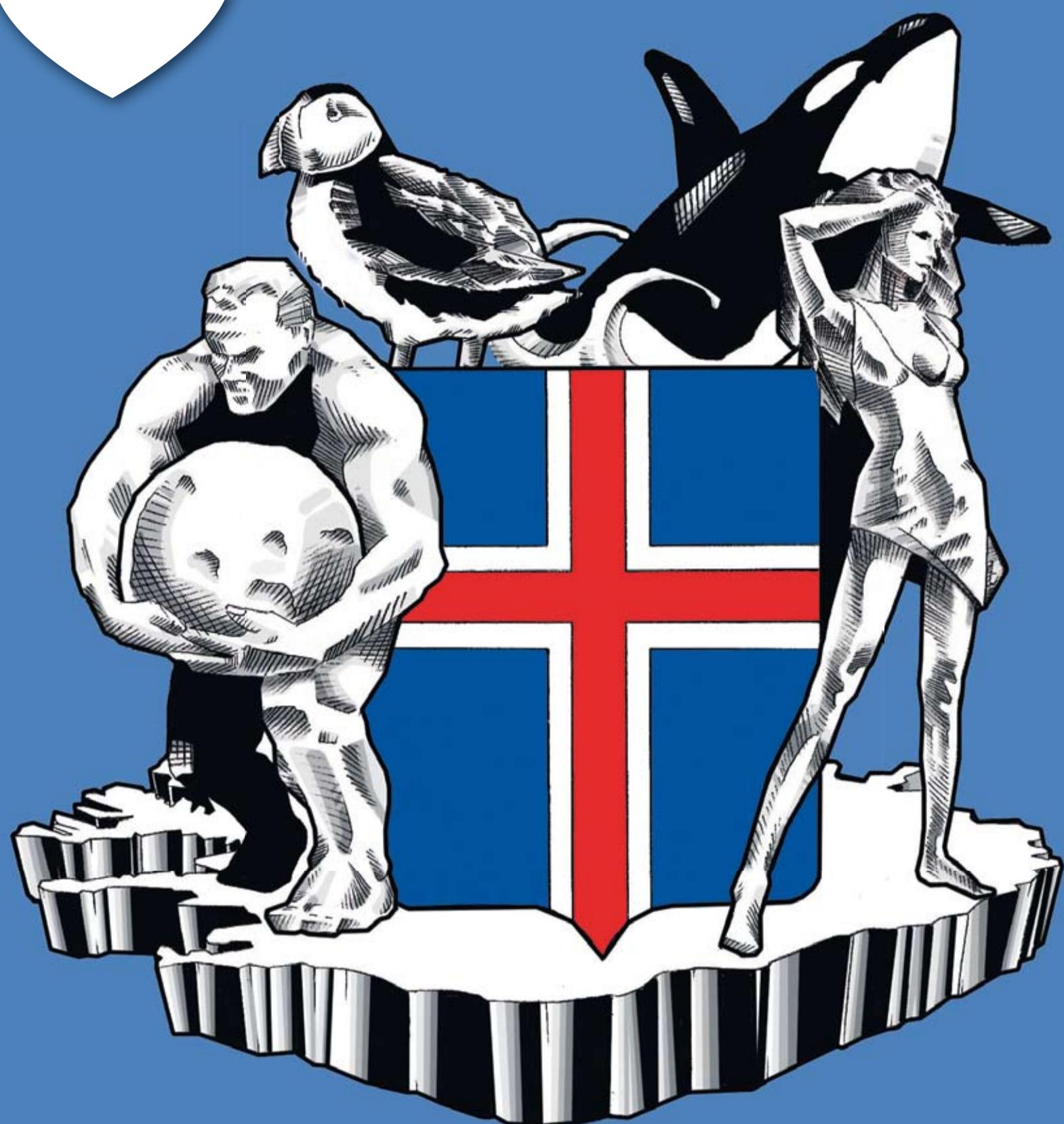




FREE



REBRANDING ICELAND

Revisiting Ungdomshuset • Björk Returns • Mínus Chases Moby Dick
Almost Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About East Iceland



Schedule Inside

+ info. A Complete City Guide and Listings: Map, Dining, Music, Arts and Events

Issue 4 // 13 April - 3 May 2007

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From the Editor's Chair

Apparently, the world at large has little or no idea that Iceland even exists, or at least it would have a hard time finding it on the map. This has been scientifically proven (as close to being science as anything else in marketing anyway) by the arbiter on nation branding, Simon Anholt. To you, the unlucky tourist who accidentally stumbled upon this island, I have this advice: The natives are friendly and well spoken and will happily direct you back to the airport.

To you, the cheating Icelander who probably ripped this copy out of the hands of a departing foreigner, I assure you that the cavalry is here. The Grapevine is launching an extensive campaign to rebrand Iceland.

Taking our cue from various marketing wiz-kids, we have designed a new Coat of Arms for Iceland, selecting the most popular icons used to market our glorious nation: the

world's strongest men, the slutty blonde, Keiko the Killer Whale, and last but not least, the Puffin. Every one of these national emblems has at one point or another been used in marketing campaigns to attract attention to Iceland, Icelandic companies, and/or institution. If you cannot trust the wisdom of the market, who can you trust?

Look for this new and improved Coat of Arms to appear on T-shirts, coffee-mugs, frisbees and key-chains in tourist stores around the country. There is no stopping us now, so look out world; here come the Vikings! (Not the Minnesota ones).

While on the subject of Minnesota, or the US in general (New Jersey to be exact), allow me this opportunity to extend an apology on behalf of my country to Uwe Reinhardt, Professor of Political Economy at Princeton University. I understand that



Sveinn Birki Bjarnason
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Are you planning an event? Do you want to tell us something?
Send a press release to: listings@grapevine.is
We are always looking for articles. Send your submissions to: editor@grapevine.is

Are you interested in working for the Reykjavík Grapevine (or the other way around)? If so contact: froken@grapevine.is

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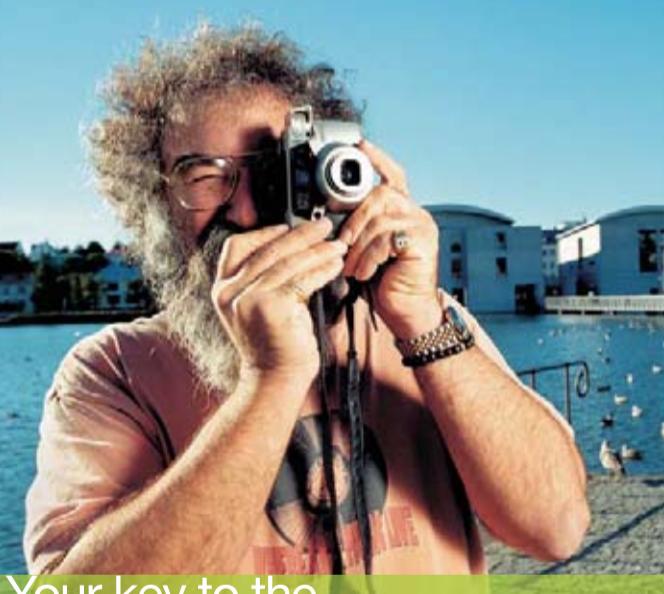
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Sour Grapes

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

Dear Editor,

Thanks for printing my letter in your Sour Grapes section. (I bitched about the local authorities taking their time or even ignoring the charges I filed when my Icelandic ex-boyfriend assaulted me.)

I had no idea my letter was printed. It was only when my IS journalist friend (who reads every printed word of every local publication) told me he saw it and thought it got a great response. (And to think the Grapevine had been sitting quietly on my couch all this time.)

Now I'm newly inspired to keep applying pressure to the authorities until my case is heard!

BTW: the guy was served and now they're deciding whether or not it deserves a hearing. If they don't, you (and every other paper) may hear from me again. I want him to suffer some sort of consequence for his abuse if it can't be a financial penalty or mark on his public record.

Thanks for the support. I can get lonely up here.

All the best,
XXXXX (Name withheld by editor).

Dear XXXXX,

Thank you for your update. I am glad to hear that there is progress being made with your case. As before, I urge you (and others in your position) to stay the course. It is the courage of people like you that force changes to stagnant situations.

Ed.

Dear editor.

Thank you for your good rebuttal to Haukur Sigurbjörn Magnússon letter in last issue regarding black metal. However I am very concerned about Haukur Sigurbjörn Magnússon attitude towards black metal. Here in Norway it has caused much grief and sorrow. It is a vicious "art" form which should not be tolerated. I was under the impression in my last visit to your beautiful country that black metal

was not part of the metal scene in Iceland. Haukur Sigurbjörn Magnússon's letter has filled me with doubts.

Is it possible that a black metal scene is brewing in Reykjavík? Haukur Sigurbjörn Magnússon should read the excellent book, "Svart-metal - mere svart en du tror" by Knut Eide, my brother. After doing that he will surely not speak of black metal in such ways.

Please print this letter in your publication.

Sincerely,

Öyvind Eide,
Bergen

Dear Öyvind,

Thank you for your letter. It is always nice to hear from our neighbours in Norway. I share your concerns about Haukur Sigurbjörn Magnússon, not only regarding his attitude towards Black Metal, but his attitude towards life in general. It seems to me that he needs to adopt a more life-affirming philosophy. I believe he needs more love in his life. Perhaps he should get a dog...

I also share your concerns over the brewing black metal scene in Reykjavík. It seems to me that black metal followers need to adopt a more life affirming philosophy. I also fear that Icelandic black metal followers will prove to be even rowdier than their Norwegian counterparts. My fear is that they will indiscriminately burn down any house of worship, regardless of religion. They might even have the nerve burn down the Pagan Hof. This is my fear.

As Reykjavík Grapevine is read by many foreigners in Iceland, I suggest that Grapevine leads the way and that you consider starting a monthly column - in Icelandic - using this modernised grammar.

Best regards,
Hanna Westesson

Dear Hanna,

I have an even better idea. How about you stop spending all your free time in Sirkus and start attending the Icelandic classes you actually signed up for and do your homework. Maybe then, the Icelandic language would stop being such a mystery to you.

Ed.

Dear Grapevine!

I am a Swedish citizen who recently moved to Reykjavík. While learning the Icelandic language, it has become apparent to me that the Icelandic need a major and non-nostalgic language reform. The Icelanders have had centuries to do

this themselves, but haven't come up with anything very impressive. Hence, I cannot but conclude that the modernisation of the Icelandic language resides in the hands of us immigrants.

Simplifications that could be considered are for example:

(1) we use all substantives and personal names in their nominative form only. Polfall, págufall and eignarfall will be abolished.

(2) We treat all substantives like one genus, which - for reasons of political correctness - will be neuter. This goes for numbers as well.

(2) We use the verb form for 1st person singular for both 1st, 2nd and 3rd person in singular as well as plural

News in Brief

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir and Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

First Acts for Airwaves Announced

Mr. Destiny, the promoter of the annual Iceland Airwaves Festival, has announced the first acts of Iceland Airwaves 2007. By now, the British dance-rockers Bloc Party, the energetic party group !!! (pronounced chk, chk, chk) and of Montreal from the US will be among this year's headliners.

After the elections, Alcan Inc. announced that the company was analysing the close results to assess the impact they may have on the future of the smelter. A news release published on the company's website reads: "Alcan is proud of its 40-year relationship with the local community in Iceland and will continue to work together with all involved to provide for a better future for ISAL and all its stakeholders."

It has already been stated in the media that Alcan can increase the smelter's annual capacity without the planned expansion by building a smelter with more production capabilities.

Hafnarfjörður Rejects Aluminium Giant

On March 31, the inhabitants of Hafnarfjörður got the chance to take part in a public consultation and have their say on the proposed enlargement of the Straumsvík aluminium smelter (ISAL), owned by industrial giant Alcan Inc. The enlargement would increase the smelter's annual capacity from 170,000 tons to 46,000 tons.

The results of the residential elections came as a shock to all heavy-industry supporters as the Hafnarfjörður residents rejected the urbanisation plan by 88 votes. Of 12,747 people, 50.06% voted no and 49.37% voted yes, resulting in the town being divided into two almost equal halves.

The Icelandic Movement will place the main emphasis on environmental issues. At the press conference, Ómar Ragnarsson explained that the party would focus on keeping the environment in the spotlight and fight against further heavy industry projects as well as emphasising innovation, general welfare, equality and increased democracy.

According to a Capacent Gallup poll published in Morgenblaðið on March 30, the first poll published after the party announced its candidature, The Icelandic Movement received 5.2% support. In that same poll, 36.7% of those asked named the Independence Party, 19.9% supported the Social Democratic Alliance, 8.3% said they would vote for the Progressive Party while the support for the Liberal Party had dropped to 5.3%. The Left-Green Movement is still the second largest political party, receiving 24% support.

HIV Increases Among Drug Users

According to a new report by the Icelandic

time exports declined by 5.6% with the consequences that the balance on current account became negative by 303 billion ISK, 26.5% of GDP. In 2005 the balance on current account was negative by 163 billion ISK, 16% of GDP.

Regardless of some improvements in terms of trade, a considerable growth in net outflow of primary income led to a decline in Gross National Income (GNI) by 1.7% after 8.1% growth the year before.

Iceland Welcomes 20 to 30 Refugees

According to Morgenblaðið on March 13, the government decided that instead of welcoming a group of refugees every second year, Iceland would now welcome approximately 25 to 30 refugees every year.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs have been working on the proposal together in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Ministries will work in cooperation with the municipalities and the Red Cross in Iceland to strengthen the country's refugee policy in the future.

For the past ten years, 217 refugees have resettled in Iceland. In 2005 the group consisted of children and mothers from Kosovo and Columbia.

Björgulfsson 249th Among Richest in World

Icelandic Investment Banker Björgólfur Thor Björgulfsson sits in 249th on the Forbes list for World's Billionaires, a list of the world's richest individuals. Björgulfsson has gained 100 seats since last year's list. According to Forbes, Björgulfsson's wealth is worth 235 billion ISK (\$3.5 billion). His Father, Björgólfur Guðmundsson, worth 80 billion ISK (\$1.2 billion) sits at 799. Guðmundsson recently bought the British football club West Ham. 946 people made this year's Forbes rich list.

Björgulfsson himself doesn't have trouble finding ways to spend his money. To celebrate his 40th birthday, Björgulfsson threw a posh party in Jamaica for his friends, featuring rapper Fifty Cent, Jamiroquai and the sons of Bob Marley. The whole extravaganza supposedly set him back around 200 million ISK.

6

in 2006

According to provisional data from Statistics Iceland, Icelandic Gross Domestic Product in 2006 was 1,142 billion ISK (\$12.85 bil).

In real terms, GDP grew at a rate of 2.6%, down from 7.2% growth in the previous year.

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Pure Body – Pure Nation

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson Photo by Skari

Eirikur Bergmann is an Associate Professor and director of the Centre for European Studies at Bifröst University. He recently published a book called *Opið land – stáða Íslands í samfélagi þjóðanna, or Open land – Iceland's Place in the International Society*. In his book, Bergmann examines the relationship between Iceland and the outside world. While immigration issues have been put on the agenda by Icelandic politicians for the upcoming parliamentary elections, Bergmann's book offers a valuable insight into the issue. A Grapevine reporter asked Bergmann a few questions about the book and about immigration issues in particular.

Tell us a bit about the book.

What I try to do in the book is to look at the relationship between Iceland and the outside world and try to find common roots for Iceland's position on issues relating to foreign policy, such as the EU, the relationship with the US and the former US military base in Keflavik, globalisation, and immigration issues. I believe there is a common root for Iceland's conservative position on foreign policy that can be traced back to Iceland's struggle for independence.

There is a certain nationalism in our ideas about the Icelandic nation that are different from other European nations because nineteenth-century European liberalism never reached Iceland in the same way it did other European countries. European liberalism was based on the demand for freedom of the individual, the demand for freedom of commerce, etc., but here in Iceland the focus was not on the individual – rather on the nation as a whole, almost as an organic bodily whole – which gives us a slightly different idea of the Icelandic nation. I think that this in some ways explains our fear of immigrants, the idea of the purity of the organic body that is the Icelandic nation. You have claimed that Iceland has the strictest immigration policy in the free Western hemisphere, please elaborate a bit.

In order to reach that conclusion, you have to look at how the immigration policy appears in Icelandic laws, the part that is directed at influx restrictions, and stipulates who can actually enter the country. These regulations are really twofold. On one hand, there are mutual regulations adopted from the EU through the EEA agreement, which stipulate that citizens from the EU area all have employment rights here. This is a decision that was taken jointly by the European nations in

Brussels; Icelanders never made that decision for themselves. After the enlargement of the EU, this applies to the countries in Eastern Europe that have recently joined the EU as well.

But once you look beyond the joint European regulations and towards people outside the EU – i.e. the part of the regulations that we can decide for ourselves – then you have the strictest immigration policies in the free democratic world. We have adopted Danish and, to some extent, Norwegian immigration regulations. We have applied the strictest parts of their regulations, including highly debatable clauses like the 24-year clause stipulating that an immigrant's spouse must be 24 years old to acquire a residents' permit. There is also a 66-year rule, stipulating that an immigrant's parents must be 66-years old to acquire a residents' permit. It could be argued that these laws are in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, but the issue has never been put to the test.

Many of them are only working here

Two recent economic studies both show that in 2006 every person in the country greatly benefited financially from the foreign workers in Iceland.

In addition, there is the strange decision by the Icelandic government that work permits for foreigners are issued to the employer, not the employee, which means that foreign workers are dependent upon their employers and are not able to move freely. This could also be regarded as a violation of human rights, since the employee does not have freedom of occupation, which is supposed to be guaranteed according to the Icelandic Constitution.

In top of that, Icelanders do not accept refugees seeking asylum. I have not been able to find another western country that does not accept asylum seekers. Only one person has been granted asylum in Iceland; others have been refused based on the Dublin Convention. Iceland always applies the strictest resources and when you add these facts up, the conclusion is that Iceland has the strictest immigration policy in the free democratic world. I have at least not

found an example of stricter policies. You mentioned two possible violations of human rights conventions in Icelandic immigration laws. Why do you think law-makers have taken such extreme measures for immigration laws?

There is an underlying fear of foreigners and immigrants in our society. Some people fear that large groups of foreigners will come streaming to Iceland and somehow disrupt the fabric of our society. In reality, there is nothing to support this fear. If you look at the position of immigrants in Icelandic society, you will see that there are about 25,000 people of foreign nationality in Iceland. Immigrants are about 6% of the Icelandic population, but they are about 10% of the active work force in the country, which tells us that the level of employment among immigrants is much higher than the current level of employment in the country, which again tells us that foreigners are coming here to work.

Many of them are only working here

temporarily on big building projects that are underway and that explains the great influx of foreign work force right now, but there is nothing that suggests that this will continue, not unless people want to build an aluminium smelter in every town. If we compare this, or set up an equation, then there are 30,000 Icelanders living abroad. That is, there are more Icelanders living in foreign countries than foreigners living in Iceland. We are at a deficit; we are 5,000 foreigners short of breaking even.

In addition, all studies suggest that immigrants financially benefit the Icelandic society. Two recent economic studies – one by Kaupping bank, the other by Landsbanki bank – both show that in 2006 every person in the country greatly benefited financially from the foreign workers in Iceland. We would have been further in debt without them, inflation would have been higher, and we would have had less money between your

hands if they were not here. The question then is, what explains this fear that we are witnessing in the public discourse.

Well...?
The only explanation I can find is rooted in our ideas about the Icelandic nation. Historian Guðmundur Hálfdánarson has shown that in Iceland a different kind of idea of nationality developed, different from the rest of Europe where more liberal ideas developed which focused on freedom of the individual and freedom of commerce. Here, a more conservative idea of nationality developed, where the onus was not on freedom of the individual, but freedom of the nation, where the nation is personified as an organic bodily whole, or a body of its own. A great influx of foreigners changes that body. It becomes a different body, and people start to fear things such as diseases and politicians start talking about looking for tuberculosis in foreigners and so on. I think that is rooted in this idea of nationality and the fear that the national body will become impure and deteriorate with the influx of foreigners.

What you are saying is that there is no logical reason for this fear of foreigners, but rather it is all based on the Icelandic ideology of nationality?

Yes, I think that is at the heart of it. You cannot find any factual support for this fear, other than the idea of the composition of the nation and the fear that it will change. But this is in line with a certain axis of conflict that has always been present in Iceland. That is the conflict between what we might call "isolationists" and "internationalists." Almost every controversial issue regarding the relationship between Iceland and foreign countries has been affected by the conflict between those two groups, whether it was over membership of EFTA, membership of NATO, the EU, fear of globalisation, protecting the pure Icelandic language, protecting the pure Icelandic agriculture, etc. The immigration issue is the conflict about the pure Icelandic nation.

There has always been a conflict between those who want to open up society and those who want to close it, and right now there is a conflict between the isolationists and internationalists over the immigration issue. I believe Iceland still has a chance to develop a successful co-existence of immigrants and natives, but you do not do that by stirring up the peace with immigrants like some Icelandic political parties have done. You do that by forming and installing an active and integral assimilation policy. Such a policy does not exist in Iceland right now. The Minister for Social Affairs recently introduced an assimilation policy which mainly focuses on the language barrier. There are other things needed for successful assimilation.

What are you thinking about specifically?
We need to address such issues as ghetto formations for example. In neighbouring countries, we have seen how immigrant ghettos have formed, where immigrants have moved into the cheapest neighbourhoods in the city. As foreigners move into the neighbourhood, the natives move out and then the politicians lose interest in the neighbourhood and it starts to deteriorate. Next thing you know, you have a ghetto, which will polarise society and eventually you will have a conflict like what we saw in France recently.

We can see the first signs of this development in certain neighbourhoods here in Reykjavík, and this is what we need to eliminate here in Iceland. We can do that by installing an official policy for distributed residence of immigrants, where we would encourage immigrants to move to certain neighbourhoods by granting them financial incentives. This would be easy to do, city and state officials grant different kinds of financial assistance to different sorts of groups. That is how we manage society. Another thing that needs to be done is to provide financial incentives for civil society to get immigrants involved in its operations. The government pays large sums of money to organisations like sports clubs or the scout movement. If you use some of this money as an incentive to get foreigners involved in their operation, you are making the whole community active in the assimilation. That is what an integrated assimilation policy looks like.

Will Your Party Support the Continued Build-up of Heavy-Industry in Iceland?

In the build up to the 2007 parliamentary elections, The Reykjavík Grapevine will be asking representatives from each of the political parties to answer questions regarding the most pressing issues.

EIKI EIT / www.eit.is

Árman Kr. Ólafsson

The Independence Party



For a long time, the simplicity of the Icelandic economic system was cause for concern. It was based on few foundations where the fishing industry stood head and shoulders above other professions. There was a reason for the leaders of this country to put an emphasis on strengthening and further developing the foundations of our economy. Both of which succeeded.

The Icelandic fishing industry is now one of the strongest in the world and probably the only one that is not subsidised by the government; on the contrary, Icelandic fishing companies pay an admission fee to the national treasury for utilising our natural resources. The tourist industry has gone from being a weak profession operating in a small market, to being a powerful industry operating around the world. Multi-national corporations in the fields of pharmaceutical, finance, and software have been founded. Lately, the entertainment industry has blossomed and there seems to be no end to that venture. Heavy industry has played a big role in this transformation and the advancement of the Icelandic economy. It has bridged the gap between Iceland being a country of primary production, to being a country of commerce and transactions. Given the current conditions, it can hardly be considered important from an economic perspective to dive into further developments in heavy industry. Such decisions need to be made carefully and we are certainly not missing out on anything if we slow down, since energy will only become more valuable as the years pass. The Independence Party will none the less continue to support sensible utilisation of our energy resources and heavy industry is one of the options to consider.

Sæunn Stefánsdóttir

The Progressive Party



The Government recently deregulated the power industry and introduced competition in line with general EU regulations and does not plan to take the lead in further energy-intensive development as a result of the new energy act. Future initiative in this field will be carried by the investors, power companies and local municipalities in direct negotiations

and in accordance with the existing regulatory system.

For decades, the government's agenda has been to promote the utilisation of Iceland's clean and renewable geothermal and hydropower energy resources in harmony with the environment with the purpose of striving for sustainable power development, diversifying industrial activity, further improving living standard of the people, stimulating foreign investments and enhancing exports. The economy of Iceland is based on the country's natural resources. For a long time the fishing industry has been the backbone of foreign currency earnings. Now other industry such as energy intensive industry has brought about diversification, which is beneficial for the economy. Iceland's future does not depend on aluminium alone. The emphasis is on well-balanced development in all sectors: industry, manufacturing, culture and services like transportation, finance, tourism and health care. Iceland has only a few natural resources: the grasslands, the fish stocks and renewable energy resources. In addition there are the human resources of 300,000 people. Agriculture and the fishing industry have exhausted the two first resources to the extent of stagnation, whereas the energy resources have only been developed to a limited extent or 17% in terms of the total electrical power potential. The Government is also paying much attention to other issues like high-tech industry, which is expected to grow substantially in the coming years.

Guðmundur Steingrímsson

The Social Democratic Alliance



Samfylkingin wants to postpone further plans for heavy industry and energy until a framework plan for environmental protection has been finalised and approved. Such a framework is expected to be 5 years in the making. The plan would stipulate which areas to protect and which areas could be harnessed. Scientific research on Iceland's nature is lacking, so

there is little basis for forming an informed opinion on the matter. This needs to change before further actions are taken for building dams and subsequently heavy industry. Because a certain chaos seems to surround this issue, it seems obvious that we need to pull in the reins. Due to the nature of heavy industry and its magnitude, regarding both environmental and economic factors, it is clear that better organisation of the decision-making process is called for, as to where and if such constructions should be built. Heavy industry can be a wise alternative under the right circumstances. But we must also consider that it is not clear if there is room for an increase in heavy industry in Iceland if we intend to honour our obligations to green house gas omission. It is also highly disputable whether there is a foundation for further heavy industry developments in the same manner as the government has done, that is, with state guarantees on loans for the developments and selling electricity at a fire-sale price. The Social Democratic Alliance believes there are strong arguments for selecting other ways to strengthen employment in the country. The party has put forward proposals to strengthen entrepreneurship, inventive, and high-tech companies, which have been well received. The party also believes the best opportunity to develop employment in the country lies in strengthening the education system.



Katrín Jakobsdóttir

The Left-Green Movement



No, obviously not. The Left-Green Movement has proposed that all further plans for heavy industry be stopped. That is the first premise for social- and economic stability; and allows us room to form a holistic plan for environmental protection, which will form a strict frame for further harnessing of hydro-energy and geo-thermal power. Until that plan is available,

all further plans for heavy industry are impossible. The current policy of drowning land has to come to a stop. We need to prioritise with an eye towards nature, assess the value of protecting Icelandic nature in a local and global perspective and form a nature preservation plan, along with our obligation to international treaties on air pollution, before continuing any plans for power plants or heavy industry. This is why it is strange to hear the current coalition renounce the heavy industry policy and put on a green coat while plans are underway to build three or four new smelters along with the accompanying hydro power plants. Our country is full of priceless natural pearls and I believe that with continued discourse on environmental protection, this fact will dawn on people. Heavy industry projects have already created great tension in our economic system and to reduce that tension, lower the inflation, and correct the trade deficit we will need to revoke further plans for building dams and heavy industry. The current heavy industry policy also bears witness to the government's centralised employment policy. Instead, the Left-Green Movement emphasises that we create fertile ground for general employment development, especially for small and medium sized companies and by supporting innovative companies. We want to utilise knowledge and entrepreneurship and be guided by inventiveness and creativity.

Magnús Þór Hafsteinsson

The Liberal Party



Stopping development in energy-intensive industry in Iceland for good is out of the question. This industry has created a lot of secure jobs and delivered a lot of revenue to our society. On the other hand, it is time for Iceland to slow down in these matters. We need to cool off the economy after years of constant development. We need to choose our next steps carefully and

prioritise firmly. This is where politicians have a big role and they cannot escape responsibility. The Liberal Party believes it is important to allow areas with rich energy resources to make use of that within the area. Urban areas should be allowed to enjoy their natural resources. The energy should not be transported long distances to be utilised somewhere else. This way, population policy is also assisted, but the Liberal Party believes that strong urban areas are important for development of Icelandic society in the future. As for utilising energy, we should look towards geothermal energy over hydropower energy. Deep surface drilling is possibly an exciting alternative. Obviously, environmental perspectives must be considered when making decisions on future damming options. But stopping further development of heavy industry is not sensible. By doing so we would be diminishing our possibilities for further employment progression. That is not an option!

Jakob Frímann Magnússon

The Iceland Green Movement



The primary aim of the new Iceland Green Movement is to bring to a 4-year halt all further aluminium smelter commitments and allow the current process of general environmental awakening to come to the surface properly here in Iceland. The general public will soon realise what incredible assets we would be compromising by continuing on the same path-

way. We have just completed Kárahnjúkavirkjun, the largest and most controversial undertaking of all times in Iceland, and there is absolutely no need to rush into another giant smelter adventure so soon. In the meantime we have a growing number of international computer giants looking seriously at Iceland for the purpose of utilizing our green energy to run their vast power-consuming activities. This should be taken seriously, partly because this presents a pollution-free alternative to the aluminium industry, but mainly because the prices that can be charged for our green electricity are in this marketplace undoubtedly much higher than the embarrassingly low prices the aluminium smelters in Iceland have been getting away with. Universally marketing the general concept of Green Iceland is one of the greatest future business opportunities we have been granted as a nation. Let's blow it!

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Soloist :: Guðny Guðmundsdóttir
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Of Elections and Identity-crises

By Magnús Björn Ólafsson

Icelanders are soon to be offered an opportunity to express themselves actively on political questions and exert influence on the political system under which they live. On the 12th of May national elections are to be held and the voter will be presented with a chance to mark the ballot in favour of one of Iceland's six political parties. For many, this is the time of absurdity and nonsense. For others, it is the time of hope and a great promise – the promise of change.

Officially, all Icelandic political parties share a common vision of a pluralistic and liberal democracy, and thus, one might assume that their differences are of emphasis rather than fundamentals. This naïve assumption, however, falls short of explaining why most official political debates are in a constant state of chaotic uproar, and why all that can be heard from most candidates are hysterical outbursts of impotent rage – outbursts from men who take themselves too seriously.

There is not much that can be written of the man who takes himself too seriously, except maybe this: He takes himself too seriously. Through all his slogan-chanting, he forgets that a large group of voters is long tired of the Independence- and Progressive-Party government, which has reigned over this island for the past twelve years. Seldom has difference of political opinion been as evident as the nation stands divided in two large blocs; some see the dream of capitalism par excellence realised under the current government, while others perceive a madhouse in which every political-cupboard is bursting with skeletons.

Independence-Party, for some reason, still refuse to admit they were wrong by granting this catastrophe an Icelandic blessing.

As the philosopher, Slavoj Žižek, points out, this can lead to serious political miscalculations: Not only does the war-monger have a dubious past (he has supported and promoted human slaughter), he is also not prepared to confront his past and evades crucial questions concerning it. His argument is spoken in the political tongue 'designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind'. In short, his basic feature is a refusal to self-recognition. Is a man who is unable or unwilling to accept responsibility for his actions morally mature enough to be trusted with executive or legislative power? – At least Oedipus had the decency to rip out his eyes after realising the horrors of his deeds.

The paradox of heavy industry

Democracy is a word many politicians use but few seem to understand. Thus far, the Icelandic government has not hesitated to use a methodology of personal threats and professional harassment against individuals who oppose its heavy industry policies. A new-born reserve-force of 250 policemen – which is at the

Is a man who is unable or unwilling to accept responsibility for his actions morally-mature enough to be trusted with executive or legislative power?

War and honesty

In March 2003 Icelandic authorities declared Iceland's support for the US-led invasion of Iraq. The decision was made unilaterally by Davíð Oddsson (then prime minister and leader of the Independence Party) and Halldór Ágrísson (then foreign minister and leader of the Progressive Party). It was met by strong protest from all opposition parties and various humanitarian organisations; the decision was made without the mandatory prior discussion with Iceland's Parliamentary committee on foreign affairs and crucial evidence was withheld from the public.

The heavy industry policy is epitomised by the Kárahnjúkar dam project, which is designed to provide hydro-electric power for an enormous aluminium smelter owned by the US multinational corporation Alcoa. But this project is only the commencement of a much greater devastation. Despite fierce local and international opposition, plans to build even more aluminium smelters, for example in Helguvík, Þorlákshöfn and Húsavík, are on the agenda for the coming year. The smelters are to be powered by constructing new mega-dams which would, yet again, flood large areas of unique wilderness. In short, the plan is to obliterate Europe's largest enduring wilderness for the benefits of heavy industry.

Politicians and policy-makers who pander to the prejudices of their allies at the expense of analytical honesty are described by political scientists as 'hired guns' or 'beltway bandits' – but when they deliberately alter facts to justify warfare they are, quite simply, called 'war-mongers'. Today, when Iraq has officially been declared a failed state – when over half a million innocent lives have been lost – when it is as clear as daylight that the invasion was founded on a pack of lies, former and current leaders of the Progressive- and

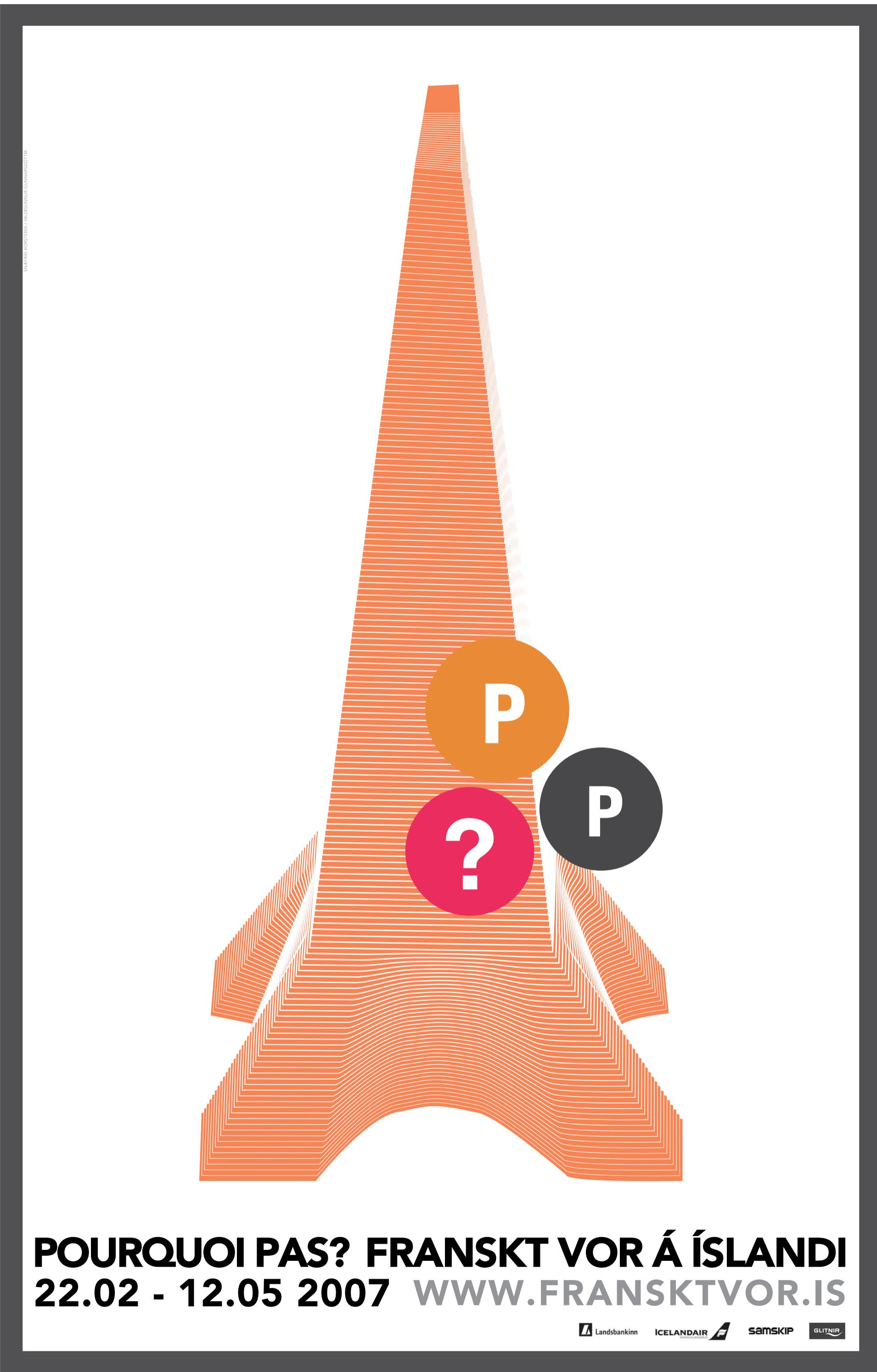
Even though a monumental number of Icelanders has marched in protest of these plans the

government is unwilling to change its policy. Only two political parties have publicly stated that they want to halt further heavy industry projects until the year 2012; the Left-Green Movement and The Iceland Movement want to pass legislation which will protect nature before further projects to harness energy for industry are undertaken.

In the past, man looked on heavy industry as a sign of technical progress and economic prosperity, and exploited the areas of land he thought necessary to exploit with a clear conscience; but in the age of global climate change, environmental destruction is considered an abomination and we engage in this abomination more than ever. Is this not paradoxical behaviour?

Farewell to welfare?

This government stands accused of seeking to cut back womb-to-tomb security for workers and the jobless, for pensioners, the sick and the disabled. The once gradually expanding social-safety net which was one of Iceland's proudest achievements has started to shrink while corporate power expands relentlessly in a seed-bed of privatisation. As the gap between rich and poor steadily widens we are led further away from the Scandinavian welfare-model and more emphasis than ever is put on





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The Fisherman's Burden – too many fish in the sea?

By Marvin Lee Dupree

After reading a recent Liberal Party advertisement in the papers, shockingly not a joke despite being printed on the first of April, I was agog with a mix of utter shock and annoyance. I was quietly staring at it, wondering how ignorant some people can be, but then I was gleefully reminded of a certain masterpiece called Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds along with a great quote from Spenser: "with love of blindness and ignorance". Somehow, I think no quote can better describe the Liberal Party and their pseudo-racist propaganda which, funnily enough, is wrapped up in a sweet package of "we care about" the immigrants, that is why we don't want them here.

While the ad itself is very sly in its use of propaganda, as it is only the latest of their desperate attempts for political survival, it is mainly laughable. First of all, the title in the advertisement is in CAPITAL LETTERS so the lowest common denominator is catered to – something which one could argue is the main objective of the ad – and so we are all asked: Do you want the same problems with foreign workers as in other countries? The question itself is very problematic. To what "other" nations is the ad referring? Can I have a debate here, please? When reading it, one might rightly assume a footnote is in order. I am perplexed. Does the same go for a Danish immigrant or worker and a person from Thailand? Should we curb the influx of Danes to Iceland and vice versa? I want to hear the answer to that question.

However, one of the "arguments" of the ad concerns industrial employment, the field which has the highest number of foreign workers, not to mention that these people are in most instances migrant workers; an important fact that the Liberal Party forgets to take into account. Many of these so-called migrant workers are contracted workers employed by both Impregilo and Bechtel, as the numbers taken off Bechtel's homepage state: "When the project reaches peak construction this year, the village will house more than 1,500 workers. By comparison, the nearest Icelandic town, Reyðarfjörður, boasts some 650 residents". Add the Kárahnjúkadam and you have almost 3,000 foreign workers solely for these two projects. It is pretty simple: someone has to build these things.

Another faulty assumption, or perhaps scare tactic, is the claim that foreign workers will be a burden on our welfare system. Now, here is a shocking logical conundrum. The first argument is hinting at the fact that "they" are causing Icelandic workers' wages to decrease (if you read between the lines) because they accept lower wages for their work. Therefore it can be assumed that the government/contractors are not to be blamed for the slow increase in income amongst industry workers compared to other groups. However, if that were the case, it stands to reason

that if the contractors were paying such inadequate wages (in theory), then it would result in the workers requiring welfare in addition to their income (instead of the blunt innuendo that they might not work), then these companies would be exploiting all of us, not only the workers. That is what some would call the "Dark Side of Capitalism". For example, in the United States, a sweatshop would, and will, often hire immigrants, but nowadays they have outsourced to China. Getting wages down is the grand scheme, so the problem is not innocent immigrants. Liberals, welcome to Capitalism 101.

The third point they raise reminds me of the famous book called How Statistics Lie, because The Liberal Party says that 9% of the workforce here in Iceland is foreign. Well, first of all you have to take into account what kinds of jobs are being referred to. Are these the underpaid ones that include caring for the elderly, nursing the sick, cleaning our schools and offices? If that is true, you can probably at least double the number. Another simple fact that is ignored in this game of statistical manipulation is the puny size of the population, because comparing our percentage of foreign workers to another country's is preposterous. Half a million foreign workers, e.g. Sweden, becomes a whole different scenario compared to 27,000. The final point they make is just cheeky. We do not have the resources to teach Icelandic. Please, since when has that become impossible? I would actually agree with that if I did not know that Magnús Þór Hafsteinsson is full of hot air, for example when he alleges that The Social Democrat Alliance wants 3-5 million people to come here (invade).

The scary conclusion that one draws from all this, including the various xenophobic and Islam-bashing quotes from Liberal Party member Jón Magnússon, is that the increase in foreign people ("Them") is the main reason for the higher crime rate, general unrest in society and finally the increasingly low living standards for everyone else in Iceland. This kind of logic becomes hysterical especially when you consider that they describe themselves as being a "political movement emphasizing liberal views, democracy and equal citizen's rights, [that] supports the free market system", well at least according to their website.

The sad part is that they actually believe that multiculturalism does not exist and has never existed, a fact that history refutes, but also that they are so smug in their Lilliputian thinking that they actually consider themselves as some kind of political martyrs. On his homepage, one candidate for the party managed to link immigration to almost every depravity, destruction, and disease, except perhaps for the fall of Camelot and Crucifixion of Jesus. I say: "Don't believe the hype".



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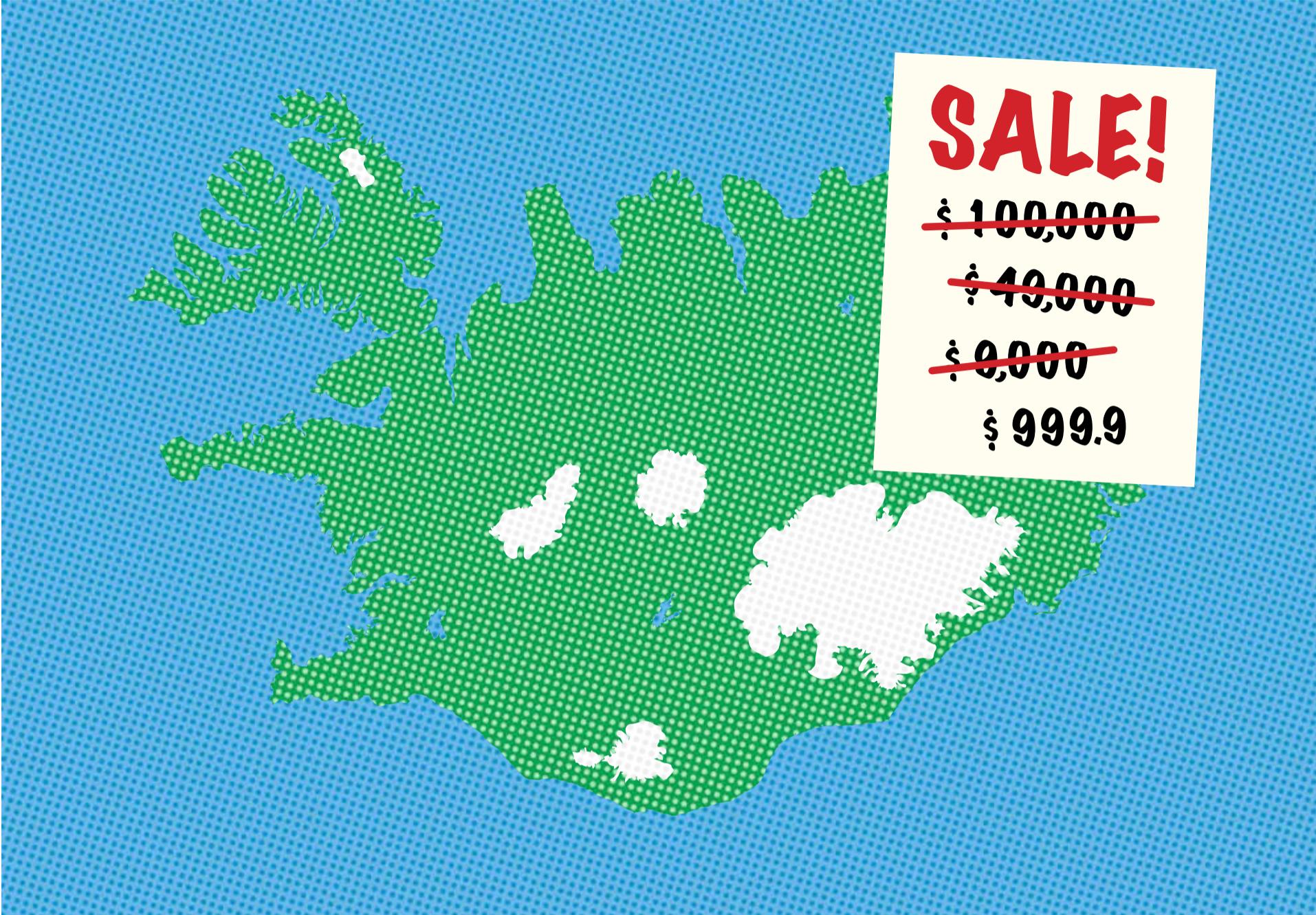
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Text by Alex Elliott

It may sound like a bit of a con; but nation branding is a very serious business these days – and Iceland is finding out the hard way.

Simon Anholt is the founder of the Anholt Nation Brands Index – a survey that ranks countries according to global perception, that is, the strength of the nation's brand. Conducted quarterly in 35 countries, plus one or more guest countries, the survey asks people to rank each of the participating countries according to their opinions of the country's exports, governance, culture, heritage, people and tourism.

"Today, every country, every region and every city has to compete with every other country, region and city on the planet: for customers, for visitors, for business, for talented people, for investment, for attention, for respect," Anholt states on his website, where he makes a very strong case for effective nation branding.

Iceland was one of three guest countries in the NBI survey for the last quarter of 2006 and finished 19th overall. Iceland's position in the top half of the table seems very encouraging, but it is considerably lower than some of the countries Iceland most readily identifies itself with: the Scandinavian countries, the USA, Canada and the UK. Iceland's near neighbours in the list are: Belgium, Portugal, Brazil and Russia.

Iceland's performance in the survey is best described as inconsistent – as it was ranked overall as high as sixth (by Norway) and as low as 33rd (by India). On individual questions across all 35 countries, Iceland reached as high as 11th for being responsible on international peace and security, but was ranked a lowly 35th on built and historical heritage.

"What most surprised me in the survey was Iceland's low score on culture and heritage," says Frosti Ólafsson, an economist with the Iceland Chamber of Commerce. "When I think of culture and heritage in Iceland, it is

obvious that we have a long standing and strong culture and heritage, but we have failed to inform others properly about that."

Dóra Magnúsdóttir, Marketing Manager for Visit Reykjavík – the city's tourist board – explains that she was not really disappointed or surprised by the results per se, saying: "I was actually a bit surprised by how many people were surprised by the outcome."

Both experts largely agree on the cause of Iceland's inconsistent results: a weak national brand. "We like to think that we are at the centre of the universe – and I'm not saying that in a bad way," says Frosti Ólafsson. "We feel that we have significance in the whole outer

"We like to think that we are at the centre of the universe – and I'm not saying that in a bad way" – Frosti Ólafsson

spectrum. Therefore it might be surprising that we are low compared to other western countries in the survey – but what seems to be the reason for this is not that we have a bad image or a bad reputation, but because we don't have a reputation at all."

The report itself states as much, saying:

"The NBI suggests that the more we know about a country, the more we are prepared to forgive its transgressions and admire its strengths and achievements. In contrast, countries that are not well known are not usually viewed very positively. Iceland, for example, may be one of the world's richest nations per capita, has a uniquely beautiful natural landscape, a rich and ancient culture, and is successful in many other ways, but few people know enough about it to see it in positive brand terms."

Having digested the results, we might ask whether the report is useful at all. Should we trust the varied opinions of a few thousand people from 35 countries, when there are people with a high regard for Iceland scattered all over the world? Ultimately, the survey may be more useful for larger nations than for smaller ones, about which people may not even have formed strong opinions. This would seem to be confirmed by the fact that countries that are culturally and geographically distant tended to rank Iceland lowest, whereas cultural and physical distance did not seem to alter the scoring of big nations, such as France and the United States.

"Our problem is first and foremost lack of image, and that is why I think it is important to put forward one united brand. But of course, it is a difficult task and has to be done in the right way," says Magnúsdóttir.

"We have to research the qualities of Iceland and do it systematically. We can't just think of a slogan, start using it and say, 'Yeah, let's see if everyone else agrees!'

Assuming that it is possible to create an exciting, universally agreed brand image for Iceland, what should we then do with it? "You would never go on an advertising campaign or something of that sort," Ólafsson assures. "It's similar to a culture. Take a corporation as an example: if it has a strong culture, then that sets it apart from other corporations and becomes a competitive advantage. And there are certainly similarities between corporations and countries. We want Iceland's culture and character to become known through our actions and build up a competitive identity in the world."

After cataloguing and refining the country's strengths and characteristics, the task is to force this positive image upon the global public without resorting to such obvious methods as advertising campaigns. This may seem a bit whimsical and perhaps even pointless, but attracting foreign investment and foreign tourists is in fact one of the most important challenges facing the entire Icelandic economy.

Dóra Magnúsdóttir believes that the most effective tool in this field is word-of-mouth: the stories (positive and negative) visitors tell their friends back home about their visit to Iceland. After all, we tend to believe our friends more than we believe the newspapers. The word-of-mouth method is not only the most effective branding device, but also the one all visitors and residents are directly responsible for – whether we like it or not.

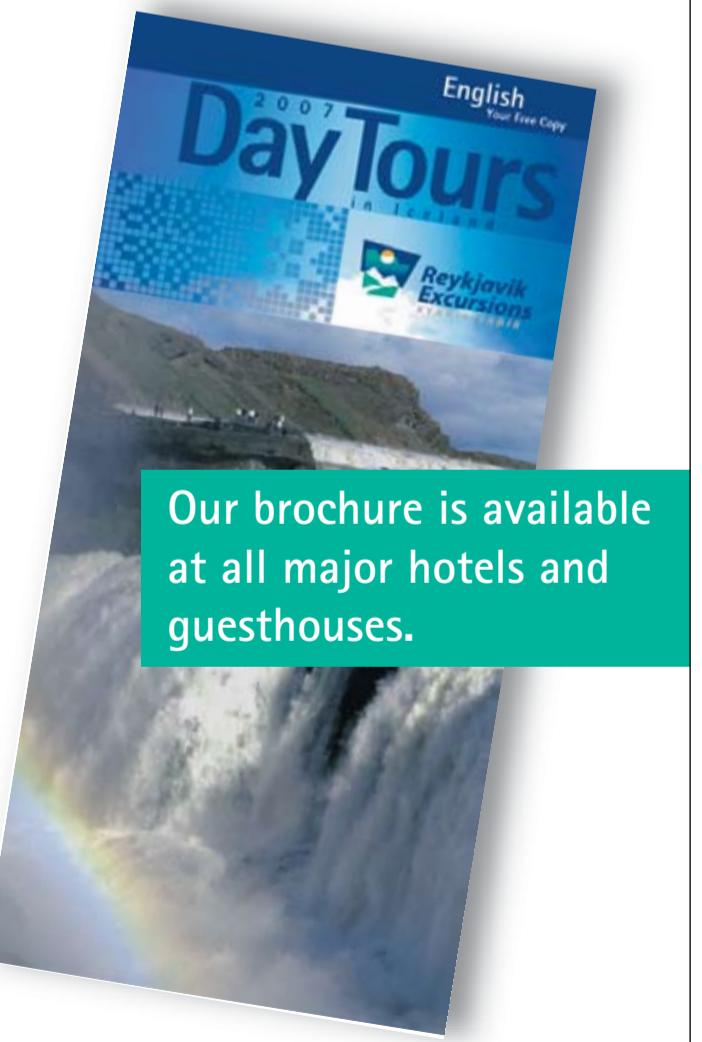


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THE STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMY

Text by Vilhelm Vilhelmsson Photo by Ali André Nabulsi

It could have been a scene from a James Bond movie. Cops in bullet-proof vests descended from a helicopter above onto the roof of the building, while below others shot teargas into the house before entering it from all sides. After serving as a user-run community centre for almost 25 years, Ungdomshuset at Jagtvej 69 in Copenhagen was cleared on Thursday morning, March 1. As a regular user of the house and a supporter of its residents' struggle, I was angry at the sale and ultimate eviction of people from the house as well as the efforts of local authorities to homogenise culture and eliminate unwanted social elements such as punks and anarchists. So I joined the protests.

After the Riots
Two days later – as I marched down a street in central Copenhagen and looked around at the thousands of demonstrators marching against the eviction of Ungdomshuset – I couldn't help but think how much our view of the world is distorted by the mainstream media. Although the rioting had stopped, the demonstrations and protests continued. But since there were no burning fires or flying Molotov cocktails, the media was disinterested.

March 1, at 10 pm, I joined around 2000 people gathered at Radhuspladsen in central Copenhagen before marching into Nørrebro, the neighbourhood where Ungdomshuset was situated. We carried coffins emblazoned with slogans such as "diversity" and "freedom", we sang songs and shouted slogans and you could sense a lot of anger in the group. There had been protests all day, some of them violent, and more than 100 people had already been arrested so I really did not know what to expect.

The march ended in Folkets Park in Nørrebro where a few speeches were made, a large bonfire was lit and people began mingling and drinking beer. At some point a barricade was built in the street and lit on fire and shortly thereafter came the teargas.

I still don't know which came first, the throwing of stones at the police or the teargas canisters, but either way I ran a safe distance away with the majority of the crowd, tears running down my face and a burning sensation in my eyes, nose, throat and lungs. The crowd gathered again, more barricades were built and subsequently set on fire and then the sequence repeated itself. More teargas and flying rocks and bottles and this time a teargas canister hit me in the leg giving me a limp for the rest of the weekend. This

Later that day I was again in Nørrebro trying to find a demonstration that had been announced. There were a lot of people walking down the main street. It was a Saturday night and people were on their way to parties or clubs. When I reached an intersection about

"This was how the police attempted to control the situation; threats and inti-

continued for a while and I ended up hiding in a churchyard together with a couple of other protesters while the police swept through the area arresting everyone in their way. The riots were still in full swing when I decided to call it a night and go home.

50 metres from where Ungdomshuset used to be, several police vans were lined up across the street, stopping people from going further into the neighbourhood. All of a sudden their sirens began to wail, the vans charged ahead full speed and those unlucky enough to be there had to run for their lives.

This is a tactic that was frequently used

during the demonstrations and at least one person had been run over by a police car.

After that, everyone walking away from the area was stopped by police, searched and questioned and ordered to go home. The policeman told me that if the police stopped me again anywhere in the city that night, I would be arrested.

This was how the police attempted to

control the situation: threats and intimidation;

systematically breaking the laws they are

supposed to uphold; beating up arrested

individuals inside police vans where there

were no witnesses; refusing to give their name

and badge number when asked (as they are

required by law); harassing anyone who

looked remotely suspicious; videotaping and

photographing everyone walking the streets to

build a database of possible suspects; arresting

people for commenting on their behaviour,

putting up posters or other harmless activities;

the list is endless.

Ungdomshuset

The large house on Jagtvej 69 was originally built in the 1890s by the Danish labour movement, financed by donations from the Danish working class at a time when salaries barely covered basic needs. It was called Folkets Hus – The People's House – and there they held political meetings, fundraising balls and so on.

Eventually, the authorities were fed up with the radical activities of the users of the house and since, legally, the house was still the property of the Municipality of Copenhagen it was sold to a fundamentalist Christian sect called Faderhuset in the year 2000. Since then, the activists at Ungerer – as the house was lovingly called by its users – have fought

the Great Northern Whalekill & Aldrei fór ég suður

More Youth Houses was formed and drafted a document with four basic demands to present to the authorities. After several evictions and riots, the city council finally gave up and agreed to give the house at Jagtvej 69 to the group. The mayor handed them the keys to the house at an official ceremony in October 1982.

The agreement between them was that, in return for control of the house, the Initiative Group would run it for public use, holding concerts, art exhibitions, seminars, workshops and so on – a duty the occupants of the house have fulfilled non-stop for the past 25 years. The house was promptly renamed Ungdomshuset, or The Youth House.

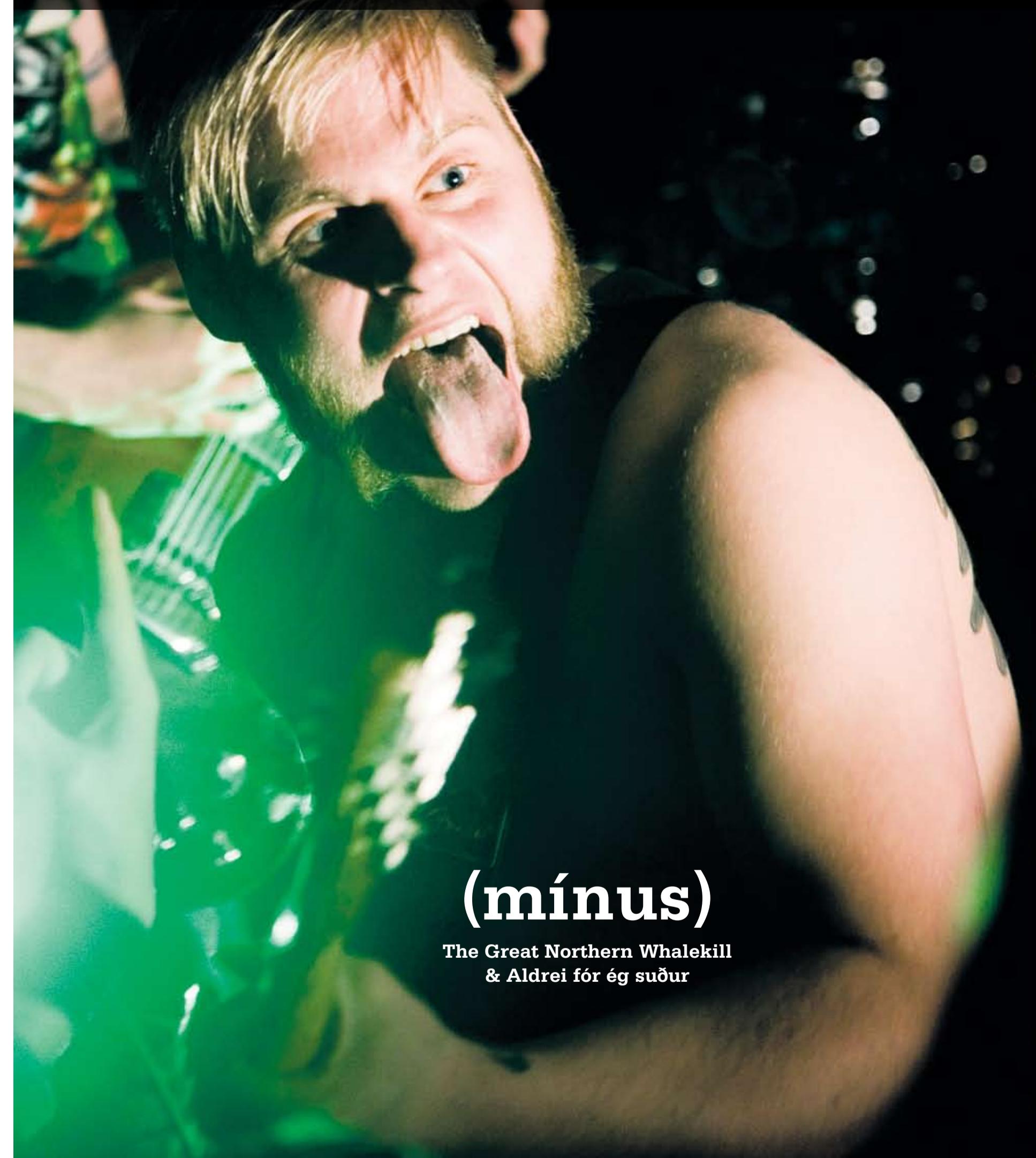
Ever since, the users themselves have been responsible for operating the house, without assistance or interference from outside. Ungdomshuset was run on the principle of consensus democracy, where all major decisions are taken at collective meetings open to everyone, and the issues are discussed until everyone is satisfied, as opposed to conventional majority rule democracy whereby an unsatisfied minority has to accept the will of the majority.

In the house itself there was a small bookshop, two concert halls, practice spaces for bands, meeting rooms for political groups, a large kitchen which served cheap vegan food once a week and probably other things that I am unaware of. There were concerts, raves, art exhibitions, seminars and workshops teaching everything from bicycle building to self defence for women, along with more ambitious projects, like how to start a revolution.

Eventually, the authorities were fed up with the radical activities of the users of the house and since, legally, the house was still the property of the Municipality of Copenhagen it was sold to a fundamentalist Christian sect called Faderhuset in the year 2000. Since then, the activists at Ungerer – as the house was lovingly called by its users – have fought

info.

▲ Is This Iceland's Folly? Peter, Bjorn and John in Concert Memories of Sari Poijärvi Partners in Crime Guilt Trip with Ragnar Kjartansson Nouvelle Vague in Concert Film Club Fjalakötturinn Pourquois Pas? Travellers' Day Minus Interview Aldrei fór ég suður Review Æla in London Food Reviews Bezt í heimi Music, Art, Films and Events Listings ▲



(minus)

The Great Northern Whalekill & Aldrei fór ég suður



Rauðavatn

Is This Iceland's Folly?

Nothing to do with whaling or sanction-busting chess players, rather a large stone seat on a hillside near Rauðavatn, on the outskirts of Reykjavík. A little plaque nearby describes it as a northern lights watching point.

Calling something a folly suggests it is a mistake. However, the follies that dot Britain, the US and mainland Europe are eccentric and beautiful pieces of architecture, ranging from mock temples to an underwater ballroom. The heyday of the folly was the 18th century, when the wealthy decided to build towers, obelisks and sham ruins on their estates. In Iceland, even

the wealthy of a couple of centuries ago had little money to spare. Today however, the country's new super rich do and perhaps they'll use some of it in this spectacular fashion.

The Rauðavatn area itself makes a good walk, with paths and bridleways winding through woods and lava hills. As well as the stone seat, the landscape boasts a couple of other man-made contributions, namely some grass-covered ruins and a few disused electricity pylons, which seem to stride across the landscape towards an unknown destination, folly-like themselves.

Andrew Clarke

the unexpectedness of its situation, looking as if it were a misplaced Aztec monument. The seat is tiled and it makes a comfortable if chilly perch for a bit of sky-watching.

The stone seat was built by the artist Erla Þórarinsdóttir, with the help of teenagers from the summer work school, to commemorate the millennium. It is one of a series of sixteen works that use or merge with nature and some of the others seem to have disappeared back into the landscape already.

Maybe it doesn't really count as a folly, being a commissioned work of art, but it certainly qualifies on

some of the best pop albums of last year. PB & J's perky melodies and singalong songs have the proper amount of maraca, harmonica, bongo drums and of course the whistle, so fans can expect some craziness at Nasa. Opening acts are Pétur Ben and Sprengjuhöllinn. Price per ticket is 2.700 ISK. SJ

NASA, Thorvaldsenstræti 2, www.nasa.is.

TICKETS AT midi.is



Reykjavík Museum of Photography – Until May 9

Memories of Sari Poijärvi

Photographs by Finnish artist Sari Poijärvi are currently on display in The Shot, an exhibition space at the Reykjavík Museum of Photography supposed to present the highlights of contemporary photography.

Sari Poijärvi, who has an MA degree in Art and Design, has held numerous solo and group exhibitions widely around the world. In September 2005, she stayed in Reykjavík and used the time to document the city and its surrounding. Some of these images can be seen

at the exhibition, entitled Memories. Poijärvi describes her work as being somewhere between reality and fiction, a combination that changes and varies in different art works. Another project of hers, log:in, is simultaneously presented at the A/A Photography Gallery on Hverfisgata. SJ

Reykjavík Museum of Photography, Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor, www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is

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

Music

Bar 11

Laugavegur 11
A popular hangout spot for Reykjavík's rockers and their young idolaters with DJ's playing classic rock'n'roll hitters.

Fri 13.04 DJ Gulli Ósóma
Sat 14.04 DJ Óli Dóri Weapons

Fri 20.04 DJ Palli Maus
Sat 21.04 DJ Óli Dóri Weapons

Fri 27.04 DJ Palli MAus

Sat 28.04 DJ Gulli Ósóma

Fri 04.05 DJ Gulli Ósóma

Sat 05.05 DJ Óli Dóri Weapons

Barinn

Laugavegur 22
Vibrant late-night party place and a nice roomy bistro during daytime.

Fri 13.04 DJ Maggi Legó and DJ Kvikindi

Sat 14.04 Barcode and DJ Eirir

Wed 18.04 Partyzone and Peter Parker

Thu 19.04 DJ Maggi Legó

Fri 20.04 DJ Peter Parker

Sat 21.04 DJ Yamaho

Wed 25.04 DJ Árni Japan

Thu 26.04 DJ Helgi Már

Fri 27.04 DJ Bjössi

Sat 28.04 TaTaTa! and DJ Kvikindi

Borgarleikhúsíð

Lístabrétt 2

Wed 18.04 Siðan Skein Sól anniversary

concerts. Special guests: Mugison, KK,

Björn Jörundur and Silvia Nött

Café Amsterdam

Hafnarstræti 5

Fri 13.04 DJ Fúsi

Fri 20.04 Coburn + guests in concert followed by DJ Master.. Starts at 23:00.

Sat 21.04 DJ Master

Café Cultura

Hverfisgata 18

Music from the world's four corners

Fri 13.04 DJ Kristín

Sat 14.04 Vanishing Twins

Café Hljómalind

Laugavegur 21

Fri 13.04 German metal-band Melan-

coholics in concert

Sun 15.04 I Adapt, Rökkrárr, The Best

Hardcore Band In The World and The

One Minute Kids. Concert start at 19

and as always, free entrance.

Dillon

Laugavegur 30

Legendary rock pub featuring live

concerts every Wednesday night and

rock DJ's every weekend.

Fri 13.04 DJ Rod and Stewart

Sat 14.04 Grasrætur followed by DJ

Andrea Jóns

Wed 18.04 Envy of Nona in concert

Fri 20.04 Shadow Parade in concert

followed by DJ Mikko

Sat 21.04 Johnny and the Rest fol-

lowed by DJ Andrea Jóns

Wed 25.04 Tab2

Fri 27.04 DJ Rod and Stewart

Sat 28.04 Grasrætur and DJ Andrea

Jóns

Grand Rokk

Café Ær

Smíðustígur 6

Fri 20.04 Dr. Spock and Drep in

concert

■ Háskólabíó

Hagatóng

Fri 20.04 The Icelandic Symphony

Orchestra

Wed 02.05 The Icelandic Symphony

Orchestra: Brahms / Beethoven III

Fri 04.05 The Icelandic Symphony

Orchestra: Brahms / Beethoven IV

■ Hellirinn

Hólmaslóð 2

Fri 13.04 Friday the 13th concerts:

Skitur, Carpe Noctem, Wreckless, Has-

treðjur and NinjaFish. Starts at 19:30.

■ Hitt Húsið

Pósthússtræti 3-5

Thu 26.04 Thursday Foreplay

■ Hressó

Austurstræti 20

Here, troubadours play sing-along

hitters until midnight followed by DJs

playing whatever the crowd is aching

for at the moment.

Fri 13.04 Flat Five in concert fol-

lowed by DJ Jón Gestur

Sat 14.04 Menn ársins and DJ Jón

Gestur

Wed 18.04 Pub-líc and DJ Maggi

Fri 19.04 Reykjavík Grapevine pres-

ents: Take me Down to Reykjavík City

concert series: Skátar + guests

Fri 20.04 Touch in concert fol-

lowed by DJ Maggi

Wed 18.04 DJ Maggi Legó

Wed 18.04 Flat Five in concert fol-

lowed by DJ Maggi

Eiriksgata

■ 101 Gallery

Hverfisgata 18

Fri 27.04 Nouvelle Vague in concert

Gestur

Sat 28.04 Touch followed by DJ Andri

Ramirez

■ Kaffibarinn

Bergstöðastræti 1

With a mixture of techno, reggae,

hip-hop and classic dance hitters, the

DJs are usually capable of crowding

this frisky bar every single night of the

week.

Fri 13.04 DJ Daði

Sat 14.04 DJ Yamaho

Wed 18.04 DJ Amma

Thu 19.04 DJ Buzby

Fri 20.04 Beauty and the Beast

Sat 21.04 DJ Pórir

Wed 25.04 DJ Anna Brá

Thu 26.04 DJ pórir

Fri 27.04 Dive De La Rosa Night

Sat 28.04 DJ Yamaho and Gísli Galdur

■ Sirkus

Klapparstígur 30

Playing reggae, country and occasion-

ally hosting live gigs on weekdays,

Sirkus's veteran techno DJs keep the

party going till late on weekends.

Fri 13.04 DJ Skeletor

Sat 14.04 DJ President Bongo

Free entrance every Thursday.

www.listasafnreykjavikur.is**March 31 – December 31**

Folk Tales

An exhibition of works by Icelandic draughtsmen who took on the task of illustrating folk tales from the oral tradition.

April 2 – December 31

The Shape of Life

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

Reykjavík Art Museum

– Hafnarhús

Tryggvagata 17

Open daily 10-17

Until April 29

Illustrations by Geirþrúður Finnabogadóttir Hjörvar at the D Gallery.

Until April 29

Erró – Gleymd framtíð / Erró

– Forgotten Future

100 watercolour paintings by Erró from the period 1981-2005.

Until April 29

Fagnaþargarðurinn / Celebration Park French artist Pierre Huyghe displays his recent works. (Pourquoi Pas? Festival)

Until April 29

Geirþrúður Hjörvar exhibition. In her exhibition she makes use of diverse media, mixing literature, music and visual arts in her installations.

Reykjavík Art Museum

– Kjarvalsstöðir

Flókagata

Open Daily 10-17

February 10 – April 29

Foss / Falling Water

The exhibition explores the relationship between art and nature through the work of Hekla Dögg Jónsdóttir, Ólafur Eliasson, Pat Steir and Rūri.

February 10 – September 2

K-pátturinn / The K-Factor

Jóhannes S. Kjartal retrospective.

Until May 6

Kjartal and bernskan / Kjartal and childhood

Jóhannes S. Kjartal exhibition especially for the young ones. A programme for children every Sunday at 14:00.

Reykjavík Museum

Kistuhylur 4

www.arbaejarsafn.is**The Reykjavík Museum of Photography**

Grófahús, Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor Weekdays 12-19

Sat.-Sun. 13-17

Free Entrance

www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is**Until May 26**

Swim and Steam

Damien Peyret exhibit displaying polaroids of people relaxing in Kópavogur swimming pool and screening his short film A Taxi for Reykjavík, made in 2001. (Pourquoi Pas? Festival)

Pas? Festival)**Until May 26**

Made in Iceland

Jo Duchene photo exhibition displaying his documentary of private, public, industrial and religious housing in Iceland. (Pourquoi Pas? Festival)

March 15 – May 9

Photographic work by Sari Poiarví

Safn

Laugavegur 37

Wed.-Fri. 14-18

Sat.-Sun. 14-17

Free Entrance

www.safn.is**March 17 – May 21**

Eden

Hugues Reip presents his installation entitled Eden, featuring images of flowers he has enlarged, printed and mounted on a wooden structure. (Pourquoi Pas? Festival)

March 17 – May 21

Jardin Vilayet

Sigurður Árni Sigurðsson photo exhibition.

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Laugarnestangi 70

Tue.-Sun. 14-17

Permanent exhibition

The work of sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson

Start Art / Art Shop

Laugavegur 12b

www.startart.is

A new gallery emphasising on contemporary art.

**Outside Reykjavík****Skaftfell**

Austurvögur 42, Seyðisfjörður

www.skaftfell.is**17 Mar – 10 May**

A unique collaboration between the Dieter Roth Academy and students from the Iceland Academy of the Arts. Participating students are:

Christelle Concho, Harpa Dögg Kjartansdóttir, Inga Martel, Irene Ósk Bermudez, James Greenway, Nika Kuprová, Sigurður Svava Ólafsdóttir, Vilborg Bjarkadóttir, Þórunn Maggý Kristjánsdóttir and Arild Tveito.

Open 13-17 on weekends

Gallery Klettur

Helluhraun 16, Hafnarfjörður

Open Sat. 10-14. At other times by arrangement.

Hafnarborg

Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður

Mon.-Sun. 11-17

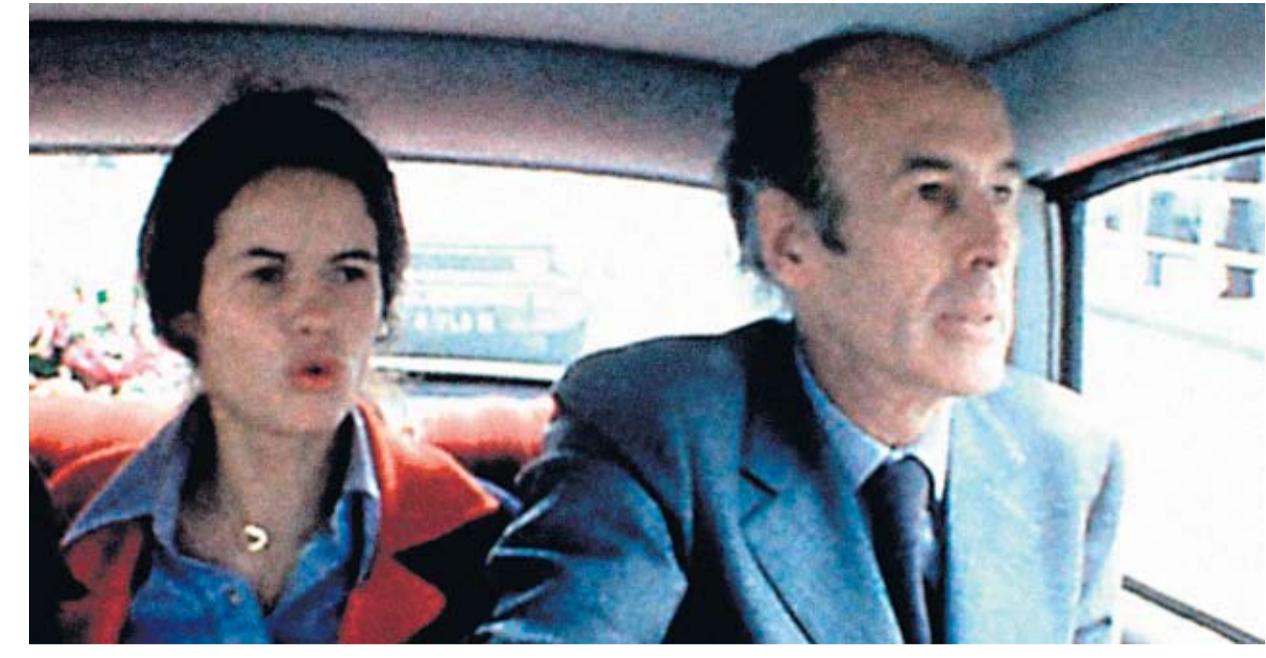
www.hafnarborg.is**April 12 – May 6**

No Particular Order

Gilles Bensimon photo exhibition. Fashion photographs spanning over three decades of his career. (Pourquoi Pas? Festival)

GalleriBOX**Best prices close to you!**

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**Music****Art****Films****Events****Music****Art****Films****Events**Tel: +354 562 6060
www.budget.is**Next Month's Programme:****Sunday, April 15.**15.00 : Profils paysans: L'Approche
17.00 : Reykjavík Documentary Workshop: Priechnyi
19.00 : Still Life
21.15 : Dong**Monday, April 16.**19.00 : 1974, une partie de campagne
21.00 : Reporters**Sunday, April 22.**17.00 : Les Années déclic
19.00 : 10ème chambre, instants d'audiences
21.15 : I for India**Monday, April 23.**19.00 : Déliés flagrants
21.00 : 1974, une partie de campagne**Sunday, April 29.**15.00 : Ronia the Robber's Daughter
17.00 : The Children of Noisy Village
19.00 : French Shorts I
21.15 : Reporters**Monday, April 30.**17.00 : The Brothers Lionheart
19.00 : Profils paysans : Le Quotidien and Quoi de neuf au Garet?
21.15 : French Shorts II**Sunday, May 6.**15.00 : The Children of Noisy Village
17.00 : Reykjavík Documentary Workshop: Wide Awake
20.00 : Moving Story: Works in progress and discussions**Monday, May 7.**17.00 : Ronia the Robber's Daughter
20.00 : Reykjavík Documentary Workshop: Wide Awake

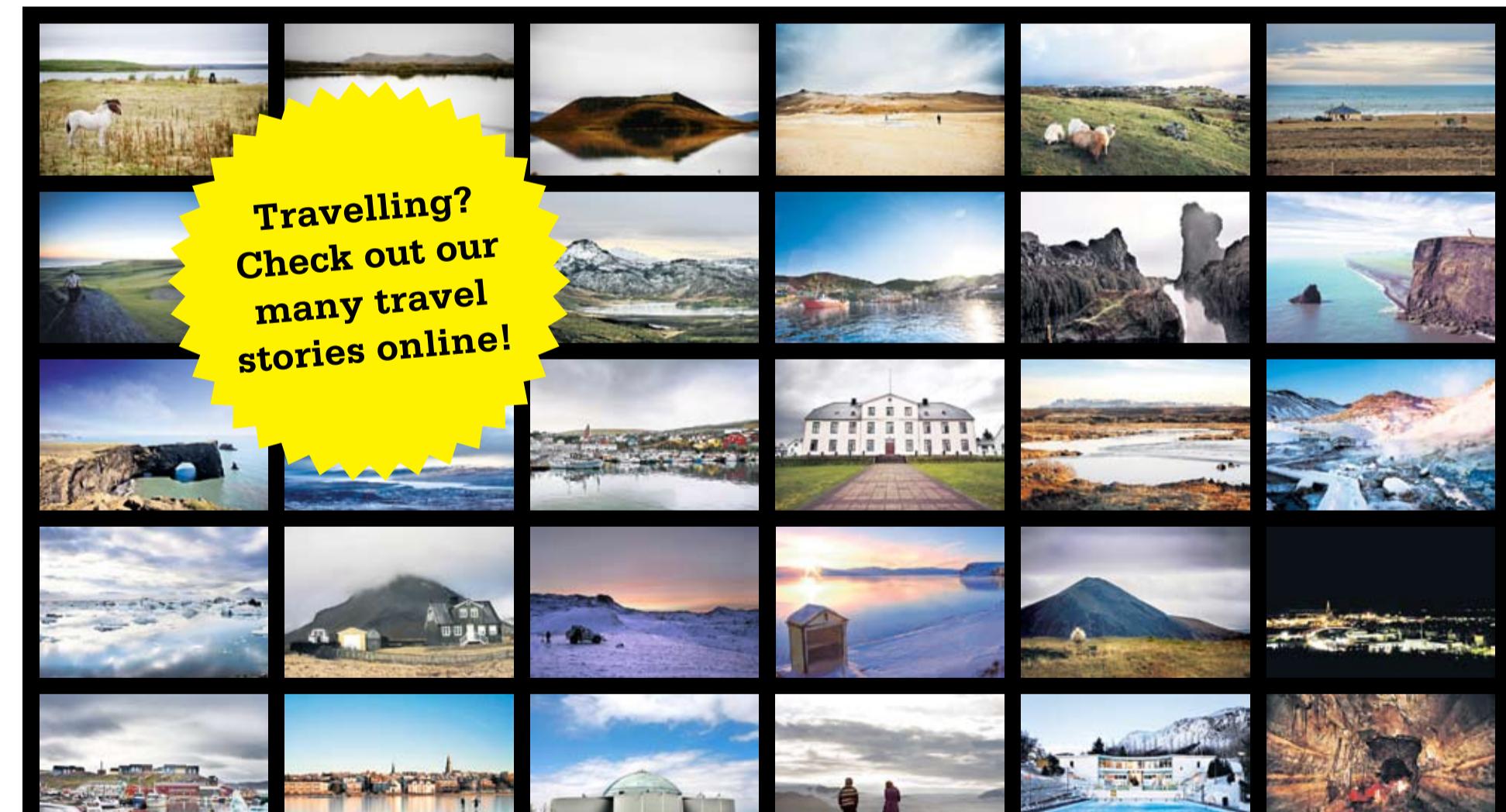
Tjarnarbíó, Tjarnargata 12

Film Club Fjalaköttrinn

A recent addition to the Icelandic film cusine is the newly established film-club "Fjalaköttrinn," which will have regular film screenings in Tjarnarbíó every Sunday and Monday until May. Nearly 30 films constitute the club's spring program and all screenings are available for the regular movie price of 900 ISK at the ticket office in Tjarnarbíó, which is open half an hour prior to every day's first screening.

Among this months, selections is also a special programme dedicated to the French photographer, journalist and filmmaker Raymond Depardon. Born into a family of farmers in 1942 in Burgundy he went to Paris in 1958, wishing to be a photographer. He later opened his own photography agency, Gamma, before becoming

a member of Magnum Photography. Famous for his coverage of the wars in Vietnam, Algeria, Congo and Chile, he later turned to films as his medium. In cooperation with Pourquois Pas?, Fjalaköttrinn has selected eight of Depardon's films for screening. The films are divided into three different categories: Journalists (Le Reporters), The Farmers (Le Monde Paysan) and Justice (Le Justice), with each category documenting a certain subject through the eyes of Depardon. Other selections include several films adapted from children's stories by Astrid Lindgren, such as Ronia the Robber's Daughter, The Children of Noisy Village and the Brothers Lionheart. In addition, members receive monthly newsletters with information and articles about the club's programme and films, as well as news from the world of cinema in general.



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The Brotherhood of the Negative

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson Photo by Skari

New Directions
Iceland's favourite sons of rock n' roll, collectively known as Mínus, are back at it. After being hailed as the saviours of metal by several esteemed rock publications following their third studio release - *Halldór Laxness* in 2003 - this April will finally see them release a long-awaited follow up. *The Great Northern Whalekill*. A Grapevine reporter sat down with two members of the band, guitarist Bjarni and drummer Bjössi, and learned more about their feelings of brotherhood and their fear of disappointment.

"The standards are just so different. There were people there to do the grocery shopping for us, a guy to set up my drum

On the surface of things, the name 'The Great Northern Whalekill' seems to be an obvious reference to both metal legends Pantera, and the delicate political climate in Iceland over the recent decision to resume commercial whaling. Yet the boys admit to it being designed to throw people off as much as anything else. "The title is just a private joke within the band, like all our other titles. There is no special message at work, it's just a big, cool title," says Bjarni when the subject is broached. "I mean, I know you are waiting for a real answer, something profound," Bjössi adds, "but there is nothing more. There is no propaganda behind the title, no politics."

So they haven't taken a stand on one of the most controversial political issues in Iceland in recent memory? "We're just not that kind of band," Bjössi states. "The only stand we have ever taken is to make music together. We have never been a political band, we're just making rock n' roll." Bjarni jumps in, saying "We were thinking about titles left and right when we were recording in Los Angeles. This was the last thing that came to us, at the airport really. When the release of [Icelandic girl pop-band] Nylon's album was cancelled in the UK because of the whaling issue, it became a factor as well. Now we have an excuse if our album flops," he says and they both laugh.

"Look, our partying lifestyle has always been a little misunderstood. There have always been certain members of the band that have done more to uphold our honour in that department."

kit. All we had to do was concentrate on the music and not worry about everyday stuff like work; I think that resulted in a tighter album," says Bjössi.

For their fourth album, the band elected to bring in new producers, opting for Joe Barresi (The Melvins, Jesus Lizard, Tomahawk and Tool) and Husky Hoskuls (Fantomas, Peeping Tom), after collaborating with Icelandic producer Bibbi Curver on their last two albums. "This is a new era," says Bjössi. "We wanted to try something new, so we brought in a new guy to produce it, a new guy to mix it, we recorded it in a new studio, using analogue technology instead of digital. This was just a good time to go in a different direction."

"Working with Curver was very different. We have known him for so many

years, and with him in the studio we would all just be goofing around, making jokes," Bjarni says. "It can be difficult to get that chemistry with a non-Icelandic producer. Icelanders have a special sense of humour and sometimes that doesn't translate very well to a foreigner."

Bjössi nods. "For a long time Curver was effectively the sixth member of our band, and did everything with us, we just saw him as a part of this project. From the moment we started working with Barresi, if you were not pulling your weight, he would chew you out, which is something we had never

been through in our eight years as a band. It was a slap in the face to hear that from somebody you didn't even know. But still, it was good slap in the face."

Channelling the Chaos
Both Bjarni and Bjössi have recently experienced fatherhood for the first time, doubling their parental duties with their careers in a band that has always been known to party just as hard as they rock, earning quite a reputation for their partying ways. Bjarni readily admits that the added duties make a difference, but don't really transform anything.

"Look, our partying lifestyle has always been a little misunderstood. There have always been certain members of the band that have done more to uphold our honour in that department."

in that department."

Bjössi agrees, saying "Through the years, people always seem to have formed a very different opinion of who I am before they meet me. People always tell me 'you are so different from what I thought you'd be'. Fatherhood wasn't a big shock for me, it came at the right time and didn't change much for me personally, and all the guys in the band backed me up one-hundred percent." Does that mean there is balance within the band?

"No," they answer simultaneously and laugh. "That is what drives this band," says Bjössi. "Total chaos," adds Bjarni, "the beauty within the chaos if you will." Bjössi picks up immediately, saying "That is just how this music is. Chaos does not necessarily have to be anything bad. We have learned to channel it in the right way. I think a lot of bands would probably have given up, had they been in our shoes. A lot of things have happened, but by now it would take something monumental for the band to fold. The fire and the passion to keep this brotherhood going are still there."

Defining a Sound

Our talk turns to their new product. On their breakthrough album, *Halldór Laxness*, the band moved away from the screamo-core elements that characterised their two previous releases. *The Great Northern Whalekill* takes that move a step further and sees the band develop their own catchistic sound, juxtaposing so many different elements that it easily escapes definition. It just sounds unmistakably Mínus.

"What I find most positive about this album is the sound. It doesn't sound like anything else, it is just our own sound," Bjarni says contemplatively. Bjössi adds "This is really the sound we've been looking for. We are really happy we managed to find that. When I was younger I had a hard time understanding that a band could change its style. If they did, I thought they should also change their name. I didn't understand that musicians evolve, and now I am at that point myself. We have already done a noise core album, and a hardcore album, and we don't want to repeat ourselves."

The first single from the album, *Futurist*, was released last month and caught many of the band's fans off guard. With voice effects, poppy hooks and sing-alongs, it is far removed from the band's previous singles. "We chose that song for our first single on purpose, just to fuck with people," Bjarni says. "Just so people would have no idea what to expect from this album." But despite coming out of left field, the single has topped almost all radio charts in the country so far. Did they expect it to be so successful?

"No, not really, this has never happened to us before," says Bjarni. "The last time we released an album, there were only a handful of people who knew who we were." Bjössi has a more pessimistic view of the whole situation: "The name Mínus has always been connected to our negative way of thinking. Every time we play we expect no one to show up and nothing to work out, just so we won't be disappointed. So I never expected anything from this single. It will just be exciting to see how it goes."

The album's release date has been pushed back from the scheduled April 16 to the end of April. I ask them if any plans have been made for the follow up. "Not really," says Bjarni. "Right now we are just taking it one step at a time. We have just released the first single, now we just want to get the album out. After that we'll just wait and see what comes up. We have nothing big planned so far."

Judging from the reception of their first single, it will be safe to assume that they have a busy summer ahead of them.

The Great Northern Whalekill is scheduled for release at the end of April.

www.myspace.com/minus

THE TRAVELLER'S DAY APRIL 19 2007 FULL SCHEDULE

Traveller's Day 2007

The Traveller's Day will be held Thursday 19th April, the First Day of Summer according to the old Icelandic calendar. This special day is dedicated to the tourism industry and travel-related leisure activities in the Reykjavík Capital Area with the aim of introducing local residents to all the delightful activities on offer for tourists. The Traveller's Day programme is family-oriented, exciting and very inexpensive. Different leisure activities will be offered at discounted prices (or for free) and most will be free for children accompanied by adults.

Active Traveller

Scenic flights over Reykjavík and surrounding area. Booking tel.: 570 3030. Price: 1,500 ISK per person. Free for children under 15. Air Iceland – Reykjavík Airport. 13:00, 14:15 & 15:15.

Horseback Riding

Hour long horseriding tours with Íshestar and children lead by reins. Price: 1,500 ISK for riding tour. Free for children to be lead by reins between 13:00 – 14:30 and 15:30 – 16:30. Café buffet from 13:00 – 17:00. Price 1,000 ISK per adult, 500 ISK for 6 – 15-year olds, free for children under 6.

Íshestar, Sörlakeiði 26 Hafnarfjörður.

Open house, Klifurhús Ís - Bouldering centre. Instructor present – free entrance. Klifurhús Ís, Skútuvogi 1G. 13:00 – 17:00.

Blokart

Highlanders offer you the chance to try Blokart on the parking lot by the Reykjavík Harbour. Price 1000 ISK. Each ride 15-minutes. Parking lot between Reykjavík Harbour and Geirsgata. 13:00 - 16:00.

ATV by the old harbour. ATV Iceland offers travellers the chance to drive street legal ATV by the old Reykjavík harbour. Price: 2,000 ISK. Each ride 10 minutes. Ægisgarður, Reykjavíkurhöfn. 11:00 – 18:00.

Cultural Traveller

Gljúfrasteinn - The House of Halldór Laxness
Open house Gljúfrasteinn, Mosfellsbær. Free Entrance. 10:00 – 17:00.

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

14:00 - Guided tour through the museum.
15:00 - Painter Bjarni Jónsson introduces his exhibition in Icelandic. Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Grandagarður 8. Free entrance. 13:00 - 17:00.

Down Town Cultural Walk for Children

A guided tour in Icelandic for children through the city centre. Tour starts at 14:00 by the Icelandic Travel Market and ends an hour later by the harbour. Price: 500 ISK per adult, free for children.

Tourist Info, Bankastræti. 14:00.

Reykjavík Art Museum - Ásmundarsafn

The Shape of a Line. A retrospective exhibition of works by Ásmundur Sveinsson.
Folk Tales - Icelandic stories from the oral tradition.

An exhibition of works by Icelandic draughtsmen who took on the task of illustrating folk tales from the oral tradition.
Ásmundarsafn by Sigtún. Free entrance. 13:00 – 16:00.

Reykjavík Art Museum - Kjarvalsstadir

Falling Water. Artists: Hekla Dögð Jónsdóttir, Ólafur Eliasson, Pat Steir og Rúri.
K - Factor. The painter Jóhannes S. Kjarval.

Active Traveller Íshestar, Sörlakeiði 26, Hafnarfjörður



Program With Íshestar

Íshestar Riding tours in cooperation with the Traveller's Day offers an extensive programme during the day. Riding tours for visitors, and short walks for children where they ride a horse lead by reins by an experienced instructor. Visitors will be able to witness a

Kjarval and Childhood

An exhibition for youth about youth. Kjarvalstaðir by Flókagata. Free entrance. 10:00 – 17:00.

Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhús

Celebration Park. French painter Pierre Huyghe.

D - Project 2. Painter Geirþrúður Hjörvar. Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhús, Tryggvagata 17. Free entrance. 10:00 – 17:00.

Saga Museum

Price 1000 ISK per adult, free for children under 12. Saga Museum Perlan. 10:00 – 18:00.

What Did Kids in Reykjavík do 1000 Years Ago?

11:00 & 13:00 - A special guided tour for children through the Settlement Exhibition 871±2, Aðalstræti 16. Free entrance. Open from 10:00 – 17:00.

The Culture House

The Nation and the Nature, a documentary by Páll Steinbergsson about the coexistence of man and animals in Icelandic nature. Medieval Manuscripts – Eddas and Sagas. Exhibition of Icelandic manuscripts from the middle ages.

The Road to Zion. Over 150 years have passed since Icelanders first settled in North America. Berlin Excursion. An exhibit of books from the publishing house Edition Mariannenpresse in Berlin.

Þjóðmenningarhús Ís, Hverfisgata 15. Free Entrance.

11:00 – 17:00.

Hafnarborg - The Hafnarfjörður Institute of Culture and Art. French fashion photographer Gilles Bensimon. Free Entrance. 11:00 – 21:00.

Turak – Théâtre d'objets. French theatre group. Admission: 500 ISK. Hafnarborg, Strandgata 34 Hafnarfjörður. 16:00.

Museum of Hafnarfjörður

Museum of Hafnarfjörður, Vesturgata 8, Hafnarfjörður. Free entrance. 11:00 – 21:00.

National Museum of Iceland

Games – old and new, guided tours for all ages, workshops and lottery. Ægissíðanafn Islands, Suðurgötu 41. Free Entrance. 13:00 – 17:00.

Down Town Cultural Walk for Children

A guided tour in Icelandic for children through the city centre. Tour starts at 14:00 by the Icelandic Travel Market and ends an hour later by the harbour. Price: 500 ISK per adult, free for children.

Tourist Info, Bankastræti. 14:00.

National Gallery of Iceland

14:00 Guided tours in Icelandic through exhibitions of the works of Jóhann Briem and Jón Engilberts. National Gallery of Iceland, Frikirkjuvegur 7, open from 11:00 – 17:00. Free entrance.

The Children's Book Award 2006

Family programme in the Reykjavík City Library – Main Library. The best children's books in 2006 awarded.

City Library Grófarhús, Tryggvagötu 15. 14:00.

ASÍ Art Museum

15:00 Borghildur Óskarsdóttir talks about her exhibition Opnur. Listasafn ASÍ, Freyjugata 41. Free entrance. 13:00 – 17:00.

90-minute Ghost Walk

through Reykjavík's most haunted places. For reservations, call 696 7474. Departure from Tourist Info, Aðalstræti 2. Admission 500kr. 18:00 & 20:00. (In Icelandic)

Healthy Traveller

Seljavarnes – A Guided Tour

A two-hour guided walk through the town Seljavarnes. Departure from Fiskisaga by Nesvegur. 16:00. (In Icelandic)

The Icelandic Mountain Bike Club

Open House.

Islenski Fjallahólkubburinn, Brekkustigur 2. 17:00 – 21:00.

World Class – Laugar

Open house.

World Class, Sundlaugavegi 30. 08:00 – 20:00.

The Iceland Touring Association

Laugavegur Walk. Guided walk through the old route to Laugardalur.

Departure from Mörkin 6. Free admission. 10:00.

Hiking mount Helgafell

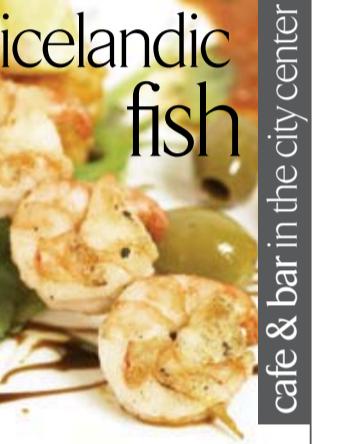
Departure from the parking lot by Kaldársel. Free admission. 11:00. Reykjavík City Hall. 13:00.

ÍR Cross Country Run

Registration from 11:00-12:50 in Reykjavík City Hall. Registration fee 1000 ISK.

Reykjavík City Hall. 13:00.



1 CAFÉS	8 Tiu Dropar Laugavegur 27	15 Næsti Bar Ingólfsstræti 1a	22 Boston Laugavegur 28b	25 Ölstofan Vegamótastigur 4	28 Barinn Laugavegur 22	31 RESTAURANTS	34 Argentina Steakhouse Barónsstígur 11	37 Indian Mango Frakkarstígur 12	44 Bæjarins Bestu Tryggvagata
Kaffi Hljómalind Laugavegur 21	A very nice, free-trade café prides itself on being a non-profit company and a dedicated venue for the hardcore and cultural scene by hosting concerts, lectures and poetry nights. Serving delicious soups and vegetarian dishes as well as organic tea, coffee and cake, this is the place to visit for a reasonably priced healthy lunch.	Næsti Bar can be a godsend on those nights when queues seem to snake all the way down Laugavegur, no seats are available anywhere and you just want to chat with some friends over a beer, those folk usually don't mind if you pop in for a quick beer and make use of some of the (usually) available tables, so long as the music is good but never intrusive.	Located above the second-hand fashion store Spútrík, with its roomy bar floor and nice sofas in the lounge room upstairs, Boston is a fresh addition to the Reykjavík bar scene. Old-school yet stylish interiors, and enough tables to create a good vibe, make this place a comfy café as well as a laid-back tavern where the music is good but never intrusive.	Ölstofan has been attracting a clientele of late twenties and up who come for the drink and stay for the company, as blasting DJs here have been replaced by nice background music to go with the drink. Better show up early on weekends before the regular clientele rushes in as its popularity makes it hard to find a table.	Up-and-coming Barinn is becoming quite popular among Reykjavík party scenesters. Its three floors and equally numerous bars get quite crowded during weekends, where a mix of dancing downstairs and chatting upstairs make for a good night out. Though mostly a DJ bar, Barinn occasionally hosts live gigs and is always a fun party venue.	Vor's refreshing take on café-style eating is marked by its use of fresh ingredients and a health-conscious menu that emphasises French and Mediterranean cuisine. The fresh spring salad and the excellent carrot-ginger soup are excellent pick-me-ups on rainy days, and the coffee served is of the highest quality.	True to its name, restaurant Argentina specialises in Argentinean steaks and southern decorations where dancing flames in the fireplace welcome every guest that walks inside. The tender meat, excellent wines, generous portions and a selection of quality cognac, whiskey, liqueurs and cigars all helped in making it a recommended place for fine dining.	Located on a quiet Laugavegur side street, Indian Mango has infused the Reykjavík restaurant scene with incredible delicacies originating in the rich food traditions from the Goa region in India, honed to perfection at the Four Seasons, during the owner's period as head chef. A local favourite, Indian Mango is known both for the quality of the food as well as the service.	There's a good reason why there's always a line in front of Bæjarins Bestu, regardless of the weather or time of day. Selected the best hot-dog in Europe by The Guardian, a fact locals realized decades ago, it has been serving "ein með öllu" ("one with the lot") to downtown pedestrians since 1935, making it the oldest fast food restaurant in the country. Grabbing a bite couldn't be easier.
2 Gráí Kötturinn Hverfisgata 16a	9 Súfistinn Laugavegur 18	16 Vegamót Vegamótastigur 4	23 Café Cultura Hverfisgata 18	26 Deco Austurstræti 12	29 Q-Bar Ingólfsstræti 3	32 Maru Aðalstræti 12	35 Icelandic Fish Chips Tryggvagata 8	38 Sægreifinn Verðub 8, Geirsgata	45 Quiznos Lækjargata 8
A small antique-style non-smoking coffee house in a Hverfisgata basement, legendary for its early opening hours, amazing breakfast and strong coffee that will easily wake you up in the morning. We especially recommend The Truck, American style breakfast consisting of eggs, bacon, pancakes, fried potatoes, tomatoes, syrup and toast. The bagels are also excellent.	On the top floor of the giant bookstore Mál og Menning, you'll find the casual booklover coffee house Súfistinn. What we love about this place is the selection of books and magazines you can take from the store and read while enjoying a breakfast, light lunch or afternoon coffee. Browse the shelves and grab a table.	Vegamót (crossroads), they serve brunch during the weekends, and the kitchen is open until 22:00 daily. After that the beat goes on, and you can check the end results in photos published the day after on their website www.vegamot.is. If you like Oliver, try Vegamót and vice versa.	Located inside the Intercultural Centre, Cultura is a restaurant/bar with a cosmopolitan feel, hosting an array of events and various theme nights like Salsa teaching, tango nights and fusion parties. The menu features all sorts of international dishes like Thai soup, Spanish tapas, fajitas and falafel mixed with bistro regulars such as sandwiches and salads.	Located inside a former drugstore, Deco is an upper-middle priced bar/bistro catering to those who prefer elegant surroundings. A good choice for a light lunch or an afternoon glass of red wine. Features an above average whiskey selection.	A spacious gay/straight friendly bar, the newly renovated Q-Bar is a welcome addition to the nightlife downtown. In stylish and comfortable surroundings, with a lounge-like atmosphere, a good vibe and plenty of seats, the place never gets uncomfortably crowded nor too noisy for conversation.	Last time we checked, Maru manages to shell out some near-perfect sushi at very reasonable prices. Their downtown location makes it an excellent place for take-away, a fact that's emphasised (and suggested) by the menu. When dining in, however, make sure to compliment your spicy tuna maki with a nice glass of Asahi Super Dry and a chaser of sake. They also offer take-away at all times.	Not the regular fish'n'chips diner but a highly restaurant using only organic vegetables, fresh fish products and no wheat or white sugar in its kitchen. Freshly caught fish of the day served with oven baked potatoes and Skyrries, a sauce made out of the fat-free milk product Skyr and flavoured with all sorts of spices, on the side for 1350 ISK.	Located right next to the Reykjavík harbour, Sægreifinn fish shop and restaurant is truly like no other you'll witness in the country. The menu features various fish dishes and a rich portion of the best lobster soup we've ever tasted. It also caters to groups upstairs where the room looks more like a cabin than a diner and the Sea Baron himself can often be seen. The good food and welcoming service make this place a must-try.	A chain of sandwich outlets specializing in toasty baguette-style subs, but also serving soups and salads. Choose your toppings and variety of sauces and you'll get a fresh sandwich to suit your taste. Ask for the lamb sub, an Icelandic specialty. Then put a double chocolate chunk brownie in your take-away box and you're good to go.
3 Mokka Skólavörðustígur 3a	10 Sverta Kaffi Laugavegur 54	17 Café Cozy Austurstræti 3		21 SPOT THIS: Vor Laugavegur 24, 101 Reykjavík		39 Apótek Bar-Grill Austurstræti 16	46 Nonnabiti Hafnarstræti 16		WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS
Mokka has been attracting coffee-thirsty regulars since 1958, making it the oldest café in the city centre and the founder of a very rich coffee culture in the country. Its old interiors full of character make the stay both relaxing and comfortable and a great place to linger on a Sunday afternoon. Mokka's regular art exhibits are always worth a look.	A cosy second floor café offering lunch snacks and cappuccinos to Laugavegur pedestrians every day of the week. The appeal lies partly in their famous Súpa í braði, (translates Soup in bread), but also in the romantic atmosphere created by candlelight on every table and easy-listening music. A nice hideaway in the evening for a drink or two.	Reykjavík's only gay-bar at the time of writing, Café Cozy is indeed very cosy, and especially so if you happen to be same-sex oriented. During weekends, this small café usually turns into a full-fledged discothèque with bouts of table dancing and general hedonism while weeknights find the clientele discussing current-affairs over pints and cups of coffee.	A cosy second floor café offering lunch snacks and cappuccinos to Laugavegur pedestrians every day of the week. The appeal lies partly in their famous Súpa í braði, (translates Soup in bread), but also in the romantic atmosphere created by candlelight on every table and easy-listening music. A nice hideaway in the evening for a drink or two.	Vor's refreshing take on café-style eating is marked by its use of fresh ingredients and a health-conscious menu that emphasises French and Mediterranean cuisine. The fresh spring salad and the excellent carrot-ginger soup are excellent pick-me-ups on rainy days, and the coffee served is of the highest quality.	DOWNTOWN REYKJAVÍK	With airy and stylish interiors and excellent menu, it's no wonder this restaurant is always packed during weekends. Located inside a building that used to house the downtown pharmacy, the restaurant is a true haven for food lovers where the pleasure of dining in the open and lively environment is almost indescribable. After the meal, order a Mojito – it's the best you'll get in the city.	Renowned for its greasy sandwiches, Nonnabiti, or Nonni as the locals call it, is one of the more popular junk food places around, offering a large selection of take-away or dine in, sandwiches and burgers with a nice dash of the unique Nonni-sauce. If you have a late night craving there's no need to worry, Nonni is open longer than most other places.	icelandic fish cafe & bar in the city center	DECO CAFE / BAR austurstræti 12 • 101 reykjavík AMERICAN STYLE RESTAURANT Down town Reykjavík at Tryggvagata close to the harbor
4 Ráðhúskaffi Tjarnargata 11	11 BARS 'N' BISTROS	18 Røsenberg Lækjargata 2		B5 Bankastræti 5	19 Óliver Laugavegur 20a		40 Við Tjörnina Templarsund 3		47 Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar (Búllan) Geirsgata 1
Located inside the City Hall with a great view over the pond, this coffee house has a good selection of cakes and pastries for pedestrians who like to relax after a stroll in the centre. A large topographic model of Iceland and regular art exhibits add to the pleasure.	A trendy lounge bar that is among the city's more stylish venues. Serving cocktails, bistro style dishes that can be enjoyed seated in comfortable leather sofas with a bottle of fine wine from the impressive wine-list while listening to some laid-back tunes. Open until 2 on weekends.	Café Røsenberg features a venue for easy going troubadours, jazz bands and blues groups, providing a relaxed atmosphere almost every day of the week and making Røsenberg one of a few jazz clubs living up to its name in Reykjavík. The live gigs, which are almost guaranteed on weekends, attract a very mixed crowd, all looking for that chilled-out feel.	A trendy lounge bar that is among the city's more stylish venues. Serving cocktails, bistro style dishes that can be enjoyed seated in comfortable leather sofas with a bottle of fine wine from the impressive wine-list while listening to some laid-back tunes. Open until 2 on weekends.	Vor's refreshing take on café-style eating is marked by its use of fresh ingredients and a health-conscious menu that emphasises French and Mediterranean cuisine. The fresh spring salad and the excellent carrot-ginger soup are excellent pick-me-ups on rainy days, and the coffee served is of the highest quality.	DOWNTOWN REYKJAVÍK	One of Reykjavík's classics, with a view over the pond and a menu almost solely consisting of traditional Icelandic dishes, this restaurant is just as popular among tourists as it is among Reykjavík's residents. The reindeer-steak with port-sauce or the pickled herring and fermented shark served with Icelandic schnapps both come highly recommended.	Frequented lauded by Iceland's hamburgier aficionados as the best place to get a real hamburger in Reykjavík, 'Búllan' (as it's affectionately known to the locals) does indeed serve up some extra-tasty burgers that are sure to take the edge off any hangover. What makes it so rare is hard to say, but liberal helpings of rare beef contribute a lot.	Á næstu grósum (Á næstu grósum) Laugavegur 208	OPEN: mon-fri 10:00-23:30 / sat-sun 11:00-23:30
5 Babalú Skólavörðustígur 22a	12 Belly's Hafnarstræti 18a	19 Óliver Laugavegur 20a		A12 Austurstræti 12	20 Bar 11 Laugavegur 11		41 FAST FOOD American Style Tryggvagata 26		48 Á næstu grósum (Á næstu grósum) Laugavegur 208
Walking up Skólavörðustígur, you can't miss café Babalú, a pleasant destination in our right, as it has to be ranked as one of the coziest places for a coffee and cake. With nice old sofas and books lining the shelves, you can't help feeling you are at your grandma's place. We could sit there every day, all day, if our daily duties wouldn't pull us out again.	A spacious pub, although the complete opposite of bright and airy, Belly's deserves praise for having the cheapest bar price around, selling a large beer for only 350 ISK. Attracting a mixture of students, sailors and all those who don't want to drain the wallet, there are enough tables for everyone and TVs on every wall for all you sports enthusiasts out there.	If you like trendy party-types who dance like crazy to a lively mix of music where glamour is all that counts on the spacious dance floor, the stylish Oliver is the nightclub for you. For all the others who hate that kind of a party, the good air-conditioning, fine food and excellent brunch served during the day makes Oliver a recommended choice for mid-priced meals.	Walking up Skólavörðustígur, you can't miss café Babalú, a pleasant destination in our right, as it has to be ranked as one of the coziest places for a coffee and cake. With nice old sofas and books lining the shelves, you can't help feeling you are at your grandma's place. We could sit there every day, all day, if our daily duties wouldn't pull us out again.	What makes American Style burgers distinct from all the other ones in the city is the size, the soft bun and the amount of fresh veggies used as toppings. Grab a seat in one of the booths with your bbq heavy special with bacon and cheese, fries and a soda, and you won't be hungry for hours.	DOWNTOWN REYKJAVÍK	Many locals claim this to be the best vegetarian restaurant in town offering a menu with plenty of vegan and vegetarian options, both healthy and tasty. Ask for the daily special or try the selection of three different courses. The Indian theme on Fridays is usually a hit and the sugar free banana cake just one of the highly tempting desserts.	Fancy a kebab? There aren't many choices – Kebab Húsíð is the only place selling them in the city. But if you don't set the standard too high and note that you'll never have to wait longer than five minutes for your piping hot dinner with veggie, yoghurt and chilli sauce, you're in for a fine meal. Especially popular among hungry club crawlers on weekends.	Pizza King Hafnarstræti 18	Kebab Húsíð Lækjargata 2
6 Segafredo By Lækjartorg	13 Kaffibarinn Bergstaðastræti 1	20 Bar 11 Laugavegur 11		A13 Austurstræti 13	21 Hressó Austurstræti 20		42 Pizza King Hafnarstræti 18		49 Kebab Húsíð Lækjargata 2
The Italian coffee-chain found its spot in the heart of Reykjavík, with its windows facing the Lækjartorg Square. Serving lunch snacks like paninis and strong espressos for coffee lovers whether you need to grab a cup and sandwich on the way to work or want to enjoy your drink on the spot.	A popular coffee place on weekdays, especially among students and downtown workers who like to enjoy a bottle of beer after a busy day. At weekends, Kaffibarinn becomes the opposite of a quiet destination, as its two floors fill up with the late-night souls. With DJs playing live sets from Wednesday to Saturday, the party doesn't start winding down until early morning.	Featuring occasional concerts on Friday nights and DJs calling the tunes every weekend, Bar 11 is a popular late-night haunt on two floors. Emphasizing old rock'n'roll classics and chart-toppers, the crammed dance floor tends to turn into a war zone at weekends when it's impossible to have a private chat. That whole fiasco can be an interesting experience, especially if you join in the fun.	The Italian coffee-chain found its spot in the heart of Reykjavík, with its windows facing the Lækjartorg Square. Serving lunch snacks like paninis and strong espressos for coffee lovers whether you need to grab a cup and sandwich on the way to work or want to enjoy your drink on the spot.	What makes American Style burgers distinct from all the other ones in the city is the size, the soft bun and the amount of fresh veggies used as toppings. Grab a seat in one of the booths with your bbq heavy special with bacon and cheese, fries and a soda, and you won't be hungry for hours.	DOWNTOWN REYKJAVÍK	One of 101's more established taverns, Dillon features moderately priced drinks, a dark and cosy mood and some pretty good music (especially when local favourite DJ Andrea Jóns mans the decks). The tattooed, beer-lovin' types who hang out there on school nights are joined by legions of parka-clad students during weekends, creating a party atmosphere that's always fun to partake in.	In an elegant setting, Seafood Cellar's serve gourmet fusion style dishes, where the emphasis is not only on ocean delights, but also on all sorts of tempting Asia-inspired dishes. The most fun is to order the exotic menu, a range of courses carefully selected by the chef, and share it with your dining partners.	Discover the original Eastern taste in the West	SHALIMAR
7 Kaffitár Bankastræti 8	14 Sirkus Klapparstígur 30	21 Hressó Austurstræti 20		24 Prikið Bankastræti 12	27 Kaffi Amsterdam Hafnarstræti 5		30 Dillon Laugavegur 30		43 Bernhöftsbakarí Bergstaðarstræti 13
At Kaffitár, making coffee is a way of celebrating life. Offering all sorts of delicacies to go with your morning fuel and a nice selection for those with a sweet tooth, it's an excellent choice for eat in or take away. Their special coffee-blends are a tad pricy, but well worth that little extra change. If you like your coffee, buy a bag of beans to take home.	Attracting a mixed crowd of party-peopple, the small bar Sirkus has always been popular among musicians and the creative crowd who get along well although the breathing space can be limited on weekends. While Sirkus' DJs provide for the greatest party possible every weekend, the bar occasionally hosts concerts on weeknights.	This two-floor café/pub has been a part of Reykjavík's bar scene for decades. With a large and fairly cheap bistro menu, Prikið attracts a mix of university students with their laptops and elderly devoted regulars during the day while the younger clientele fills up the space during the evening and especially at weekends when the music is mostly dedicated to hip-hop and R&B.	At Kaffitár, making coffee is a way of celebrating life. Offering all sorts of delicacies to go with your morning fuel and a nice selection for those with a sweet tooth, it's an excellent choice for eat in or take away. Their special coffee-blends are a tad pricy, but well worth that little extra change. If you like your coffee, buy a bag of beans to take home.	One of 101's more established taverns, Dillon features moderately priced drinks, a dark and cosy mood and some pretty good music (especially when local favourite DJ Andrea Jóns mans the decks). The tattooed, beer-lovin' types who hang out there on school nights are joined by legions of parka-clad students during weekends, creating a party atmosphere that's always fun to partake in.	DOWNTOWN REYKJAVÍK	The quintessential rock-pub, Dillon features moderately priced drinks, a dark and cosy mood and some pretty good music (especially when local favourite DJ Andrea Jóns mans the decks). The tattooed, beer-lovin' types who hang out there on school nights are joined by legions of parka-clad students during weekends, creating a party atmosphere that's always fun to partake in.	It's a bakery, the oldest one in the city in fact, selling all sorts of bakery goods, snacks and an extensive selection of the sweet stuff from early dawn. We particularly love the spelt bread in the morning, and some sôndur, kleina and vinarbrot to go with the afternoon coffee.	Discover the original Eastern taste in the West	INDIAN - PAKISTANI CUISINE

tveir fiskar
DISCOVER ICELANDIC SEAFOOD
At the Reykjavík harbour

Gissur Gudmundsson
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European Continental Director for World Association of Cooks Societies
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Talking Shops With Æla in London

Text by Ben H. Murray Photo by JosephH

Æla's first gig in London was at the Buffalo Bar, situated in the well-to-do North London suburb of Islington. It is a dark pit of a place, typical of the capital's atmospheric live music venues, with a tiny stage and an interesting collection of London's music glitterati in attendance on this particular evening. The first band playing were duller than an old Victoria Line tube train disappearing down a tunnel, something that posed an interesting juxtaposition when Æla came on stage to awaken the bored audience.

Opening with a piratical shouting session worthy of any invading Viking, Æla launched into a set of prog thrash punk which, although mostly sung in wailed Icelandic, was widely understood by the audience to be a mix of energetic humour and surreal prose. "This song is about a banana that saved his life" was the explanation behind one song - apparently the product of a nourishment crisis on a golf course being solved by fruit - and some insight into the band's song-writing technique was gained when they later admitted that they construct songs by each writing a line and passing the sheet round until they have enough for a whole song. Chairs were danced on, more lyrics shouted, Hafþór the drummer sweated a lot, lots of people were smiling and then, after Æla had overrun their allocated time by some margin, they walked off grinning. Some Australian band came on a bit later.

We retired to the seats near the back of the bar - the rest of the bands were boring in comparison.

We were just leaving when Halli Valli, Æla's lead singer, confided: "I really need a new outfit." Thankfully he'd abandoned the renaissance pirate gear he was sporting on stage earlier in favour of some attire more suited to braving London's rather unforgiving streets. A new outfit was not a problem as I happened to know of a shop in South London, a short train ride from Victoria, that you could describe as a fancy dress supermarket without misrepresenting its size in any way. Halli, who was clearly a man desperate for some fancy new threads, agreed that this sounded like a good place to visit before their next London-based gig on Friday evening - I already felt sorry for the staff of the Party Superstore in Clapham Junction, South London.

Two days later and after a much-needed intake of Guinness and cider at a drinking hole near the station called The Falcon - a typical South London pub with brass fittings and a massive bar - we struggled through the rain and up the small hill where the emporium of tat, also known as the Party Superstore, awaited. "Like a kid in a candy shop" is how one band member described the moment of entry and, it has to be admitted, the endless possibilities housed within this four walls do fascinate: giant Donnie Darko psycho bunny

or a huge yellow chicken? Egyptian stripper or sexy air hostess? Actually, any thoughts of the last option were rather ruined when Halli, having been searching for his fancy dress nirvana for about 20 minutes among the many racks and shelves, located an airhostess outfit that fitted him. He knew this because he tried the outfit on and asked how he looked. Someone commented on the dodgy EU badge on the sleeve but the general opinion was that he looked OK.

"It's always the quiet ones, isn't it?" said the photographer as Ævar, the slightly retiring but thoroughly pleasant guitar player, showed genuine interest in an outfit described as Virgin Bunny Girl on the packaging. Hafþór, meanwhile, was pursuing the military look but a Crimean War-era British soldier outfit sadly proved to be a bit expensive. Post-weight gain Elvis gear, on the other hand, was more reasonably priced but came with a catch: "You've got to have the cape, it just looks like a white tracksuit without the cape" explained the knowledgeable shop assistant. I wonder how many little nuggets of valuable knowledge such as this you come across whilst working at the Party Superstore - lots, I reckon.

Outfits purchased and with the shop's tilts better off to the tune of about £200, we celebrated with a swig of liquorice vodka in the drizzle outside before heading for the train station to return home before the gig.

www.myspace.com/aelaspace

Þetta er skartgripur

Poppkorn er ekki bara gott, það er líka fallegt. Ef þú átt nái og tvína er lítið mál að bua til flotta perfufesti.



Hjá Námsmannapjónustu Sparisjóðsins gerir þú mikil úr litlu. Gott dæmi um það er 2 fyrir 1 í Sambíóin alla þriðjudaga. Skráðu pigi Námsmannapjónustu Sparisjóðsins og þú færð Bíkkort - 4 x fritt í bíó og margt fleira. Nánari upplýsingar á spar.is eða í næsta sparisjóð. Við hlökkum til að heyra frá þér. Gerðu mikil úr litlu!

SPARISJÓÐURINN
Námsmannapjónusta



POURQUOI PAS?_A_FRENCH_SPRING_IN_ICELAND_2007

■ Street Art

May 10 – May 12
Royal De Luxe – Street Theatre Company, Streets and squares of Reykjavík

■ Visual Art

Feb 23 – Apr 22
Celebration Park - Pierre Huyghe design exhibition, Reykjavík Art Museum, Tryggvagata 17

Feb 25 – May 12
M/M & Gabriela sculpture exhibition. Museum of Design and Applied Art, Lyngás 7-9, Garðabær

Feb 25 – Feb 7 2008
Pourquoi Pas? – Charcot exhibition, Sandgerði Museum, Garðavegur 1, Sandgerði

Mar 10 – Apr 29
Face à Faces – Photo exhibition, Akureyri Art Museum, Kaupvangsstræti 12, Akureyri

Mar 17 – Apr 21
African Art – Photo exhibition, National Museum of Iceland, Suðurgata 41

Mar 17 – May 15
Emotional Landscapes – Exhibition on the nature of exhibitions, Safn, Laugavegur 37

Mar 17 – May 21
Hugues Reip and Sigrún Ární Sigurðsson - Photo exhibit , Safn, Laugavegur 37

Mar 24 – Apr 29
Design Reference, Kópavogur Art Museum / Gerðasafn, Hamraborg, Kópavogur

Mar 24 – Apr 29
Traits Trés Mode – Design exhibition, Sævar Karl Gallery, Bankastræti 7, Reykjavík

Mar 31 – Apr 29
WA – Wall paintings by 15 artists, Reykjavík Energy, Bæjarháls 1

Apr 12 – May 6
No Particular Order – Gilles Bensimon Photography, Hafnarborg, Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður

■ Audiovisual

Apr 4 – Apr 30
Performing art by Ketill Larsen, Tjarnarbió Theatre, Tjarnargata 12

■ Theatre

Apr 16 – Apr 24
Le Musée De La Mer – A Play by Marie Darrieussecq and Nauzyiel
The National Theatre of Iceland, Hverfisgata 19

Apr 16 – Apr 29
Turak - Michel Laubu Theatre, Touring Iceland

Apr 18 – May 31
Partners In Crime – A play by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt , The National Theatre of Iceland, Hverfisgata 19

■ Dance

May 8 – May 9
Pokemon Drew – Hip Hop Dance, Reykjavík City Theatre, Listabraut 3

■ Literature

Mar 29 – May 19
Bernard Aligand book exhibition, National Library, Arngrimsstæti 3, Reykjavík

Apr 16 – Apr 22
Week of the Book – French literature, Café Paris / Mál & Menning / Alliance Française

Apr 24
Conference: Writer and director Alain Robbe-Grillet, The University of Iceland

May 5
Literary Conference: Edouard Glissant and Thor Vilhjálmsson, The University of Iceland

■ Music

Apr 27
Nouvelle Vague in concert, Reykjavík Art Museum, Tryggvagata 17

May 10
Kitchen Motors Night: Francouz Breut and Benni Hemm Hemm

The National Theatre Basement, Hverfisgata 19

May 11
Hélène Grimaud and the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra, Háskólabíó, at Hagatorg

■ Science

Apr 24
Scientific Conference – Paleoanthropologist Yves Coppes, University of Iceland

■ Business and Tourism

Apr 19 – Apr 24
Michelin Star Chef Francis Chauveau, Siggi Hall Restaurant, Þórstigata 1

Apr 22
Competition to Find Iceland's Top Wine Expert, Hôtel Borg, Pósthússtræti 11

May 5 – May 10
Wine Seminar, Hotel Reykjavík Centrum, Adalstræti 16

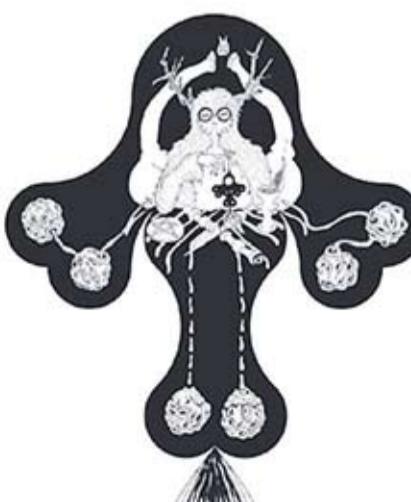
May 10 – May 13
Michelin Star Chef Guy Lassausaie, Hôtel Holt, Bergstaðastræti 37

Visual Art: Museum of Design and Applied Art, Feb 25 – May 12

M/M & Gabriela

The Parisian designer duo M/M, a partnership between Mathias Augustyniak and Michael Amzalag, in collaboration with Icelandic artist Gabriela Friðrikssdóttir presents an intriguing sculpture exhibition at the Museum of Design and Applied Art in Garðabær.

M/M mixes together different art-forms including posters, speakers, free-standing picture frames, Plexiglas lamps and carpet tiles. The duo shares many conceptual concerns with the Design Art movement which, in the past fifteen years, has become an increasingly important practice within the contemporary art scene. Their collaborative exhibition with Gabriela features a tree-sculpture that will be planted in Icelandic soil during the Pourquoi Pas? festival.



Visual Art: Kópavogur Museum, Mar 24 – Apr 29



Design Reference

An exhibition dedicated to the art of reference in French contemporary design is now on display at the Kópavogur Museum. The exhibition presents more than forty pieces designed by Parisian artists who share a background in furnish-

ing design. With the aim of breaking down different facets of French design, the exhibition offers a wide overview of the use of citations and references in the past five years.



No Particular Order

World-known fashion photographer Gilles Bensimon will open a photo exhibition in Hafnarborg on April 12. Bensimon, who has been an editorial director of Elle magazine since 1999, has shot mind-blowing photos of supermodels such as Naomi Campbell, Linda Evangelista, Claudia Schiffer, Christy Turlington, Elle MacPherson and Hollywood stars such as Madonna, Gwyneth Paltrow, Drew Barrymore, Beyoncé Knowles, Sharon Stone and Uma Thurman. He chooses exotic locations for his photo-shoots and has travelled several times to Iceland with his crew. This retrospective will display a selection of his works, covering over twenty years of his career and featuring some of the more famous fashion photographs of the past decades. The exhibition is held in cooperation with Ari Alexander.

Dance: Reykjavík City Theatre, Listabraut 2, May 8 – May 9



World Famous Breakdancing Crew

The French breakdancing group The Pockemon Crew will perform twice at Reykjavík City Theatre next month. Established in 1996, the group, counting more than twenty dancers today, is highly respected in the Hip Hop universe and their shows usually attract a large crowd eager to see what cool new tricks they'll pull. The Pockemon Crew claim that their Hip Hop is still pure and authentic, and that they will never leave the street, because that's where it all began.

For a full programme, visit www.pourquoipas.is.



Einar Ben

Veltusund 1, 101 Reykjavík, tel.: 511 5090

Located in an old wooden house in the centre of town, Einar Ben is easily one of the most conveniently situated restaurants in Reykjavík. The house itself is a historical building from the turn of the 20th century where Einar Benediktsson, one of Iceland's national heroes and poets once operated a law firm and later established Iceland's first newspaper. The respectable décor, influenced by Iceland's national colours, reflects the historical significance of the house and installs a sense of occasion upon entry. The interior is spacious and despite always being busy, the place rarely feels crowded.

While Einar Ben takes great pride in using only Icelandic ingredients in all its dishes to ensure freshness and quality, the decision is obviously in line with the national theme of the place. A new menu offers adventurous combinations, with Icelandic herbs often taking a prominent place in the creation. The house wine list is extensive and a wide variety of monthly selections are available as well. It was also pleasant to see that the ecological wines are becoming a permanent selection at the city's restaurants.

We opted for the chef's pride, a four-dish menu selected and prepared by the chef, and the sommelier's choice of accompanying wines. For a starter we were served a rich creamy lobster soup, with an Australian Chardonnay white wine. The wine was solid if not spectacular, while the soup was a little too creamy for my taste. For the first entrée, our waiter brought out a plate of transparent-thin carpaccio, layered with Parmesan cheese and pepper. A classic and refined dish that was highlighted by the excellent selection of a Italian Tuscany red wine, rich in flavour with a hint of chocolate. Score one for the sommelier.

Our second entrée was Dijon-glazed lamb with basil and pepper sauce. The loin was perfectly cooked, soft and tender, but the trimmings left a little to be desired. Once again, the highpoint was the wine selection, a fabulous spicy South-African red wine with rich fruity taste. Score two for the sommelier. For dessert, we were presented with a delicious chocolate cake, accompanied by a nice glass of port wine.

A word must be reserved for the excellent service we were afforded at Einar Ben, especially the wine selections, which brought out the best in every dish.

Reviewed by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

Reviewed by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

Reviewed by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir



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Reykjavík Pizza Company

Laugavegur 81, 101 Reykjavík, tel.: 561 3838

At the top of Laugavegur is the pizza fan's favourite, Reykjavík Pizza Company. Established by the same owners as Eldsmjójan Pizza, this chilled-out, reasonably-priced pizzeria has become a bit too popular for its own good, resulting in long lines and sometimes not-so-attentive service during the busiest hours. Luckily, the restaurant offers take-away from morning to late evening so no hungry pedestrian should have to leave empty handed.

Although the pizzas are the restaurant's specialty, the owners were clever enough to stretch the menu a little and, instead of only serving the fire baked pizzas, the menu consists of various bagels and wraps served with all sorts of fillings. The cheap ready-to-grab pizza slices seem to appeal to the younger clientele, especially the ones in a hurry. While the pizzas are excellent – among the best you'll get in the city in fact – it's my view that the over-the-top bagels outdo all the other fast-food brunch/lunch joints around, making the place a perfect dining spot for a small and light meal.

The restaurant's two floors offer plenty of seats and in the evening, when the place is almost always packed, both floors are bustling with food and fun.

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

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Services**■ Useful Numbers**

Emergency number: 112

Police: 569 9000

Medical help: 1770

Dental emergency: 575 0505

AA: 551 2010

Information: 118

Telegrams: 146

■ Tax Free Refund

Iceland Refund,

Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 564 6400

www.icelandrefund.com

■ Laundry Service

HI Hostel, Sundlaugarvegur 34,

Tel: 553 8110, www.hostel.is

Údafoss, Vitastigur 13,

Tel: 551 2301, www.udafoss.is

■ Post Office

Post offices are located around the city as well as in the countryside. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5. For a full list and info on opening hours visit www.posturinn.is.

Stamps are also sold in bookstores, gas stations, some grocery stores and tourist shops.

■ Embassies and Consulates in Iceland

United States, Laufásvegur 21,

Tel: 562 9100

United Kingdom, Laufásvegur 31,

Tel: 550 5100

Russia, Garðastræti 33,

Tel: 551 5156

China, Viðimelur 29,

Tel: 552 6751

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

■ Internet Access

Most coffeehouses have wireless Internet access.

Computers with Internet connections are available at:

Ráðhúskaffi City Hall, Tjarnargata 11

BSÍ Bus Terminal,

Vatnsmýrarvegur 10

Ground Zero, Vallastræti 10

The Reykjavík City Library,

Tryggvagata 15

The National and University Library,

Arnrímsgata 3

Tourist Information Centre,

Aðalstræti 2

Icelandic Travel Market: Bankastræti 2

■ Opening hours

Bars and clubs: According to regulations bars may be open until 01:00 on weekdays and 05:30 on weekends.

Shops: Mon-Fri 10-18, Sat 10-16, Sun closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

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

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

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

Getting Around**■ Public transport**

The only public transport system in Reykjavík is the bus. Most busses run every 20 minutes and price per fare is 250 ISK for adults and 75 ISK for children. Complete route map at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700

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

■ Rent a bike

Borgarhjól, Hverfisgata 50, Tel: 551 5653, www.borgarhjol.net

HI Hostel, Sundlaugarvegur 34,

Tel: 553 8110, www.hostel.is

Tourist Information Centre,

Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550,

www.visitreykjavik.is

■ Taxi

Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir, Tel: 553 3500 or 588 5522

BSR, Tel: 561 0000

■ For disabled travellers

Reykjavík Group Travel Service, Brunastaðir 3, Tel: 587 8030, www.randburg.com/is/reykjavik_group_travel_service/

A useful brochure, Accessible Reykjavík, can be found at tourist offices.

■ Car rentals

Átak Car Rental, Smiðjuvegur 1, Tel: 554 6040

ALP, Dugguvogur 10, Tel: 562 6060

Avis, Knarravogi 2, Tel: 591 4000

Eucarop, Hjallahraun 9, Tel: 565 3800

A.G Car Rental, Tangarhöfði 8-12, Tel: 587 5544

Atlas Car Rental, Dalshraun 9,

Tel: 563 3800

Berg Car Rental, Tangarhöfða 8,

Tel: 577 6050

Hertz, Flugvallavegur, Tel: 505 0600

■ Airlines

Air Iceland, Reykjavíkurflugvöllur, Tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelagi.is

Air Vestmannaeyjar, Tel: 481 3255, www.ejafliug.is

■ Bus Terminal

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

■ Samferda.net

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

Cultural Centres and Tourist Offices**■ The Intercultural Centre**

The Intercultural Centre throws occasional cultural events and conferences but its main purpose is to be an information and counselling centre and serve as an advocate for the rights of immigrants in Iceland. Hverfisgata 18, Tel: 530 9300 www.ahus.is

■ Icelandic Travel Market

Bankastræti 2, Tel: 510 5700, www.kleif.is

Information on day tours, accommodations, car rental and everything else you need to know when travelling in Iceland.

■ Iceland Visitor

Lækjargata 2, Tel: 511 2442, www.icealandvisitor.com

A travel agency offering travelling package trips and custom-made tours as well as car rental, day tours and accommodations for visitors.

■ Tourist Information Centre

Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550, www.visitreykjavik.is

Offers information for tourists as well as providing internet access, booking service, a phone centre, money exchange service, tax refund and selling the Reykjavík Tourist Card. The Reykjavík Tourist Card gives admission to city busses, various museums, Reykjavík swimming pools, The Family Park and Reykjavík Zoo, The Culture House and the National and University Library.

■ The Icelandic Tourist Board

Lækjargata 3, Tel: 535 5500, www.visiticeland.com

All information needed before traveling in Iceland.

■ Goethe Institute

Túnsgata 14, Tel: 561 5921, www.goethe.de/island

A cultural institute that offers movie screenings, lectures and German language courses.

■ Nordic House

Sturlugata 5, Tel: 551 7030, www.nordic.is

The Nordic cultural centre organises various cultural events, conferences and exhibitions.

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

Useful Information**■ Where to learn Icelandic as a foreign language**

Icelandic on the Internet, www.vefscoli.is

Mimir Continuing Education,

Skeifán 8, Tel: 580 1800, www.mimir.is

Námsflokkar Reykjavíkur,

Frirkirkjuegur 9, Tel: 551 2992

Fjölmennings, Laugavegur 59, Tel: 511 1319, www.fjolmennings.is

The Icelandic College of Engineering and Technology, Höfðabakki 9, Tel: 577 1400, www.thi.is

Iönskólinn í Reykjavík, Skólastórholti, Tel: 552 6240, www.ir.is

The University of Iceland – Department of Continuing Education, Dunhagi 7, Tel: 525 4924, www.endurmenntun.is

■ Religious movements

The national church in Iceland is the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Masses are generally held on Sundays at 11:00 in churches all around the capital.

Service in English is at Hallgrímskirkja every last Saturday each month, starting at 14:00. The Roman Catholic Church also has masses in English and Polish.

Other religious movements in Reykjavík are for example:

The Muslim Association of Iceland, Ármúli 38**Ásatrú Association,** Grandagarði 8**Bahá'í,** Álfabakka 12**The Church of Evangelism,** Hlíðasmári 9**The Icelandic Buddhist Movement,** Vígðalstígur 21**Reykjavík Free Lutheran Church,** Fríkirkjuegur 5**Pentecostal Assembly,** Hátún 2**Roman Catholic Church,** Hávallagata 14**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,** Asbraut 2**Jehovah's Witnesses,** Sogavegur 71**Seventh-Day Adventists,** Suðurhlíð 36**Zen Buddhism in Iceland,** Reykjavíkurvegur 31**Independent Church,** Háteigsvegur 101**The Russian Orthodox Church in Iceland,** Sólvallagata 10**The Cross,** Hlíðasmári 5-7**■ Trade Unions****The Icelandic Federation of Labour,** Sætún 1, Tel: 535 5600, www.asi.is**The Federation of State and Municipal employees,** Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8300, www.bsr.is**The Association of Academics,** Borgartún 6, Tel: 581 2090, www.bhmi.is**Efling,** Sætún 1, Tel: 510 7500, www.efling.is**The Commercial Workers' Union,** Kringsljan 7, Tel: 510 1700, www.vr.is**Union of Public Servants,** Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8340, www.sfr.is**■ Useful Websites****www.visitreykjavik.is** (The official tourist website of Reykjavík)**www.gayice.is** (Information about the gay scene in Iceland)**www.fjolmenningsarsetur.is** (The Multicultural Centre)**www.hostel.is**

(Hostel International in Iceland)

www.vinnusmalastofnun.is (Public employment services)**www.gulalinan.is** (The yellow pages)**www.leigulistinn.is** (Rent a flat)**www.simaskra.is** (Icelandic telephone directory)**■ Where to get ...****Work and residence permit:** The Directorate of Immigration, Skógarhlíð 6, Tel: 510 5400, www.utlis.is**Insurance and benefits:** The State Social Security Institute, Laugavegur 114-116, Tel: 560 4400, www.tr.is**Icelandic citizenship:** Unless you come from a Nordic country, foreign citizens have to have had an unrestricted residence permit in Iceland for at least seven years in order to get an

A Celebration of All Things Good

Text by Haukur Magnússon Photo by Leó Stefánsson

The fourth annual Aldrei fór ég suður festival took place in Ísafjörður

The Reykjavík Grapevine and Bad Taste in collaboration with Thule and FM Reykjavík present:

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REYKJAVÍK
FM101.5



Illustration by Bear



three court battles and countless awareness campaigns and peaceful demonstrations to try to keep their beloved house, but to no avail.

Faderhuset, the religious organisation that bought the house, is a tiny fundamentalist Christian sect led by Ruth Evensen who claims she is in direct contact with God. The sect is very controversial in Denmark. Their school was closed down last year since they refused to teach certain obligatory subjects such as Darwin's theory of evolution, opting instead to teach the children that the biblical tale of creation was in fact how the world began. The sect has attacked toy manufacturers for manufacturing "satanic" toys. They have been accused of brainwashing young people attending their schools and religious sermons and Ruth Evensen declared during the Sunday sermon on March 4, that after the satanic influence of Ungdomshuset had finally been defeated, their next targets would be homosexuals and abortion.

Maintaining the Status Quo

Ungdomshuset meant a lot to many very different people. It was a meeting place for political groups, it was a place where homeless people could occasionally get free meals, a place where bands could rehearse and play gigs, where thousands of people went to meet friends and party. It was a safe haven for homosexuals and others who often feel threatened out in the "real world." But ultimately, the house isn't the real issue. The real issue at hand is to protect cultural diversity: the right to think, live and be different. It's about being able to be free to maintain, operate and define our own culture without outside interference or having to ask for permission. It's about finding your own identity in a world that is becoming increasingly homogenous and monotonous.

This is not possible in a society where people are refused the autonomous space necessary for the realisation of such projects. A society that sends its storm troopers to evict houses

brought in front of a judge, five at a time, all accused of violence against the police. She says the only reason she wasn't sentenced to custody like everybody else in the group was her old age.

The thousands of people demonstrating feel that the authorities are systematically trying to wipe out anything that doesn't fit into their idea of culture and society. That they are trying to eliminate a political culture of resistance: the anarchists and socialists, or, as they are more commonly called, the "autonomes." Most people I talked to at demonstrations weren't regular users of Ungdomshuset – some had never even been there – but rather people tired of this ongoing homogenising and culture-destroying process that has been dubbed the "normalisation process."

The official response from politicians after the uproar began when the people were evicted from the house on March 1 has been one of denial and a naive refusal to find a common solution to the problem they created when they sold the house. They have mostly been interested in finding someone to blame. The police response has been random violence and extreme violations of human and civil rights, all sanctioned by the Minister of Justice, Lene Espersen, who put the blame for the riots on "bad parenting."

Protect and Serve

As of March 12, over 700 people have been arrested and 200 of those have been sentenced to custody for up to 4 weeks. 33 of those are minors (children under 18 years) including a 15-year-old girl accused of digging stones up from the street. All these people were sentenced without any evidence being presented against them other than police reports. A 64-year-old retired doctor was arrested along with a group of about 40 people who had been at a demonstration but were fleeing away after the stones began to fly and teargas filled the air. The group was held for 24 hours in a crowded cell and then

brought on his way home. He was jumped by three policemen in riot gear, beaten a few times with the policemen's helmets and, when a search of his pockets revealed nothing illegal, he was forced to take off his clothes so the policemen could search them thoroughly. He was eventually allowed to go home. They've also arrested members of the prisoner support network ABC and the Street's First Aid group who were attending an injured protester when the police arrested them, even though they were clearly marked as a neutral first aid team.

These are just a few examples of how the police "protected and served" the community in Copenhagen during the period. If you even looked like an "autonom" you could expect to be stopped in the street, questioned and searched, possibly arrested or beaten. If you happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time, if you complained about police behaviour or if you dared to attend a demonstration you risked being arrested and detained in custody.

The house at Jagtvej 69 is now gone. It was demolished just a few days after the eviction. A lot of people loved that house, and I saw many people cry as it was being demolished. At the time of writing, the empty site where the house once stood is filled with thousands of flowers, candles, goodbye notes and poems.

But we are not giving up. The demonstrations and protest actions will continue until another house will be available to us, until the authorities stop threatening Christiania with eviction, until we are recognised as a part of this society, no better and no worse than the rest. They can tear down all our houses but not our convictions, our beliefs and our opinions. We will not be shut up, locked out or pushed away. The struggle for free, autonomous space continues.

Another man shouted, "go home, this isn't your fight" at a few policemen as he walked

midation, systematically breaking the laws they are supposed to uphold."

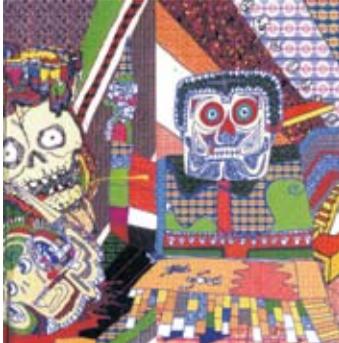

Motion Boys
Hold Me Closer To Your Heart

It's about one thirty in the morning, the dance floor is packed with all manner of unseemly folk, a sweaty crowd of drunken animals swelling and surging like a single organism. The DJ, a twenty-something chick magnet with three-day stubble and a stupid hat smirks to himself as he thinks of the perfect track to put on next. The beat kicks in, quiet at first, but increases in volume, as do the flimsy, almost dorky synths. Then the singing starts. A huge, inebriated cheer of woos and yeahs erupts from the crowd, and the DJ tries to keep his cool, although secretly he's bursting with pride. This is a scene from the coming summer; I'm so fucking certain of it. I don't know whether the two-song disc I was given is a promo of an upcoming album, or everything the Motion Boys ever intend to release, and I don't really care; the summer of 2007 already belongs to them. SE

www.myspace.com/motionboys

Skátar
Ghost of the Bollocks to Come

Riding high on an indie rock wave, comes the Reykjavík five-some Skátar with their first studio album, and it has its irregular glorious moments. With a barrage of guitars, bass doodles and whacky keyboards that at times seem to be heading in different directions and lyrics that mostly repeat a single sentence; it is not the most accessible CD the first time around, but the quirkiness grows on you. The first seven minutes of Taco 'n' Surf a Prayer is the best song of the album, although I could well have done without the full minute of pointless noise that follow. Behind their experimental approach, Skátar have delivered a somewhat interesting but inconsistent album; they seldom fail to impress, but they sometimes fail to entertain. To be fair, many songs on the CD sound as if they need to be enjoyed in a live setting to be fully appreciated. SBB

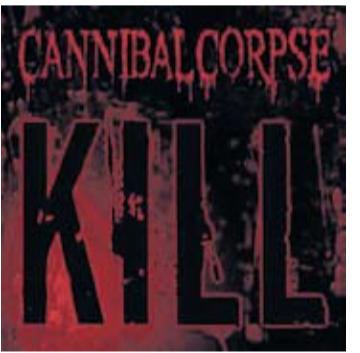
www.myspace.com/skatar

Evil Madness
Demon Jukebox

Although flawed in places, this collection of ambient noise is nevertheless a fine product, and in many places a testament to the brilliance and/or complete and utter insanity of its creators, although there are other times when the obvious minimalism of some of them conflicts with the insipidly bombastic pretentiousness of the others. The pulsating eeriness of tracks like Grotesque Insideness and Tremendously Sick Horror Art Display, and the full-on sonic onslaught that is the opening minute of A Sudden Moment of Private Demonic Psychodrama are excellent, as are all the tracks that remain formless and atmospheric. The album's more structured tracks, such as So Successfully Evil and Inspired By Long Hours Of Continuous Repetitive Deep Irritations And Uncontrollable Agony, fail miserably, and remind one more of someone who wanted to make electronic music, but couldn't be bothered to write a decent song and tried to pass their keyboard fiddling off as 'experimental'. SE

www.myspace.com/evil666madness

Sudden Weather Change
Sudden Weather Change

The self-titled debut album from indie rock quintet Sudden Weather Change is a middle of the road CD, never boring, but not particularly engaging either. Founded on the remains of System Failure 3550 ERROR ERROR, Sudden Weather Change occasionally display great potential on this album in sudden spurts of creative intelligence, but for the most part, it just rolls through effortlessly, easily forgotten in a sea of similar sounding bands. What sets them apart from the rest of the indie rock mass are the lyrics that are more maturely constructed than most of the songs. Of the six tracks, Godspeed and Great Lift sound as though they might make some radio station's rotation, but the instrumental ballad Jed the Humanoid is as pointless as a boat in the desert on this collection. It will be interesting to see if SWC can build on the potential shown here to produce something truly worthwhile. SBB

www.myspace.com/suddenweatherchange

Cannibal Corpse
Kill

Kill is an apt reference to what CC are all about and far removed from their older, laboured, album titles. But that is about the gist of CC's progression. Once you get into the album you soon discover that it is just another assembly line offering utterly generic and uninspired mid-tempo Death-Metal with dispassionate vocals, crap lyrics and songs so desperately homogenous you'd be hard-pressed to tell one from the other. Add to that an annoying solo or two on nearly every track and inner back-sleeve art work so bad it boggles the mind and what you've got is an "easy listening" Death-Metal classic ready for consumption by 16-year-old kids yet to discover Nile and devoted fans of 19-years-standing who still consider chanting "The time to kill is now" along to George Fisher's monotonous and mediocre growling the very pinnacle of the Death-Metal experience. BB

<http://www.myspace.com/thedeathmetalbandcannibalcorpse>

The Kitchen Motors Collective
The Kitchen Motors Family Album

Bad, bad, bad: this is the collective worst of Icelandic music neatly bundled up in all its shallow, pretentious and self-indulgent glory, with some extra-pertinent liner notes thrown in to boot. Representative Man kick off this shitfest with some block rockin' beats, but that's about as interesting as things get, really. The other contributions (if you can really call scattering a bunch of random noise on top of vacant and idiotic chord progressions 'contributing') range from the mildly interesting (Múm, DJ Musician, Auxpan, Músikvatur) to the completely pointless (Borko, Slowblow, Sigríður Nielsdóttir) to the painfully insipid (Benni Hemm Hemm, Jóhann Johannsson, Apparat Organ Quartet) to the earth-shatteringly, suicidally awful (Amina, illi vill, Paul Lydon, Kira Kira). Even the mighty Stillupsteypa do not escape unscathed, although their shallow and uninspired offering manages salvage what little can be salvaged. Avoid at all costs. SE

Reviews by Bogi Bjarnason, Sindri Eldon and Sveinn Birkir Björnsson



Crying Out Loud

By Gabriele R. Gudbjartsson

In 1997 Annette Sorensen, a Danish actress, was visiting her Brooklyn-based husband in New York City along with their 14-month-old daughter. One sunny afternoon they decided to frequent a popular restaurant in the East Village. As it is socially accepted both in her country and Scandinavia, Sorenson left her baby safely tucked into their stroller located right outside of the restaurant. Moments later she and her husband were arrested and imprisoned by the New York City Police Department for child neglect and endangerment. Their baby was taken away and placed in foster care for several days.

This "fish out of water" scenario

is unnerving to think about as a soon-to-be mother living in a foreign country. When I found out I was pregnant my heart could not really contain the pure enjoyment of carrying a child. However, once the initial excitement and celebration faded, the realities of being pregnant away from my home settled in. My mind created a bank of questions constantly streaming in one after another. Is the medical care going to be adequate? Are the hospital staff going to understand me in the delivery room? Should I just go back home and have the baby? My nagging questions were clearly motivated by a fear of the unknown, however, as time passes my pregnancy qualms are beginning slowly to disappear as the birth of my child draws closer.

My concerns started when I was told by my neighbourhood medical clinic that I wouldn't be seen until I was at least two months pregnant. Shocked and appalled, I proceeded to debate with the midwife about the responsibility of the medical community to educate and inform newly pregnant women about taking care of themselves and any other critical aspects of pregnancy. Does the Icelandic medical community assume that every newly pregnant woman knows exactly what to do during the course of her first trimester of pregnancy? Thank you for the vote of confidence, however, if a woman wants her pregnancy to be validated by a professional as soon as the little blue cross appears on the stick then I think the medical community should be open to that.

Being directly communicated with and understood during the course of my pregnancy has also been a bit of a roller coaster ride. At the end of the day, wherever any woman decides to have her baby, she needs to be mentally and emotionally mature enough to handle all that comes with the process of having a child. Any woman can have a child; however, if a woman wants her pregnancy to be validated by a professional as soon as the little blue cross appears on the stick then I think the medical community should be open to that. I'm hoping that my "fish out of water" experience will make me a better mother and endow me with the wisdom that will assist me with many future gifts from above.



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An Exceptional Anomaly

Text by Helgi Valur Photo by Skari

Who: Ólöf Arnalds
Where: NASA
When: March 21, 2007

There was a fair amount of anticipation on my behalf before Ólöf Arnald's debut release concert. Ólöf has gotten great reviews for her new album and I had previously seen her warm up for Amiina in concert but this was Ólöf's night.

From the first tone ringing in my ears I knew this was gonna be a feel-good concert. The band, consisting of many of Iceland's best musicians, was more than formidable playing all kinds of instruments I won't bother to name. Ólöf began singing in Icelandic in a raw, folksy Joan Baez style and the Icelandic language has never sounded so good. Few would describe Ólöf as singing like an angel, but if I had an angel in a cage I'd want him to sound just like her. Beauty is not in perfection but in an exceptional anomaly. Ólöf also proved quite humorous on stage. She kept forgetting to introduce Arnþjótur Sigurðsson, a competent young bass player who filled in for the ex-Blonde Red Head (now bald) Skúli Sverrisson.

Ólöf played beautiful heart-warming songs, such as the lullaby Go to Sleep, and while my body felt sleepy my soul felt uplifted. Ólöf has a unique voice that is always on the verge of breaking, which, for those who don't follow music, is a good thing. Ólöf's greatest strength is the combination of Icelandic folk music and traditional oriental music. Playing the Koto harp she taps into something foreign

that is nevertheless so close to us.

The low point of the concert was a Megadeth cover, which, besides being a cliché and an easy and tasteless way out, it was so slow and pretentious that even a few members of Múm thought it was pretentious. Actually, that's a lie, but that would be funny. The high point of the night was when Ólöf gave her guitar player a guitar tuning lesson on stage proving she's a real person and a damn good guitar player as well. The brass and sting sections accompanying Ólöf sounded really good. Ólöf sang about peace in one of her lyrics, which coincidentally was the feeling lingering inside me for most of the show.

I really liked all the songs apart from the Megadeth cover and when she started singing Lalalalala, I knew she was a real artist singing from her soul and not her mind. I don't trust artists who never sing Lalalala because human emotion is often too magnificent to be reduced to manmade concepts. Everybody gets the Lalalala feeling now and again; and those who don't have never fully lived.

The last song of the night was a cover of Johnny Cash's That Lucky Old Sun. Some people might have found the context weird when Ólöf was singing the words of a depressed cowboy but I felt it was a post-modern masterpiece. It was strange, it was exciting, it was something special adding to Iceland's musical history. Ólöf got a standing ovation and deserved it. Her voice and Koto harp may well touch people's hearts for a long time.

vibrant feel to the delivery.

Much like when I first listened to the album, I felt there are two songs that absolutely stand apart from this CD. The first one was her fifth song on the night, a heartwarming duo with Anthony Hegarty (Anthony and the Johnsons), Dull Flame of Desire, that will surely be the radio hit of the album. Anthony was obviously feeling a bit awkward on stage, a full foot taller and far from being dexterous enough to keep up with Björk. It was still an early highlight of the show, despite their lack of cohesion, probably resulting from Anthony's lack of rehearsing time (he badly miscued at least twice). Sadly, he is not likely to be a permanent member of the entourage.

The second one was her encore, a song she dedicated to Greenland and the Faeroe Islands called Declare Independence (don't let them do that to you). It is a frantic screamo-electronica with a lot of fire. It will be interesting to see how that goes down at Roskilde, as Denmark is the ruling nation in both Greenland and the Faeroe Islands.

In other news, it became a show to witness towards the end when Björk performed some of her earlier hits, including Army of Me, Bachelorette (with a nice polka section), and a thundering version of Hyperballad, duly assisted by Mark Bell from LFO who has been a permanent fixture in Björk's camp.

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Can I Get a Witness?

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson Photo by Skari

Who: Björk
Where: Laugardalshöll
When: April 9, 2007

When The Sugarcubes first embarked on their musical voyage under the slogan 'World Domination or Death,' few people expected them (or more accurately, one of them, although many of the 'Cubes still work closely with Björk) to live up to the hype. Now the world at large is more familiar with Björk than with Iceland, and in the process, she has become a symbol for the Icelandic plan for world domination (Operation Ice Storm). As much as we would all like to pretend that a Björk concert is solely about the music, it is anything but. A large part of the audience was there simply to witness the event, rather than to listen to the concert.

Björk stepped on stage wearing a gold puffed-out dress that actually made her resemble a character from Giles Reed's The Munch Bunch, although that may have no relevance here at all. A small army of stage performers, including a ten-strong female horn section, dressed in the most colorful collection of dresses, accompanied her.

Björk has stated that the songs on Volta were written with the purpose of being delivered live. Having had the pleasure of listening to Volta in its entirety a few days earlier, I noticed that many of the song arrangements had been changed from the album version to accommodate the newly added horn section. For most parts, the changes were positive, and gave a more

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Designer clothing shop KronKron sells all sorts of cool accessories from Zarah Voigt's jewellery collection. A nice selection of necklaces and earrings as well as this green plastic Lassie pin is now in store.

KronKron, Laugavegur 63, 101 Reykjavík



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Sævar Karl, Bankastræti 7, 101 Reykjavík



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The Naked Ape, Bankastræti 14, 101 Reykjavík



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The Naked Ape, Bankastræti 14, 101 Reykjavík

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KronKron, Laugavegur 63, 101 Reykjavík



32.900 ISK

This trendy and feminine designer dress is one of its kind and perfect for the party.

The Naked Ape, Bankastræti 14, 101 Reykjavík



Pay Attention!

The Naked Ape

Bankastræti 14, 101 Reykjavík

The vibrant designer shop The Naked Ape, located in a spacious second floor at Bankastræti, is undoubtedly the liveliest shopping destination you'll find in the city. Only a few days ago, the shop experienced a complete transformation, the floor was painted in bright colours and the space stuffed with brand new designer wear for the summer, all for us shoppers to enjoy.

Naked Ape's amazing variety of crazy colourful street-clothing has made the shop a hit among its arty clientele - people who want to dress in cool yet comfortable clothing that complements well their outgoing mentality. Since opening in 2005, the shop has been most famous for the hooded sweatshirts, T-shirts and leggings designed by the owners and hand-printed with differ-

ent patterns, graphics and figures. The girls especially love the long hoodies, perfect to wear with thick leggings and a pair of boots, and now there's plenty to choose from.

In addition to their own fashion line they offer a selection of Icelandic music, books on art and design, accessories such as freaky sunglasses, shoes, handbags and numerous other curious things. Even adorable Hektojai clothes from Copenhagen designer brand Devandervar. As if all this shouldn't be enough, there's even more to come. The Smeiliner clothing line from Berlin will hit the store any day now, as will all sorts of crazy accessories from the New York based jewellery company Arms and Armory. Today, this large creative space is literally screaming for joy!

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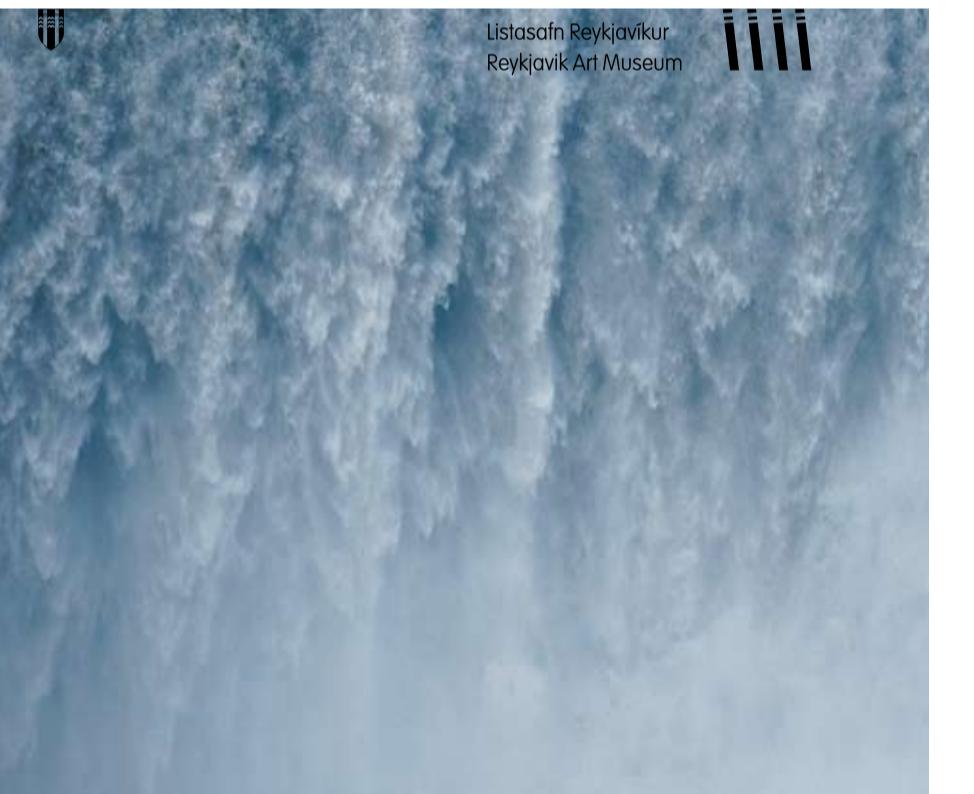
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Fight for Your Right to Stay on the Air

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson Photo by Skari

Andri Freyr Viðarsson and Búi Bendtsen host one of the most popular morning radio shows in the country on the newly established classic rock station Reykjavík FM. The pair of them have been on the air together since January 2004, but they have already gone through establishing two separate radio stations to stay on the air, after 365 Media closed down their previous stations. A Grapevine reporter sat down with the two of them and had a critical discussion about the current condition of the Icelandic media and the benefits of working in radio. As our reporter stepped into a meeting with the twosome, the Mayor of Reykjavík was stepping out.

So, the Mayor, huh?

Andri: Yes, he is in my pocket, our new best friend.

Búi: I have him on speed dial.

Is it difficult to get distinguished figures like the Mayor to appear on a morning radio show on a rock station?

Andri: We had actually been chasing him for some time, but he always believed we were some idiots, which of course is not true. Yesterday I called his secretary and told her that we had had all sorts of distinguished guests on our show, Members of Congress, former president Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, so if the Mayor was not going to talk to us, it would just reflect badly on him. He called me an hour later and said he would come tomorrow.

This is at least the second time you guys establish a radio station for your show, what is it like having to go through this repeatedly?

Búi: It sucks.

Andri: Mmm, it sucks.

Búi: It is disgusting really, being forced to deal with all the technical aspects and

getting things off the ground. It takes a lot of time and energy. When you finally make it to broadcast, you are drained. But there is fun involved in the struggle as well.

You never thought of giving it up?

Búi: Yes, so many times.

Andri: I mean, to do what? We do not know how to do anything else. If we are fired, we just have to establish a new station.

Búi: We believe we still have something left.

The last two years, we have spend six months doing nothing... On full salaries no less. And then we get a summer vacation on top of that; so basically, we have spent eight months doing nothing. That is pretty sweet.

Why did 365 Media close the previous station?

Búi: Obviously because the station was getting too big and strong and it was interfering them in the market. We had very high ratings, and as soon as our old station was closed, sales at some of 365's stations jumped. This is not the first time they did this. I am just tired of talking about this. They simply cannot stand the competition. Instead of taking the fight and trying to build something off the ground and show some originality, they just smother everyone else with their checkbook. It is just so cowardly.

This is at least the second time you guys establish a radio station for your show, what is it like having to go through this repeatedly?

Búi: It sucks.

Andri: Mmm, it sucks.

Búi: It is disgusting really, being forced to deal with all the technical aspects and

all over them the way you have been doing Bendtsen. It reflects badly on you. What if you have to go work for them tomorrow? You should be more careful.

Búi: Well, okay... Could you keep that part off the record then?
No, this is the fat of the story right here.

Andri: The Grapevine is never off the record Bendtsen.

Búi: No, you are right. Well, I am just stating an opinion; it does not mean I cannot work for them. I am just telling it like it is.

Andri: Oh, so now you want to back out of it?
This is a tough business isn't it?

Andri: Yes it is, but it is fun. Well, no, it is not really. It sucks.

Búi: Obviously this business sucks, although the job can still be fun and demanding and all that. But, as you can see, it is not the people involved; it is the environment that is poisonous. It is very difficult to maintain any sort of competition under these conditions. You are always up in the air, until one day you are fired. That is the only really bad part.

Andri: But it is still not so bad, per se. We have gained from being fired repeatedly. We have twice received three months severance pay for doing nothing. The last two years, we have spent six months doing nothing... On full salaries no less. And then we get a summer vacation on top of that; so basically, we have spent eight months doing nothing. That is pretty sweet.

Búi: Yes, it's easy money.
Let us turn to something else. You have said that you want to give more attention to Icelandic rock music. As experts in the field, how is Icelandic rock music doing?

Búi: It is doing good, and has been doing well for several years.

Andri: I agree, it is doing good, but I wouldn't say that it is doing any better than English rock music or you know, I don't know about the Faeroe Islands...

Búi: We usually use a per capita comparison.

Andri: That is a useless statistic. But there are many good bands operating. It is a new development to be able to go out on almost any given night and see a show somewhere. It was not like that ten years ago.

Búi: Yes, but it is sad to see how this sector is constantly being shunned. Just see the difference between how musicians are treated here or in Sweden for example.

Andri: Is it? Isn't it just the musicians that are whining?

Búi: No, not really.

Andri: How is it being shunned?

Búi: Take TBM for example, it is being closed down and nobody gives a shit!

Andri: But shouldn't musicians just be able to pay for their own practice space? They choose to pursue this.

Búi: Well, maybe. But it is not like there are practice facilities everywhere.

Andri: No, but they get paid to visit other countries.

Búi: Andri, you have to look at this compared to what is the norm in the countries around us.

Andri: Like where?

Búi: Sweden for example

Andri: Sweden? Pfff...

That is true; I think I am correct in saying that Sweden has the third highest export revenue from music of all countries.

Búi: Exactly! I am just talking about taking better care of the musicians, there are so many people involved with in music and it means so much to so many people. Just look at what we are spending money on. How much money is just being spent on some bullshit like some embassies in foreign countries while this is left unattended? It is not like this radio station intends to save the world or anything, but at least we intend to do more for the Icelandic bands.

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A Day Trip to Borgarfjörður

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir Photos by Gúndi

Distance from Reykjavík

ca. 75 km



Borgarnes

The small town Borgarnes is located at the shore of Borgarfjörður and is the service and trade centre for the neighbouring area.

In 2006, Borgarnes added a significant feature to its historical importance when the Settlement Centre of Iceland was opened to the public. Housed in the town's oldest building, the Centre is, as the name suggests, dedicated to the settlement of the country over a thousand years ago.

There are two permanent exhibitions presented in the museum all year round. The main floor houses the exhibition The Settlement of Iceland, which shows the birth of the nation in detail. By using various forms of multimedia, models and artefacts, the exhibition manages to recreate the old community and offers an adventurous insight into the way society developed from the early settlers to the establishment of Alþingi. In the base-

ment of the centre is an innovative exhibition dedicated to Egill Skallagrímsson, which retells the story of his life and legacy in a very amusing way. Audio guides for both exhibitions are available in different languages.

During the summer months, the Settlement Centre will organize guided tours around the Borgarnes area, visiting many of the places mentioned in Egils Saga. Such a tour should be an even greater experience for those now addicted to the Icelandic heroes. Adding to all this is the pleasure of dining at the fine restaurant located next to the Settlement Centre, where guests can enjoy traditional Icelandic dishes before continuing to the next destination.

Before leaving Borgarnes, there is one more place that deserves to be visited: the botanic public park Skallagrímsgarður, where Skallagrímur himself was laid to rest.

Distance from Reykjavík

ca. 75 km



Borg á Mýrum

The west coast of Iceland is rich with history and interesting sights to explore. The area isn't only known for its natural beauty but also for being the setting for many of the old Icelandic sagas. A trip to Borgarfjörður and surrounding area, where parts of one of the most famous sagas, Egils Saga Skallagrímssonar, takes place, should be an ideal route to take for those interested in Viking adventures and Icelandic history.

The scenic landscape increases the pleasure of the whole experience when driving from Reykjavík towards Borgarfjörður and all the way to Borg á Mýrum, the former home of Skallagrímur Kveldúlfsson, father of Egill Skallagrímsson. Skallagrímur was the first settler at Borg and claimed the whole Borgarfjörður district. Snorri Sturluson – a writer, historian and politician who many believe

was the author of Egils Saga – lived at Borg for a couple of years in the beginning of the 12th century.

Egill himself, born in 910, settled at Borg for a short period of time. Since early childhood he was a brutal, rebellious berserk. According to the legend, he killed his first enemy at the age of seven and later became one of the country's greatest Vikings. But Egill was also a renowned poet and in front of the small wooden church at Borg stands a large sculpture named Sonatorrek (Loss of Sons) made by Ásmundur Sveinsson. This monument is inspired by the famous poem that Egill wrote upon learning that his second son had drowned. Today, Borg á Mýrum is a parsonage with a small cemetery and a church, constructed in 1880.

Distance from Reykjavík

ca. 110 km



Reykholt

No traveller interested in the country's history should ignore a trip to Reykholt, a parsonage in Reykholtdalur valley that has great historical significance to the Icelandic population.

On the way from Borgarnes to Reykholt, you'll pass Deildartunguhver thermal spring, the biggest hot spring in Europe that supplies both Borgarnes and Akranes with hot water. Reykholt is mostly famous for being the former mansion of Snorri Sturluson, a highly respected and influential politician and historian as well as a widely acclaimed author.

Born in 1179, Snorri settled in Reykholt in 1206 and lived there until he was assassinated in 1241 for betraying Hákon, the king of Norway. During his years in Reykholt he wrote some of Iceland's most renowned literature, like Heimskringla, the history of the Kings of Norway, and the Poetic Snorra-Edda. Both Heimskringla and Snorra-Edda have been

translated into numerous languages and are still read by children and adults for both the pleasure and education.

The main attraction for visitors is Snorrasafn, a cultural and conference centre dedicated to Snorri and his legacy that also serves as a research centre for medieval studies. Snorrasafn houses a permanent exhibition on Snorri's life and the history of Reykholt and Borgarfjörður as well as an impressive library.

Outside the building is a small bathing pool, Snorralaug (Snorri's Pool), preserved since the time Reykholt was the home of Snorri. The pool is geothermally heated and has been listed since 1817.

Since the 10th century there has been a church in Reykholt and today there are two. A wooden church built in 1886 and a new one, constructed between 1988 and 1996.

Distance from Reykjavík

ca. 120 km



Barnafoss and Hraunfossar

Only a few minutes by car east of Reykholt are two of the country's more spectacular waterfalls, Barnafoss (Children's Waterfall) and Hraunfossar (Lava Waterfalls). In 1987, the two waterfalls and the surrounding area were selected as a Natural Monument because of the outstanding beauty one immediately witnesses on arrival at the site.

Hraunfossar waterfalls are in fact numerous small waterfalls stretching over an area that is hundreds of metres wide where small rivulets emerge from beneath the lava and fall into the river Hvítá. A more picturesque phenomenon is hard to find.

A good hiking trail leads from Hraunfossar up to Barnafoss, located only 300 metres away. Barnafoss, drawing its name from an old folktale about two children that accidentally fell in the waterfall and drowned, is

unique in a different way. Since ancient times, the forceful river has been wearing down the lava, creating a narrow gorge and remarkable rock formations.

You could easily spend many hours walking around the area and enjoying the majestic scenery. If you still have the time and energy for some more adventurous explorations, a short drive east of Barnafoss leads you to Surtshellir cave in the Hallmundarhraun lava fields. The cave is 1970 metres long and among the deepest in the country.



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The Arty East

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir Photos by Skari

"By organising a unique international film and video festival here in Egilsstaðir, we are trying to get rid of the common misunderstanding that the countryside is tacky" explains Kristín Scheving, the director of the experimental film and video festival 700.is Reindeerland, over a cup of coffee at Te & Kaffi in Egilsstaðir. Now in its second year, the festival has almost doubled in size, screening 90 films over a one-week period in March at various locations in Egilsstaðir and the surrounding area.

Kristín tells me that Icelandic as well as international video artists and filmmakers have welcomed the opportunity to participate in the only festival of this kind in the country, this year receiving more than 500 films from various countries including Taiwan, Russia, the Netherlands, Britain and the US. Advertisements were published in

newspapers and websites all over the world, and Kristín has a hard time explaining how the news spread so far.

The East of Iceland has slowly been building a reputation as an artistic district, aiming at creating an active art and cultural scene that is no less curious than what goes on in the capital. Projects like the film fest 700.is Reindeerland, over a cup of coffee at Te & Kaffi in Egilsstaðir. Now in its second year, the festival has almost doubled in size, screening 90 films over a one-week period in March at various locations in Egilsstaðir and the surrounding area.

The Slaughterhouse becomes a showroom

It takes only an hour to fly from Reykjavík to Egilsstaðir, the largest town of East Iceland. Due to its central location, Egilsstaðir has always been a service centre for the neighbouring district and a starting point for many tourists travelling around the area.

Ever since the Alcoa Fjarðarál aluminium smelter in Reyðarfjörður and the Kárahnjúkar dam project began, the traffic in and out of the community has only been increasing, providing residents in East Iceland with work and attracting a lot of foreign migrant workers. For the past few years, Egilsstaðir has been growing rapidly and by the end of 2006 the population in Egilsstaðir and the surrounding area had increased by 19% in a single year.

Established in 1947, Egilsstaðir is a young town. When driving from the airport it becomes quite clear that the place doesn't boast a long history. Lacking most of the charming characteristics of most small towns across the country, it almost seems that no one had really planned how the town was supposed to develop. There is no actual centre, the houses are spread over a large

Art students invade Seyðisfjörður

If one truly wants to experience the artistic sector in East Iceland, it is necessary to make a trip to Seyðisfjörður, a tiny fishing village that also happens to be a flourishing art and cultural community only twenty minutes by car from Egilsstaðir.

Renowned for its natural beauty and creative atmosphere, it is home to approximately 700 souls. Surrounded by steep mountain hills and located at the end of a narrow fjord this attractive little town with its colourful wooden houses, many of them preserved since the late 18th century, is as different from Egilsstaðir as possible.

area and the downtown is little more than two gas stations and a shopping centre.

But we hadn't come all this way to discuss architecture, aesthetics or urban planning. The reason for our trip across the country was to experience the way the East has evolved into a desirable environment for artists who no longer see Reykjavík's galleries and art venues as the only opportunity to promote their work. Today, artists and musicians travel to the East to open up exhibitions and participate in festivals while getting inspired by the majestic nature in the meantime.

The aforementioned Kristín Scheving moved from the UK to be a part of this movement. She is now not only the organiser of the Reindeerland festival but the director of the Culture Centre of Fljótsdalshérað, established in 2005, with the aim of promoting performing and visual arts in East Iceland and introducing the art form to the public. The Centre is one of four cultural centres in this quarter. In Höfn, the emphasis is on literature; Fjardárbyggð is all about the music; and in Seyðisfjörður the contemporary art scene gets most of the attention.

Featuring experimental documentaries,

video art and short films as well as organising lectures and workshops, the film and video festival was still in full swing by the time we arrived. As Kristín had recommended, we headed straight to the old Slaughterhouse in the middle of town, where the festival's opening had taken place the weekend before. On the outside, the building looks a little rusty, but once inside, creativity and resourcefulness were the only things I could think about. Mixing computers and headphones with the old interiors made the whole experience much more surreal, and as many of the films screening were highly unconventional, using an old slaughterhouse as a movie theatre was just spot-on.

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The whole town participates in this event. And everybody loves it" Pórunn explains. "Seyðisfjörður as a whole is an artistic town. There's some magical energy streaming down from the mountains I suppose."

Instead of going to the movies we therefore headed to the gas station for a cup of coffee. There we met another pioneer, Óli, known among locals as Óli Skálanes. A year ago, Óli and his three sisters established the Skálanes Nature and Heritage Centre, situated at the mouth of Seyðisfjörður, which is about 17 km from the town. Skálanes is an old farm that has been used as a guesthouse for a long time, but due to its natural environment and the fact that tens of thousands of birds of over 40 different species nest annually at the site, its main purpose today is to be an independent conservation site that offers guided tours, housing and food to travellers, students and scholars, from May to September.

"The summer is getting more and more crazy. It's sort of like a long Saturday with guests constantly coming and going. Now people are flocking to Seyðisfjörður from May to September, asking for houses or apartments to buy and many of the artists who visit us once don't want to leave at all"

Pórunn adds.

No mercy!

Pórunn had told us about the newly opened Mini-Ciné microcinema, run by the couple Hassan Harazi and Lilja Dógg Jónsdóttir Eldon,

and as it is only across the street from Skálfell

we headed straight over to take a look.



Located inside Iceland's oldest shop, which dates back to 1890, nothing on the outside gives a hint that inside is a cinema. The building seems just like a regular family home, not a brand new venue for alternative and independent film and video.

At the same gas station, which seems to be a popular lunch-spot, we are introduced to Eyþór, a man in his late sixties and a legend around the area. Eyþór is the proud owner of Verslunin Ósk, a shop selling all sorts of clothes as well as quality reindeer skin. Lucky for us, Eyþór also happens to own the popular Café Lára, a charming old-school pub in the centre of town, and is more than eager to give us the grand tour and one last drink for goodbyes even though the pub isn't regularly open to customers that early in the day this time of year.

The building housing Café Lára was constructed in 1899 and the interiors have been remarkably preserved, featuring all sorts of old and amazing monuments, like a 106-year-old piano that apparently still works.

"Yes, I played it last night. No mercy!"

Eyþór says before guiding us to the bar.

While bringing us drinks Eyþór starts telling us about the beer he is brewing. He named it El Grillo, after a British tank ship that sank in the fjord during the Second World War. He has been working on this secret recipe since he took his first sip of beer but, up until now, the residents of Seyðisfjörður are the only ones who've been

able to enjoy his brew. Now he's expanding, and in June his beer bottles will hit the liquor stores around the country. For the occasion, Eyþór is planning a grand celebration at Café Lára.

"Yes, there will be a big party. No mercy! I'm going to open the El Grillo garden outside. With lots of seats and live music every Wednesday when the Norræna ferry arrives. And the garden will have a fountain with my head in the middle. No mercy! You have to come back for the party. Ok? No mercy!"

As I'm a big fan of good parties and would never ignore the chance to drink a fine beer with the inventor himself, especially when surrounded by such majestic nature and creativity, I promise to come back to celebrate. After raising a toast to El Grillo, and life in general, we need to leave this peaceful and arty paradise and the numerous inventive individuals we had come across during our much-too-short visit. By now, the townspeople are getting ready for the touristy summer months, planning concerts, film screenings, festivals, beer parties and art exhibitions so every single visitor stepping foot in the town will find some entertainment. Who knows, you might even end up not leaving at all.

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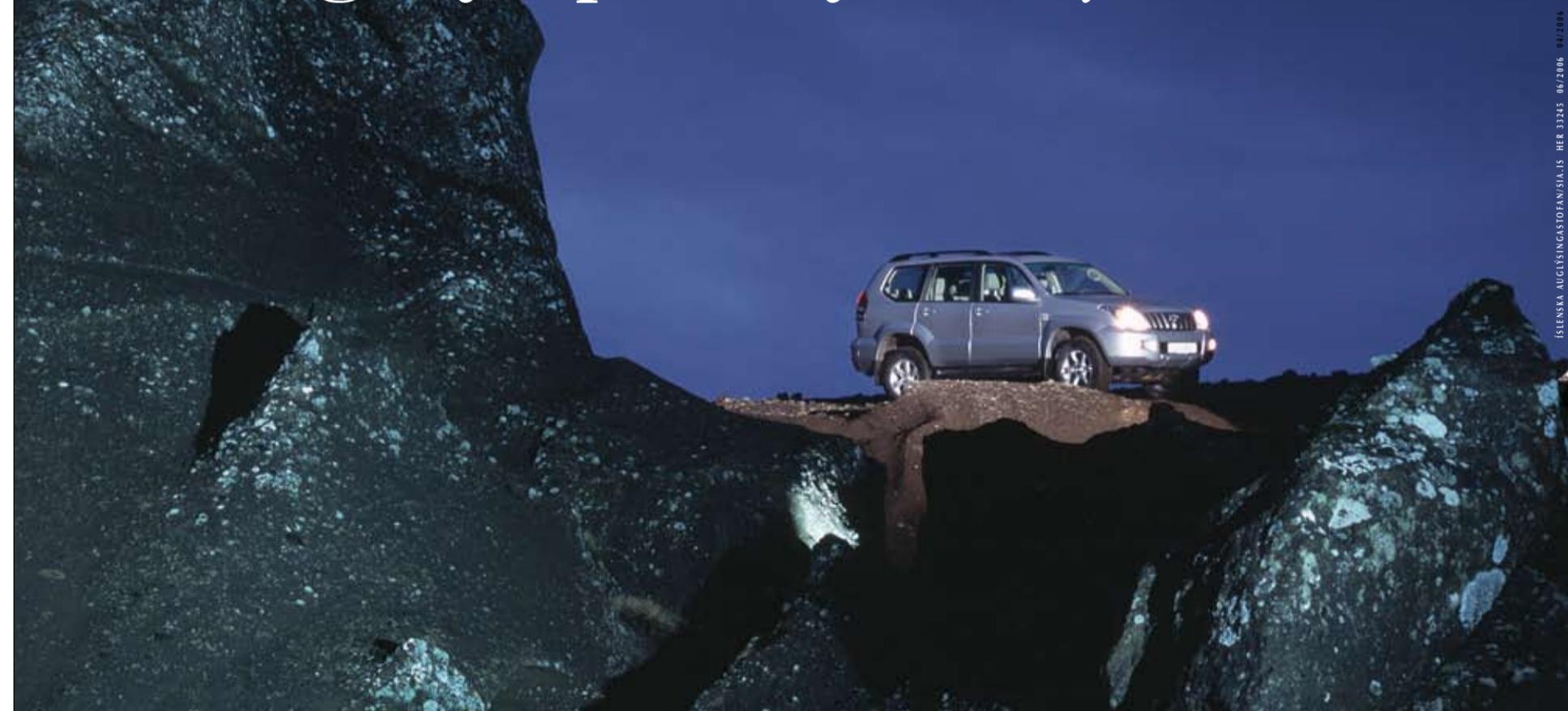
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Stuffed with stuff

The Grapevine is never off the record Bendtsen.

Andri Freyr warns his buddy Búi Bendtsen to choose his words carefully when talking to the Grapevine.

Page 24

What I find most positive about this album is the sound. It doesn't sound like anything else, it is just our own sound

Guitarist Bjarni from Mínus describes The Great Northern Whalekill.

Page B6

As much as we would all like to pretend that a Björk concert is solely about the music, it is anything but.

Sveinn Birkir Björnsson attends a Björk concert.

Page 20

If one truly wants to experience the artistic sector in East Iceland, it is necessary to make a trip to Seyðisfjörður.

Steinunn Jakobsdóttir discovers East Iceland.

Page 28

What seems to be the reason for this is not that we have a bad image or a bad reputation, but because we don't have a reputation at all.

Frosti Ólafsson explains Iceland's poor showing in the Anholt Nation Brands Index.

Page 14

Það er líf eftir menntaskóla



Háskólinn á Bifröst er eini „campus“-skólinn í félagsvíndum á Íslandi.

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