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Author Hallgrímur Helgason : Happy on the homefront,
worried about where the world is going

REYKJAVÍK 101

Goes to War

**THE MEDIA CONTROLS
OUR MINDS**
*but who should control
the media?*

**WE DON'T LIKE YOUR
KIND AROUND HERE:**
*Are immigrants welcome
in Iceland?*

**THE MOUNTAINS AND THE MOLEHILLS
OF THE WEST FJORDS:**
Moody meets Mugi.

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the REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

ISSUE ONE : MAY 28 - JUNE 10 , 2004

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The Reykjavík Grapevine crew

The Reykjavík Grapevine
 Hafnarstræti 15, 2nd floor
 Editors: 561-2323 / editor@grapevine.is
 Advertising: 562-1213 / ads@grapevine.is

Publisher: Hilmar Steinn Grétarsson
Editor: Valur Gunnarsson
Co-editor: Robert Jackson
Advertising directors: Hilmar Steinn & Jón Trausti
Listings editor: Jón Trausti Sigurðarson
Production manager: Oddur Óskar Kjartansson
Creative director: Hörður Kristbjörnsson
Photographer: Hörður Sveinsson
Distribution: Hrafn Þráinsson & Jóhann Páll Hreinsson
Cover photo by: Hörður Sveinsson
On cover: Hallgrímur Helgason

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LETTERS

the reykjavik grapevine

DIAMONDS IN THE MINE

We put out ads for writers in the months leading up to the first issue of the season, and got responses from many talented individuals, including a New Yorker who's run the gamut of shit jobs in Iceland, a tweed cap wearing Tom Waits fan, and a fire-dancing vegetarian from England. We look forward to printing more articles by them in the following issues. Then there's this, which we could not resist the temptation to print right away:

The League of extraordinary gentlemen

I read somewhere you never spend it badly with Sean Connery, true?
A board of seven against a conspirator, supported by special powres: a vampire, Dr Jackill, Dorian Gray, The invisible man...
A mixture of legebnd and modern mythology for a novel set worldwide, amazing scenarios and interiors, the right dosage of special effect and wonder machine back in time.
The movie flow up and down between humor and thrill action and suspense.
Nice adventure, would not say a masterpiece, would not say i did not enjoy, did you?
(sic, sic and sic)

Augusto Parolini

If brevity is indeed the essence of wit, then this must count as one of the greatest ever movie reviews. He captures perfectly the style of the film, moving back and forth between the mythological and the nonsensical, even leaving room for the reader to come to his own conclusion. Many thanks, Augusto. Sorry to say all positions have been filled, but we wish you lots of luck on your writing career.

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Ab, getting your PhD as well as a whale-sized penis while doing nothing but smoking cheap cigarettes and watching free porn. If only it were true. But the Internet is used not only by pornographers and cigarette salespeople. Whale protectionists have also gone online to save their animal of choice. Here's a brief excerpt from a letter sent to our graphics designer (translation by Grapevine):



"There are no letters in the mailbox/There are no grapes upon your vine" quoth Cohen. Things have been slow on the letters front lately. Perhaps the absence of Grapevine since last August has something to do with this. However, this being the age of information, there's no lack of letters in the mailbox:

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Dear recipient

I assume that it is rather unusual for you to receive letters of this nature, but I nonetheless hope you will give yourself time to read what is written herein...

I like traveling very much and have heard about the unique nature of Iceland...On the other hand I cannot come to Iceland...I want to come to Iceland to experience the nature of the country but not see it destroyed. Last year whale watching in Iceland created 1,6 billion krónur in revenue in the year 2002 and the travel industry as a whole created 37 billion in revenue that same year. Last year the value of whale products was around 100 million krónur, assuming all whale meat was sold. I am a member of Greenpeace and here in Germany there are around 500.000 registered members. This letter is sent to you personally from Greenpeace members such as me to regular Icelanders such as you to explain our views in a personal and more human way than can be done through advertising and television debates. Your name and address was on a list that was retrieved from the National Register of Iceland.

So, is Greenpeace right? Will whaling kill of tourism in Iceland? Or won't it have an impact at all? The Greenpeace ship Esperanza is expected here in June to open up further debate. Will Icelanders listen? Is Greenpeace right to contact residents individually? Feel free to comment about this or anything else at:
letters@grapevine.is

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EDITORIAL

THE PETER PAN GENERATION

by Valur Gunnarsson

So, to quote a phrase, "We're back". We'd like to say "bigger and better than ever", but it's the same length, the same format, and as for quality, we leave that up to you, dear reader, to decide. We'll just state the obvious, which is to say: We're back.

In the meantime, leaving the readership in the hands of the perpetually feuding giants of media, members of Grapevine have done as follows: Publisher Hilmar Steinn Grétarsson started his business studies at the University of Reykjavík, so he should by now know how to run a paper in theory as well practice. Oddur Óskar Kjartansson has been busy studying electrical engineering, no doubt secretly designing robots in an attempt to make the rest of the staff superfluous. Our graphic designer Hördur Kristbjörnsson, now titled art director as compensation for continued absence of payment for his work, has been studying at the Academy of Arts, among other projects. The merciless marketer Jón Trausti has been leading strangely parallel lives with your editor. We both wound up working for supermarket and media conglomerate Baugur, he as a warehouseworker for Aðföng and me as a journalist for DV. No matter what you do, you always wind up getting your money from the Man. He then resigned to become a bartender at the rock bar 11, his career there being documented, for some reason, in the pages of DV. Media coverage of his bartending career then came to an abrupt halt as I resigned all ranks and privileges as art correspondent for said publication, and went off to Finland to write a book, subsequently winding up in Lapland far above the Arctic Circle. In between our day jobs, we were both members of punk rock band Ríkið, railing against said Man (or Men, as the case might be).

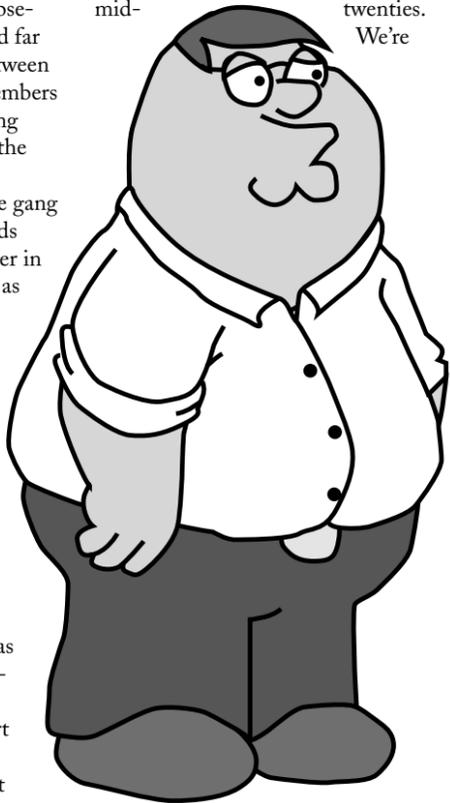
One member of the Grapevine gang has sadly departed. Being hands down the prettiest staff member in everyone else's opinion as well as the only female, Aldís has left us to complete her photography studies in Denmark. She will be missed and we wish her the best of luck. Hopefully we'll be able to see some of her postgraduate work in guest slots here before too long.

However, on an up note, we have two new fulltimers. Hördur, namesake of our arts director and will no doubt be as unfortunate with his pay situation, is our new photographer. Also new on the staff is Robert Jackson, our resident Grand Old Man who contributed last

year, and, despite knowing of our wage policy, seems to like what we're doing. His functions are to write, co-edit and make your editor (at 27 until now the oldest staff member) feel younger. Also onboard is Paul Fontaine-Nikolov, an American expat who fled the deterioration of human rights in his native US and is slowly realizing that not all is well here in the promised land. He'll be doing our proofreading as well as contributing articles. Along with the above, a number of talented young writers destined for poverty will be contributing articles. There has, however, been a marked change in our wage policy. Before we paid nothing. Now we pay next to nothing. Anyone interested can submit material to editor@grapevine.is

Do we want to stay forever young?

A friend of mine was discussing the new He-Man cartoon the other day, as he had been watching it that very morning. One of the guys sitting there then pointed out that when his old man was our age, he himself was six years old and would have been very surprised to come into the living room to see his dad watching cartoons. People back then had grown up by their mid-twenties. We're



watching cartoons and playing computer games into our thirties and perhaps beyond.

It is true that most of the best television programs in the past ten years have been cartoons. Shows such as The Simpsons, South Park, Family Guy and Duckman have offered biting political satire as well as laughs, whereas most live action programs offer nothing but predictable mistaken identity gags and various combinations of beautiful people attempting to sleep with one another. It's the cartoons with their caricatures that often seem to offer a more realistic view of the world. That aside, one wonders whether the legions of sex-starved Trekkies and Star Wars fans still collecting the action figures they never had as kids are really enjoying it that much. The other day I was eating a hamburger on my way to see a Saturday afternoon screening in Smáralind mall, and it dawned on me that this might not, in fact, be the best way to spend an afternoon. Hamburgers and fries, apart from ruining your appearance, clogging your arteries and putting you in an early grave, don't even taste that good. I remember when I was eight, a burger and a movie seemed like the nearest thing to heaven. Is this perhaps the reason why young adults today often seem to cling to their childhood interests? Not because they actually still enjoy them, but because, in the absence of anything better, it reminds them of something they used to like? We were conditioned by McDonalds to associate hamburgers with receiving toys, and hence people still feel a certain warmth inside when eating a not-too-good burger under a clown's

sinister smile.

When we escaped parental supervision in our eating habits, we wound up having junk food every day, just like we always said we would. The results were obvious. Children under the age of five in Iceland are now as obese as those in America. To be fair to McDonalds and other fast food chains responsible for much of the problem, they are now finally offering less fattening alternatives, such as fruit instead of fries. Hopefully the obesity epidemic in the West has reached its peak. In any case, it's obvious something needs to be done. As for our clinging to childhood, in our defense it must be said that our parents' generation grew up with the illusion that living standards would keep on rising, as they did constantly from the end of World War II until the oil crisis of the 70s. They even felt confident enough to rebel against them, at least for a while. These days, despite an ever-increasing flow of overpriced gadgets, the young today have to contend with mass unemployment as a seemingly permanent factor, pollution caused by the profit-making of previous generations, constant wars being fought over dwindling supplies of oil and an increasing number of aging people about to leave the employment market. Is it any wonder we don't want to grow up? Isn't it better to, much like Peter Pan, cling to childhood as long as we possibly can. Which begs the question: Was it really ever that good to begin with?



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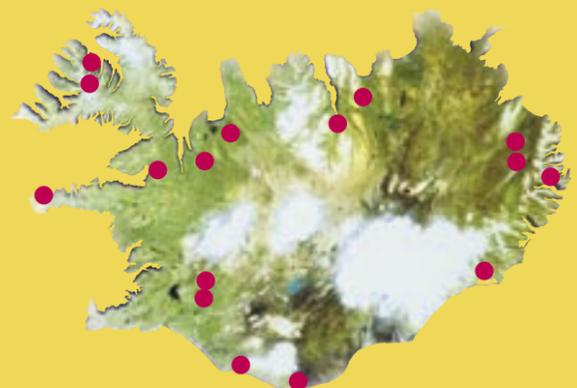
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THE MEDIA CONTROLS OUR MINDS

by Robert Jackson

But who should control the media

A word of advice for anyone visiting Iceland: Don't phone a home here between 6.30 and 7.30pm. This is the hour when families are clustered around their sets, the time when old folks in their homes are wheeled into the TV rooms and young babies are propped up in their prams to make those early steps in what will become a lifelong obsession. Meanwhile, the telephone exchanges fall silent, tumbleweed rolls down Laugavegur and life comes to a standstill – Icelanders are watching... The News.

Picture it: Out of a population of two hundred and eighty odd thousand souls, living in approximately one hundred and ten thousand households - 98% of which have televisions - a staggering 70% of these households will be watching television between six thirty and seven thirty each evening. The whole of a nation glued to their sets, and all for the News.

September 11th and the Death of Diana every day

This 70% figure needs further amplification. The percentage is five times more than the comparative viewing figures in the United Kingdom and approaching ten times that of the United States. In order to attract similar ratings, these broadcasters would need September 11th and the Death of Diana to happen on the same day, every day. They might then reach the same proportion of households, but only just.

It's not hard to put a finger on where the nation's love affair with The News stems from. RUV, like many national broadcasters, was created in the age of radio nearly 75 years ago - in those times there was one broadcaster with one channel. In Great Britain we had the BBC; in Iceland they had Ríkisútvarpið - literally, "State Radio".

RUV and BBC took their roles seriously as the programmes they were broadcasting developed almost universal coverage and appeal, and with this came the burden of responsibility and accountability for broadcasters. In Britain, Lord Reith,

who was responsible for creating the BBC's Charter, devised the term Inform, Educate and Entertain. Tenets which were adopted by broadcasters around the world, and nowhere more so than here in Iceland.

It became clear that the bedrock of all broadcasting and programming would be the news. The family was assembled, a blanket was put over the parrot's cage and everyone sat down to listen. This was a scene that was replicated in millions of households throughout the world.

"Narrow" casting replaces broadcasting

Turn the clock forward nearly seventy-five years. The radio has been replaced by television as the main means of receiving and there are multiple channels available to everyone, even in the most isolated communities. The concept of public service broadcasting has been stood on its head; with commercial operators who have a completely different set of rules and priorities now competing for viewers, state broadcasters can no longer take their universal appeal for granted.

Now the audience has the power to choose what it wants. In parts of some European countries the advent of digital broadcasting is so advanced that each household can now become their own television station. Selecting only the programming they want to watch, and only when they want to watch it.

'Broad' casting is fast becoming a



thing of the past - 'Narrow' casting is the way ahead. There has been a democratising of television that could never have been envisaged all those years ago. While television stations hunt for viewers and compete for advertisers, 'Entertain, Entertain, Entertain' are becoming the tenets held by contemporary broadcasters and Lord Reith is most probably revolving in his grave.

Digital television is the way ahead and it will provide viewers with more choice than is currently imaginable. At its best, homes will be able to select the best plays, documentaries, films, sport, news and debates and have them beamed into their homes at whatever time they want. At its worst, people will be glued to around the clock pornography, reality shows and mindless action.

Ambulance chasing for adverts

A by-product of this democratisation could be the abandonment of Public Service Broadcasting as we know it today, and as governments find it harder to justify license fees, state broadcasting will become a thing of the past.

Some will argue that this will be democracy and free markets working at their best. Viewers should be able to watch what they want, when they want, without a 'nanny' state inter-

vening. We now have more access to news outlets than ever before. But are we getting more reliable news? Editors have repeatedly claimed their independence from political and economic interests and stated that the media does not set agendas but only mirror the opinions of the day. But global newsgathering is an expensive business and it is the advertisers who pay the bills.

Increasingly the competition to get to the story first and provide the most attention grabbing pictures has undermined basic rules of sound investigative reporting. 'Ambulance Chasing' may seem too strong a word, but there are times when viewing CNN, SKY and FOX it appears that is what we are watching. If ratings figures begin to drop then there is commercial pressure on News editors to find stories or methods of reporting that will put them back on track, otherwise advertisers may lose interest.

Perhaps the price we will pay for the freedom of choice that the new digital technology will bring will be for News to be relegated to just part of the 'entertainment' that is offered to viewers. As viewers we have now not only to look at the news, but also look closely at what interests lie behind the reporting.

Reporting to "M"

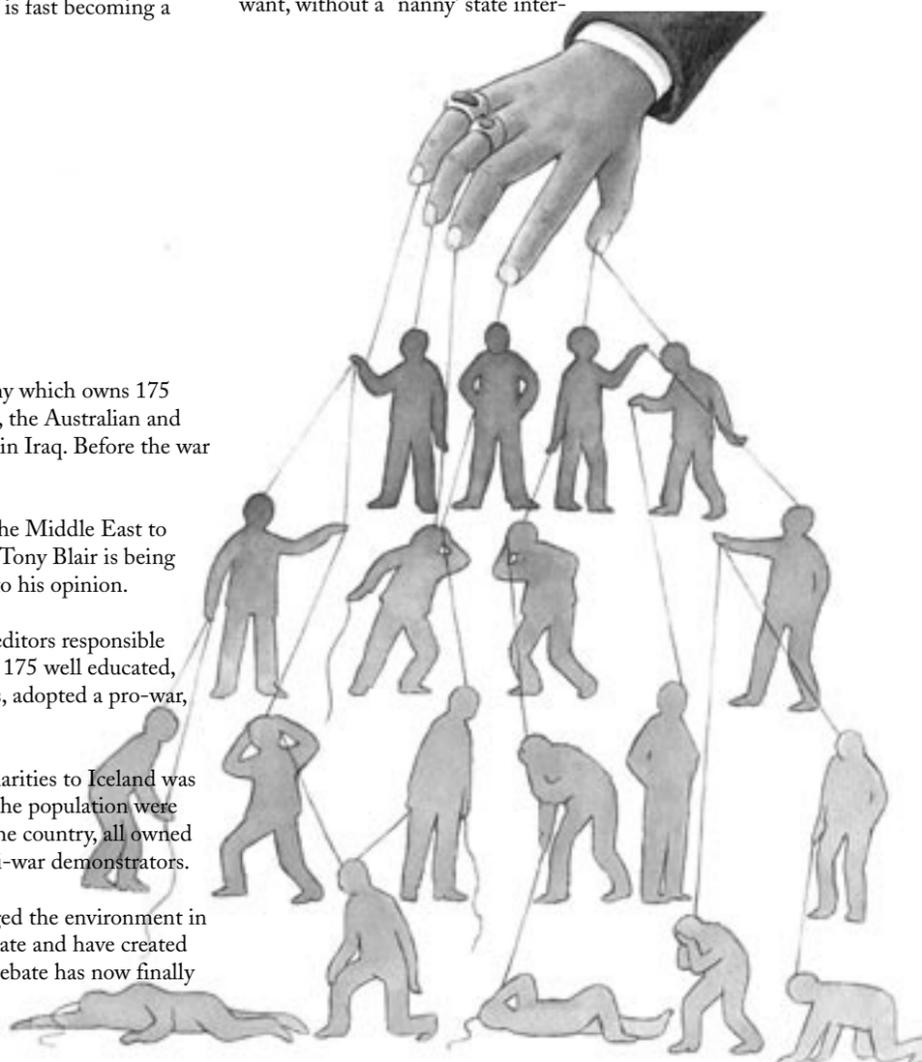
News Corporation, Rupert Murdoch's holding company which owns 175 titles in three continents, including the London Times, the Australian and the New York Post, wholeheartedly supported the War in Iraq. Before the war started Murdoch gave an interview in one of his titles.

"We can't back down now, we can't hand the whole of the Middle East to Saddam...I think Bush is acting very morally...I think Tony Blair is being extraordinarily courageous and strong." He is entitled to his opinion.

What's sobering is that his opinion was shared by 175 editors responsible for the 175 newspapers that he owns around the world. 175 well educated, intelligent journalists, all at the tops of their professions, adopted a pro-war, pro-Bush/Blair stance. Not one voice against the war.

A specific example in a country which bears many similarities to Iceland was in Murdoch's country of birth, Australia. Here 76% of the population were against the war, and yet the five largest newspapers in the country, all owned by Murdoch, were in favour of the war and derided anti-war demonstrators.

It is companies like News Corporation who have changed the environment in which public service broadcasters and Newspapers operate and have created a wholesale re-evaluation of media in its entirety. The debate has now finally reached Iceland.



News in brief

Artist gets rid of all earthly possessions



The artist Saga Ásgeirsdóttir decided to get rid of all her earthly possessions by gluing them together. The finished work is estimated to be about 10 metres long. The event is currently taking place in art workshop Klink og Bank (see p. 23), and the last items to be glued to the piece will be the clothes off her back. She is moving to Denmark on Monday. She has already secured a ticket. Flight details available upon request.

Midwives support use of condoms



450 midwives from all over the Nordic countries celebrated the 85th anniversary of the midwife association at Hotel Nordica. Speeches were held and local midwives suggested that contraceptives be made available for free. Finally, a profession that isn't just working out of self interest.

No medicine after midnight



There is currently no chemist open after midnight in Reykjavík, despite a law which states that chemists should be open around the clock. An spokesman for the health department said that night service was not necessary, as these rarely dealt with emergencies, only people asking for new syringes or condoms, or girls who had forgotten their birth control pills.

Babies with sexually transmitted diseases

In unrelated news, a report from the surgeon general has shown that between 1997 and 2003, 67 children under the age of four were found to have the venereal disease Chlamydia. Doctors think that the children contracted the disease through their eyes at birth. Fortunately these were all diagnosed early on as the disease, when contracted by children, can cause blindness later on if untreated.

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LICENSE APPROVED?

by Robert Jackson

The man who is Head of News at RUV is Bogi Ágústson. I visited him at the RUV broadcasting centre at this pivotal time in Icelandic television history. Bogi not only faces the challenges the new digital technology will bring, but does so at a time when the laws regarding media ownership are threatening drastic changes in the commercial sector and wholesale reviews of television licensing.

The walk to Bogi's office is along wide corridors, covered with black and white photographs. I remark upon these images when we reach Bogi's office in the heart of the newsroom.

"We line the corridors with photographs from Iceland's history. This is to remind people who work here of the responsibility they bear. We were there on 17th June when independence was declared. We are not only the cultural life but we are woven into the fabric of Icelandic society."

I asked whether 'Inform, Educate and Entertain' are still workable in today's Iceland (see previous article).

"Yes, they are. You have to provide a mix, you cannot rely on one thing. If you are providing purely entertainment then there is no point being a public service broadcaster and if you wish only to educate you will soon lose your license. If the right mix can be achieved and you strive to produce the best in each area, then you will be a successful TV station. We take a license fee from every TV household in Iceland; they have the right to be entertained. And so when people say to me the RUV should not be showing *Sex in the City*, I say to them, 'Bollocks'. We should provide entertainment as of high a quality as possible."

Bogi smiles

I mention that is not exactly how the sainted Lord Reith (founder of the BBC) would have phrased his reply. Bogi laughs and it occurs to me that I have rarely seen him smile. Presenting the news in Iceland is a serious business and the four anchors at RUV not only take their work seriously, but are seen to take it seriously. It's the way it is in Iceland. Away from the camera Bogi is every inch the modern news editor. He wears jeans and a shirt with colourful braces. On a hanger his jacket and tie are ready for his on-air appearances. Throughout the interview his eye wanders to a monitor fixed to the wall that is tuned to Sky and breaking news. His walls have pictures and memorabilia from his twenty-five years as a RUV journalist.

"I have learnt through my news

career that change comes and comes fast. As a young reporter, I stood in front of the Berlin Wall saying that it would take at least another 25 years before it came down. Three years later it was down!"

Channel 2 keep us on our toes

I first visited RUV in the autumn of 2003 and I remind Bogi that when we last met it looked like Channel 2 was going to disappear entirely through the likely bankruptcy of its

There is no fun playing football when there is only one team on the field.

parent company. Is he glad they were saved?

"I was here before competition came along and we improved enormously when they arrived. There is no fun playing football when there is only one team on the field. It is always good to have someone to measure yourself against. If they had gone under they would have been sorely missed. Over the last ten years the output of domestic news from our two newsrooms has increased hugely and the viewing figures show that the public want it. We see Channel 2 not only as our opposition but also as

*"When people say to me the RUV should not be showing *Sex in the City*, I say to them 'Bollocks'.*

serious journalists. They keep us on our toes."

...but it has to be in Icelandic

We are sitting in the offices of one of the last truly independent national broadcasters in the world, with Rupert Murdoch's Sky News channel providing the international news in the background. I ask about the current debate over media ownership in Iceland.

"To date, we have had no serious media law in this country. Effectively you could buy a license to broadcast with no restrictions whatsoever, no money for the license, the only requirement from the government was that it had to be broadcast in



Icelandic. When Baugur (Iceland's leading supermarket conglomerate) bought into Northern Lights Corporation, I don't for a second believe that they had a grand plan to take over media in Iceland. It's more a matter of them being there when

350-plus people and of course some will have their own agenda. But I hazard a guess that 99% of our journalists want nothing to do with party politics."

License to bill

Would he welcome a review of RUV's contract as per the 1985 Act?

"Of course, this would be the next logical step. We may well not like the result, but we have for a very long time maintained that this is absolutely essential. That the owner (The State) decides himself what he wants to do with this company that he owns, and this he has not done. It is almost twenty years since the act and it is long overdue."

His eyes have been wandering off to the monitor from time to time and suddenly he grabs the control and turns up the volume. I assume that some global catastrophe is about to disturb our interview. Instead we stop to watch a few minutes of highlights of the Spurs' game from the weekend.

the opportunity presented itself. But they have developed a taste for the media. People have become scared when they realised that Baugur owns all news media in this country, with two exceptions (RUV and Morgunblaðið). And people do believe that with such enormous monetary power, Baugur have become too big. And, yes, I personally do believe that they have become too big."

Conservative commies!

"What's more is that this has forced the politicians finally to look at RUV's own contract. We are

basically governed by a media act of 1985. This act provides that it should be re-examined within three years. The political parties have not been able to reach agreement on what RUV should be and, as it was not an acute political problem, it has been left alone."

I suggest that as RUV is funded by the state it will naturally support the government of the day.

"Yes and no. We have people who perceive our programming critical of the established order, these people call us left wing. The opposition says that we are run by the Conservative Party, and the Independence party says that there are nothing but commies here! Look, we employ

"I've always supported this team," he smiles "but they've sure put my loyalty to the test this season."

"Gott kvöld..."

To finish, I ask what the future holds, specifically the threat that digital technology poses RUV. "Without a doubt Digital TV will be available here in Iceland within the next five years. It will bring greater choice at a lower price and we will see more competitors entering the market. At the same time we will see fragmentation of stations and what they are offering. Technology will see people watching TV through their mobile phones and PC's. It will be challenging. The country will

News in brief

Bank robbed at axepoint



A bank in the Reykjavík suburb of Grafarvogur was robbed on Friday the 21st of May. A bank employee was threatened with an axe. The perpetrators were soon caught, one within a few minutes as the ax drew attention to him.

Dog locked in car



On Monday police received reports of a dog that had been locked in a car all day long. Officers were dispatched to the scene, and the dog was let out. It was a busy day for the city police for that very same day a car drove away from a gas station in Grafarvogur without paying. Fortunately, a security camera recorded footage of the culprit, which led to his arrest.

have to decide whether it wants a public service broadcaster. There are those who suggest that the company should be sold to the free market and our future is by no means certain. But if we go, there will be a huge gap that will never be filled."

It was time for him to work on the evening bulletin and he goes to discuss the line up with his colleagues. The next time I see him is on television, jacket and tie in place, and saying in his sombre voice the sentence Icelanders have been hearing once a day for as long as they can remember: "Gott kvöld. Í fréttum er þetta helst."

The laughter and the tears: From Eurovision to New Year's Eve

Icelanders are not only bucking the global trend in their slavish following of the News, when it comes to other viewing they like their programming homegrown. So here are the top eight based on average viewing figures, in ascending order.

We have:

8. Af fingrum fram. A talk show where a musician talks to musicians and plays along with them, a Jools Holland of sorts, although there's only one featured artist a time. The guests run the entire gamut from the Icelandic Beatles to the underground.

7. Gettu Betur. An inter-schools quiz programme which has run every year since anyone can remember. Taken very seriously by viewers and schools alike, some secondary schools start training their prospective contenders from

when they are freshman for participation in their final year.

6. Saturday Night with Gísli Marteinn. Iceland's young and perpetually smiling interviewer eases his guests through a cozy chat rather than an inquisition, leaving everyone happy with the current state of affairs. Gísli for President in 2025, although since he's more dream son-in-law than teen idol, his constituency may have dwindled by then.

5. Idol. Yes, it's the format show that has taken over the UK and America but has a distinctly Icelandic flavour to it. Bubbi Morthens plays the role of Simon Cowell and the winner was, of course, a singing cod fisherman.

4. The News. RUV and Channel 2 combined.

See above, although on quiet days the news

desks will discuss the other programmes in this list.

3. Spaugstofan. Where else in the world will you find political satire topping the bill on a Saturday night? The actors are all well into middle-age and yet the scripts, at their best, have both bite and humour. The show, which



And those are the results of the Icelandic jury.

is a cross between Spitting Image and Not the Nine O'clock news, beats all younger rivals hands down.

2. Eurovision Song contest.

Each year Iceland turns up and each year they get a pounding from the voters, but viewers remain undeterred. Not only are the streets empty on the night itself, but all the entrants are shown every night for weeks in advance. Don't mention the black year of 1989 to anyone on this evening, as the humiliation of "nul points" still stings.

1. The News Year Eve Show.

An absolute must before unleashing 40 tonnes of fireworks into the sky over Reykjavík is the annual New Years Eve round up show. Everyone watches. RUV don't bother to ask Gallup to run the figures. There is no contest.

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Hlynur. Five consonants and a vowel buried somewhere towards the end make it one of those awkward Icelandic names that are difficult to get your tongue around. It is not the only difficult thing about the main character in

HALLGRÍMUR HELGASON's novel, 101 Reykjavik.

by Robert Jackson

The reader is asked to live in Hlynur's head, sharing his thoughts and observations. A head which spends a significant amount of time conjuring up the masturbatory images that play in the desultory mind of a slacker. I found it was not a particularly easy place to be.



Two years ago and newly arrived in Iceland, 101 Reykjavik failed to give me the fuel for my romanticised notions of the country. I put the book to one side after reading a few chapters, but over time I recognised that it was impossible to live here and ignore a book that has achieved the most elusive of all Icelandic prizes, international success. It is also impossible to ignore Hallgrímur Helgason.

I again started the book a few months ago and this time found myself a willing inhabitant of Hlynur's psyche. I realised that Hallgrímur had created one of the more fascinating and compelling characters that I have come across in contemporary fiction.

Hallgrímur is one of the most instantly recognisable 'characters' in Reykjavik. The 'pork pie' hat, the overcoat, the chiselled cheeks, the flinty eyes, the ambiguous smile; all are trademarks of the writer who gave an Icelandic postcode international renown and, through his novels, plays and articles, has established himself as a prominent and lasting figure in the world of Icelandic literature.

Summer had been 'declared' (according to tradition, this takes place on the 22nd of April, although it has been known to snow on that day) a few weeks before I met him and to celebrate, Hallgrímur had bought himself a bicycle; he peddled up to Café Thorvaldsen, sat down ready to talk, and we started on Reykjavik 101.

101 Reykjavik wakes up from its coma

"It is a book that follows me forever. Sometimes I get tired of talking about it but one should never complain about success. In the beginning the book didn't do that well. It had been laying half dead in a coma for four years when the film came out in the year 2000. It was shown at various film festivals, got prizes and was distributed in 22 countries. Then everybody wanted to have

translations of the book. There are now 12 language versions; it's really what I am known for outside of Iceland."

We talk about the growing international interest in Iceland. It is a subject that he warms to and I ask him whether Reykjavik deserves the reputation it receives.

"Sometimes I really can't understand why, because on your average Tuesday it looks like a small town in Sweden. It's like Eskilstuna. You go downtown, it's raining, there's nobody

SOMETIMES I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY REYKJAVÍK HAS THE REPUTATION IT HAS, BECAUSE IT LOOKS LIKE A SMALL TOWN IN SWEDEN

around and it's very far from this glamorous image that it's received in recent years. I guess that there's something foreigners see that we don't see.

But I used to hate it as a boy. It was a horrible East European town where nothing was happening and everything was gray and state run and most things were closed. There was only 'One' of anything: One restaurant, one bar, one hot dog stand, one tree, even only one guy walking around downtown. He's dead now, bless his soul. The pre-war downtown culture had been wiped out and replaced by the horrible suburbs. It was the same old story but here we saw it happen in a bit more exaggerated form. After the war, Iceland finally found prosperity. After a thousand years in isolation, we finally became a part of the real world. And the generation of my parents went on a shopping spree. They wanted everything new; new cars, new hairdos, a new life. They built

new houses and tore down the old ones. They had no sense of history; they just wanted everything new. They remembered the poverty, they were ashamed of their origins, and they wanted to be an active part of the new world. The seventies in Iceland were ugly, tasteless and boring. The books were boring, the paintings were ugly and everything we did was a total failure. We lost every football game and the rock bands always came empty-handed home from London. My generation was brought up feeling that we were out of place, a nation of losers; too small and provincial. I mean, we didn't even have beer until 1989 and the first Icelandic pizza was baked in 1990. In my youth the word "red wine" had an exotic ring to it, a bit like "balsamic vinegar" has here today. We really didn't feel proud of our country. But now everything has changed. All thanks to Björk, I guess. We've gained our self-esteem and our self-respect, a generation has grown up that is more internationally thinking.

At the moment many fine talents are growing up in Iceland. Many bands are getting exposure abroad, every once in a while we make a decent film, our literature is being translated like never before, an Icelandic theatre production is a hit in London, Guðjónsen has secured his place on the Chelsea football team and the Baugur Group is buying all the shops in the UK. We should be thankful, we should be grateful." He stops for a pause to reflect, and smiles. "Yes, now it's very cool to be Icelandic." He says the word cool with more than a hint of irony.

The country you love to hate

I ask whether he ever feels like leaving Iceland. "Iceland is a country that you love and hate. Every week you think about leaving. Like last week, when the polar wind blew solidly from Monday to Friday. It was hell and I was thinking: How do the tourists cope? It gets me down and I think of going but I've



I DREW A PICTURE OF PRIME MINISTER DAVID ODDSON WITH GRIM'S FACE ON HIM.

SOON AFTER MR. ODDSON CALLED ME IN FOR A MEETING



already done that. I was abroad for ten years. I lived in America and it was very uncomfortable in the long run. I guess it has to do with the fact that they have no real national soul. The USA is just too big. And it's all about money. In the end I just couldn't stand the commercial breaks on TV. It was driving me nuts. Then I went to Paris and lived there for 5 years. There was nothing happening there. It was like living in the

He has a 'voice' and he is not afraid to use it. He also has Grim.

The Grim truth

Grim is a cartoon character that Hallgrímur created in Paris in 1995. In those days Grim 'spoke' French and was used as a weapon to attack the Art Establishment in Paris.

"Grim is my alter ego, my other self, he resembles me a lot and in many ways I wished I had spent more time on him. I've had three solo exhibitions featuring him and I have the 'Best of Grim' book coming out in June."

I ask him whether he is ever used for political purposes.

"Well, I did one painting of our prime minister, Mr. David Oddsson, as Grim. This was after he called me into his office where he lectured me for 75 minutes for having written a

against you in the end. It's a classic story. This is what's happening now and this is why all our biggest names live abroad.

"By the time this interview is printed and read it might all be over, so my words here might be quite meaningless. But I do think that this example is extreme enough: A personal bill directed against one person. And plus: Davíð has crossed the line already. He was even tasteless enough to attack our president openly; calling him unfit to handle this bill. The lowest point in political debate I have ever witnessed in Iceland came when the Prime Minister used the President's own daughter against him. She works for Jón Ásgeir he said, and that makes the President unfit for his office. By saying that, Davíð also admitted that this law is only directed against one man, contrary to what all his people are saying. And then the blue dogs start attacking the President's right to refuse a bill from

The young generation seems so old. Most of those kids are very quiet, very inward, very subtle. They walk around with woollen hats like this." He makes an impression of a Buddhist monk on the way to the monastery. "They light candles, drink tea and wear no shoes. When they play on stage they make sure you can't see their face. And in interviews they don't say much. In Icelandic it's called the "Krútt-kynslóðin", The Mild Bunch. That's their style. It's OK, but still a surprise to me."

A black stain on Vatnajökull

Inevitably, the conversation is drawn to Iraq. "Iceland is stained by the Iraq war. Our traditional position has been that we do not go to war. Actually we have never fought any war at all. I mean, how could we, when we don't even have an army?!... But this all changed last year when Davíð & Co. got us into the mess in Iraq.

"We know now that this war was fought under false pretences. On top of everything, we have those recent pictures of abuse by the American Army that are totally incredible. That is a BIG SHOCK to the whole Western culture. "We" were meant to be the good ones. But we're not anymore. And we cannot escape sharing some of the blame.

"More significantly, you have to see those horrors as a product of our western culture. This is what you get when generations bred on violent movies, porn videos and computer games go to war. We have to ask ourselves some questions. Have we gone too far? We have allowed everything. We allow dead stupid violence on TV, brainburning computer games built on rape and murder, gang-rapes shown at "respectable" film festivals... etc... The whole mess has been bred into a couple of generations and we now see it acted out in Baghdad. They can live out their fucked-up fantasies. And it's all done in our name. Prisoners raped with broomsticks.



"With kind regards from the people of Iceland". It's the saddest story. One of the single biggest mistakes in our history. A huge black stain on the Vatnajökull glacier. In four years Bush has created more Muslim terrorists than the previous 2000 years of Christianity."

My mind goes to Hlynur and I ask how Hallgrímur's character would have fared as a guard in Abu Ghaib prison. Hallgrímur continues - he is on a roll, the words come fast and for the first time his face is animated.

"Morbid as he may be, I think even Hlynur would have been outraged by the atrocities carried out by the "bringers of freedom". It might be too strong to liken it all to the discovery of Auschwitz, but it is very close and Bush and Blair have to bear responsibility. They cannot say they didn't know. Hitler could just as well have said he didn't know about the gas chambers. These guys were stupid enough to create this stupid situation where things like these have flourished. They have to take the blame along with Rumsfeld and the rest. A leader is a leader, at the top as well as at the bottom. If the head is stupid, the limbs can do stupid

THERE USED TO BE REBELLION BUT I DON'T SEE IT NOW. WE HAD TO REBEL

Louvre. I felt more isolated in Paris than in Reykjavik so I just came back. I mean, where else can you live? I went to London the other day. There you have the same weather but no real heating in the houses. All people talk about are royal sluts, all the bars close at eleven and they drive on the wrong side of the road. I think the big cities are just outdated. They are dinosaurs. Too huge and heavy. I don't want to spend my days sitting on the tube or chatting my way through endless openings and cocktail parties. Reykjavik is small but energetic. It's big at heart but accessible at the same time. It's the Palm Pilot of world cities." However much Hallgrímur dislikes current American and European culture, he has absorbed a huge amount of it. Much of the appeal of Reykjavik 101 is the stream of fantasies and rants that focus on that troika of mindlessness - consumerism, internet and satellite TV. The book projects a bleak image of Reykjavik, and yet it is not one that Hallgrímur sees today.

"Iceland is the land of opportunities. It's so small. You can have your breakthrough every week. One weekend you open an art exhibition and the next one you publish a book of poetry or write a play and then all of a sudden you're a stand-up comedian. Here you cannot live off one success; you always have to move on, you're always judged by your latest work, or rather by your latest career. It keeps you on your toes, you have to continue creating. It's a good thing."

Without doubt Hallgrímur has thrived in this environment. He is by training a painter who has shown at over fifty exhibitions. There are five published novels, three plays and a staggering 5,000 articles to his name.

piece about him in Morgunblaðið, nicknaming him The Blue Hand. The name has stuck with him ever since. He was angry. He was grim. So I did the painting..."

"On the whole David Oddsson has done a good job, though he's about to ruin his reputation by his weakness for personal revenge. In fact, Icelandic society is the best one the earth has ever seen." He pauses and I assume that he is about to rephrase or alter the remark but he continues in the same vein. "It is a big statement but it is true. There has never been a society where almost everyone has been provided for. Nobody goes hungry to bed and no one is cold at night. Our healthcare system covers everybody, most people travel abroad three times a year and every home has an internet connection. Our only real problem is the Berlusconi character of the Prime Minister."

The issue of the day

It seems an opportune moment to raise the issue which is currently dominating the headlines: The new Media Ownership laws. Should the President refuse to sign the media bill?

"Yes. I think it would be a good idea because then we would have a referendum. And hopefully the people would reject this law that is only directed against one man; Jón Ásgeir, the head of Baugur Group. It's Davíð Oddsson's personal revenge, since Jón Ásgeir hasn't played by "his rules" and is now funding two independent newspapers and a TV station. It's not your ideal situation, but we have to think about the smallness of our market. No one else was willing to put up money for these things. If you become too big in a small society it will always turn

the parliament, even though it's all there in the constitution. For those guys nothing is holy anymore. We're

only this close from dictatorship. I sure hope the President finally uses this small power he has. If ever there was a need it is now. This is the moment to do it." He shrugs and sips some water.

And what of Reykjavik's new talent, how does he see them?

"They are operating in a wonderful environment. Iceland is on a higher level than it was some years back when you couldn't even begin to talk about Jeff Koons or Matthew Barney when you came home from New York. Up here nobody knew who they were. Nowadays those guys are walking the streets of Reykjavik. But I am curious about the latest output of artistic stuff from the young.



ICELAND IS STAINED BY THE IRAQ WAR. OUR LEADERS TOO NEED TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

things. I also believe that our leaders too should take some responsibility. If you side with Hitler, you go down with Hitler."

So where should Iceland stand in its future relationship with America and what about stronger ties with Europe? He pauses for a drink of iced water. The storm has passed and a smile emerges.

"We're doing well. We don't need to plunge into one camp or the other. Maybe we should just relax and wait and be happy."

We said our farewells as he plonked his hat on his head, wrapped his coat around his shoulders, mounted his bicycle and pedalled off into the cool of a spring afternoon, in his beloved Reykjavik.



IT WAS TIME TO GET A JOB

by Padraig Mara

3 weeks after my arrival in Iceland it became apparent that the party couldn't last forever. After 3 weeks of jamming, fine dining, tour-taking and serious merry-making, my tax refund from Uncle Sam had disappeared. My girlfriend, sweet and bubbly as she is, said there was nothing at all to worry about; I should take myself down to Efling, join the union and ask for their help. It was time to get a job.



The Union

On a beautiful Monday morning I was ushered into the office of Lára, the grandmotherly Efling representative whose mission it would be to get me gainfully employed. I was puzzled upon meeting her. Where I'm from, union business is carried out by fat guys named Al in stained T-shirts. They handle your complaint and then tell you to 'get back to work'. As I sat across from Lára, I felt as though I should have shaved. Or at least worn a sweater or something. I explained my situation, that I had registered at the University of Iceland for the coming fall term, that I was now the proud owner of a newly minted kennitala. I told her I was fit and hard working, quite anxious to join the Icelandic workforce and that I would certainly consider any jobs she might have available. Lára smiled, offered me candy and said that was fine. She opened her book of available work, looked at me seriously and said 'You know, there's work for everyone in Iceland.'

Ship-Building

Not long after my meeting with amma Lára I stood on the work floor of ISI Shipbuilders talking to the Foreman. I had to shout to be heard over the noise and flying sparks. Being from America, I unconsciously used certain cliché job-requesting phrases...

ME- I'd be an asset to your company and uhh.
 FOREMAN (watching sheet metal half the length of a soccer field being hoisted in)- Ha?
 ME- I'm a self-starter...uhh..Highly motivated...
 FOREMAN- What are you saying? Can you torch?
 ME (looking up at the metal suspended over me)- Not yet.
 FOREMAN- Eða weld? Can you weld?
 ME- I'm a fast learner.
 FOREMAN (looking down at my shoes)- Are they steel-tip?
 ME- Uhh, yeah.
 FOREMAN- Good, we don't have to loan you them then. Monday 8:15. Don't be late.

This was on a Friday afternoon. My girlfriend and I were so pleased with

my new status as professional ship-building-guy that we broke out the Visa card and jammed until we were 50,000 kr. into debt. Jesus.

Little by little I got to know my fellow workers at ISI. Jói the Funny (who wasn't), Young Kjartan (close to 70), and Atli the Pilot (who was). I learned to try and steer clear of Biggi, who whenever using the escalating platform, raised his arms and yelled 'Hallelujah', Hallelujah' as if he were ascending to heaven and not the wheelhouse. Oddly enough, this cat only wanted to talk about Jesus. We had a brief chat about my spiritual situation.

BIGGI- Tell me...are you saved?
 ME- (changing discs in a grinder)- What?
 BIGGI- Are you saved?
 ME- (having trouble with it)- Saved from what?
 BIGGI- I mean is Jesus your saviour?
 ME (still wrestling with the grinder)- I dunno...probably. I never gave it much thought.
 BIGGI- Are you a Christian?
 ME- (finally unscrewing the grinder disc)- I guess...I was raised Catholic...But my father's half Satanist. (laughs)
 BIGGI: (walks off).

In the weeks that followed I learned to grind steel as smooth as glass, mount stabilizing fins to the bottom of fishing trawlers and snort Icelandic snuff without sneezing black snot all over my jumpsuit. You know, the usual. Eventually I also learned to blowtorch steel plate.

FOREMAN- Here's how you open the gas, turn it one-quarter of the way. See?
 ME- Why one-quarter?
 FOREMAN- So that if the tubing catches fire you have time to turn it off before it blows up.
 ME- Right...
 The flame is ignited, the foreman lights his smoke from the flame, hands me the torch.
 FOREMAN- Don't go too fast or

you'll spray melted steel on yourself.
 ME- (Looking up from the plate, sweating) This speed good?
 FOREMAN- Yeah, fine.
 Pause.
 FOREMAN- Hey.
 ME- (Utterly concentrated) Yeah.
 FOREMAN- Your jumpsuit is on fire.

One afternoon I was called off the work floor and sent upstairs for a chat with the owner. It was payday and I was half expecting a raise. In spite of my terrible grasp of Icelandic and total lack of experience, I had worked hard and done well. I figured I may get up to 900 kr per hour.

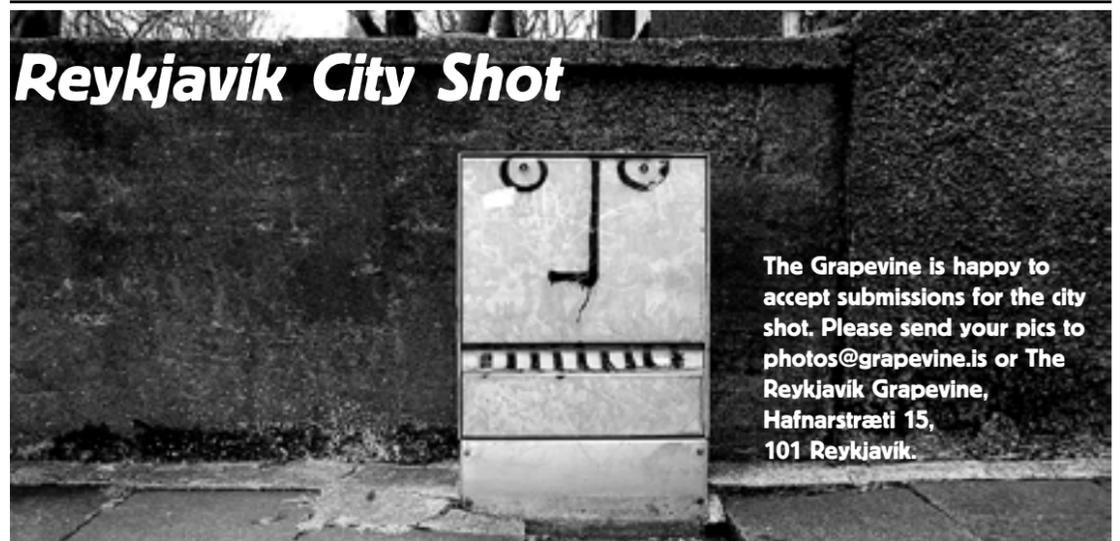
OWNER- Where is your skattkort?
 ME- My what?
 OWNER- Tax Kort. Tax Card. Where is it?
 ME- I dunno...I have a kennitala..
 OWNER- Are you allowed to work in Iceland?
 ME- Yeah, I am enrolled in University here.
 OWNER- Do you have a student work card?
 ME- No, I guess not.
 OWNER- Punch out. Come back with both cards.

I contacted the Office of Immigration that day. As it turned out, I was working illegally. I was not eligible for work permission for another three months. I called ISI and explained my situation. I asked politely if they could keep me on and pay me black, off the books. They told me just as politely that they could not.

My limbo status put me and my girlfriend in a bad position. It would be three months until I was legally permitted to work in Iceland. According to our household budget, a three-month-long, non-paid vacation was impossible. This left but one choice. The murky world of...black jobs.

Next Edition, Icelandic Carwash.

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LONDON

by Valur Gunnarsson



“Don’t go to him,” says a man standing outside a sightseeing bus in London as I turn to the bus beside it, run by a competing company. “Come on, I’ll knock five pound off,” he adds. “Five pound off,” says the man in the next bus. “You must be getting desperate. Well, you get what you pay for,” he adds and looks at me condescendingly. Not wanting him to think me easily fooled, I climb onboard the more expensive bus.

The Greater London Metropolis spreads out below as far as the eye can see as the plane descends from the clouds. During the Blitz just over half a century ago, it was still the largest city in the world before the mantle passed outside of Europe, perhaps never to return. For someone born in a country where “the city” refers to a town of 100.000 souls, London seems impossibly big. On the ground, it still seems impossibly big. There’s no Laugavegur that serves as the main street, no Hallgrímskirkja towering over everything to get your bearing.

There’s Big Ben, Nelson’s column, and the latest addition, the London Eye ferris wheel. But these, unlike said church, aren’t visible from wherever you stand. Along with big cities comes big traffic, and it can be frustrating to sit in a car, even if it is the upper floor of a double decker bus, to get where you want to go. The City of London, the old part of the city situated right in the heart of the London, has finally decided to do something about this, adding a special tax on those who wish to enter by car. The tube, fortunately, is easy to use, even if you’re from a country which doesn’t even have trains, much less ones that go underground.



For many young Icelanders, London, the HQ of the

swing- ing six- ties, punk rock and later

Cool Britannia, is still the Promised Land. Berlin has its appeal for painters and poets, Copenhagen is home away from home, the neighbouring cities of Oslo and Gothenburg are nice and safe if a little dull. But the twenty something seeking the one thing that can unquestioningly prove his worth to friends and family - international recognition - London is the place to be. Most eventually come home, wiser for the experience but have to find other ways to gain esteem in the eyes of friends, family and the still-elusive girl/boy next door. Some stay on. Some even do manage to conquer the world.

Lines of communication between London and Reykjavík have been shortened considerably in the past decade. After Björk, all of Cool Britannia seemed to have their holidays here, Damon Albarn even buying a house here and one of the Spice girls, at the peak of their power, taking an Icelandic boy home.

Thanks to low cost airline Iceland Express, Icelanders are now able to go to London without having to emigrate. Weekend trips have suddenly become a viable option. London, of course, is still impossibly big. But these days, you can always go again.



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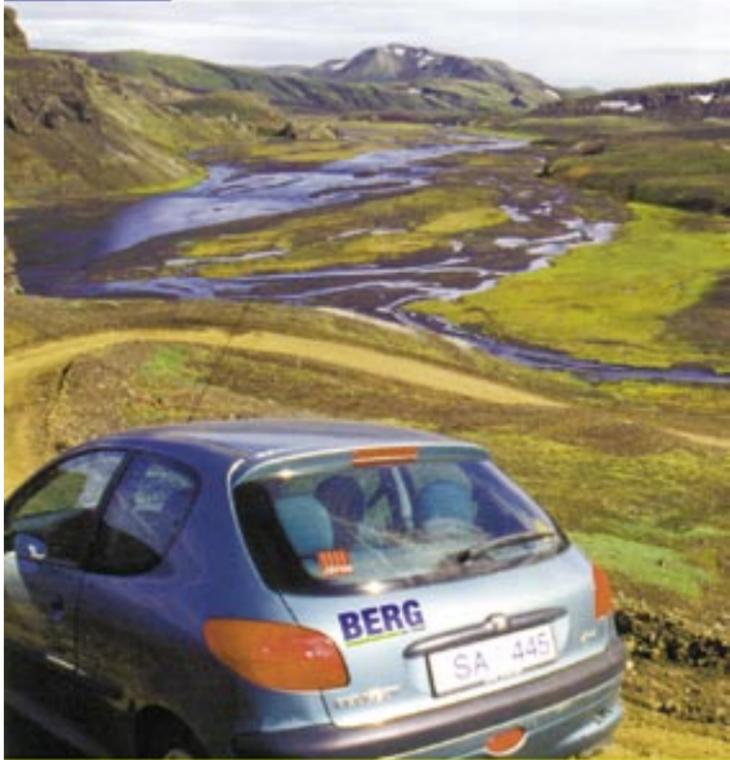


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Snowmobiling on Iceland's principal glaciers Langjökull West (close to Húsafell), Mýrdalsjökull (close to Skógar) and Vatnajökull (close to Höfn). Daily departures throughout the summer.

Dog sledging close to nature

Dog sledging at Langjökull West, about 40 min. drive from Húsafell. Daily departures throughout the summer.

Holders of the Reykjavík Card receive **10% discount** of the following tours, when booked directly with Destination Iceland.



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Express tour from Reykjavík to wet white-water action on the Hvítá River. The river is graded 2+ and is a nice blend of rapids, admirable nature and fun. For more River Rafting tours and information, check our website, www.dice.is

**Landmannalaugar
and Mt. Hekla**

• DI-02 (IA 51)
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**Langjökull
Glacier Tour Adventure**

• R-05 (IA 50, s/d)
A guided super truck tour with the classical sights of West Iceland. Hvalfjörður bay, hot spring Deildartunguhver, Hraunfossar waterfalls, Kaldidalur and the National Park Þingvellir. On the glacier a dog sledging tour or snowmobile tour - otherwise the Super Trucks take you on a glacier adventure.

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MEN IN UNIFORM

the reykjavík grapevine



Boy scouts

Baden Powell's boy scout movement was formed in 1907, and first came to Iceland four years later via Denmark. A girl scout movement was formed here in 1922. Boy Scouts here are particularly taught respect for and handling of the national flag, and the Boy Scout honour guard carrying the flag is a staple of Independence Day and First Day of Summer celebrations. Not quite as menacing as marines, perhaps, but probably nicer.

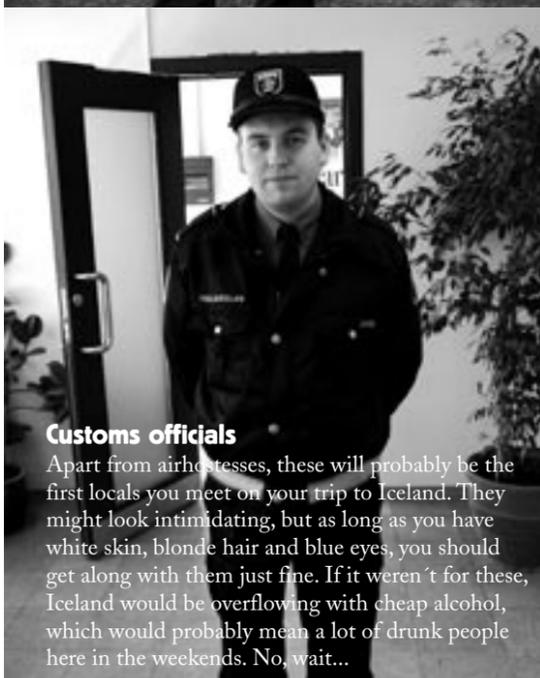


Parking Ticket Attendants

Walking the streets in marked with their distinctive P's, rarely smiling but having an uncanny ability to show up just as you run into the store, parking attendants, along with lawyers and politicians, are one of those professions everyone loves to hate. Icelandic parking attendants currently have 54 hate entries on Google. Unlike politicians and lawyers, however, they are people just like you and me, doing their jobs for an undecent wage.

Police officers

The Reykjavík police was formed in 1768 and their uniform at the time consisted of cape, casket and mace. In 1801, the officer was supplied with a pair of boots as well. Two years later, the force was expanded to two. It wasn't until 1879 that the force got its own uniforms, modelled on the Danish police. When Iceland became a republic in 1944, the crown was removed from the belt buckle. The uniform has remained unchanged since 1958.



Customs officials

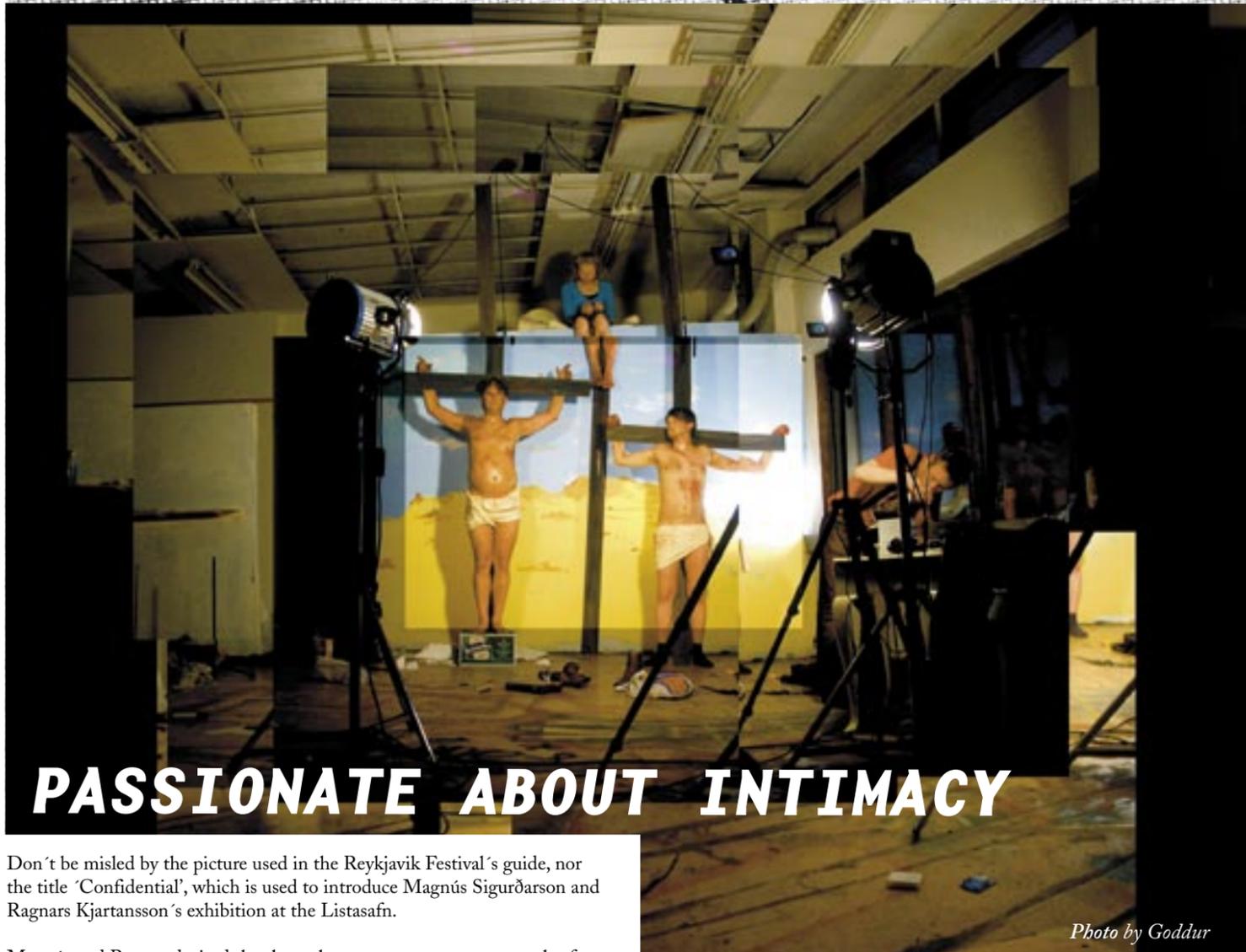
Apart from airhostesses, these will probably be the first locals you meet on your trip to Iceland. They might look intimidating, but as long as you have white skin, blonde hair and blue eyes, you should get along with them just fine. If it weren't for these, Iceland would be overflowing with cheap alcohol, which would probably mean a lot of drunk people here in the weekends. No, wait...



Bus drivers

They don't give change, so there's no use arguing. These days they usually wear fleece sweaters on the job, but the older uniforms are affectionately remembered by a generation of Icelanders who recall begging for a ride home without have the exact amount.

GRAPEVINE IN YOUR POCKET



PASSIONATE ABOUT INTIMACY

Don't be misled by the picture used in the Reykjavik Festival's guide, nor the title 'Confidential', which is used to introduce Magnús Sigurðarson and Ragnars Kjartansson's exhibition at the Listasafn.

Magnús and Ragnar devised the show almost two years ago as a result of their conversations, which went beyond traditional male bonding and yet, stopped short of a sexual relationship. They thought about the nature of male friendship and decided that the purest and most clearly defined example, was the conversations held by the two common thieves nailed to the crosses either side of Jesus on Golgotha.

The show is in two rooms. The first features a number large black and white images of the two artists naked in poses culled straight from Renaissance images of the Pieta, the bathing of Christ's wounds as he's been cut down from the cross. This is traditionally an example of male/female tenderness, but is here performed by two men. The photographer Kristján Sigurðsson needs special mention, they are fine images. Under each picture a song, written and performed by Ragnar is played - it is a soft, haunting melody played in a loop.

The second room features an hour long reel of the two artists, this time in loinclothes, strapped to crosses. A third pair of feet dangle unambiguously between them. Here they discuss their family, their friends, their fears and their worries, seemingly unaware of the discomfort they must undoubtedly be experiencing.

Somewhere between Mel Gibson's Passion of the Christ and Monty Python's Life of Brian, but making a point advanced by neither, this exhibition draws on traditional subject matter and gives it a new and intriguing slant.

Photo by Goddur



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This pullout has all the information one might need, so for a safer journey, pull it out and put it in your pocket.

CAFE'S

1. Segafredo

By Lækjartorg
McDonalds has departed from the centre of Reykjavík and instead Italian chain Segafredo has arrived, which isn't a bad trade-off. You can smoke indoors, which gives you a nice continental feel, the staff is Italian and the prices are in Euros as well as krónur. Although Segafredo isn't one of the more expensive places, you wonder whether knowing how much things cost might ruin your vacation.

2. Ráðhúskaffi

City Hall
With view over the city pond, Ráðhúskaffi is situated inside the City Hall. Coffee and great cakes as you enjoy the view. Free internet access for costumers and, in the lobby of City Hall, you'll find a big 80m² model of Iceland.

3. Grái Kötturinn

Hverfisgata 16a
Grái Kötturinn is across the street from the National Theater and is very small and very popular in the early hours of the day. A good place to start a day the British way, with eggs and bacon and other traditional breakfasts on the menu. The lunch menu is also inviting, but somewhat pricey.

4. Súfistinn

Laugavegur 18
A smoke-free café in the city centre, right inside Mál & Menning bookstore. You can buy or borrow books, magazines and newspapers from the bookstore, and read them there over a cup of coffee and/or a snack.

5. Mokka

Skólavörðustígur 3a
An Icelandic tradition since 1958, Mokka is the oldest café in Reykjavík and the first one to make coffee with an espresso machine. The walls are covered with art for sale and, though seats are usually filled by loyal customers, every now and then you'll catch a glimpse of the owners, a really nice and friendly couple in their seventies who have owned the café since its inception.

6. Kaffivagninn

Grandagarður 10
By the harbor where fishermen and sailors along with bus drivers and aging tough guys gather for lunch and a cup of coffee. If you want to try out traditional Icelandic food, pancakes, or bread with smoked lamb, this is the right place to see another side of Reykjavík.

7. Café Paris

Austurstræti 14
Situated in the heart of the city with a view over Austurvöllur, spacious,

popular and usually full in the afternoon, Café Paris is international like the city it's named after. In the mornings it is more quiet and a hangout for philosophers and artists. Offers you light meals and the opportunity to sit outside when the weather is nice.

8. Tíu Dropar

Laugavegur 27
With the exception of Mokka, Tíu Dropar is the oldest café in downtown Reykjavík. The place has a very special feel to it, the decor, the tables and the chairs, along with the service makes you feel very much at home. It's almost like your sitting down for a cup of coffee in your grandma's kitchen. The menu is limited, but has the advantage of constant changes, with new items every day.

9. Café Árnes

By the harbour
Once a ferry, Café Árnes has recently been turned into a coffeshop by day and seafood restaurant by night. The cardeck in the basement now functions as a bar. Situated by the harbour (obviously), have a traditional waffle with lots of jam and cream and watch the whale watchers come in.

BARS & BISTRO

10. Grand Rokk

Smiðjustígur 6
A place true to the spirit of Rock 'n' Roll and bands that don't do covers. Better and lesser known Icelandic bands play there, usually no less than three bands a night, four nights a week. Whether they charge admission or not is up to the bands, but if they do, all proceeds go to starving artists. Grab a beer and rock on! During the day this is a hangout for chess players, challenging each other and anyone that might wander in here for a game, as every table doubles as a chess board. One of the best places to meet locals for a chat, every night of the week.

11. Hverfisbar

Hverfisgata 20
Very long queues to get in, and once there, you wonder what the fuss was about, or whether the queue was in fact the best part. When it's four o'clock on a Sunday morning and you're still going strong, this might be the place you'll wind up, by which time you probably won't care that the same song seems to come on every half hour.

12. Café 22

Laugavegur 22
Has recently undergone a major facelift. The top floor is now dedicated to artist Jón Sæmundur, aka Dead, whose Dead label can be seen on quite a few people these days. Downstairs is a decent bistro (try the Gringo), whereas the middle floor houses a dancefloor. Open until the

wee small hours, and a great place to want drink along with a less than warned, though, they do charge

13. Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1
Kaffibarinn is Cool Reykjavík, itself on having more artists per world, and the crowd here seen musicians, actors and writers famous. Blur's Damon Albarn ing it was cheaper than buying the director of the film 101 Rey in the film.

14. Sirkus

Klappartígur 30
"Welcome to the Jungle! We g With tropical palm trees on the welcome to the party that never ending any time soon. Usually or want to be students of the I musicians and other members floor, for whatever reason, look

15. Nelly's

Pingblástræti 2
The cheapest beer in Reykjavík drinkers as well as expats. Trout covers though. In the weekend large dancefloor on the upper floor midnight on weekends.

16. Vegamót

Vegamótastígur 4
Wants to be the in-spot to be seen up, flaunt it and enjoy the view there, and the fittest, or at least Rumours of girls trading favours have proved unsubstantiated.

17. Kaffibrennslan

Pösthússtræti 9
One of the largest selection of of the few bars in Reykjavík w conversation after midnight on on a budget, they are generous

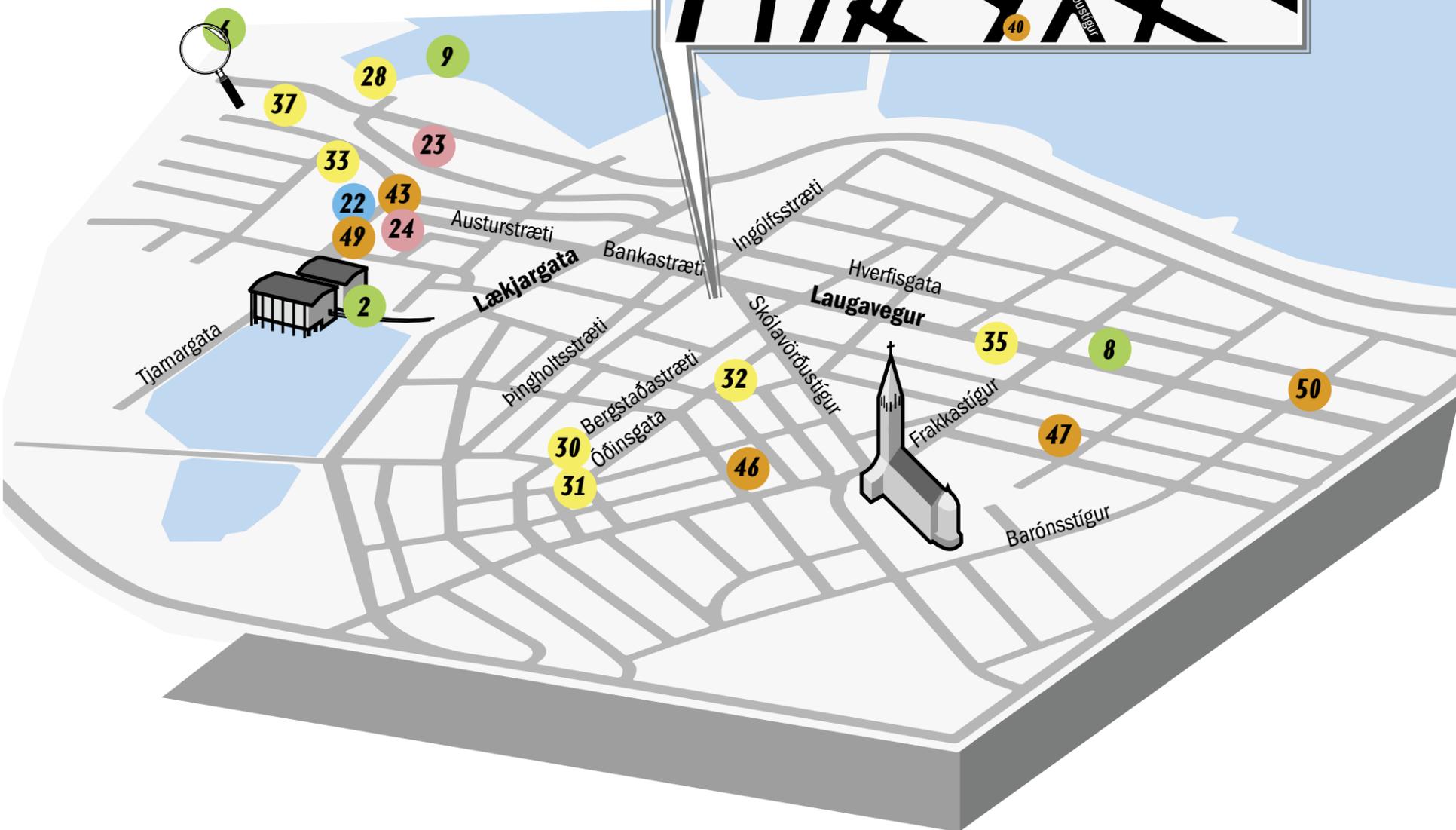
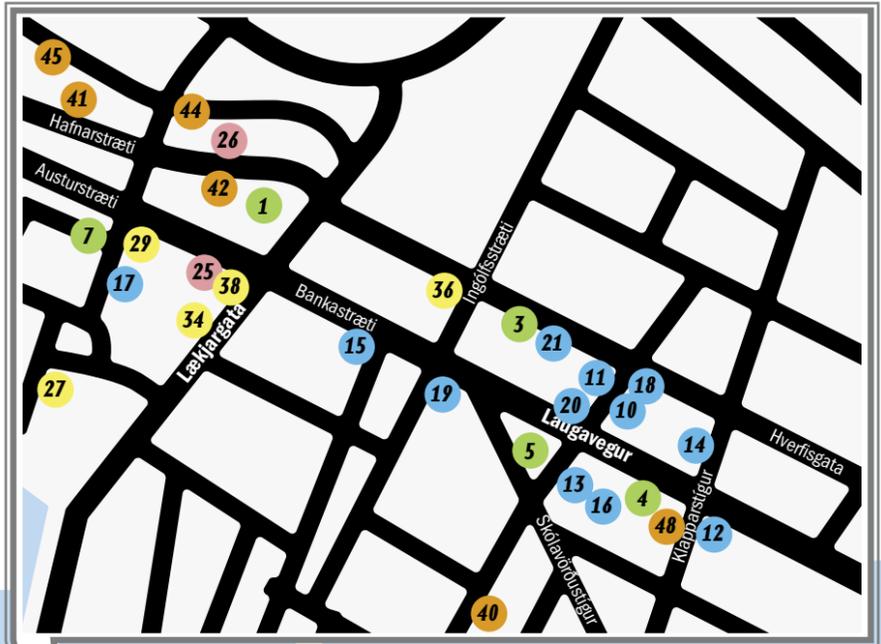
18. Celtic Cross

Hverfisgata 26
Arguably the bar in town that Irish, even though the Dubliner the back, it's very much alive. I

SPOT THIS

Hamborgarabúllan

The name literally means "the hamburger joint" and the word "sleazy" might not seem out of place. What was for years a cafeteria for sailors was recently rebuilt by Iceland's fast food pioneer Tommi. He was the man who opened the first fast food restaurant in Reykjavík in the early eighties. He had been inspired by fast food culture while attending University in the US and dropped out to open a hamburger place here. Well, so the legend goes. After taking a 10 year break from the fast food business, he's back. Burgers cheaper, sleazier and greasier than ever. Grapevine welcomes his return.



tveir fiskar

seafood restaurant at the reykjavík harbour

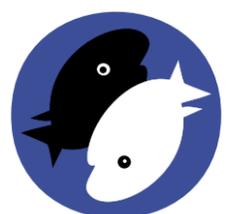
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tveir fiskar

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BSI, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10, 101 Rvk. 591-1000
Netkaffi, Kringlan mall, 103 Rvk. 533-2424
Reykjavik Travel Service, Lækjargata 2, 101 Rvk. 511-2442
Ground Zero, Vallarstræti 4, 101 Rvk. 562-7776

Useful Websites

www.icelandtourist.is
www.visitreykjavik.is
www.grapevine.is

Car rentals

ALP 562-6060
Avis 591-4000
Berg car rental 577-6050
Budget 567-8300
Europcar 591-4050
SBK car rental 420-6000

Other useful numbers

City bus info, 551-2700
BSÍ bus info, 591-1000

Post offices

Central Post office, Pósthússtræti 5, 101 Rvk. 580-1000.
Post offices are easily found around Iceland

Laundry Services

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A Smith laundry, Bergstaðstræti 52, 101 Rvk, 551-7140

Taxi services

Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir 588-5522
Borgarbilstöðin 552-2440
BSR 561-0000

Rent a bike

Borgarhjól, Hverfisgata 50, 101 Rvk 551-5653
Reykjavik travel service, Lækjargata 2, 101 Rvk, 511-2442
Reykjavik Youth Hostel, Sundlaugavegur 34, 105. Rvk. 533-8110

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Vesturbæjarlaug, Hofsvallagata, 101 Rvk.

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place for a late night drink for those who are party (and perhaps more cool) crowd. The entrance is 500 krónur after midnight.

pour on the upper floor and a band in the basement, both doing their best to make a living as human jukeboxes.

19. Prikið

Bankastræti 12
Used to be a traditional coffee house which has been around longer than any but, after a change of clientele, they now cater to a younger crowd. A diner during the day and a nightclub on weekends. You can also borrow games there, such as backgammon or chess.

20. Bar 11

Laugavegur 11
The rock hangout, be it live music or the riff-heavy jukebox. Iceland's premier rock band Mínus are regulars. Bands play and/or poetry is recited most Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. A good place to come down on Sundays, with a screening of cult films.

21. Kaffi Kúltur

Hverfisgötu 18
For those who grow tired of seeing nothing but palefaces about town, Kaffi Kúltur might be a pleasant diversion. During the day it's something of a hangout for the actors from the National Theatre, just across the street, but in the evening it is populated by both new and older Icelanders. They have multi-ethnic food and frequent concerts. Wednesday night is tango night. Anyone can join in, but this is not a place to learn as the regulars know their way around a dancefloor.

22. Jón Forseti

Áðalstræti 10
The oldest house in Reykjavik is now, you guessed it, a gay club. Named after founding father and national hero Jón Sigurðsson, who lived there for a while, it now has various events, including concerts, plays and a gay cabaret, performed on a small stage that tries its best to look big with curtains and everything. So how long until they change George Washington's old place into a gay bar? You heard it here first.

CLUBS

23. Gaukur á Stöng

Tryggvagata 22
Iceland's oldest club is turning 20 this fall. During the day it's a pool pub and on weekday evenings there are live rock concerts by more mainstream bands. On weekends there is usually a lot of action with cover bands playing everything from Britney to the Beatles. Without exception you'll be charged at least 1000kr for entrance in the evenings. Crowd: 20+

24. Nasa

by Austurvöllur
Used to be a theatre, but is now a club. Great sound system and occasional live bands. The town's biggest club, but the high prices do limit the crowd somewhat. Admission 1000 krónur.

25. Pravda

Austurstræti 22
Despite its Soviet-themed name, this is a place where young and heavily made-up consumers go to flaunt it. Somehow the word "plastic" comes to mind, along with dyed hair and solarium tans. Look out for Ken and Barbie, as they are known to party here from time to time.

26. Kapital

Hafnarstræti 17
The town's premier dance music venue. Regularly features top dance DJ's from around the world, as well as the hottest local talent. Watch out for DJ fashionably late, who is also the art director of a reputable local publication. Occasional live bands as well. Huge dance floors on both floors.

RESTAURANTS

27. Við Tjörnina

Templaravund 3
The most novel fish restaurant in Iceland. The owner, Chef Runar Marvinnsson, is known for innovative fish dishes made from a variety of rare fish and shellfish and related raw materials. Mr. Marvinnsson is also a respected food and cooking personality and the author of several cookbooks. His respect for his raw materials is a tribute to fish and shellfish, showing off their natural goodness without artificiality. Chef Marvinnsson is really a natural wonder and a particular favourite with Icelanders!

28. Tveir Fiskar

Geirsgötu 9
Seafood restaurant, although they also do land-based animals. At lunchtime you can have a three course meal for 2300, which isn't too bad, all things considered. The chef has been awarded the Medal of the Order of the White Rose by the President of Finland.

29. Apotek

Austurstræti 16
Formerly the central drugstore of Reykjavik, established in the late 1800s, the Apotek is now a modern restaurant with an Art Deco interior. You can still see the names of the chief managing pharmacists/owners on the wall of the bar. Today, this "drugstore" serves a different type of milkshake. Now look for a sizzling visual kitchen (behind a

glass wall) with a Super Menu! Apotek is an eating experience not to be missed.

30. Hótel Holt

Bergstaðarstræti 37
An exclusive hotel housing Iceland's Most Renowned Restaurant, the Gallery. An evening at The Gallery Restaurant remains an unforgettable experience, if your passion is good wine and food. The superb cuisine is inspired by French culinary tradition and includes a variety of Icelandic seafoods and organic lamb. The impressive selection of vintage wines is unique for lovers of the grape. This is where you will see original Icelandic art, without having to go to a gallery. The Holt has the largest privately owned art collection in Iceland.

31. 3 Frakkar

Baldursgata 14
This is a restaurant that cannot be ignored. A very small place with an atmosphere. Here you may enjoy the house specialties of Icelandic traditional dishes prepared in the good, old-fashioned manner, including catfish, shark, and whale steaks. And of course much more. If you're lucky, Chef Úlfar Eysteinnsson, the owner, may be present regaling the clientele with wild whaling tales. Don't forget to ask Chef Úlfar for dark Icelandic pumpernickel bread with pure Icelandic butter, and don't forget to make a reservation!

32. Siggí Hall at Óðinsvé

Dörsögata 1
Ask Chef Della, the only Italian who is "Commander de la Commanderie de Cordons Bleu de France". Ask Chef Burmistrov at the Corithia Nevskij Palace in St. Petersburg. Ask Chef Jeff Tunks, owner of the fabulous DC Coast in Washington, D.C. Ask anyone who is somebody in the culinary world, and they will tell you about Siggí Hall, Iceland's famous chef and television personality. Siggí Hall has presented Icelandic gourmet food all over the world. His television show is very popular and so are his cookbooks. The Siggí Hall restaurant at Hotel Óðinsvé is one of the 100 best new restaurants in the world according to Condé Nast Travel Magazine. Need we say more?

33. Tapas

Vesturgata 3b
For those with a bit of money and time on their hands, the evening can hardly be better spent than at Tapas, where you can while away the evening having course after course of wonderful miniature dishes. Particularly recommended is the garlic-fried lobster and duck in apricot sauce. If afterwards you don't feel like getting up right away, there's also a rather large lounge to relax in, and the paintings are worth a look.

34. Jónfrúin

Lækjargata 4
In this global age, it can be hard to find good smörrebröd even in Copenhagen. Never fear: out here in the colonies you can still find first rate smörrebröd at Jónfrúin. They even import their own eel directly from Denmark to make one of Scandinavia's delicacies.

35. Rossopomodoro

Laugavegur 40a
This is a new chain of eateries trying to move away from the American image of pizza joints. Originally a local Napoli venture, now a string of modestly cool restaurants striving to make it in Northern Europe. Iceland is one of the first places for Rossopomodoro outside Italy. A clever beginning in a country absolutely free from Neopolitan traditions. A modest wine list with good prices

36. 101 Hotel

Hverfisgata 10
The former headquarters of the Icelandic Social Democratic Party completely reformed, by owner/designer I. Palmadóttir, to a Mecca of the capitalist world of fine arts, contemporary architecture and beautiful people. The hotel is elegant, the restaurant/cafeteria fashionable and the atmosphere is international. A perfect place to have a glance at the jetset eating hamburgers! The martinis are super.

37. Naustið

Vesturgata 6-8
Probably the oldest traditional restaurant in Reykjavik, Naustið has a reputation for fine food and service tailored for visiting groups. The main dining room is fashioned as the interior of a ship. Here the tables and booths are named after famous vessels. Visiting royalties have made this place a must for traditional Icelandic food, such as pickled sheep testicles and other delights.

38. Café Opera

Lækjargata
Situating right in the middle of downtown Reykjavik, the Opera is a popular place for those who missed the 10 o'clock kitchen deadline at restaurants further away from the discos and the midtown nightlife. Café Opera's kitchen is open weekdays until 23:30 and weekends until 01:00 in the morning. A fine cuisine with mouthwatering specialties is a first choice for many local gourmets.

39. Vox

Nordica Hotel
Perhaps a typical off-lobby restaurant, bistro, bar in a four-star hotel, the Vox looks at first glance like a fancy cafeteria spiced up for an official reception. But please do not let that glance throw you off! The restaurant has a modern interior with extremely un-Icelandic décor,

however the kitchen saves the situation. Run by a master chef, a recent winner of the super gastro competition "Bocuse d'Or," the Menu is tops.

FAST FOOD

40. Bernhöftsbakarí

Bergstaðstræti 13
A bakery with traditions going back some 150 years, although it has changed locations. Apart from a supermarket, a bakery is still the best way to fill your belly. Try the staple of Icelandic childhood and beyond: a snúður roll with chocolate milk.

41. Nonnabiti

Hafnarstræti 11
The owner is a miser who charges additionally for everything, but this is almost certainly the best junk food in the Greater Reykjavik area. The subs are great, none of that Subway commitment to healthy living, and they probably contribute significantly to the ever-increasing "size" of the nation. They also serve burgers and sandwiches, and have lunchtime offers.

42. Serranos

Hafnarstræti 20
A Mexican themed eatery, but light on the chilli. Slightly cheaper and lighter on the cholesterol than its neighbour Nonni, but somehow not quite as fulfilling, although you might feel better in the morning. You can get a large burrito and soft drink for 599, which is one of the cheaper ways to fill your belly in this far too expensive town.

43. Hlöllli

By Ingólfstorg
Where Nonni used to work before he went solo, due to creative differences no doubt. The original, but not necessarily the best. They have a somewhat larger selection of subs, and the also have smaller sizes for kids and weight watchers. Brave souls might want to try the Gúmmi-Bátur (rubber boat), which might seem like an oversized relative of the ever-present pulsa.

44. Baejarins bestu

Tryggvagata
They claim to have the best hot dogs in town, and for once the product lives up to the hype. Ask for one with everything, and you'll get a dog in a bun with ketchup, mustard, remulade (don't ask), fried and raw onion. The standard Icelandic hotdog, only somehow it tastes better.

45. Pizza 67

Tryggvagata 26
The local pizza chain that's trying to take on the world, and who currently operate a place in the Faeroes and China, as well as all over Iceland. The have a Summer of Love theme, which doesn't really extend beyond the names of the pizzas, a few slogans and a few posters, but the pizzas are nice. They also do deliveries. They have a lunchtime buffet for 990, for those in search of quantity for the króna.

46. Eldsmíðjan

Bragagata 38a
Oven-baked pizzas simply don't get much better than this. It is slightly more expensive than other pizzerias, but well worth it. A wide selection of toppings, including that sorely missed pizza delight, snails. You can also turn the chef loose and let him decide what goes on it - you'll rarely be disappointed. Take away, order delivery, or eat in at the cosy restaurant upstairs. The paintings are worth a peek as well.

47. Vitabar

Bergþórsgata 21
Actually a bar, but best known for its hamburgers. A burger with fries for 500 is one of the best meal deals in town, but special mention must go to the Forget-Me-Not blue cheese and garlic extravaganza. The Viking beer always feels particularly cold and refreshing here.

48. First Vegetarian (Á naestu grösun)

Laugavegur 20b
Used to be called One Woman Restaurant, as there was always the same woman working there. Has new owners and a larger staff, but the theme is still vegetarian, with one vegan and one wheat-free dish always on offer. The only vegetarian restaurant licensed to carry beer and wine. Remains on the right side of the 1000 krónur bill at lunchtime, slips slightly over in the evening.

49. Pizza Pronto

Vallarstræti 4
Conveniently located by Ingólfstorg, and serves slices until late at night. A good place to have a snack in between bars, particularly if you don't want a whole Hlöllli. They also have a menu (in 9 languages, no less) of three sizes of pizzas with a good selection of toppings. Nice, but seems a bit pricey for the surroundings.

50. Reykjavík Bagel Company

Laugavegur 81
Situating a bit from the immediate centre but close to Hlemmur bus-stop. Bagels, wraps and coffee that might make you feel better in the morning than the more hardcore fast foods farther down the street.

HOW TO USE THE BUS

Reykjavik has no trams, trains or subways, only buses. These yellow things can take you pretty much anywhere in Reykjavik's suburb areas. It's a slow system and you might have to change buses a couple of times to get where you want to though usually things run smoothly, and on time. The price of a single fare is 220kr, for an adult, (60kr for children under 12). If you are in town for more than a few days then the 9 ticket package for 1500kr would be a better bet. Bus cards valid for two weeks a month or three months are also available. You have to pay as you step on board and it has to be the accurate amount, unless you want to pay more for your ride. The driver can not change your money. For those of you used to the honesty system, this system is as honest, because if you don't pay, you don't ride. You can ask the driver for a free time-limited exchange ticket, if you need two buses to complete your journey.

The bus system is closed during the night, you can catch your first bus between 6:40 and 7:00 in the morning, and last call is around 24:00. The main bus stops in Reykjavik are Hlemmur and Lækjartorg (see map), there you'll be able to get all the information you need.



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Food and wine critic – Morgunblaðið Daily Newspaper

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ADDRESS BOOK

Museums

ASÍ Art Museum, Freyjugata 41, 511-5353
 Árbæjarsafn Folk Museum, Kistuhylur 4, p: 557-1111
 Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum, Sigtún, p: 553-2155
 Culture House, Hverfisgata 15, p: 545-1400
 Einar Jónsson, Sculpture museum, Einarsgata, p: 551-3797
 Gerðarsafn, Kópavogur Art Gallery, Hamraborg 4, p: 551-3797
 Gerðuberg Cultural Center, Gerðuberg 3-5, p: 577-0440
 Hafnarborg Art Gallery, Srandgata 34 Hafnarfj, 555-0080
 Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art museum, Tryggvagata 17, p: 590-1200
 Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Hlemmur 5, p: 590-0500
 Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum, Flókagata, p: 517-1290
 Museum of Medical History, Neströð 170, p: 561-1016
 National Film Archive, Vesturgata 11-13 Hafnarfj, p: 565-5994
 National Gallery of Iceland, Frikirkjuvegur 7, p: 515-9600
 Nordic House, Sturlugata 5, p: 551-7030
 Numismatic Collection of the Central Bank, Einholt 4, p: 569-9964
 Nýlistasafnið, The Living Art Museum, Laugavegur 28, p: 551-4350
 Reykjavík Botanical Garden, Laugardalur, p: 553-8870
 Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagata 15, p: 563-1750
 Reykjavík Electricity Museum, Rafstöðvarvegur, p: 567-9009
 Reykjavík Museum of Photography, Tryggvagata 15, p: 563-1790
 Reykjavík Zoo & Family Park, Engjavegur, p: 575-7800
 Saga Museum, Perlan Óskjuhlíð, p: 511-1517
 Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum, Lauganestangi 70, p: 553-2906
 Telecommunications Museum, Suðurgata, p: 550-6410

Galleries

Art Studio Gallery, Vesturgata 12, p: 562-5757
 Gallery Fold, Rauðarárstígur 14-16, p: 551-0400
 Gallery Hnoss, Skólavörðustígur 16, p: 561-8485
 Gallery Hulduhólar, Hulduhólar, p: 566-6194
 Gallery i8, Klapparstígur 33, p: 551-3666
 Gallery Meistari Jakob, Skólavörðustígur 5, p: 552-7161
 Gallery Oféigur, Skólavörðustígur 5, p: 551-1161
 Gallery Sævar Karl, Bankastræti 7, p: 551-3470
 Gallery Tukt, Pósthússtræti 3-5, p: 520-4600
 Hafnarhúsið, Tryggvagata 17 harbour side, p: 588-7576
 Handverk og Hönnun, Aðalstræti 12, p: 551-7595
 Safn, Laugavegur 37, p: 561-8777
 Teddi Workshop, Kapparstígur 2

Other

Broadway Entertainment Hall, Ármúli 9, p: 533-1110
 Kringlan mall, Kringlunni 4-12, p: 568-9200

Theaters

Borgarleikhúsið, City Theatre, Listabraut 3, p: 568-8000
 Þjóðleikhúsið, National Theatre, Hverfisgata 19, p: 551-1200

Restaurants

101 Hotel, Hverfisgata 10, p: 580-0101
 3 Frakkar, Baldursgata 14, p: 552-3939
 Apótek Bar Grill, Austurstræti 16, p: 575-7900
 Café Opera, Lækjargata 2, p: 552-9499

Hótel Holt, Bergstaðarstræti 37, p: 552-5700
 Jómfrúin, Lækjargata 4, p: 551-0100
 Naustið, Vesturgata 6-8, p: 554-0500
 Rossopomodoro, Laugavegur 40a, p: 561-0500
 Siggí Hall at Óðinsvé, Þórsgrata 1, p: 511-6200
 Tapas, Vesturgata 3b, p: 551-2344
 Tveir Fiskar, Geirsgata 9, p: 511-3474
 Við Tjörnina, Templararund 3, p: 551-8666
 Vox Nordica Hotel, Suðurlandsbraut 2, p: 444-5050

Cafés

Café Árnes, by the harbour, p: 551-5101
 Café Paris, Austurstræti 14, p: 551-1020
 Grái Kötturrinn, Hverfisgata 16a, p: 551-1544
 Kaffivagninn, Grandagarður 10, p: 551-5932
 Mokka, Skólavörðustígur 3a, p: 552-1174
 Ráðhúskaffi, City Hall, p: 563-2169
 Segafredo by Lækjartorg, p:
 Súfistinn, Laugavegur 18, p: 552-3740
 Tiu Dropar, Laugavegur 27, p: 551-9380

Café, Bar and Bistro

Bar 11, Laugavegur 11, p: 511-1180
 Café 22, Laugavegur 22, p: 511-5522
 Celtic Cross, Hverfisgata 26, p: 511-3240
 Grand Rokk, Smiðjustígur 6, p: 551-5522
 Hverfisbar, Hverfisgata 20, p: 511-6700
 Jón Forseti, Aðalstræti 10, p: 551-0962
 Kaffi Kúltur, Hverfisgötu 18, p: 530-9314
 Kaffibarinn, Bergstaðastræti 1, p: 551-1588
 Kaffibrennsli, Pósthússtræti 9, p: 561-3600
 Nelly's, Þinghóltsstræti 2, p: 551-2477
 Prikið, Bankastræti 12, p: 551-3366
 Sirkus, Klapparstígur 30
 Vegamót, Vegamótastígur 4, p: 511-3040

Clubs

Gaukur á Stöng, Tryggvagata 22, p: 551-1556
 Kapital, Hafnarstræti 17, p: 511-7007
 Nasa, by Austurvöllur, p: 511-1313
 Pravda, Austurstræti 22, p: 552-9222

Fastfood

Bæjarins bestu, Tryggvagata, p: 894-4515
 Bernhöftsbakari, Bergstaðastræti 13, p: 551-3083
 Eldsmíðjan, Bragagata 38a, p: 562-3838
 First Vegetarian (Á næstu grösum), Laugavegur 20b, p: 552-8410
 Hlílli, by Ingólfstorg, p: 511-3500
 Nonnabíti, Hafnarstræti 11, p: 551-2312
 Pizza 67, Tryggvagata 26, p: 561-9900
 Pizza Pronto, Vallarstræti 4, p: 517-5445
 Reykjavík Bagel Company, Laugavegur 81, p: 511-4500
 Serranos, Hafnarstræti 20, p: 551-1754
 Vitabar, Bergþórugata 21, p: 551-7200

LA MÔME PIAF

by Eyvindur Karlsson



On December 19th, 1915, a voice was born. Her name was Edith Gassion, she was known to the world as Edith Piaf when she sang her way into the hearts of millions before and after the Second World War.

Born into poverty in the red-light district of Paris, her home was the street and her dreams were to be found in the nightclubs and bars of Pigalle. "The Little Sparrow", as she was known, sung her way from the gutter to the salons of the rich and powerful. Although she found fame, happiness was to elude her. A string of broken relationships and a battle with the bottle eventually took their toll. Piaf died, aged only 48

The Icelandic National Theatre is now showing a production based on the life and music of Edith Piaf and written by Sigurður Pálsson. Sigurður who directed a British play about Piaf in 1985, and has since been obsessed with the petite French singer.

Sigurður seems to be set on fitting each and every significant event of her life into a three hour play, in addition to numerous musical numbers. He has likely been torn between these two halves of himself, but might have done better leaving himself out entirely, as the events portrayed on stage are pretty much self explanatory, and do not need narration

The two narrative clowns, as they're called, seem to have the sole purpose of squeezing in parts of Piaf's life that the playwright couldn't fit on the stage. The result is often a bit

chaotic. The show, on the other hand, is very good. Marvellous at times. The cast does sterling work, and the wardrobe draws a vivid picture of period France. The stage setting is wonderful in its simplicity, and the lighting helps achieve a certain atmosphere that complements and enriches the show's highlight: The music.

The house band, led by legendary musician Jóhann G. Jóhannsson, is absolutely brilliant in delivering Piaf's music. The band is on stage most of the show, often taking part in the action. But the most outstanding part of the show is without a doubt Brynhildur Guðjónsdóttir, who plays the part of Edith herself. Not only does she look almost identical to Piaf, she also moves and sounds exactly like her. Her performance is driven, energetic and extremely sincere. No wonder she was awarded a standing ovation at the end of the show. Getting a glimpse into the life of Edith Piaf was interesting in itself, but getting such a marvellous performance of her music was simply amazing.

The lyrics alternated between Icelandic and French, and Brynhildur's voice treated the songs so well it was almost as if Piaf herself was in the room.

Dusk to Dawn

Schedule for June

30.5 Movie Night: E.T. & Event Horizon
 02.6 5ta Herdeildin Concert
 03.6 Jan Mayen Concert
 04.6 Dj Hædi
 05.6 Dj Frosti
 06.6 Movie Night: Batman(1966) & Batman(1989)
 09.6 Heida og Heidingjarnir Concert
 10.6 Sein Concert
 11.6 Dj Doddi
 12.6 Dj Lazer (Jón Atli)

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PICKS MOVIES



Troy

The battles are conducted on a scale David Lean could only have dreamt of. One of very few epics that actually has sympathies with both sides. This is perhaps the film's strongest point. That, and having a story that climaxes with a giant wooden horse not looking silly.



Touching the Void

A dramatised documentary about two British climbers who take on a mountain in Peru. Their planned 24 hour jaunt turns into a harrowing 7 day ordeal. It is tightly scripted, beautifully filmed and gripping to the end. As good as anything coming out Hollywood.

THEATRE

National Theatre

Petta er allt að koma

A play version of Hallgrímur Helgasons book, "Things Are Going Great," directed by Baltasar Konrák. The production is set in a gigantic box, with imaginative special effects. The play tells the story of a young woman growing up in the 70's who moves to America and he disappointments on returning home.



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Reykjavík

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Smiðjustíg 6. p: 551 5522

UPCOMING EVENTS

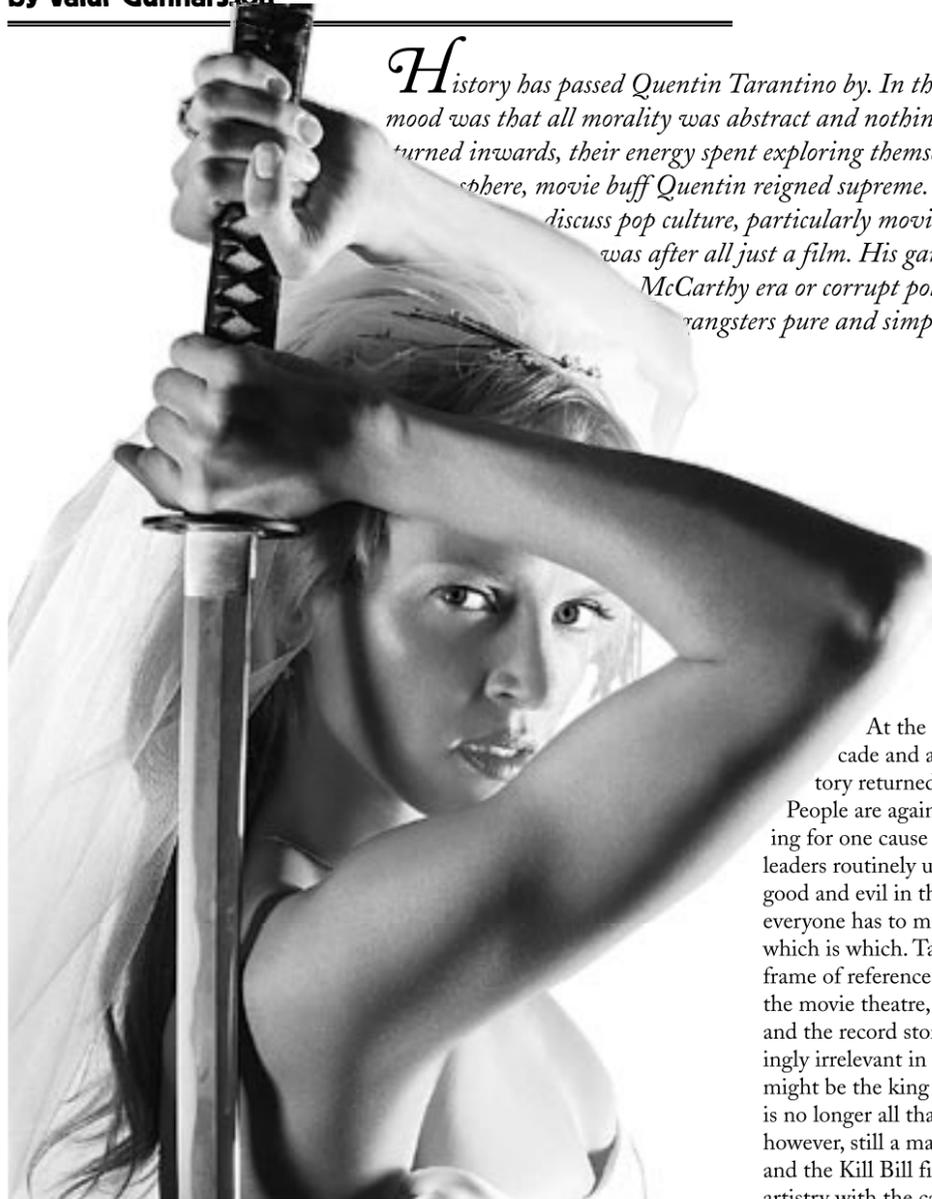
Friday May 28th
 Electro pop night: Funk
 Harmony Park, Tonic & Censor

Saturday May 29th
 Band Blísbyltan

Thursday June 3rd-6th
 Grand Rokk annual arts festival

KILL BILL : AN UNINTENDED APPRAISAL OF THE CLINTON YEARS?

by Valur Gunnarsson



History has passed Quentin Tarantino by. In the 90's, a decade he helped to define, the prevalent mood was that all morality was abstract and nothing really mattered much. Both philosophy and art turned inwards, their energy spent exploring themselves rather than the outside world. In this atmosphere, movie buff Quentin reigned supreme. He patented a style wherein all his characters coolly discuss pop culture, particularly movies, with a knowing nod to the audience that this was after all just a film. His gangsters were not metaphors for communists as in the McCarthy era or corrupt politicians as in the Watergate era; they were movie gangsters pure and simple.

At the dawn of a new decade and a new century, history returned with a vengeance. People are again fighting and dying for one cause or another, world leaders routinely use phrases such as good and evil in their speeches, and everyone has to make up their mind which is which. Tarantino - whose frame of reference seems limited to the movie theatre, the comics store and the record store - seems increasingly irrelevant in such a world. He might be the king of cool, but that is no longer all that matters. He is, however, still a master craftsman, and the Kill Bill films show his sheer artistry with the camera, dancing between genres like the virtuoso he

is, master of style if not substance. Perhaps one of the most impressive things about Kill Bill Vols. 1 and 2 is how different they really are from each other. Vol. 1 was an over-the-top splatter fest, a one woman army slaughtering an endless succession of weak-willed men and strong-willed women. It is perhaps indicative that Tarantino, child of the 90's, chooses a feminine hero, as he came of age in a decade where men, not belonging to any minority with its own cause and culture, found it increasingly difficult to find an identity. Now they have again, for good and for bad, found causes to fight for. The second film shows us a different, more vulnerable side to the heroine. She no longer tackles whole armies; one adversary at a time is more than enough. And one has rarely seen the main character in a film in such dire straits as when the bride is buried alive, in one of the most suspenseful scenes in recent memory. The plot is as simple as can be: the heroine horribly wronged, which justifies her subsequent killing spree.

Tarantino's morality is, as always, vague. He seems to glorify man's killer instinct, those who don't possess it in sufficient quantities being barely worth killing. In the films clumsiest scene, he equates murderers with Superman and the rest of us with Clark Kent, the scenes weakness not so much lying in it's message (which is, of course, kinda cool), but in the fact that we wouldn't believe that particular character would actually read comic books. This is too much Tarantino's own voice we're hearing, comic book villains quoting comic books fail to be believable, even as comic book villains. Kill Bill 2 is probably better than its predecessor, which in turn was better than Jackie Brown, which brings us close to Tarantino in top form. This is great cinema. But perhaps the "who gives a fuck" stance of his generation is partly to blame for the world deteriorating to the state it's in today. The generation growing up under Bush will no longer find the outside world as easy to ignore.

MOVIES : LISTINGS : may 28 - june 10



Hverfisgata 54
Phone: 551-9000
www.regnboginn.is

PREMIERS:
4. júní Jersey Girl

Still running:
Day After Tomorrow
Kill Bill vol. 2
Ella Enchanted
You Got Served
Taxi 3
Peter Pan (dubbed)



Laugarás
Phone: 553-2075
www.laugarasbio.is

PREMIERS:
28. maí Day After Tomorrow
4. june Laws of Attraction

Still running:
Spartan
The Butterfly Effect
Peter Pan



Álfabakka 8
Phone: 587-8900
www.sambio.is

PREMIERS:
28. maí Eurotrip
4. júní Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (English and Icelandic language)

Still running:
The Day After Tomorrow
Troy
Van Helsing



Smáralind
Phone: 564-0000
www.smarabio.is

PREMIERS:
4. júní Jersey Girl

Still running:
Day After Tomorrow
Kill Bill vol.2
Ella Enchanted
You Got Served
Taxi 3
Peter Pan (dubbed)



Kringlan 4-6
Phone: 588-0800
www.sambio.is

PREMIERS:
28. maí Eurotrip
4. júní Harry Potter and the Prisoner Azkaban (English and Icelandic language)

Still running:
The Day After Tomorrow
Troy
Van Helsing



Hagatorg
Phone: 530-1919
www.haskolabio.is

PREMIERS:
Harry Potter and the Prisoner Azkaban (English and Icelandic language)

Still running:
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Van Helsing
Anything Else
Touching the Void

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JAMMING WITH THE REYKJAVÍK NIGHTLIFE FRIEND

by Pdraig Mara

At seven o'clock on a Saturday evening I got the call. After a few weeks of telephone tag and scheduling problems, I was finally going on an excursion with Jón Kári, Chairman and CEO of Reykjavík Nightlife Friend. I was told he was taking out a group of three Americans for their second night in a row of jamming, and would I like to tag along? I kissed my wife goodbye, saying I would be home early Sunday morning, probably somewhat less than sober. The spirit of journalism demanded it.

As I purchased my litre of Becks (a mere apéritif) and an extra box of smokes (ammunition for a long night) and walked down to meet this evenings' team, I wondered exactly how this 'Nightlife Friend' was going to be. I imagined a sort of Icelandic Keith Richards, all barroom pallor and bloodshot eyes, skull ring and pirate bandana included. Helping foreigners jam in a city known for its nightlife has to take its toll. I expected a Reykjavík vampire.

9 o'clock

Answering the door at Jón Kári's Laugavegur apartment was a rather clean cut, bespectacled man in his late thirties wearing an NYPD T-shirt. He introduced himself as Jón Kári. Vampire he was not; I could have easily taken him for a business man. Or a marketing degree holder, a respected professional of some kind. He introduced me around. The Americans, who I'll call James, John and Bill (partly out of respect for their privacy, and also because I can't recall their names), were all from Chicago. James and John were both in the field of finance and

investment, and looked it.

Bill, who happened to be wheelchair-bound, was the District Attorney for the State of Illinois. Not at all the calibre of folks I'm used to getting pissed with. Curious, I pulled up a chair, opened my beer and listened.

As the crew from Chicago went over the drunken details of the previous nights amusements ('Are those twins going downtown tonight?'... 'One is, the other can't get a babysitter'), Jón Kári played the gracious host, pouring beers and cocktails, selecting the music, and making call after call arranging the nights activities. While he topped off my second pint, he explained that though the Reykjavík Nightlife Friend was only four months old as a business, he had been doing exactly this type of thing for years, for free. He explained that while he worked for Icelandair, visiting business people would be referred to him to show them the most popular places to drink, dance, and so on; a sort of nocturnal urban tourguide. He decided to take his

hobby and make it his profession. Soon after, Jón Kári's batphone rang. There was a birthday party in progress somewhere in Reykjavík that we were, if not invited to, not specifically not-invited to, either. The night was just about to jump off.

11 o'clock

We found ourselves in an expansive warehouse on the west side of Reykjavík. The party, winding down by the time we got there, was still fairly full of people. I immediately grabbed myself a healthy dose of free wine, and set about checking the place out. As I inspected the premises, I noticed candles, altar-like installations and pictures of bearded individuals looking decidedly guru-esque. People were walking about in occult costume. I wondered just what the hell was going on here. Then I met the birthday girls' sister. We introduced ourselves. STÍNA: Hi, my names Stína (gesturing to a woman walking passed dressed, well...like a witch) and we're all witches (she starts to

laugh). ME: Hi, my name's Pdraig (gesturing to my countrymen as they chatted up girls at the party). We're all Americans.

I was quite excited to learn this particular birthday party was in fact a witch-type birthday party. I waited eagerly for a Dionysian orgy to break out, or a blood-spattered invocation of the Horned God, anything. I kept asking people when 'the witch stuff' would start. Unfortunately, there would be no occult rites that night. Unless shakin yo ass to 'Daddy Cool' counts.

At one point in the night Jón Kári grabbed me by the arm and said I had to go out on the balcony. I stepped outside, parted the crowd, and witnessed ex-Icelandic Parliamentary man and convicted embezzler Árni Johnsen strumming a guitar and leading the group of witches and friends-of-witches in a spirited version of 'Ó, María mig langar heim', or 'O María I want to go home.' Kinda nice, coming from an ex-convict. I tried to explain the significance of this little scene to one of my fellow Americans, saying it was a bit like Marion Barry (ex-mayor of Wash. D.C. and champion crack smoker) showing up at your party and singing 'Big Rock Candy Mountain'. They still weren't sufficiently impressed. I sat on the railing, lit a smoke and joined in the song. Sometimes real life is more

surreal than fiction.

2 o'clock

At some point it was decided that we should move the festivities to Thorvaldsen, a popular bar in the town square. We arrived just after nearly 60 people had begun lining up to get in. I resigned myself to a good half hour wait. I had not counted on the extent of the Nightlife Friend's mysterious powers. Jón Kári went and had a brief chat with the doorman and, like magic, we moved to the head of the line and right inside. Evidently, when you jam with the Nightlife Friend, you get treated like a minor celebrity.

Thorvaldsen was packed full of elegant people getting, slowly but surely, elegantly shit-faced. I grabbed another pint, found a free bit of wall to lean against and watched as Jón Kári went into social overdrive. He moved from group to group, kissing cheeks and shaking hands introducing and chatting with nearly everyone in the bar.

It's always a pleasure to witness a professional at work... Time passed, drinks were drained. Toward the end of the night the entire bar gathered at the dance floor right by the exit. Everyone danced, spilled drinks, enjoyed themselves in inebriated good spirits. Even I did my 'Monster Mash'. Teeth-bared, lurching back and forth in time to the beat. Well, almost. Its the only dance I know. I noticed however, that its not a dance known at Thovaldsen, or particularly appreciated. At 5 o'clock the exit doors popped open, and we spilled, literally, out into the gathering dawn and the town square.

One of my compatriots demanded I use the phrase 'Worth its weight in gold' to describe the Reykjavík Nightlife Friends services. And so I have.

For more information on rates check out the website at nightlifefriend.is.

MUSIC and NIGHTLIFE LISTINGS : may 28 - june 10

Music and nightlife events usually start around 23:00, unless otherwise noted.

FRIDAY

MAY 28

Café 22

DJ Matti form X-ið radiostation

Dubliners

Rock band Atómstöðin play it loud!!

Dubliners

Troubadour Bjarni Tryggva does his best as a human jukebox

Prikió

Band Búðarbandið play like they feel like.

Kapital

DJ Kered

Grand Rokk

Electro pop night: Funk Harmony Park, Tonic & Conor

Miðbar

Troubadour Siggí, an Icelandic/Canadian drummer plays his favorites with a guitar

Nasa

Band "Í svörtum fötum" or in english: "men wearing less clothes than you want them to" play covers.

Gaukur á Stöng

Band Buff plays whatever, however and all over

Dillon

DJ Andrea Jóns plays rock classics

Hressingarskálinn

DJ Atli Skemmtanalögga

Hverfisbar

DJ Benni, plays a record

Felix

DJ Doktorinn

De Palace

DJ Extreme / Devious plays Psy-Trans music

Prikió

DJ Gísli Galdur

Kaffibarinn

DJ Kári

Sirkus

DJ Maggí Lego, 1/4 of GusGus

Nelly's

DJ Nonni 900

Vegamót

DJ Rampage

Amsterdam

DJ Steini

Glaumbar

DJ Þór Bæring

Café Sólón

DJ Þróstur 3000

Thorvaldsen bar

DJ's Daddi Disko & Hlynur Mastermix

Ari í Ögri

Troubadour duet Dralon play covers

SATURDAY

MAY 29

Café 22

DJ's Palli & Biggí from band Maus, 1/4 of Grapevine will show up like usually, drunk

Dubliners

Rock band Atómstöðin play it loud!!

Grand Rokk

Band Blúsbyltan

Dubliners

Troubadour Bjarni Tryggva does his best as a human jukebox

Kapital

DJ Galactica, Njasta Tækni og Vísindi

Miðbar

Troubadour Siggí, an Icelandic/Canadian drummer plays his favorites with a guitar



PICKS MUSIC and NIGHTLIFE

Grand Rokk. June 3-6

Grand Rokk Arts Festival

Held at a chess/rock bar, this should offer events you're not likely to see anywhere else, including preview of a documentary film about horses, a short film competition with a 1st prize of 350.000ISK, rock band Lokbrá playing traditional Icelandic folk songs in rock versions, cocktails, happenings, art exhibitions, short story contest and an auction where both books and paintings will go to the highest bidding, look for details in the listings.



Bar 11

Heiða og heiðingjarnir

The irrepressible Heiða, whose repertoire goes from pop punk to the Velvet Underground, plays songs from her albums at one of Iceland's premier rock venues. The setting is small but intimate and the band rarely disappoints.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Weekend 28-29th of May

Upstairs: Band 3some plays covers

Downstairs: Band Spilafíklarnir play covers

Weekend 4-5th of June

Upstairs: Troubadour Ómar Hlynsson

Downstairs: Troubadour Garðar Garðarsson

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Violent Femmes: New York band searches for its roots.

by Bart Cameron

So that's why you talk funny," says Gordon Gano, the singer and songwriter of the Violent Femmes, when I introduce myself as a writer from Racine, Wisconsin.

The Violent Femmes were my local band. I saw them at least five times in high school. My friends and I thought of them as friends who just weren't with us right now. We joked about Gano's odd weight fluctuation in 1995 and his flat-out geekiness. We made fun of Brian Ritchie for being so angry and for playing instruments with a little too much competence and intensity - too much like a Wisconsin jock. We made fun of Victor Delorenzo for being too ridiculously entertaining - if you make a joke at an inopportune time, my friends will say you've pulled an "Uncle Victor." We are all from what might be called a difficult section of Wisconsin; the industrial corridor between Chicago and Milwaukee along Lake Michigan known for its pollution and juvenile crime. Of course, that was ten years ago. I now tell people I'm from Brooklyn, not the armpit of Southeastern Wisconsin. And I'm interviewing Gordon Gano in Reykjavík, a town that, from the statistics about

literacy, crime and clean air, is something like the opposite of our home towns. Gano is smoking a cigar, sipping an espresso and, it seems to me, facing me down. "How do you feel Wisconsin affected your music," I say, and he grimaces. "I don't really see how Wisconsin played a role in the music," he says. "Brian and Victor feel differently, but, well, except for having time and nothing else to do... I never even fit in there. People always asked me where I was from." That pretty much shoots the interview. I have eight more minutes to talk to the man I thought wrote poignant, fantastically candid and amusing lyrics dedicated to the Wisconsin experience. He doesn't agree. I ask if he can think of anything else about our home state. This is the lead singer of the band that released an album called "Viva, Wisconsin." "I always say I did ten to twenty in Wisconsin." Change of subject.



I can't bring myself to ask the joke question 'What do you think of Iceland?' so I nod toward the Penninn bag on his dressing room table and tell him that Icelanders had told me he bought a lot of expensive poetry. He can't believe I could know about this, that Reykjavík could be such a small town. He pulls out Action Poétique and shrugs at it. In a rush he bought a translation from Icelandic to French. I ask if he speaks French. "I can get the meaning, but not much else," he says. I realize that I'm not getting along

with my idol. It gets worse. "You know who I've found here? Jón Leifs or Liefs. Great classical composer of the early 20th Century. Mixed the traditions of Iceland with German training. From what I can tell, he really succeeded." Gordon Gano, the man who wrote the catchiest masturbation jingle in the history of modern music, may have just uttered the most boring sentences I've heard in Iceland.

Victor Delorenzo comes in and saves the day. "You're from Racine? My god, I can't believe that. Such a small world," he says when Gano introduces me.

We leave Gano to his dressing room, Brian Ritchie is wandering between the backstage area and the show to hear the opening band and stopping occasionally to explain to everyone how he missed the tour of Reykjavík. "I thought you said we were going at three o'clock. So I woke up late and thought everyone had gone and I went out by myself. But you left at three." He repeats this to each person who will listen, three times total. Delorenzo is ecstatic in general, and he is talking about the pleasures of traveling, his new solo album, a musical interpretation of Marcel Duchamp, his son in Brooklyn, and the neighborhoods and atmospheres

of our home town. "You know what it is about Racine, it was so desolate. It created that railroad folk sound," Delorenzo says and nods at me so that I write it down. He seems impossibly happy about being from a desolate, railroad folk town. The band has to go on in five minutes, and Victor Delorenzo is still talking with me, though he takes breaks to talk with the security guards and anybody else who seems at all uncomfortable. Finally he apologizes and says he should go to the dressing room, "Because I should at least go over things before we go on."

Minutes later, the Violent Femmes play for a sold out audience - at about \$40 a ticket. They play better than I've ever seen them play, and I think about telling the show's producers, three unusually affable Icelanders, about the time Gano played nothing but feedback for twenty minutes, mumbling his own name into the microphone to a crowd of 15,000 Wisconsin fans waiting for "Blister in the Sun." The producers are mostly talking about Victor Delorenzo, though, who they claim is one of the nicest people they've ever met. Toward the end of the Reykjavík show, Gano introduces himself. "I'm from New York," he says.

MUSIC and NIGHTLIFE LISTINGS : continued

Gaukur á Stöng
Band Buff plays whatever, however and all over

Amsterdam
Band Penta plays covers

Sirkus
Discotheque Árni Sveinsson

Dillon
DJ Andrea Jóns plays rock classics

Hressingarskálinn
DJ Atli Skemmtanalögga

Felix
DJ Doktorinn

Prikió
DJ Jói

Hverfisbar
DJ Kiddi Bigfoot plays the same record

Nelly's
DJ Nonni 900x2=1800

Kaffibarinn
DJ Raggi, member of band Botnleðja

Vegamót
DJ Sóley

Glaubar
DJ Þór Bæring

Café Sólón
DJ Þróstur 3000

Thorvaldsen bar
DJ's Daddi Disko & Hlynur Mastermix

Ari í Ögri
Troubadour duet Dralon play covers

SUNDAY
MAY 30
Kaffibarinn
DJ Árni Sveins

Sirkus
DJ KGB

Prikió
DJ KGB

Amsterdam
DJ Steini

Dubliners
Troubadour Ingvar Valgeirs

Café 22
DJ Honky Tonk (Andri X)

Kapital
303; Frímann & Bjóssi

Felix
DJ Andri

Hverfisbar
DJ Kiddi Bigfoot, probably didn't go home to get a new record to play.

Glaubar
DJ Þór Bæring

WEDNESDAY
JUNE 2
Kaffibarinn
DJ Jón Atli

Kapital
Chill Out; Ambient, Jazz & Beer offers

Dubliners
Troubadour Bjarni Tryggva

Bar 11
Band 5ta Herdeildin play

Glaubar
DJ Stoner the Boner

THURSDAY
JUNE 3
Kaffibarinn
DJ Raggi again

Grand Rokk
18:00: Opening
The Grand Rokk Male Choir sings. Opening of art exhibition by known local artists, including footballer Halldór, as well as a 2nd exhibition of young artists from Faxaskáli workshop.
21:00 Crime short story contest. 40 stories compete
23:00 Jazz night. Siggí Flosi Trio.

Kapital
Breakbeat.is; DJ's Gunni Ewok, Lelli, Kalli, Reynir

Jón Forseti
Karaoke Night

Prikió
Lady's Night: DJ Sóley

Dubliners
Troubadour Bjarni Tryggva

Gaukur á Stöng
Band Ulpa play. Ulpa are one of the finer members of the underground music scene, great stuff.

Bar 11
Rockband Jan Mayen, their last release was chosen EP of the year

Nasa
Band START

Glaubar
DJ Stoner the Boner

FRIDAY
JUNE 4
Bar 11
DJ Hædri

Nasa
DJ She-Devil from the U.K.

Dubliners
Cover band Spilafíklar

Grand Rokk
17:30 Pub Quiz
19:30 Band Slow Beatles (downstairs)
20:30 Last years short films screened
21:30 Live Music: Gummi Jóns, Daysleeper, 9-11's, Lára and also; Band Lokbrá performs Icelandic trad. songs.

Prikió
Band Búðarbandið entertain themselves and others

Kapital
DJ Exos

Miðbar
Pianist Sigurjón plays singalongs

Nasa
Band START

Gaukur á Stöng
Band Íslenski Fáninn or The Icelandic Flag play covers. Most song Icelandic trad pop.

Dillon
DJ Andrea Jóns plays rock classics

Hressingarskálinn
DJ Atli Skemmtanalögga

Felix
DJ Doktorinn

Prikió
DJ KGB

Café Sólón
DJ Þróstur 3000

Vegamót
DJ's Dóri & Hannes

De Palace
Mjólínis & Tangarhöfða party

Ari í Ögri
Troubadour duet Acoustic play covers

Celtic Cross
Troubadours Ómar Hlynsson and Garðar Garðarson

SATURDAY
JUNE 5
Kaffibarinn
Lobster summer, DJ KGB

Bar 11
DJ Frosti

Dubliners
Cover band Spilafíklar

Grand Rokk
14:00 Documentary Hestasaga (Horse tale) by Þorfinnur Guðnason preview
15:00 An outdoor event by Ragga Gísla & Anna Richardsdóttir
17:00 Cocktails
18:00 Grand Rokk's 3rd annual Short Film festival, 1st prize is 350.000kr
23:00 Culture ball

Jómfrúin
Summer Jazz, Sigurdur Flosason's Trio. Lineup: Sigurdur Flosason - alt sax, Þórir Baldursson - Hammond B-3 and Erik Quick - Drums. Free entrance.

Miðbar
Pianist Sigurjón plays singalongs

Dillon
DJ Andrea Jóns plays rock classics

Felix
DJ Andri

Hressingarskálinn
DJ Atli Skemmtanalögga

De Palace
DJ Extreme / Devious plays Psy-Trans music

Prikió
DJ Jói

Kapital
DJ Margeir & DJ Ymir

Café Sólón
DJ Þróstur 3000

Thorvaldsen bar
DJ's Daddi Disko & Hlynur Mastermix

Vegamót
DJ's Tommi White & Maggi Jóns

Gaukur á Stöng
Icelandic stoner rock band Brain Police and a rock band from Sweeden (Grapevine didn't know who when this went to print) play rock.

Nelly's
Princess Of India, Leoncie plays her greatest hits, such as Love at the Bar.... Entrance fee 1000ISK.

Ari í Ögri
Troubadour duet Acoustic play covers

Celtic Cross
Troubadours Ómar Hlynsson and Garðar Garðarson

SUNDAY
JUNE 6
Grand Rokk
15:00 Short story competition rerun.
17:00 Bragi book auction, Jón Proppé with his hammer
18:00 Art auction, all paintings painted over the weekend sold
19:30 Horse tale rerun
21:00 Andrea's Bluesmen

Dubliners
Andy Garcia

Prikió
Cult movie night

TUESDAY
JUNE 8
Prikió
DJ experiments

WEDNESDAY
JUNE 9
Kaffibarinn
DJ Gísli Galdur

Bar 11
Band Heiða & Heiðingjarnir; See page 30

THURSDAY
JUNE 10
Kaffibarinn
DJ Benni

Jón Forseti
Karaoke Night

Bar 11
Band Sein play rock!!

Prikió
DJ Sóley, women night

plastikk
laugavegur 17
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A LONG TIME AGO IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY...

by Eydís Björnsdóttir

Close-up is an exhibition of American Contemporary Art, which is currently being held at the National Gallery of Iceland and runs until the 27th of June.

Greeting me at the entrance was the marble statue of Michael Jackson and Bubbles, all glittered with gold. I looked at the white and shiny surface representing skin that once was dark, and I couldn't help a number of possible cheap shot jokes springing to mind.

The exhibition is a collection of dissimilar artworks by various artists who are united by their method of expression. The exhibition has normal, almost mundane things that no one would ever bother documenting for the sole reason that they're just too common. However, whatever their intended meaning, some of those works are much like a joke gone horribly wrong. Nonetheless, the exhibition is overall rather entertaining. The works contain references to society in a way that demands the viewers' knowledge of certain icons, social situations or occurrences in order to see the big picture. I was infatuated with the desolate pink image of Andy Warhol's Big Electric Chair, quite apart from whatever political or sociological message it might hold. But of course it is laden with meaning. It not only represents the icon of the death penalty in the U.S. but also planned death as opposed to chaotic, random accidental death.

In the basement rolls an amusing filmstrip made by Bruce Nauman

entitled Setting a Good Corner. It reminded me of all the hours I've spent watching my father put together IKEA products or battle the station programmer of new television sets with only the aid of a German manual. In other words boredom silently endured out of curiosity of what the end result might be. Still, that's being a trifle unfair. My dad doesn't own a fancy chainsaw, let alone know how to wave it around as smashingly as Nauman does. A thing to be wary of, when sneaking about in surroundings such as these where everything is charged with subtle meaning, is not to start overanalyzing various objects. I have another confession to make. Upon entering one of the showrooms, I saw an ordinary chair situated beneath a placard. The placard dis-



played the name of Bruce Nauman and his artwork Large Butt to Butt. Was this really art? Up rose my rebellious nature as I immediately sat myself down. Alas, my revolution was quick to fall apart, for as I sat there and gazed over the room I realized that what I was sitting on and appeared to be an ordinary chair was in fact an ordinary chair, put there for the comfort of weary museum visitors. The true artwork hung in midair in the middle of the room, gloating over my defeat. Whatever difficulty I may have deci-

phering those peculiar conundrums, I allow myself to doubt that I'm the only one who needs the occasional hint. Sometimes they forget to connect those dots. Thankfully, there are the friendly pieces of paper coated in plastic that are scattered around the museum for people such as myself. They have basic information about the artists and their works but more importantly, some contain explanations on the idea behind an artwork or two. The contemporary society that the artworks refer to is in some cases not all that contemporary either in time or space. As an example, Felix Gonzalez-Torres' work Placebo from 1991 refers to the medical pseudo treatment of AIDS patients. Even if a cure has not yet been found, there have undoubtedly been some changes in this field for the last ten years or so, not to mention in society's view towards the disease and those who suffer from it. Art such as this is based on the assumption that the viewer knows the soil it springs from. At one point, Koons uses vacuum cleaners as the means of his expression. It shouldn't be too difficult to understand the artwork because we all know what a vacuum cleaner does, but there can be a discreet, yet distinct message within the fact that it is an American vacuum cleaner and not European or Korean. We are not used to vacuum cleaners that look like that and thus experience the artwork as more exotic than an American housewife would, who might even feel that the art is elevating her own life. Therefore, as much as these artists enjoy taking objects out of everyday context to make their point, it should not be forgotten that as soon as the "everyday" changes, so does their art and its meaning. It is the sort of exhibition we wished we had from cultures such as the ancient Egyptians, the Babylonians or even our very own berserk Vikings. As a result, later civilizations are usually left with huge gaps in their recorded knowledge of "ye olde times". An exhibition such as this might reflect more accurately what contemporaries were actually thinking.

Snapshots of the Reykjavík art festival



PICKS ARTS and CULTURE

Reykjavík Art Museum

Art school graduation exhibit

The Listaháskóla show at the Reykjavík Art Museum may provide the most authentic and enthusiastic exhibit of Icelandic art. It is a joy to see the young, active artists of Iceland representing themselves at this beautiful museum. The quality of the work varies wildly - the video installations by Malin Stáhl and Þóra Sólveig Bergsteinsdóttir are confident, complete, and use the space of the museum unusually well.

Kjarvalsstaðir

Roni Horn's New Iceland Exhibit

I knew Roni Horn's Icelandic photographs for their unusual balance of salesmanship, subtlety and intimacy. Horn's current exhibit Hún, hún, hún og hun, at Kjarvalsstaðir until August, does not look like her famous works, and it may leave the viewer unsatisfied.

Laugavegur 37

Safn



Opened to the public in spring 2003, it comprises a collection which represents over 30 years of collecting by Pétur Arason and Ragna Róbertsdóttir. There is the largest and most significant private collection of its kind in Iceland. Safn will be featuring temporary exhibitions of new work alongside the permanent collection.

May-June 20, New works by Icelander Margrét H. Blöndal.

Additional new works this season by artists from Germany and Holland. For more information on the website, visit www.safn.is



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Building something out of nothing. From HI-FI to LO-FI

by Aðalsteinn Jörundsson

On May 1st I entered the Klink & Bank's artist facility to attend their first exhibition since it started in February. It was apparent at once what a treasure this house is for artists. Each and every one has a studio for themselves, whether they are into music, drama, graphic design or just good-old-classic painting and everything beyond and in between. You name it; if you are an artist in a need of a studio, you can get housing with Internet access and all modern comforts and pay only minimum fee to cover heat and electricity.

In one of those rare instances of the rich giving to the poor, the National Bank of Iceland decided to practically give an office building to artists to use as studios. The building had previously housed a rope factory and then Fréttablaðið newspaper. A debate, albeit not a very deafening one, had been going on about artists in need of studios, so bank owners contacted an art gallery named Klink & Bang offering them the house for a minimum fee. Klink & Bang were only too happy to accept and named the facility Klink (small change) & Bank (a bank). The selection of artists to use the facility was done by a committee that democratically reviewed applications. The accepted artists then went into their studios and started work, interacting between themselves and exchanging

ideas, the ideal of a mix between different art forms having become a reality.

The exhibition on May 1st was the first fruit of this artistic melange. Fourteen of the selected artists were given the concept of LO-FI to work with and the result was then revealed to the public. When I spoke with the curators Huginn Þór Arason and Unnar Örn Auðarson Jónasson about this choice of concept, they said they wanted to do it in honour of Dieter Roth and others who, along with groups such as the Flúxus and Súm, helped reinvent artistic expression in the sixties. They opposed the idea that art needed to be made of some specific matter to be worth something. They attempted to create their works out of everyday material that had been rejected or wasn't



considered to have any value, and convert it into a part of something sublime. They said that the idea itself was golden and the matter it was created out of needn't be gold as well. They created gold out of junk, so to speak.

With this in mind I then walked about the showroom. There was one piece that I particularly liked because I thought it was the strongest expression of the concept as I understood it. It was a basketball-sized coconut roll by Huginn Þór Arason, one of the curators. What he

was pointing out was that a coconut roll is usually made of scrapings from the bakery. Rejected flour, sugar and assorted bakery ingredients are kneaded into dough with a bit of chocolate powder and butter and then formed into small balls with a sprinkle of coconut on top. From what I had learned, this was the very essence of LO-FI; A huge coconut roll on a pedestal. Rejected material formed into a perfect form and then displayed. Imperfection made perfect.

I walked on through the exhibition room and into the basement where there was something completely different going on. Tilraunaeldhúsið or the Kitchen Motors were celebrating their fifth anniversary. To describe their work it is best to say that they are sort of sound sculpturists that have been actively playing their noise music every month or so. The outcome is a huge number of sound sculpturists that came together that day in the basement of Klink & Bank to celebrate their birthday. It was good to see a former rope factory being put to good use. I hope the National Bank won't soon see a higher (FI) purpose for it.

ARTS and CULTURE LISTINGS : may 28 - june 10

ONGOING

Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum

10:00-16:00 every day
The Man and Material. A retrospective exhibition of works by Ásmundur Sveinsson.

Telecommunications Museum

Tue, Thu & Sun 11:00-17:00
Pictures and items related to the history of telecommunications.

Reykjavík Zoo and Family Park

10:00-18:00 every day
Icelandic horse and sheep, along with local varieties other animals in the zoo. Right beside it is the Park, which has various activities for the whole family.

Reykjavík Botanical Garden

10:00-22:00 every day
All kinds of plants and flowers on display.

Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum

10:00-17:00 every day
Roni Horn: Her, her, her and her: Photographs taken in the Reykjavík Swimming Hall. Francesco Clemente: New Works. Exhibition of new works by the famous Italian artist.

Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum

10:00-17:00 every day
Works from the Kjarval Collection. Kjarval's career as a painter spans the years 1901 to 1968. An overview of Kjarval's work which shows how he developed as an artist.

Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum

Tue-Sun 14:00-17:00
Works of Einar Jónsson, Iceland's first sculptor.

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum

10:00-17:00 every day
The annual graduation exhibition of the Iceland Academy of the Arts. No entrance fee Ends May 31

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum

10:00-17:00 every day
Part of the Erró Collection on show.

National Gallery of Iceland

11:00-17:00 every day
Close-up. American Contemporary Art. Includes the Jacko porcelain statue, the most expensive piece of art ever to come to Iceland.

Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum

Tue-Sun 14:00-17:00
Works by the artist.

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Mon-Fri 12:00-19:00, Sat & Sun 13:00-17:00
A collection of Finnish contemporary photographs.

Museum of Medical History

Sun, Tue, Thu, Sat 13:00-17:00
Artefacts, tools, instruments and pictures on the subject.

Numismatic Collection of the Central Bank

Mon-Fri 9:00-17:00, Closed 12:00-13:00.
Icelandic coins and banknotes.

Icelandic Institute of Natural History

Tue, Thu, Sat, Sun 13:00-17:00
Geological, botanical and zoological exhibits, displaying the nature of Iceland.

Nordic House

Mon-Fri 8:00-17:00, Sat & Sun 12:00-17:00
Paintings by Sigurður Þórir.

Saga Museum

10:00-16:00 every day.
The Saga museum intimately recreates key moments in Icelandic history and gives a compelling view into how Icelanders have lived and thought for more than a millenium through the use of life size likenesses

Culture House

11:00-17:00 every day

Many of Iceland's national treasures are on display in the Culture House's featured exhibition Medieval Manuscripts – Eddas and Sagas. The exhibition Home Rule 1904 is held on the centenary of Home Rule in Iceland 2004.

Gerðarsafn, Kópavogur Art Gallery

Tue-Sun 11:00-17:00.
Private Collection - Icelandic Painting in Denmark. Also Opus, Paintings on Plexiglas by Bjarni Sigurbjörnsson.

Gerðuberg Cultural Center

Mon-Fri 11:00-19:00, Sat-Sun 13:00-17:00.
Women of the world - art exhibition. Works of 176 women from 176 countries.

Reykjavík City Library

Mon-Fri 10:00-16:00
Books and periodicals in Icelandic as well as English, Scandinavian and other languages. Also has childrens and a comic book section.

Hafnarborg Art Gallery

Wed-Sun 11:00-17:00
Ólöf Erla Bjarnadóttir exhibits her ceramic works and Arngunnur Ýr Gyfadóttir her paintings. Ends June 7

Gallery Fold

Mon-Fri 10:00-18:00 Sat 11:00-17:00 Sun 14:00-17:00
One of the largest Galleries in Iceland, works by many know artists.

Handverk og Hönnun

Mon-Fri 09:00-16:00
Craft and design. Craftspeople transfer – in modern and dynamic ways – nature's shapes, colours and materials to their work.

Gallery Hnoss

Mon-Fri 12:00-18:00 Sat 11:00-16:00
Auður Eysteinsdóttir works with aquarelle, pastels and stained glass. Hildur Margrétardóttir works with oil on canvas and aquarelle.

Gallery I8

Thu & Fri 11:00-18:00
Catharsis. In her work Gabriela Fríðriksdóttir presents the manifold faces of melancholy in many of her sculptures and drawings.

Gallery Meistarar Jakob

Mon-Fri 11:00-18:00, Sat 11:00-14:00
The gallery is run by eleven artists who work in ceramics, textiles, printmaking and paintings and you will always find one of them at the gallery.

Gallery Ófeigur

Mon-Fri 10:00-18:00, Sat 10:00-16:00
Exhibitions by Sunna Sigurðardóttir.

Gallery Sævar Karl

Mon-Fri 10:00-17:00
Harpa Björnsdóttir installation inside the clothes store.

Gallery Tukt

Mon-Thu 13:00-18:00, Fri 13:00 - 17:00
Various artists.

Gallery Hulduhólar

Sat 11:00-14:00
Ceramic artwork from Steinunn Marteinsdóttir.

Safn

Wed-Fri 14:00-18:00. Sat & Sun 14:00-17:00
The works were the artists' most current works at the time of the museums purchase. The artists in Safn include: Donald Judd, On Kawara, Karin Sand-er, Lawrence Weiner, Dan Flavin, and Dieter Roth.

Teddi - Workshop

10:00-18:00 every day
Open workshop of tree sculptures of Teddi

Hafnarhúsið, harbour side

Tue-Sun 14:00-18:00
Björg Þorsteinsdóttir: Flow. Watercolor paintings. Ends May 30

Art Studio Gallery

Mon-Fri 10:00-16:00
Ceramic by Svetlana Matusa and oilpaintings by Helgi Hálfánarson

Gallery Fold

Mon-Fri 10:00-18:00 Sat 11:00-17:00 Sun 14:00-17:00
Photographs by Artist Fríðrik Tryggvason. Acryl paintings on canvas by Trygvi Ólafsson. Ends June 6

ASÍ Art Museum

Tue-Sun 10:00-18:00
CONFIDENTIAL. Visual exhibition of two leading young and fresh artists Ragnar Kjartansson and Magnus Sigurdsson. Exhibition includes troubadours and confidential conversation. Ends June 6

FRIDAY

MAY 28

17:00

Kringlan mall

Arts festival: KK and Guðmundur Pétursson perform music.

20:00

The Icelandic Opera

Arts festival: Brodsky String Quartet - A classical concert at Icelandic Opera.

20:00

Borgarleikhúsið, City Theatre

Arts festival: The Raven's rhapsody Hugstolinn, the Raven's rhapsody

21:00

Broadway Entertainment Hall

Arts festival: Klezmer Nova - french klezmer jazz. One of the leading French klezmer bands, whose roots are in classical music, jazz and pop.

SATURDAY

MAY 29

14:00

Kringlan mall

Arts festival: Dog missing, music feat.

14:00

Háskólabíó

Arts festival: Icelandic film music – then and now. Kasa group performs film music by Icelandic composers –then and now at Háskólabíó.

16:00

Borgarleikhúsið, City Theatre

Arts festival: Brodsky String Quartet - a classical concert at Icelandic Opera.

SUNDAY

MAY 30

21:00

Broadway Entertainment Hall

Arts festival: Susana Baca - the barefoot diva from Peru. World music from the Peruvian Grammy Award winner.

MONDAY

MAY 31

11:00-16:00

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum

Hugstolinn, the Raven's rhapsody. Chamber opera by Janick Mosian. Composers from Alaska, Iceland and Finland and Faroe Islands.

21:00

Broadway Entertainment Hall

Arts festival: Susana Baca - the barefoot diva from Peru. World music from the Peruvian Grammy Award winner.

14:00

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum

Children's puppet show at 2pm

SATURDAY

JUNE 5

All day

City Harbour

Festival of the Sea. The first weekend in June is a special day in Iceland a celebration of the importance of the sea and its sailors to Icelandic history economy and people.

SUNDAY

JUNE 6

16:00

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum

New exhibition opens in Suðurgata 7: Women's national dress. Folk dances at 4 pm.

All day

City Harbour

Festival of the Sea. The first weekend in June is a special day in Iceland a celebration of the importance of the sea and its sailors to Icelandic history economy and people.

THURSDAY

JUNE 10

19:30

Háskólabíó

The Iceland Symphony Orchestra. Igor Stravinsky: Pulcinella, Firebird (1919), Rite of Spring

Café Árnes

By the Reykjavík harbour

Suðurbugt Reykjavík harbour

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SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW ?

The only Rossopomodoro in Northern Europe

by Sonny Greco

I don't blame you if you think that this is just another franchised restaurant. Another automatic feeder, shoveling patented portions on your plate. Another patented fast food production that all tastes the same.

Wrong!

Rossopomodoro is a franchise operation, to be sure. It is based on the pure Italian Napoli pizza mentality. However, there are not many Rossos. One in Madrid, one in Rio de Janeiro and one in Reykjavik. In the mother country, Italy, you may find three in Milano, if you look closely. But in Napoli, the birthplace of pizzas, you'll only find seven or so!

Having a built-in dislike for chain restaurants, cafeterias and fast food establishments, I was ready to dismiss the Rosso in Reykjavik as a dressed up pizzeria with an ill conceived wine list thrown in. The Sebeto group of Napoli have succeeded in the creation of quite the opposite of everything I dislike about franchised food establishments,

made these frightful things quite tolerable and, in some cases, quite good. Rossopomodoro is a cross between a traditional ethnic restaurant and a casual pizzeria. Rosso succeeds where Pizza Hut (and other places) fail miserably.

Ok, hold on to your hats. The Rosso in Reykjavik, the only place of its kind in Northern Europe, can boast a solid, friendly, service-minded staff. This is more than can be said of similar establishments in Southern Europe, where far too often you feel that you are keeping your waiter from an exciting game of poker in the back room. The staff in Reykjavik seems to like their job (so far) and it shows.

The wine list is perhaps nothing to write home about. But the list

includes medium to good Italian wines that go well with the fare. There is even a surprisingly good Colthon Nero d'Aviola that leaves a good taste in your mouth and a fine feeling in the bottom of your tummy. Best of all, the prices on the wine list are from cheap to moderate compared with Reykjavik's restaurants in similar categories.

So what else is there? The food? Oh well, no first prizes I am afraid. But if you like mozzarella, you should try the "Abufala" with salad. There is also the "O Fusillo" pasta with bacon, cacio and black pepper. And last but not least the smoked "Scamorza" cheese with bacon. However, if you don't care for things like that, a plain beefsteak with mushrooms, parmesan and pepper, "A Straniera," will

definitely make you happy.

The magic formula seems to be: Blend a Napoli trattoria together with a casual Italian ristorante, spice it with good Icelandic service - and you'll have a very pleasant Rossopomodoro! Interested? I thought so.



Enter the Dragon

Eating in Reykjavik on a Budget : Part One

by Marc Mettle

Keeping up with the high-priced fashions and day-to-day living in Reykjavik can get expensive. A café latte here, a pair of Diesel jeans there - if you aren't thrifty, things add up all too quickly. And realizing you are too broke to buy beer on the weekends can turn life into an existential crisis.

Believe me, I've been there. Living as a college student in Reykjavik, I have come to understand the true meaning of the word "budget." To me, everything is counted in beer. 300 krónur for coffee? That's half a beer!

But whether you are saving

money for your drinking or your dignity, remember that you don't have to dumpster dive for dinner. It is possible to find affordable prices beneath Reykjavik's overwhelmingly expensive exterior.

Enter the dragon. Drekkinn ("The Dragon" in English) is a wonderfully inexpensive place to grab a bite to eat. Located just down Frakkastigur from Hallgrímskirkja, Drekkinn offers a traditionally greasy menu with great prices.

According to owner Gudmundur Ingvarsson, Drekkinn has been open for more than 40 years as a small convenience shop. It was only a year ago that the shop extended its services to a fast-food joint.

Now the store skillfully does double duty, without losing the convenience. From 8am to 11:30pm everyday, Drekkinn carries both basic grocery goods and generously-priced fast food.

A full dinner at Drekkinn will rarely cost more than 600-700 kronur per person. The combo meals are the best steal, which include a grilled sandwich, hamburger or cheeseburger with fries and a 1/2-liter beverage.

They fill you up for only 500-600 kronur.

And the fries are worth that price alone. Filling and thick (not to be confused with McDonald's skimpy and starved fries), Drekkinn's fries are especially addictive when dipped in Iceland's wondrous cocktail sauce. Starting in the middle of May, an extended menu will be introduced, including chicken- and lambsteak sandwiches, pitas, fried fish and onion rings. Eating in at Drekkinn adds a special flavor to the experience. One long table with bar stools serves as the dining area, perfect for people on a tight schedule and wanting a no-frills meal. Or you can take time to skim the daily newspapers and enjoy watching the children stop in to see how much candy they can afford with a pocketful of coins. Don't get me wrong. There is nothing poignant about Drekkinn. It's a simple place that serves exactly what fast food should be: Cheap and greasy, hot off the grill. Besides, wouldn't you rather burn the roof of your mouth than a hole in your pocket?



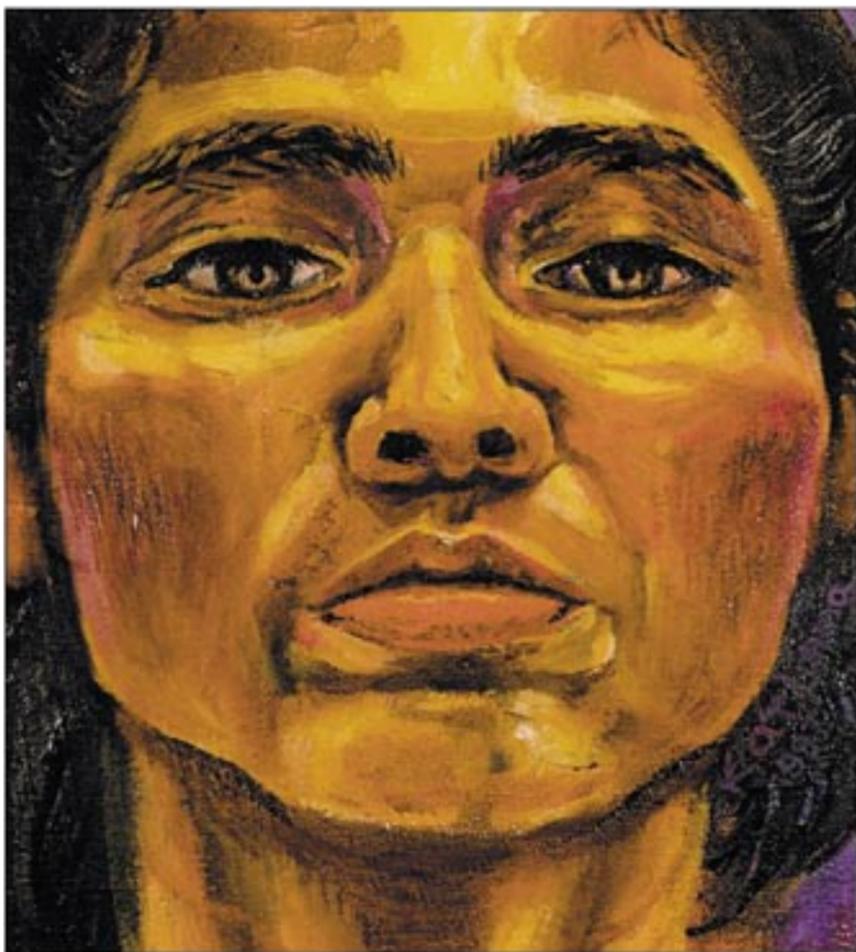
In the very heart of Reykjavik you can enjoy a real Italian cuisine and wine at a very reasonable prize in a cozy atmosphere. Our spacious interior is perfectly suited for groups. This Naples-style restaurant is as Italian as it gets!

Grapevine protests

Grapevine has just moved into a new locale in Hafnarstræti 15. The long hours and absence of culinary skills means that the surrounding fast food places have all been thoroughly investigated. Serrano's tastes nice and is cheap but entirely too healthy for our purposes. There is a new sandwich bar opening

next door that remains to be explored. However, by far the best bite around is Nonni. Your heart beats slower, your veins clog up and you lose years of your life with every sandwich, but those years are well spent. However, the price for this pleasure has just gone up. Again. We protest.





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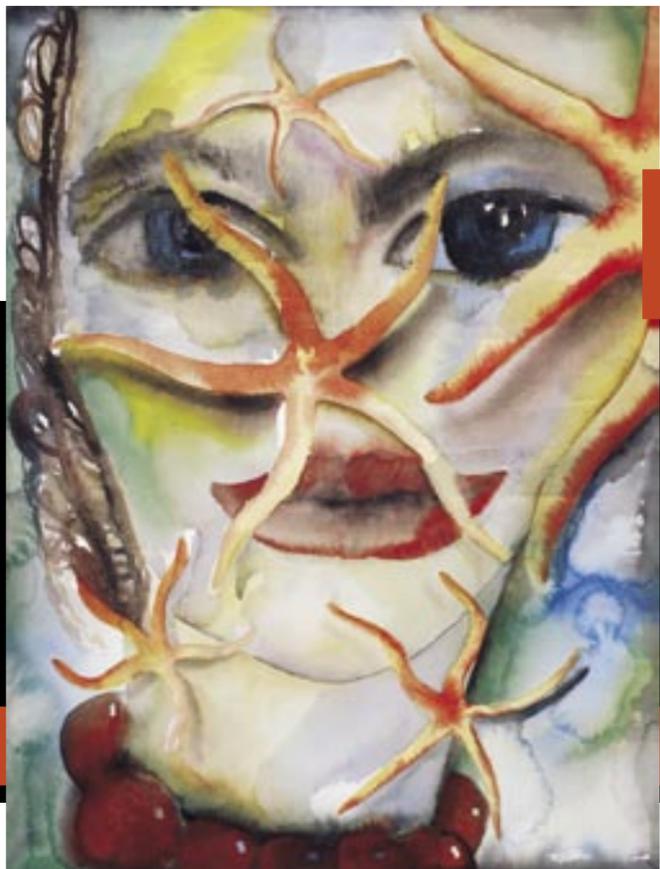
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NEW REALITIES finnish contemporary photography 16. may – 29. august 2004

The Reykjavik Museum of Photography is the only independently-run photographic museum in Iceland. Its objective is to present both historical and contemporary photography in an artistic, social and cultural context.

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JUST ONE BIG MISUNDERSTANDING?

Public Reaction to the New Immigration Laws

by Paul Fontaine-Nikolov

On May 5th, I attended a public debate regarding a new set of immigration laws, passed by Alþingi on May 1st.

The meeting was sponsored and publicised by Heimspörp, a group of Icelanders working to end racism. The keynote speakers were Sigurður Hólm Gunnarsson from Ungir Jafnaðarmenn and Jón Hákon Halldórsson from Ungir sjálfstæðismenn.

Crowded into a small room in the basement of Kaffi Kúltúr, Mr. Halldórsson was surrounded by Icelanders and a few foreigners who all share one thing in common - none of them are happy about these new laws. Sitting beside him, I noticed his hands shaking as he held his written statement, reading

of one Icelander and one foreigner, must wait until they are 24.

2) For the police to search the home of an Icelander, they must make a strong case for suspicion of a crime to get a search warrant from a judge. Yet for the police to search the home of a foreigner, a member of the po-

would be enough that my husband was married to me. Yet because of these laws, he's not able to get a kennitala (an Icelandic identity number) and therefore can't get any legal work."

From my own observation in my home country - where we've passed more and more restrictions against immigrants - these laws actually do nothing to reduce the number of immigrants coming into the country. Whether we're talking about Iceland or the United States, immigration continues to rise despite of them. One very real effect, however, is that in order for these immigrants to make a living wage, they are forced to work illegally. This serves to justify, in the minds of many lawmakers, the need to add further restrictions. And so the vicious cycle continues.

Now that the law has been passed

website which could serve as a single source for immigrants to go to. Some very good points about language very also made:

"The fact that the immigrants themselves have to pay for 150 hours of classes, even the ones living in some tiny little village hours away from where any class is taught, is bad enough. Even if you can afford it, these classes are structured poorly and not very much help in getting integrated."

Of course, there are a few bad apples in every basket, as they say, and when I saw some tell-tale flyers up around town, my heart sank.

"Stop the immigrant invasion," they read (in Icelandic), "Protect the purity of your country. Love your

set up on stage to perform next, I caught up with Sigga Birna Valsdóttir, the coordinator of this event. She told me that one event in particular was the inspiration behind this carnival:

"Not too long ago, there were some fights between gangs of Icelandic kids and Asian kids living in Breiðhólt. The news coverage of this focused very negatively on the Asians. I work at Hitt Húsið with young people in the 16- to 25-year-old range, including some of these Asian kids. I can't tell you how many times I've had to practically demand that these kids go to the police when some racists vandalise their homes. There's too much of this 'let's just pretend it didn't happen' attitude. But when I began to put this event together, I received a very positive

SUSPECT



DECLINED



APPROVED



response. So many of these kids wanted to take part, and did. It went far better than I expected."

I asked her if she knew anything about the flyers from the "racists". It turns out that it was, in fact, part of

the party line which has stirred up so much outrage and bewilderment. I certainly have to give the guy credit for facing a room full of angry Icelandic liberals. Even if there were only fourteen of them.

A regular tightening of immigration laws is nothing new, and when various new restrictions were added in 2002 (including the compulsory attendance of at least 150 hours of Icelandic classes - to be paid for by the immigrants at a total cost 100.000 krónur; about a whole month's wages for many), resistance was limited to foreigners and a few sympathetic Icelanders. However, whether due to growing sympathy among Icelanders or the fact that these new laws effect Icelanders themselves, resistance is growing rapidly.

The new laws regarding immigration bear many inconsistencies. To name a few:

1) While it is perfectly legal for an Icelandic couple to apply for a bank loan to buy a house or apartment when they're as young as 18 years of age, foreign couples, or couples

lice force need only suspect that the foreigner has broken an immigration law, and needs no such search warrant.

3) Most bizarre of all, the parents of a foreigner may not immigrate to Iceland until they are at least 66 years of age.

Mr. Halldórsson was received politely as he read his statement, explaining that this set of laws was being wildly protested based on a "misunderstanding" of what the law actually was. There was no misunderstanding, however, among this group of people in attendance as to what this new law had to say. As Mr. Gunnarsson noted: "We contend that these laws are flat-out racist. They send a message to all foreigners immigrating to this country that we consider them to be dishonest, and not worthy of our friendship or our respect." And then the meeting began to get really hot.

An Icelandic woman, newly married to an Italian man, recounted her tale of frustration: "I thought that it

and the media has moved on to what it deems more important - laws regarding itself - will this matter go the way of the 2002 laws; stirring up outrage in a few but ignored by the public at large? Not if the Reykjavík Multicultural Centre, among others, can help it.

On Friday 21 May, the Reykjavík Multicultural Centre held a public meeting at Iðno. The attendance fared far better than the Heimspörp meeting - some fifty people listened intently as centre chairman Stefán Jón Hafstein read aloud the purpose of this meeting, which essentially made it clear that the city of Reykjavík is reaching out to the immigrants living in this city and actually asking them what should be done to make Reykjavík more multicultural. Certainly a step in the right direction, and it didn't end there.

One of the ideas brought by sitting members of the committee included a multi-language radio station - stocking the library with more foreign-language books and a

white skin." And so on and et cetera. What disturbed me most was that these people were promoting a meeting which they planned to have at Stjórnaráðið, the very seat of government, right across the street from where Hitt Húsið and Heimspörp were planning on throwing a street carnival against racism. The two events were scheduled to begin at the same time.

I showed up at Stjórnaráðið at the appointed time, filled with dread. Across the street, the carnival was setting up. It was a cold rainy day, but nevertheless the carnival organisers seemed in high spirits. I took a breath and tried the door - it was locked. I looked inside and saw no one there. I left the area to get some coffee.

When I came back half an hour later, the carnival was in full swing. That is to say, as full as the swing could be in the cold, pouring rain. So despite the elements, there were some 100 people huddled under umbrellas and listening to a slightly-out-of-tune but very well-meaning band. Also entertaining the crowd was a stilt-walker, a fire-breather, a juggler, and a fire-dancer. At one booth a Chinese man was writing people's names in Mandarin characters. At another, there were some international snacks for sale, such as sesame crackers from the Philippines, couscous from North Africa and banana nut sticks from Thailand. A few volunteers were leading people to a world map and encouraging foreigners to place small orange stickers on their city or country of origin. There I saw stickers marking Honduras, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, most of eastern Europe, and numerous other locales. Baltimore was already tagged, so I placed a sticker on Bulgaria, on behalf of my wife.

As Musíktílaunir "battle of the bands" award-winners Lada Sport

performance art piece that was done separately from the carnival. Apparently, there were a few people of different races dressed as angels, who beat a piniata which was supposed to represent racism. The idea was to attract racists to the area and perform this piece for them. I was told that no racists actually showed up. So much for that then.

Many immigrants reading this article might be asking themselves at this point, "Fine, but what can we do?"

Every political party in this country depends on volunteer support to campaign. People to hand out flyers and pins, to stuff envelopes, to host public meetings and the like. What we immigrants can and must do is lend our volunteer support to that party which defends us and represents our interests in Iceland.

Also, there is the offer made by the Reykjavík Multicultural Center. Those with some ideas to get across as to how to make Reykjavík more multicultural can contact Halldóra Gunnarsdóttir by phone at 563 2000, or by e-mail at halldora@rvk.is.

Immigrants will keep coming to Iceland. We work hard, we pay taxes, we obey the law. Unless immigration restrictions make earning a legal wage nearly impossible, we will continue to live as honest members of this society. Most Icelanders would be inclined to agree. Given the growing response to and participation in this issue, it's safe to say that this matter is far from over.



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OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK

THE MOUNTAINS AND THE MOLEHILLS OF THE WEST FJORDS

the reykjavík grapevine

by Jónas Moody

After a snowbound winter in Iceland's capital, in all its reinforced concrete splendor, my two friends and I are anxious to make our pilgrimage to the country's most remote and desolate wonderland, the West Fjords.

With a dying fishing industry, rapidly shrinking population, and the locals' rumored penchant for the occult, characterizations of this place tend to breed a certain air of melancholy and mystery, which is enough to provoke at least a sense of curiosity in anyone who has the time, the patience, and the will to make the considerable and rather treacherous drive. I was especially enticed by the weekends free rock festival, *Aldrei fór ég suður* (literally, "I never went south", a song by Bubbi Morthens), a newly established tradition which offers a veritable smorgasbord of Iceland's up-and-comers.

Three sore rumps later...

On the way up we take the trip in two stretches; first to Hólmavík, and the next day to Ísafjörður. In all of my excitement to make a quick exodus from Reykjavík I neglect to notice any of the numerous signs saying *malbik endar* (pavement ends). The drive along Steingrímsfjörður on the approach to Hólmavík would be rather tranquil were it not for the extremely rough roads. Instead it provides a rousing homestretch to what began as a rather tedious drive along Strandir from the ring road. One set of shocks, two cranky passengers, and three sore rumps later we pull into the tiny seaside village of Hólmavík. At first glance the quintessentially Icelandic, brightly colored houses leading down to the waterfront make for a pleasant seascape, but certainly not worth five hours of hard driving. However, pushing into the heart of the village begins to reveal what is actually quite an oddity as far as Icelandic villages go.

Pants from the skin of a dead man...

The biggest draw is the recently opened Exhibition of Witchcraft and Sorcery, and the exhibition's gruesome show-stopper, the *Necropants*; a pair of magical skin pants made from the lower half of a dead man (anatomically correct, of course). But all told, the most thrilling part of the witchcraft museum is its turf roof, which, once mounted, provides a stunning view of Hólmavík's bay. The real treasure of Hólmavík, however, is *Sæberg*, a house down the street from the museum. *Sæberg* is Iceland's answer to *Día de los Muertos*, replete with kitsch dioramas of

trolls and smurfs in midday activity; a miniature, four-gabled, elfin house; and keeping watch in the farthest corner sits a triple-faced mermonster crudely assembled from snarled tree limbs and a spray-painted buoy. An obvious labour of love, no detail was spared when it came to the mold-injected hoot owls, no penny



was pinched for the disembodied wagon wheels and paginated propeller; this is sheer driftwood delight. As we meander through the empty streets looking for a bite to eat, we encounter only one Hólmvíkingur, a young man on the smallest bicycle I have ever seen. After a few moves on the micro-cycle and a photo op he gives the snack bar at the Esso station a glowing review where I am later treated to one of the best hamburgers this side of the continental divide. All in all, Hólmavík is a humble town with a robust pride for all its superlatives, be it the goriest trousers, tackiest yard art, tastiest burger, or tiniest bike.

And a doorway from the jawbone of a whale

The next day's drive begins like a car commercial, zooming along curvy roads at (relatively) breakneck speeds, but we soon reach the fjords and the white knuckles come out. This is an unpaved, one-lane, icy deathtrap of a road that lines a succession of towering, hairpin fjords. Upon meeting a large truck or better yet, tour bus, coming in the opposite direction, I jerk the steering wheel to the right and find myself driving on little more than my imagination and the hope that only two wheels need to be in contact with the ground to

propel the car forward.

The town of Ísafjörður itself is rather small; on the approach it's possible to glimpse it all in one glance, but the way it's situated in the mountains is quite striking as it sits on a spit of land that juts out into the calm waters of Skutulsfjörður. The mountains on all sides are so tall and so steep that it appears as though the town is boxed in by looming walls of ice. At night it's impossible to see the tops of the mountains which creates an odd sensation of sinking as one gazes upwards.

Ísafjörður is a bit more centralized than your garden-variety Icelandic town. On the main streets, *Hafnarstræti* and *Aðalstræti*, you'll find a great bakery, *Gamla Bakarið*; a decent bar, *Sjallinn*; and a handful of restaurants. Further ahead there's another weird, modernist, Icelandic church but still more bizarre is the giant whale's jawbone turned on end which serves as the archway entrance to *Jónsgarður*, the town's pretty municipal garden. The garden is filled with people, as is the rest of the town. We have come to Ísafjörður during one of its busiest weekends, *Skíðavikan*, an annual ski holiday coinciding with the new rock festival.

The Mugiman and Mugilady

The festival is the brainchild of Örn Elías Guðmundsson, the local musical phenom better known as *Mugison*. *Mugison*'s industrious spirit has yielded thus far two albums (one now picked up by *Rough Trade Records*), a whopping persona, a slew of videos, and a sort of verbal branding system wherein his father is *Papamug*, his girlfriend, *Mugilady*, his website, *mugiweb*, then there are his mugimentaries, *mugiTV*, *mugicrew*, and the *mugimonkey*—but more on *Mugison* and his *mugimovement* later. The concert is slated to be held in one of Ísafjörður's many old fish processing plants. Nothing spells c-h-a-r-m like the foul odor of had-dock guts from ages gone by, so I am prepared for the worst, but the space is actually quite ordinary, a big room with a stage constructed at one end. This entire homespun operation is embodied by a woman in an oversized, woolly sweater. She's down on her hands and knees, finger-painting the concert line-up on big strips of newsprint. As we step further into the room she greets us like old friends. I sit with her briefly and discover she is *Mugison*'s girlfriend, the *Mugilady*, in the flesh. I let her know how much I like the latest album, *Lone Mountain*, and how very impressive it is that one little *Mugison* can be so prolific. She as-

sures me that he enjoys a lot of support, and evidences this by showing her paint covered fingers. She also tells me about the packaging of the latest album, which features a piece of thread sewn through each copy. Apparently the whole *Mugifamily* was gathered into a sweatshop of love to complete the strenuous job of sewing together some 10,000 copies. Late in the show, *Mugison* finally steps up. The crowd here in Ísafjörður knows him and the anticipation in the room is palpable. *Mugi live* was a *mugispectacle*.

Bass and a G-string

The final band was certainly the coup de grace of the night, at least in terms of outright entertainment. *Trabant* is a techno-cum-performance-art calamity that leaves no room for encores. When they finish, the show is over. Good night nurse! No looking back. *Ragnar Kjartansson* fronts the group and progresses through various stages of undress as the show pushes on until he stands in all his glory sporting silver underwear, a *Dracula* cape, and tasseled pasties. Not that anyone notices, but all the while the rest of the band is churning out an ominous groove for *Ragnar*'s debauchery: before long bassist *Viðar* has lost his pants, wearing only a red, frilly g-string. Naturally, *Ragnar* pretends to mount him from behind and matters simply degenerate from there. Scantly clad girls get excited and begin to take the stage in some kind of lemming-effect, not knowing exactly what to do once they make it up there. Mic stands fall and equipment is thrown across the stage; the drummer storms off and *Kjartan* from *Lonesome Traveller* flings himself into the chaos. Throughout the entire ordeal *Ragnar* consistently chanting his mantra, "I'm a little nasty, I'm a nasty little boy." A cataclysmic ending to a smashing show.



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Island life

Sheep sets record

A sheep in Mývatnssveit has recently carried 4 lambs. This would not be breaking news but for the fact that the sheep, which carries the serial number 603, has now carried a grand total of 27 lambs in its lifetime, which is a first. The sheep carried five lambs last year, and so seems to be taking it a bit easier this time around.

Wrestling comes to Ólafsvík

A gang of youths were spotted one peaceful evening in Ólafsvík in Western Iceland fighting wearing face masks and other outfits. The boys claimed to have seen the World Wrestling Federation on cable TV, liked what they saw and decided to imitate it.

Guitarist from Mývatn joins Faroese rockband

Unknown guitarist Ottó Arnarsson from Mývatn has joined Faroese rockband Týr, best known for their hit song Ormurinn langi (the Long Serpent), a reworking of an old ring dance song. The guitarist, who had never met the band, sent them an email in December 2003 asking them if they needed a guitarist. The band replied, saying they did and accepted him.

Statue of Thor unveiled

In honour of the 20th anniversary of the Comprehensive College in Akureyri, a statue of Thor has been unveiled outside the school. The statue is a replica of a pendant found there in Akureyri in the mid 19th Century, and is presumed to date from Viking times. The replica, however, is 1,6 metres tall.

We were here first

by Kría

It's about this time of year that we start to poll up in this little island that you like to call home, and over the last few decades our visits up here have not always gone as planned - things have been getting out of order.

Listen hard now - we were here first.

We'd been hanging out here for centuries before your raggedy-arsed little ship trundled over the horizon and a few sorry Vikings stumbled ashore. They were lost, by the way, and hopeless at fire-lighting, but that's a different matter. Now where was I?

Oh yes, So here we were at the end of our usual trip from down south, chilling out with the relatives, getting a bit of pre-coital preening going, and this wooden thing with a woolen sail and a few bewildered sailors spluttering some unintelligible language, land right in the middle of our nesting ground.

What you got to understand is that these Vikings discovered nothing.

They spent most of their time lost, wandering around the globe bumping into places. Speaking as a bird, I feel qualified to tell you that we don't have a high regard for folks who rely on ravens for navigation. If it's direction you've a mind for, then mark my words: A dove's the only option. Think about it. Noah used a dove - he got the promised land. Use a raven, you get Iceland.

So, anyway, that's how it all started. At first it really wasn't a problem. There were millions of us all over the place and a few hundred or so of you. You weren't going to make any difference. Besides, we don't actually like it that much here. You see, we like the sun and when I say like, I really mean LIKE. Put it another way. We don't do dark. Dark is bad. Dark sucks.

No, we are the ultimate sun hounds. We follow it when it comes up here in May or June and then leave as the night starts again in August. We head off down to the equator, hang out in the Sahara for a week or so while we rest up, and then we flit on

down to Antarctica, where we can check in for months of non-stop Big Orange - Old Helios himself - for the winter.

We feed up and wait until we feel encouraging squirmings in the regeneration department, in no time at all the primeval urge kicks in and, once again, we pack up and head north.

So what's my gripe? Well, is it too much to ask to be left alone when we get here? Look, the sun aside, we're up here to get intimate, to shake tail feathers and generally strut our stuff. And the place we've been coming all these years to do it is out there, on the point at Seltjarnanes. You put a light house out there, we could cope with that, but whose idea was it to add bunkers and a club house?

Put it another way. How would you feel if you'd travelled 6,000 miles from the other end of the earth, risking wing and limb over land and sea, hell-bent on procreation, only to find that some idiot's built a golf course in your boudoir? Think of

it, a putting green on your pleasure table, a 'nineteenth hole' in the kid's nursery - NO WAY man!

What we need is a little respect around here. I mean, who else travels this far to come here, geese? Nope. Ducks? - Are you kidding me? Skuas? They don't even make it half way.

When it comes to migration we are IT, man. We were the ones who put tourism on the map. Not some short hop to the Canary Islands that you guys seem so obsessed with. What is it about that place anyway? What's wrong with your own volcanic rock-heap; haven't you had enough of black beaches and moss to last you a life time?

And what's the problem you guys have got with names? We're called Sterna Paradisea. Not Tern. not Kria, not Arctic Tern. Sterna Paradisea. And what's our idea of paradise? A place with no golfers. There are no golfers in the Antarctic, no golfers in the Sahara. And the Vikings didn't golf. What have you people come to?

You see what we want is... R.E.S.P.E.C.T. - you know the song. The Vikings we could handle, your ancestors we could cope with, those guys with the guns around the time you got Independence we could tolerate - we thought they were only temporary anyway. But golfers? Now you've crossed the line...we won't put up with it. It's war.

So if you want some fun, finish your coffee, and amble down to the point at Seltjarnanes. There's one of them golf courses there. Sure nuff, they'll be there waving their sticks, wriggling their fat arses and chasing that white ball around the place. (Now what's all that about? They got nothing better to do? "A good walk spoiled" just about sums it up. That Kipling, he knew what golfing was about.) But don't get me started on that one.

We'll be there and so will the golfers. Beak to butt. No contest!



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TOP

8 TOP

BOOKS

by Silja Aðalsteinsdóttir

It should be an impossible task for a person involved in Icelandic literature as a writer, critic and editor to decide on a favourite book – choose one of thousands. But I am not in doubt. My favourite book, since I first read it at the age of 23, has been Salka Valka by Halldór Laxness. It was first published in two volumes 1931 and 1932 and has been reprinted many times.

Salka Valka - A Political Love Story, as Halldór called the second half of the novel, tells the story of the headstrong pauper Salka Valka from the age of ten to twenty-five and is an excellent book for adolescents, girls especially. Why then did I not read it earlier? The answer is personal. My father was a male chauvinistic working class man, and he adored Laxness' books, especially Independent People. But what he saw in the novels was what he wanted to see, and his endless quotes from Laxness were not tempting for a girl growing up. So although I loved my father dearly, I hated his idol and did not read his novels until I had to; at university. Then I read practically all of them during one winter, mostly aloud to my husband (we had no television but we did have

a baby so we could not go out much). I was deeply moved by the story this first time through, and the final unforgettable sentences of Salka Valka still make me cry. Yet there is no other end possible. If life is to go on for both of them, Arnaldur and Salka must part. Salka Valka is a milestone in Laxness' career but people do not agree as to whether it is his last juvenile novel or his first mature one. The very interesting thing about the novel is that it started out as a manuscript for a motion picture, written in Los Angeles, and it so happens that this manuscript was printed for the first time this year, both in English and Icelandic, in the literary magazine Tímarit Máls og menningar (1/2004). Halldór Laxness went to L.A. in 1927, determined to become a



scriptwriter in Hollywood.

"The film life here is magnificently interesting and I have good hopes to get into that as soon as I have written something in English," he writes to his fiancée in Iceland. He wanted Greta Garbo to play the main character in the film which was to be called Salka Valka, A Woman in Pants or The Icelandic Whip! Unfortunately it all came to nothing.

But the novel lives and charms new readers constantly, because Salka Valka is such a fantastically real person. It is almost weird how much a young man of twenty-something in the late 1920s knows of the inner life of girls! If ever a novel convinced me that to be really

outstanding, a writer has to be both man and woman, it is this wonderful book.

Seven other favourites
Snorri Sturluson (1178-1241): Edda. (Tales from Nordic Mythology. English translation 1987).
Hallgrímur Pétursson (1614-1674): Passíusálmarnir. (First printed 1666. Engl.transl.: Hymns of the Passion, 1966).
Stefán Hörður Grímsson (1920-2002): Hliðin á sléttunni. (Poems, 1970).
Laxdæla Saga. (13th century. Engl. transl.: The Saga of the People of Laxardal, 1997).
Sturlunga saga. (13th century. Engl. transl.: Sturlunga Saga, 1970-74).
Jónas Hallgrímsson (1807-1845): His collected poetry. (A selection translated by Dick Ringler in Bard of Iceland, 2002).
Halldór Laxness (1902-1998): Íslandsklukkan (1943-1946). transl: Iceland's Bell.

TOP

ALBUMS

by Heiða Eiríksdóttir

Here you go: The list we've all been waiting for. The eight best Icelandic albums of all time (the order is the order of the day, and it might have been different another day.)

Countdown:

8. *Mím* - Summer make good (2004). Minimal pop, makes you feel good.
7. *Gunnar Þórðarson* - Gunnar Þórðarson (1975). Sounds like a mixture of Stevie Wonder, Beach Boys and Beck.
6. *Sagtmóðigur* - Plata (1998). Great Icelandic punk.
5. *Olympia* - Olympia (1994). Epic Electrometapunk. Before their time.
4. *Reptile* - Fame and fossils (1990). Sweet eccentric girl-pop.
3. *Bless* - Melting (1989). Go check it out, it's outstanding!
2. *Purrkur Pillnikk* - GoogooPLEX (1982). My favourite band in the world! Featuring Einar Örn, of later Sugar-cubes fame.

and the winner is...

1. *Hljómar* - Hljómar (1968)
1. Sandgerður (A Girl From Sandgerði)
2. Ástarsæla (Love Ecstasy)

3. Ég elska alla (I Love Everybody)
4. Lífsgleði (Life Happiness)
5. Er hann birtist (When He Appears)
6. Saga dæmda mannsins (The Story Of The Outlaw)
7. Dansaðu við mig (Dance With Me)
8. Ég mun fela öll mín tár (I Will Hide All My Tears)
9. Vertu kyrr (Stay)
10. Að kvöldi dags (In The Evening)
11. Ég er þreytt á þér (I Am Tired Of You)
12. Regn óréttlætisins (The Rain Of Injustice)

Hljómar is one of the best bands to come from Iceland. They were the country's biggest band in the sixties and the seventies, and sometimes called "the Icelandic Beatles". But I think they've got a fair share of uniqueness, and deserve to be remembered for this masterpiece. The album has 12 songs, the A-side (first 6 songs) are written



by Gunnar Þórðarson, whose first solo album also made my list, in 7th place. The songs are a mixture of hippy-rock and beautiful melodies, with harmonies and orchestral arrangements straight from heaven! The remaining 6 songs are Icelandic cover versions of songs like "Crying in the Rain" by Carole King, "Since You've Been Gone" by Aretha Franklin/Ted White and "Window Of The World" by Burt Bacharach. Hljómar manage to alter these songs, and make them into something entirely their own.

There is a slight Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young feeling about this album, because nearly all of the songs have amazing vocal harmonies, and build

around the voices. There were four regulars in Hljómar, but the fifth member on this album was an American/Icelandic girl called Shady Owens. She is, in my opinion, the best female vocalist ever to sing in Icelandic. It is beyond me why she is not a multi-millionaire today, but she moved to England and continued to sing backing vocals for many artists after her contribution to Icelandic rock music. Her American accent in the Icelandic language is still unmatched, and absolutely charming and irresistible. Song number 6 is the highlight of side A, with a Velvet Underground-y tambourine and classical guitars, and psychedelic backing vocals. Songs 8, 11, and 12 are all more than perfect. On the whole, an Icelandic masterpiece, not to be missed! Heiða first came before the public eye with band Unun, whose members included Dr. Gunnar and former Sugar-cube Þór Eldon. She currently fronts band Heiða og Heiðingjarnir, as well as having a music program on Saturday nights on Rás 2. Her latest album, 10 fingur upp til Guðs, is available in stores.

TOP

MOVIES

by Baltasar Kormákur

Children of Nature by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson, based on the book by Halldór Laxness

When I first saw it, at the time I realised how powerful Icelandic film could be. It was the first time I experienced being profoundly moved by an Icelandic film and I saw how important Icelandic film making is. I was graduating from acting school at the time it came out, and it influenced me both as an individual and as a prospective filmmaker. The acting of the older people is great, and at it's best. This is a first rate Icelandic film.

My top 8 films of those I haven't participated in are (in no particular order):

1. *Börn Nátturunnar (Children of Nature)*. Directed by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson. 1991.
2. *Nói Albinói (Nói the Albino)*. Directed by Dagur Kári. 2003.
3. *Á köldum klaka (Cold Fever)*. Directed by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson. 1995.

4. *Með allt á breinu (No English title available)*. Directed by Ágúst Guðmundsson. 1982.

5. *Hrafninn flýgur (Also known as: Revenge of the Barbarians/When the Raven Flies/Korpen flyger (Swedish))* directed by Hrafn Gunnlaugsson. 1984.

6. *Magnús*. Directed by Þráinn Bertelsson. 1989.

7. *Sóðoma Reykjavík*. Directed by Óskar Jónasson. 1993.

8. *Útlaginn (Outlaw: The Saga of Gísli)*. Directed by Ágúst Guðmundsson. 1981.

Of the films that I have acted in, I think the best ones are *Djöflaeyjan (Devil's Island)*, directed by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson and *Ævintýri á okkar tímum (A Fairytale of our times)* directed by Inga Lisa Middleton.



Baltasar Kormákur is the acclaimed director of the films *101 Reykjavík* and *Hafið (The Sea)*. He has also starred in numerous roles on stage and screen. He is currently directing his third film, starring Forest Whitaker.

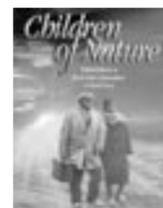
Salka Valka
by Halldór Laxness



Hljómar
Hljómar



Children of the Nature
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