugees from war-torn or famine struck regions of the world is deplorable. The nation hasn’t been up to speed in providing aid to those territories, either.

Text by Haukur S. Magnússon



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*From the Hávamál, 1300 AD



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Icelandic Heroes of Foreign Literature

“Einarson was an Icelandic soldier, though whether he was supposed to have served in an Icelandic army isn’t made clear. What is certain is that he has his eyes on becoming a dictator.”

Countless travellers have waxed lyrical about the harshness and grandeur of the Icelandic terrain, while the populace itself has received more mixed reviews. The English explorer and writer Richard Burton wrote of Icelanders with eyes “dark and cold as a pebble” at the site of which a mesmerist would despair.

Betsy Tobin’s new novel, *Ice Land*, in which Christianity and the old, pagan gods battle it out in the shadow of Hekla, is the latest in a long line of stories about Iceland. For well over a century, writers have turned to Iceland for the picturesque or the grotesque.

Famously, the Sagas have influenced writers from Sir Walter Scott to JRR Tolkien to Jorge Luis Borges. How Iceland has itself nudged its way into literature though is not so well known, with the big exception of Jules Verne’s 1964 novel, *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. Prof Lidenbrock’s party begin their descent through the crater at the top of the atmospheric Snaefellsnes and this has become as much a part of Iceland’s tourist industry as the Blue Lagoon.

Forty years before Verne turned his gaze north, the future French literary heavyweight, Victor Hugo, wrote his first novel, *Hans of Iceland*. The titular Hans is actually a peripheral character in this romance but a wild one nonetheless. He is a hideous dwarf, a proto-Quasimodo, who comes on like an evil version of Rabelais’ Gargantua. He’s abandoned as a child and taken in by a bishop whose palace he torches. He sails to Norway where he burns Trondheim cathedral, hurls mountains on to villages and slaughters regiments, while riding a polar bear called Friend. All of this seems to have represented Hugo’s sexual frustrations when a clandestine relationship was discovered and ended by his mother.

Hans - The Trusted Guide

In *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, Lidenbrock and his nephew Axel discover a runic parchment tucked inside a copy of Snorri Sturluson’s *Heims Kringla* and realise that it describes how they can reach the centre of the Earth through the crater on Snaefellsnes. They set sail for Iceland, landing in Reykjavik, where Axel explores the “sad, dismal streets” and within three hours has seen “not only the town itself but its environs. The view was remarkably dreary” he notes. He describes the men as robust but clumsy, their facial muscles sometimes contracting in a sort of laugh but never a smile. The women have “sad, resigned faces, quite pretty but expressionless”.

Lidenbrock finds the library almost devoid of books but is informed by the science teacher, Mr Fridriksson, that the 8,000 volumes are spread across the country. “There isn’t a single farmer or fisherman who can’t read and doesn’t read.... The love of study is in our blood.” They hire Hans (“You could see at a glance he asked nothing of anybody. He worked as it suited him, and that nothing in this world could astonish or disturb his philosophy of life”) as their guide and begin their journey. They overnight in Garðar where poor but hospitable farmers feed them soup made from lichen, dried fish in sour butter (“which was twenty years old and therefore, according to Icelandic ideas of gastronomy, vastly preferable to fresh butter”) and skyr.

At Stapi, they marvel at the basalt columns and are ripped off by the local rector. The next day they make their ascent of Snaefellsnes and disappear into the crater. The ever cool and resourceful Hans then helps them through a myriad of strange adventures.

Evil Spirits and Dead Sailors

It isn’t Iceland or its people that feature in the next French novel but the sea. Pierre Lot’s 1886 novel, *An Iceland Fisherman*, is a story about Breton fishermen catching cod in Icelandic waters: “the

frigid regions where the summers have no night”. While the men catch cod in peaceful seas, “far off Iceland” appears, showing her “mountains of bare stones”. But the sea isn’t always calm. Back home a graveyard is filled with memorials to lost fishermen. “Iceland – always Iceland! All over the porch were slabs bearing the names of dead sailors”. Fishermen “which the Icelandic Moloch devours”.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Land of Mist* is an extraordinary novel, proselytising the pseudo religion, spiritualism in which he had come to believe profoundly. In it, his heroes of *The Lost World* one by one become convinced that various psychic phenomena are real. First Malone the rugby-playing reporter, then Lord John Roxton the big game hunter and finally the great Professor Challenger himself.

In one episode, Malone and Roxton accompany Rev. Mason to a haunted house in an effort to aid a lost soul. While there, Mason relates a case closely observed by Professor Neillson of Iceland: “an evil spirit used to go down to an unfortunate photographer in the town, draw his supplies [of ectoplasm] from him and then come back and use them”. Ectoplasm gave body to this spirit of a fisherman of rough and violent character who had committed suicide, making him “a most formidable creature”, so that “they had great difficulty in mastering him”.

Conan Doyle adds in a footnote that Iceland is “very advanced in psychic science, and in proportion to its population or opportunities is probably ahead of any other country”.

Iceland on Soma

Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* presents a sterile future of genetically-engineered stability and efficiency. Time and Decode have added a dash of irony to the use of banishment to Iceland as a threat to non-conformists, like Bernard Marx.

Marx doesn’t like the Feelies, doesn’t like Obasatle Golf, and doesn’t even like soma. Rumour has it that while he was still in the bottle, someone thought he was a Gamma rather than an Alpha-Plus and put alcohol in his blood surrogate to stunt his development.

When Marx brings *The Savage* back from his holiday at the New Mexico Reservation, he boosts his status from shunned loner to society host. When the Savage brings Marx and his friend Helmholt Watson into conflict with the authorities, The Controller, Mustapha Mond, sends Marx to Iceland (“Oh, please don’t send me to Iceland” he begs) and Watson to the Falkland Islands. When the weeping Marx is dragged out, Mond explains to Watson that the punishment is really a reward: “He’s being sent to a place where he’ll meet the most interesting set of men and women to be found anywhere in the world. All the people who’ve got independent ideas of their own. Everyone, in a word, who’s anyone”.

Iceland briefly popped up in that other great dystopian novel, George Orwell’s 1984. It’s an outpost of Oceania, a super-state comprising the Americas, Britain and Ireland, which is constantly at war with either Eurasia or Eastasia. On his television, Winston Smith listens to a clipped military voice describing with brutal relish the armaments of a new Floating Fortress anchored between Iceland and the Faroe Islands.

The Evil Colonel

Dashiell Hammett’s *Continental Op* was the original hard-boiled PI, paving the way for Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe. He had no name, no home life, no social life but relentlessly worked his way through his cases, tackling racketeers, kidnappers and other assorted hoods.

In *This King Business*, the *Continental Op* is sent to Muravia, an unstable Central European country, to track down a senator’s son who was



mixed up in a coup attempt. Hammett wanted his villain to be vicious but also “spectacular, theatrical”, so he turned to a little nation in the North Atlantic to supply Colonel Einarson.

Einarson was an Icelandic soldier, though whether he was supposed to have served in an Icelandic army isn’t made clear. What is certain is that he arrived in Muravia after World War One and has steadily risen through the ranks to become the head of the army and has his eyes on becoming a dictator.

He interrogates a soldier with a whip. It’s “especially nasty because he was not hurrying himself, not exerting himself. He meant to flog the man until he got what he wanted, and he was saving his strength so that he could keep it up as long as necessary.” The next evening, dressed in a dinner jacket, with a handshake stronger than it needed to be and a Napoleonic air, he’s every inch

the man of action. None of this helps him avoid a particularly gruesome end. Fittingly, Hallgrímur Helgason, who wrote *101 Reykjavik*, described the *Saga*’s as being like Dashiell Hammett on horseback.

So that’s Iceland and the Icelanders. A threat or a sanctuary producing flamboyant psychopaths as well as phlegmatic and reliable guides you’d want to accompany you on a great adventure: a nice mish-mash from a bunch of authors, none of whom appears ever to have set foot in the country.

Text by Andrew Clarke
Illustration by Bobby Breiðholt



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Bob Dylan has enjoyed a long and successful career, but he never seemed to find the right hair stylist. Illustration by GUP



Bob Dylan's Glasnost

“Winston Churchill once called Russia a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. Much the same can be said of Bob Dylan.”

The movie *I'm Not There*, a highly stylised account of the life of Bob Dylan, starts out by showing a young black boy named Woody Guthrie jump a train by the Mississippi sometime during the 1930's. Woody is here used to symbolise the young Dylan, by showing where he drew his inspiration from rather than his actual life. Dylan was a huge fan of 30's folk singer Woody Guthrie, who was white, as well as black bluesmen from the same era. As the movie progresses, he is played by among others Christian Bale as a burnt out preacher, Heath Ledger as a movie star, Richard Gere as an old cowboy and Cate Blanchett as, well, the outlandish Dylan in 1966. The film follows the time honoured rule that when legend and truth collide, one should always print the legend.

Dylan himself seemed to adhere to this principle early in his career, when he would tell the press fictional stories about himself, such as of running away with the circus or living a life similar to his heroes, disguised as biography. Later on he would adopt a different tactic, as he stopped talking to the press altogether. This would of course fuel new myths. Perhaps it was his intention to let the music do the talking, as his 1985 career spanning box-set bore the name *Biograph*. This seemed as close to the man as the fans would ever come

Soon afterwards, Dylan embarked on the longest rock and roll tour in history, starting in 1988 and continuing to this day. This will bring him to Iceland for the second time where he will perform on May 26th, two days after his 67th birthday.

The Enigma of Bob

Winston Churchill once called Russia a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. Much the same can be said of Bob Dylan. He was born as Robert Zimmerman in Duluth, Minnesota, on May 24th, 1941. Later he adopted the artist's name "Dylan" before moving to New York to play in the coffee shops of Greenwich Village. The name came from the poet Dylan Thomas, who had in earlier times been a regular at the Village dives. At this stage, Dylan was busy mixing his own identity with that of his heroes.

And his own times were rapidly a-changing as his identity was. The generation born during and after the Second World War was making their voices heard and were demanding, among other things, equal rights for black and whites, and an end to the escalating war in Vietnam.

Voice of a Generation

With anthems such as "Blowin' in the Wind" and "Masters of War," Dylan achieved international fame as a protest singer in the vein of Woody Guthrie. But in 1965 he abandoned the folk style of his earlier message songs. He hired a backing band while his lyrics turned from protest to

surrealism. In *I'm Not There*, it is suggested that he abandoned his belief that music could really change the world, just as it seemed on the verge of doing so. Some of his older fans had problems adjusting to his new style and booed at his concerts, but his popularity grew more than ever.

A Second Golden Age

Even though he may not have sparked a political revolution, he became a hugely influential songwriter, inspiring the Beatles as well as later artists such as Bruce Springsteen. But in 1966, exhausted after the constant touring and having barely survived a motorcycle crash, Dylan disappeared from view for over a year.

When he re-emerged at the end of 1967 with the album *John Wesley Harding*, he seemed to be a changed man. Older, even though still only 26, and less interested in setting the world on fire either politically or musically. A series of uneven albums followed. Dylan finally went on tour again in the mid-70's to support a string of brilliant albums: *Planet Waves*, *Blood on the Tracks* and *Desire*. 1975's *Blood on the Tracks* is his biggest selling album to date and, for once, quality and quantity share the same bed.

Born Again

Even though most of his songs seemed more inspired by his private life rather than politics, there were some reminders of the old protest singer. At 35, Dylan was at the peak of his powers. Then something strange happened. After the somewhat confused album *Street Legal* in 1978, Dylan emerged in 1979 as a born-again Christian. In concerts, he now refused to play any of his older songs and would only do religious material, resulting in boos from his audience for the first time since 1966. During the 80's he seemed to lose both his faith and his passion for music. His albums declined both in quality and popularity, and he was eclipsed by younger disciples such as Springsteen, who turned Dylan's "Chimes of Freedom" into an anthem for Amnesty International in 1988.

Axl Rose and the Pope

After 10 years of diminishing returns, Dylan finally teamed up with U2 producer Daniel Lanois which resulted in a new masterpiece, 1989's *Oh Mercy*. Dylan again seemed to be rebooting his art and career, as he had done 15 years earlier. However, the follow up, *Under the Red Sky*, which came out a year later, was a much inferior work. Dylan's influence had now reached a new generation of rock musicians. Guns n' Roses made his song "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" into an unlikely anthem for metal heads, and their guitarist Slash appeared on *Under the Red Sky*.

It was to be the last album of new songs for seven years. Dylan turned to his roots in the early 90's with two excellent albums of folk stan-

dards, where he accompanied himself alone on guitar. In early 1997 he had heart surgery, but the *Never Ending Tour* continued later in the year, taking in a concert backed for Pope John Paul II at Bologna. The pope returned the favour, giving a sermon based on the song *Blowin' in the Wind*. Not many artists can claim both Axl Rose and the Pope among their fans.

Masked but Not Anonymous

More importantly, in 1997 a new phase started with the release of *Time Out of Mind*. The heroes of the 60's were now reaching the age of 60, but whereas contemporaries such as Mick Jagger still tried to pretend they were young, the eloquent *Time Out of Mind* is in many ways the first rock album about growing old. Full of references to mortality and a longing for youth, it includes lines such as: "See the young boys, with the young girls looking so good/I'd change places with them in a minute, if I could." It was Dylan's best album since *Blood on the Tracks* and was followed with the similarly themed *Love and Theft* in 2001 and *Modern Times* in 2006. In his autumn years, Dylan seems to be going through an artistic rebirth. And a commercial one too, as *Modern Times* became his first US number 1 album for 30 years, making him the oldest person still alive to have a number one hit.

In 2003, Dylan starred in and wrote the script for the film *Masked and Anonymous*, which touches on themes ranging from politics and religion to celebrity. With an all star cast, Dylan plays an aging rock star named Jack Fate. Even though the movie hardly unwraps the enigma of Bob, perhaps some clue is to be found in the final scene, when Fate says: "I stopped trying to figure things out a long time ago."

The Thaw

Even better was the appearance of a surprisingly candid autobiography, "Chronicles," a year later. While not a full biography, it offers an in-depth view of certain points in his life, such as the Greenwich Village years and the recording of *Oh Mercy*.

As well as appearing in the Martin Scorsese documentary *No Direction Home*, the best so far on Dylan's life, Dylan became host of his own radio show, "The Theme Time Radio Hour," showcasing his encyclopaedic knowledge of 20th century popular music.

All this activity and previously unheard of openness towards has led some Bobcats (as fans sometimes call themselves) to speak of Bob Dylan's Glasnost, in reference to Gorbachev's policy of openness to the public and press after the secretive days of the Soviet Union.

Text by Valur Gunnarsson



My Morning with Martha

“I am trying to show the seduction of aluminium, because like any seduction, it can be dangerous – it could be your poisoned chalice.”

I had arranged an interview with landscape architect and designer / artist Martha Schwartz on Saturday morning, the day before the opening of her large installation project in the Reykjavik Art Museum - Kjarvalsstaðir, called I Hate Nature. She had planned to be there to oversee the final composition of the installation, a rather large, black building which hosts a giant “bowl” – is likely the right word – of aluminium foil.

When I arrived, I found Schwartz mid-sentence, ordering people around to try to get the project off the ground. “The damn thing isn’t ready yet, I don’t think we’ll finish in time,” she says. “I had to throw a little tantrum this morning just to get things going.” There is no time to conduct an interview, that goes without saying, but Schwartz tells me she has to go to the store and pick up some more household aluminium foil, and I am welcome to ride along and ask her a few questions.

In an article she wrote for the catalogue that accompanies her installation, Schwartz says: “I would like to use my own experience as an American as a mirror here in Reykjavik. We, too, live in a recently settled, thinly populated land whose great beauty and resources have become both its pride and its downfall. In the face of all kinds of contrary evidence, the mythology of our sublime landscape still thrives in our hearts, minds, and, especially, our media. You are at a fork in the road. Choose carefully.”

“We Americans continue to hold onto the myth that we are living in a wide-open continent of endless beauty and natural riches – thanks, in part, to the ad men on Madison Avenue who, in a genius move, borrowed from the work of generations of explorer-artists who raised Nature to a cult status. The media has kept the wilderness fantasy alive and kicking through our industrialisation and well into the Information Age, sustaining us through our continued historical “westward expansion” towards a manifest destiny of Big Box developments.”

She gives me a short explanation of the idea behind her work as we speed through an intersection, running a red light. I buckle up and listen: “In America, because of our idea of how vast the landscape is, because it is so huge, we have this attitude, this idea of endless resources – that we can do what we want – and that has not necessarily helped us,” she says.

“In America, urban sprawl has really been our worst enemy. Americans hate cities,” she says, “they want to live in the suburbs.” She explains how urban sprawl has been responsible for degrading nature, man-made environments and the quality of life; how densely populated areas don’t support cultural institutions like the opera or art museums; and how economic imperatives of urban development disregarded the importance of aesthetic demands in reconstructing our environment and our

cities. Or, as it is put in her catalogue: “Sprawl development generates ecological problems, discourages cultural and social interaction, and creates vast demi-worlds of bland, faceless and ugly environments.”

We have arrived at the store, and Schwartz grabs what’s left of heavy-duty aluminium household foil and we are soon on our way back to the museum. I ask her how these thoughts relate to her project here in Iceland. “I am trying to show the seduction of aluminium, because like any seduction, it can be dangerous – it could be your poisoned chalice,” Schwartz explains “Much like Americans, you have this vast landscape, but you have to be careful how you choose to use it.”

Aluminium has been a subject of heated debate in Icelandic society. Due to Iceland’s abundant energy resources, multi-national companies aluminium companies like Rio-Tinto have shown great interest in building smelters in Iceland, with one project recently completed and three more on the horizon. Schwartz believes Icelanders have shown a certain level of short sightedness in how they approach the choice between utilization and preservation.

And we leave it at that. Schwartz returns to her installation, carrying 39 rolls of household aluminium foil in a plastic bag.

Text by Sveinn Birgir Björnsson
Photo by GAS

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Pretty Vacant

Walk down Laugavegur, or just about any other street in Reykjavík's centre, and you might get the idea that you were located in an industrial part of a remote city in Eastern Europe. Boarded up vacancies, empty storefronts and ruins of old buildings that ceased to be are something that most people associate with slums, rather than commercial centres of vibrant cities, such as Reykjavík.



The problem is not so much the poor condition of many of the houses in the city centre, but rather the lack of direction, lack of vision even, for how city's centre should develop.

In recent years, developers have bought up house after house along Laugavegur and surrounding streets, in the hope of tearing them down in order to build something new, something bigger, something that better utilizes the valuable square-metres of land where the property stands.

The problem is that these new developments are nowhere near completion, or nowhere near beginning, truth be told. A ferocious battle is being fought on the administrative/political level over these lots. A backlash from Laugavegur conservationists has all but halted developments. Their claim is simple: the city centre should be kept as is, and any developments should focus on rebuilding old houses and recreate the early-twentieth century look of city centre. On the opposite end of the debate, Laugavegur revivalists claim that the city needs considerable redevelopment in order to meet the demands for a modern commerce centre.

Reykjavík's mayor, Ólafur F. Magnússon, is a firm conservationist. His first act as a mayor was to buy two houses, Laugavegur 4 and 6, that were already being torn down and put them on the path for renovation. The battle still rages for other houses, but in the meantime the mayor has put the clamp on further developments. The result is the Vacants: boarded up houses, lifeless buildings, deserted construction sites.

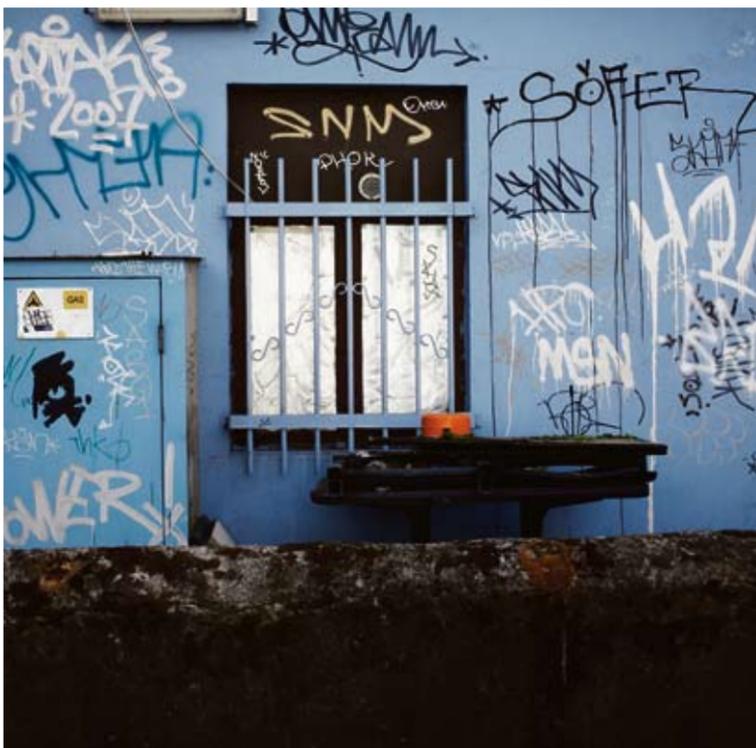
Now, I am not going to choose sides in this debate, but I will say this: it doesn't really matter what you choose to do, it is the status quo that is going to kill Reykjavík centre.

Vacant houses and empty lots are a sure-fire way to gut the city centre of everything that makes it an exciting place to visit. Slowly and painfully, it will drain the life out of downtown Reykjavík, creating a snowball effect that could spell economic disaster for the whole city.

No one wants to visit a vacant city. Not the tourists, not the locals, not the high-end companies Reykjavík hopes to attract. What downtown Reykjavík needs, more than anything, is not buildings, but Life. Empty buildings don't attract people. This is a simple fact.

Bring Life back to the city. Either open up the Vacants and allow people to operate there, or redouble all efforts to build something else instead, posthaste. Either way, we must bring life back to this ghost town.

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson Photos by GAS





Smiðjustígur 4a: An

It may not be the end-all solution to the problems of downtown Reykjavík, but the artists collective o

Reykjavík's guitarist Haukur hands me a glass of red wine, plugs in, and starts playing. The band is rehearsing for a long recording session the next day. Their second album, scheduled to release later this year, is in the making.

While I listened to their new songs and sipped my wine, I walked around the place. The building, located on Smiðjustígur, a Laugavegur off-street, (next to legendary bar Grand Rokk.) might not look like much on the outside, but inside, it is two floors filled with guitars, amplifiers, recording equipment, computers, sketchbooks, art-pieces and clothing fabrics. An old piano, weird home-made instruments and concert posters on the walls add to the artistic feel.

In February, the 300 square metre building became home to a group of musicians, fashion designers and artists. The place brings to mind the former artist collective Klink & Bank, which consisted of more than 100 artists, designers, filmmakers and musicians that worked on their diverse projects for two years in

a former industrial building before it was demolished. Klink & Bank set an example and showed how it is possible to use a deserted house, facing destruction, in a creative way. Now a smaller version of that kind of artistic energy grows inside a building with the same destiny. Room to Rock

Before settling in at Smiðjustígur, Reykjavík! shared a 40 square metre practice space in a Laugavegur backhouse with Skakkamanage, Borkó and FM Belfast, a diverse but energetic group of local musicians. That place is now being torn down. Luckily, their previous and current landlords, an investment company called Festi ehf, owns plenty of other properties in the centre waiting to be demolished. The company quickly fixed them up with new accommodations.

"The company owns many buildings along Laugarvegur, Klapparstígur, Hverfisgata. They were very concerned to find us a new home" says Kristján, Reykjavík's drummer and the building's main supervisor. "The first idea was to get the old Sam-

hjálp building (on Hverfisgata) where Gallery Klíng & Bang (not to be confused with Klink & Bank, another institution entirely) are now housed. They then mentioned this possibility, to take over the two floors on Smiðjustígur. It was of course much too big for us but I knew we would easily fill the space as there are plenty of bands and artists literally on the street," he adds.

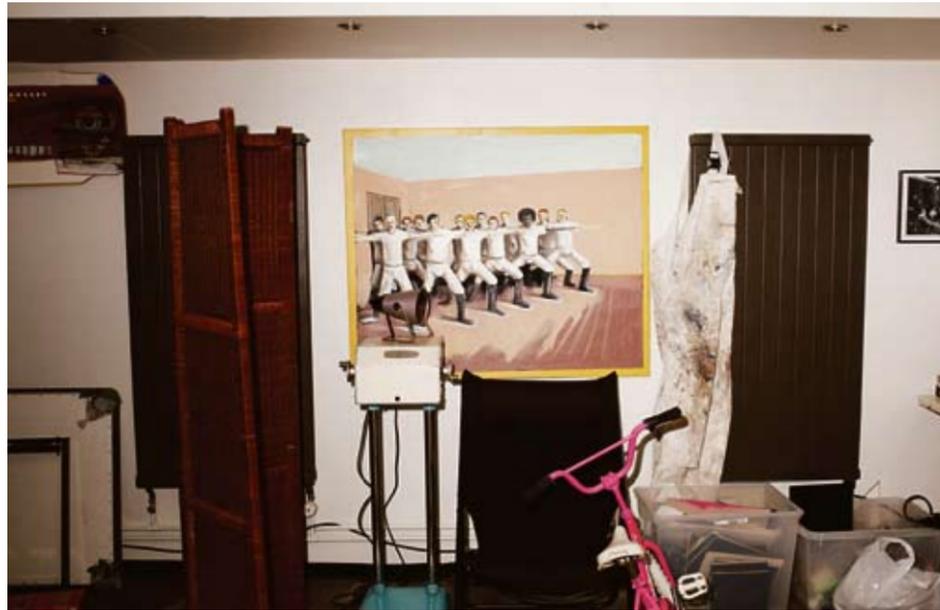
Their previous housemates moved in and the girls in Amiina, Óláf Arnalds and electronic musician 7oi joined the group on the ground floor. A couple of artists and designers took over the second floor and soon every room was packed. "These are all friends of ours and the cohabitation has gone very smoothly. No conflicts or anything. It is important to have good roommates to make this work," Kristján explains. They've had to say no to lots of interested lodgers. "We've got loads of Myspace messages from bands looking for a practice space," says Reykjavík's singer Bóas and adds: "There is a great shortage of decent practice spaces, especially downtown. In my view, more construction

companies that own buildings in the area should support this kind of operation and see the benefit in getting some rent and support the grassroots in the meantime."

This view is shared by those artists and musicians Grapevine caught up with at Smiðjustígur. If the music and art scene is supposed to flourish, it must have a place to grow. Lack of facilities is a problem and finding a place that is suitable and also affordable can be difficult. At the same time, buildings in the city centre that could easily be used for artistic purposes, stand empty and locked until the construction companies get permission from local authorities to destroy them.

Creativity Instead of Closed Doors

Graphic designer Inga María, shares the second floor with six other artists and designers. She says she's also received plenty of e-mails from people asking for a room to rent. "This is an awesome space and for me, it is great to get the company of other creative people. We were really lucky to get it," she says. "I think it's weird that more



An Artistic Shelter

Operating in Smiðjustígur is an example of how vacant houses in the city centre could be used.

houses aren't used for this kind of operations."

"There is a nice artistic atmosphere here," adds Jói (better known as electro musician 7oi). Surrounded by instruments and electric cables in his corner, he says he's now working on a new album, which has been due for years. A good portion of his time here is also used for making drums out of gas containers in the outside port. He's happy to share space with such a creative bunch. "I especially love all the instruments I can find here. My fingers just itch from excitement."

We talk about how artistic places like this can have good influences on the city and bring life to the centre. We discuss why the investment companies don't rent out the empty spaces, awaiting destruction in coming years anyway, and create a better public image for themselves in the meantime. Instead of dead silence, creativity could be bursting inside their buildings and they could get some money out of it. A win-win situation it would seem.

"It's no secret that we pay a really fair

amount in rent, much less than the prices are today, but that's of course because we will have to leave eventually," explains Kristján. In two or three years, the building will be torn down to make room for new developments. No one really knows exactly what will replace it, although talks of a mini-mall have been loud and not too popular among many downtown residents. "I don't want to defend the investment companies, but when I discussed the downtown situation with our landlord I got the impression that the city council hasn't given them the chance to present their ideas. I think there's some truth to that. I really care for the centre and want to see it thrive but feel that city authorities have screwed up big time for more than a decade. They don't understand how the centre should be. I don't understand the talks of mini-malls for example," Kristjan says and adds that there are the small concept shops and designer boutiques that give Reykjavík's centre its charm, rather than large fashion-chains or mini-malls. "As I see it, the city council is in a way misun-

derstanding the centre and its purpose," he adds.

Instead of focusing on the negative, plenty of shop owners and downtown residents emphasise the positive and create life in the centre by organising concerts, events and parties inside their stores or galleries. The art collective at Smiðjustígur plans to spike things up even more and Kristján points out how a group of artists can create something magnificent if they are given a room to do so. "Just look at Klink & Bank when that still existed. Think about all the collaborations and bands that were formed because of Klink & Bank. Heaps of projects, concerts and events took place."

They have plenty of plans for the summer. Inga Mæja mentions a flea market and 7oi plans on making plenty of drums to sell. Concerts and other fun happenings are also scheduled. "We will try to create a good atmosphere around this place. We will collaborate with Grand Rokk, use maybe the outside port where people can sell their designs and art and we can

throw concerts. We have many ideas for this place and can hopefully support the downtown business in the meantime," says Kristján.

With such a diverse mix of people working together the possibilities are numerous. Reykjavík! might even end up forming a band with Amiina. Who knows. The group will at least continue to rehearse, design clothes, record songs and work on various art projects and use the building as a venue for concerts, exhibitions and other of fun stuff in the near futures. Whatever comes of this collaboration, it will probably be something a little crazy, but it will always be better than another empty building in Reykjavík centre.

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

Photos by GAS

CONCERT

Photo by GAS

Amiina**Where:** Hafnarhúsið **When:** May 15, 2008

The foyer at Hafnarhúsið was buzzing with excitement when we arrived early to see Amiina and Co. on the opening night of this year's Reykjavík Arts Festival. As part of the festival, the city's art museum was also hosting the Experiment Marathon, a variety of installations and exhibitions, and it had clearly drawn quite a crowd. The atmosphere in the backroom of the museum, the venue for the night's concert, was more suitably subdued, though.

The stage was set with an elaborate arrangement of objects – burning candles, plants, and hanging light bulbs – as diverse as the all-female quartet's collection of instruments, and which created a sense that we were about to witness a theatrical, rather than musical, performance. From our seats in the second row we had an un-obscured view of the stage. The formality of being seated, the silence, lack of stage staff scurrying to finish their work and snappy photographers vying for a prime position, helped create anticipation for the event which was to come.

While Amiina may not be everyone's cup of tea, you have to give them this: they know how to create a unique stage atmosphere and an unforgettable ambience. The dozen or so musicians that made up the collaboration paced through Amiina's set of delicate and haunting soundscapes – much of which was from their debut album *Kurr*, released last year. The sounds of the cello, drums, glockenspiels, harp, trombone, trumpet, viola, violin, water glasses, and who-knows-what-else (the group is known for using an array of household objects in their music) were accompanied by the electronics of Kippi and the sweet voices of the four women as they moved around the stage from one instrument to another.

During the 60 minute set, I found myself drifting in and out of a dream-like state – some may describe the experience of listening to Amiina as boring. Others, as blissfully relaxing.

Reviewed by Zoë Robert

CONCERT

Photo by Peter Corkhill

Valgeir Sigurðsson**Where:** St. Barnabas Church, London **When:** May 16, 2008

Along with eighty others, I'm inside the chapel of the St. Barnabas Church, a seventeenth century house of worship the size of a utility room. Rickety wooden chairs dot the overcrowded chapel, as candles illuminate the entertainment, a stage shared by Sam Amidon and Icelandic super producer Valgeir Sigurðsson.

Sam Amidon is first, matching generations' old folk to Icelandic classical accompaniment, seizure-like dancing and scorned, crackling vocals. Amidon is flawed, very flawed, but utterly endearing, childlike and playful. Oboe, accordion and violin pokes scratch each sentence, producing blemished folk ditties wrought in self-reflexivity, liturgical sensitivity and adventure. Amidon makes mistakes, lots of them, but they never undermine his message, one that begs to bring light into the most seriousness of circumstances. It is forty-five beguiling minutes, frustratingly rewarding.

Valgeir Sigurðsson, who played bass in Amidon's set-up, emerges a half-hour later with the same instrumentation. But he is a completely different beast, one more in touch with externalities than antiquated atmosphere. Sigurðsson secularizes hymns, as electronic drum pads, pre-mixed samplers and sensuous string arrangements peer through classical, flowery arrangements. Each song is a glacial war cry, patient but increasingly urgent as it flicks and flutters through its composition, revealing more as the melodies pass. His is an electronic approach compared to Amidon's acoustic approach, but the result is as successful because Sigurðsson picks his sounds carefully, slowly enrapturing us textures filtered through melodies, but never reliant on them.

It is all over way too soon. As Sigurðsson concludes, the lights reveal the crucifix planted above the stage, a dominating figure reminding everyone why this structure still stands four centuries after it was constructed. While no one came here to go to church tonight, the brood permeating from years past surely reared its biblical head through all of this. They should do this more often.

Reviewed by Shain Shapiro

CONCERT

Photo by GAS

Ólafur Arnalds**Where:** Iðnó **When:** May 18, 2008

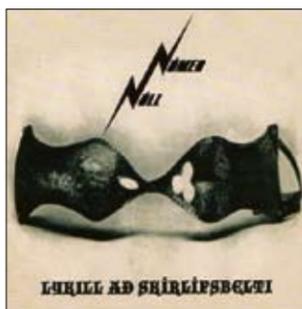
At 21-years of age, the highly acclaimed indie-darling Ólafur Arnalds has just released *Variations of Static*, his sophomore release of compositions for piano and strings, laced with electro-beats and sound effects, following last year's *Eulogy for Evolution*. To celebrate the occasion, a release concert was promptly scheduled at the old Iðnó theatre. The theatre carries great sound and is an ideal venue for this kind of concert. Few things in this world create a subdued atmosphere like a quiet all-seater in a dimly-lit ballroom. Opening act Svavar Knútur delivered a sombre set of heartfelt and emotional troubadour songs that teeter on the edge of being overly dramatic and emotional, and at times are. The kind of songs that sound like they could serve as a backdrop to all the emotional moments on *Grey's Anatomy*. That kind of heartfelt.

Ólafur Arnalds entered the stage, accompanied by a cello player and three violinists. His compositions are sparse and repetitious, almost naïvely so, but still carry something delicate, something ethereal. To take the TV/film analogy even further, it is the type of music that would score a movie about an autistic kid that overcomes great adversity. That kind of pretty. For his final song, he brought out a bass player and a live drummer. The bass was a great addition, giving his sound an added layer of density. The drums, however, could have been a great addition, if not for the fact that the drummer pounded them way beyond what the instrumentation allowed for, overpowering everything else. For an encore, Ólafur played *Death Cab for Cutie's Marching Bands Of Manhattan*, which was met with great appreciation from the audience.

Reviewed by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

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CD
Lykill að skírlífsbelti
Númernúll

Let me just say one thing right off the bat – this is a great album. If any part of this review reads like I'm being negative, that's just because it's hard to point out exactly what's so great about it. It's like a pick-and-mix bag of everything that has made guitar pop great throughout the seventies, eighties and nineties without wallowing in the excesses of any decade, leaving us with straightforward, unassuming and unpretentious pop rock that doesn't really go anywhere, but enjoys itself all the same in a relaxed and cocky sort of way. The only truly adventurous thing about this album is the abstract and distinctly Icelandic lyrics, but if you're reading this, chances are you won't understand them anyway.

Reviewed by Sindri Eldon

CD
Silent Rivers
Silent Rivers

This could have been better had more work been spent on the production... maybe. I don't know, maybe if you ram your tongue hard enough into your cheek, there's fun to be had on this ho-hum, forgettable metal album. But for the most part, it's like a textbook examination on how to keep metal boring and predictable, plus I'm pretty sure that the guitar riff in Nemesis is actually from the Trogdor The Burninator song. There seems to be a popular myth about anyone who's listened to an Iron Maiden album or two being able to play metal and get away with it, but the myth, unfortunately, does not specify if you'll be any good at it. For die-hard metal enthusiasts only.

Reviewed by Sindri Eldon

FILM

Skjaldborg Festival

The young Festival for Icelandic Documentaries is a unique mixture of local experiences and cultural events – this year's second annual edition even went international.

Skjaldborgarbíó, the amazingly cosy, old cinema from 1932 in the middle of Patreksfjörður hosted the second annual Skjaldborg Festival for Icelandic Documentaries during this year's Whitsun. Last year the festival showed 20 Icelandic documentaries, this year the number grew to 31.

The festival spiced up its impressive, Icelandic film program with an international touch. Skjaldborg 2008's guest of honour was the legendary documentary godfather Albert Maysles, who is known as the pioneer of the "cinema verité" film genre. Four of his best films were shown at Skjaldborg 2008; *Salesman* (1968), *Grey Gardens* (1976) and his newest work *The Gates* (2007) together with the Rolling Stones documentary, *Gimme Shelter* (1970), which opened the festival. *Gimme Shelter* provided us with a visual injection of flower-power rock n' roll on this first evening of the festival. After the screening, Maysles answered questions and talked to a delighted and interested audience. It was a perfect start for a great film weekend to let one of the grand old men of cinema set the tone for discussion. From the start, Skjaldborg managed to put focus on great dialog and unique come-together possibilities, not only for national and international documentary film makers, but for anyone interested in cultural gatherings in general – including the locals of Patreksfjörður.

On Saturday morning the film program roared on with an overwhelming amount of Icelandic documentaries. The Skjaldborg cinema filled up as people got themselves back on track after the previous night's celebration at the local bar. The different documentaries showed a great diversity in form as well as content. From the environmental critical *Lundi í Hættu* and *Magapína/Rumenatomija* to music documentaries about Icelandic rockers Mínus, the 78-year old Sigríður Nielsdóttir and an early Sigur Rós tour, this and the following days' 31 documentaries emphasized various current issues and subjects.

One of the nicest viewing experiences turned out to be the brand new *Kjötborg* documentary about two excentric brothers, their convenience store at Ásvallagata in Reykjavík and the everyday life around it. – The documentary was also chosen as this year's best entry. Shockingly hard was Guðmundur Tjörvi Guðmundsson's work in progress about street kids in Odessa and Kiev; *Götubörn – Katja*, and surprisingly boring, Friðrik Þór Friðriksson's *Sólskinsdrengur*.

The festival ended Sunday evening with a traditional Sveitaball dance. Before that, the 30 imported film makers and the festival guests constantly stumbled into each other and the locals on the small, narrow streets of Patreksfjörður, back and forth from the cinema, the bar and the swimming pool. This created an atmosphere of warm and gentle welcome to Patreksfjörður, and I can't help thinking that Skjaldborg offers the highest degree of local, Icelandic experience mixed with a unique, cultural happening of International dimensions.

The Skjaldborg Documentary Festival is still in the process of finding its shape and has ambitions to grow in size and content in the coming years. Hopefully it will be possible to maintain the magically, local atmosphere at the same time!

www.skjaldborgfilmfest.com

Reviewed by Janne Kristensen

CD
Southside Lounge
Ron Whitehead & Southside

This is a sad, misshapen sack of worthless, drugged-up hippie improv bullshit beatnik poetry cleverly disguised as a country album by some insolent guitar jamming on every other track, with tasteful covers of Melanie, Townes Van Zandt and Dwight Yoakam thrown in for good measure – and the covers are the best bit, really. Upon further inspection of the album booklet, the covers weren't Whitehead's idea at all or even performed by him, but by an obviously quite talented member of Southside, a woman called Sarah Elizabeth, who also designed the booklet itself; they should have let her make the whole album. Where's militant feminism when you finally need it?

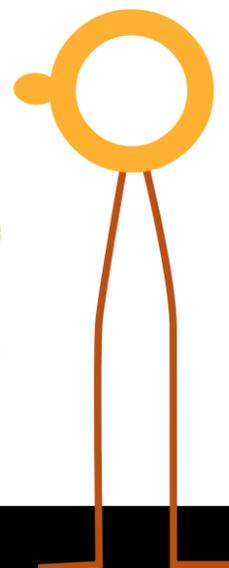
Reviewed by Sindri Eldon

CD
Sýn
Gústi Hraundal

Imagine, if you will, a ditch. Then imagine a body being dumped into said ditch. Then imagine a fine, greenish-gray mold beginning to grow on the body. But then, a strange phenomenon occurs: the mold begins to emit a sound as its earthy scent wafts into the air. A sound not unlike the tired, unimaginative songs of talentless wannabe folk musicians across the globe, each one of them thinking they've struck some deep, resounding chord within their fellow man when they sing about the evils of drug abuse and the manhood-challenging feelings they get when they stare at their wife. Then imagine someone recording that sound and putting it on an album for the world to hear. That's pretty much what you have here.

Reviewed by Sindri Eldon

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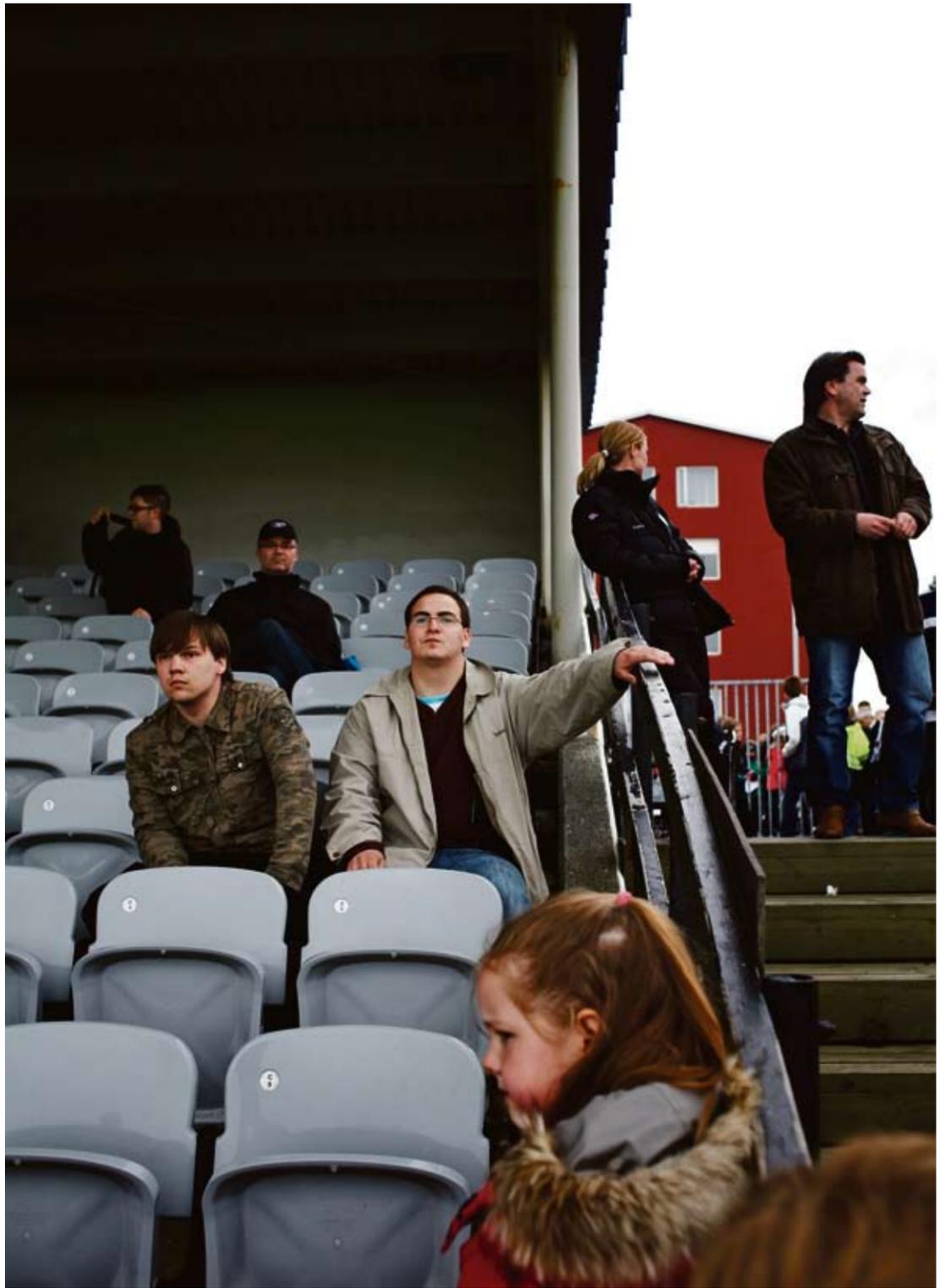
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Kick Off!

Every two years life becomes just a little bit more bearable and a little less depressing. That's because we either witness a World Cup soccer final, or a European Cup final. This year it's the European finals, starting on June 8. Until then we'll have to make good with the local premier leagues, which kicked off on May 12.

Since then three rounds have been played of not so majestic soccer in the men's premier league. Each spring, every club manager in the premier division states that the winter has been put to good use; his men have trained long and hard resulting in the team being in the best shape it has ever been in. But then each year we are treated to soccer in the opening games that looks as if the players have spent the winter lounging around on their sofas, trying out a new training plan based on watching TV and eating chips. Slowly as the summer progresses the quality increases and by the end of the year we might even see some soccer that wouldn't embarrass us in the unlikely event that proper soccer playing nations would take notice.

The fact of the matter is that Icelanders aren't any good at soccer. FIFA, the world governing body of this noblest of all sports, ranks the Icelandic men's national team at 85, just above Togo and immediately below Ghana. The ladies do a lot better, being ranked at number 19 and outclassing nations as soccer savvy as Belgium, Argentina and the Czech Republic.

This should come as no surprise really (except the women's high stan-

dard) as after all, Iceland is a small, young nation that lives with a climate that isn't exactly suitable for a game played on grass and in shorts (why we also suck at hockey is a true mystery though). These facts do not, however, stop Icelanders from wildly speculating about our soccer abilities. Each time the national teams start out playing in

Team	W	D	L	Points
1 Fjölnir	3	0	0	9
2 Keflavík	3	0	0	9
3 FH	2	1	0	7
4 Fram	2	0	1	6
5 Breiðablik	1	2	0	5
6ÍA	1	1	1	4
7 KR	1	0	2	3
8 Valur	1	0	2	3
9 Fylkir	1	0	2	3
10 Þróttur R.	0	2	1	2
11 Grindavík	0	0	3	0
12 HK	0	0	3	0

the qualifiers for the two big tournaments, the Icelandic consensus is that this time around we will surely reach the finals, if not be crowned champions.

But enough about the winning obsessions of the Icelandic nation, let's take a look at the first rounds of the premier leagues.

As not predicted in the last issue of Reykjavík Grapevine, Fjölnir sits on the top of the men's division with 3

wins. Newcomers to the league, they managed to beat the favourites KR 2-1 with a last minute goal. In second place, also with 3 wins, is the Keflavík team. They managed a highly surprising win against last year's champions Valur in the first round 5-3. Valur came back in the second round, totally outplaying Grindavík with a 3-0 win, just to lose to Fylkir 0-2 in the third round, putting them in the bottom half of the division, along with KR and Fylkir – all with 3 points. In the top half FH, FRAM and Breiðablik divide places 3 to 6. At the bottom with no wins Grindavík and HK share places 11 and 12. Just above, Þróttur sits in tenth place with 2 points.

The next two weeks will bring some interesting match ups. Valur plays top team Fjölnir on Sunday the 25 at 19:15, the first home game of Valur at their new pitch at Hlíðarendi. Expect a large crowd and a festive mood. Reykjavík giants KR and FRAM meet on June 2, also at 19:15. This is a true Derby-match, with tensions running high on both sides. If you'd rather like to venture out of town, then Grindavík welcomes FH on June 2 at 19:15.

Check www.soccerway.com for a full schedule.

Text by Páll Hilmarsson, sports commentator; Photo by GAS



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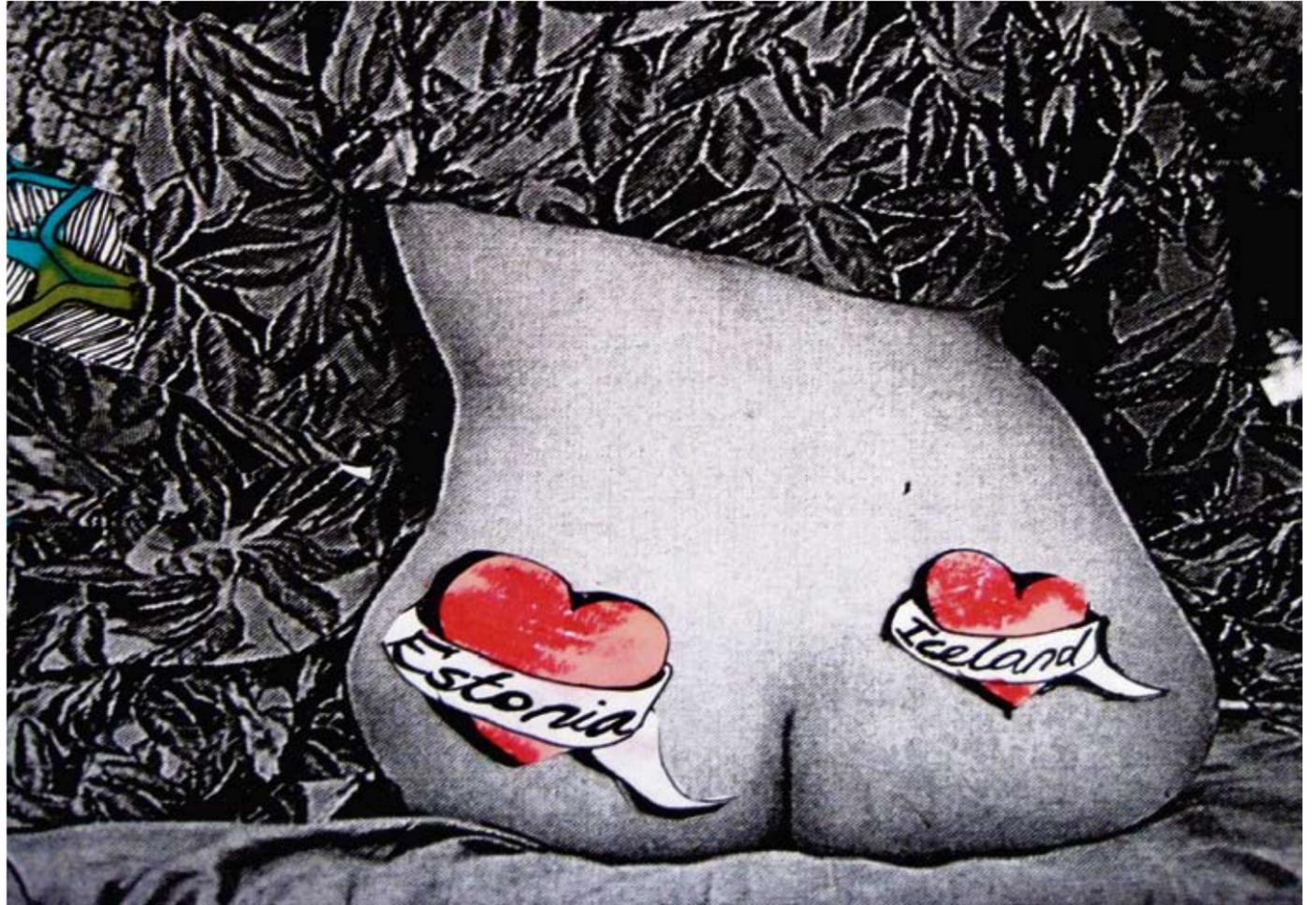
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Iceland and Estonia, two cheeks on the same butt.
Illustration by Rakel McMahon



A Tale of Two Countries

“Both countries were occupied in World War II. The British arrived in Iceland in May 1940, set up military bases but promised not to interfere in local affairs. They largely kept their promise. The Russians set up bases in Estonia in the autumn of 1939 and made the same promise, but did not keep it.”

Every now and then, someone suggests changing Estonia's name in English to “Estland,” the reason most likely being that Estonia is what those pesky Russians call the country, while Germany and the Scandinavian countries – countries that Estonia likes to be compared with – call it Estland in their native tongues. This does not, however, apply to Estonia's immediate neighbours. The Finns to the north call it Viru, after the Estonian province closest to Finland, while the Latvians call it after the southernmost province, Ugandi.

Some have worried that if the name Estland were adopted, it would be confused with that of another small, northern country, namely Iceland. This is probably true, as we in Iceland are used to having our mail end up in Ireland. In a previous article in *The Baltic States City Paper*, it was suggested that as Icelanders were known to be melancholy, vodka drinking techno-geeks with a love of nature poetry, perhaps it would only be right that they be confused with Estonians. As an Icelander, I can attest that this image of the Icelanders is largely true, give or take the love of nature poetry. When Icelanders go out into nature, usually in their SUV, they are likely to bring along their barbecue, stereo, their six pack (of beer, not belly) and a fortress size tent, so that they can feel “right at home” in the wild. Anyone seen wandering about in the highlands with only a backpack full of canned food is most likely to be a German tourist. And, being a German tourist, he or she does not know that the Icelandic highlands are not the sort of place one should go with nothing but a backpack of canned food. As no one lives there, one is very likely to get lost and eventually has to be rescued by Iceland's helicopter, which is employed by the Coast Guard and, being the only one of its kind, should be helping sailors in distress rather than German tourists in the highlands.

Estonia does not have this particular problem. Its tourists rarely venture outside Tallinn's Old Town, and if they get lost they can usually a) ask for directions, b) use the St. Olaf Church for navigation, or c) simply sod it all and have another beer while they decide where it was that they really wanted to go anyway. However, a brief comparison of both country's histories will reveal similarities, as well as differences, between Iceland and “Estland.” Both are countries on the periphery of Northern Europe, one on its westernmost part, the other to its east. And both have through most of their history been ruled by their neighbours.

Something rotten in the State of Denmark?

Iceland was first settled in 874 and remained an independent commonwealth for four centuries, before coming under the suzerainty of the king of Norway in 1262, which in turn later became governed from Denmark. Estonians have been living in present Estonia a lot longer. When they first came here is not precisely known, but they are first mentioned

by the Roman historian Tacitus in the first century AD. In the year 1219, under king Valdemar II, the Danes conquered northern Estonia and founded Tallinn, still the capital city. Its name is derived from Taani Linn, which means “Danish Town.”

In 1397, the Danes had managed to unite all the Nordic countries, Iceland and Norway as well as Sweden and Finland, in the Kalmar Union, which ruled, of course, from Copenhagen. Estonia, however, just missed out on belonging to this Union, which did not have quite the same welfare benefits as the Nordic countries today. In 1346, the Estonians had been sold to the German knights after a rebellion that convinced the Danish king that they were more trouble than they were worth.

Trading Places

The king of Denmark, however, never quite managed to unload Iceland. Perhaps he never got the right price from any prospective buyer and, in any case, the Icelanders were somewhat less troublesome. Little by little the Danish Empire disintegrated, but the king still kept his colony in Iceland. In 1523, the Swedes left, taking the Finns with them. In 1809, the Swedes lost Finland to the Russians and, much like someone who has their bicycle stolen and goes out and steals someone else's, took Norway from the Danes. This left the Danes with only Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. To make matters even worse, the Germans took Slesvig-Holstein from them in 1866.

While Iceland remained within the same kingdom, Estonia changed hands every other century. Other neighbours were not as businesslike as the Danes, and instead of buying it or at least trading it for something else, they had to fight for it. Sweden ruled a part; Poland had a part, and even the Danes had the island of Saaremaa for a while, until it was all taken over by the Russians in 1710. It was to remain Russian for the next 200 years.

English and North-African pirates

Iceland and Estonia were two of the poorest areas of Europe until the late 1800's. Iceland, like Estonia, managed to preserve its language and culture despite foreign domination from the 13th century until the early 20th. One major difference was, however, that while the king was Danish, most of the ruling class were actually Icelandic. In Estonia the situation was more complex. The peasants were Estonian, the ruling class German but the tsar was Russian.

There are other obvious differences in the histories of the two countries. Iceland was an infertile land with no forests. It was far removed from the rest of the world with sometime not so much as one ship arriving a year. And despite occasional raids from English or even pirates from North Africa, Iceland was never under threat from foreign powers. The natural enemies of the Icelanders were not

foreign armies, but the harsh soil, the climate, and occasional volcanic outbursts which at one point killed around a third of the population, causing the Danes to consider moving the survivors to a more hospitable island outside Copenhagen.

In Estonia, things were rather different. For centuries, and in fact until 1945, Estonia was the battlefield of invading armies from Germany, Poland, Sweden and Russia. In every war the Estonian people suffered and the longer the wars dragged on, the more they suffered. So whereas the problems of the Icelandic farmer were mainly geological, for the Estonian farmer they were primarily political.

The Russians are Coming... or the British

Both countries became independent as a result of World War I. But the circumstances were vastly different. Iceland became a free state in a union with Denmark after a plebiscite. The Estonians had to struggle more for their independence in 1920.

Both countries were occupied in World War II, but again the circumstances were very different. The British arrived in Iceland in May 1940, set up military bases but promised not to interfere in local affairs. They largely kept their promise. The Russians set up bases in Estonia in the autumn of 1939 and made the same promise, but did not keep it. Less than a year later Estonia was incorporated into the Soviet Union and its former leaders executed or jailed.

In 1941, both countries changed occupiers. In Iceland, the local government actually had a hand in this, as they negotiated that US troops take over from the British. In Estonia, the Germans arrived uninvited and pushed the Russians out. Estonia declared its independence again, but the Germans had little interest in a free Estonia.

In the summer of 1944, Iceland became a fully independent country under US protection. At the same time, the Red Army again pushed into Estonia, and again incorporated the country into the Soviet Union. The results of the war could not have been more different. Iceland emerged a more independent and richer country, having profited from selling fish to the allies and did not have to endure any substantial war damages. It received Marshall Aid, joined the UN in 1946 and NATO in 1949. Estonia, however, lost a quarter of its population, its cities bombed, its bridges blown up and the country lost its independence. But the histories of the two countries would become intertwined once more. When Estonia re-declared independence in August 1991, Iceland was the first country to recognise it.

Text by Valur Gunnarsson

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Reykjavík Then & Now

In 1969...

Hallgrímskirkja Church tower was still under construction.



In 2008...

Hallgrímskirkja Church tower is under reconstruction, but the scaffolding technique is greatly improved. Photo by GAS



THE WILD ICELAND

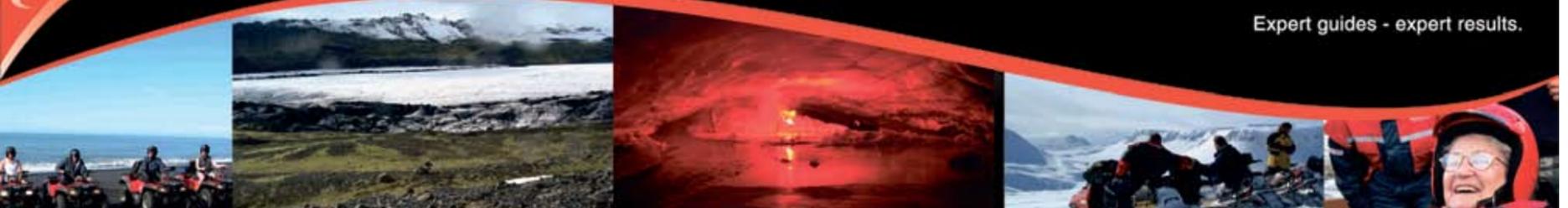
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Floating on Murky Waters

“The original lagoon was first formed in 1976 and locals started to bathe there in 1981. Today, international visitors make up seventy percent of all visitors and the complex now includes a spa, steam baths and saunas, a restaurant, a cafe, a gift shop...”

I had been to the Blue Lagoon several times before but this time round I had the company of my friend who was visiting from Germany. While she complimented the glossy advertisement for the spa in her city guide (the one with the elderly, but rejuvenated, man stretching a yoga pose alone in the lagoon), she was sceptical about the place living up to its pristine image. “I’ve heard it’s really touristy” and “It looks like Seaworld (a water theme park in Australia),” were among her comments. Crowded, yes. A theme park, not quite.

“Energy for life through forces of nature” is the Blue Lagoon’s motto and people come in droves to experience the relaxation and supposed healing powers of the aquamarine geothermal seawater which contains minerals, silica and algae. We arrived at the newly renovated spa, set among the barrenness of the surrounding lava fields, one sunny mid-week afternoon.

The main focus of our visit was the massages which we had come to try. Having little idea of what to expect, we entered the massage pool area 10 minutes before our appointments. When my masseuse, Maria, arrived and explained that we would each be receiving a 30 minute in-water relaxation massage, my first concern was how on earth she was going to go about massaging me, presumably without me having to get naked. Maria soon explained that I was to lie on my back on a floating mat, partially submerged in the water. After a couple of unsuccessful attempts to balance on the drifting mat, I managed to lie still as she covered me with a heavy, wet blanket – pur-

pose made to keep patients warm and to allow them to lie with their bathers pulled down to the waist – and began to apply some scented oil to my lower back.

Once I was confident that I would not fall off my mat, I closed my eyes and quickly drifted into deep relaxation, the distant sounds of water trickling soothing me. As Maria massaged my arms, hands, neck and feet using a combination of gentle massage techniques, she made her way around the secluded section of the lagoon, constantly rotating me as she massaged – a really unique experience which, despite having no sense of where exactly I was in the pool, I found immensely relaxing.

Just minutes after closing my eyes, the crowds of this isle’s most visited tourist spot (around 400,000 visitors a year) seemed a distant memory. My friend was also being massaged simultaneously by another masseuse. After half an hour of pampering I was left to float on the murky waters before I headed off to the nearby steam bath and sauna. My only regret is not having worn a swimming cap, as after being drenched in the silica-rich waters your hair becomes incredibly dry – almost straw-like.

Guests wanting to splash out on a massage can also choose from a range of relaxation, water-retention, cleansing, and firming treatments designed for children, adults and expectant mothers. And all sorts of people seem visit the Blue Lagoon – well Icelanders generally excluded these days, that is. This particular day there was a large group

of what I presume were business men, as well as couples and families of all ages. Prince Fredrik and Princess Mary of Denmark even stopped by a few days earlier.

The original lagoon was first formed in 1976 and locals started to bathe there in 1981. Today, international visitors make up seventy percent of all visitors and the complex now includes a spa, steam baths and saunas, a restaurant, a cafe, a gift shop and a health clinic for those seeking treatments for psoriasis and other skin disorders.

The waters were a perfect temperature of 39–41°C on this bright and sunny day. My friend and I spent several hours lazing about, stopping to apply the white silica mud in the pool side buckets, which shouldn’t be replaced with the stinky version found on the floor of the lagoon, to our faces. Those who have reservations about the hygiene of public bathing presumably need not worry. The lagoon’s six million litres of water are renewed every 40 hours. At least, the soothing waters of the Blue Lagoon certainly won my friend over.

Text by Zoë Robert

Photos by GAS



MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS – EDDAS AND SAGAS. EXHIBITION AT THE CULTURE HOUSE.



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National Centre for Cultural Heritage
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The admission fee grants entry to all exhibitions at the Culture House. Adults ISK 300. Senior citizens ISK 200. Students ISK 200. Free entry for children 16 years of age or younger. Admission is free on Wednesdays. An open guided tour of the Manuscripts exhibition is offered every weekday except Wednesdays at 3:30 pm.



Dead Cars Society

Tucked away in the industrial part of the town Egilsstaðir in East-Iceland, a part of the country that most tourists will never pass, lies an enormous collection of old cars that have been stored on a tract outside the machine shop Véltekni hf. "I have about 200 cars here," says Valdimar Benediktsson, owner of Véltekni hf., who has taken it upon himself to preserve the history of the automobile in Iceland. Benediktsson maintains that little has been done to collect old cars that have served their time. Mostly, people just want to discard old cars and never see them again – a point that is all too obvious, considering how Icelanders import cars at a rate that would put most countries to shame. "I thought it was worth keeping a few samples of these old cars," Benediktsson explains.

Although many of the cars in the collection fall squarely under the term 'antique,' – as in 'before the great oil depression antique' – a large part of the collection is made up of models that were still a common sight on Icelandic roads 20-30 years ago. Models that most people will remember, but may not have seen for decades, such as the original Volvo L3314 Laplander or early '70-80s models of the Ford Escort, the Saab 99 or the Skoda 120.

"At first I just collected American cars," Benediktsson explains. "I have a motto: cars are made in the U.S.A. – beware of replicas!" Although this operation is exclusively a hobby, Benediktsson has gone through great pains to hunt down and fetch some of these cars. "This is mostly just an inconvenience for me. And it has cost me a lot of money as well. I have gone all the way to Reykjavík to fetch cars that I thought were worth keeping."

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson
Photo by GAS



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Skaftafell



The change in landscape is dramatic: the colours and shapes of birch trees, shrubs and other vegetation replace the largely mono-colour lava fields, pastures and glaciers which make up much of the views along the 340 km drive along Route 1 from Reykjavik along the south coast to Skaftafell – a national park in the south-east of the country which encompasses parts of Europe's largest glacier Vatnajökull.

Though the tourist season hadn't yet launched into full swing when we visited one Saturday afternoon in mid-May, it nonetheless came as a surprise to see the park all but deserted. Particularly considering Skaftafell is often referred to, by guidebooks and locals alike, as being a favourite destination for camping and hiking. But while 160,000 visitors a year can't be wrong, the notoriously good weather, a result of Skaftafell's location sheltered by mountains and glaciers, was yet to kick in leaving us to share the hiking trails with just a handful of others.

As we were cutting it a little short to attempt the six hour planned hike, we opted for the comfortable one hour paved track from the carpark to Skaftajökull glacier. To be honest, our guidebook's description of the walk as being the most popular and the glacier as being "ugly" was a little off-putting. But as we made our way along the empty trail past the green covered mountain slopes and various mosses and wildflowers, which form a myriad of colours on the rocky ground, neither of these rang true. The park's landscape – a rare combination of green forest, waterfalls, sands, mountains, and glaciers – was formed by thousands of years of volcanic eruptions and the movements of glaciers.

As we approached the edge of the glacier, jagged rocks and boulders, several small lakes and the glacier itself came into view. Here we sat in awe at the mighty glacier as we listened to the trickle of the melting ice. The glacier is like a series of ever-changing sculptures, with its black sands and protruding sediments. Apparently, the glacier can recede by up to one meter a day and has in the past 50 years lost around 1 km in length.

After a brief introduction to the magnificence and diversity of the scenery of Skaftafell, we aim to return later in the summer to explore the extensive network of other hiking trails.

Text and photo by Zoë Robert



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Distance from Reykjavík

ca. 150 km



Seljalandsfoss

When driving along the south coast of the country, admirable sights that will fill your camera's memory card pretty quickly are only minutes apart, making the region a popular day-trip destination. Numerous impressive waterfalls, steep mountains, glacial rivers, hot springs and historic tourist attractions are characteristic of the area, providing the traveller with endless activities and diverse hiking trails.

After passing through small towns and loading your car with some food and beverages, it would be ideal to make a lunch stopover next to Seljalandsfoss, a spectacular waterfall that drops 60 metres over a large cliff in the Eyjafjöll Mountains.

Seljalandsfoss has a distinctive feature, which makes it among the country's most photographed waterfalls. It is possible to walk behind it without getting soaking wet, if careful that is,

and capture unusual images from the other side. These shots will undoubtedly spruce up the photo album, which by now is probably filled with pictures of Iceland's countless cascades. You don't have to worry about falling in the stream, a marked footpath leads all the way.

After photographing Seljalandsfoss from all sides, it's time to drive to the next interesting spot, Paradísarhellir (Paradise Cave), only minutes away. The cave is one of Iceland's most noted ones, not due to its size (it's only five metres long and three metres wide) but for being a refuge for the outlaw Hjalti Magnússon in the 16th century. You will need to climb eight metres up a rope to reach the cave's entrance, so you'll better not be scared of heights.

Distance from Reykjavík

ca. 155 km



Skógar

If you continue driving east along the ring road, you will soon notice another one of Iceland's remarkable waterfalls, Skógarfoss, which falls down some 60 metres into the river Skógá, and is the main appeal for photo-enthusiasts arriving at Skógar.

Located south of the Eyjafjallajökull glacier, with the Eyjafjöll Mountains hovering in the background, Skógar is a wide grassy stretch boasting incredible natural beauty, a modern hotel, church, several reconstructed turf farmhouses and historic buildings as well as a unique folk museum.

The museum itself is located in a large building across from the farmhouses and features an interesting exhibition all year round. Established by Þórður Tómasson in 1949, the museum's general concept is to introduce Icelandic society to interested visitors. It gives an insight into the way the country slowly developed into a growing com-

munity and educates visitors about the everyday life of farmers and fishermen in the country by displaying artefacts, tools, clothes and household items which Tómasson has collected over the years or which have been donated to the museum. The exhibition is divided into several sections, each emphasising a specific period in the country's history. These priceless items include an 18th-century fishing boat, and a haymaking tool. In 2002 a new exhibition space, dedicated to developments in technology and transportation in the 19th and 20th century, was added to the museum.

Skógar also has a nice camping site, located only metres away from Skógarfoss. The site gets quite crowded during summer, attracting weary travellers who want nothing more than to be lulled to sleep by the calming sound of the waterfall.

Distance from Reykjavík

ca. 180 km



Dyrhólaey and Vík í Mýrdal

Dyrhólaey, a long preserved promontory stretching from the coast and out into the ocean, is the southernmost part of Iceland. Surrounded by black sand beaches and green meadows, this 120 metre high precipice was created by an eruption thousands of years ago.

Walking to the tip of the promontory offers an amazingly scenic view in all directions. On one side there's the North Atlantic and on the other is the Mýrdalsjökull glacier. On a clear day you can even spot the Vestmannaeyjar (Westman Islands) far away. The promontory is also rich with incredible birdlife and attracts bird watching enthusiasts all year round. Various species of seabirds including puffins and seagulls nest in the cliffs as well as in the large rock pillars, named Dyrhóladrangar, a little further out in the ocean.

On the southernmost part of Dyrhólaey, the ocean has shaped a hole in the rock that looks like a gate or a curved door. From this peculiar formation, Dyrhólaey draws its name, literally meaning Door-hill-island (although it isn't really an island). If the ocean is calm, small boats can sail through the door.

If, after exploring Dyrhólaey, you're looking for refreshments or accommodation, the nearest town is Vík í Mýrdal, a small coastal village surrounded by spectacular natural beauty. To name just one option for recreation, a short but bumpy drive leads to Þakgil, or 'roof canyon', a large cave that has been renovated into a fine eating spot, providing long dining tables and even a barbecue grill. Just bring the food and dishes and enjoy your meal out in the wilderness.

Distance from Reykjavík

ca. 110 km



Mt. Hekla

On the way back to the capital a short detour up to Mt. Hekla comes highly recommended. This dignified and scenic 40 km long stratovolcano is one of Iceland's most famous landmarks, towering above the Þjórsárdalur valley.

Hekla is among the world's most active volcanoes. Over the past 1000 years Hekla has had about 15 major eruptions and more than 150 smaller ones. The volcano has erupted five times in the 20th century, most recently in February 2000. Early settlers in Iceland understandably feared this frightening fire-spouting mountain and believed Hekla to be the gateway to Hell.

On May 5 a new geo-historical museum, the Hekla Centre, will be opened at the farm Leirubakki, situated at the foot of the mountain. By using the latest technology, the permanent exhi-

bition centres on the volcano's history and the effects it has had on the country's inhabitants for more than a 1000 years and will undoubtedly be extremely educational to those interested in volcanism.

The Hekla Centre will also feature art exhibitions, host conferences and meetings and house a nice restaurant with an incredible view. With the star attraction nestling in the background, a better location for such a centre would be hard to find.

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir
Photos by Skari

Inside Reykjavík

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Those damn kids and their spray cans.

Photo by GAS

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- **Medical help:** 1770
- **Dental emergency:** 575 0505
- **AA:** 551 2010
- **Information:** 118
- **Telegrams:** 146

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- **Iceland Refund,**
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www.icelandrefund.com

Post Office

Post offices are located around the city as well as in the countryside. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5. For a full list and info on opening hours visit www.posturinn.is. Stamps are also sold in bookstores, gas stations, some grocery stores and tourist shops.

Embassies and Consulates

- **United States,** Laufásvegur 21, Tel: 562 9100
- **United Kingdom,** Laufásvegur 31, Tel: 550 5100
- **Russia,** Garðastræti 33, Tel: 551 5156
- **China,** Víðimelur 29, Tel: 552 6751

For a full list visit *Ministry for Foreign Affairs:* www.mfa.is/diplomatic-missions/icelandic-missions/

Internet Access

Most coffeehouses have wireless Internet access. Computers with Internet connections are available at:

- **Ráðhúskaffi City Hall,** Tjarnargata 11
- **BSÍ Bus Terminal,** Vatnsmýrarvegur 10
- **Ground Zero,** Vallarstræti 10
- **The Reykjavík City Library,** Tryggvagata 15
- **The National and University Library,** Arngrímshöfðugata 3
- **Tourist Information Centre,** Aðalstræti 2
- **Icelandic Travel Market,** Bankastræti 2

Opening Hours

- **Bars and clubs:** According to regulations bars may be open until 01:00 on weekdays and 05:30 on weekends.
- **Shops:** Mon-Fri 10-18, Sat 10-16, Sun closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

■ **Swimming pools:** weekdays 06:30-22:30, weekends 08:00-20:30 although some may be open an hour longer.

■ **The State owned ÁTVR liquor stores:** Mon-Thu 11-18, Fri 11-19, Sat 11-18.

Banks in the centre are open Mon-Fri 09-16.

Laundry Service

- **HI Hostel,** Sundlaugarvegur 34, Tel: 553 8110, www.hostel.is
- **Úðafoss,** Vitastigur 13, Tel: 551 2301, www.udafoss.is

Getting Around

Public Transport

The only public transport system in Reykjavík is the bus. Most busses run every 20 minutes and price per fare is 280 ISK for adults and 100 ISK for children. Complete route map at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700

Busses run from 07:00-24:00 on weekdays and 10:00-24:00 on weekends

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Taxi

- **Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir,** Tel: 553 3500 or 588 5522
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 - **ALP,** Dugguvogur 10, Tel: 562 6060
 - **Avis,** Knarravogi 2, Tel: 591 4000
 - **Eurocar,** Hjallahraun 9, Tel: 565 3800
 - **A.G Car Rental,** Tangarhöfði 8-12, Tel: 587 5544
 - **Atlas Car Rental,** Dalshraun 9, Tel: 565 3800
 - **Berg Car Rental,** Tangarhöfða 8, Tel: 577 6050
 - **Hertz,** Flugvallavegur, Tel: 522 4400

Airlines

- **Air Iceland,** Reykjavíkflugvöllur, Tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is
- **Air Vestmannaeyjar,** Tel: 481 3255, www.eyjaflug.is

Bus Terminal

- **BSÍ,** Vatnsmýrarvegur 10, Tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

Flybus

Busses run daily from the BSÍ Bus Terminal to Keflavík International Airport in connection with all departing flights. Departures daily from 04:45 to 15:00/16:30 (every 15 - 60 minutes). For Flybus time schedule see: www.flybus.is

Samferda.net

A reasonable choice for the budget traveller. You log on to the website www.samferda.net, choose your destination and hopefully find a travel buddy to share the cost.

Cultural Centres and Tourist Offices

- **The Intercultural Centre**
The Intercultural Centre throws occasional cultural events and conferences but its main purpose is to be an information and counselling centre and serve as an advocate for the rights of immigrants in Iceland.
Hverfisgata 18, Tel: 530 9300
www.ahus.is
- **Icelandic Travel Market**
Bankastræti 2, Tel: 510 5700, www.kleif.is
Information on day tours, accommodations, car rental and everything else you need to know when travelling in Iceland.
- **Iceland Visitor**
Austurstræti 17, Tel: 511 2442, www.icelandvisitor.com
A travel agency offering travelling package trips and custom-made tours as well as car rental, day tours and accommodations for visitors.
- **Tourist Information Centre**
Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550, www.visitreykjavik.is
Offers information for tourists as well as providing internet access, booking service, a phone centre, money exchange service, tax refund and selling the Reykjavík Tourist Card. The Reykjavík Tourist Card gives admission to city busses, various museums, Reykjavík swimming pools, The Family Park and Reykjavík Zoo, The Culture House and the National and University Library.
- **The Icelandic Tourist Board**
Lækjargata 3, Tel: 535 5500, www.visiticeland.com
All information needed before travelling in Iceland.
- **Nordic House**
Sturlugata 5, Tel: 551 7030, www.nordice.is
The Nordic cultural centre organises various cultural events, conferences and exhibitions.

All major tourist spots in Reykjavík also offer brochures, maps and information for travellers.

Useful Information

Where to Learn Icelandic as a Foreign Language

- **Icelandic on the Internet,** www.vefskoli.is
- **Mímir Continuing Education,** Skeifán 8, Tel: 580 1800, www.mimir.is
- **Námsflokkar Reykjavíkur,** Fríkirkjuvegur 1, Tel: 551 2992
- **Fjölmenning,** Laugavegur 59, Tel: 511 1319, www.fjolmenning.is
- **The Icelandic College of Engineering and Technology,** Höfðabakki 9, Tel: 577 1400, www.thi.is
- **Iðnskólinn í Reykjavík,** Skólavörðuholti, Tel: 552 6240, www.ir.is
- **The University of Iceland – Department of Continuing Education,** Dunhagi 7, Tel: 525 4924, www.endurmenntun.is
- **Language School Lingva,** The University of Iceland, at Sturlugata. Tel.: 561 0351, www.lingva.is

Religious Movements

- The national church in Iceland is the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Masses are generally held on Sundays at 11:00. Service in English is at Hallgrímskirkja every last Saturday each month, starting at 14:00. The Roman Catholic Church also has masses in English and Polish.
- Other religious movements in Reykjavík are for example:
- **The Muslim Association of Iceland,** Ármúli 38
 - **Ásatrú Association,** Grandagarði 8
 - **Bahá'í,** Álfabakka 12
 - **The Church of Evangelism,** Hlíðasmári 9
 - **The Icelandic Buddhist Movement,** Vighólástígur 21
 - **Reykjavík Free Lutheran Church,** Fríkirkjuvegur 5
 - **Pentecostal Assembly,** Hátún 2
 - **Roman Catholic Church,** Hávallagata 14
 - **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,** Ásabraut 2
 - **Jehovah's Witnesses,** Sogavegur 71
 - **Seventh-Day Adventists,** Suðurhlíð 36
 - **Zen Buddhism in Iceland,** Reykjavíkurvegur 31
 - **Independent Church,** Háteigsvegur 101
 - **The Russian Orthodox Church in Iceland,** Sólvallagata 10
 - **The Cross,** Hlíðasmári 5-7

Trade Unions

- **The Icelandic Federation of Labour,** Sættún 1, Tel: 535 5600, www.asi.is
- **The Federation of State and Municipal employees,** Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8300, www.bsrb.is
- **The Association of Academics,** Borgartún 6, Tel: 581 2090, www.bhm.is
- **Efling,** Sættún 1, Tel: 510 7500, www.efling.is
- **The Commercial Workers' Union,** Kringlan 7, Tel: 510 1700, www.vr.is
- **Union of Public Servants,** Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8340, www.sfr.is

Useful Websites

- **www.visitreykjavik.is** (The official tourist website of Reykjavík)
- **www.gayice.is** (Information about the gay scene in Iceland)
- **www.fjolmenningarsetur.is** (The Multicultural Centre)
- **www.hostel.is** (Hostel International in Iceland)
- **www.vinnumalastofnun.is** (Public employment services)
- **www.gulalinan.is** (The yellow pages)
- **www.leigulistinn.is** (Rent a flat)
- **www.ja.is** (Icelandic telephone directory)

Where to Get ...

- **Work and residence permit:** The Directorate of Immigration, Skógarhlíð 6, Tel: 510 5400, www.utl.is.
- **Insurance and benefits:** The State Social Security Institute, Laugavegur 114-116, Tel: 560 4400, www.tr.is
- **Icelandic citizenship:** Unless you come from a Nordic country, foreign citizens have to have had an unrestricted residence permit in Iceland for at least seven years in order to get an Icelandic citizenship although some exceptions exist to that general rule. Applications are at the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Skuggasund, Tel: 545 9000, www.domsmalaraduneyti.is
- **Unemployment benefits:** Directorate of Labour, Public Employment Service, Tryggvagata 17, Tel: 515 4800, www.vinnumalastofnun.is
- **Icelandic social security number (kennitala):** National Register, Borgartún 24, Tel: 569 2900, www.thjodskra.is
- **Driver's license:** Applications at police stations. (Those who have a foreign license don't need an Icelandic one for the first six months.)
- **Tax card:** Tax office, Laugavegur 166, Tel: 563 1100, www.rsk.is
- **Social Service:** Information and service is provided by district service centres in Reykjavík. To locate the service centre in your neighbourhood see: www.reykjavik.is



NORDIC HOUSE - KNOWLEDGE AND DESIGN

The "Alvar A" dining room is open
 Mon - Fri 10:00 to 17:00
 Saturday - Sunday, 12:00 to 17:00
 Special events/occasions - open until 22:00 hours (check website for details)

Norræna húsið / The Nordic House
 Saemundargata (in the Iceland University quarters of the city)
 Tel: +354 551 7030
www.nordice.is



Stuffed with stuff

We need to know where these people are coming from. We had to learn it from the media that these were single mothers from Iraq.

Magnús Þór Hafsteinsson is not so sure about refugees.

Page 6

Considering that it rains quite frequently in Iceland, I was surprised to see that no one really uses umbrellas here. I learnt very quickly however the reason for this. How silly of me to actually think that rain falls from above!

Iris Goemans moved from Australia to Iceland.

Page 8

"The damn thing isn't ready yet, I don't think we'll finish in time," she says. "I had to throw a little tantrum this morning just to get things going."

Martha Schwartz tries to get the locals to put on an exhibition.

Page 13

Iceland is a small, young nation that lives with a climate that isn't exactly suitable for a game played on grass and in shorts (why we also suck at hockey is a true mystery though).

Premier league football has kicked off.

Page 20

In a previous article in The Baltic States City Paper, it was suggested that as Icelanders were known to be melancholy, vodka drinking techno-geeks with a love of nature poetry, perhaps it would only be right that they be confused with Estonians.

Valur Gunnarsson muses on the similarities between Iceland and Estonia.

Page 22

When my masseuse, Maria, arrived and explained that we would each be receiving a 30 minute in-water relaxation massage, my first concern was how on earth she was going to go about massaging me, presumably without me having to get naked.

Zoë Robert visited the Blue Lagoon.

Page 25



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REYKJAVÍK:
Islandia, Kringlan Shopping Center, Bankastræti 10
The Viking, Hafnarstræti 3
Handþrjónasambandið, Skólavörðustíg 19, Laugavegi 64
UII og Gjafavörur, Hótel Sögu ísey, Klapparstíg 30

Álafoss Verksmiðjúsala, Laugavegi 1
Intersport, Bildshöfða 20

OTHER LOCATIONS:
Blue Lagoon, Svartengi
Geysir Shops, Haukadal
Gullfosskaffi, Gullfoss
Byggðasafnið Skógum

The Viking, Akureyri
Mývatnsmarkaður, Mývatn
Mývatn ehf, Skútustöðum, Mývatn
Tákn Sport og Útivist, Húsavík
El Grillo, Seyðisfjörður,
Álafoss Verksmiðjúsala, Álafossvegi 23, Mosfellsbæ
Nóatún, Selfossi

info.

Music, Art, Films and Events Listings · Eating, Drinking and Shopping · Map

***plus* Photos From a Vacant Navy Base · Photography Students' Graduate Exhibition**



above Viggo Mortensen exhibits at the Reykjavík Museum of Photography (B2)



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Art

Viggo Mortensen Photo Exhibit

Actor Viggo Mortensen is apparently competent in more areas of art than acting. According to him, his acting is only a fracture of his great art ambition and over the years he has gained reputation as a decent painter, a poet and a photographer. We have the privi-

lege to be able to get acquainted with his photography this summer, or from the May 31 till August 31. The exhibition's name, Skovbo, can be translated as an oasis in the forest, or in a wider context simply to live in the forest. The piece is a collection of photos from his

extensive travels and although it might trigger political thoughts, Viggo denies all its possible affiliations with wildlife conservation ideals.

Reykjavík Museum of Photography
Tryggvagata 15

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HÚSAVÍK

If you would like to be included in the Grapevine listings, free of charge, contact the Grapevine by email at listings@grapevine.is.

Music

■ Bar 11

Laugavegur 11
Fri May 23: DJ Biggi Maus
Sat May 24: DJ Gulli Ósóma
Fri May 30: DJ Gulli Ósóma
Sat May 31: DJ Matti X-FM
Fri Jun 6: DJ Matti X-FM
Sat Jun 7: DJ Gulli Ósóma

■ Barinn

Laugavegur 22
Fri May 23: Grétar G "Don" & Danni Bigroom
Sat May 24: 4/4 "You haven't lived until you've attended a 4/4 night"
Fri May 30: TBA reserve this weekend!
Sat May 31: TBA reserve this weekend!

■ Broadway

Ármúla 9
Fri May 23: Johnny Logan concert:
Tickets at www.midi.is

■ Brons

Pósthússtræti 9
Every Thursday: DJ Lucky
Every Friday: History Sound System
Every Saturday: DJ Gauti

■ Café Paris

Austurstræti 14
Every Friday and Saturday: DJ A. Ramirez

■ Háskólabíó

At Hagatorg
Sat May 24: Concert: Wayne Shorter jazz quartet. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival. Tickets at www.midi.is
Mon Jun 1: Concert: Denyce Graves, mezzo-soprano. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival. Tickets at www.midi.is
Thu Jun 5: The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Lady and Bird

■ Hressó

Austurstræti 20
Fri May 23: Dalton followed by DJ

Maggi

Sat May 24: Hvar er Mjallhvít followed by DJ Maggi
Thu May 29: Beerfest, performance by Tryggvi Vilmondar
Fri May 30: Menn ársins followed by DJ Maggi

■ The Icelandic Opera

Ingólfsstræti
Thu May 29: "A journey without a destination" concert with Jón Ólafsson. Tickets at www.midi.is
Fri May 30: "A journey without a destination" concert with Jón Ólafsson. Tickets at www.midi.is
Wed Jun 4: Concert: Violinist Porkell Sigurbjörnsson. Tickets at www.midi.is

■ Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1
Fri May 23: Ben Frost recite their piece "Music for 6 guitars" at 21:30PM and DJ B-Ruff follows at 24PM
Sat May 24: Dansa Meira: performance by Már and Nielsen.
Fri May 30: Jack Schidt
Sat May 31: Alfons X
Fri Jun 6: Terrordisco
Sat Jun 7: Johnny Sexual LIVE

■ Laugardalshöllin

Laugardalur
Mon May 26: Bob Dylan concert.
Tickets at www.midi.is

■ Nasa

by Austurvöllur
Sat May 24: Annual Páll Óskar Eurovision Party
Fri May 30: Concert: Super Mama Djombo from the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. Tickets at www.midi.is
Sat May 31: Concert: Super Mama Djombo from the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. Tickets at www.midi.is
Fri Jun 6: Techno.is night!
Sat Jun 7: Concert: Sálín Hans Jóns Míns

■ Organ

Hafnarstræti 1-3
Fri May 23: Pop-Quiz at 6pm. Happy hour from 5pm-7pm
Concert hosted by UVG, Æla, Hraun, Múgsefjun, <3 Svanhvít and Blaz Roca
Sat May 24: Dj Árni Sveins: From Soul

To Italic and Beyond

Wed May 28: Númer Núll release concert

Thu May 29: Monitor Party
Fri May 30: Pop-Quiz 6PM Kimi Records Party from 10PM Borko, Reykjavík!, FM Belfast and more
Sat May 31: Anti-Racism Funding Concert 10PM

Wed June 4: Retro Stefson, Klive and Skelkur í Bringu 9PM
Thu June 5: Men of the Year 9PM
Fri June 6: Pop-Quiz 6PM and Alaska in Winter 10PM

■ Prikið

Bankastræti 12
Fri May 23: Franz and Kristó followed by DJ Danni Deluxe
Sat May 24: Eurovision finals/Tetriz night with performances by DJ B-ruff and Fingaprint

■ Q-Bar

Ingólfsstræti 3
Fri May 23: DJ Unnur Andrea
Sat May 24: Eurovision theme Night with DJ Manny
Tue May 27: Open Mic Night with Musicians Elín Ey & Myrra
Fri May 30: 60's Theme Night with DJ Kvikindi
Sat May 31: 80's Madonna Theme Night featuring Diva De La Rósa

Thu June 5: DJ Kvikindi
Fri June 6: Surprise Night
Sat June 7: Gala Night TBA

■ Tunglið

Tryggvagata 22
Fri May 23: Frímann & Arnar
Sat May 24: DJ Baldur Vs. DJ Skeletor
Fri May 30: Ghozt & Brunheim
Sat May 31: Mike Monday & Will Paton aka Willerby
Fri June 6: Mercedes Club "VIP-Party"
Fri June 6: Loop Troop + guests "Chronic Night"



Music

Kimi Party at Organ

The newly founded Akureyri based record label Kimi Records throws a party May 30 where their main attractions perform. Kimi have in a short period positioned themselves amongst the more prolific labels in Iceland and pilfered many of the country's rising stars

in the music industry. The last Friday of May, Organ will be shaken at the foundation by the infamous madcaps of Reykjavík!, the enigmatic but homey Borko and finally the party ends with a dance frenzy controlled by FM Belfast as well as Dj Peter Parker. In addition,

Kimi promise a surprise and whether it should be the newly signed electro musician Klive or the alleged next Kimi band, Retro Stefson, it will be a night to remember at Organ.

May 30, Organ, Hafnarstræti 1-3

Art

■ 101 Gallery

Hverfisgata 18
Thu.–Sat. 14–17 and by appointment
www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery/
May 16–June 27

Tenebrae

Installation by Jóhannes Atli Hinriksson

■ Artótek

Tryggvagata 15
Mon 10–21, Tue–Thu 10–19, Fri 11–19,
Sat and Sun 13–17
www.sim.is/Index/Islenka/Artotek

■ ASÍ Art Museum

Freyjugata 41
Tue–Sun 13–17

Free Entrance

May 16–June 15

What Volcanoes?

An exhibition by Halldór Ásgeirsson and Paul Armand Gette. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ The Einar Jónsson Museum

Eiríksgata
Tue–Sun 14–17
www.skulptur.is

Permanent exhibition:

The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson.

■ The Culture House

Hverfisgata 15
Open daily 11–17
www.thjodmenning.is

Ongoing exhibitions:

The Medieval Manuscripts – Eddas and Sagas

On view are the ancient vellum manuscripts that preserve the Northern classical heritage: unique sagas, poems and narratives which are often our sole written sources of information on the society, religion and world view of the people of Northern Europe from pagan times through the tumult of Viking Expansion, the settlement of the Atlantic Islands and the period of

Christianisation.

SURTSEY – Genesis

Multimedia exhibition that tells the story of an island's spectacular birth from the depths of the Atlantic Ocean in 1963, traces its history to the present day – and beyond, glimpsing its future 120 years hence. The exhibition explains the grounds for the Government's decision to nominate Surtsey to UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Across the Oceans

The exhibition is dedicated to Helgi Hálfðanarson's (b. 1911) translations and original writings. Helgi Hálfðanarson is Iceland's most prolific literary translator of all time. His extraordinary life's work includes the feat of translating and publishing all the plays of Shakespeare and all the extant Greek tragedies.

The Journey's End

The exhibition bears the title of a poem by the Icelandic poet and natural scientist, Jónas Hallgrímsson (1807-1845), and sheds light on his life's work.

■ Dwarf Gallery

Grundarstígur 21
Opening Hours: Sat 18–20
www.this.is/birta

May 24, 31 and June 7

A piece by Helga Óskarsdóttir

■ Fotografi

Skólavörðustígur 4a
www.fotografi.is
May 3–June 6

Chaos

Photographs by Stígur Steinþórsson

■ Gallery 100^o

Bæjarháls 1
www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/
Open weekdays from 08:30–16:00
May 16–June 27

Croatian Contemporary Art

Video-installations, photography and performance art by five Croatian artists. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ Gallery StartArt

Laugavegur 12b
Tue–Sat 13–17

Free entrance

www.startart.is

May 15–June 30

Flooding

Video installation by Rúri. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ Gallery Ágúst

Baldursgata 12
Wed–Sat 12–17
www.galleriagust.is

May 16–June 28

S M A R T

Solo Exhibition by Andrea Maack. Part of the Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ Gallery Fold

Rauðarárstígur 14–16
Mon–Fri 10–18
Sat 11–16
Sun 14–16

www.myndlist.is

May 3–May 25

Blómastillur

Exhibition by Pétur Gautur

■ Gallery Kling & Bang

Hverfisgata 42

Thu–Sun from 14–18

Free admission

this.is/klingogbang/

May 16–June 22

Uncertainty Principle

Exhibition by Sirra Sigrún Sigurðardóttir. Part of the Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ Gallery Turpentine

Ingólfsstræti 5
Tue–Fri 12–18
Sat 11–16

www.turpentine.is

May 23–June 17

GEOMETRIA

Húbert Nói

■ Gel Gallery

Hverfisgata 37
Mon–Fri 13–18
Sat 11–16
Sun 14–16

www.myspace.com/gallerigel

Apr 26–May 29

Björn Árnason photographic exhibition.

■ Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

Gerðuberg 3–5

Uncle Tom's Cabin

Laugavegur 2

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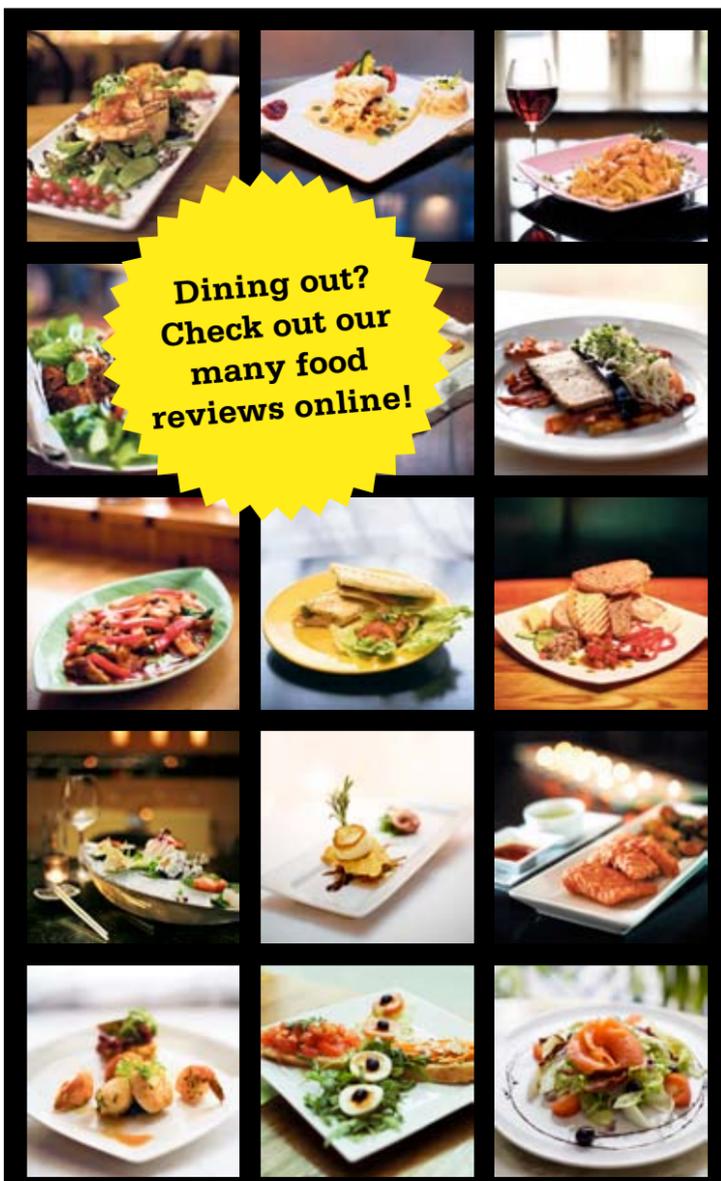
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Jamie Oliver's Diary

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s'n's King Prawn
Fried Noodles

Meal 3:

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Fried Beef with
Sacha sauce
Mixed Meet Dish
Fried Noodles



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Helga Óskarsdóttir in Gallery Dwarf

On May 15, artist Helga Óskarsdóttir opened an exhibition in the artist operated Gallery Dvergur. The exhibition includes a brand new, sectional piece where the artist approach to its subject is of an unorthodox kind, i.e. instead of enhancing it in order to view the small-

est details, she reduces it and observes it externally. Helga's earlier works include dealings with various kinds of landscape and she has a reputation for finding hidden jewels in human surroundings and bringing them on to the surface, such as fractures in rusty walls

and she has even discovered long lost continents hidden in a weathered layer of nail polish.

May 24, 31 and June 7
Dwarf Gallery, Grundarstígur 21

Mon-Thu 11-17

Wed 11-21

Thu-Fri 11-17

Sat-Sun 13-16

www.gerduberg.is

May 3-Sep 7

Between Mountain and Shore

Exhibition of Landscape paintings from popular-artist couple

Michael Guðvarðarson and Ósk Guðmundsdóttir

May 3-Sep 7

Magical Beings From the Folk Tales of Iceland

Drawings from Jón Baldur Hlíðberg

4 Mar-7 Sep

A Date with Collectors III

II of the exhibition pieces are connected with music in one way or another

■ **Hitt Húsið – Gallery Tukt**

Pósthússtræti 3-5

www.hithusid.is

May 16-May 31

Artwork by Ísak Óli Sævarsson

■ **i8 Gallery**

Klapparstígur 33

Tue-Fri 11-17

Sat 13-17 and by appointment

www.i8.is

May 16-June 28

Brazilian artist Ernesto Neto exhibits large-scale experiential installations.

Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ **Living Art Museum**

Laugavegur 26

Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17

Thu 13-22

www.nylo.is

Ongoing exhibition:

Nylo celebrates its 30th anniversary

May 16-June 30

Exhibition documenting Icelandic performances featuring an ongoing performative dialogue with artist Karl Holmqvist. Documents from Icelandic performance artists Magnús Pálsson, Rúrí, Hannes Lárusson, Bjarni H. Þórarinnsson, Ásmundur Ásmundsson, Sara Björnsdóttir, Egill Sæbjörnsson, and Ásdís Sif Gunnarsdóttir can be viewed. A special performance featuring Icelandic artists will also take place.

■ **The Lost Horse Gallery**

Skólastræti 1

Open on weekends from 13-19 and by appointment on weekdays.

www.this.is/subaqua/losthorse.html

■ **The National Film Archive of Iceland**

Hvaleyrarbraut 13

www.kvikmyndasafn.is

The National Film Archive of Iceland screens old movie classics and masterpieces twice a week for 500 ISK per ticket.

■ **The National Gallery of Iceland**

Fríkirkjuvegur

Tue-Sun 11-17

Free Entrance

www listasafn.is

May 16-June 29

Art Against Architecture

Exhibition examining the difficult relationship between art and architecture with artists Elín Hansdóttir, Franz West, Finnbogi Pétursson, Monica Bonvicini and Steina. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ **The National Museum of Iceland**

Suðurgata 41

Open daily 10-17

natmus.is/

Permanent exhibition:

The Making of a Nation

May 16-Aug 31

Reflection

Photographic exhibition that showcases Icelandic masters of the field including: Bára Kristinsdóttir, Bragi Þ. Jósefsson, Einar Falur Ingólfsson, Ívar Brynjólfsson, Katrín Elvarsdóttir, Pétur Thomsen, Spessi and Þórdís Erla Ágústsdóttir. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

May 16-Sep 15

In the Mist

Photographs by Thomas Humery

■ **The Nordic House**

Sturlugata 5

Tue-Sun 12-17

www.nordice.is/

May 1-May 30

Art Without Borders Exhibition

■ **The Numismatic Museum**

Kalkofnsvegur 1

Open Mon-Fri 13:30-15:30.

Free admission.

Permanent exhibition:

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

■ **Reykjavík 871 +/- 2**

Aðalstræti 16

Open daily 10-17

Permanent exhibition:

The Settlement Exhibition

■ **Reykjavík Art Gallery**

Skúlagata 28

Open from Tuesday through Sunday

14-18

Current exhibition:

Magnús Tómasson, Pétur Már Pétursson and Tolli

■ **Reykjavík Art Museum**

– Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum

Sigtún

Open daily 10-16

Free entrance.

www listasafnreykjavikur.is

May 20-Aug 10

The Shape of Line

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

■ **Reykjavík Art Museum**

– Hafnarhús

Tryggvagata 17

Open daily 10-17 and on Thursdays from 10-22

Free Entrance.

May 15-Aug 24

Experimental Marathon Reykjavík

Hafnarhús turns into a major laboratory where leading artists, architects, film-makers, and scientists will create an environment of invention through various experiments and performances (in English).

May 29

Screening of the documentary Steypa, which explores the relationship between inspiration, creativity, culture and environment through a collaboration of seven of Iceland's most acclaimed young artists.

■ **Reykjavík Art Museum**

– Kjarvalsstaðir

Flókagata

Open Daily 10-17

Free entrance.

18 May-31 Aug

Dreams of the Sublime and Nowhere

in Contemporary Icelandic Art:

This exhibition includes many new works of photography and video art by Iceland's most outstanding artists, building on their disparate ideas about nature as a phenomenon.



Art

The Artist In His Work

Early on in his career recently deceased Icelandic artist Magnús Kjartansson (1949-2006) was widely celebrated for his works. Even though his exhibitions grew less frequent as time passed, they always caused a stir in the Icelandic art community and his work has a great

resonance with the work of today's modern artists. This retrospective in Hveragerði's Listasafn Árnesinga features Kjartansson's work on paper from 1982-1988, in which he experimented with various ways of committing pictures, objects and even his own body

to the form. It features several lectures and performances by today's notables, including Ragnar Kjartansson.

May 18 – July 20
Listasafn Árnesinga
Austurmörk 21, 810 Hveragerði

18 May–20 July

I Hate Nature

Martha Schwartz exhibition

18 May–31 Aug

Where Am I?

An exhibition in which children and adults can contemplate their planet, their country, and the landmarks of their environment.

18 May–31 Dec

Jóhannes S. Kjarval – Key Works

The current exhibition in Kjarvalsstaðir's east gallery features key works from the museum's collection along with works on loan from the Labour Unions' Art Gallery and from the collection of Ingibjörg Guðmundsdóttir and Porvaldur Guðmundsson.

■ **Reykjavík City Theatre**

Listabraut 3

May 16–June 5

Five

In 2006, hundreds of children at the age of five were given instant cameras to use for a period of one week. The goal was to encourage children to view their world through the lens of a camera and to capture moments in time or space that they felt were special in some way. Some 250 photographs have now been selected for publication and 50 photographs will be exhibited in the foyer of the theatre. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ **Reykjavík Maritime Museum**

Grandagarður 8

www.sjominjasafn.is

Will reopen on May 31

■ **Reykjavík Museum**

(Árbæjarsafn)

Kistuhylur 4

Open daily from 10–17

www.arbaejarsafn.is

Current exhibitions:

Building Techniques in Reykjavík 1840-1940; Disco and Punk – Different cultures?; Christmas is Coming; History of Reykjavík – from farm to city; Memories of a House; Living and Playing

■ **The Reykjavík Museum of**

Photography

Grófarhús, Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor

Weekdays 12–19

Sat–Sun 13–17

Free entrance

www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is

Feb 23–May 25

Places: From a Visual Diary 1988-2008

Photographic Exhibition by Einar Falur Ingólfsson.

Apr 9–June 3

Photographs by Jirka Ernest

May 31–Aug 31

Skovbo

Photographs by Viggo Mortensen

■ **Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**

Laugarnestangi 70

Open Tue–Sun 14–17

Permanent exhibition:

Works of sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson.

Outside Reykjavík

■ **Hafnarborg**

Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður

Mon.–Sun. 11–17

www.hafnarborg.is

Special celebration of

Hafnarfjörður's 100 anniversary

May 29

HUNDRED

Historical Photography Exhibition

Photos that depict special moments in the lives of the people of Hafnarfjörður and an anecdote follows.

June 1

Opening of photography exhibition by

Árni Gunnlaugsson

June 5

Evening concert with Antonia Hevesi, piano and Hliðover Sigurðsson, tenor

■ **Kópavogur Art Museum**

– Gerðarsafn

Hamraborg, Kópavogur

Open daily 11–17 except Mondays

www.gerdarsafn.is

■ **The Icelandic Museum of Design**

and Applied Art

Lyngás 7–9, 121 Garðabær

Opening hours: Tue–Fri 14–18; Sat and

Sun 16–18.

www.mudesa.org

Exhibitions devoted to Icelandic

design.

■ **Gljúfrasteinn**

– Halldór Laxness museum

270 Mosfellsbær

Open daily except Mondays from

10–17.

■ **The Icelandic Settlement Centre**

Brákarbraut 1–15, Borgarnes

Opening hours: May to Sep 10–20; Sep

to May 11–17.

www.landnam.is

Permanent exhibitions:

The Settlement of Iceland; The Saga of Egill Skalla-Grimsson

Current theatre productions:

Brák – a monologue by Brynhildur

Gudjonsdóttir

Mr. Skallagrímsson – a monologue by

Benedikt Erlingsson

■ **Listasafn Árnesinga**

– LA Art Museum

May 18–July 20

Austurmörk 21, Hveragerði

Open daily, 12–18

www.listasafnamesinga.is

May 18–July 20

Exhibition of works on paper

produced by Magnús Kjartansson

(1949–2006) between 1982 and

1988. Curated by Jón Proppé. Part of

Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ **Suðsuðvestur**

Hafnargata 22, Keflavík

Sat–Sun 13–17:30

www.sudsudvestur.is

■ **Reykjanesbaer Art Museum**

Duushús, Duusgata 2-8, 230

Reykjanesbær

Open daily 13–17:30

www.reykjanesbaer.is

May 18–Aug 15

Wanwood

Reliefs, floor pieces and vertical

structures by Hannes Lárusson,

Guðjón Ketilsson, and Helgi Hjaltalín.

Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ **Vatnasafn / Library of Water**

Bókhöðustígur 17, 340 Stykkishólmur

www.libraryofwater.is

Open daily from 11–17.

Permanent exhibition:

Roni Horn installation. She has

replaced stacks of books with glass

columns containing water gathered

from Iceland's glaciers and glacial

ivers.

■ **Jónas Viðar Gallery**

Kaupvangsstræti 12, Akureyri

Fri–Sat 13–18

www.jvs.is/jvgallery.htm

■ **Akureyri Art Museum**

Kaupvangsstræti 12, Akureyri

Tue–Sun 12–17

www.listasafn.akureyri.is

May 17–June 29

Facing China

Paintings and sculptures by nine

prominent contemporary Chinese

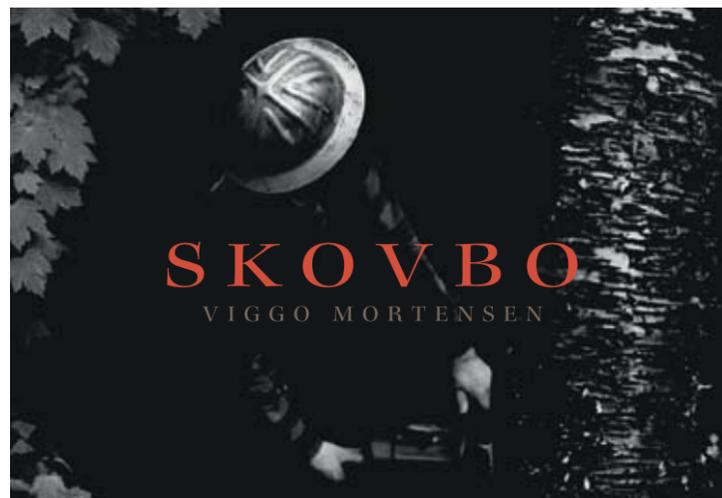
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31 May – 31 August 2008



LJÓSMYNDASAFN REYKJAVÍKUR
Reykjavík Museum of Photography



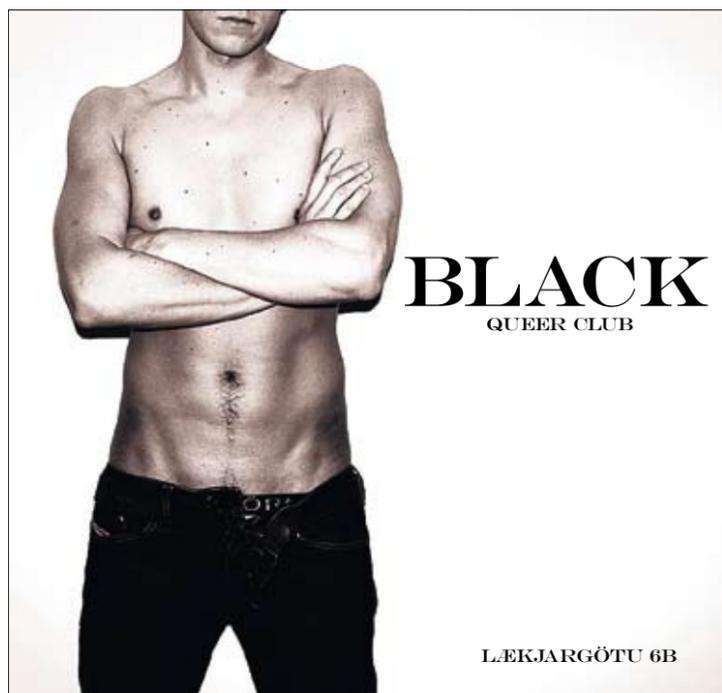
Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor · 101 Reykjavík · Tel. 563 1790 · photomuseum@reykjavik.is · www.photomuseum.is
Opening hours 12–19 mon–fri, 13–17 weekends · ADMISSION FREE

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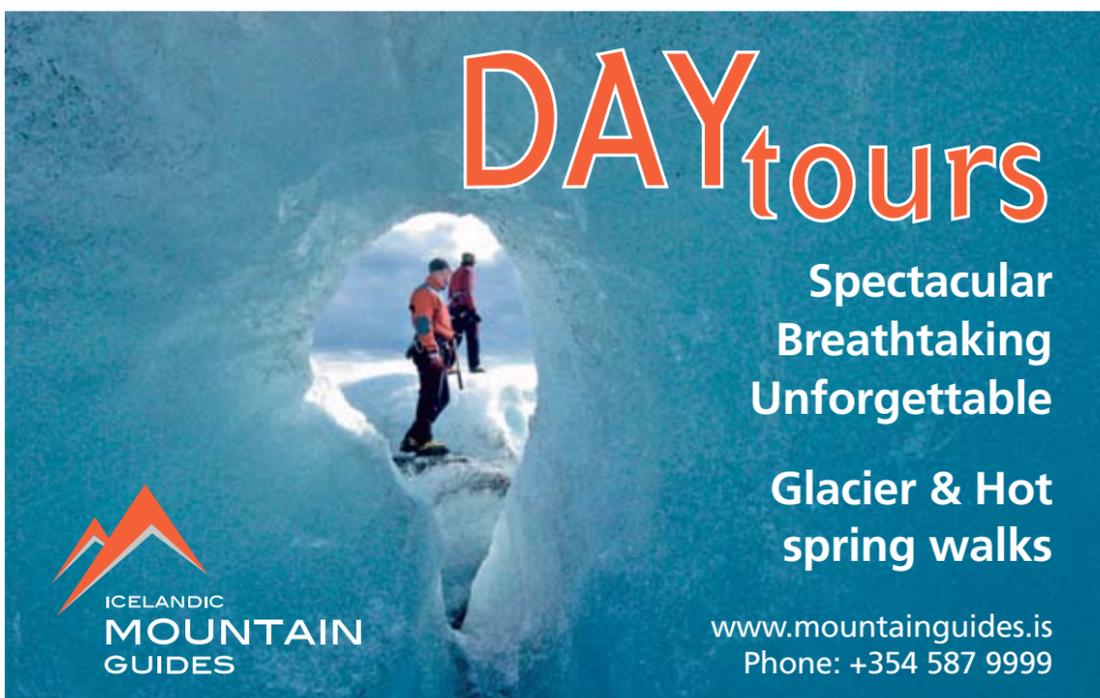
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Music



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Reykjavík 871 ±2 Landnámssýningin The Settlement Exhibition

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101 Reykjavík / Iceland
Phone +(354) 411 6370
www.reykjavikmuseum.is

Reykjavík City Museum

Experience Viking-Age Reykjavík at the new Settlement Exhibition. The focus of the exhibition is an excavated longhouse site which dates from the 10th century AD. It includes relics of human habitation from about 871, the oldest such site found in Iceland.

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

Kodd'í sleik, ekki stríðsleik

If there's one thing that is guaranteed to attract the younger 101-generation, it's anti-war concerts, markets, protests, or anything else that can be attached with an anti-war prefix. On May 23, the idealistic youngsters of the Left-Green Political Party (UVG) youth movement, host a concert at Organ with the slogan "Kodd'í sleik ekki stríðsleik", which can roughly be translated as "let's French kiss, but let's not take part in

any warfare", catchy, aye? The line-up is bulletproof and artists vary from the Keflavík punk band Æla to the playful group of younglings in <3 Svanhvít. So let's encourage our spirits, put up our Palestinian scarves and enjoy the fine performances offered by UVG.

Friday, May 23
Organ, Hafnarstræti 1-3



artists. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ **DaLí Gallery**
Brekkgata 9, Akureyri
Mon-Sat 14-18
www.daligallery.blogspot.com

■ **GalleriBOX**
Kaupvangstræti 10, Akureyri
www.galleribox.blogspot.com

■ **Kunstraum Wohnraum (Home gallery)**
Ásabyggð 2, Akureyri
Open by appointment. Tel.: 462 3744
Mar 16-June 22
Ragnar Kjartansson exhibition

■ **Safnasafnið -Icelandic Folk Art Museum**
Svalbarðsströnd, 601 Akureyri
Open 9-18
www.safnasafnid.is

May 17-July 8
Branch Collection
Exhibition by Hildigunnur Birgisdóttir, Bjarki Bragason and Anna Líndal. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ **Eiðar - Art Centre**
Fljótsdalshérað
Open by appointment
May 17-July 1

Journey
Works by visual artists Hrafnkell Sigurðsson and Lennart Alvés. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ **Sláturhúsið - Culture Centre**
Kaupvangur, 700 Egilsstaðir
Open Mon to Fri 14-18, Sat and Sun 14-16
www.slaturhusid.is

May 17-May 31
Works by visual artists Paul Harflett. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ **Skaffell**
Austurvegur 42, Seyðisfjörður
www.skaffell.is
May 17-June 22

Journey
A collaboration between 3 art centres, realised especially for the Reykjavík Art Festival.

Films

■ 21
Háskólabíó, Regnboginn

■ **Brúðguminn**
Háskólabíó, Regnboginn

■ **Bubbi Byggir í villta vestrinu (Bob the Builder: Built to be Wild)**
Smárabíó

■ **Definitely Maybe**
Selfossbíó

■ **Drillbit Taylor**
Sambíó Álfabakki

■ **Forgetting Sarah Marshall**
Laugarásbíó

■ **Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay**
Laugarásbíó, Regnboginn

■ **Horton (Hears a Who!)**
Háskólabíó, Smárabíó

■ **In the Valley of Elah**
Sambíó Álfabakki

■ **Indiana Jones IV**
Háskólabíó, Laugarásbíó, Nýja-bíó, Regnboginn, Sambíó Álfabakki, Sambíó Kringlan, Smárabíó

■ **Iron Man**
Nýja-bíó, Sambíó Álfabakki, Sambíó Kringlan, Selfossbíó, Smárabíó

■ **Kickin It Old Skool**
Regnboginn

■ **Love in the time of Cholera**
Nýja-bíó, Sambíó Álfabakki, Sambíó Kringlan, Selfossbíó

■ **Made of Honor**
Sambíó Álfabakki, Smárabíó

■ **Never Back Down**
Sambíó Álfabakki, Sambíó Kringlan

■ **Nim's Island**
Nýja-bíó, Sambíó Álfabakki, Sambíó Kringlan, Selfossbíó

■ **Over Her Dead Body**
Nýja-bíó

■ **Prom Night**
Háskólabíó, Smárabíó

■ **Sex and the City**
Háskólabíó, Smárabíó

■ **Shine a Light**
Sambíó Kringlan, Selfossbíó

■ **Street Kings**
Háskólabíó, Nýja-bíó

■ **Superhero Movie**
Smárabíó

■ **The Hunting Party**
Nýja-bíó, Sambíó Álfabakki, Sambíó Kringlan

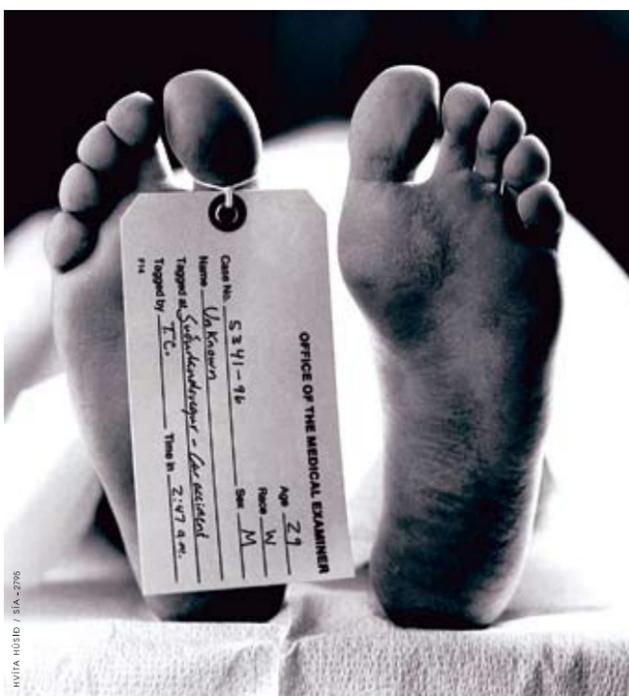
■ **The Ruins**
Selfossbíó

■ **The Spiderwick Chronicles**
Laugarásbíó

■ **U2 3D**
Sambíó Álfabakki, Sambíó Kringlan

■ **What Happens in Vegas**
Háskólabíó, Laugarásbíó, Smárabíó

■ **Flawless (May 23)**




BOSTON

LAUGAVEGI 28B



Music

Ben Frost at Kaffibarinn

Australian born composer Ben Frost has been a fixture on the Icelandic music scene ever since relocating here to work with Valgeir Sigurðsson on the Bedroom Community label a few years back. His noisy-drone opuses are often challenging and always entertaining, especially in a live setting. Last year at Hallgrímskirkja, Ben premiered Music for Six Guitars, a specially commissioned composition that stretches over

40 minutes and is built around the furious discipline of six electrified guitarists, orchestrated and processed live by him. This Friday, Ben will perform the piece in the intimate settings of Kaffibarinn – and you should not miss it.

Friday, May 23, 21:30

Kaffibarinn, Bergstaðastræti 1

■ **The Forbidden Kingdom** (May 30)

■ **Sex and the City** (May 30)

■ **Zohan** (June 4)

■ **Speed Racer** (June 6)

■ **Deception** (June 6)

reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping Gospel choir on tour of USA, trying to save Christmas from the imminent Shopocalypse. The screening starts at 20:00 and admission is free.

Kaffi Hljómalind, Laugavegur 23

■ **EURES IS Mobility Conference**, May 30

Increased demand and competition for the highly skilled labour force is becoming more and more evident on the EEA labour market and is likely to become one of its largest challenges in the next decades. The Intercultural centre, in co-operation with EURES in Iceland, Denmark, Norway and Ireland and Capacent Search and Selection, holds a one day seminar in Keflavik on the situation for highly skilled mobile labourers. The seminar runs from 9:00 until 17:00 and includes 11 presentations from various international experts. Check www.ahus.is for info and full program.

Flughotel Icelandair Hotel, Keflavik

■ **Lost and found auction** May 31

The annual lost and found auction held by the Reykjavik police department will take place at Suðurhraun 3 Garðabæ, Saturday 31. The amount of discarded items the police pick up is staggering. Hundreds of bicycles are up for grabs to the highest bidder, often going for ridiculously low amounts. Those badly in need of fake dentures, prescription glasses or hearing aids might also find something to their liking. The inventory is truly puzzling and the auction lively and fun.

Krókur, Suðurhraun 3, Garðabæ

■ **Open House at the Intercultural Centre**

Every Friday night

The Intercultural Centre plays host to intercultural meetings every Friday at 22:00. The concept is to bring foreigners and Icelanders together, and to give them the opportunity to get to know other people and to share experiences. The meetings feature plenty of activities that allow attendees to stir things up into a nice cultural broth. Entrance is free.

The Intercultural Centre, Hverfisgata 18

Movie Theatres

■ **Regnboginn**, Hverfisgata 54

101 Reykjavík, Tel. 551-9000

■ **Háskólabíó**, Hagatorg

107 Reykjavík, Tel. 525-5400

■ **Laugarásbíó**, Laugarás

104 Reykjavík, Tel. 565-0118

■ **Smárabíó**, Smáralind

201 Kópavogur, Tel. 564-0000

■ **Sambíóin**, Álfabakki 8

109 Reykjavík, Tel. 575-8900

■ **Sambíóin**, Kringlan 4-12

103 Reykjavík, Tel. 575-8900

■ **Sambíóin Akureyri**, Ráðhústorg

600 Akureyri, Tel. 461-4666

■ **Nýja-Bíó**, Hafnargata 33

230 Reykjanesbær, Tel. 421-1170

■ **Selfossbíó**, Eyrarvegur 2

800 Selfoss, Tel. 482-3007

Events

■ **Valkyrie festival – women empowering workshops**

May 23–May 25

Youth centre Hitt-Húsið holds a 3 day festival for females aged from 15-25, aimed at celebrating the culture of young women and to work against their own negative stereotypes. On May 23 at 18 there will be an opening party and the weekend schedule introduced and registrations for the workshops will open. The workshops offer a range from yoga lessons to the mysteries of DJ-ing. A total of 12 workshops will be available, with half of them open with no need to register prior. Go girls!

Hitt Húsið, Pósthússtræti 3-5

■ **What Would Jesus Buy – screening**

May 28

Activist group Andspyrna shows radical movies every Wednesday night in May at Kaffi Hljómalind. On May 28 the documentary What Would Jesus Buy will be shown. The movie follows

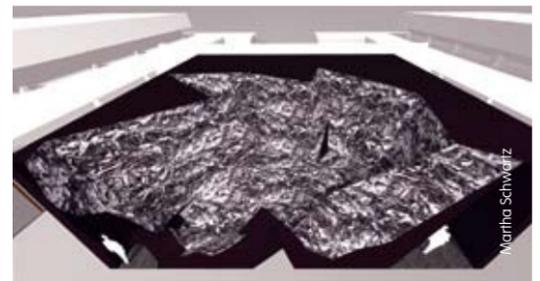
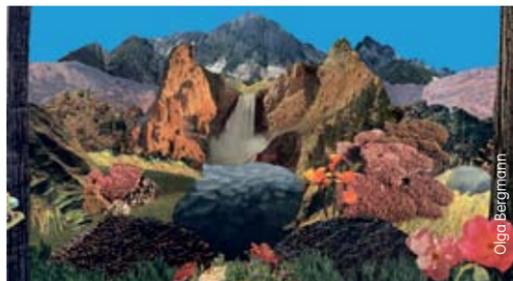
Listasafn Reykjavíkur
Reykjavik Art Museum



Hafnarhús
May 15 – August 24
Experiment Marathon
Reykjavik
Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist
and Olafur Eliasson

Roger Harris

Reykjavik Art Museum



Kjarvalsstaðir

May 18 – August 31

Dreams of the Sublime and Nowhere In Contemporary Icelandic Art

Curated by Æsa Sigurjónsdóttir

May 18 – July 20

Martha Schwartz – I Hate Nature – 'Aluminati'

Hafnarhús, Tryggvagata 17
Open daily 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Thursdays to 10 p.m.

May 18 – December 31

Jóhannes S. Kjarval

Kjarvalsstaðir, by Flókagata
Open daily 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

May 18 – August 31

Where am I?

Free admission.



www.artmuseum.is

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THE REYKJAVIK GRAPE VINE

1 EATING

Vor
Laugavegur 24

Vor's refreshing take on café-style dining is distinctive for its use of fresh ingredients and a health-conscious menu that emphasises French and Mediterranean cuisine. Fresh spring salad and carrot-ginger soup are excellent pick-me-ups on rainy days, and the coffee served is of the highest quality.

2 Jómfrúin
Lækjargata 4

If your stomach is aching for some traditional Danish smørrebrød with all the proper toppings, Jómfrúin is the place to go. Reasonably priced hearty dishes and a variety of lunch specials, Danish style of course, should satisfy anyone looking for a nice meal. Add to that a large Danish beer and a shot of Akvavit, and you have a cocktail that can't fail to impress.

3 Argentina Steakhouse
Barónstígur 11

True to its name, Argentina Steakhouse restaurant specialises in Argentinean steaks and has been cooking up juicy char-grilled steaks since 1989. The tender meat, excellent wines, generous portions and a selection of quality cognac, whiskey, liqueurs and cigars all add to its reputation as a place for fine dining in Reykjavík.

4 Icelandic Fish & Chips
Tryggvagata 8

This is not the regular fish'n'chips diner but a healthy restaurant using only organic vegetables, quality fish products and no wheat or white sugar in its kitchen. Deep-fried catch of the day served with oven baked potatoes and Skyronnes – a sauce made out of the fat-free milk product Skyr and flavoured with all sorts of spices – on the side is 1350 ISK.

5 Sægreifinn
Verbúð 8, Geirsgata

Located right next to the Reykjavík harbour, fish shop and restaurant Sægreifinn is truly like no other you'll experience in the country. The menu offers various fish dishes and a rich portion of the best lobster soup we've ever tasted. The good food and welcoming service make this place a must-try.

6 Við tjörnina
Templarasund 3

One of Reykjavík's classics, with a view over the pond and a menu dominated by traditional Icelandic dishes, this restaurant is just as popular among tourists as it is among Reykjavík's residents. The reindeer steak with port-wine sauce or the pickled herring and fermented shark served with Icelandic schnapps both come highly recommended.

7 Indian Mango
Frakkarstígur 12

Located on a quiet Laugavegur side street, Indian Mango has infused the Reykjavík restaurant scene with incredible delicacies originating in the rich food traditions of the Goa region in India, honed to perfection at Four Seasons during the owner's stint there as head chef. A local favourite, Indian Mango is known both for the quality of the food as well as the service.

8 Hornið
Hafnarstræti 15

This casual family-friendly Italian-style corner restaurant has been operating at the same location since 1979 and has become a steadfast part of the Icelandic dining-out tradition. Most famous for its pizzas and the generously stuffed calzone, the wholesome menu boasts all sorts of high-quality pasta dishes, as well as vegetarian and meat dishes, all easily affordable.

9 Sjávarkjallarinn
Aðalstræti 2

In an elegant setting, the Seafood Cellar chefs serve gourmet fusion-style dishes, where the emphasis is not only on the ocean's delights, but all sorts of tempting Asian-inspired dishes. The most fun is to order the exotic menu – an array of courses carefully selected by the chef – to share with your dining companions.

10 Hamborgarabúllan
Geirsgata 1

Frequently lauded by Iceland's hamburger aficionados as the best place to get a real hamburger in Reykjavík, 'Búllan' does indeed serve up some extra-tasty burgers that are sure to take the edge off any hangover. What makes it so good is hard to say, but liberal helpings of rare beef and the old-school basket you eat from contribute a lot to the experience.

11 Sushibarinn
Laugavegur 2

The Sushi Bar on Laugavegur has fast become the talk of the town among Reykjavík sushi-lovers, and for good reason as their rolls are among the best in the city. The whole atmosphere inside the small bar is a good blend of oriental tradition with the somewhat more familiar settings of the West.

12 Great Wall Restaurant
Vesturgata 6-8

This newly opened addition to the Reykjavík Chinese palate offers great service and a staggering 100-plus traditional Canton, Szechuan and Peking dishes, as well as a weekday lunch buffet. Specialties include the duck and the "magic hot plate."

13 Garðurinn
Klapparstígur 37

Ecstasy's Heart Garden, as Garðurinn is called in English, is a small, simple, friendly, family-operated vegetarian restaurant on Klapparstígur. The menu is no-nonsense, and consists of the ever-changing soup de jour and other daily specials. Open until 17:00, closed on Sundays.

14 Á næstu grösum
Laugavegur 20B

Many locals claim this to be the best vegetarian restaurant in town offering a menu with plenty of vegan and vegetarian options. Ask for the day's special or simply try the selection of three different courses. The Indian theme on Fridays is usually a hit and the sugar free banana cake is just one of the highly tempting desserts.

SPOT THIS: Icelandic Fish & Chips

Tryggvagata 8, 101 Reykjavík

This is not the regular fish'n'chips diner but a healthy restaurant using only organic vegetables, quality fish products and no wheat or white sugar in its kitchen. Deep-fried catch of the day served with oven baked potatoes and Skyronnes – a sauce made out of the fat-free milk product Skyr and flavoured with all sorts of spices – on the side is 1350 ISK.



15 DRINKING

Organ
Hafnarstræti 1-3

This stylish two-floor bar and concert venue presents a diverse range of concerts by local and international acts at least four times a week. The venue features established bands and young and emerging musicians. It can accommodate 300 people and has enough seats for weary concertgoers to rest between sets. Open until way past late on weekends.

16 Belly's
Hafnarstræti

A spacious pub, yet the complete opposite of bright and airy, Belly's deserves praise for having the cheapest bar-price around, selling a large beer for only 390 ISK. Attracting a mixture of students, sailors and anyone who doesn't want to drain the wallet, there are enough tables for everyone and TVs on every wall for all you sports enthusiasts out there.

17 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

Kaffibarinn is a popular coffee place on weekdays, especially among students and downtown workers who like to enjoy a beer after a busy day. On weekends, it becomes a very lively destination as its two floors fill up with late-night souls. With DJs playing live sets from Wednesday to Saturday the party doesn't start winding down until early morning.

18 Café Paris
Austurstræti 14

On a sunny day, Café Paris is one of the busiest outside cafés in the city centre, featuring fine food and attentive service. The stylish interiors, relaxing music and friendly evening atmosphere make it a cosy inside bar as well. DJs play soul and funk on weekends.

19 Café Cultura
Hverfisgata 18

Located inside the Intercultural Centre, Cultura is a restaurant/bar with a cosmopolitan feel, hosting an array of events and various theme nights such as Salsa lessons, tango nights and fusion parties. The menu features all sorts of international dishes like Thai soup, Spanish tapas, fajitas and falafel as well as bistro regulars such as sandwiches and salads.

20 Kaffi Amsterdam
Hafnarstræti 5

Kaffi Amsterdam is a 101 tavern which seems to have been in business forever, as some of their decorations bear witness to. Recently reinvented as a live venue, weekends see some of Reykjavík's most rockin' bands strap on their guitars for some... rockin'. The beer's also cheap and you will get exposed to some 'colourful' characters.

21 Hressi
Austurstræti

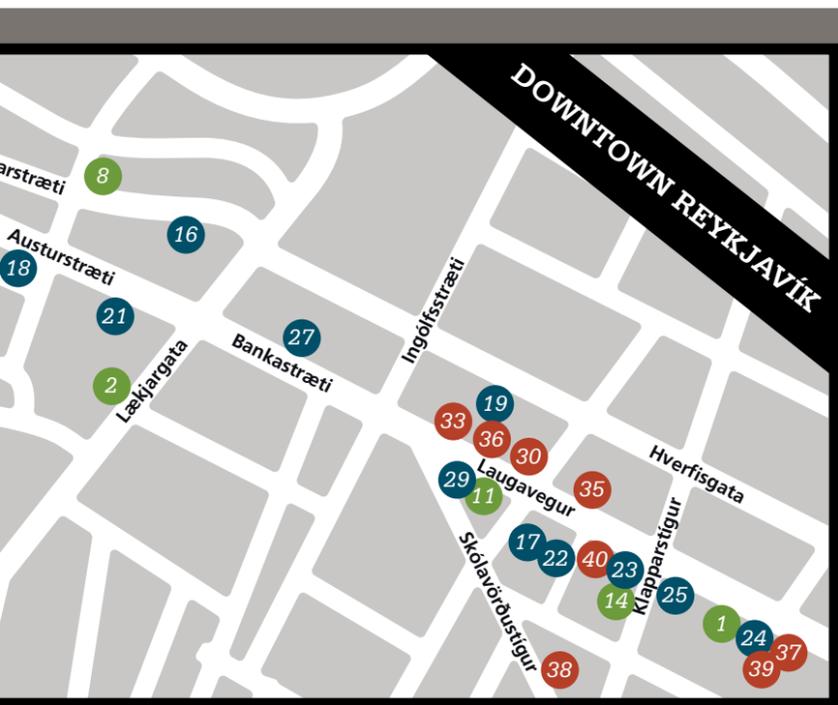
A spacious neutral type of clientele where the menu specialties during the day and tab-beer are the norm. It becomes a somewhat popular weekend spot with a large amount of seats.

22 Vegamót
Vegamót

Nothing really beats a Vegamót with its dishes served until the fish of the day, dishes that attract usually packed during hours every day of the kitchen closes, Vegamót is a popular hangout for trekkers into a lively nightclub.

23 Óliveri
Laugavegur

If you like trendy parties like crazy to a lively glamour is all that counts on the dance floor, Óliveri is a nightclub for you. Fine dining, fine conditioning, fine brunch served during the day. Óliveri a recommended priced meals.



30 SHOPPING

Cintamani Laugavegur 11

Cintamani stocks quality Icelandic outdoor-gear and travel equipment, guaranteed to keep the whole family nice and warm in any type of weather. Here you'll find almost everything needed for your trip across the country and beyond, and you can book an adventure excursion on the spot.

37 Laugavegur 28 Laugavegur 28

Four separate stores under one roof, second-hand clothing and accessories store Elvis, Rokk og Rósir and the Smekkleysa record store. In addition, the new store, Pop, supplies smart stuff for the home. The collective offers all kinds of unique clothing and ornaments.



31 Glamúr Laugavegur 41

Vintage clothing shop Glamúr stocks everything from second-hand boots, capes, Japanese kimonos and fur coats to 60's style party-dresses and big leather belts. A selection of glamorous necklaces and accessories will help sharpen the look. They just love vintage!

38 12 Tónar Skólavörðustígur 15

Walk into 12 Tónar on any day of the week and the friendly folk inside will sit you down, fix you a nice cup of coffee, and tear open jewel cases just to show you the latest in Icelandic music. A record label as well a record store, this place features all the best local music and hosts concerts almost every Friday at 5 pm.



32 Húfur sem hlæja Skólavörðustígur 18

Loosely translated as 'Happy Smiling Headwear', the shop's owners have designed whacky hats and headwear since 1994 and stock a good selection of warm handmade products for women and children at the downtown store. Check out the elf hats if you want to look different.

39 Spúútník Laugavegur 32

Who knows why this hip second-hand clothing shop is named after the first Russian spaceship? Spúútník is the one of the best second-hand stores in the country, with great recycled designer clothes at a range of prices. Expect to see the cream of the bohemian crop shopping here.



33 Álafoss Shop Laugavegur 1

The downtown outlet store for the Álafoss factory – the famous makers of traditional Icelandic wool sweaters. Here one can also find woollen mittens, gloves, caps, scarves and blankets as well as other woollen goods.

40 Mál og menning Laugavegur 18

Mál og Menning book store occupies three levels on Laugavegur. It sells stationary, children's games, foreign newspapers, Icelandic books, CDs, postcards and souvenirs. You'll find the always-bustling café and the foreign book section on the top floor.



34 The Viking Hafnarstræti 3

The large tourist shop The Viking sells all sorts of souvenirs and smart gift items to bring back home. The selection includes postcards, outdoor clothing, teddy bears, maps, books, woollen sweaters and plastic Viking helmets as well as Viking statues and shot glasses.

41 Friða Frænka Vesturgata 3

This small boutique is a treasure trove overflowing with antique furniture and items to perk up your apartment. In every corner of the shop, you'll find some unique items, including lamps, pillows, gorgeous 60's sofas, tables, and a selection of vintage jewellery.



24 Boston Laugavegur 28b

At Boston, the casual atmosphere, stylish interiors, low-volume music and nice crowd create a laid-back vibe on any given day, ideal for early drinks and chitchats. The comfy two-floor bar provides plenty of seats and recently started serving great traditional Icelandic dishes to hungry regulars – try the 'kjötsúpa' (meat soup) and 'plokkskukur' (fish and potato dish).

27 B5 Bankastræti 5

By day, B5 is a chic little bistro with good food and a prime location on Laugavegur for people watching. By night, B5 is one of the most stylised bars in town, with a "whiskey room" resembling a buccaneer's jail, and another room reminiscent of a high-class Manhattan bar.

25 Barinn Laugavegur 22

Barinn is quite a popular hangout among Reykjavik party scenesters. Its three floors and equally many bars become quite crowded on weekends where its mix of dancing downstairs and chatting upstairs makes for a good night out. Though mostly a DJ bar, Barinn occasionally hosts live gigs and is always a fun party place.

28 Gaukurinn Tryggvagata 22

Also known as Gaukur á stöng, this is the oldest standing bar in Iceland. Gaukurinn is considered to be one of the rowdiest rock clubs in Reykjavik. This is the place to enjoy live music from upcoming bands (at a high volume) and some of the cheapest beer prices in town.

35 Blue Lagoon Store Laugavegur 15

The Blue Lagoon geothermal spa is a world famous healing spot as the water is rich with silica, minerals and algae, which are extremely good for the skin. The natural skin care products made from the geothermal seawaters active ingredients are sold at the downtown Blue Lagoon shop.

42 Dogma Laugavegur 32

Dogma offers street clothing with interesting prints. Hooded sweaters and shirts made by both Icelandic and foreign designers can be found, including the "How do you like Iceland?" shirt and band shirts from groups such as The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. You'll also find a Dogma stall in the Kringlan shopping mall.



26 Glaumbar Tryggvagata 12

Glaumbar follows in the American sports bar tradition as it boasts a humungous satellite television that broadcasts matches from across the globe. This is the place to be on the night of any big game. Glaumbar is also notorious in town for its late closing hours and loud music.

29 Kofi Tómasar frænda Laugavegur 2

With its basement location, Kofi Tómasar Frænda (Uncle Tom's Cabin) has the feel of a tucked-away alley café in London. During the day, the café has a relaxed feel with easy access to Laugavegur and Skólavörðustígur. At night, it becomes a happening and diverse bar.

36 Kisan Laugavegur 7

Kisan sells goods that you're unlikely to find elsewhere in Reykjavik. The selection is a mix of interesting items from around the world, such as high-street brands, children's clothing, household items, stationary, toys, DVDs and even books on Japanese street fashion.

43 Fígúra Skólavörðustígur 22a

The small designer shop Fígúra stocks a nice selection of fashionable Icelandic designer wear, from casual street-clothing to elegant party dresses. Fígúra is owned and run by six young designers in their early twenties who needed a place to sell their designs and promote other young designers in the meantime. The selection today features printed T-shirts, hair accessories, sweaters, leggings and more.



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Photos by GAS

Lava Restaurant

Once again I was put in the difficult position of reviewing a restaurant in Iceland as a vegetarian. The Lava restaurant at the Blue Lagoon, offers just two such options on its current menu, leaving it difficult for the reviewer to fairly judge its seafood focused à la carte menu. With this in mind, my dining companions ordered the Mussels poached in white wine with chilli, spinach and tomatoes from the appetizer menu and was quick to comment that the generous portion of tender and juicy mussels, complimented by the flavour of chilli, the freshness of the spinach and hearty broth in which it was served, was the best they had tasted. The Soup of the Day was of the creamy and particularly flavoursome mushroom variety.

After a satisfying appetizer, the Ravioli Stuffed with Spinach and Mushrooms in Walnut Sauce and Vegetable Risotto from the Salad and Pasta menu followed. The creamy ricotta, spinach and mushroom filled ravioli, which came in a distinctive and unusual tasting walnut sauce, while interesting did not win over my companion. For starters my friend felt that the dish contained too many flavours and that it would be better suited to the winter months. A new menu is, however, on its way. On the other hand, the tomatoey risotto consisting of bell peppers, red onion, olives, dried tomatoes and risotto in a tomato based sauce, was more of an appropriate option for the warmish weather. Though, again, this meal was a little overcompensated for in the flavour department.

Judging by the quality of the mussels, however, the reviewer would assume that the variety of seafood courses, the ingredients of which are sourced both locally and from New Zealand, would be of an excellent standard. In short, come here to sample some of Lava's seafood offerings as the restaurant does not, understandably, specialise in vegetarian cooking. Its location makes it an ideal spot for a meal, a couple of drinks in the upstairs bar and lounge area, or for a function. The modern design – a unique structure built against a rock face with views of both the lagoon and surrounding area – along with its warm service make for a relaxing and enjoyable dining experience after an afternoon in the lagoon.

Address:
Blue Lagoon
240 Grindavík
Tel.: 420 8806
Kitchen open until 21:00

Reviewed by
Zoë Robert

Af lífi og sál

Af lífi og sál is a brand new restaurant which opened its doors the first of this month. This bistro is located in a cosy port just off of Laugavegur. The restaurant itself is on two floors, with a balcony on the second floor overlooking the port. The interior is simple and relaxing and together with the enjoyable music creates a welcoming atmosphere.

The bistro offers a 'floating menu,' that is to say they have a different menu in the evening than in the daytime. During the daytime the emphasis is on lighter courses as well as lower prices. You'll find everything from soups and salads to Icelandic opened-faced sandwiches and crêpes. In the evening they switch to a sophisticated and more traditional menu, offering a variety of fish and meat courses as well as inviting appetizers and desirable desserts. The prices are a bit higher in the evening, but that only reflects the transformation from bistro to restaurant.

For starters, my companion for the evening and I decided to share two courses. First, we had grilled portobello mushrooms with a cheese mix, served with a salad and green and red peppers. The smooth and salty taste of the mushroom made this the perfect appetizer. Next we had the antipasto which came with a mixture of meats, cheese and olives. It was so good that neither of us really wanted to share it with the other.

As for the main course, I had the giant carp with lemon and caper butter, served with tomato salad and shrimp risotto. To be honest the carp was a bit salty for my taste and I've never really been a fan of risotto, so I was a bit disappointed with the course. My companion had the baccalo with tomato and toasted garlic, served with salad, olives and shrimp risotto. By his account the dish was tasty and fulfilling, and even further complimented by the excellent Pinot Grigio we had with it. Overall, the meal was very enjoyable despite the let down by the carp.

Throughout the evening we had excellent service from our attentive waitress and we left feeling full and satisfied. I promised myself to return later and try out the daytime menu.

Address:
Laugavegur 55b
Tel.: 551 1511

Reviewed by
Sverrir Hjálmarsson

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Grilled Halibut baked in garlic butter with salad and corn of the cob

Oven baked Bacalao in a tomato-basil sauce with capers and olive's

Hashed fish (Icelandic specialty) in mild curry sauce with rye bread

Fish and chips with sauce and salad

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Festival of the Sea – May 31 & June 1

Saturday, May 31

10:00 Ships' foghorns signal the opening of the Festival of the Sea.

10:00 – 16:00 Bizarre sea creatures – The Icelandic Marine Research Institute displays a collection of strange sea dwellers. *The central pier (Miðbakkj), Reykjavík Harbour.*

09:00 – 17:00 Whale watching
Whale watching tours – 4100 ISK for adults, 1800 ISK for children aged 7–15 and no charge for children under 7 accompanied by adults. Departures are at 9.00, 13.00 and 17.00. Each tour takes 3 hours.
Ægisgarður, Reykjavík Harbour.

11:00 – 17:00 Ferry trips to Viðey Special offer: 600 ISK for adults and 400 ISK for children. The ferry leaves Skarfabakki harbour at 11:15 and on an hourly basis after that. Return trips are 30 minutes past the hour. Further information available at www.videy.com. *Skarfabakki, Sundahöfn Harbour.*

10:00 – 12:00 Tourville – open ship. French anti-submarine frigate Tourville welcomes guests. *Skarfabakki, Sundahöfn Harbor.*

10:00 – 16:00 Open house at the Reykjavik sailing society Brokey *Ingólfsgarður, Reykjavík Harbour.*

10:00 – 17:00 Photography exhibition presented by Faxaflói Harbors. *The central pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.*

11:00 – 22:00 Sjávarbarinn. Author Einar Már Guðmundsson reads sea related poetry and artist Tolli paints paintings inspired by the reading. Special offer on seafood buffet: 1900 ISK. *Sjávarbarinn, Grandagarður 9.*

12:00 – 17:00 Fun and games (mini amusement park). Free admission. *The central pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.*

11:00 Sightseeing cruise to Akranes The Icelandic Association for Search and Rescue's schoolship, Sæbjörg, sails from the central pier (Miðbakkj) of Reykjavik Harbour to Akranes – waffles and coffee will be served on board. Admission is free but seating is limited. The ship will sail back at approximately 14:30. *The central pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.*

13:00 – 16:00 Food and culture at the central pier
Message in a bottle workshop: decorate your own bottle and send a bottled message. At 16:00 a ship will take all the bottles out to sea and release them.
– Reykjavik Whale watching introduces its operations and hosts an art competition for children.
– The Icelandic Diving society sells samples of grilled shellfish and other delicacies.
– Akureyri University displays images of underwater life in Eyjafjörður
– The zoo and family park: have you ever petted a crab? Live sea creatures you can examine and touch under the guidance of trained staff.
– Ladies from the Icelandic Search and Rescue Organisation sell waffles. *The Central Pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.*

13:00 The search and rescue organization, Ársæll, displays jeeps and other rescue equipment. *The Central Pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.*

13:00 Reykjavik-Maritime Museum in Grandagarður opens five new exhibitions. *Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Grandagarður 8.*

13:00 Óðinn – Open Ship. Icelandic Coast Guard ship Óðinn welcomes guests. The ship lies at the pier by the northern end of the Maritime Museum. *Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Grandagarður 8.*

13:30 Football match and rope pull between ship

crews in Laugardalur. *Próttarvöllur, Laugardalur.*
14:00 Festival of the Sea Sailor Song Competition in cooperation with Rás 2 radio. *Reykjavík Art Museum – Hafnarhús.*

14:00 Brokey sailing competition: Cannon fire signals the beginning of this event! *The central pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.*

14:00 Former crew members of Óðinn welcome museum guest aboard the ship. *Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Grandagarður 8.*

13:00 – 16:00 The DAS lottery reveals a state of the art Mercedes-Benz and a Harley Davidson Fatboy motorcycle; both can be won in the lottery. *The central pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.*

15:00 Energy Export in the Past. Solveig Nielsson introduces an exhibit dedicated to shark hunting and shark liver oil that was used to light up Copenhagen in the past. *Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Grandagarður 8.*

15:00 From Poverty to Prosperity. Guided tour of the exhibition. *Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Grandagarður 8.*

16:00 The Handy Hiddenman Guided tour of the exhibition. *Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Grandagarður 8.*

16:00 Message in a bottle. Ship sails to launch bottled messages. *The central pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.*

18:00 Festival of the Sea – Fish Fest
From Friday to Sunday seafood restaurants offer a special three-course seafood menu. Prices range from 4500 – 5500 ISK. *Participating restaurants are: Fjalakötturinn, Aðalstræti 16; Vin og skel, Laugavegur 24; Orange, Geirsgata 9; Við Tjörnina, Templarasund 3; Einar Ben, Veltusund 1; Hornið, Hafnarstræti 3; Þrír Frakkar, Baldursgata 14; Gullfoss, Pósthússtræti 2; Domo, Pínghóltsstræti 5.*

Sunday, June 1

08:00 Ships' celebratory flags drawn.

09:00 – 17:00 Whale watching
Special offers on whale watching tours – 4100 ISK for adults, 1800 ISK for children aged 7–15 and no charge for children under 7 accompanied by adults. Departures are at 9.00, 13.00 and 17.00. Each tour takes 3 hours. *Ægisgarður, Reykjavík Harbor.*

11:00-17:00 Ferry trips to Viðey Special offer: 600 ISK for adults and 400 ISK for children. The ferry leaves Skarfabakki harbour at 11:15 and on an hourly basis after that. Return trips are 30 minutes past the hour. Further information available at www.videy.com. *Skarfabakki, Sundahöfn Harbor.*

10:00 Memorial Service for the Lost Sailor.
The memorial service will honour the memory of the lives of sailors lost during World War II when 203 Icelandic sailors and passengers were lost at sea. *Fossvogskapella Chapel, Fossvogskirkjugarður.*

10:00 – 16:00 Bizarre sea creatures – The Icelandic Marine Research Institute displays a collection of strange sea dwellers. *The central pier (Miðbakkj), Reykjavík Harbour.*

10:00 – 12:00 Tourville – open ship. French anti-submarine frigate Tourville welcomes guests. *Skarfabakki, Sundahöfn Harbor.*

10:00 – 17:00 Photography exhibition presented by Faxaflói Harbors.

11:00 – 22:00 Sjávarbarinn. Author Einar Már Guðmundsson reads sea related poetry and artist Tolli paints paintings inspired by the reading. Spe-

cial offer on seafood buffet: 1900 ISK. *Sjávarbarinn, Grandagarður 9.*

11:00 Sailor's mass at the Dómkirkjan Cathedral. The memory of the Unknown Sailor will be honoured. *Dómkirkjan Cathedral, Templarasund*

11:00 Víkin-Maritime Museum and Óðinn Coast Guard Vessel open. *Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Grandagarði 8.*

12:00-17:00 Fun and games (mini amusement park). Free admission. *The central pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbor.*

13:00, 14:00, 15:00 Family sightseeing cruise.
The Icelandic Association for Search and Rescue's schoolship, Sæbjörg, offers a great chance to see the city from a totally different perspective. Admission is free but seating is limited. *The central pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.*

13:00 – 16:00 Food and culture at the central pier
Message in a bottle workshop: decorate your own bottle and send a message. At 16:00 you can join a short cruise from the central pier and send your message in a bottle into the unknown.

– Reykjavik Whale watching introduces its operations and hosts an art competition for children.

– The Icelandic Diving society sells samples of grilled shellfish and other delicacies.

– Akureyri University displays images of underwater life in Eyjafjörður

– The Zoo and Family Park: have you ever petted a crab? Live sea creatures you can examine and touch under the guidance of trained staff.

– Ladies from the Icelandic Search and Rescue Organisation sell waffles. *The Central Pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.*

13:00 The Search and Rescue Organization, Ársæll, displays jeeps and other rescue equipment. *The Central Pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.*

13:00 Painter Sigurjón Jóhannsson gives a guided tour of his exhibition on the second floor of the museum. *Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Grandagarði 8.*

14:00 – 15:00 Sailors' Day Opening Ceremony
Opening Speech: Guðmundur Hallvarðsson, Head of the Sailors' Day Committee. Sailors honoured. *Listasafn Reykjavíkur – Hafnarhús.*

13:00 – 16:00 The DAS lottery reveals a state of the art Mercedes-Benz and a Harley Davidson Fatboy motorcycle; both can be won in the lottery. *The central pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.*

14:00 Sigrún Magnúsdóttir welcomes guests and introduces five new exhibitions. *Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Grandagarði 8.*

10:00 – 12:00 Tourville – open ship. French anti-submarine frigate Tourville welcomes guests. *Skarfabakki-Sundahöfn Harbour.*

14:00 Helgi M. Sigurðsson gives a guided tour of the coast guard ship Óðinn. *Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Grandagarði 8.*

15:00 Pillow Fight
By Suðurbugt boat pier, Reykjavík Harbour.

15:00 Rowing competition.
The central pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.

15:00 Aerobatics over the Reykjavík Harbour.

15:00 Energy Export in the Past. Solveig Nielsson introduces an exhibition dedicated to shark hunting and shark liver oil that was used to light up Copenhagen in the past. *Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Grandagarði 8.*

14:00 The coast guard's helicopter demonstrates maritime rescue operations with the search and rescue organization Ársæll.

16:00 Award ceremony for the rowing competition. *The central pier (Miðbakkj) Reykjavík Harbour.*

16:00 Guided Tour of photographer Þorleifur Þorleifsson retrospective. *Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Grandagarði 8.*

18:00 Festival of the Sea – Fish Fest
From Friday to Sunday seafood restaurants offer a special three-course seafood menu. Prices range from 4500 – 5500 ISK. *Participating restaurants are: Fjalakötturinn, Aðalstræti 16; Vin og skel, Laugavegur 24; Orange, Geirsgata 9; Við Tjörnina, Templarasund 3; Einar Ben, Veltusund 1; Hornið, Hafnarstræti 3; Þrír Frakkar, Baldursgata 14; Gullfoss, Pósthússtræti 2; Domo, Pínghóltsstræti 5.*



Akranes Special – Saturday, May 31

A part of the Festival of the Sea program will take place in Akranes, a neighbouring town across the inlet from Reykjavik. A ferry will depart Reykjavik's central pier at 11:00 and sail to Akranes where guests can enjoy an action packed program, before sailing back at 14:30. The program includes an exhilarating bicycle competition, where competitors will not only compete for the fastest track time, but also try their hand at who can perform the longest jump of the pier into the ocean. Divers will

be on hand to fish up the bicycle from the bottom of the ocean for the next competitor. Other death defying competitive events include: cardboard box climbing, sea swimming in P.V.C. clothing, pillow fights above sea, ropepull between piers, in addition to monkey swings and rowing competitions. The program is free of charge and all guests will be treated to a barbeque hot dog and soda. There will be live music and festival atmosphere by the Akranes pier all day.



The Lodgers

On June 5, German photographer Anne Kathrin Greiner will open a photographic exhibition in Skotið at the Reykjavík Museum of Photography. Entitled 'The Lodgers', her exhibition is the result of several trips to the former American Military Air-Base in Keflavík she visited during a residency last year. She had the opportunity to explore the area and take photographs of the former base, which closed in 2006. That year, the US government decided to withdraw its forces in Iceland and close the base, which they had operated since 1951. By September 2006, all the facilities had been cleared out and the last military personnel had packed up and left, leaving the town and the many houses completely empty.

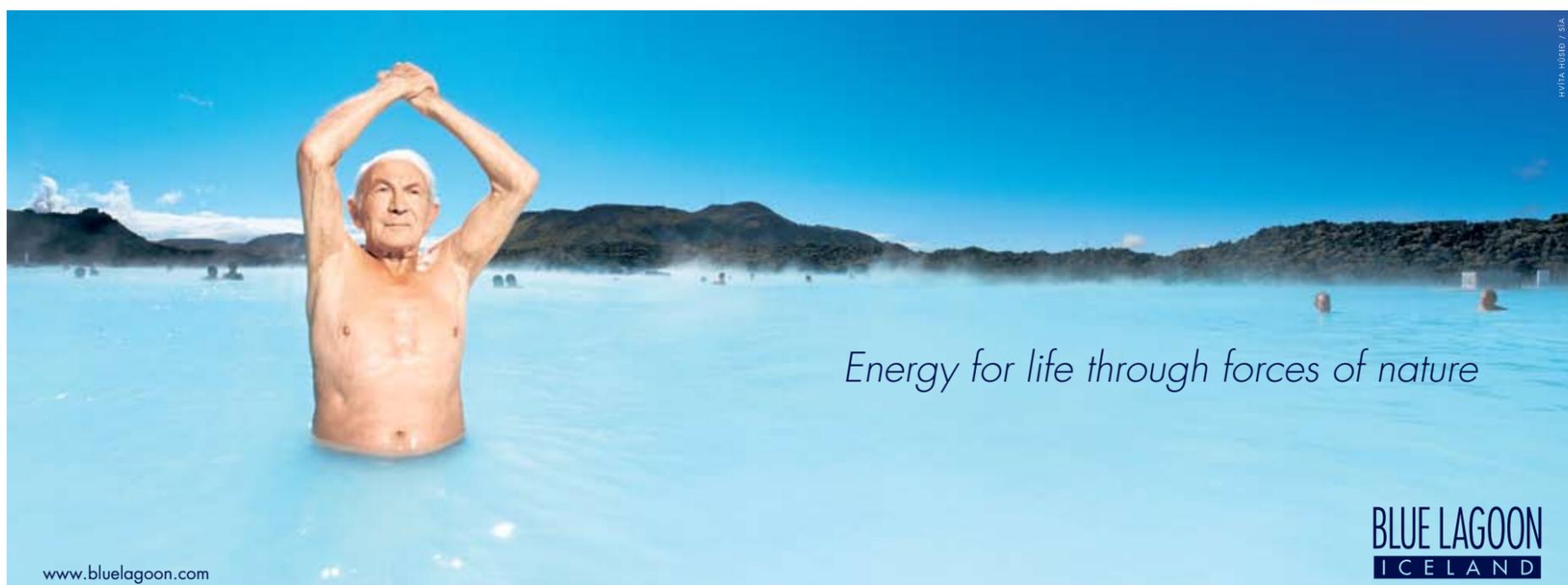
Greiner is interested in deserted spaces with complex history and asked why she decided to photograph the former base she explains: "Before I travelled to Iceland for the residency, I came across a picture of Icelandic soldiers in Afghanistan while doing research on the internet. This photograph struck me as odd. Partly because they looked so out of place and partly also due to the fact that I had read that Iceland had never attacked another nation. My subsequent reading about the North-Atlantic Treaty, the closure of the Keflavík base and people's reaction to this, led to my decision to visit and examine this place."

When she visited in June 2007 the army had already left, so she had easy access to the whole area and was able to photograph the interior and exterior space. She explains that although geo-political history greatly influences the reading of her new work, it is meant more as a metaphorical and contemplative piece. She says her work isn't an objective piece of documentation but rather a piece that "ruminates upon themes of loss, abandonment, the fears of the modern age, the paranoia that is provoked and encouraged as a form of control and the architecture of our environment as an extension of our individual and collective psyches." She furthermore explains she uses the notion of an abandoned military base to interpret such concerns, which she feels are both timeless and universal yet simultaneously very much about the current cultural and political miasma.

Asked if her exhibition is in some way a critique on warfare or the American army bases stationed across the world, she replies: "The title of the work (The Lodgers) certainly alludes to a concern with political issues. However, one can view America's military presence in Iceland from various angles and I feel that this ambiguity also forms part of my work. Whilst the idea of a lodger implies a somewhat 'unsteady' presence – someone who can come and leave whenever they decide to do so – there is also the issue of political changes and uncertainty and cultural influence"

She continues: "I feel that the work addresses the current climate and that The Lodgers developed from something culturally specific into a more metaphorical piece, using the notion of an abandoned military base as a vehicle for some of our most basic or timeless fears and apprehensions as well as those that are uniquely sprung from the twentieth century. Coupled with this, and as mentioned before, I feel that the presence of the American military in Iceland is a very complex issue and that my work is intended to raise and open a dialogue rather than to judge or point fingers."

Greiner's photographs will be displayed from June 5 until July 30 at the Reykjavík Museum of Photography, Tryggvagötu 15.

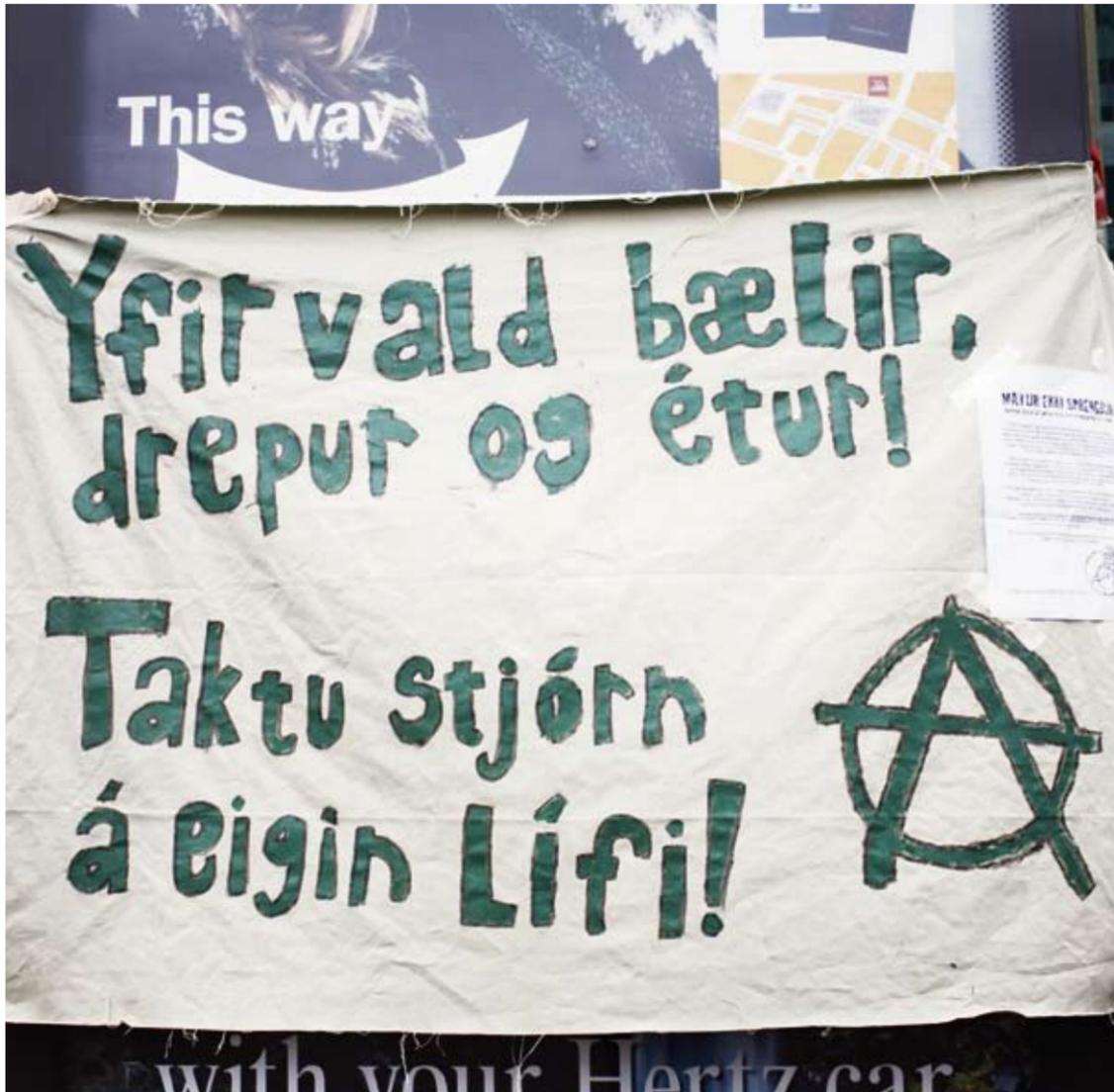


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Food not Private-Jets

“Although not many people are starving in Iceland, say compared to India, poverty exists here and it is hidden. We want to expose the problem.”

“We give away food for various reasons, for one it’s a direct stab at the wastefulness of modern society”, says local activist Sigurður Harðarson, a member of the group Food not Private Jets. Every Saturday at 14:00 this summer they serve hot vegetarian or vegan food to anyone requesting at Lækjartorg in the centre of town. The group is based on the Food not Bombs ideology.

The Food not Bombs saga started in Cambridge, USA, in the early eighties where anti-war activists handed out food to homeless people in order to draw attention to homelessness and poverty. The initiative has sprouted over 400 other groups around the world, all-working along the same guidelines. Each group adheres to the same basic principles, but is free to adjust its work to the needs of its local community.

Generally, the Food not Bombs ideology can be divided into three statements:

1. If corporations and governments spent as much

time and energy on feeding people as military expenditures, no one would go hungry.

2. There is enough food in the world to feed everyone, but waste as a by-product of capitalism and militarism ensures that people go hungry.

3. By sharing food in public places, Food not Bombs draws attention to poverty and homelessness, thereby bringing it into the public eye.

“This is also a lesson to our fellow citizens that it is ok to give. In a society where everything is for sale, that’s a valuable lesson to learn”, says Sigurður. The group gets food donated from stores and individuals, food that otherwise would have been thrown away. So far the group has given away meals for 3 consecutive Saturdays and the response has been positive. Over 50 people received a meal the first time, and a lot of curious people stopped by.

“Although not many people are starving in Iceland, say compared to India, poverty ex-

ists here and it is hidden. We want to expose the problem, start a debate, and hopefully, encourage others to do the same. This is also a symbolic act”, states Sigurður. In fact, various organisations around the city provide food donations and shelter for homeless and poverty stricken people. Those organisations work behind closed doors and seldom, if ever, advertise their work. On the contrary, the Food not Private-Jets group aims at as much exposure as possible by working in the public arena.

“We will continue as long as we have the means and energy. Hopefully other people will join and help us along”. So if you’d like to help, or just to eat a healthy free meal, stop by at Lækjartorg at 14:00 each Saturday.

Text by Páll Hilmarrson

Photos by GAS



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The official site of Reykjavik City is now available in English, Polish and Thai language, www.reykjavik.is

The department of welfare gives information and advice about social entitlements and provides support in cases of social or personal problems for registered residents in Reykjavik. For general information about operations in the City of Reykjavik and additional information on e.g. specific housing benefits, pre-school applications or financial aid, you should contact service centers in your own neighbourhood:

- **Vesturgarður**, service centre for the residents of Vesturbær district, Hjardarhagi 45-47, tel. 411-1700
- **Hlíðar**, service centre for the residents of the city centre and the district of Hlíðar, Skulagata 21, tel. 411-1600
- **Laugardalur and Háaleiti**, service centre for the residents of the districts of Laugardalur and Háaleiti, Sidumuli 39, tel. 411-1500
- **Breidholt**, service centre for the residents of Breidholt, Alfabakka 12, tel. 411-1300
- **Árbær and Grafarholt**, service centre for the residents of the districts of Árbær and Grafarholt, Bæjarhals 1, tel. 411-1200
- **Miðgarður**, service centre for the residents of Grafarvogur and Kjalarnes, Langarima 21, tel. 411-1400



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Sissa's School of Photography

Despite its picturesque landscape and all, obtaining the title "photographer" in Iceland has long been a rather strenuous process. Most Icelandic photographers are educated abroad, but in recent years Sissa's School of Photography has inspired a dawn of a new era in photography education where seasoned Icelandic pros pass their knowledge on to newcomers.

The alleged discharge, though, is only factual for about half the students, as Sissa now offers an 18 month extension to the previously one year study.

When Grapevine caught up with her she informed us that this was in fact the reason for the school's founding, and her students simply wouldn't forsake her. And so the brief seminar she began with in '97 has evolved into the only decent private photography school in Iceland. She explains that over these ten years, photography has morphed from being somewhat of an underrated industry in Iceland into being a respected form of art and the request for such education has increased.

When asked about the difference between other educational institutions of the same kind in Iceland, Sissa replies that her school is more focused on artistic creation than technical aspects. The school does not follow the old tradition where the same professional mentors students for up to two years. Instead, they have a wide selection of photographers who swap their disciples every now and then, which results in a more diverse student experience.

The only drawback to Sissa's school is its lack of degree offerings. But students graduate only with a certificate of completion. Árni, a graduating student of Sissa's, doesn't look at this as an obstacle but has great faith in Sissa's ability to obtain her permit to administrate degrees soon. He looks back on his year as a great experience and says all prejudices about the 'over the top tuition for not so excellent education' are based on nescience. Thirteen students are involved in this year's showcase and their number also represents their vast difference in intonations.

So, if you are into champagne, live jazz and interesting photos, show up at the opening in Hólmáslóð 6, May 31 at 15:00.

Clockwise from top left: Viktor Svan, Anna Margrét Óskarsdóttir, Guðfinna Magnúsdóttir, Edda Björnsdóttir, Leifur Wilberg.



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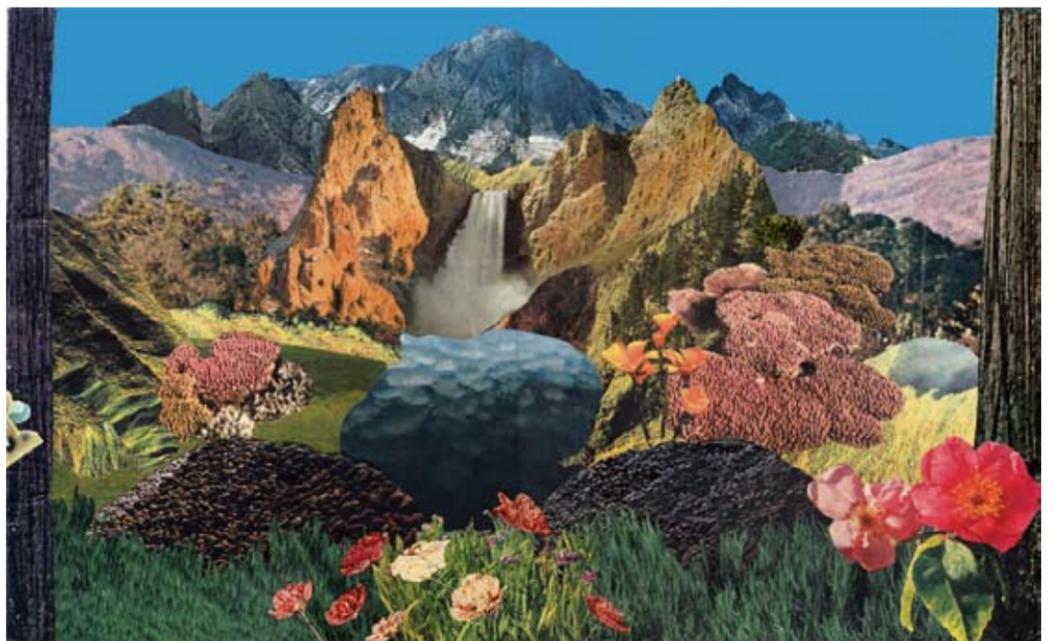
Dreams of the Sublime and Nowhere

From May 18th to August 31st, the Reykjavik Art Museum presents a thematic exhibition curated by Æsa Sigurjónsdóttir at Kjarvalsstaðir. The exhibition explores different ideas of nature and natural phenomena in photographs and video art, showing visions and interpretations of the “sublime” and “nowhere” through classical, melancholic, ironic or radically ecological images. Works from over 13 artists are on display, ranging from black and white photographs from the 1920s and 1930s, to modern multi-media installations. Presented concurrently with Dreams of the Sublime will be outdoor work by landscape architect and artist Martha Schwarz, who has an interest in urban projects and the exploration of new design expression in the landscape.

The exhibition is open everyday from 10:00 to 17:00 and admission is free.

Text by Páll Hilmarrson

Clockwise from top: Pétur Thomsen, Imported Landscape, Kárahjúkar, Iceland, 2006; Olga Bergmann, Panorama, 2001. 1/3. ; Daniel Magnússon, So fucking peaceful, 2001.



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