



FREE



THE GREEN GRAPEVINE

The Grapevine Goes Scholarly • Is Environmental Rationality at Odds With Democracy?
Is Environmental Discussion Inherently Flawed? • Could Icelandic Energy Serve Server Farms?

+ **info.** A Complete City Guide and Listings: Map, Dining, Music, Arts and Events *Issue 7 // June 1 - June 14 2007*

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From the Editor's Chair

Green is the catchphrase of the day. As PR firms bend over backwards in order to establish eco-conscious images for their clients, the current marketing mantra seems to be: all that is green will bring you the green.

This is not a positive development. We cannot afford to lose this discourse to the hands of the marketing powers that be. So, the Grapevine goes green.

It has been a while since we have done a theme issue, but this time we decided to focus on environmental issues and do our best to bring the discussion to the people. The discourse has to take place in a democratic public forum, free from the financial influences on the one hand and free from people's prejudices on the other. We need an intelligent and open discussion on how we are going to deal with this situation that we have created and which could threaten our very existence. So, the Grapevine goes scholarly.

For those who fear the serious tone in the feature section of this issue, rest assured that we will probably return to our usual tongue in cheek reporting in two weeks time.

Having devoted over five years of my life to the study of philosophy, I am extremely pleased to have an opportunity to present an article by the philosopher Ólafur Páll Jónsson on environmental rationality and democracy. If it is even possible to speak of a rising star in Icelandic philosophical circles, Ólafur Páll Jónsson is surely it. Although it is unusually academic in tone for the Grapevine, I urge you to read it. At this point, we cannot afford to dumb down the discussion to appeal to the lowest common denominator. It is our responsibility as citizens to make the extra effort to grasp the discussion of environmental issues and partake in the public discourse. Our future is at stake.

I would also urge you to read Fabrizio

Frascaroli's article on the need to change the way we approach environmental discussions. While Frascaroli has been a frequent contributor to the Grapevine in the past, I believe this to be his best work yet and an important input for anyone who has given a second thought to these matters.

While this issue of the Grapevine will probably not be regarded as a watershed moment in the struggle for sustainable development in the future, we are extremely proud to have fought the good fight. I hope the discussion that is offered on the pages you have before you will be able to make some people think twice about their environment and their actions upon it. Heck, even if it would be only one person, it would all be worth it. It is a cliché, I realise. But sometimes, all you really need to turn the tide is one good person.



Sveinn Birkir Björnsson
Editor



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Sour Grapes

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

Dear all, Góðan daginn!

My name is Augustin, I live here in Iceland and some of you know who I am. I found your e-mails from the cultural centre website and the purpose of my letter is to speak for those guests in Iceland who can't (for a reason or another) speak for themselves. I know how much you all are busy with your life but because of the dignity we all share and the values we all stand for in this new country, take a few minutes to read and possibly respond to the following:

As part of the ongoing Reykjavik Art Festival, a lot of you might have been entertained up to some level by the diversified, colorful and at times breathtaking performances done by our dear guests from other countries. These entertainers varied a lot in their cultural demonstrations, backgrounds and in as much as their financial ability could truly speak out, yet with the shared and intrepid goal that was to entertain!

On Friday the 18th of May an orchestra called KONONO N.1 was on-stage to do just that. Subsequent to that performance, an article appears in the Grapevine journal by a certain Helgi Valur who dare compare one of the dancers as "a twenty year old porn star in a music video" (reference to the full article is on the link below).

Aghast by the article I decided to make a phone call to Grapevine in order that they graciously redeem this defenseless man's reputation by publicly apologizing for the publication of such abusing words, to no avail.

Forget not that on the 10th of January last year, a man in Isafjörður took his life due to irresponsible libel (article here below) which in fact prompted the writer to resign at DV after massive series of protests.

Comparatively, in the beginning of April this year a famous commentator on the CBS Corp subsidiary in New York by the name of Don Imus was shown the way out of his job because of the equally "cool racial gibe" after advertisers such as General Motors, Procter & Gamble deserted the radio station (find links below as well).

These are few among many other cases of irresponsible reporting being met by responsible reaction!

The point I would like to make here is that Helgi Valur was wrong to write those words and should apologize immediately in the following Grapevine Issue. That band that came to Iceland to entertain Icelanders was invited for that same purpose! A well deserved farewell to the band should have required and an appreciation, least of which is to recognize that they do what they do for a decent living. It only appears that Helgi's life -and profession for that matter- isn't that much laudable than theirs, because to be called a "porn-star in a video" is defamatory by all rational thinking, especially when you are not one. Thus, Helgi should get a lesson now rather than later. He should also be able to acquaint himself with the happenings in the media industry in order to learn the basics of what is right and what is wrong in connection with media reporting.

After you have read this, all I would simply like to ask you to kindly forward this letter to: publisher@grapevine.is or editor@grapevine.is and feel free to make any further suggestions as is deemed seemly.

The Konono group is gone, voiceless but their reputation unjustly destroyed!!! Perhaps today it was Konono, tomorrow it could be someone related to you and just because he/she would then be a foreigner does not justify Helgi's writing style.

Thank you all, Augustin

Augustin and others cc'd. It was with utter disbelief and disgust that I read your incredibly tasteless and ill-advised e-mail.

I cannot even begin to understand the general suspension of common sense to reach the absurd conclusions you present as facts. I find it saddening that you choose to waste

not only my time, but also the time of those you have chosen to send your e-mail to as well with such incredible nonsense. "...but also the time of the other recipients of this nonsensical email." Especially after you called me earlier to threaten me with legal action.

Helgi Valur, an accomplished musician himself, wrote a glowing review of the Konono no1 show where he concluded that the show was a great experience by all standards. The full clause by Helgi Valur, which you refer to without any context what so ever, reads: "Mingiedi, the Jimi Hendrix of the likembé, had been standing still all evening only moving his thumbs. Now he walked on stage dancing, shaking his hips like a twenty-year-old porn star in a music video. "What a cool dude!" I could hear many people utter."

Now, your statement that Helgi Valur compares Mingiedi to a porn star is an incredible stretch at best. He uses an analogy to describe a certain movement of the hips by a "cool dude" who happens to be the "Jimi Hendrix of the likembe." How you reach the conclusion that this man's reputation needs to be redeemed or that Konono no1's reputation has been unjustly destroyed by this clause is not only blatantly ignorant, it is just plain stupid.

Be that as it may, what sets your letter apart from other nonsensical letters I receive is the incredible tastelessness to try to evoke correlation or compare this to the case of Don Imus or an accused child molester in Isafjörður who sadly took his life after his name was leaked to the press. As well as your suggestion that people can expect to be attacked on the pages of the Grapevine for being foreigners.

There is absolutely no correlation whatsoever, and the mere fact that you should bring this up is both incredibly tasteless, and again, beyond ignorance. The mere attempt to compare the two and bring the discussion down to that level and to send out a mass e-mail suggesting any correlation is a much more serious attempt at destroying a man's reputation than anything said in the review by Helgi Valur.

The Grapevine is largely written by foreigners and has always been supportive of the immigrant community. Your attempts to suggest that people can expect to be treated badly by the Grapevine based on their nationality are extremely offending.

If anything, I believe that you owe both Helgi Valur and me an apology for your false statements and your merciless attack on his person by sending out a mass e-mail full of unfounded accusations.

Your decision to not only write your letter from the relative safety of not supplying your full name, that is anonymously but also creating a special e-mail address (grapevine-issue6-may18-2007@hotmail.com) to send it from is cowardish, and it suggests that you may not even be confident in your own claims.

I will be waiting for that apology.

Be that as it may, what sets your letter apart from other nonsensical letters I receive is the incredible tastelessness to try to evoke correlation or compare this to the case of Don Imus...

Hressingarskálinn

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

Food is served from 10 until 22 every day. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, after the kitchen closes Hressó heats up with live music. Weekends, DJs keep the party going until morning, with no cover charge.



The Grave-digger and the Bell-ringer

Text by Magnús Björn Ólafsson

I'm a ridiculous man – all too familiar with self-contempt and self-mistrust. I envy those who can sleep, who can "dream" without imagination... who can have that clarity distilled upon them by 'meaning'... who seek profound moments... where all is still while life is such a blunder; comfort must be found in such blindness.

But there is one miserable being, dear reader, who I loathe even more than myself: The Politician – and I sometimes wonder how this mysterious creature can think... and feel. I will, however, not make a thorough study of its face. I will only listen, and remain an ever present critique – and never so epitomizing arrogance as to criticize people: I leave that task to the ignorant and truly clever... Power structures will be the only objects of this petty inquiry.

Every human society is overrun by diverse forms of Power, which rule our acts and regulate our trains of thought, whether we like it or not, and Power is a key element in the formation of all social-structures: a painter seeks power over his paint-brush, a politician seeks legislative power, the media seeks power over social debate, a parent seeks power over her child as a teacher seeks power over his pupil; and this master-slave dualism will be evident throughout human history ad infinitum... Welcome to the hierarchy.

But, Power 'itself' is not a simple concrete object which can be scrutinized in a dark laboratory until we have determined its essence and finalized its fundamental nature. Power 'itself' is so much more deceitful and Machiavellian than we can ever imagine; like gravity, it is invisible, unattainable, and thus, in order to examine its true essence, we must study the way it announces itself before our very eyes – we must wait for it to show its face – like gravity exposed itself to Newton in the form of a falling apple.

Power is perfectly reflected in the absence of a single, innocent, little word: 'Why?' When this childish question is nowhere to be found, an unconditional obedience to the current state of affairs is unveiled; an unconditional obedience which is encapsulated in a well known example of Primo Levi's experience in the notorious Auschwitz concentration-camp: "When the thirsty Levi reached for a pile of snow in the window-sill of his shed, the guard

outside hysterically ordered him to step back; when the astounded Levi asked Why? – why should such an act, which contradicts no rules and is of no apparent damage to anyone, be rejected? – the guard replied: Hier ist kein Warum! – here there is no why." The complete absence of 'Why?' demonstrates Power par excellence – whether you need a bearded metaphysical clause to anchor that or not.

Politics make strange bed-partners, over-cast by the shadow of the recent Icelandic governmental transformation – where the so called "left-wing" Social-Democratic Alliance and the right-wing Independence Party were united in a perverted Midasian embrace – I must ask the question which so many have asked before me: Was Fukuyama correct when he wrote The end of History and announced the death of ideology? Is there space to be found for a fundamental ideological debate if the 'left' is embedded in the 'right'? Is a capitalistic democracy the only imaginable possibility from the eternal multitude of infinite possibilities? Are we not men anymore? Have we lost the naïve talent to ask Why? – the talent of interpretation which makes us human – the talent to criticise power-structures? Has the childish Why? quite simply, been sent to the gas-chamber?

The grave is open, the bells are ringing, and ideology is being buried alive... Left- and right-politics are dead clichés! you say. Well, let me remind you, that to become too easily afraid of the cliché, is to become one yourself. They... (The Cliché), grasp us, not we them; when the emperor walked proud and naked in the New Clothes, his subjects could not find words sublime enough to describe his elegant attire. It was not until someone finally broke the object of illusion that the herd started laughing: Can't you see that the man is naked! – it was a child who spoke out. A good argument is always better than bad peace.

I have no political-compass... all I have is my all too human heart.

(In this text, there are references to a few philosophers (most of whom are long-dead), but it would be barbaric of me to name any of them; so in the spirit of the late Derrida, I chose not to fragment my debt of gratitude – or to quote Montaigne: I quote only others to quote better myself.)

Was Fukuyama correct when he wrote The end of History and announced the death of ideology? Is there space to be found for a fundamental ideological debate if the 'left' is embedded in the 'right'?

GREEN

To be Green or not to be Green

Text by Marvin Lee Dupree

I remember when being Green, or whatever it is called nowadays, was generally referred to as being: an environmentalist, a hippie, or rather tastelessly, a weirdo. It was like being in a constant state of committing a faux pas. Around the same time I was rather young and quite into Captain Planet, the cartoon, and his band of eco-conscious friends who would often thwart the dastardly plans of conglomerate corporations bent on raping Mother Earth.

Since then, a lot has changed; being Green has, essentially, become quite hip, at least in Europe and especially in England. There even the trashy tabloids that report daily on environmental issues, focusing on carbon footprints, both the ones we leave and the ones that we generate with our shopping and how products arrive into our shopping carts. Hence, it would seem that England along with other countries such as Sweden and Germany seem to be leading the way towards greener lifestyles and policies.

So that raises the question: Where does that leave Iceland? Are we looking ahead or lagging behind with China and suburban America? The answer might not be as simple as one would want to believe. On my way here, right now I am writing this article in lovely eco-friendly café Kaffi Hjómáland, I counted the cars that were driving down the street to this exact spot. I counted 66 cars, despite the fact that I walked rather briskly. Moreover, at least twenty vehicles had only one occupant – and since I have been here there has been a car driving down the street at ten to fifteen second intervals. Hundreds and hundreds of cars creep along slowly for the weekend glance of Laugavegur and its part-time denizens.

Personally, I do not understand the appeal of watching other people walk down the street from a car. Emitting carbons and wasting oil driving down a street seems to be a popular leisure here in Iceland, known as "rúntur", which is sort of like a '50s style teenage leisure activity in some suburban nightmare with a Freudian edge. My question is why is this so popular here? Are these the same people who throw trash on the street, do not recycle and scoff cynically with the typical Icelandic stubbornness at the term "global warming"?

From my own personal experience, I seem to have discovered one thing about "certain" Icelanders – yes here comes the generalization.

Because, as you all know, some people just can't handle the truth. Those who scoff at green thinking seem more inclined to try and rationalize whaling by saying: they eat all the fish. There you have Solomonian wisdom at its finest. The same kind of Icelandic person never recycles, as he or she sees no point in it – and considers the epitome of modern culture to be the cultural wasteland that is the American mass consumer society. If these people got to decide Iceland's future I am sure that we would become the 51st state with 50 aluminium smelter plants to boot.

On the other hand, being Green has become a fashionable vote baiting commodity in the agora of Icelandic politics. The main proponent of Green values hitherto has been the political party, the Left Green Movement, and of course they have put Green politics on the map here in Iceland – although at a price. If you cast a vote for Left Green, you are casting a vote for nanny state politics, which is a steep price indeed; not to mention their occasional shelving of Green values for political gain. Not to be "left" out of the mix are the Independence Party, priding themselves with a generous clap on the shoulder: we have seen An Inconvenient Truth as well. The sad fact that remains is that being an environmentalist is still on the fringe of Icelandic society, although we have made progress, e.g. hydrogen buses, carbon footprints (kolvidur.is) and numerous other initiatives.

However, being an environmentalist doesn't really mean you have to conform to some kind of stereotype or adhere to certain politics, it is more of radical new Social Contract that depends on the cooperation of everybody involved. So, here is hoping that more Icelanders ride a bike, use local transport systems or use cars less, demand less packaging in their groceries and recycle. The change has to start with Icelanders that have an irrational phobia of being Green. Because, of course, one of our national pastimes is talking about how great the country looks. Somehow I don't think Iceland is as attractive with Marlboro packages, coke cans, aluminium plants and various trash scattered around – not to mention the fact if the country (and world) finally becomes a true uninhabitable wasteland because "To be, or not to be: that is the question." I just think the answer needs to be a resounding yes.

Those who scoff at green thinking seem more inclined to try and rationalize whaling by saying: they eat all the fish. There you have Solomonian wisdom at its finest.

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Hydrogen (Brain) Power

Text by Zoë Robert Photo by Leó Stefánsson

Þorsteinn Sigfusson is Professor of Physics at the Science Department of the University of Iceland. Sigfusson, who currently chairs Icelandic New Energy Ltd. (a promoter for using hydrogen as a fuel in the transportation sector in Iceland), has been leading the effort of bringing Iceland to becoming the world's first hydrogen economy. Sigfusson holds a Knighthood for his work and was also recently awarded (along with a British and Russian scientist) a Russian "mini-Nobel Prize" energy award for his pioneering research on hydrogen, to be presented by President Putin in St. Petersburg on June 9th. A Grapevine journalist sat down with Sigfusson to discuss the award and the state of hydrogen technology in Iceland.

Note: This interview was conducted just prior to the recent elections and therefore any reference to the government is referring to the now former government.

You won the award together with two others. How does that work?

The official explanation is that Professor Sigfusson gets it for the research and development of hydrogen as an energy carrier and the impact in Iceland and the world. The two other scientists get it for different things. There's no use to mention it but they also bring the size of the prize to the same level of the Nobel Prize. We're talking about 37 million ISK for my part – it's an amazing thing for a scientist. Halldór Laxness of course won the [Nobel] prize in '52, that was a similar thing, and he bought himself a Jaguar car. I've been joking that I will try to get a hydrogen powered Jaguar.

What is Iceland's place in the world in the area of hydrogen?

I would start by telling you that in the course of the 20th century Iceland gradually displaced a lot of fossil fuels from its portfolio. It for example displaced the use of coal for heating houses in Reykjavik in the period after the Second World War and right now the use of renewables is about 72% of the whole country's portfolio – which is the highest in the world. Next is New Zealand with 57%. So the fact that we have to import our oil and gasoline to Iceland – there's no coal import anymore – for the transport sector, fishing

fleet and now airplanes is a question of lack of security of delivery of fuels so there's been quite an interest in Iceland to try to replace this with domestically produced fuels.

What options do we have? Iceland is a rather cold country so bio-fuels à la Brazil are not really in the picture here but there is a well known possibility to split water using electricity – its called electrolysis – and make hydrogen and we started doing that at the beginning of the new millennium. We started Icelandic New Energy Ltd as a spin off from the University of Iceland. The aim of Icelandic New Energy was to help to create a hydrogen energy society. We started by setting up a hydrogen fuelling station and gathering a lot of experience for the world market. For example, when we first got the [hydrogen] buses in 2003 the sensitive hydrogen system could not withstand frost, but now these systems can go to -20°C so a lot of learning has been provided for the world from here.

Are there any plans for any more [hydrogen powered] buses?

The buses will be ready in I think 2009. Daimler Chrysler is expecting a new generation of buses where they have used the learning curve from here and elsewhere to improve the systems.

You might also want to know about the sort of work I've been doing in Iceland on hydrogen. I defined something I called geo-thermal hydrogen. So it's the link between geothermal energy and hydrogen which has been the content of my own research. For example, I have been extracting hydrogen out of geothermal gases. I have been using a geothermal system to power a hydrogen compressor and things like that and my graduate students have been quite active with me in this realisation. So this would be my own unique contribution to the old science.

So, what does it take to make hydrogen cars produced or available to people on a mass scale? How is this going to take place?

I would say that we are probably today in a similar position as the makers of the combustion automobile engine in 1907. It's a technology in its infancy and the cost of making these

things needs to be reduced a lot. To give you an example, our kind of benchmark is the cost of producing a diesel or gasoline engine which is about \$35 per kilowatt. Now our cost of producing a hydrogen engine is unfortunately maybe five times higher and this needs to be gradually reduced and the market will not accept this until we have a competitive price. [...] But you know, countries or civilizations will need generations to change the fuel base and in the last century we for example changed the energy system twice. First in the 1920s to hydro-electric power and then in the post World War II period to geothermal. I think the first half of this century will be devoted to alternative energies replacing oil.

There's been a shift in focus in the discussion on the environment. In the past, hydrogen-electrical and geothermal power was the focus but in recent months the focus has been on reducing the direct impact of humans [eg. carbon emissions and waste disposal]. Why has it taken this long for that shift to take place? There were two things that motivated our work in hydrogen. One was energy security or insecurity with the import of oil and gas and the foreseen limit of availability of oil on Earth. The second is the situation with the atmosphere – the emissions. Actually, Iceland by converting the car fleet to hydrogen we would reduce our carbon emissions dramatically. So right now Icelanders are probably spewing out 11 tonnes of CO₂ per capita per year whereas the OECD average is maybe 7. America's is of course the dirtiest – it's maybe 23 tonnes per capita per year. If we could get the [car] fleet over to hydrogen – and the fishing fleet – we would probably go down by more than half, so it would be dramatic.

But, with the fishing fleet – is that something that is realistic? Obviously you would need a new fleet?

That's an excellent question because running the fishing fleet [on hydrogen] is going to require a lot of infrastructure investment – yes. And the old trawlers will last for almost [another] 40 years so we have to assume that such a transition will have to take a long time and then another problem with hydrogen is that it is very difficult to compress in the same

I see the present energy system on Earth as something we have inherited from some stone age and burning these hydro-carbons as we do is not the sustainable way of treating Earth so I realise that a fuel which is renewable, like hydrogen, is necessary to break this vicious circle that humankind is in.

way as say diesel. It requires a lot of volume. It's like the same volume of a gasoline tank using hydrogen gases will only lead to a third of the range.

But, has it been done before [converting fishing boats to hydrogen]?

Yes, I tell you what, the Russians have even tried hydrogen on airplanes. Boats – yes, it has sort of been done in limited experiments. There are submarines in Germany that run on hydrogen. And, in one year from now Icelandic New Energy will be working with hydrogen in a whale watching boat. The whale watching boat will be installing a partial hydrogen system. So when you are on the [whale watching] spot you can shut off the main engine and run on a quiet battery-like hydrogen system.

The discussion on hydrogen has been on-going for some time. What's new and why do you focus on it?

I see the present energy system on Earth as something we have inherited from some stone age and burning these hydro-carbons as we do is not the sustainable way of treating Earth so I realise that a fuel which is renewable, like hydrogen, is necessary to break this vicious circle that humankind is in. But at the same time I realise that it is going to be very difficult – there are no patent solutions. This is quite a challenge and this is why I am interested in it. It's a challenge from many points of views – societal, scientific... we are looking towards a paradigm shift. A paradigm shift in energy, in fuels on Earth has not taken place. In the whole history of humankind we've been burning things and we go to the hydrogen thing it's a different story all together.

New things happening? Well, what I could tell you is that if the government of for example the US had the same vision for hydrogen as they had for the moon race – they simply defined a goal and put more money into it – we would solve this thing in five years. So my message to you is that we need some sort of a moon race for hydrogen.

Leading up to the elections, many of the parties have a green agenda. Do you think this is going to continue [after the elections]?

Yes, I think so because I think environmental discussions are here to be. It's an amazing transition that has taken place. When I started talking about the need for this towards the end of the 20th century, some of the advisors of our government said "Well, we don't really believe in this man-made CO₂ thing – is it real?" and you don't hear these views anymore. But there were advisors to our ministers who claimed this. It was amazing and actually these voices were fuelled by I think some of the oil companies who really thought that they would be in a better position if they put some doubt into the whole discussion. Last year the secretary of the Royal Society in London sent a very harsh letter to the CEO of Exxon Mobil US saying that it was shameful to notice that Exxon Mobil had been supporting funds to spread this doubt.

Maybe you can't really compare it... but it sounds a bit like the story of tobacco.

No, [...] I was at a conference last year and this analogy was taken. And what is the situation with tobacco's health these days? Zero doubt. So, this is the world we live in.

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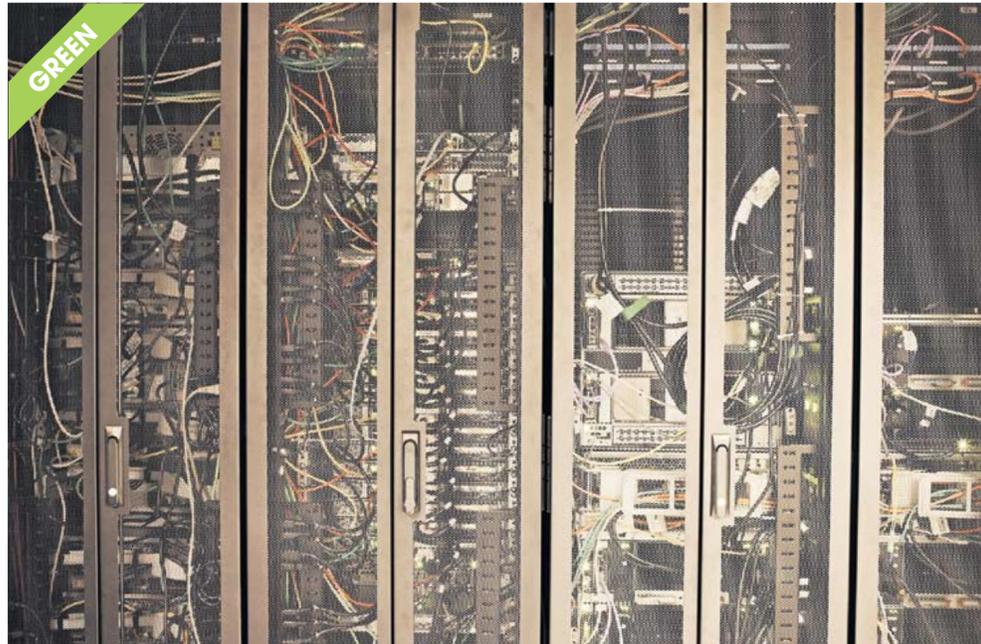


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Iceland: A Hot Server Spot?

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir Photo by Gulli

Global Internet giants and computer corporations such as Microsoft, Yahoo!, Cisco and Google are showing a growing interest in Iceland as a possible location for building data centres (also known as server farms) that would be powered by environmentally friendly hydroelectric or geothermal energy. The companies currently run dozens of data centres all over the world, and now Iceland's competitive environment and cheap energy prices have helped to make the country a feasible option. At the same time, many locals see the service companies as a new and more environmentally friendly alternative to the aluminium industry in the country.

Alexander Picchietti, Director of Business Development and Global Services at the Icelandic telecommunication company Síminn, regards this idea as a positive opportunity for the country and its economy and is optimistic that these talks will lead to something. "I would be willing to bet a lot of money on this becoming a reality. I think that it is in fact inevitable. If you look at computing and the migration to the web, that development will not stop, and as it happens the world will be an interconnected web of data centres, one way or the other."

Picchietti stresses how important it is to fully understand what a data centre is, what it means to establish such centres in Iceland and what kind of service we are talking about. The computer technology is constantly developing and has changed immensely in the past few decades and data centres are part of that evolution. Data centres have been around for quite a while, in fact, they have been around much longer than the internet. Currently, the data centres exist both for hosting data as well as web services.

"As computing moves to the web, we have these massive centres, which are established for the purpose of housing equipment, connected by fiber-optic cables. It's a concentration of lots of computer equipment to facilitate this communication. That's really what a data centre is, a big building with whole bunch of computers," Picchietti explains.

Iceland is not the only country these giant companies are eyeing as a feasible option for their large computer buildings so I asked how reasonable it is to expect them to choose Iceland as the prime candidate.

"I wouldn't say it's reasonable to expect them to come but I would say that it's reasonable to hope that they will come. In the light of the big guys, [Google, Yahoo and Microsoft] it will be a long fight and there has to

be a lot of creative work done to get them to say yes, but as the situation is today, Iceland has an incredibly favourable atmosphere for international business."

Today, we have plenty of small data centres in Iceland, for example at Anza, Skýrr and TM Software Skygginn. Picchietti says that what now needs to be done is to take what we have and make it a bit bigger. The only thing that is stopping us, he adds, is a new submarine cable for data transportation between Iceland and Europe. At the moment, we have two submarine cables, Cantat and Farice, but a third one would be necessary for such large companies as Microsoft, Google or Yahoo! to even consider Iceland as a possibility. The current cable condition is not consistent with the advanced technology but plans have been made for an additional submarine cable, which hopefully will be realised by the end of next year.

Being Socially Responsible

What these large companies find so inviting in Iceland is the fact that the country is rich with cheap environmentally friendly energy. Running data centres is a power intensive industry and requires a massive amount of electricity, something Iceland could easily provide. The companies are also looking for a secure location and the right infrastructure, with both conditions fulfilled in Iceland. The country's location, being mid-way between Europe and North America, is an added bonus.

In recent years, Iceland's cheap energy has mostly attracted aluminium giants who have built, and have shown interest in building, numerous more smelters around the country, but which has caused a lot of discontent among locals and environmentalists in the meantime. Using the abundant energy sources to attract Internet giants instead of aluminium companies might be a new and more attractive option.

"Overall I think it's a better use of our fine natural resources, for sure" Picchietti says adding that right now the country could deploy several data centres without having to dam up rivers and kill wildlife. He continues: "At the same time I think everything is a balance and Iceland's infrastructure would not be like it is today if it wasn't for the aluminium factories. [...] A lot of people like to talk about how bad the aluminium companies are, but what I find interesting is that you have a thriving economy here in Iceland and a lot of that has to do with the foreign investors that come in through large organisations like the aluminium companies. If you think about it in a global

perspective, it's the most socially responsible thing for them to do, to go where they are using sustainable energy sources. To put things into perspective, data centres are significantly dependent on electricity and one of the reasons that Internet companies would look at coming to Iceland is because of sustainable energy. It would be a globally responsible use of resources," he says adding:

"The power infrastructure in Iceland, which is really favourable for data centres, is so because of the aluminium smelters that have been built here. Because of the aluminium smelters, it is now possible to do other things. They should therefore be looked at as an enabler to now take the next step."

Making Iceland Competitive

In May this year, representatives from Reykjavik Energy, an independent service company owned by the City of Reykjavik, the town of Akranes and the local authorities of Borgarfjörður met with representatives from Yahoo! to investigate the possibilities of building server farms in Iceland.

Eiríkur Hjálmarsson, Chief Information Officer at Reykjavik Energy, told the Grapevine on behalf of Reykjavik Energy that the discussion started almost six years ago. The company was examining the market for electricity and economic innovations, and one part of that investigation involved looking into the possibility of establishing data centres in Iceland.

"We informed certain companies about this possibility at that time but when the climate change became a big issue last year we noticed an increased interest in the idea. Data centres require a lot of energy and the claim for environmentally friendly energy is important to the companies running them. The geothermal power is a renewable source of energy and a much better alternative than burning coal or gas which produce greenhouse gases" Hjálmarsson says adding that discussions are still in their initial stage. Now both parties are investigating how profitable it would be to operate data centres in Iceland and what would have to be done to make that a reality, a new submarine cable being an essential part of that process.

When asked if there have been talks of possible locations, Hjálmarsson mentions the lowlands of Borgarfjörður or Kjalarnes. Other sites could be considered, all depending on the conditions the companies find preferable.

When asked whether there have been any negotiations about energy prices Hjálmarsson says: "No, we haven't talked about prices and

What these large companies find so inviting in Iceland is the fact that the country is rich with cheap environmentally friendly energy.

it really isn't timely to talk about that part yet. I think these companies are serious about Iceland being a possibility but when anything will be decided is hard to say. We are willing to sell energy and examine the infrastructure, but the next steps are up to the companies. What we [at Reykjavik Energy] need to do now is to be a feasible option for them."

Halldór Jörgensson, the managing director of Microsoft in Iceland, shares a similar view and hopes that a new submarine cable will be built sooner rather than later. After Microsoft CEO Bill Gates met with Iceland's President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson at a convention in January, Microsoft in Iceland received an inquiry from Bill Gates who wanted to investigate the possibility of building a server farm in Iceland. Jörgensson says that the discussions are still in the initial stages though:

"This is a really exciting project but I don't want to be too optimistic. This hasn't happened yet. We are competing with other nations where the governments have been more active and participated in the process. We will just have to hope that a new government will show more interest in the idea and make Iceland competitive. When this could become a reality is hard to say. The next step for us at Microsoft is to do field work and that has already been organized," said Jörgensson.

New Job Opportunities

At this time it is hard to make any predictions as to a specific timeframe or what particular company would locate in Iceland. At the same time, it is hard to predict how large the data centres could be or how many jobs they would provide. Numbers ranging from a couple of dozen up to 200 new jobs have been mentioned, but it will all depend on how advanced the centre will be and how much interaction the centre needs. But if one of these data centres will pop up in Iceland it could mean some positive changes for the economy. For the high-tech industry, data centres would mean more opportunities to employ local IT people in the country. While the centres are being built, construction workers could be temporarily employed and after the centres are ready the buildings will need attendants and security.

As the current situation in Iceland is, we don't have all of the IT staff needed to service the data centres, so the recruitment of foreign IT talent would be inevitable.

"We would need some foreign employees. We need this expertise which would be a good addition to the Icelandic expertise and an opportunity to educate people in that industry here in Iceland," Jörgensson explains.

Current talks have focused on server farms that would require approximately 50 to 70 megawatts of power which would be an immensely large first step. Picchietti thinks we need to be careful making assumptions regarding numbers of employees or the size of the data centres, as in the end it should depend on what we want to do but not on what we can do: "We can do a lot, even populate the entire country just with these big buildings, but do we want to? I don't think so. There's 1.5-2% unemployment in the country at the moment so the question we should be focusing on is what we need now. [...] But I think that the vested interests should be high for everybody and we should work hard to make it happen."

As of today, nothing has been decided but the discussions will continue in the forthcoming months. Establishing data centres in Iceland could be profitable for the economy and change the employment opportunities in the country as well as bring Iceland's knowledge industry to a new level. What remains to be seen is whether these talks will lead to action.

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One Giant Step for Mankind

Text by Alex Elliot Photo by Gulli

You'd need to have pretty big feet to walk in our shoes. Our footprint is 25% bigger than the whole planet. However: it may be big, but it's not clever.

The footprint in question is a metaphorical one: it is our ecological footprint. The tally of the renewable resources humanity takes from the planet against what the planet can regenerate. We have exceeded the planet's annual sustainable bounty by some time in September each year.

Ecological footprinting is a theoretical science, but it is measured in the most tangible and physical sense possible: land area (usually given as gha, or 'global hectares'). An ecological footprint analysis can be carried out for individuals, communities, nations and all of humanity, but also for things like factories, offices and even clubs and hobby groups. We can all find out our environmental impact in the form of a tangible gha number.

Notably, the ecological footprint does not include our use of non-renewable resources such as fossil fuels, metals and quarried goods – it is concerned solely with renewable resources. The Global Footprint Network sums it up thus: "how much land and water area does a human population require to produce the resources it consumes and to absorb its wastes under prevailing technology?"

1.9 gha per Person

Let's put this into context. The amount of land needed to provide food, drink and all other renewable consumables – and to absorb the resultant waste – is 9.5 gha for every American. That figure is 5.45 for the British, 4 for the Swiss and just 1.5 for every Chinese person. At the present population level and with present technology, the planet can allow each human about 1.9 gha.

With increasing wealth and aspirations, the ecological footprint of the Chinese is growing rapidly – and so is the global population. But how are we able to live the way we do if there aren't the resources available? After all, you can't have what doesn't exist.

The question is not just one of available resources, but more about the sustainability of those resources. We are still lucky enough to have the resources to live as wastefully as we want, but ecological footprinting aims to encourage us to leave enough for future generations. Deforestation, over fishing, species extinction and carbon-induced climate change are just some of the issues that underline our lack of sustainability.

Worryingly, the over-exploitation of natural resources can actually be an exponentially increasing problem – as taking a tonne of fish from a healthy stock will have less of an impact and be replaced quicker than taking a tonne of fish from a depleted stock. Just as there may not be 'plenty more fish in the sea', so too might we 'not be able to see the trees for the (dead) wood'. The more we damage our tropical forests, the less able they are to regenerate.

Simplified Equation

Of course, measuring the impact of all human activity on all aspects of the natural world is incredibly difficult, if not

impossible. A certain amount of simplification inevitably happens when turning Mother Nature into a mathematical equation, and as a result there are critics.

Figures based on crude estimates are often used and little notice is taken of geographical circumstances – as a hectare of intensive arable land may be given the same value whether in Iceland or in the middle of the Amazon. It is also difficult to account for multiple land uses, where a forest is considered a carbon sink and not a source of food and the food production and carbon absorption of residential areas are not considered.

Also, one person is considered to have a lower impact as a member of a family household of ten people than say one of three people. While true on a basic level, this fails to account for their possible contribution to over-population.

Does this hair splitting actually matter though? Supporters of ecological footprints think not. They argue that the figures are accurate enough to show that we are consuming far too much, far too quickly – and that's all that matters.

Calculate Your Own Footprint

It is worth mentioning that ecological footprints are just one of several footprints available to the environmentally conscious – or to be forced upon the environmentally ignorant. For example, ecological footprints take account of climate change, because of the atmosphere's status as a changing system and part of the carbon cycle – with carbon contributors and carbon sinks. It doesn't take account of where the carbon is coming from though. For that you need a carbon footprint.

The carbon footprint is the amount of carbon emitted by each person, company, nation or other community through their use of fossil fuels. It is most commonly measured in tonnes per year.

You may also hear tell of such notions as bio-productivity footprints and biodiversity footprints. These are more accurate ways of looking at the impact of specific land usage and our impact upon the natural habitat in a given ecosystem.

And so ends 'The Grapevine Lecture Series: Footprints 101'. We hope you find it useful. For more information, visit www.footprintnetwork.org.

We are still lucky enough to have the resources to live as wastefully as we want, but ecological footprinting aims to encourage us to leave enough for future generations.

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Tickets can be bought at all tourist information centers, booking offices and most hotels in Reykjavík. Tickets can also be bought from the guides (cash only). Reservations recommended. Please call +354 543 6666 or e-mail: walk@hauntediceland.com

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12_RVK_GV_07_2007_ARTICLE/ENVIRONMENT



Reykjavík Bike Punks

Text and photo by Páll Hilmarsson

"We just wanted to do something!" says Ingibjörg Ingvarsdóttir, one of the four people who run the alternative bike repair shop Ræbbblarnir (punxs) at Ásvallagata 48 in West Reykjavík. The label "shop" really does not do the enterprise justice since the service is free, although donations are welcome. "The idea was born 2 years ago when some of us visited the punk K-Town festival in Copenhagen. Every time the festival is held there is a bike repair shop and that's where the idea comes from", says Viktor Orri Dietersson Pollitz. Since then a loosely defined group of 10-15 people belonged to the Reykjavík Bike Brigade, swapping tips on everything bike related and riding free together.

Now the name has changed to Ræbbblarnir (the three b's stolen from the legendary punk group Fræbbblarnir) and shop has been set up in a rented garage in a quiet neighbourhood. Early this summer Ræbbblarnir called for donations in the form of bikes people no longer wanted and needed. The response was big and now they have a sizable stash of old bikes of any kind. "We want people to realize it's easy to fix a bike – you don't have to take it to a repair shop or buy a new one", says Ægir Freyr Birgisson. "But this isn't a repair service, it's a place where you can learn how to fix your bike and get the tools, help and space needed". The municipal authorities provide the four with pay during the summer months through the program "Creative Summer Jobs" and a partnership with Íslenski Fjallahjólaklúbburinn (the Icelandic mountain bike club) is in the works.

"This is about recycling and using old things. Someone's piece of trash can be valuable to somebody else", says Ægir. At the garage, every piece of equipment needed to fix a bicycle is available: wrenches and screw-

drivers, nuts and bolts, a welding gun and plenty of old spare parts, salvaged from donated bikes. But the Ræbbblarnir are not just about bikes. Early this month they put up a daytime punk show in the garden next to the garage. "The neighbours complained a bit... said it was like a 5 on the Richter scale earthquake", says Ingibjörg laughing. "But we'll do it again!"

Other bike related events are on the agenda: Viktor really wants to have a demolition derby style bike-war competition and there is a Critical Mass event in the pipes. Critical Mass events are known in other countries but have never taken place in Iceland. It is a day when self-propelled commuters of any kind take to the streets en masse – forcing cars and motorbikes to acknowledge their existence under the slogan "We Are Traffic". The first Critical Mass took place in San Francisco in 1992 and has been spreading throughout the world since.

The idea behind Ræbbblarnir is that there are no customers or clients, only people participating. Anybody can bring their bike over and repair it or get help repairing it. One of the organization's objectives is to raise awareness about the environment, pollution and recycling. "Anybody can do anything here – there is no elitism", says Ægir. "And it should be fun... and it will be!" he adds.

The garage is open this summer every working day from 10 to 5 at Ásvallagata 48. If you own an old bike which you'd like to donate to the project, contact Ræbbblarnir and they will pick it up from you. As any cool kid in the world, the bike-gang has a Myspace presence, www.myspace.com/raebbblarnir and the email address raebbblarnir@gmail.com.

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One reason to think that democracy is not likely to guarantee or encourage suitable outcomes stems from different spatial and temporal frames, namely the long range of environmental effects and the local focus of democratic decision.

Text by Ólafur Páll Jónsson Photo by Gulli

Democracy is hailed as the best form of government, but yet the countries that have been ruled by this best form of government are responsible for the worst consequences in the history of humanity: climate change and other environmental crises threaten the very living conditions of millions of people around the globe and no part of the world will be unaffected.

Some people believe that democracy itself is responsible for this severe situation – that democracy as such undermines environmental rationality and plays into superficial and unreasonable preferences while ignoring long term consequences by making environmental decisions subject to procedural standards.

In other words, since democracy is primarily about procedures while environmental rationality requires certain outcomes, democracy has no way of guaranteeing environmental rationality.

The Mismatch Problem

Why can the fundamental procedures of democracy not guarantee or encourage suitable outcomes in environmental issues? Stating that democracy is about procedures but environmental rationality is about outcomes hardly does more than hint at an answer to that question.

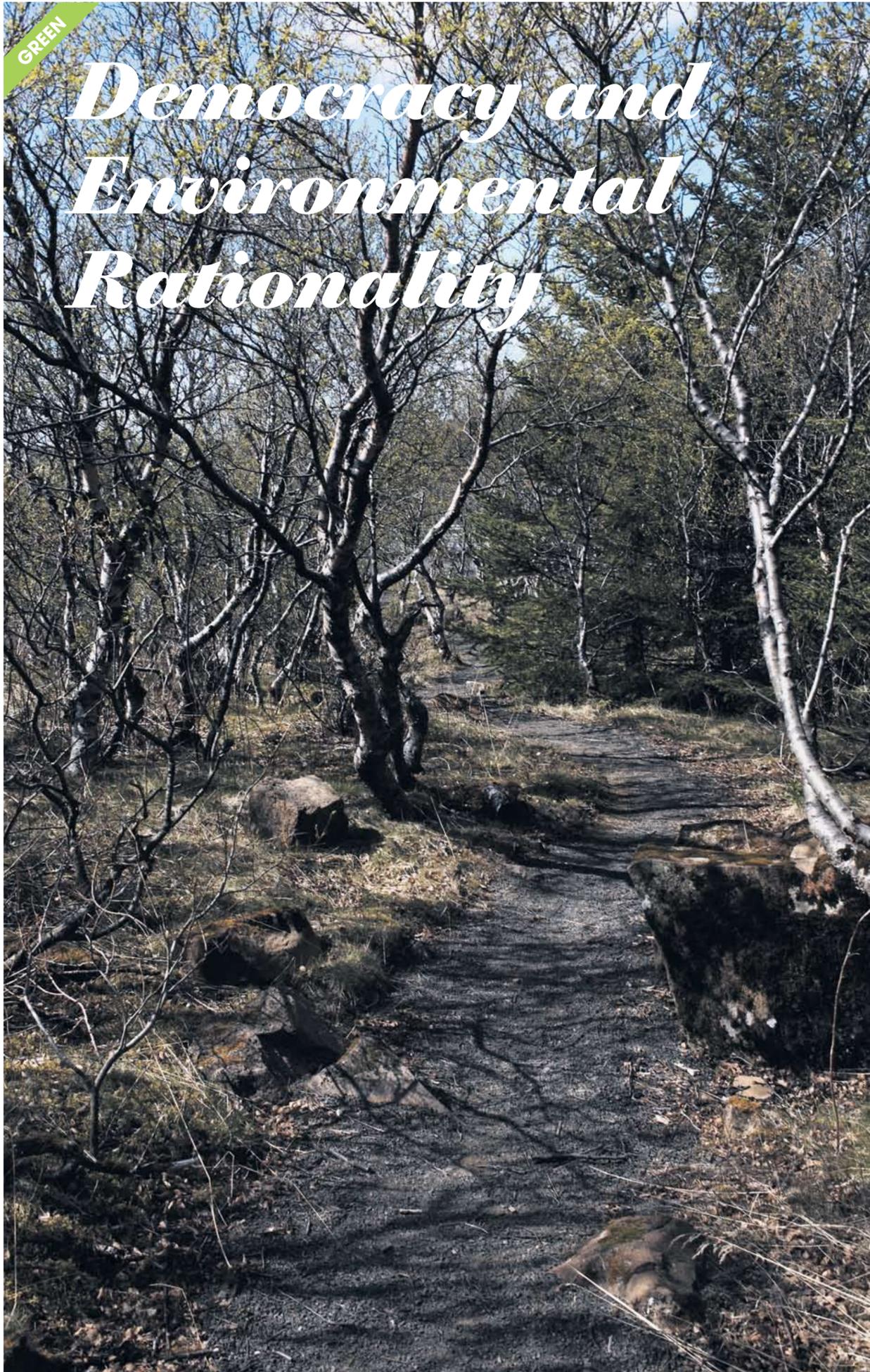
One reason to think that democracy is not likely to guarantee or encourage suitable outcomes stems from different spatial and temporal frames, namely the long range of environmental effects and the local focus of democratic decision. This is obvious if we consider issues like pollution: we drive cars, produce household waste, and eat agricultural products which are produced using artificial fertilizers. All of these activities pollute. But even if everyone agrees that these factors are partly to blame for the pollution, it is not clear what should be done. The relation between possible action and preferred consequences is rather loose and, as a consequence, it is difficult to form definite preferences and to reach a general consensus concerning environmental actions.

Democratic decisions, on the other hand, have a narrow focus. What triggers the need for a democratic decision is usually something pressing and present: lack of employment, a hope for tax reduction, a need for better roads, etc. Definite preferences are easily discernible in these cases. Furthermore, the relation between available action and possible satisfaction of preferences is relatively tight.

It is easy for people to form definite preferences concerning issues with a narrow focus. As the space of effects becomes larger and less concrete, as is often the case in environmental issues, forming preferences becomes more difficult. Moreover, environmental issues may demand a time frame extending far beyond that of democratic decision-making. A hydroelectric power project supplying energy to an aluminium smelter may require decades of research, whereas the decision to build an aluminium smelter is reached within a short time span based on market conditions and cyclical changes in the metal industry.

The clearest example of this mismatch between environmental values and narrow preferences is the struggle against climate change. By now, it has been proven even beyond a reasonable doubt that the climate is changing and that human produced greenhouse gases are to blame. Yet, we still buy big cars, drive everywhere, and generally do little to reduce our impact when such actions would require changes in our everyday life.

The opportunity to invest in forestry to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases is taken as a solution to a personal situation, even if it is obvious that the practice of growing trees is (a) not a solution to the problem and (b) is not sustainable (since suitable land is a very limited resource). What makes investment in forestry such a successful option is that it allows us to do something about the problem without affecting our ways of living. It allows us to respond to the present



GREEN

Democracy and Environmental Rationality

environmental situation, however ineffectively, without compromising our ways of living.

The conclusion is that while environmental values may be strong in theory, they turn out to be weak in practice because they interfere with other preferences which, even if superficial, are close to hand. I call this the mismatch problem.

Democracy as Aggregation of Preferences

What I have said so far does not really show that democracy undermines environmental rationality. It only shows that democracy, which focuses on peoples' preferences, tends to do so. But we should take a moment to consider what democracy is – or rather, what it should be. In his influential book *Democracy and its Critics*, the American philosopher Robert A. Dahl presents an idea of democracy that fits the common conception of the term in many ways. Dahl suggests the following four criteria for democratic procedure:

- 1) **Effective Participation:** Throughout the process of making binding decisions, citizens ought to have an adequate opportunity, and an equal opportunity, for expressing their preferences as to the final outcome. They must have adequate and equal opportunities for placing questions on the agenda and for expressing reasons for endorsing one outcome rather than another. (*Dahl, p. 109*)
- 2) **Voting Equality at the Decisive Stage:** At the decisive stage of collective decisions, each citizen must be ensured an equal opportunity to express a choice that will be counted as equal in weight to the choice expressed by any other citizen. In determining outcomes at the decisive stage, these choices, and only these choices, must be taken into account. (*Dahl, p. 109*)
- 3) **Enlightened Understanding:** Each citizen ought to have adequate and equal opportunity for discovering and validating (within the time permitted by the need for decision) the choices on the matter to be decided that would best serve the citizen's interests. (*Dahl, p. 112*)
- 4) **Control of the Agenda:** The demos [i.e. those who have the right to vote] must have the exclusive opportunity to decide how matters are to be placed on the agenda of matters that are to be decided by means of the democratic process. (*Dahl, p. 113*)

Dahl outlines a conception of democracy according to which the main function of a democratic procedure is to pool the citizens' preferences together and make binding decisions accordingly. In short, democracy is concerned with the aggregation of preferences. Dahl's criteria are meant to guarantee that the democratic procedure is free from coercion and the unjustified elimination of people's preferences, that the final decision is enlightened, and that the agenda is controlled by those affected.

Against an Aggregative Conception

The first of Dahl's four criteria for democratic procedure lists three conditions for effective participation: citizens ought to have adequate and equal opportunities (i) for expressing their preferences, (ii) for placing questions on the political agenda, and (iii) for expressing reasons for endorsing one outcome rather than another. The third condition has little force on its own. The reasons people have certain preferences do not count in the final outcome, and there is nothing in the criteria which says that a procedure would be less democratic if these reasons were ignored. This is not because the requirement as such is foreign to democratic procedure – it should be important – but because it does not fit well into the aggregative conception. Effective participation means that people's preferences get known, not their underlying reasons. The ordinary person takes part in a democratic procedure by casting her vote according to her preferences, and effective participation means that she understands what options best fit her preferences and that she casts her vote so that it gets counted.

Dahl might argue that if the citizens were not granted equal opportunity to express their reasons for endorsing a specific outcome their influence on the political agenda, or even on the final decision, might be unequal. If someone has a better opportunity to express her reasons for favouring a particular outcome, then she is in a privileged position to argue that some interests, that may be widely shared, are best served by this particular outcome. This would make her influence on the final outcome greater than the influence of others, which would violate the principle that all interests be given equal consideration.

As appealing as this argument may be, it militates against Dahl's conception of democracy rather

than supporting it. This argument undermines the idea of democratic procedure as a pooling of preferences, and supports the idea that democratic procedure is a procedure in which preferences are formed and transformed. This argument also moves the emphasis from voting to the discussion leading up to the final voting.

Political Justification

The conception of political justification that we get from the aggregative conception of democracy is too permissive; too much can legitimately be done. According to the aggregative conception, democratic procedure is primarily about voting, which yields a winner and a loser, and there is nothing within the democratic standards which prevents the winner from violating certain non-political rights, such as religious rights, of those who lose. In most democratic countries, various non-political rights are protected, but from the point of view of the aggregative conception their protection is not a matter of democracy. The protection of such rights is seen (from the aggregative point of view) as an external hindrance to authoritative action, be it an action driven by a simple majority vote or the action of an elected individual.

It is interesting to consider the relevance of future generations in this context. As a matter of fact, the preferences of future generations cannot be taken into account in the democratic process as laid out by the aggregative conception, since those preferences have not yet been formed. This fact has severe consequences when decisions about environmental issues are taken, since such decisions usually have consequences which extend far into the future. The example of Kárahnjúkavirkjun should make this clear. The dam and the damage done by the reservoir will be there for generations to come and future generations will, when time comes, have various preferences regarding the whole Kárahnjúkar project. But those preferences had no weight in the decision to go forward with this project. To account for future generations, it would of course be possible to impose certain restrictions on the democratic procedure, such as a demand for sustainability and respect for certain enumerated rights. But such restrictions would be external to the democratic procedure, i.e. they would be external hindrances to what could be subject to democratic decision and, hence, democracy and concern for future generations would be at odds.

Deliberative Democracy

Because of the above problem (and various others) philosophers have looked for a different conception of democracy, one of which is the so called deliberative democracy. Under this heading are various theories, but common to all of them is a conception of the political process as involving more than self-interested competition governed by bargaining and aggregative mechanisms (Bohman and Reg, p. xiii). A further common underlying idea is a conception of the state as a cooperative venue for the citizens to set themselves goals and to work towards them. Understanding the role of the state in this way raises questions about the legitimacy of state action in general, in particular its monopoly on the use of force. The need for democracy derives from the fact that the citizens must take collective, binding decisions concerning various issues, and such decisions will favour the preferences of some people at the expense of the preferences of others. The basic question then is: How can a state action, which goes against the preferences of some people, be seen by those very people as an action belonging to a cooperative venue to which they belong?

If a state action can only be justified on grounds which are incompatible with people's basic values and rights, such action will be deemed illegitimate irrespective of its consequences. A ban on smoking in public places justified in terms of a lesser worth of smokers would be illegitimate, whether or not such a ban would be in violation of any rights or fundamental values. The illegitimacy of such a ban derives from an unacceptable justification which depicts some people as having lesser worth than others. However, a similar ban justified in terms of health risk towards non-smokers would be legitimate. According to the aggregative conception, majority vote is usually a sufficiently good justification for action, but according to the deliberative conception, people's basic rights and fundamental values are assigned such weight that a majority vote may not suffice as a justification for action.

According to the deliberative conception of democracy, the requirement of political justification makes substantial demands concerning people's

rights and liberty and ultimately their sense of self-worth. This means that the protection of various non-political rights, such as religious rights, is inherent in the deliberative conception of democracy. It is not an external hindrance to democratic decisions as seen from the aggregative viewpoint.

Deliberative Democracy and the Mismatch Problem

The mismatch problem derives from the fact that people may have definite preferences concerning local matters, but in matters where the space of effect extends into the distance, either because it concerns remote regions or consequences that will only become relevant decades later, preference orderings becomes much trickier. This leads to the conclusion that trivial local preferences may outweigh fundamental preferences in matters that are more distant and elusive.

Solving the mismatch problem seems to require giving certain interests and preferences more weight than others by constructing barriers that are not part of democratic procedure in the aggregative sense, i.e. hindrances that constrain what issues can be put on the local political agenda, what political and social rights must be upheld, which principle to impose, etc. However, if the situation is viewed from the deliberative perspective, assigning different weight to different interests and preferences need not be foreign to a democratic procedure but may follow from the requirement that persons should be shown equal respect. In particular, showing special concern for the interests of future generations, say by imposing a requirement of sustainability, need not involve factors that lie outside the democratic procedure.

Showing people equal respect will directly involve future generations in so far as they will be affected by the decisions in question. Moreover, showing equal respect to individuals belonging to the present generation may require indirect concern for future generations, since individuals living now may derive their meaning of life from the thought that they may have children one day, and these children may, in turn, have children themselves. In the deliberative framework there are means to take such distant values into account. This is particularly relevant in the case of the environment, especially when it comes to unspoiled nature which is generally regarded as an important source of a meaning of life while being possibly, at the same time, an important provider of raw materials for industry which is driven by the immediate here and now.

The mismatch problem does not support the view that there is a fundamental conflict between democracy and environmental rationality. Why people have thought so lies partly in an unacceptable conception of democracy – the aggregative conception. Once democracy is seen as a deliberative procedure based on the assumption that the state is a cooperative venue for the pursuit of happiness, the appearance of such a conflict vanishes. And in general, the idea that democracy might undermine environmental rationality because the former is about procedures while the latter is about outcomes, is not justified since the deliberative conception of democracy makes substantial claims about outcomes.

References

James Bohman and William Rehg (eds.) *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics*, MIT Press, Cambridge Mass., 1997.
Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1989.

The author is an assistant professor of philosophy at the Iceland University of Education. He has recently published a collection of philosophical essays called: *Náttúra, vald og verðmæti* (Nature, Authority and Value) on the subject of environmental philosophy.

If a state action can only be justified on grounds which are incompatible with people's basic values and rights, such action will be deemed illegitimate irrespective of its consequences.

As cases of savage deforestation in the Amazon, Thailand and Nepal have documented, there can be no effective attempt at environmental preservation if it is not preceded by an increase in social welfare and equality.

Text by Fabrizio Frascaroli Photo by Gulli

The other day I was in Skaftafell, the most renowned National Park in Iceland. A series of didactic panels are on display in the Visitor Centre to celebrate the saga of the area. One in particular drew my attention. The National Park – it explained – was instituted in order to allow nature to grow and develop in accordance “to its own rules”. For this reason, the grazing of sheep was immediately forbidden. This brought forth as a side effect, however, an uncontrolled expansion of lupine – a non-indigenous and rather invasive species – at the expense of the local vegetation. What followed was a long-term plan – still not fully realised – to eradicate lupine. After which, nature will finally be enabled to follow its course.

Make no mistake; I thought it was a commendable effort. And yet, as I read the panel, there was something that bothered me. The whole discourse was built upon an inherent ambiguity. “Nature should be allowed to grow spontaneously, according to its own laws” was the morale of the whole story. But that same story highlights how reliant on human intervention the “spontaneity” of nature has been in Skaftafell over the years. Rather than being a pristine cradle of naturalness – as is commonly suggested – the National Park appears to be a place of cultivated naturalness. And what is that if not a contradiction in terms? Is it “natural” when it is nurtured?

I believe my uneasiness had nothing to do with the history of Skaftafell in particular. Rather, it stems from a dominant cultural model, which at a deeper analysis seems unable to capture the nuanced reality of human-environmental relations. Like a knife, Western thought has cut the conceptual bonds between man and his surroundings, creating a split between “nature” on the one hand and “culture” on the other: two separate domains, closed and neatly delimited.

And it is not difficult to notice how this distinction is reflected in other similar opposing pairs typical of a Western dualistic philosophy: culture/nature, mind/body, subject/object; they all represent the same pattern of thought, applied to different levels of analysis. And according to what story one reads, there is a different villain guilty of slicing a single reality in two and “objectifying the bodily world of nature.” In turn, it is Hebraism, Christianity, Socrates, Positivism, Al Qaida... OK, the last one was a joke. But whoever is deemed responsible, a reunification of our cosmos still appears far from being realised. Despite a massive speculative effort – especially in the last part of the 20th Century – our models of thought are still prisoners of such dualistic conceptions.

Two Conceptions of Nature

This is not the case of claiming the frequently repeated false myths that other cultures are more “natural” than ours or more able “to be one with nature”. Distinctions similar to the one between culture and nature are present among many other societies as well. But most often the dynamic and reciprocal character of that relationship is implicitly assessed, in some cases even portrayed in symbiotic terms. It is this dynamism and reciprocity that one day Western culture failed to recognise, ultimately estranging itself from what we call “nature”.

Indeed, we always conceive of nature as different, whether we approach it in terms of exploitation or with unconditional respect: never of belonging and communion. On the one hand, we have those who claim that “nature” is a world of objects and physical facts, governed by laws and regularities. Science can read it like a book; technology can manipulate it like clay. Man should tame it in order to benefit from its bounty and employ its resources. Quantification and reification are the trademarks of such a conception, which I call “utilitarian mechanism.”

On the other hand are those who see “nature” as the ultimate Otherness. Feminine and motherly, spontaneous and uncultivated; their Nature (a “nature” with a capital N) is the negative to the male and man-made world of the mind and ideas. Her sublime beauty inspires our awe and devotion. Her exploitation is comparable to rape and matricide. I call this view “romantic idealism.”

If we can agree that we have environmental problems today (and I would not express many doubts about it myself), then I believe that its profound causes have to be sought in similar conceptions and in the dualistic way of thinking that underlies them. Either they have justified illusory and fallacious policies of economic maximisation at expense of ecological awareness; or fostered an environmental counterculture that is offspring of the same mindset and as such weakened by its own premises and stereotypes.



The Nature / Culture Dual

info.

▲ Festival of Nations Installations at Nylo 90s Summer Party Students' Photography Exhibition The Icelandic Tattoo Festival Jeff Buckley Tribute Concert Art-fest DIONYSIA Morr Music Ghetto Yoga Festival of the Sea The Coolest Beer in Iceland Icelandic Contemporary Design Food Reviews Music, Art, Films and Events Listings ▾

(motion boys)

The electro-pop duo hits the music scene with a bang.





Hafnarfjörður – June 2

Festival of Nations in Hafnarfjörður

Iceland's multicultural society will be on show again at this year's Festival of Nations in Hafnarfjörður on June 2. The festival, which is in its second year, is organised by The Intercultural Centre and members of the immigrant community and aims to present the culture and traditions of the forty countries that will be represented. The festival will be held at the Sports Centre on Strandgata in Hafnarfjörður from 12:00-18:00 and will consist of booths offering national dishes and displaying traditional costumes, as well as books, brochures and audio and visual presentations. Traditional songs and dances will be performed on stage and food from the participating countries will be judged by master chef and TV

personality Soggi Hall.

Organiser Kolfinna Baldvinsdóttir says the idea behind the festival was to give Icelanders and immigrants an opportunity to interact and a chance for immigrants to introduce the countries they come from. "The dialogue on immigration lately has been quite negative, so the greater purpose is to lead Icelanders, to introduce them to the wonderful multicultural society we live in," Baldvinsdóttir said of the festival which attracted over 10,000 visitors last year. "Foreigners in Iceland are increasing. There are only 20-30,000 foreigners but 132 nationalities – it's like [Iceland is] a world of its own," she added.

Following the festival, the second

annual Cantare multi-lingual song contest will take place at the Hafnarfjörður Theatre located behind the Viking Village on Strandgata. Participants will perform songs in different languages. A last minute change to last year's rules means that entrants can now sing in their mother tongue – but still not in English. Páll Oskar will judge the contest and Bryndis Schram will take part in the event which starts at 20:00. **ZR**

Both events are part of the *Bright Days arts and cultural festival in Hafnarfjörður which runs from May 32 – June 10 and admission is free. For more information see www.ahus.is*

Nylo – May 26 - July 8

Bread and Animals at Nylo

Artist Anna Sigmond Guðmundsdóttir opened her exhibition inside the living art museum Nylo on May 26. Anna, who lives in Norway, is half-Icelandic but this is her first exhibition here. Her installations are internationally renowned. For example, she participated in the Manifesta 4 project which took place in Frankfurt in 2002.

Entitled Bread and Animals, Anna's installation inside Nylo's spacious and raw exhibition space is sort of like a giant painting, covering the walls and floors of the mu-

seum. Visitors can view drawings taken from newspapers and encyclopaedias, cuttings from children's books and comic books as well as words and sentences sprayed all over the space in the form of graffiti. This mix creates a large picture that the viewer virtually walks into and from there can try to understand, or misunderstand, all the small pieces in the large puzzle.

The exhibition is open until July 8. Nylo, Laugavegur 26, 101 Reykjavík, www.nylo.is



NASA – June 1

90s Summer Party at NASA

DJ Kiki-Ow and Curver bring you their favourite 90s music for a sweaty party at NASA on June 1. Expect to hear Mr. Boombastic, Groove is in the Heart, Pump up the Jam, Everybody Dance Now as well as a bunch of danceable hit singles. A special guest of the night is DJ Wayne Paul from the UK who will play some old-school 90s rave by the end of the night.

The two past 90s parties at NASA were sold-out hits, so if you're into the whole combo of hiphop/pop/eurodance mix, neon

coloured jackets, smoke machines and a frisky crowd cheering to Ski-Bi dibby dib you da dub dub and dancing the Macarena, you better get a ticket as soon as possible.

The party starts at midnight and tickets are for sale at nasa.is and the second hand shop Spútnik on Laugavegur where buyers will get a 20% discount on 90s clothes to dress up for the party. Don't forget your glowsticks!

NASA, Thorvaldsenstræti 2, 101 Reykjavík, www.nasa.is

Sissa School of Photography – May 26 - June 3

Students' Photography Exhibition

After learning an impressive variety of photographic techniques and styles, the 16 graduating students from the one-year photography school Sissa are exhibiting their finals projects. As an accumulation of their education at the artistically ambitious and rigorous school, the students were given a month and a half to compose and present a themed series of photographs in the style of their choice. Final projects range from the usual landscape studies, fashion photography and portraits, to poignant compositions of an anorexic woman

with her diary entries written onto the photographs. One student has chosen to exhibit his photo essay of a 10-year-old cancer patient undergoing chemotherapy. Sissa claims that though they were not required to present a large portfolio, many students were very active this year and chose to show as many as 20 photographs. The exhibition will be open every day from 14:00-19:00.

Sissa School of Photography, Hólmaslóð 6, 107 Reykjavík.



Grand Rokk – June 8 - 10

The Icelandic Tattoo Festival

The now annual Icelandic Tattoo Festival will be held for the second time during the weekend June 8 to 10. This time, the festival will take place at Grand Rokk and features international award-winning tattoo-artists Santana, JJ & GP, Jason June & Cheryl "The Devil", Cline & Jason Thompson, Bosco, Erin Lambert and Crowbar. The local contribution includes Fjólnir, Jón Páll, Búri, Sverrir, Jón Þór and Vincent.

Everyone can stop by and see some

of the best artists in action and perhaps decorate your body in the meantime.

During the same weekend, rock-pub Bar 11, (which is organising the event) presents a packed rock'n'roll programme. Friday will see Weapons and Átómstöðin in concert and on Saturday, Wolfgang and Vicky Pollard will play to the tattooed crowd.

Grand Rokk, Smiðjustigur 6, www.myspace.com/icelandictattooofestival



Austurbær - June 13

Jeff Buckley Tribute Concert

In tribute of the 10 years since Jeff Buckley's passing, Manz productions and several members of the Reykjavik music scene will be holding an hour-and-a-half long event at the Austurbær Theater. On May 29, 1997, Buckley drowned in the wake of a passing tugboat while he was swimming in a tributary of the Mississippi river. Since his death, hundreds of tribute bands have been assembled worldwide, including one 5 years ago in Reykjavik. Apparently, the event was so popular that Manz decided they would do it again this year in collaboration with several tribute events in major cities like Dublin, London and New York. Unfortunately, the original May 29 event was cancelled due to one

guest singer's strained voice and another singer's developing throat infection. Those who purchased tickets were contacted and the event was rescheduled for Wednesday, June 13.

The tribute band includes musicians from local bands such as Dr. Spock, Ensimi and Ampop. The band itself is around 11 people, with two main singers and four guest singers. According to Franz Gunnarsson, who is putting on the event, the Reykjavik tribute has the blessing of Buckley's mother, who he met while working at the South by Southwest (SXSW) festival in Austin, Texas. The event also has the seal of approval from Fun Palace, a company out of New York that handles all of

the merchandise for Jeff Buckley. Gunnarsson expects an attendance of 250-300 people, undoubtedly indicating the continuity popularity of Jeff Buckley's music in Iceland (Buckley's Icelandic album sales are somewhere around 3,000, a high number for the nation). **CF**

For more information, visit the Manz website at www.myspace.com/manzproduction. Tickets can be purchased at the box office at the Austurbær Theatre, and on the web at www.midi.is. Austurbær Theatre, Snorrabraut 37.

TICKETS AT **midi.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

Austurbær
Snorrabraut 37
Wed 13.06 Jeff Buckley tribute concerts
Bar 11
Laugavegur 11
A popular hangout spot for Reykjavik's rockers and their young idolaters with DJs playing classic rock'n'roll hits.
Fri 01.06 DJ Gulli
Sat 02.06 DJ Óli Dóri
Fri 08.06 Weapons and Átómstöðin in concert followed by DJ Óli Dóri
Sat 09.06 Wulfgang and Vicky Pollard followed by DJ Gulli
Fri 15.06 DJ Palli
Sat 16.06 DJ Gulli
Barinn
Laugavegur 22
Vibrant late-night party place and a nice roomy bistro during the day.
Fri 01.06 Kalli and Gunn Ewok / DJ Ladycats
Sat 02.06 DJ Kári / DJ Peter Parker
Tue 05.06 DJ's Steinunn and Silja
Wed 06.06 Soft Rock Party: Bobby Smooth and Kokomo
Thu 07.06 Breakbeat Night
Fri 08.06 DJ Skeletor / tweek
Sat 09.06 DJ Barcode / DJ Ennir
Tue 12.06 DJ Muffins
Wed 13.06 DJ Byzby / African music from 22:00
Thu 14.06 Steed Lord presents: Shake

Yo Booty # 1
Fri 15.06 Benni B-Ruff / DJ's Steinunn and Silja
Sat 16.06 DJ Yamahō / DJ Ladycats
Café Cultura
Hverfisgata 18
Music from the world's four corners
Fri 01.06 DJ Böddi
Sat 02.06 DJ Ennir
Thu 07.06 DJ Böddi
Fri 08.06 DJ Örn plays disco
Fri 15.06 DJ Ennir
Sat 16.06 DJ Böddi
Café Hljómalið
Laugavegur 21
Sat 02.06 Ræbbblarock: Bike auction, vegan food and concerts featuring Gavin Portland, Deathmetal Supersquad, The Best Hardcore Band in the World and Brat Pack. Starts at 19:00 and costs 500 ISK.
Thu 14.06 Dutch troubadour Jessica
Fri 15.06 Snobb fyrir alla concert series: Dean Ferrell + friends.
Café Paris
Austurstræti 14
Fri 01.06 DJ Lucky plays soul, funk, reggae and hip-hop
Sat 02.06 DJ Börkur plays soul, funk, reggae and hip-hop
Fri 08.06 DJ Lucky plays soul, funk, reggae and hip-hop
Sat 09.06 DJ Börkur plays soul, funk, reggae and hip-hop
Fri 15.06 DJ Lucky plays soul, funk, reggae and hip-hop
Sat 16.06 DJ Börkur plays soul, funk, reggae and hip-hop
Dillon

Laugavegur 30
Legendary rock pub featuring live concerts every Wednesday night and rock DJs every weekend.
Sat 02.06 Grasrætur + DJ Andrea Jóns
Mon 04.06 Átómstöðin, Peer and Norwegian heavymetal band Quiritatio in concert
Domo
Hvolsstræti 5
Thu 07.06 Bláir Skuggar - Sigurður Flosason quartet in concert
Thu 14.06 BonSon in concert
Grand Rokk
Smiðjustigur 6
Fri 08.06 Icelandic Tattoo Festival
Sat 09.06 Icelandic Tattoo Festival
Sun 10.06 Icelandic Tattoo Festival
Gljúfrasteinn / Halldór Laxness museum
270 Mosfellsbær
Sun 03.06 Tómas R. Einarsson Latino-trio
Sun 10.06 Singstress Signý Sæmundsdóttir and pianist Þóra Friða Sæmundsdóttir
Háskólabíó
At Hagatorg
Sat 02.06 The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Family concerts
Thu 07.06 The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Carmen, short version
Hafnarfjörður Old Library Strandgata 6
Sat 02.06 Bright Days Opening Event: Art exhibition followed by concerts with Grasrætur, <3 Svanhvít!, Rökkurró and Arnljótur + friends. Starts at 17:00
Tue 05.06 Norwegian heavymetal band Quiritatio in concert. Opening acts: For-

eign Monkeys, Vicky Pollard and Peer
Hellirinn
Hólmaslóð 2
Fri 01.06 Norwegian heavymetal band Quiritatio in concert accompanied by Myra, Ask the Slave and Peer
Hressó
Austurstræti 20
Here, troubadours play sing-alongs until midnight, followed by DJs playing whatever the crowd is aching for at the time.
Fri 01.06 Tryggi Vilmar followed by DJ Andri Ramirez
Sat 02.06 Pub-lic in concerts followed by DJ Maggi
Thu 07.06 Pub-lic in concert
Fri 08.06 Flat five followed by DJ Maggi
Sat 09.06 Gotti and Eisi followed by DJ Maggi
Thu 14.06 Garðar trubadour
Fri 15.06 DJ Maggi
Sat 16.06 Flat five followed by DJ Bjarni
Iðnó
Vonarstræti 2
Tue 05.06 Morr Music Night: Benni Hemm Hemm, Seabear, Tarwater, Isan and The Go Find
Kaffibarinn
Bergstaðastræti 1
With a mixture of techno, reggae, hip-hop and classic dance hits, the DJs are usually capable of crowding this frisky bar every single night of the week.
Sat 02.06 DJ Maggi Legó
Fri 08.06 DJ CasaNova
Fri 15.06 DJ Jack Schidt
Laugardalshöllin
Engjavegur 8

Fri 01.06 Beatles tribute show: The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra together with Jón Ólafsson rockband and a group of singers, including Egill Ólafsson, Stefán Hilmarsson, Björgvin Halldórsson, Páll Rósinkranz, Sigurjón Brink and KK will perform the masterpiece Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band
Nasa
Thorvaldsenstræti 2
Fri 01.06 90s party with DJ Kiki-Ow and Curver
Sat 09.06 S.S.Sól in concert
Sat 16.06 Flex Music party: Desyn Masiello
National Theatre Basement
Hverfisgata 19
Fri 01.06 Concerts organized by the theatre group Hugleikur, featuring songs from their past shows. Starts at 22:30.
Prikið
Bankastræti 12
Fri 01.06 House DJ
Sat 02.06 Ladycats
Thu 07.06 House DJ
Fri 08.06 DJ Kári
Sat 09.06 Gulli Ósóma
Q-bar
Ingólfsstræti 3
Stylish and vibrant gay / straight-friendly bar and party venue. Cosy on weekdays and full of surprises on weekends.
Fri 01.06 DJ Dive de la Rosa
Sat 02.06 Q-Bar's first annual Speedo Night featuring Groovebox DJ set
Wed 06.06 DJ Baldur
Thu 07.06 DJ Anna Brá
Fri 08.06 DJ Maggi Legó
Sat 09.06 DJ Yamahō

Wed 13.06 DJ Manny
Thu 14.06 DJ Bjartur
Fri 15.06 DJ B-Ruff
Sat 16.06 Beauty and the Beast
Sirkus
Klapparstigur 30
Playing reggae, country and occasionally hosting live gigs on weekdays, Sirkus's veteran DJs keep the party going till late on weekends.
Fri 01.06 The first Sirkus Garden Summerparty featuring the opening of the outdoor flea market and concerts.
Museums & Galleries
101 Gallery
Hverfisgata 18
Thu.-Sat. 14-17 and by appointment www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery/
Anima Gallery
Ingólfsstræti 8 / Lækjargata 2
Tue.-Sat. 13-17
www.animagalleri.is
Current exhibition:
The Last Spring
Harpa Arnadóttir exhibition at Ingólfsstræti 8
Artótek
Tryggvagata 15
Mon. 10-21, Tue.-Thu. 10-19, Fri. 11-19, Sat. and Sun. 13-17
www.sim.is/index/slenska/Artotek
ASÍ Art Museum
Freyjugata 41
Tue.-Sun. 13-17
Free Entrance
Current exhibitions:
Of this World
Photographs by Katrín Elvarsdóttir

Stabs
Installations by Hye Joung
Auga fyrir Auga
Hverfisgata 35
Open Thu.-Fri. 15-19, Sat.-Sun. 14-17
The Einar Jónsson Museum
Eiríksgrata
Tue.-Sun. 14-17
www.skulptur.is
Permanent exhibition:
The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson
The Culture House
Hverfisgata 15
Open daily 11-17
www.thjodmenning.is
Permanent exhibitions:
Medieval Manuscripts; The National Museum – as it was; The Library Room; The Road to Zion; Berlin Excursion
Current exhibition:
Surtsey - Genesis
The exhibition traces the emergence and evolution of the island Turgey until the present day and predicts its geographical and ecological development over the next 120 years.
Dwarf Gallery
Grundartigur 21
Opening Hours: Fri. and Sat. 18-20
www.this.is/birta
Gallery 100 Degrees
Bæjarháls 1
Mon.-Fri. 8:30-16
www.oris.forsida/Gallery100
May 13 – Jun 29
Free Entrance
Finnbogi Pétursson exhibition
Gallery Fold
Rauðarárstigur 14-16

Mon.-Fri. 10-18
Sat. 11-16
Sun. 14-16
www.myndlist.is
Sells a large selection of Icelandic and international art and hosts exhibitions on a regular basis.
Gallery Sævar Karl
Bankastræti 7
Mon.-Fri. 10-18
Sat. 10-16
www.saevarkarli.is/
Gallery Turpentine
Ingólfsstræti 5
Tue.-Fri. 12-18
Sat. 11-16
www.turpentine.is
Current exhibition:
Halla Gunnarsdóttir exhibition
Gel Galleri
Hverfisgata 37
Mon.-Fri. 10-19
Sat. 10-17
Gerúberg Cultural Centre
Gerúberg 3-5
Mon.-Thu. 11-17
Wed. 11-21
Thu.-Fri. 11-17
Sat.-Sun. 13-16
www.gerudberg.is
May 5 – Sep 9
Paintings by Ágúst Jónsson
May 12 – Sep 9
Kvenfólk / Women
Erró exhibition
Ið Gallery
Klapparstigur 33
Tue.-Fri. 11-17
Sat. and by appointment 13-17

www.i8.is
May 12 – Jun 23
Spencer Tunick photographic exhibition
Kling & Bang Gallery
Laugavegur 23
Thu.-Sun. 14-18
Free Entrance
www.this.is/klingandbang
Living Art Museum
Laugavegur 26
Wed., Fri.-Sun. 13-17
Thu. 13-22
www.nylo.is/
May 26 – Jul 8
Bread and Animals
Installation by Anna Sigmond Guðmundsdóttir
The National Gallery of Iceland
Frikirkjuvegur
Tue.-Sun. 11-17
Free Entrance
listasafn.is
May 10 – July 8
Cobra Reykjavík
A retrospective presenting the international abstract artist group Cobra
The National Museum
Suburgata 41
Open daily 10-17
natmus.is/
Permanent exhibition:
The Making of a Nation
May 5 – Aug 24
As seen by the visitor
Hans Viingard Friis photo exhibition
May 5 – Aug 24
Gallery to the countryside
Photo exhibition

May 19 – Sep 30
The Road Between
Andrá exhibition: Installations by Guðbjörg Lind Jónsdóttir, Guðrún Kristjánsdóttir and Kristín Jónsdóttir.
The Nordic House
Sturlugata 5
Tue.-Sun. 12-17
www.nordic.is/
Perlan
At Óskjuhlíð
105 Reykjavík
www.perlan.is
Current exhibition:
Monumental Niceness
Sound installation by Margit Sæde
Reykjavík 871 +/- -2
Aðalstræti 16
Open daily 10-17
Permanent exhibition:
The Settlement Exhibition
Reykjavik Art Museum
– Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum
Sigtún
Open daily 10-16
Admission ticket is valid for three days in all three museums.
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.

Reykjavik Art Museum – Hafnarhús
Tryggvagata 17
Open daily 10-17
May 11 – Aug 19

My Oz
Roni Horn retrospective
May 10 – Jun 17
Works by Sigurður Guðjónsson at the D Gallery. The exhibition will include a new film and sound installation.

May 10 – Aug 17
The Erró Collection
Works from the museum's Erró collection: A further examination of the diverse subjects and stages of Erró's artistic oeuvre.

Reykjavik Art Museum – Kjarvalsstaðir
Flökagata
Open Daily 10-17
Feb 10 – Sep 2

K-Pátturinn / The K-Factor
Jóhannes S. Kjarval retrospective.
May 19 – Aug 26
Kvíka / Magna
Icelandic contemporary design
May 19 – Aug 26

The Spark – Design for Everyone
Design exhibition, with special educational programming
Reykjavik Museum
Kistuhylur 4

Open daily from 10-17
www.arbaejaarsafn.is
Permanent exhibition:
Objects from Reykjavik cultural history.

The Reykjavik Museum of Photography
Grófarhús, Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor
Weekdays 12-19
Sat.-Sun. 13-17

Free Entrance
www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is
May 15 – Jul 4
The Resistance Collection
Unnar Örn exhibition

Safn
Laugavegur 37
Wed.-Fri. 14-18, Sat.-Sun. 14-17
Free Entrance
www.safn.is

May 19 – Oct 20
Museum of the Surface / Desire Archive / Decay Complex
Unnar Örn J. Auðarson exhibition
May 19 – Jul 1

Quadro Pop
Davíð Örn Halldórsson exhibition
Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum
Laugarnestangi 70
Open Tue.-Sun. 14-17

Permanent exhibition: The work of sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson
Start Art / Art Shop
Laugavegur 12b
www.startart.is

Current exhibition:
MINI VOTT

Installations by Anna Eyjófsdóttir, Ragnhildur Stefánsdóttir, Rúri and Þóris Alda Sigurðardóttir.

Outside Reykjavik
Skaffell
Austurvegur 42, Seyðisfjörður
www.skaffell.is

May 19 – Jun 23
An exhibition by the artists Finnur Arnar, Jón Garðar Henryson and Þóririnn Blöndal consisting of installations, 3D and photographs. On the same occasion, the first exhibition of the summer on the West-wall opens showing the collaboration of the Evil-Madness duet, Helgi Þórrson and Sigtryggur Berg Sigmarrson.

Gallery Klettur
Helliuhraun 16, Hafnarfjörður
Open Sat. 10-14. At other times by arrangement.

Hafnarborg
Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður
Mon.-Sun. 11-17
www.hafnarborg.is

May 11 – Jun 24
Paintings by Temma Bell
May 11 – Jun 24
Paintings by Louisa Matthíasdóttir and Leland Bell

May 11 – Jun 24
Installations by Ruth Boerefijn
Gljúfrasteinn / Halldór Laxness museum
270 Mosfellsbær

Open daily except Mondays from 10-17.
Kópavogur Art Museum – Gerðarsafn
Hamraborg, Kópavogur

Open daily 11:00-17:00 except Mondays
www.gerdarsafn.is
Current exhibition:
Stoned glass by Gerður Helgadóttir, drawings by Barbara Árnadóttir and Magnús Á. Árnason

May 2 – Jun 24
The Provincialists
Paintings, video-works and installations and by Nordic artists Ane LAn, Asti Lühn, Madeleine Park and Þóris Alda Sigurðardóttir

The Icelandic Museum of Design and Applied Art
Lýngás 7-9, 121 Garðabær
Opening hours: Tues. –Fri. 14-18; Sat. and Sun. 16-18.
www.mudesa.org

Exhibitions devoted to Icelandic design.
The Icelandic Settlement Centre
Brákarbraut 13-15, Borgarnes
Opening hours: May to September 10-20; September to May 11-17.
www.landnam.is

Permanent exhibitions: The Settlement of Iceland; The Saga of Egill Skallagrímsson
Suðurovestur
Hafnargata 22, Keflavík
Thu.-Fri. 16-18

Around Iceland – June 9 - June 19

Art-fest DIONYSIA

From June 9 to June 19, Iceland's countryside will turn into a grand art-fest when a group of young artists from the Icelandic Academy of the Arts together with some friends will hit the road and drive crisscross the country and arrive in small towns and villages for the purpose of organising various arty happenings. Scheduled sites include Bolungavik, Borgarfjörður eystri, Djúpvavik, Grundarfjörður, Hafnir, Hofsó, Siglufjörður and Stoðvarfjörður.

Sat.-Sun. 14-17
www.sidsudvestur.is
May 26 – Jun 17
Birgir Snaebjörn and J.B.K. Ransu exhibition

Vatnasafn / Library of Water
Bókhöfundstigur 17, 340 Stykkishólmur
www.libraryofwater.is
Open daily from 11 – 17.

Permanent exhibition:
Roni Horn installation. She has replaced stacks of books with glass columns containing water gathered from Iceland's glaciers and glacial rivers.

Sandgerði Museum
Gerðavegur 1, Sandgerði.
Until February 7, 2008
Polar Adventures
Exhibition on the life and work of the French polar explorer, scientist and doctor Jean-Baptiste Charcot.

Jónas Viðar Gallery
Kaupvangsstræti 12, Akureyri
Fri.-Sat. 13-18
www.jvs.is/vjg.gallery.htm

Jun 2 – Jun 24
Paintings by Tólli
Akureyri Art Museum
Kaupvangsstræti 12, Akureyri
Tue.-Sun. 12-17
www.listsafn.akureyri.is

May 5 – Jun 24
Rhythms of Life
Sculptures by Australian artist Andrew Rogers

DaLi Gallery
Brekkuvegur 9, Akureyri
Mon.-Sat. 14-18
www.daligallery.blogspot.com

Current exhibition:
Paintings by Sigurlin M. Grétarsdóttir
GalleriBOX
Kaupvangsstræti 10, Akureyri
www.galleribox.blogspot.com

Current exhibition:
Þórunn Eymundardóttir exhibition

Gljúfrasteinn Laxness Museum
www.gljufnasteinur.is

Films
Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End
Smárabíó, Laugarásbíó, Selfossbíó

Fracture
Smárabíó, Borgarbíó Akureyri, Háskólabíó

It's a Boy Girl Thing
Smárabíó, Regnboginn, Borgarbíó Akureyri

Spiderman 3
Smárabíó, Laugarásbíó, Regnboginn, Borgarbíó Akureyri, Háskólabíó

28 Weeks Later
Regnboginn, Borgarbíó Akureyri, Háskólabíó

Unknown
Painted Veil
Regnboginn

Severance
Laugarásbíó

The Lives of Others
Háskólabíó

The Reaping
Sambíóin Álfabakka

Delta Farce June 1
The Invisible June 1
The Hoax June 8
Ocean's Thirteen June 8
The Last Mimzy June 8
Code Name: The Cleaner June 15
Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer June 15
La Vie en Rose June 15

Movie Theatres
Regnboginn, Hverfisgata 54
101 Reykjavik, Tel. 551-9000

Háskólabíó, Hagatorg
107 Reykjavik, Tel. 525-5400

Laugarásbíó, Laugarás
104 Reykjavik, Tel. 565-0118

Smárabíó, Smáralind
201 Kópavogur, Tel. 564-0000

Sambíóin, Álfabakki 8
109 Reykjavik, Tel. 575-8900

Sambíóin, Kringlan 4-12
103 Reykjavik, Tel. 575-8900

Sambíóin Akureyri, Ráðhústorg
600 Akureyri, Tel. 461-4666

Nýja-Bíó, Hafnargata 33
230 Reykjanesbær, Tel. 421-1170

Selfossbíó, Eyrarvegur 2
800 Selfoss, Tel. 482-3007

Events
Festival of Nations
02.06 The annual multicultural fiesta the Festival of Nations, organized by the Intercultural Centre, will take place in Hafnafjörður Sport Centre on June 2 from 12-18. As part of the festival, a multi-lingual singing contest Cantare will be held at the Hafnafjörður Theatre that same day.

Festival of the Sea
02.06 and 03.06 The annual Festival of the Sea takes place down at the Reykjavik harbour this weekend, featuring all sorts of fun events and activities for adults and children alike.

Kant's Moral Philosophy
04.06 The American philosopher Robert Paul Wolff will give a lecture on Kant's moral philosophy in room 225 at the University of Iceland. Entitled The Completion of Kant's Moral Theory in the Tenets of the Rechtslehre, the lecture is open to all free of charge. Starts at 17:00. The University of Iceland, Sæmundargata 6

Women's Bingo Night
07.06 Every Thursday night at the Intercultural Centre will be dedicated to women playing bingo. Starts at 20:00 and each game costs 100 ISK. Coffee, cakes and great prizes. The Intercultural Centre, Hverfisgata 18, www.ahus.is

Exchange Market at the Intercultural Centre
08.06 Friday night is an open house at the Intercultural Centre where everyone can bring things they no longer use and need to get rid of to exchange with items from other guests. You might find some cool antique stuff! Starts at 20:00. The Intercultural Centre, Hverfisgata 18, www.ahus.is

For more info see <http://www.myspace.com/dionysia2007> or this.is/dionysia

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	Sundays: • Roast pork • Lamb cutlets

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Morr Music: One Big Happy Family

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir Photo of Seabear by Sindri

The Berlin based independent music label, Morr Music, known for its quality electronic and dreamy indiepop releases is highly influential in the international music world. Having previously released artists such as The Notwist, Lali Puna, Styrofoam, B. Fleischmann, Phonem, Ms. John Soda; they have now turned their attention to Icelandic bands Benni Hemm Hemm and Seabear.

The man behind the label is Thomas Morr, a Hamelin native who in his late twenties resettled in Berlin to realise a long awaited dream and established his own record label. In 1999 the first Morr album was released, Poploops For Breakfast by Austrian electro musician B. Fleischmann. Today the label boasts 75 releases from at least 24 artists plus some 25 more releases on their sister labels Shake and Anost.

When looking for new artists and musical talents, Thomas Morr says that for the most part he's searching for something he likes and doesn't want to be caught up in following trends: "I guess I know very well who I do not need and that's a good point to start" he explains.

Asked how he would characterize the Morr artists, Thomas says that the label has been changing ever since the beginning, so the artists that they have added to their roster differ as well: "Just as the person behind the music, you're working in your microcosms and even all small changes seem to be relevant. I guess we never made a secret about where we come from and I guess some common roots won't harm. Usually I need to feel that, beside all the

problems that are in front of us, the artists are going to be partners who are willing to work through that challenge too. As that's what it is these days when you run a label, you don't have all the answers in place anymore and you have to question everything permanently. Some deep certainty about people helps a lot."

Striking Artwork

I ask Morr whether he expected this kind of success when he founded the label:

"When we started we had tried to create some kind of a label profile which was immediately communicated via artwork and a specific electronic sound. We were lucky that the genre names electronica and indietronic did not exist by that time. When these names became common, quite some people said that the label genre was defining and the label name was easily promoted alongside that genre. I think we've benefited from the timing. [...] When I started I was lucky to work with artists that had found their own sound already. Just think about B. Fleischmann, Lali Puna and Isan. But when looking back it's been hard work and the success could not have been expected."

Today, you must have a stack of demos from artists eager to grab your attention. Do you have time to listen to them all?

"I do, sometimes just not more than 10 seconds, but as I've said, I know what I do not need."

The Morr artwork is an important part of the label and has made its album releases easily recognizable in the record shops. Designer Jan

Kruse has managed to create a unique look that stands out and sort of defines the label. Was this the intention from the beginning and how important is it to you to have such a strong look for the label?

"Musically I felt mostly inspired by Wurlitzer Jukebox in the beginning. I liked the idea of "somehow" doing a 7" label in an album format, where this whole genre was already existing for some years. [...] Within a couple of months I realised that it's more challenging to work with artists on a regular basis and the concept was adjusted with the second B. Fleischmann release. Our artwork's aesthetics remained the same and labels such as 4AD, Touch and Mego, influenced us. Jan and I liked the idea of having a strong visual identity that was changed very often over the past year. Jan just lectured about that at the typo fair in Berlin. Honestly I think that some of the artists might underestimate how many records have been sold because Jan did the cover. We even usually get negative feedback from our distributors whenever he doesn't. Hopefully he's not taking over the label," Morr adds.

Morr Label Nights in Iceland

Morr Music has been connected with the Icelandic music scene for quite some time. The label re-released múm's album Yesterday Was Dramatic, Today is OK in 2005 after the album had been unavailable for far too many years. Since then, the label has signed two Icelandic bands, first Benni Hemm Hemm and most recently the group Seabear which released its debut, The

"Honestly I think that some of the artists might underestimate how many records have been sold because Jan did the cover. We even usually get negative feedback from our distributors whenever he doesn't."

Ghost That Carried Us Away, at Morr Music. Thomas explains that the friendship between Morr and Iceland began immediately after he had listened to the aforementioned first múm album, after which he contacted the group and praised their music.

"They moved to Berlin and we met on a regular basis and I just liked them even more. That's the short version. Orvar introduced me to Benni Hemm Hemm and Borko and Seabear I 'discovered' via a mutual French and very nice friend," he adds.

I ask what it was that fascinated him about these musicians:

"Of course I like their music as to me there's some originality in it. I also seem to like the people involved," he says.

Thomas and his Morr friends are planning two concerts in Iceland this coming week, one at Græni Hatturinn in Akureyri on June 1 and one taking place at Iðnó Theatre in Reykjavik on June 5. The two shows in Iceland are though far from being the first Morr Music Night organized by the label and the bands signed often tour together.

"We try to make it as comfortable as possible and I definitely prefer to work with nice people that are not on ego trips. I think it's important to keep an eye on that factor, as a label is after all a fragile structure with interests that needs to be balanced, like a city football team," Thomas adds.

The concerts are supposed to give the audience a good overview as to where the label stands today, but the show features local acts Benni Hemm Hemm and Seabear as well as Berlin based electro post-rock duo Tarwater, Belgian dance-pop group The Go Find and the electro duo Isan from the UK. Thomas Morr along with DJ Apfelblut will keep the crowd entertained between sets.

It's worth mentioning that a limited addition CD, Music for Hairy Scary Monsters, was released as part of the event and features 10 tracks by the artists performing so concert goers can warm up for the grand scale event. The CD is available at the 12 Tónar record shop.

Tickets for the show at the Akureyri International Music Festival are available at www.midi.is. Tickets for the concerts at Iðnó are sold at the 12 Tónar record shop on Skólavörðustígur 15.



Ghetto Yoga

Text by Zoë Robert Photo by Gulli

A new yoga class has recently started in downtown Reykjavik and the best thing is that it doesn't cost you your month's salary. GhettoYoga founder and instructor Bergsteinn Jónsson takes pride in not charging for his classes.

"It's part of growing as a person," Jónsson said. "I never wanted to make a career out of it. I just wanted to do it for me," he added.

According to Jónsson, the story behind starting Ghetto Yoga is neither interesting nor romantic. "My wife's friend is a dentist and she wanted to enlarge her practice and had some free space," he explained.

Jónsson emphasises that his classes are available to everyone. "The ideological message is to personally illustrate that you can be an accountant and a yogi – that anyone can lead a yogic lifestyle," said Jónsson, whose day job sees him working at the UNICEF office in Reykjavik.

Yoga has taken the world by storm in recent years. Made fashionable by stars such as Sting and Madonna, yoga classes are today offered at most gyms around the world.

Jónsson says that Ghetto Yoga's no-charge policy is not the only way in which his classes differ from others. The name Ghetto Yoga illustrates his philosophy.

"It's a grassroots kind of thing [...] the name comes from the fact that the classes are held in Hlemmur, being the ghetto of Reykjavik, and also that yoga should be as fitting in a ghetto as in the high street," he explained.

"Sometimes places that teach yoga are too sanctimonious about it," he added.

Jónsson, who has been teaching yoga for around six years and practicing for 13 years, teaches Hatha Yoga for beginners and says the poses taught are specifically aimed at preparing the mind and body for "potent, tantric style meditation."

The word Hatha derives from the Sanskrit words Ha and Tha meaning sun and moon and follows the same concept as yin-yang, balancing mind and body through physical poses, controlled breathing, and the calming of the mind through relaxation in pursuit of enlightenment. Hatha Yoga differs from other forms of yoga in that it focuses on simple poses that flow from one to the other at a comfortable pace as opposed to being geared towards strength and stamina.

The creation of yoga can be traced back as far as 5000 years ago in India. Today yoga is practiced as much for its physical benefits as for its original purpose of achieving inner peace.

Ghetto Yoga classes have been attracting a steady attendance but anyone interested in joining can simply turn up to one of the scheduled times. The classes are open to everyone – including children.

Hverfisgata 105, 2H Hlemmur, 101 Reykjavik. Wednesday 18:00, Saturday 13:00

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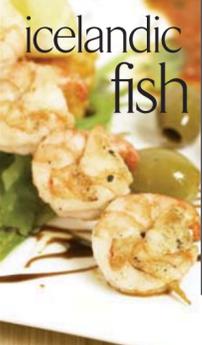
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1 EATING
Vor
Laugavegur 24

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.

2 Hornið
Hafnarstræti 15

The casual family-friendly Italian-style corner restaurant has operated at the same spot since 1979 when it became a loyal member of the Icelandic dining-out tradition. Most famous for its pizzas and the generously stuffed calzone, the wholesome menu prides itself on all sorts of high-standard pasta dishes, vegetarian and meat courses, all very affordable.

3 Argentina Steakhouse
Barónsstígur 11

True to its name, restaurant Argentina specialises in Argentinian 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 help make it a recommended place for fine dining.

4 Icelandic Fish Chips
Tryggvagata 8

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

5 Sjávarkallarinn
Aðalstræti 2

In an elegant setting, Seafood Cellar chefs 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.

6 Indian Mango
Frakkastígur 12

Located on a quiet Laugavegur side street, Indian Mango has infused the Reykjavik 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.

7 Sægreifinn
Verubúð 8, Geirsgata

Located right next to the Reykjavik 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. The good food and welcoming service make this place a must-try.

Gísur Gudmundsson
Owner of Tveir Fiskar
President of the Nordic and Icelandic Chefs Association
European Continental Director for World Association of Cooks Societies



The most original New York Times

8 Pizza King
Hafnarstræti 18

This small pizza place is not only cheap but offers the largest slices of pizza you'll get downtown. Charging only 350 ISK per slice, not to mention the special lunch offer where a 10" pizza with three toppings of your choice and a can of Coke costs only 800 ISK, Pizza King is a local favourite. The fact it's open until 6 on Friday and Saturday nights doesn't hurt either.

9 Bernhöftsbakari
Bergstaðastræti 13

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 snúður, kleina and vínarbrauð to go with the afternoon coffee.

10 Bæjarins bestu
Tryggvagata

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 stand 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.

11 Quiznos
Lækjargata 8

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 speciality. Then put a double chocolate chunk brownie in your take-away box and you're good to go.

12 Á næstu grösum (First Vegetarian)
Laugavegur 20B

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.

13 Nonnabiti
Hafnarstræti 9

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 subs, 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.

14 Austurlanda-hraðlestin
Hverfisgata 64A

Although a little pricey for a take-away, charging around 1600 ISK for a main course, the food is well worth that extra spending once in a while. Serving typical Indian dishes, the menu is a treasure chest for those with a penchant for a spicy bite. There are also a few tables inside for those who choose to dine in.



Treat yourself to Reykjavik's richest blend of seafood by Our Award-Winning Chefs

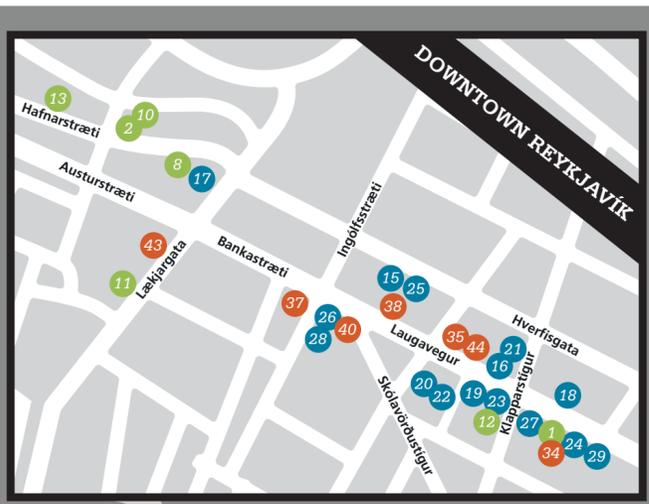


SPOT THIS: Blue Lagoon Shop
Blue Lagoon, Laugavegur 15

The geothermal seawater spa The Blue Lagoon is a world famous healing spot as the water is rich with silica and sulphur, which are extremely good for the skin. The natural skin care products produced from the healing minerals are sold at the downtown Blue Lagoon shop which stocks lotions and scrubs for your face and body as well as spa products and gift items.



Map showing streets: Tjarnargata, Austurstræti, Lækjargata, Bankastræti, Þinghólsstræti, Bergstaðastræti, Öðingagata, Ingólfsstræti, Skólavörðustígur, Hverfisgata, Laugavegur, Frakkastígur, Barónsstígur.



Map showing streets: Hafnarstræti, Austurstræti, Bankastræti, Ingólfsstræti, Laugavegur, Hverfisgata, Skólavörðustígur, Frakkastígur, Barónsstígur.

15 DRINKING
Grái Kötturinn
Hverfisgata 16a

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.

18 Tíu Dropar
Laugavegur 27

A very nice, old-fashioned café. It's subterranean, as all traditional coffee shops should be, and this place makes you feel warm, both with its atmosphere and the generosity of the coffee refills.

21 Sirkus
Klappargatun 30

Attracting a mixed crowd of party-people, 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's DJs provide for the greatest party possible every weekend, the bar occasionally hosts concerts on weeknights.

24 Boston
Laugavegur 28b

Located above the second-hand fashion store Spútnik, with its rooey bar floor and nice sofas in the lounge room upstairs, Boston is a fresh addition to the Reykjavik bar scene. Old-school yet stylish interiors, and enough tables to create a good vibe, make the place a comfy café as well as a laid-back tavern where the music is good but never intrusive.

27 Barinn
Laugavegur 22

Up-and-coming Barinn is becoming quite popular among Reykjavik 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.

34 Laugavegur 28
Laugavegur 28

A fresh addition to the Laugavegur fashion scene, four separate stores under one roof, second-hand clothing and accessories stores Elvis and Rökk og rósi, and CD experts Smekkleysa, all staples of the Laugavegur shopping experience. In addition, the new store, Pop, supplying neat stuff for the home. The collective will offer unique clothing and ornaments and supply the score to your life.

41 Thorvaldsens Bazar
Austurstræti 4

Located inside a dignified wooden building, Thorvaldsens Bazar is among the oldest shops in Reykjavik, opening in 1901 and run by the women's charity organization the Thorvaldsen Society. Selling souvenirs, handicrafts, woolen underclothes and sweaters as well as Icelandic jewellery, the friendly saleswomen work as volunteers and all profits are donated to charity work.

16 Kaffi Hjómaland
Laugavegur 21

This organic, 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.

19 Súfistinn
Laugavegur 18

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.

22 Vegamót
Vegamótastígur 4

Vegamót (crossroads) has an appealing lunch menu, 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.

25 Café Cultura
Hverfisgata 18

Located inside the Intercultural Centre, Cultura is a restaurant/bar with a cosmopolitan feel, hosting an array of events and various theme nights 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.

28 Q-Bar
Ingólfsstræti 3

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.

35 Gullkúnnst Helgu
Laugavegur 13

This spacious and classy store sells jewellery made from lava and other stone. Gullkúnnst Helgu, which is housed in the 1924 built shop on Laugavegur 13, has been selling unique jewellery such as necklaces, bracelets and watches for 15 years.

42 Friða Frænka
Vesturgata 3

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

17 Segafredo
By Lækjartorg

The Italian coffee-chain found its spot in the heart of Reykjavik, 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.

20 Kaffibarinn
Bergstaðastræti 1

A popular coffee place on weekends, 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 soups. With DJs playing live sets from Wednesday to Saturday, the party doesn't start winding down until early morning.

23 Oliver
Laugavegur 20a

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.

26 Prikíð
Bankastræti 12

This two-floor café/pub has been a part of Reykjavik's bar scene for decades. With a large and fairly cheap bistro menu, Prikíð 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.

29 Dillon
Laugavegur 30

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.

36 Börn Náttúrunnar
Skólavörðustígur 17a

The children's toy store Börn Náttúrunnar, located in a Skólavörðustígur basement, sells clothes and toys made only of organic products as well as books about childcare and parenthood. Here you can buy creative wooden playthings and woolen products for the young ones carefully selected by the parents who own the shop.

43 Iða
Lækjargata 2a

The spacious Iða bookstore is a great source for all kinds of reading material offering an excellent range of books, travel guides, magazines, post-cards and great gift items. The first-class service will help you search for what you need. On the second floor you'll find restaurants serving sushi, soups and sandwiches.

30 SHOPPING
G-Star Raw
Laugavegur 86

Buying jeans used to be a simple task. With the ever-growing selection, successful jeans hunting can take days. The task did not get any easier with the recent addition of a store from the industry powerhouse G-Star Raw. This Dutch brand features an edgy collection, authentic details and innovative washings.

37 Islandia
Bankastræti 10

The store Islandia has a modest selection of postcards, Icelandic wool products, cups with tacky designs, mini sculptures of Icelandic symbols such as Vikings and puffins, Icelandic flags, books, handbags, wallets and even underwear sporting the Icelandic flag. Great for some last minute souvenirs. Look for the sign with the Viking helmet.

31 Underground
Veltusund 1

Located in a basement by Ingólfsfjörður, former pro skater, Mike Carroll's skateboard shop Underground is aptly named. The shop offers all the relevant skating gear, be it clothing or boards, from industry leading brand names such as DC, Circa and others. A wide array of T-shirts, shoes, and other skating necessities available.

38 Trilogia
Laugavegur 7

A collection of trendy designer wear fills the space at fashion shop Trilogia, including amazing designs by Alexander McQueen and Chloe alongside Robert Cary Williams, Erotrokits and many, many more. Summer dresses, sweaters and skirts for all the fashion conscious girls out there as well as cool accessories to complete the look.

32 Kirsuberjatréð
Vesturgata 4

Kirsuberjatréð is the perfect little gift shop. A co-op gallery/gift shop owned and operated by ten women artists and designers. Kirsuberjatréð is the commercial outlet where they sell their products. The selections range from clothes, baskets, ceramics, copper sculptures, fish skin items, paper crafts, contemporary jewelry, felt items, and various other designs.

39 Kolaportíð
Tryggvagata 19

A trip to the downtown indoor flea market Kolaportíð down by the harbour is always a fun way to spend a Saturday afternoon. Endless stalls offering all kinds of second-hand goods, candy and even fermented shark and Icelandic liquorice. If ready to spend some time thoroughly examining the selection you can find some great bargains. Only open on weekends.

33 Vinberíð
Laugavegur 43

This small boutique sells all kinds of sweets. From chocolate fondue mix, to handmade chocolates, to lollypops and Belgian chocolate with such flavours as lavender and ginger. Vinberíð also sells Icelandic sweets, including the popular licorice products. A must stop for the sweet toothed.

40 Nakti Apinn
Bankastræti 14

Nakti Apinn, located on the second floor at Bankastræti 14, offers an amazing variety of colourful street-clothing, including hooded sweatshirts, T-shirts and leggings designed by the owners and hand-printed with different patterns, graphics and figures. Inside you'll also find a good selection of Icelandic music, books on art and design, accessories, baby clothes and international designer wear.



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LIBORIUS
LAUGAVEGUR 7



Fígúra
Skólavörðustígur 22a

hoodies, T-shirts, dresses, leggings, accessories, jackets, shirts, gallery



Laugavegur 23



KISS MEE
[I'm famous]
YOUR SUPER T SHIRTS
Laugavegur 27

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SATURDAY, JUNE 2

» **10:00** Ships' foghorns signal the opening of the Festival of the Sea
 » **10:00-16:00** Bizarre sea creatures
 The Icelandic Marine Research Institute displays a collection of strange sea dwellers. *The central pier (Miðbakkí), Reykjavík Harbor.*
 » **09:00-17:00** Whale Watching
 Special offers on whale watching tours – 3.000 kr for adults, 1.500 kr for children aged 7-15 and no charge for children under 6. Departures are at 9.00, 13.00 and 17.00. Each tour takes 2,5 – 3 hours. *Ægisgarður-Reykjavík Harbor*
 » **10:00–16:00** Open house at the **Reykjavík sailing society** Brokey. *Ingólfsgarður-Reykjavík Harbor*
 » **11:00-18:00** **Photography exhibition** presented by Faxaflói Harbors.
 » **11:00-17:00** **Reykjavík Maritime Museum** Free admission and fun program for the whole family. *Grandagarður 8*
 » **11:00-17:00** **Ferry trips to Viðey** on special offer. 1.100 kr for adults and 600 kr for children (waffles and hot cocoa included). The ferry leaves at 12:00 noon from the old pier, where there is also a bus service to Sundahöfn harbor on an hourly basis. Further information available at www.videy.com
 » **11:00** **Pier fishing competition** at the pier by Ægisgarður. All competitors get a free movie ticket and a certificate acknowledging participation.
 » **11:30** **Sightseeing cruise to Akranes**

The Icelandic Association for Search and Rescue's schoolship, Sæbjörg sails from the central pier (Miðbakkí) of Reykjavík Harbor to Akranes - waffles and coffee will be served on board. Admission is free but seating is limited. The ship will sail back at approximately 14:30. *The central pier (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbor*
 » **12:00** **Sailing competition** Cannon fire signals the beginning of this event! *The central pier (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbor*
 » **12:00-17:00** **Fun and games** (mini amusement park) *The central pier. (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbor*
 » **12:30** **The festival kicks off in Akranes**
 » **13:00 – 16:00** **The Icelandic coast guard** exhibits its pride and joy, the 32 year old veteran ship Týr. *Faxagarður- Reykjavík Harbor*
 » **13:00 – 16:00** **Food and culture in the tent at the central pier**
Message in a bottle: Send a bottled message. At 16:00 a ship will take all the bottles out to sea and release them.
Reykjavík Whale watching introduces its operations and hosts an art competition for children.
Gourmet fish: The store Fiskisaga sells samples of delicious fish based courses.
The Icelandic Diving society sells samples of grilled shellfish and other delicatessen.
Akureyri University displays images of under water life in Eyjafjörður.
Edda útgáfa: Art competition. The 20 prettiest fish pictures earn the artists a book each as prizes.
The zoo and family park: have you ever petted a crab? Live sea creatures you can examine and touch under the guidance of trained staff.

Matis: How does fish change in storage?

Experts teach passers-by to recognise tell tale signs of fish going off after extended periods of storage and offers tips for picking and storing the right cuts.

Do you know that smell?

A fun game for people of all ages. Smell from the bottles and guess what was in each one.

Micro-organisms in fish

Passers-by are given the chance to examine micro organisms in petrie dishes.

» **13:00** **The search and rescue** organisation, Ársæll, displays jeeps and other rescue equipment. *The central pier (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbor*

» **13:00-16:00** The DAS lottery exhibits a state of the art Lexus GS300 and a Harley Davidson V-Rod motorcycle. *The central pier (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbor*

» **14:00** **Sailor's Song Festival**

The Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhúsið

» **15:00** The best **sea faring ditty** chosen and performed - also live on Rás 2 radio. *The Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhúsið*

» **16:00** **Speedboat racing**

Just off the coast from Sæbraut

» **16:00** **Message in a bottle.** Launch bottled messages from a boat. *Departure from the central pier (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbor*

» **18:00** **Fishfeast!** Information about participating restaurants and their menus can be found below, on the program flyer and at www.hatidhafsins.is

SUNDAY, JUNE 3

» **10:00** **Memorial ceremony for fallen sailors.**

Fossvogskapella, Fossvogskirkjugarður (Fossvogs cemetery).

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

» **09:00-17:00** **Whale Watching**

Special offers on whale watching tours – 3.000 kr for adults, 1.500 kr for children aged 7-15 and no charge for children under 6. Departures are at 9.00, 13.00 and 17.00. Each tour takes 2,5 – 3 hours. *Ægisgarður-Reykjavík Harbor.*

» **10:00-18:00** **Photography exhibition** presented by Faxaflói Harbours.

» **11:00-17:00** **Reykjavík Maritime Museum** Free admission and fun program for the whole family. *Grandagarður 8*

» **11:00-17:00** **Ferry trips to Viðey** on special offer. 1.100 kr for adults and 600 kr for children (waffles and hot cocoa included). The ferry leaves at 12:00 noon from the old pier, where there is also a bus service to Sundahöfn Harbour on an hourly basis. Further information available at www.videy.com

» **11:00** **Memorial service** for fallen fishermen in the Reykjavík Cathedral. Flowers placed on the grave of the unknown sailor.

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

» **13:00 – 16:00** **The Icelandic coast guard** exhibits its pride and joy,

the 32 year old veteran ship Týr. *Faxagarður- Reykjavík Harbour.*

» **13:00-16:00** The DAS lottery exhibits a state of the art Lexus GS300 and a Harley Davidson V-Rod motorcycle. *The central pier (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbour.*

» **13:00, 14:00, 15:00** **Family sightseeing cruise:**

A great chance to see the city from a totally different perspective. Admittance is free. *The central pier (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbour.*

» **13:00** **The search and rescue** organisation Ársæll shows how to quickly respond to a drowning person in the ocean. *The central pier (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbour.*

» **13:00 – 16:00** **Food and culture** in the tent at the central pier **Reykjavík Whale watching** introduces its operations and hosts an art competition for children.

Gourmet fish: The store Fiskisaga sells samples of delicious fish based courses.

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

Akureyri University displays images of under water life in Eyjafjörður **Edda útgáfa: Art competition.** The 20 prettiest fish pictures earn the artists a book each as prizes.

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Do you know that smell?

A fun game for people of all ages. Smell from the bottles and guess what was in each one.

Micro-organisms in fish

Passers-by are given the chance to examine micro organisms in petrie dishes.

» **13:00** **The search and rescue** organisation Ársæll displays jeeps and other rescue equipment as well as teaching resuscitation techniques. *The central pier (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbour*

» **13:00-16:00** **The mountain rescue** contingent of the search and rescue organisation Ársæll teaches kids the basics of safe descent

» **14:00-15:00** **Opening ceremony** Traditional festivities on Sailor's Day with various addresses and seamen honoured.

The central pier (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbour

» **15:00** **Rowing competition**

The central pier (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbour

» **15:00** **Aerobatic displays** in the skies over Reykjavík Harbour.

» **15:00** **Felix and Jói entertain the young ones**

The central pier (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbour

» **16:00** **The coast guard's helicopter** demonstrates maritime rescue operations with the search and rescue organisation Ársæll.

The central pier (Miðbakkí) Reykjavík Harbour

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

» **18:00** **Fishfeast!** Further information about participating restaurants and their menus can be found below, on the program flyer and at www.hatidhafsins.is.



FESTIVAL OF THE SEA

The first Sunday in June is traditionally called the Sailor's Day, celebrating the importance of the sea and the men who attend it for the survival of this nation. It is the only day of the year when every Icelandic ship is in harbor and every sailor has the day off. In Reykjavík, this special holiday has been stretched out to a two day Festival of the Sea. The celebrations usually involve activities surrounding traditional sailor stuff, such as rowing competitions,

family sailing tours, and display of search and rescue operations at sea. Several seafood restaurants located around the harbour will have their specialties or offer during the weekend.

Participating restaurants are:

Iceland Fish and Chips, *Tryggvagötu 8*; Sjávarbarinn, *Grandagarður 9*; Gróubúð, *Grandagarði 1*; The Duke of the Sea and the Sushi Factory, *by Verubúð*.



FISHFEAST

Do not miss the Fishfeast! During the weekend's Festival of the Sea celebrations some of the finest restaurants in downtown Reykjavík will offer hungry visitors special fish-based menus at slightly reduced prices. Icelanders are particularly proud of their fresh fish and for two days you have the chance to taste what local master chefs can do with this special ingredient. The menus are varied but what they all have in common is that they each showcase a variety of different fish and preparation styles, from lobster tempura to butter fried monkfish.

Most of the participating restaurants are chosen for their expertise and thus tend to be in the upper half of the price range - you will be paying 4000 to 5000 kr. for a complete meal. With some of the city's fin-

est restaurants partaking however, the combination of fresh ingredients and delicate preparation means that satisfaction is all but guaranteed.

Participating restaurants are:

Horníð, *Hafnarstræti 15*; Við Tjörnina, *Templarasundi 3*; DOMO, *Pinghóltsstræti 5*; Fjalakötturinn, *Aðalstræti 16*; Salt Restaurant, *Pósthússtræti 2*; Þrír Frakkar, *Baldursgata 14*; Einar Ben, *Veltusundi 1*; Apótekið, *Austurstræti 16*; Tveir fiskar, *Geirsgata 9*; Vín og skel, *Laugavegi 55b*.

The Fishfeast is sponsored by: Ögurvík, HB Grandi, Brim hf and Iceland Seafood international.



The Motion Boys Fear For Their Success

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir Photo by Gulli

It seems like everyone is talking about the perky duo the Motion Boys at the moment. A band of two, Birgir Isleifur, (former member of Byltan and Motherfuckers in the House) and Árni +1 (from FM Belfast and Hairdoctor), the Motion Boys, although without a record deal and only two songs released, have become the hype of the summer. It doesn't hurt that the band's live line-up features Minus drummer Bjóssi, Trabant members Viddi and Gisli Galdur, and Tobbi, a former member of Jeff Who?. Local radio station Dls can't seem to get enough of their high-end electro-pop singles and the danceable tunes have scored big with the local party crowd. Grapevine sat down with Biggi and Árni at Prikkið to learn a little more about their collaboration.

How did it all start?

Árni: We started working together about a year ago. Biggi asked me to help arrange a song he was writing for Sigtið [an Icelandic comedy show]. He came to my studio and we wrote one song just for the fun of it. That's basically how it all started.

Biggi: That song is called Silhouette. No one has heard it except us two. After writing that song we saw that our collaboration was working so we continued writing and Hold Me Closer to Your Heart was born, but after writing that song we felt kind of bad.

Why so?

Biggi: Because we knew the song would be a

major hit. At least I did.

Árni: We were afraid that if we would release this song, we would never make another one.

And become a one-hit wonder?

Árni: Exactly. In my view, it was really important to write numerous other songs before releasing Hold me Closer, and actually our first single released was Waiting to Happen.

Biggi: I also felt bad about that song. I felt as if I was in the eighth grade all over again, hanging around in the Frostaskjól youth centre among the tenth grade kids. When in the eighth grade you have this feeling towards the older kids, which is kind of a mix of fear and respect. You respected them but at the same time your stomach was aching. I had the same feeling about Waiting to Happen. I really don't know how to describe it.

Árni: You felt as if you were a part of something much bigger than yourself.

Biggi: Exactly.

You managed to face your fears and release a promo CD, featuring the two aforementioned songs. The Grapevine critic, Sindri Eldon, reviewed the single and said that the summer of 2007 belonged solely to you, no matter if you would ever release anything else.

Árni: Yes, we finally released the CD, but we weren't trying to promote it in any way though. We just wanted to try and see what would happen.

Biggi: And it worked, much beyond our hopes at that moment. The songs have been played a lot on the radio stations, and they seem to be appealing to both the pop and rock genre. It's unbelievable really, as there are no guitars in these songs! I don't know how to play the guitar and Árni only knows three chords. My opinion is that if Hold me Closer won't be an international hit, then I know absolutely nothing about music. It doesn't matter who would have written this song, when I hear it I can't imagine anything else than a global success. Anything less would just be weird and wrong.

But you are planning a full-length album sometime in the near future, right?

Árni: Yes, we have the next bullet ready. Now we just need to fire the gun.

Biggi: That song is crazy! Its called Steal Your Love. Remember that name!

Árni: It's sort of a mix between Hold me Closer and Waiting to Happen.

Biggi: With a touch of Michael Jackson.

Your live line-up is somewhat impressive. And even before your first live gig, people were calling Motion Boys a supergroup.

Árni: Everyone is famous in Iceland so it's really easy to mix together a supergroup. We share a studio with Trabant so it just happened naturally and we didn't run around asking for the phone number of Bjóssi in Minus, he actually asked us if he could join in. He got down on his knees and cried out in the rain.

Biggi: Viddi has been an immensely big help, for

“It doesn't matter who would have written this song, when I hear it I can't imagine anything else than a global success. Anything less would just be weird and wrong.”

example with recording Hold me Closer. Then we have Gisli Galdur, he's of course amazing, and everyone knows that.

Árni: And Tobbi is just like a computer with a soul.

Biggi: Today we think of all these guys as part of Motion Boys.

Your first concert was cut short due to technical problems (see review, page 20), it must have been a great disappointment?

Biggi: It was just unbelievable really, but despite this fuckup we all had a great time.

Árni: Afterwards, I feel that the show ended just the way it should have ended. The audience got a preview of Motion Boys and was generally positive towards the music. No one got angry and the incident kind of brought us closer together. I at least don't have any negative feelings about this show. All I wanted was to get goose bumps and I did. I also find it remarkable that four bands, with no record deals and no album releases, were able to stuff lónó. The band Hjaltalín was great that night and so was Sprengjuhöllin.

Biggi: And FM Belfast was crazy.

You must be planning another concert soon. I heard you are scheduled to open for The Rapture at NASA on June 26.

Árni: Yeah we are. That's gonna be nice.

Biggi: The Rapture is a fun band. I'm sure they will be much more tight on stage than we will, but I'm convinced that we will touch people's hearts in a greater way than they are going to. Maybe the guys in The Rapture will even be a little weepy when they go on stage. But seriously, I'm sure it will be a great gig.

Árni: It will be good to get the chance to play in front of a large crowd and know that you can deliver the music well. Our live band features experienced musicians who've played NASA multiple times over so it's a great opportunity.

So what's the plan for the summer?

Biggi: To play as many concerts as we can. We are also booked to play at the Iceland Airwaves festival in October.

Árni: In addition to that, we want to travel abroad and play our music for a broader audience.

Biggi: And then there is of course the forthcoming album. We are planning to record as many songs as we can this summer and nail the project down and be ready with an album next fall.

You can check out their songs at www.myspace.com/motionboys



How to drive in Iceland

A relatively large percentage of foreign tourists in Iceland travel around the country by car. Conditions in Iceland are in many ways unusual, and often quite unlike that which foreign drivers are accustomed. It is therefore very important to find out how to drive in this country. We know that the landscapes are beautiful, which naturally draws the attention of driver away from the road. But in order to reach your destination safely, you must keep your full attention on driving.

Livestock on the road

In Iceland, you can expect livestock to be on or alongside the road. It is usually sheep, but sometimes horses and even cows can be in your path. This is common all over the country, and can be very dangerous. Sometimes a sheep is on one side of the road and her lambs on the other side. Under these conditions—which are common—it is a good rule to expect the lambs or the sheep to run to the other side.

Single-lane bridges

There are many single-lane bridges on the Ring Road. The actual rule is that the car closer to the bridge has the right-of-way. However, it is wise to stop and assess the situation, i.e. attempt to see what the other driver plans to do. This sign indicates that a single-lane bridge is ahead.



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Grænn kostur

Skólavörðustigur 8b, 101 Reykjavík, tel.: 552 2028

Grænn Kostur, or "The Green Choice," is a small vegan/vegetarian restaurant in downtown Reykjavík. Seating around 30-40 people, Grænn Kostur is tucked away on Skólavörðustigur off Laugavegur.

Grænn Kostur has been serving healthy organic vegan and vegetarian food for ten years. Their current menu consists of veggie burgers, pizza, spinach pie, soups and various salads. Staying true to their philosophy of veganism and healthy eating, Grænn Kostur does not use dairy products, white flour, sugar, yeast or eggs in their dishes. However, tangy yogurt dip and goat cheese crumbs are offered for those not on a strict vegan diet.

The bright and airy restaurant was almost empty when my friend and I stopped by for a late lunch one Saturday afternoon. The attentive staff gave us servings of all of the day's offerings. The day's special, Indian casserole served with rice and salad, was a nice introduction to the food of Grænn Kostur. Still on the Indian theme, the flavourful Indian pie was made from rice and vegetables and was as much a hit with my carnivorous companion than with any vegetarian diner.

We were also offered Spinach pie and Spinach Lasagne. The Spinach pie was satisfactory but apparently the Spinach Lasagne needs no introduction. The understandably extremely popular dish is made with spelt lasagne sheets and delicious organic fresh spinach but at least on this occasion was served with a melon salad – not the most obvious combination.

We tried a vegetarian version of Tom Yum Thai soup made from chilli, garlic, vegetables and tofu. The spicy soup was cold before we got to it, but was delicious all the same. At 700 ISK the freshly made soup comes with bread and hummus. Again, while all three aspects of this dish – the soup, the bread and the hummus were delicious – I'm not too sure about combining them.

The vegetable burger topped with crunchy sunflowers, pepitas and sesame seeds accompanied by a salad of crisp lettuce and baby spinach leaves, peas, cucumber, onion, tomato, bell peppers and artichokes drizzled in yogurt sauce was the standout dish.

Grænn Kostur also serves a variety of cakes, including raw fruit and nut cake.

Averaging out at around 1000 ISK, whether you're a vegetarian or not you're bound to enjoy a light, healthy and inexpensive meal at Grænn Kostur.

Reviewed by Zoë Robert



Maður lifandi

Borgartún 24, 104 Reykjavík, tel.: 585 8700

Being one of only a handful of strictly organic restaurants in town, Maður Lifandi (which translates to "Man Alive!") has a practical philosophy: show sceptics that organic food is not intimidating. The store/cafe/terrace offers books on vegetarian eating, cooking classes, vitamins, organic ingredients (including hummus, curries and sauces made in-store) and online recipes. Proprietor Helga Mogensen knows that people can be hesitant when it comes to organic cuisine, and that is why she has made Maður Lifandi an open learning environment for all budding health-food nuts.

Maður Lifandi has a cafeteria feel, with a hipper dining area downstairs. A fresh salad bar teases you at the beginning of the line just before the posted menus appear. Unfortunately, the English menu obviously lacks the descriptions that the Icelandic menus have, and the smoothie menu is entirely absent for English speakers. The atmosphere in Maður is clean, with hardwood floors and a nice distance between tables, which is comforting given the eventual crowd of lunching down-towners. To the side of the main ordering area is a refrigerated selection of healthy juices, store made sauces and popular to-go orders (Helga told me that all of the to-go orders are customer favourites).

For lunch, I ordered the Chicken Burrito with a Salad (900 kr), which came wrapped in a whole-wheat tortilla with just the right level of flakiness. Inside was a unique combination of curried chicken, cooked spinach, tomato, and mustard seeds. The accompanying salsa, which was tangy, contended a little bit with the sweetness of the spinach, and I found that leaving this combination out of the equation was the better decision. The burrito's size was relatively modest, which was actually a refreshing break from the gutbusters I am used to as a Southern Californian. My friend decided on the special, which is a Caribbean plate (1,200 kr) with black beans, couscous, guacamole, and the less recognizable yucca and squash. The combination was great, the ingredients fresh, and the simple side salad nicely complemented the plate. Simplicity was the key here.

Before we left, Helga urged me to dump my scepticism for gluten-free knock-offs and finally convinced me to try the Hrákaka (or 'raw cake'), a spicy nut and berry cake made without wheat or spelt (Maður Lifandi accommodates most dietary restrictions). The cake came with cream and fresh fruit and offered something unique and unexpectedly good to the typical dessert menu.

Reviewed by Chandler Fredrick



First Vegetarian

Laugavegur 20b, 101 Reykjavík, tel.: 552 8410

The restaurant Á næstu grösum, located on the corner of Laugavegur and Klappartígur, is popular with locals who want healthy and nutritious meals served fast and reasonably priced. This cosy eatery boasts an easygoing atmosphere and a nice selection of vegan and vegetarian meals cooked from quality ingredients without sugar, yeast or manufactured food additives like MSG. Organic vegetables are also used whenever possible.

The small dining room was almost fully seated when we arrived but my dining partner and I were able to get a table by the window, overlooking Laugavegur. After bringing us fresh orange juice and organic soda for drinks, our friendly waitress invited us to the buffet. At Á næstu grösum there is no actual menu and it is sort of a self-service dining-spot featuring an impressive buffet and a waiter armed with a large spoon who will stuff your plate with anything you find appetizing.

The today's specials constantly change, so the many regulars will always find some new and exciting dishes written on the blackboard above the counter. The buffet itself, which is divided into diverse hot and cold dishes, always features numerous wholesome courses such as soups, lasagne, veggie-stews, pea patties, quiches and side servings as fresh salads, rice and sauces. It's worth mentioning that Fridays and Saturdays are dedicated to Indian cuisine, a particularly popular weekend feast.

I opted for a mixed plate and sampled a portion of vegetables in Thai curry, aubergine terrine, delicious lasagne, well-flavoured fried chickpea patties with spicy tomato sauce and rice, potato salad as well as tomato-fruit salad and fresh vegetables on the side. Although my plate was completely stuffed, I couldn't resist some freshly baked bread with hummus, but the choices of chutney, butter and extra virgin olive oil are also offered as toppings, and you can have as much as you can eat.

After mixing all the tasty delights there was no room for anything else than a cup of coffee, which was a shame as the cakes at Á næstu grösum are 'world-famous' (at least among the regular clientele). I've tried the sugar free banana cake before and can easily recommend it to future visitors.

Here, dining out can be both quick and enjoyable and the take-away offered can become useful as well, whether you need to grab a meal or a yummy piece of cake to take home for a late-night snack.

Reviewed by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir



Kaldi: The Coolest Beer in Iceland

It seems that the introduction of an Icelandic microbrewery has been long overdue: it was nearly twenty years ago that the ban on beer was lifted, and since then big-brand beers have dominated the nation's shelves. As Iceland's first (and only) microbrewery, Kaldi was founded as an alternative to the preservative, sugar, and chemical-heavy beers that are generally sold in the state alcohol store and in bars.

The idea for Kaldi came after Agnes Sigurðardóttir and Ólafur Ólafsson (Kaldi is a husband and wife operation) watched an engaging segment on the news about the popularity of microbrews in Denmark. After much inquiry, they saw the opportunity to buy equipment and grains from the Czech Republic. Along with the deal came expert Czech brewmaster David Masa. They soon brought the brewery to their hometown of Árskógssandur, a small coastal town northwest of Akureyri, where the opportunity for work was not exactly abundant.

While it would be cheaper for the brewery to add preservatives found in larger beers like Viking or Thule, the founders of Kaldi opted for quality: "We like this type of beer, and that's why we chose to brew it," says Ólafsson. Due to the lack of additives, the beer has a shelf life of only 3 months (Beers with preservatives have a one-year shelf-life). Still, Ólafsson believes that the popularity of the beer will grow as people become more health-conscious.

While generally available at the Vinbúð, Kaldi can only be found in two bars in Reykjavík and a few in Akureyri. Due to the small size of the brewery, Ólafsson does not expect that many bars will be picking up the brew in the near future.

Text by Chandler Fredrick



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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
Úðafoss, Vítastígur 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, Víðimelur 29, Tel: 552 6751

For a full list visit Ministry for Foreign Affairs: www.mfa.is/diplomatic-missions/icelandic-missions/
 ■ **Internet Access**
 Most coffeehouses have wireless Internet access.

Computers with Internet connections are available at:
Ráðhúskaffi City Hall, Tjarnargata 11
BSÍ Bus Terminal,
 Vatnsmýrarvegur 10
Ground Zero, Vallarstræti 10
The Reykjavik City Library,
 Tryggvagata 15
The National and University Library, Armgrimgata 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 Reykjavik 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
 Buses 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**
Reykjavik Group Travel Service,
 Brunastaðir 3, Tel: 587 8030, www.randburg.com/is/reykjavik_group_travel_service/
 A useful brochure, Accessible Reykjavik, 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
Eurocar, Hjallahraun 9, Tel: 565 3800
A.G Car Rental, Tangarhófi 8-12, Tel: 587 5544

■ **Atlas Car Rental,** Dalshraun 9, Tel: 565 3800
Berg Car Rental, Tangarhófi 8, Tel: 577 6050
Hertz, Flugvallavegur, Tel: 505 0600

■ **Airlines**
Air Iceland, Reykjavikurflugvöllur, Tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is
Air Vestmannaeyjar, Tel: 481 3255, www.eyjflug.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.icelandvisitor.com
 A travel agency offering travelling package trips and custom-made tours as well as car rental, day tours and accommodations for visitors.

■ **Tourist Information Centre**
 Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550, www.visitreykjavik.is
 Offers information for tourists as well as providing internet access, booking service, a phone centre, money exchange service, tax refund and selling the Reykjavik Tourist Card. The Reykjavik Tourist Card gives admission to city buses, various museums, Reykjavik swimming pools, The Family Park and Reykjavik Zoo, The Culture House and the National and University Library.

■ **The Icelandic Tourist Board**
 Lækjargata 3, Tel: 535 5500, www.visiticeland.com
 All information needed before travelling in Iceland.

■ **Goethe Institute**
 Tungata 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.nordice.is
 The Nordic cultural centre organises various cultural events, conferences and exhibitions.
 All major tourist spots in Reykjavik also offer brochures, maps and information for travellers.

■ **Useful Information**
 ■ **Where to learn Icelandic as a foreign language**
Internet on the Internet,
 www.vefskoli.is
Mimir Continuing Education,
 Skeifán 8, Tel: 580 1800, www.mimir.is
Námshólfur Reykjavíkur,
 Frikirkjuvegur 1, Tel: 551 2992
Fjölmenning, Laugavegur 59, Tel: 511 1319, www.fjolmenning.is
The Icelandic College of Engineering and Technology, Höfðabakki 9, Tel: 577 1400, www.thi.is
lönskólinn í Reykjavík,
 Skólavörðuholti, Tel: 552 6240, www.ir.is
The University of Iceland – Department of Continuing Education,
 Dunhagi 7, Tel: 525 4924, www.edurmenntun.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 Reykjavik 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, Vígðólástigur 21
Reykjavik Free Lutheran Church, Frikirkjuvegur 5
Pentecostal Assembly, Hátún 2
Roman Catholic Church, Hávallagata 14
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Ásabraut 2
Jehovah's Witnesses, Sogavegur 71
Seventh-Day Adventists, Suðurlíð 36
Zen Buddhism in Iceland, Reykjavikurvegur 31

■ **Independent Church,** Háteigsvegur 101
The Russian Orthodox Church in Iceland, Sólvallagata 10
The Cross, Hlíðasmári 5-7
Trade Unions
The Icelandic Federation of Labour, Sættún 1, Tel: 535 5600, www.asi.is
The Federation of State and Municipal employees, Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8300, www.bsrb.is
The Association of Academics, Borgartún 6, Tel: 581 2090, www.bhm.is
Efling, Sættún 1, Tel: 510 7500, www.efling.is

■ **The Commercial Workers' Union,** Kringlan 7, Tel: 510 1700, www.vr.is
Union of Public Servants, Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8340, www.sfr.is

■ **Useful Websites**
www.visitreykjavik.is (The official tourist website of Reykjavik)
www.gayice.is (Information about the gay scene in Iceland)
www.fjolmenningarsetur.is (The Multicultural Centre)
www.vinnumalastofnun.is (Public employment services)
www.gulalinn.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.utli.is
Insurance and benefits: The State Social Security Institute, Laugavegur 114-116, Tel: 560 4400, www.tr.is
Icelandic citizenship: Unless you

come from a Nordic country, foreign citizens have to have had an unrestricted residence permit in Iceland for at least seven years in order to get an Icelandic citizenship although some exceptions exist to that general rule. Applications are at the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Skuggasund, Tel: 545 9000, www.domsmlaraduneyti.is
Unemployment benefits: Directorate of Labour, Public Employment Service, Tryggvagata 17, Tel: 515 4800, www.vinnumalastofnun.is
Icelandic social security number (kennitala): National Register, Borgartún 30, Tel: 560 9800, www.hagstofa.is
Driver's license: Those who have a foreign license don't need an Icelandic one for the first six months. After that time you have one month to apply for an Icelandic driver's license. Applications are at police stations.
Tax card: Tax office, Laugavegur 166, Tel: 563 1100, www.rsk.is
Rent subsidies: Social Service Office, Tryggvagata 17, Tel: 411 9000 www.felagstjonustan.is

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Rent subsidies: Social Service Office, Tryggvagata 17, Tel: 411 9000 www.felagstjonustan.is

Facts on Iceland

■ Iceland is a constitutional republic with slightly more than 300,000 inhabitants. Reykjavik has been the country's capital since 1786 and today almost two-thirds of the population live in the greater capital area.
 ■ The 17th of June 1944 Iceland became an independent republic.
 That day is the national holiday and is celebrated all around the country.
 ■ Alþingi, the national parliament, is the oldest assembly in the world, established at Þingvellir in 930 but restored in Reykjavik in 1844. The parliament is comprised of 63 members, who are elected by popular vote every four years. Icelandic citizens over 18 years of age have the legal right to vote.

■ Parliamentary elections were last held in 2003 with 33.7 percent of votes going to the Independence Party. The Social Democratic Alliance got 31 percent, the Progressive Party 17.7 percent, the Leftist-Greens 8.8 percent and the Liberal Party 7.4 percent. The Independence Party and the Progressive Party formed a coalition and together lead the government.
 ■ Iceland has 12 ministers with the prime minister and head of government being Geir H. Haarde, who is also chairman of the Independence Party. The President of Iceland is Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, who has been in office since 1996. He is the Chief of State although his duties are mostly ceremonial.
 ■ Time Zone: GMT 0
 ■ Currency: Íslensk króna (ISK).
 ■ International Dialling Code: +354



Icelandic Contemporary Design

Entitled Magma, this exhibition solely focuses on new innovations in Icelandic contemporary design. Magma is currently on display at Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum. The exhibition features a range of pieces including: street wear and classy clothing, furniture and interior decorations as well as lighting, textile design, jewellery, watches, snowboard prints and helmets, graffiti and various technical innovations. Viewers are able to examine works by approximately sixty of Iceland's designers who present their diverse ideas and experimental use of materials in numerous interesting creations.
 1) The Modern tree-shaped clothing hangers, available

in black and white, designed by Katrín Pétursdóttir Young and Michael Young.
 2) Mundi Design presents a spaceman sweater knitted from Icelandic wool and a warm winter jacket.
 3) Trendy and comfortable street wear designed by Nikita Clothing.
 4) A unique Sequinwaterfall designed by architect Theresa Himmer decorates the cafeteria at Kjarvalsstaðir.
 The exhibition is open until August 26.
 Reykjavik Art Museum – Kjarvalsstaðir, Flókaqata, 105 Reykjavik, www.artmuseum.is.

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Such binary oppositions as "culture vs. nature" can surely make speculative life easier. However, it should be enough to take a glance 'out there' to realise how the two domains are far from being separated by clear-cut boundaries. They blur into each other and interweave in a problematic unity.

Humanising Nature

A disastrous drought struck the African State of Zimbabwe in 1992, decimating the crops and prostrating the entire country. Did the international community's sympathy go to the starving Zimbabwean population? Absolutely not. It was with twenty elephants under threat to be shot down in order to have the meat distributed among the most desperate peasants.

Nature can be nurtured, we said in the beginning. Apparently it can also be humanised. We have human beings objectified and pushed outside the borders of human solidarity and elephants that are welcomed into our cultural world, becoming a matter of concern in international summits and direct beneficiaries of financial aid. And yet, nobody is likely to refuse to admit that the wealth of human societies largely depends on the welfare and abundance of nature. Still, the opposite also happens to be true and the welfare and abundance of nature is tied to the wealth and well being of society.

Does it sound like a regression to magical thought? Perhaps. But this ancient wisdom has also begun to be accepted in highly modernistic circles such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It is becoming widely recognised as a fact, indeed, what havoc on the environment is wreaked by poverty and social disruption.

As cases of savage deforestation in the Amazon, Indonesia and Nepal have documented, there can be no effective attempt at environmental preservation if it is not preceded by an increase in social welfare and equality. There is no sharp disjunction between the realms of "culture" and "nature". Rather, a constant interplay and unsolvable entanglement.

The Icelandic Viewpoint

A number of Icelanders I have spoken to, especially in the countryside, express irritation towards the wave of ecologic activism recently investing the island on the wake of large-scale projects for industrialisation. "Can't we exploit our own resources and get the most out of them? Just because some 'romantic idealists' in Reykjavik or some metropolis in Europe or in the US are opposed to it? They live far away from the affected areas, how can they know better than us what's to do? All they want is to keep on with their comfortable city lives and still have a place for summer vacations." That was their basic argument.

When put in those terms I can agree with the objection, at least to a certain extent, but simply because the whole issue is poorly posed. We would gain different kinds of insights if we started to consider human-environmental relations in all their entangled character and to recognise their extreme complexity – an endless string of actions, reactions and retroactions that grasp "man" and "nature" in one single web of existence. To start with, for example, we could reframe the whole ecological question in purely utilitarian terms, showing that economic maximisation is a slippery measure of judgement – and we would have a good chance to make a point.

"Energy in Iceland is both more inexpensive and clean than elsewhere: exploiting it for industrial production is a way to oppose global warming and not to contribute to it". This is roughly the claim made by spokespersons for Alcoa, the multinational aluminium giant investing most heavily in the industrialisation of Iceland.

It might even be true: having no means to argue on the scientific grounds of such a statement, I can only raise the doubt whether the environmental costs for importing the raw material and exporting the final products from the country do not end up levelling out the boasted benefits.

But the real point is another one. Global warming is only the tip of the iceberg, an instance on planetary scale of human-environmental relations, which have gone astray. The scope of the phenomenon has provided it with prominence in public agendas worldwide – and with some right. But this cannot become a device to overshadow the fact that the rapport between man and its surroundings can possibly be problematic in a number of other ways. Any alteration brought onto an ecosystemic matrix – besides its effects on global warming – also bears other consequences, often unpredictable and unexpected, often visible only in a long period, often quantifiable as negative repercussions even in economic terms.

The Lesson From Reclaiming Wetlands

You want examples? The reclamation of wetlands is an ongoing practice justified on the ground of a myth of "development". For the most parts, it aims at acquiring further cultivable land. At first, it would seem to be a wise option, at least in a utilitarian perspective: after all, it is a matter of turning apparently fruitless areas into productive ones.

In the United States, however, the collective costs for such an operation amount to US \$11,000 per year for each hectare of drained wetland. And this figure only takes into consideration the increased gravity of floods (wetlands act like sponges, which soak water and limit the impact of floods) and not other benefits that wetlands notably bring to an ecosystem.

Seen from a long-period perspective, then, is indiscriminate land reclamation a sound economic strategy? Doubting that claim seems more than licit. And the whole history of agriculture is full of episodes of poor management due to en-

vironmental misreading, which resulted in massive economic losses. Fertilisers and pesticides have contributed to staggering increases in production – that is undeniable. However, it has been at the expense of public health and burdens on the health-care systems.

The radical change in our diet is rapidly leading to similar outcomes. Growing consumption of meat and proteins may seem to be the most obvious choice for our famous "economic man": richer foods at ever-lowering prices. The widely acknowledged epidemic of obesity that has spread across the Euro-American world over the last decade, however, might suggest that the "economic man" is mistaken in some of his calculations.

Are Icelanders ready to trade their fisheries – the source of the country's wealth over the last century – for a model of growth based on heavy industry? It does not have to be the case, but beware: modifying the course of too many glacial rivers may well have repercussions on the oceanic population. Should the eventuality not be carefully pondered?

Our Faustian Enterprise

I am not arguing that any man-induced change brought upon our environment should be preventively forbidden. Our own presence, anyways, mutates the nature of "nature". And it has been proven that even a hypothetical pristine Earth would not inherently tend to a self-organised state of equilibrium, but rather be shaken by periodic cycles of disruption and chaos. But yes, any large-scale alterations produced on our surroundings remain something of Faustian enterprise, whose aftermaths are often clouded in uncertainty.

In a world where man and nature are entangled in a single and inextricable web, actions undertaken in sight of a short-term advantage can disastrously backfire over a longer period. Both successful adaptive strategies and sound economic management used to be grounded on the common principle of minimisation of risk. As the stockbroker who ventures into rapacious and rash financial operations, we have apparently decided to leave that basic wisdom behind and play an increasingly hazardous game with our surroundings and ourselves. In both cases the stakes are extreme: incredible gains in the immediate moment, but also catastrophic losses just behind the corner.

In objection to such arguments, some contemporary prophets of "utilitarian mechanism" may remove the mask of philanthropy and wear that of freedom instead. "No constraint," they say, "no collective concern should be placed on the shoulders of the enterprising and ambitious individual. Let individual health and individual security be individual matters." In doing so, they reveal their true minds: a world of human and environmental relations, where the well being of the few occurs to the detriment of the most. Not only is nature humanised; they implicitly advocate the "naturalisation" of humans. Making waste paper of "the social contract", forgetting any previous alliance between man and his surroundings, they substitute all bonds of solidarity with a nightmarish vision of the struggle for survival in accordance with the most vulgar reading of Darwinism. And, since everything is entangled, such a struggle is going to invest the entire planet with all its inhabitants, man and nature alike: truly "a struggle of all against all".

The Point, At Last

If there is a point to be drawn out of this discussion, then I believe that we are finally approaching it. Taking an ecological stance is not about making dramatic choices between man and environment, seen as two opposite and mutually exclusive poles. It is not a matter of privileging the authenticity and beauty of a mythical untamed "nature" over the artificial ugliness of man-made industrialism and concrete; nor is it opting for conservation, simplicity or a return to primitivism versus the sirens of development and economic growth.

No. As we are part of the same unity and talking about our environment, I believe, it is like looking in a mirror: it is another way to talk about ourselves. To ask questions such as: what foundations of growth and development are truly solid? What society is actually healthy? What kind of community would we want to build and live in? Our relationship to "nature", we will discover, is already largely inscribed in the very answers to those questions.

It is my conviction that a conscious environmental movement would have much to gain by appropriating such insights.

In a world where man and nature are entangled in a single and inextricable web, actions undertaken in sight of a short-term advantage can disastrously backfire over a longer period.



Samúel Jón Samúelsson Big Band
Fnykur

Only 7 years out of music school, Samúel Jón Samúelsson has already built an accomplished resume. A graduate of the prominent Tónlistarskóli FÍH, the composer has done arrangements for Sigur Rós, Sálín, Reykjavík Big Band, and Traband and has been a key player in the annual Reykjavík Jazz Festival. On his myspace is a picture of him with James Brown (RIP), who SJS backed up with his other funk band Jagúar. His magic is pretty apparent: as complex as the arrangements on Fnykur are, they never become overwhelming. Sometimes songs switch directions and go into new territory, but for the most part, they are straightforward funk, with blaring brass arrangements, bubbly bass lines, and choking electric guitar spurts. While nothing on Fnykur stands out, it's clear why he's so respected in Iceland. It's not uncommon to see the American influence in a lot of Icelandic music, but you've got to hand it to the guy who spawns the Icelandic 'Funk' genre. **CF**

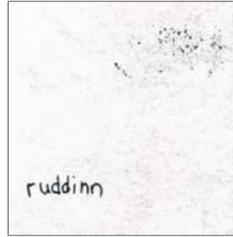
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Hraun
I Can't Believe It is Not Happiness

I'm not going to tell you that the packaging of this album didn't frighten me. That would be lying. Hraun is written in Old English font, and the album title is obviously an emotional take on the margarine company I Can't Believe It's Not Butter, which is embarrassing. The album cover is a picture of the band (a sensitive looking bunch, to be sure) eating a candlelit dinner at what appears to be a nice restaurant. Inside, there's a picture of one of them reading a book. Already I can't relate. The best word to describe this band is 'safe'. Light acoustic guitar, soft voices, and semi-fuzzy electric guitar lines. The lyrics testify against the unfulfilling life of drinking and bathroom blowjobs. Hraun is kind of like your concerned 35-year-old brother who's "been through it all." Might wanna pass this one on to your parents, because this is the kind of stuff that frat boys listen to back in the States. **CF**

www.myspace.com/hraunhraun



Ruddinn
Ruddinn

Calling himself a 'true Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,' the lone Ruddinn has been writing and putting forth pop for the past 15 years. If I'm doing my math right, this guy has been around since the early 80's. It seems that Ruddinn might be stuck in a time capsule, as most of his work draws from the likes of New Order, Joy Division and maybe a little Slowdive. The songs, for the most part, are well-crafted electronic pop. Unfortunately, the album is poorly produced (it appears that Ruddinn did all the work himself) and ultimately it comes off as more of a quickly-produced 10-track rough than a carefully crafted album. The vocals sound muffled and amorphous, and there are dissonant parts here that were probably not intended. Moreover, when the similarities between Eyes on Me and New Order's Bizarre Love Triangle become too obvious, it seems like Ruddinn might be up to some foul play. I thought you said you've been doing this for 15 years, man. **CF**

www.myspace.com/ruddinn



Björk
Volta

Like enthusiastic parents, we're supposed to egg Björk on. Even if she doesn't score a goal or win first place at the science fair, we've still got to hand it to her just for being, well, Björk. And I acknowledge that her work should stand apart from the conventional musical criticisms and be praised for constantly redefining genres and defying musical linearity. Sure. But that doesn't make listening to Volta any easier. Much of the album is so instrumentally indulgent and electronically reliant that the ultimate effect is something disjointed, incoherent, and frankly, inaccessible. Maybe the extensive cast (ranging from Timbaland to Lightning Bolt's Brian Chippendale) is to blame for the lack of focus. Björk certainly hasn't lost her abilities as a musical visionary (Vertebrae by Vertebrae) or a catchy tunesmith (Declare Independence and Earth Intruders). Still, there is nothing truly engaging about her latest release, and the main effect of Volta is that it has pretty much strolled right by you. The good moments (and there are a few) are just too sparse. Where Volta depends too heavily on instrumentation and the work of contributors, it becomes a little ostentatious. Even for Björk. **CF**

www.myspace.com/ruddinn



Unun
Æ

Supergroup Unun, including 'Cubes guitarist Þór Eldon, at first might seem like a poor man's Sugarcubes, but with a closer look they manage to create something entirely their own. Frontman Heiða managed to supersede the inevitable Björk comparisons to become one of the most interesting artists of the past decade. But the bands' engine is guitarist Dr. Gunni and his knack for writing melodic post-punk, as exemplified on, well, pretty much all of the tracks. They became an instant hit in Iceland in 1994, but failed to conquer the world and rumour has it that Gunni is still paying off debts accrued during the attempt. Eldon left the band after the first album, and the follow up failed to capture the spark of the original. Heiða moved back to Keflavík where she fronts underground band Hellvar and recently ran for MP, whereas Dr. Gunni is finally living up to his assumed moniker as Iceland foremost authority on the subject of rock and roll. **VG**



Pan
Virgins

These five kids from Hafnarfjörður, who produced this album themselves, present tight hard rock worth respect. While the guitars, often mixing palm muting with harmonics, don't catch you by surprise, the band has the kind of timing that makes you nod your head to even conventional tunes. In addition to simply being well-rehearsed, the band works around genuinely strong vocals from Halldór Örn Guðnason. How good is his singing? He can make "Pseudo-saviour of gold/ wash me whiter than snow" sound gutty and bold. (Rhyme intentional.) If the band can mix up the rhythms a little, as songs like Dying in Our Prime indicate they have the ability to do, Pan will be touted as the next Minus. **BC**

www.myspace.com/panband



Hera
Don't Play This

Not since Spinal Tap's Shark Sandwich has someone lobbed a softball like this to a reviewer – the abysmal cover featuring a smiling, topless girl, (the picture cuts just at the top of the breasts to be playful), does not help the tag line Don't Play This at all. But Hera and the performers on her album don't deserve the bile that the cover raises. True, she has a song about chocolate, Chocolate, It Melts the Pain Away, that won't win her any songwriting competitions. But she seems earnest enough, and she has a crystal clear voice. And a lot of people don't listen to words anyway. And maybe twelve year olds need a topless role model. **BC**

www.myspace.com/herasings



Nýdönsk
Ekki er á allt kosið

In the early 90's, the Icelandic music landscape was dominated by four bands: The plastic soul of Sálín, the pseudo Stones of SSSól and the art-pop of Todmobile. The best of the bunch was a group of kids from MH high school who, in 1989 released their first, and best album, Ekki er á allt kosið. Despite finishing last in that year's Eurovision, singer Daniel and his gang painted an unforgettable portrait of teenagers blindly following trends on Apaspi, becoming trendsetters themselves in the process. Mellow, acoustic, and slightly hippie-ish, the stand out tracks feature bassist Björn Jörundur centre stage on Hjalpaðu mér upp and Fram á nótt. The early 90's saw the two front men recruiting veterans Jón Ólafsson and Stefán Hjörleifsson, each album selling more than the one before, but quality wise heading in the opposite direction. They split up after 1993's flopp Hunang, Daniel heading out to form Gus Gus while Björn stayed behind and eventually reformed the band as sole front man. **VG**

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The Night the PA System Blew

Text by Chandler Fredrick Photo by Gulli

Who: **Motion Boys, Sprengjuhöllin, FM Belfast and Hjaltalin**
Where: **Iðnó**
When: **May 24, 2007**

As a part of the Take Me Down to Reykjavik City concert series, the Grapevine assembled a handful of upstart bands from Reykjavik to showcase at Iðnó. The historical theatre house is not typically used for shows, even though it has a spacious main ballroom and a sizable antechamber. Sound at the theatre is clean and relatively professional; that is, when the bands aren't cutting out every minute or so. But we'll get to that later.

American singer-songwriter Sam Amidon started the show with a set of what he claimed to be "old American songs," but I'm pretty sure I heard some Tears for Fears in there. The native Vermonter's first few songs sounded like an impressive mixture of southern folk and the Red House Painters. However, in the middle of one particularly gorgeous number he belted out two horrific shrieks, with accompanying eerie facial expressions. People carefully began to move away from the front of the stage in what seemed to be an act of self-defence. Fight or flight. A last minute addition, Amidon and his antics didn't seem to fit in with the seriousness of the other bands that night.

As for Hjaltalin, I typically get sceptical when a band I haven't seen before gets on stage with instruments like the bassoon, the accordion or the cello. It can go either way with these bands: either they rock (like The Arcade Fire) or they come out overblown and pretentious, using layered instruments to cover up bad songwriting (think The Decemberists). Fortunately, Hjaltalin ended up being more like

the former. The band had a well-rehearsed set, the power of Högni Egilsson's litting voice, and numerous clever string arrangements. "Good-bye July" was among the best performances that night.

As far as the hype surrounding FM Belfast goes, I'm sold. The members dressed up like my grandparents and furiously dhrumped everything in sight. Mastermind Árni +1 fingered away at a sticker-covered Mac while the others sang in high, cooing voices. With strong beats and scattered electronic blips and bleeps, they had at least 5% of the crowd dancing (which was more than any other band that night). Without a doubt, the sassy FM Belfast stole the show.

I should say that if Sprengjuhöllin is the least impressive band on your ticket, you're doing something right. The quintet isn't going to break new musical ground anytime soon, but they do the pop thing well. An Icelandic rendition of the Motown favourite Heatwave was the highlight of their set.

On came the long awaited (and debuting!) Motion Boys. Quite unexpectedly, singer Birgir Isleifur opened up with a solo, an unplugged version of Hold Me Closer to Your Heart on the electric piano. A group chorus of "hoos" at the interlude indicated that a lot of the audience had done their homework. The band came out and played a few songs together, when suddenly the power blew out. The band, being either valiant troopers or too deaf to hear that they'd lost their loud keyboards, continued their song before finally realising that they had rocked too hard. The Boys looked unscathed, but the crowd was obviously disappointed. Eventually, Birgir Isleifur finished the set solo and unplugged to a diminishing crowd.



Orchestral Manoeuvres in London

Text and photo by Ben H. Murray

Who: **Benni Hemm Hemm and Stórsveit Nix Noltes**
Where: **Catch, London**
When: **May 21, 2007**

The venue in East London known as Catch does have a catch – it'd be easier to track down one of the Jule lads in June than locate this bar, situated just outside the city's main financial district in the fashionably scruffy Shoreditch area. Thankfully, the lost late-comers (and there were many) didn't miss a note as Benni Hemm Hemm took some time to make the transition from tuning their plethora of instrumentation to full orchestral magnificence.

At this point I have to admit that I was rather spoiled by my previous Benni Hemm Hemm experience. I saw them perform a joyous pre-Christmas gig in a Reykjavik theatre late last year with about 15 band members, including a full brass section supporting Benedikt Hermannsson's whisper-smooth vocals and gentle guitar playing. Sadly, not all of the extended band members were present (the seven who did make the journey to London packed the small stage with a trombone, trumpet, horn, drums and various guitars) but they more than made up for their lack of numbers with a genuinely delightful evening of unique music.

Fight is one of the band's few English language songs and its down-tempo attitude doesn't showcase the band's ability too well in comparison to their grander Icelandic-language songs, despite having some nice poetic lyrics about falling out with a spouse on a grey day. Other tracks from Kajak, their triumphant last album, followed and included the brilliantly bold Brekken plus "the saddest song ever writ-

ten in Icelandic", a slow-burning lullaby which was dedicated to the aluminium factories that are irreparably scarring Iceland's landscape.

When you see Benni Hemm Hemm it's the little details that make them so memorable: the little zipping sound of a finger scraping against a guitar string as the chord changes; the brass instruments, including the eternally jolly French horn player, gently fading in and out of each song; and the pint glass of dried peas that joined the band. The peas were housed in a plastic beer glass with their own microphone and whenever the band reached one of their many crescendos the peas danced a merry jig in the glass, with a little help from the bass instruments, and added to the sound with a rhythmic rattling. Some were lost in action but thankfully the multi-tasking trumpet player had peas in reserve.

After Benni Hemm Hemm departed the cramped stage to much applause from the modest crowd, the-band-that-nobody-dared-to-try-and-pronounce took their place and treated the audience to some lively folk rock instrumental work. Stórsveit Nix Noltes, to give them their full name, consists of two mysteriously beautiful ladies on accordion and violin and assorted members of Benni Hemm Hemm and friends on various other instruments. The sound is chaotic, but not overly so, and could be likened to a gang of delinquent Romanian gypsies – who can hold their vodka and still turn out a decent tune or three – running riot at an Icelandic wedding party. Despite not having a single vocal contribution in their whole set, they offered something a little different to Benni Hemm Hemm and something very different to the dozens of guitar-based bands that were also playing in Shoreditch that night.

Kolviður: A Noble Idea Gone Wrong

Text by Sveinn Birgir Björnsson

On May 15th, the President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, officially opened the Iceland Carbon Fund's website at a prestigious gathering with great fanfare and media attention. The founding partners of the fund are the NGOs the Icelandic Forestry Association and the Icelandic Environment Association, while the Government of Iceland, Reykjavik Energy, and Kaupung Bank supply the financial assistance.

The aim of the Iceland Carbon Fund is to finance forestry in Iceland in order to dispel the effects of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere. Plants and vegetation bind CO₂ through photosynthesis, turning the carbon (C) into plant mass, while releasing the oxygen (O₂). The combination of continuing deforestation, and the ever-increasing release of CO₂, mostly from transportation, is among the main contributors to global warming, so forestry seems to be an obvious path to pursue in the battle against greenhouse gases. In that context, the Iceland Carbon Fund is obviously a noble idea.

Let me make one thing clear from the start. I fully believe that the Iceland Carbon Fund was created with the best of intentions and that the people behind it believed they were doing a genuinely good thing. And the idea per se, to bind CO₂ through forestry, is a genuinely good idea.

Still, something has gone horribly wrong. The fund offers individuals, companies and organizations the opportunity to "neutralise" their yearly CO₂ emission from transportation by paying for the planting of a sufficient number of trees to reverse the effects of the CO₂ they produce. To that end, the Government of Iceland has "neutralised" all their flights to foreign shores this year. And yes, that is probably a shitload of trees, in case you were wondering. Myself? Well, I would need to pay the Iceland Carbon Fund around 5000 ISK to plant 35 trees to CO₂ neutralise the family's trusted Opel Zafira.

And how is this a bad thing you may ask? Well, think of it in this context. In the past, the church sold absolution. If you committed a very small sin, you would buy the budget package and be absolved from your sin, but for a really big sin, say rape and pillage, you

were obviously required to contribute more. See the similarities?

In their defence, it must be said that on the Iceland Carbon Fund's website it is stated that this should not be regarded as an absolution of sins. They point out that the most effective way of meeting the challenge of global warming is not to neutralise CO₂ emission, but to seek ways to reduce CO₂ emission. But, as I stated before, it is not really the Icelandic Carbon Fund that is causing me concern.

It has hardly been two weeks since the project got off its feet, and already car dealerships are running ad campaigns claiming that every car they sell is environmentally friendly, since the dealership will pay for neutralising, nay, absolving, your new car's CO₂ emission... for the first year. This sounds all too much like the delusional gambler who always intends to pay off his gambling debts with the next big win.

Now we are being bombarded with messages from companies that have miraculously become "CO₂ neutral." Suddenly, every product you may want to buy is "green," because somewhere, someone is planting trees instead and now there is no real need for you to change your pattern of consumption. In the hands of the market, being green is not question of survival; it is a question of pushing a product.

In reality, forestry is a band-aid fix that does nothing to eliminate the real problem, which is the un-sustainable mode of living that we have chosen. We need to reduce greenhouse gases by actually driving less, not by driving more. Forestry should be our way of bringing down CO₂ emission, and there is certainly enough to go around, not neutralising added CO₂ emission. Myself, I bought a bike and stopped driving to work.

Sending out the message that it is even possible to somehow stay 'neutral,' when it comes to global warming is wrong. We should not entertain the idea of staying on the sidelines when it comes to this fight. As of now, we all belong in the ring.

To bring the discussion to a close, I applaud every true effort to protect the environment, but being truly green takes more than slapping a bumper sticker at the back of your car.

This sounds all too much like the delusional gambler who always intends to pay off his gambling debts with the next big win.

The Fate of Small Town Iceland

Text by Haukur S. Magnússon

"You know what I think should be done about Flateyri? Nothing. Nothing at all. Not even a kilo of quota should go their way. No last-minute operations to glaze over the grim facts-of-the-matter, no patch on the gaping wound. Nothing."

Sitting in the now-abolished smoking section of Ísafjörður pub/café Langi Mangi my companion, a journalist for local newspaper BB, lit a cigarette, chugged the last of his beer and finished his sentiment. "It's time people get confronted with the harsh reality of this system. Head on. It is doing exactly what it was designed for; this is how it works, this is what it amounts to and this is what they voted for, continually. So let them enjoy it!"

What should be done about Flateyri indeed? Mere days after the parliamentary elections, word got out that the proprietors of Flateyri's largest employer ("sole employer" is hardly an overstatement), fishery Kambur, were liquidating the business. 120 townspeople, nearly half the population, stand to lose their jobs this fall. Their given reasons: inflation, the resulting strength of the Króna against foreign currencies and the high cost of renting quota (the highly debated Icelandic fishing regulatory system deserves many lengthy essays. It is quota based, and a few large fisheries now possess a huge portion of the allotted quota. Smaller businesses and independent operators need to rent theirs at a considerable price). Kambur's owners will of course walk away with considerable sums of money. That's business.

Regular readers of the Grapevine may remember learning about Flateyri in issue 12 of last year, in an article entitled Flateyri and the fate of small town Iceland. It mainly dealt with the town's continually diminishing size, its one-horse economy and the fact that an estimated third of its population of 300 (down from 500 in its heyday) is comprised of immigrants and immigrant-workers from Poland and the Philippines who sometimes have trouble fully adapting and participating in local culture. It portrayed a still proud small-town, struggling to find its legs in modernity following a series of setbacks.

One of the people I interviewed for said article was Halldór Halldórsson, mayor of Ísafjörður, the coalition township that unites Flateyri with several (closely) neighbouring towns. While he agreed that Flateyri had its fair share of problems, he expressed optimism for its future. "There's plenty of jobs to be had," he told me, "even though we need to

import labour to operate the business [Kambur's workforce is 90% immigrant]. Kambur is doing extremely well. The company had a record-year last year [2005], processing a full 8,000 tons of products."

So much for record-years.
So much for jobs to be had.

Luckily, God (or the Icelandic government) rarely closes a door without opening some windows. And behold! The viability of establishing a large-scale oil refinery in the vicinity of Flateyri is already being researched and seriously discussed. It would provide the people of the northern Westfjords with 5-600 additional jobs. And they need them, as it is evident that the fishing industry on which these towns were originally founded has left the area for good, the region's allotted quota quietly traded away by the robber barons that built (and later dismantled) their empires there. These are the Icelandic equivalents of Flint, Michigan. This is how the system works: it is doing exactly what it was designed for.

Icelanders often speak of problems facing small communities such as Flateyri, problems shared by most if not all of the small towns lining the island's shoreline, problems for which behemoth aluminium smelting plants (and now oil-refineries) are often our government's proposed solution.

Here are some examples:

- Educated youngsters aren't returning to the communities that fostered them. This is sometimes referred to as brain drain.
- Government jobs are severely unevenly distributed around the country. Save for a precious few, most of them are located in Reykjavik, even those positions founded during the last decade when it was evident that smaller towns would need the boost they could provide.
- Uniting with neighbouring towns (way of the future!) meant forfeiting certain modes of employment, such as common commerce and service jobs. As a result, available jobs are pointedly un-diverse.
- Most of the community is employed by a single company.
- A large part of that company's workforce (at Kambur: 90%) is comprised of immigrants.
- Language-barriers and scarce educational resources often isolate said immigrant portion from the rest of the community, making it hard for them to fully integrate.

Surely, heavy industry will serve to solve these problems for good.

Luckily, God (or the Icelandic government) rarely closes a door without opening some windows.

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Reader's Response

Regarding the article 'The struggle for autonomy' by Vilhelm Vilhelmsson in 'The Grapevine', issue 04/2007.

After reading the rather one-sided article about Ungdomshuset and its people, I will have to comment on a few things since it is definitely not a neutral view of the case about Ungdomshuset written by Vilhelm Vilhelmsson.

The article is written like the people connected to Ungdomshuset are a group of nice innocent kindergarden kids playing with their toys. Sorry, but that is not the fact. Far from, actually.

The vast majority of those people are notorious cold blooded criminals trying to reach their goals with primitive methods, such as violence and vandalism. They have no respect what so ever for the general society and its people. They have taken away their own membership card to the civilized, democratic world where most of us belong.

When demonstrating the representatives of the Ungdomshuset always cover their faces with a mask or a cloth so they cannot be recognized when they commit their crimes. They do not even want to show their faces – I would call that being cowardice.

It would have been appropriate for Mr. Vilhelm Vilhelmsson to mention what the Police actually found inside the Ungdomshuset: The Police found a huge arsenal of weapons, enough to start a small war! Nasty weapons like molotov cocktails, flame launchers, nail canisters, iron spears, big stones and rocks etc. etc.

All to be used against the Police who, at bottom line, just did their job – did what they were ordered to do by the politicians.

Mr. Vilhelm Vilhelmsson describes himself as a regular in the Ungdomshuset. Then I would expect he would know just a little about what is also going on in connection to this, now former, Ungdomshuset.

One must NOT forget, that the Ungdomshuset did NOT belong to the people that used the house. They were occupying the house illegally, and since they would not leave the house voluntarily, the Police were told to clear the house. The house was sold to the religious organisation, Faderhuset. However, I do NOT sympathize with either group! Just to make that clear!

The people connected to Ungdomshuset were ready to start a war and of course the Police had to be well prepared as well. I do not – of course – sympathize with police brutality and if it really happened, (as stated by Mr. Vilhelm Vilhelmsson), during the eviction of the house, the individual officers must be found and prosecuted. But honestly, I doubt that there were any, but you never know.

During the eviction of Ungdomshuset, some of the autonomous people dragged innocent people out of their cars and put the cars on fire and pushed them towards buildings in order to set them on fire too. Furthermore, they were demolishing public high schools, local shops in the streets, and they put plastic containers and, everything else they could find, on fire on the streets of Copenhagen.

I am a police officer myself, and I served in the Noerrebro area for about 7 years, and I know a lot of what is really going on in connection with Ungdomshuset. They are not as described by Mr.

Vilhelm Vilhelmsson. They hate everybody else than themselves, they hate the Police and other authorities, they hate the democratic society outside their own small world, and they hate everybody else that do not share their views upon the world.

Mr. Vilhelm Vilhelmsson also mentioned in his article that some of the arrested people were sentenced without any evidence being presented against them other than police reports. Well, that is not unusual in Denmark or many other civilized countries, I think. The Police do NOT necessarily need anything else but the police reports. Just to make that clear to you and the readers of 'The Grapevine'.

It is also important to mention that if you, during a violent demonstration, are told by the Police to leave the scene, and you for some reason decide to stay, you are at great risk of being arrested. ALSO if you do not take part in the demonstration yourself but just are there as a spectator. That is the way the law is in Denmark.

Mr. Vilhelm Vilhelmsson made it sound like the Police just arrested people because of the fun of it. There was actually a reason and as said before, if you are told to leave, and you do not, then you will be arrested. And that is fair enough, I think. And if you were wrongly arrested, you are of course entitled to compensation. After all, everyone make mistakes – sometimes also the Police.

Mr. Vilhelm Vilhelmsson also mentions that the Police refused, if asked, to give their name and badge number which they are required to according to the law. According to the rules in Denmark, the Police are, if asked, ONLY required to give name, rank, and duty station, (we are not required to give our badge number for your information).

But the Police are NOT required to give out this information to people under the influence of illegal substances and/or alcohol and/or violent or aggressive people. And I could suspect that there were a few people that day that would fall into one of these categories.

It could be the reason if some officers did not give their name – I do not know – I was not there. If it really happened, as said by Vilhelm Vilhelmsson.

Vilhelm Vilhelmsson also wrote that it is a minor offence to put up posters on the streets in Copenhagen but none the less it is a violation of the laws in Denmark. And he also wrote that it might be a minor offence to comment on the behaviour of the Police but if it is done in a humiliating/offending manner, it is also a violation to the Danish law. Like it or not.

I am not saying that the Danish Police are not making any mistakes, but claiming that the Danish police are a bunch of notorious people who, quote start: '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 to 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, (the Police), behaviour, putting up posters or other harmless activities', end of quote by Vilhelm Vilhelmsson, is just ridiculous and shows



how little he actually knows of what is going on.

It is just stupid and primitive when people like Vilhelm Vilhelmsson claims that this is the way the Danish Police is and this is how they work. Maybe it is a surprise to you, but that is NOT the fact. The Danish Police are actually highly respected both nationwide as well as internationally. The Danish Police Force got a lot of positive feed back from the general population, from the politicians and from other sides as well, for the eviction of Ungdomshuset. Maybe a few cases about police brutality in the aftermaths of the riots, will end in court - nobody knows - time will tell.

This was my comment on Vilhelm Vilhelmsson's article about the, now former, Ungdomshuset. I am most certain that if Vilhelm Vilhelmsson read his article once again and having read my article, he might agree with me, when I say his article was very one-sided and not very neutral, which is a wrong approach in any article to be printed in a news paper.

After all the readers of 'The Grapevine' deserve to get another point of view of the whole Ungdomshuset case and not just a one-sided and partial view from Vilhelm Vilhelmsson. It is not fair that the readers of The Grapevine might think that what Vilhelm Vilhelmsson wrote in his article are the facts! Its not facts – far from – and I truly think many of The Grapevines readers also know that.

But NOT all!
That is the reason, I wrote my article. One might say that my article is one-sided too, but it is most certain more in accordance to the facts compared to the article written by Vilhelm Vilhelmsson. Reykjavik, the 14th of May 2007.

Klaus W. Andreasson
Danisk police Officer
wallbergvip@hotmail.com

Editor's Response

Dear Klaus,
I believe your letter is the best possible confirmation of why Vilhelmsson's article needed to appear. Of course, Vilhelmsson's article was by no means a neutral account of what happened in Norrebro in the days leading up to, and continuing after, the closing of Ungdomshuset. The thing that strikes me

as odd is that I have yet to see a neutral account of what happened.

Every mainstream media outlet's coverage of the events I watched, read, or heard, was extremely one-sided. The people protesting the closing of the Ungdomshuset were badly represented in these segments, if at all. Your letter is full of blatant oversimplifications, erroneous statements and false accusations. But, it is entirely possible that none of this is your fault, since the media did a terrible job of presenting both sides of the struggle.

You state: "The article is written like the people connected to Ungdomshuset are a group of nice innocent kindergarden kids playing with their toys. Sorry, but that is not the fact. [...] The vast majority of those people are notorious cold blooded criminals trying to reach their goals with primitive methods, such as violence and vandalism." Your statement shows an incredible lack of respect for logic and contradicts your desire for a neutral discussion of what actually happened. Claiming that the thousands who marched in support of the Ungdomshuset are cold-blooded criminals is not only false, it is downright stupid.

Your claim that "they hate everybody else that do not share their views upon the world" and your statement: "they have taken away their own membership card to the civilized, democratic world where most of us belong" are incredibly contradictory statements, be that as it may, the fact remains protesters have human rights like the rest of us.

You decide to add insult to injury by claiming that never during this entire period did the Danish Police overstep their boundaries. You act as though police brutality is entirely acceptable, if it ever happened.

Obviously, it remains to be seen how much will come out of the forthcoming trials over the Police officers in Copenhagen who have already been charged with brutality. You may recall the 2001 protests in Gothenburg, Sweden where a young protestor was shot in the back while running away from the Police. I fail to see how Danish Police officers should differ so tremendously from their colleagues around Scandinavia when it comes to Police brutality.

I could go on and on... and on, pointing out all the ways in which your letter is wrong, but sadly I don't have the space to do it. Let it suffice to say that you have proven exactly why people need to read The Grapevine.

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Börn Náttúrunnar, Skólavörðustigur 17a, 101 Reykjavík



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Green Apple, Laugavegur 20, 101 Reykjavík



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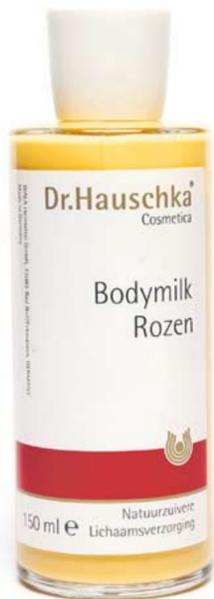
Green Apple, Laugavegur 20, 101 Reykjavík



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A good selection of educational toys produced by Grimm's Spiel & Holz Design are for sale at Börn náttúrunnar. This stacking rainbow is handmade and dyed with natural non-toxic colours and can be used to create numerous objects like a bridge, flower or a tunnel.

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Pay Attention!

Green Apple

Laugavegur 20, 101 Reykjavík

Green Apple's sign reads: Aromatherapy, Massage oil, Bath oil, Romance. The tiny organic shop on Laugavegur sells a range of products aimed at health and wellbeing. The selection includes massage and other relaxation products such as: essential oils, bath products, oil burners, steam vaporisers, as well as environmentally friendly laundry and cleaning products. Packaged foods and drinks include herbal teas, soy products and wheat-free pastas.

The store also stocks the Aromatic Herbal Pack range by Arose. The packs can be used for general relaxation or to improve blood circulation, muscle tension and spasms, back and period pains, and migraines. The range includes eye pillows, shoulder and back packs, and wrist packs - placed on your mouse pad to support

the wrist when using the computer. The packs, which can be put in the microwave to be used as a heat pack or in the freezer to be used as a cold pack, consist of brown rice, ginger, mint, wansao long, lemon balm and lemon grass.

The 18-month-old addition to the downtown shopping district sources most of its products from an organic farm in Thailand. Store owner Linda Friðriksdóttir, who swears by the effectiveness of her products, says she opened the store after getting sick herself. She found it difficult to find chemical-free products which would help her to recover. "The drink and foods in Iceland have a lot of additives [so] I started to bring organic food produce to Iceland," she said. For such a small store, this place offers a great range.



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Walking Trails Near Reykjavík

Text by Sveinn Birgir Björnsson Photos by Gulli



Mt. Esja

The 914 meter high Esja stands across from Reykjavik on the other side of Kollafjörður, the small cove by which the city is built. While technically not a mountain, rather a volcanic mountain range, Reykjavikian's will invariably name it as their favourite mountain in the country. Yes, such is foolish local pride. Esja is a popular hiking spot for locals and travellers alike, and on a clear and sunny day, the view over Reykjavik from the mountaintop is breathtaking and makes the relatively easy three-hour hike well worth the effort.



Mosfellsdalur Valley

The suburban town Mosfellsbær sits on the outskirts of Reykjavik City, at the bottom of the beautiful Mosfellsdalur valley. There are many intriguing walking treks around the valley, although two deserve a special attention. From the Laxness museum in Gljúfrasteinn, the former home of Nobel Prize winning author and poet, Halldór Laxness, two marked trails go by the name 'In the Path of the Poet.' The trails will take trekkers through some of the poet's favourite spots; some of which served as backdrops to the events in his epic novels.



Pingvellir National Park

Pingvellir, by Lake Þingvallavatn, is a historical place in Iceland. The site of Alþingi, one of the oldest parliamentary institutions of the world. A national park since 1928, Þingvellir was recently designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The continental drift can clearly be seen in the cracks which traverse the region. There are many trails around Þingvellir and Lake Þingvallavatn. Treks will take you along Almannagjá, Lögberg the cliff overlooking the place where the Alþingi (assembly), met and Drekkingshylur (The Drowning Pool), where mothers of illegitimate children were drowned.



Mt. Hengill

Hengill is an 803 meter high active volcano located between Reykjavik and Þingvellir. The last volcanic eruption is believed to have been 2000 years ago, but numerous hot springs and fumaroles still bear witness to the geothermal activity in the area. There are many interesting hiking trails in the area and informative signposts with geographical information have been added along the treks. Several huts are in the area, available for overnight stays or shorter stops free of charge. Hengill offers all the visual excitement a trekker can expect in Iceland.



Mt. Bláfjöll

The Bláfjöll (Blue Mountains) mountain range is Reykjavik City's skiing resort, but the area is also full of exciting hiking treks. The old Reykjavegur trail, an old walking route from Reykjanes to Þingvellir, has been divided up to seven sections, each one being ideal for a day's walk. Two sections of the old Reykjavegur trail start and end in Bláfjöll: the 16 km Kaldársel – Bláfjöll trek, between the mountain and the beautiful Hafnafjörður lava fields; and the 20 km Bláfjöll – Hamragil trail. The treks are marked and easily navigated.



Heiðmörk Park

The natural reserve park, Heiðmörk, lies just outside Reykjavik. Since 1949, Reykjavik's Forestry Station has planted an estimated 50 million trees in the park. With a large recreational area, the park is full of walking, jogging and biking trails between the small forests and beautiful lava formations. Within the park are Red Hills pseudo-craters, unique red lava formations that are created when the hot lava crosses a wet surface and the steam explodes through the lava surface. Heiðmörk is an ideal spot for romantic late night walks, family picnics or cross-country running.



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 - at Reykjavik harbor

A Trip to an Eco-Village

Text by Páll Hilmarsson Photo by Gulli

An hour's drive to the East of Reykjavík is the community of Sólheimar with around fifty houses, home to roughly one hundred persons. Sólheimar is the first intentional community in Iceland and the first Icelandic community to be a member of the Global Eco-Village Network. It was also the first place in the Nordic countries to cultivate food bio-dynamically.

A young woman, Sesselja, who had a vision to treat handicapped people in better ways than cattle, founded the community in 1930. Drawing from Rudolf's Steiner ideas and her own on how a human society should function, she started organic growing, allowed mentally handicapped children (or idiots as they were then called) to associate with "normal children", and in the process upset a great number of people. Today the community is fairly accepted, although some minor disputes seem to flare up every now and again, mostly evolving around the spending of money, as always seems to be the case about disputes.

In the community there are a few local run workplaces, a candle factory, organic nursery, arts and crafts store, coffeehouse and a small hotel. Handicapped or not, both work side by side in these workplaces, which are open to the public in the summertime. Sólheimar has a well thought out environmental policy under the motto: "We did not inherit the earth from our ancestors - we borrowed it from our children." One of the goals the Sólheimar community strives to achieve is to create a self-sustained society, relying on organic production and harmony between humans and nature. In 2002 a completely self sustained house was built at Sólheimar, Sesseljuhús, which houses an educational environmental center, with the house itself being the biggest part - a blueprint of sorts for buildings that are built without having a negative impact on the environment.

A visit to Sólheimar is a highly recommended affair. It is a unique place and one that gives a hint of a different future than ever expanding, smog filled, detached cities. Check it out.

www.solheimar.is, www.sesseljuhus.is



"The walking path around the cove in Grafarvogur is my favourite place in Reykjavík. It is a great place for jogging, inline skating or just to stroll around on a beautiful day in good company."

Dofri Hermannsson is an actor and environmentalist. He currently works as a Manager of the Parliamentary Party of the Social Democratic Alliance.

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The Emperor's New Clothes?

Photo by Gulli.

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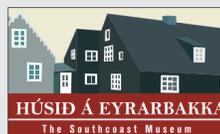
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David and Nenty, Tel: 864 4994, davidbertelsen@gmail.com

Stuff for Sale
Two students from Poland are looking for a flat or room in a reasonable price to rent from August till December or even longer. Contact by mail: tlesna@poczta.onet.pl

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Independent Financial Advice for Expats I am an independent financial consultant specializing in wealth management; pension transfers; trust planning and general financial services for expat English language speakers. For a free no obligation consultation please ring Michael Doyle on (Copenhagen) 0045 41166358. Further details can be found on our website www.grosvenorbell.com

Dear Grapevine and its esteemed readership, I am travelling to Iceland at the end of June and am planning a sightseeing trip around the west fjords. I'm trying to find a travelling companion, or companions, to do this with as I really don't want to go it alone. My goal is to spend 8-10 days thoroughly exploring as much of the area as possible. I would prefer to travel by car, but my shoestring budget precludes me from renting. Ideally, I'd like to find someone with a car to join me, with whom I would split fuel costs. As far as I'm concerned, sleeping arrangements will be dictated by the circumstances at hand. I'm fine with anything from a guesthouse to a tent in the middle of nowhere. Again, budget (and circumstances) would be the determining factor. If anyone is interested in joining me on this trip, please contact me at jevicki@uno.com. Thank you. -John Evicki Dracut, MA, USA



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Stuffed with stuff

At the present population level and with present technology, the planet can allow each human about 1.9 gha.

Alex Elliott examines your ecological footprint.

Page 10

Rather than being a pristine cradle of naturalness – as is commonly suggested – the National Park appears to be a place of cultivated naturalness.

Fabrizio Frascaroli visited Skaftafell and discovered an inherent flaw in environmental discourse.

Page 16

“The ideological message is to personally illustrate that you can be an accountant and a yogi.”

Bersteinn Jónsson offers ghetto yoga classes.

Page 23

“Musically I felt mostly inspired by Wurlitzer Jukebox in the beginning.”

Thomas Morr explains his fascination with music.

Page 22

The band, being either valiant troopers or too deaf to hear that they'd lost their loud keyboards, continued their song before finally realizing that they had rocked too hard.

Chandler Fredrick watched the Motion Boys blow out the sound system.

Page 36



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