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# *Carving up the City*

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## From the Editor's Chair

Throughout January, Reykjavík has seen a sudden surge in politically charged protests. This is cause for celebration.

Despite what misguided tour books will have you believe, Iceland does not have a long democratic tradition. We may have had some functioning form of parliament here before the year 1000, but the original Icelandic Parliament was dissolved in 1262, with a parliamentary decision no less, and Iceland joined the Norwegian kingdom. The ideological winds of change mostly passed us by when other surrounding nations established democracies in the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Icelandic democracy has lasted less than a century.

Maybe that partially explains why Icelanders have always frowned upon on demonstrators. We never had a Bastille to storm. We never fought for our freedom. It was handed to us due to 'external circumstances' after Germany occupied Denmark, our rulers at the time, during WW II. We are a conservative nation where every man should know his place. We know authority comes from above, not from below. No questions asked. Our democratic maturity is stunted.

Perhaps that is about to change.

Let's recount for a moment. After the deci-

sion had bounced around the system for years, plans to tear down two old houses on Laugavegur 4 and 6 were finally set in motion. That sparked a small protest group into action, which set off with a petition to reverse the decision and preserve the buildings. The chain reaction that followed was one of the things that led to, or at least made possible, a mayoral change and a new coalition in city government.

The mayoral change, however, sparked a completely new wave of protest. Again, a petition was circulated, and although close to 6000 people signed it, the new Mayor showed little interest in accepting it. And then they stormed the Bastille. Or City Hall at least, where a heated protest erupted during the inaugural meeting of the new Mayor. For the first time in recent memory, a City Council meeting had to be postponed due to protests.

Fired up by recent developments, I staged my own protest that night against the injustice of having to do the dishes at home. It went unnoticed.

Yet another petition was started to save the bar Sirkus on Klapparstígur. The Mayor gladly accepted that one. A protest concert was organised and spirits were high.

The latest action comes from Reykjavík bar

owners, who, perhaps feeling empowered by the spirit of the age, and generally fed up with the somewhat misguided smoking ban that was put in effect last June, decided to allow smoking in their bars again in protest to the ban. A fine act of civil disobedience if you ask me. What comes of it remains to be seen, but sales numbers for deodorants are sure to take a dive.

I'd call this a good month for democracy. The recent wave of protests shows that democracy in Iceland is not the putrid corpse it has been made out to be. There is life to it yet. It is the duty of every good citizen to protest its government, or so they say, and the minimum requirement guaranteed by freedom of expression should be our right to stand up against the tyranny of government, both local and national.

That is why I am stunned to read comments from public officials and members of the fourth branch of power, the media, claiming that protesters are a mob, and protests are mob behaviour. They would be better served by examining the actions that spurned the protests in the first place.

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# Sour Grapes

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

Dear Editor,

I moved to Iceland around 6 months ago from Birmingham, England. I moved here to be with my long distance boyfriend of almost 3 years, and after 2 and a half years of waiting i finally made the choice by myself to move here. Anyway, at first i loved it, i loved going out and seeing the beautiful landscapes and taking drives into the middle of nowhere to find solace, the kind of thing you couldn't do in a big city like Birmingham. But when i started work things changed, i started noticing people staring at me out of the blue for no reason, which made me uncomfortable, but what could i expect being a coloured girl i guess, but still, things seemed to get worse for me, the more i thought about the stares and the comments about me not being able to speak Icelandic after even 2 to 3 months the more it started to anger me, how could people be so ignorant? I regard myself as a very polite and friendly person, who gives everybody a first and second chance, whereas i feel like nobody gives me a chance to show them who i am before they make their judgement about me and where i'm from. I know that it is an isolated island and that people are not used to immigration, I of all people know that in England there is also racism and prejudice but nowadays there is such a variation of people that colour or race or religion doesnt seem to matter as much as it used to in England. I dont expect things will change anytime soon, but it kinda depresses me in a way that i cant communicate on any level with some people, even if they speak good english, it seems like they are miles away when i talk to them. Infact i find that when i speak english in a public place or at work, i get stared at, which is kind of humourous but can be annoying if you're having a bad day. I know some Icelanders do try really hard to accomodate immigrants, and not all icelanders are ignorant or rude, but i feel that it is a long way before iceland truly accepts immigrants the way other more integrated countries like america or england, which kinda makes me sad, as i would have loved to have stayed here for longer but now i have plans to move back to england in 6 months. I have tried to learn the language, but resources are hard to find, my boyfriend is icelandic and he tries to help the best he can but he can only do so much.. I also think it would be more helpful if Icelanders advertised jobs in english as well as icelandic, because learning icelandic takes some time, and for an english speaker like myself, its extremely hard to find a job when you dont understand any of the advertisements.

thanks for reading,

Jessica x

Dear Jessica,

*It always makes me sad to read letters from people who move to Iceland, only to be confronted with icelanders' prejudices and lack of manner. Your story is hardly more than a variation of a story I've heard many, many times before. But, you and me, we are on the right track here. The only way to uproot prejudices and lack of cultural understanding is to open discussion. Ignorance, pure and simple, is the root of all prejudices, and we need to get to that root, through the only means we have. Open discussion is the only effective method to educate those who are still in the dark. I hope that your letter will be put this issue in new light for somebody. That would be a good start.*

Thank you for writing,  
Editor

Hello,

I would like to ask, through your paper, about the possibility finding penfriend, an Icelandic woman between the age of 45 and 60. I live in north Queensland, Australia, and I am a family person. I would prefer the old fashioned method of correspondence. My address: 18 Cedarbrook Terrace, IDA-LIA, TOWNSVILLE 4811, North Queensland, Australia.

Thanks.

Denise Moore  
Phone 4722 0304  
[denise@townsvilleofficefurniture.com.au](mailto:denise@townsvilleofficefurniture.com.au)

Denise,

*I expect that by old-fashioned mode of correspondence you are referring to carrier pigeons. You can expect my letter in a few weeks, oh, and I need that pigeon back.*

Editor

Editor: Barker Bjornsson

I would like to offer my commemorative poem to be published in your English language daily newspaper. Of course, I was inspired to write this poem on hearing about the death of the great chess player, Bobby Fischer, who was able to find shelter and comfort in your wonderful country, for the last few years of his life.

Thank you Iceland!

Bobby Fischer

Bobby Fischer's gone and died,  
He's famous cause he once defied,  
The Ruskies at their favourite game,  
And he American by name!

It's hard for us to quite assess,  
How good he was at playing chess;  
He took poor Spasky, rook and all,  
And trapped his bishop at the wall.

And with his poisoned pawn approach,  
His queen in danger, did encroach,  
And snatch a piece without exchange,  
Left the white Sicilian strange.

But too outspoken was his curse,  
And like a pawn he felt it worse;  
They threw him in a Japanese cell,  
With both his knights captured as well.

And now he's had his final fling,  
For God has moved to take his King;  
In Iceland's womb he met his fate,  
He's now received his own checkmate!

Written by: Michael J Monteith, January 19, 2008



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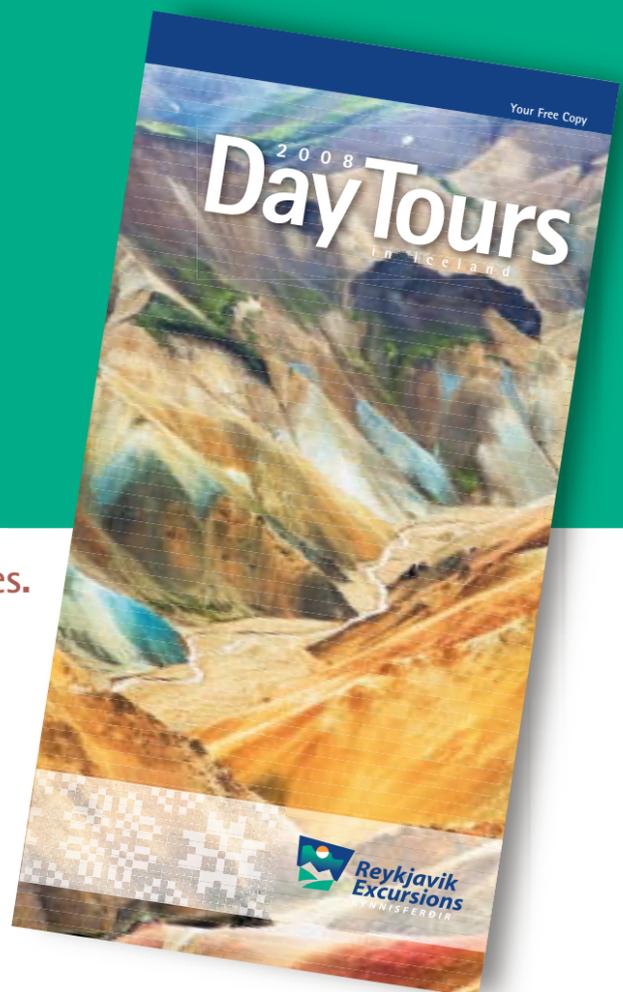


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Actress Bryndís Guðjónsdóttir reenacts the story of Þorgerður Brák, of Egils Saga fame, at the Settlement Centre in Borgarnes.  
Photo by GAS



## Lyrical Savages

**When my director, Atli Rafn [Sigurðarson], came to the project I was just like this single mother with seven children, and some of the kids had to just... go off somewhere else, because, well, I had enough material for a seven or eight-hour show. So I had to start by whittling things down.**

*Actress Brynhildur Guðjónsdóttir is a long-time veteran of the Reykjavík stage. Having frequently crossed thespian-media to star in premier films as well as television and theatre productions, Brynhildur has become well known for her bold personification of characters such as Edith Piaf, from the musical of the same name, for which she won Actress of the Year at Gríman (the Icelandic national theatre awards) in 2004. From the epic Egils saga, Brynhildur has now begotten her first one-woman show, Brák, relating the emotional tale of Þorgerður Brák, the bondswoman who became one of Iceland's matriarchs and who reared Egill Skallagrímsson, the country's first and greatest poet.*

**You're now the second person, in recent years at least, to tackle Egils saga with a solo act. What is it about this story that so appeals to this form?**

That wasn't really the idea. The Settlement Centre has two permanent exhibits, and it was decided to run a vocational theatre there as well. The Centre orders these shows and asks for something specific. Essentially Þorgerður Brák came up because we wanted to keep our roots in the Viking Age. So the story could just as well have been out of Laxdæla saga or Njáls saga, but of course we're not in Laxárdalur Valley. It's not necessarily that Egils saga is a better form than any other story. In fact, I also delve into Laxdæla saga, other ancient Scandinavian histories, Irish ancient history, The Book of Settlement and other sources extremely far and wide. But it was decided from the start that this would be a solo performance. The space just can't accommodate anything else.

**It certainly plays upon the story-telling tradition.**

Yes, exactly. And this is of course a form that demands an enormous amount of work. It's been about a nine-month-long process, day and night, because this has been constantly running along in my head.

**There is very little in Egils saga directly about Brák and you delve somewhat into the broader history of female enslavement by the Vikings.**

Yes. There is of course very little about Brák and about most other bondswomen. There are a few who get a sort of vindication because they are Iceland's matriarchs and they raise good men who marry good daughters. But sources about slaves are very scarce and are also coloured by those writing them. These Icelandic sagas recount the same events as some Irish scribes, but it's completely black and white. For us, these are heroic tales, and the women were fairly happy to come over and so on. In Ireland these were considered the most disgusting people imaginable. The Vikings that came and kidnapped young women and children were revolting animals. So I have to

look at everything and then, because I'm writing a play, there has to be a bad guy, you know, and in my case I side with the Irish. Not that this is polemic, it's not a polemic play. It's just blowing life into our story and showing that it is incredibly enjoyable and that it draws a lot from Irish sagas, for example, and there are many stories that mirror each other very precisely.

**To what extent then is this actually a story of Brák? It seems much more comprehensive, as a story about women in the saga age more generally.**

Well the play is called "Brák" and tells the story of Þorgerður Brák, but in light of the fact that sources are so scarce, both about her and other slaves, I chose to weave the story around who this woman was. She was the person who nursed Egill, Iceland's greatest poet and the man who is called the father of Icelandic poetry. With him, certain poetic forms emerge in Iceland that didn't exist in Norway but that were rooted in Ireland. What did he know? Well he knew poetry, he knew magic and he was a hero. What kind of person raises that sort of man? So I had to jump back and forth in the story to find out what he was made of in terms of what kind of upbringing he received. But it's clearly a story of emotion, it's the emotional story of a person, and it's the story of an era, essentially, much more so than the daily life of some bondswoman. It isn't exactly: she woke up, ate breakfast and went to work.

Essentially I started out knowing that there are eleven lines written about her in Egils saga, and not much else.

**How did you decide where to start then, when you took on this whole project?**

Basically, I started by reading Egils saga and mapping it out a little bit, and then I went into the Settlement period and mapped out the movements of the people that came to these places at this time, what other bondswomen's stories are interesting to look at and which stories mirror each other. Gradually it became bigger and bigger and at one point it was just like this overawing helmet. There was a core or a kind of sun which was Brák, and from her came all these rays, and then I just had to choose and refuse... in which direction do I want to go? What stories can be accommodated within this? When my director, Atli Rafn [Sigurðarson], came to the project I was just like this single mother with seven children, and some of the kids had to just... go off somewhere else, because, well, I had enough material for a seven or eight-hour show. So I had to start by whittling things down.

**And just chasing down interesting tidbits that seemed to surface...**

Exactly, and what remained is what ended up in the show. Your head just becomes a certain kind of filter: some things stay and the rest just goes.

**Does that relate to this being what you call an**

**emotional show? Is that what you were filtering for? Emotional relevance?**

Yes undoubtedly. For me, you know, this was just an incredibly emotionally rich story of, you know, people. Of course they were Vikings who killed and pillaged and burned and raped and were completely mad, but they were still people. Especially with someone like Egill, in all his lyricism, it is so easy to read his emotional life through his verse. The need to say these things must come from somewhere, and so many answers lie in the poetry.

When you start leafing through the books, the stuff is, well, it's fairly dry. But you just need to pick at it and get underneath the surface, and then it's so incredibly juicy. Essentially, you know, without having looked for it especially, that's just the stuff that stands out.

You see, this is all just old and new and true and false. It might not be completely true that some guy jumped his height dressed in full armour. That's maybe not totally true, but these are all fine stories, you know. Furthermore, these stories are supposed to have happened in 800, 900, and 1,000 AD, but they're not written until 1,100-and-something. And now we're sitting here talking, I mean, if someone sits down in the year 2,400 to write about what we were saying, then it's probably going to be a little bit different. So you know, you try to see things mirrored, but this is naturally all my interpretation of what I'm reading.

This all happened and is happening sort of automatically. The show is a kind of puzzle. The pictures come gradually and it's not until the end that we see the full picture, what we intended to see. We don't necessarily get the whole frame first. That's what's so exciting, I think.

*Brák is now showing at the Settlement Centre in Borgarnes. For more information about available shows visit [www.landnam.is](http://www.landnam.is). Tickets are available at 437 1600.*

Text by Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir



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## Democratic Antics



Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir is a staff journalist at the Reykjavík Grapevine. She is young and sprightly.

Ah, to be young and virile! Full of raging idealism! Free from the arrogance of age!

What a rousing thing it is to see youthful energy exemplified in the passionate expression of conviction. What an uncomfortable circumstance when that passion clashes with the sober nature of those whose revolutionary spark has fatigued, or those who are obliged to repress it.

Two points of interest on the City Council protests on January 24: One, I was there; Two, it was one of the most awkward experiences of my life.

Valiant, but undoubtedly awkward.

In any other country, where public outcry is more common, the protests would surely have played out very differently than they did here in Reykjavík. More like an indignant rally, perhaps, and less like an angry mob crashing a tea party. I refuse to accept the logic behind many recent criticisms of the event that seem to suggest that the nature of protest should be such that it does not disturb anyone. Vocal expressions of dissent can at times play just as effective and vital a part in a healthy democracy as any other, including written contributions to local media. I do, however, admit that the circumstances surrounding the protest may not have shed the best light on the intended assertions of many of those gathered to voice their discontent.

I know for a fact that the organisers repeatedly urged against personal attacks on behalf of the incoming Mayor, Ólafur F. Magnússon, since the main objections for most were against the undue process of law that the Independence Party and the F-List exercised when they took over City Council. The protest was certainly not formed around any intent more malicious than to demonstrate unrest when no immediate and effective alternative existed.

I also stand unmoved by criticism of the fact that the protest indeed had informal organisers, as that

seems to me a basic and not unprincipled necessity for protest.

That being said, I was proud to have joined in the demonstration. The fact that we, as actively shouting protestors, were allowed not only inside the building, but into the meeting room itself, brings us to the heart of the criticism surrounding this momentous event. We were there to make noise and disrupt, and despite the sensitive nature of the meeting, we weren't ushered out. Inevitably, the result was quite a few uncomfortable moments.

As a young voter of Reykjavík, however, I was dismayed by how much criticism of the event focused on the ostensibly young age of the protestors.

Like most involuntary distinctions in modern-day society, age is subject to an explicit double standard. It has long been a matter of fact that notwithstanding the calibre of their ideas or ideals, "young people" are continually liable to criticism for the mere circumstance of their age.

Granted, babies are babies (assuming that the babies in question don't possess sophisticated forms of logic,) but when it comes to talking about young adults, the prejudice becomes more frustrating.

The mantra that "youth is wasted on the young" effectively illustrates this popular point of view; that juvenescence is plagued by naiveté and foolishness, and the physical prowess of the young is thus squandered on their unfocused, inexperienced nature.

Clearly this theory is silly and completely useless. (And I don't just say so because I am, in fact, young and sprightly.) We might argue, for example, that the ability to fly is wasted on airplanes, because they're made of metal and plastic and thus don't appreciate the talent of soaring as we humans might. Essentially the argument comes down to the fact that this is just the way things are.

Nature demands that youth yields strength and vigour, time yields weariness, and that humans just can't fly.

But what of youth as a quality of spirit, rather than body? What of the distinction between a youthful frame of mind, and of childish action?

When the new majority in city government was announced on January 21, and Ólafur F. Magnússon was asked for justification for what seemed a clearly egocentric political overthrow, he looked like a petulant child gripping his mayoral crown. "Because it's mine!" was all he seemed to argue, "I wannit!"

An expensive suit and calm voice don't certify responsibility or maturity. The loud, disruptive, "shenanigans" of those shouting inside City Hall on January 24 showed much more investment in the well-being of our city and city government than anything Ólafur F. Magnússon or Vilhjálmur Þ. Vilhjálmsson have had to say since this whole mess began.

The distinction that needs to be made here between right and wrong conduct shouldn't be defined by arrogant assumptions of authority, but rather by more substantial virtues. In a democratic society, idealistic or not, merit ought not to be based on the size of your wallet, or the number of grey hairs on your head. The revolutionary glint, when it presents itself, shines just as brightly at any age.

## An Eagle, a Shark and a Pig



Haukur Magnússon is a contributing writer for the Reykjavík Grapevine. He has kittens that need a good home.

At noon. Eating an overpriced, under-cooked slice at Pizza King, thinking of nothing in particular, while my friend gulped down his own while chatting away on a cell phone (and my, how hanging out with friends has become harder as well as easier since the advent of those things); bored and uninspired, the TV blaring in the corner caught my attention: It showed a live broadcast of a mass of indignant young people, booing and heckling at a City Hall podium where a five-minutes ago appointed official asked them to behave. Or else. The sound was turned down, but this seemed exciting enough.

So, off we went.

We missed most of the action, which was too bad. Screaming at politicians would have been nice for a change. Cops had been given the task of keeping someone's peace and were maintaining a strict presence along with their billy clubs. The offending meeting had been adjourned indefinitely, until those pesky kids would leave the building.

What was all the fuss about? Grapevine's editor does his best to explain everything in an intriguing piece elsewhere in this very magazine. Read that.

In the aftermath, media and blog-apes were predictable enough in detailing what went down: Those leaning to the left half-heartedly applauded the young folk for making a stand for democracy, those on the right expressed shock and outrage that anyone would willingly interrupt THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. Especially a group of snott-nosed kids that had no idea what they were talking about anyway.

What caught my attention about that spectacle, however, was the fact that those kids managed to harbour enough genuine faith in politics and politicians to actually be offended by them. That's what stood out for me that day, and that's what still perplexes me and gives me hope in equal measure.

For I expect nothing of any politician. I do not believe in them. In fact, I cannot remember a time after I turned eighteen when I actually expected an elected official to behave in any man-

ner that wasn't specifically aimed at promoting and preserving their own best interest. And I am not the sole proponent of this view; in fact, from what I can tell, this is a feeling indigenous to the whole Western hemisphere, shared by all but the most naïve of my generation.

I cannot remember an election in which my vote was cast for anyone but the least glaringly evil party or candidate on offer. Save for those elections in which I turned in blanks.

It is a sad and laughable fact that nobody really expects politicians to fulfil their pre-election promises once in office. It is equally sad and laughable that nobody really expects politicians to take responsibility for their actions, to step down when they're caught with their hand lodged firmly in the proverbial cookie jar. It is sad and laughable that politicians are able to raise their salaries regularly while at the same time speak loudly of the need to keep inflation at bay, and it is sad and laughable that they can shamelessly appoint their friends and nephews to any and all available posts in the government system.

Politics is a sad and laughable game, where the players aren't idealistic or even socially responsible citizens, so much as jaded rhetoric experts that have effectively mastered the art of never saying anything meaningful at all. Politics is sad and laughable.

I can remember the exact time when the seeds of this hopeless cynicism were planted in me (incidentally, it was at that very moment that I discovered there was such a thing as a teenage Progressive Party member):

At age eighteen, I participated in the "Parliament of Youth", a PR stunt to celebrate the birthday of the European Council, where teenagers from around Iceland were invited to pretend they were MPs for a couple of days, working in councils, making speeches and holding debates. I had expected to gain a small insight into how Alþingi worked while getting to discuss things that mattered with my equally concerned-for-the-world young peers. And what an insight I got.

Turns out, I was the only one of those kids

not enlisted in a political party (what self-respecting teenager wants to be part of a political party?). All the rest of 'em were career politicians in the making, already mastering the lingo and rhetoric of their rotted idols and proudly displaying on their lapels party insignia marking their chosen ways to fame: an eagle, a shark and a pig.

Looking upon all those prematurely middle-aged teenagers, sporting their pins and ambitions, I realised that this was all there was to politics. These were the people that would govern and represent me in the future; political experts in the making. During debates, they would quote their respective parties' agendas, and that would be that. They weren't interested in discussing the matters at hand, uncovering new truths or points of view.

They were interested in their suits and their careers and how this would look on their CVs. Not so much in solving the world's problems as figuring out how they could benefit from them. Some of those people are already representing me in Parliament.

So if these kids, these people, can get genuinely angry at something a politician says or does, to the extent that they show up for some direct action, then I applaud them for it. I applaud them for believing that they can make a difference, and for trying to do just that. I hope they keep trying and, maybe, I will start trying too.

Fisher at the height of his mental powers. Next issue, we will deal with last days in Iceland and the legal battle over his remains. Illustration by Baldur Helgason



## Remembering Bobby Fisher – I

**Fischer made further strange demands, wanting the size of the chess board changed, the chairs; he wanted to change just about everything that could be changed. It has been argued that all this was a part of a psychological war Fischer was waging against his opponent, while others believe that this was a manifestation of his own mental problems.**

On January 17, chess legend Robert "Bobby" James Fischer passed away at his apartment in Reykjavik. Bobby's life was full of controversy, mystery and, at times, outright insanity. His life was fascinating in its strangeness the way a car crash is fascinating; something compels you to look when you know you really should not. His last three years in Iceland went by relatively free of controversy though. It wasn't until after his death that the last media spectacle surrounding Bobby Fischer started, and continues to this day. We'll dive into that strange story in part II, but for now let's take a look at his life prior to his arrival in Iceland in 2005.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, March 9, 1943, Fischer soon became known as a chess prodigy, winning the United States Junior Chess Championship in July 1956. In January 1958 he became the youngest US Chess Champion at the age of 14, a record that still stands. That earned him a title as an International Master, the youngest at the time to reach that goal. His life revolved entirely around chess; at one time he was quoted saying that "chess was better than sex." He won the US Championship tournament a total of eight times. In international competitions he voiced concerns regarding what he thought was foul play on behalf of the Soviet chess masters, stating that the Soviets fixed their intra-games to end in draws, effectively shutting him out from becoming world champion.

### The Match of the Century

In the qualifying games preceding the 1972 International Championship, Fischer won 20 consecutive games and earned the right to challenge the current Champion, Boris Spassky. Fischer was known for his stubborn demands regarding tournament conditions, and his requests before the 1972 tournament in Reykjavik almost put the match off. Bobby demanded much higher prize money than had previously been awarded. The Icelandic government coughed up US\$125,000 but Bobby wanted more. Finally an English financier doubled the amount, bringing it to US\$250,000 and the stage was set for what would later be known The Match of the Century.

But the circus was just starting. Bobby made various new demands, wanting to ban TV cameras from the venue and demanding a cut of the spectator's fee. He failed to show up for the opening ceremony and only flew to Iceland after a phone call from Henry Kissinger, taking a time out from running the Vietnam war, who allegedly told Fischer to crush those Soviets for freedom-loving people everywhere.

Fischer lost the first game and continued to make demands on the organisers, refusing to show up for the second game, forfeiting it to Spassky. For the third game Spassky agreed to play away from the TV cameras and Fischer won. At one time the Soviets believed Spassky was being poisoned by Fischer and specimens were sent for testing to KGB labs. Fischer made further strange demands, wanting the size of the chess board changed, the chairs; he wanted to change just about everything that could be changed. It has been argued that all this was a part of a psychological war Fischer was waging against his opponent, while others believe that this was a manifestation of his own mental problems. Finally, after 21 games, some great chess and many strange antics, Fischer was crowned the 11<sup>th</sup> world champion; the first and only American to hold that title.

The match caught the world's attention. It became a symbol for the cold war, the only sporting event where the two superpowers fought it out. It elevated interest in chess everywhere; the rise of UK chess players in the 1980s has been attributed to the match. The whole world followed the championship, divided into factions. Fischer was a tall, handsome genius who rarely studied the game after they played, opting instead to go bowling at Iceland's only bowling alley at the time, in the US military base in Keflavik. Spassky was the epitome of the Soviet chess-machine; a bear-like man who meticulously studied each move with his assistants.

In 1975 Fischer was scheduled to defend his title against Anatoly Karpov. He had played no official tournament games after his title win. He made numerous demands (reported to be around 190) before the championship, but this time they were not met, resulting in Fischer resigning his World Championship. In his letter to FIDE (the International Chess Federation) he specifically noted that he was resigning his FIDE title, not losing it. He would never acknowledge another World Champion, regarding himself the one and only until the very end.

### Recluse

Fischer played no competitive public chess until 1992 when he agreed to play Spassky in Yugoslavia with US\$3.5 million in prize money. Fischer spent the years in between in obscurity, becoming the chess world's equivalent of J. D. Salinger. In 1981 he was arrested in Pasadena, California, on suspicion of bank robbery. He was released two days later and the charges were dropped. He published

a pamphlet titled "I was tortured in the Pasadena Jailhouse!" which became a surprise best seller in chess circles. Otherwise he stayed out of the public limelight.

When he surfaced for the 1992 match against Spassky, dubbed "the rematch of the 20<sup>th</sup> century", it was clear that Fischer's ideas about the world had been altered. He ranted on about a Jewish conspiracy against him and at a press conference he spat on a 'cease and desist order' from the US government, forbidding him to play the tournament since Yugoslavia was under a United Nations embargo at the time. Fischer won the match, 10 to 5, but most agreed that his playing wasn't at the same level as when he beat Spassky twenty years earlier. The US government issued an arrest warrant for Fischer for breaking the embargo. He never returned to the United States.

### Raving

He spent the next years in recluse, travelling between countries such as Hungary, Philippines, and Japan. He regularly phoned various radio stations around the world, mostly in the Philippines, ranting and raving about the Jewish conspiracy, the rotten American society and the evils of President Bush. Hours after the attacks on the twin towers in 2001, Bobby phoned a Philippine radio station, declaring: "This is all wonderful news," and then raved on about the evils of the US government. He also regularly declared traditional chess to be dead and tried to promote a new version he had invented, named Fischer's Random Chess.

Up until that point the United States had not pursued Fischer with much vigour, but that was about to change. His US passport was revoked and in 2004 he was placed in detention in Japan for travelling without a valid passport and his deportation to the US was scheduled. "A Committee to free Bobby Fischer" was set up by a Canadian lawyer, which caught the attention of a few Icelanders, most of whom were active in the Icelandic chess scene at around the time of the 1972 match, who lobbied the Icelandic authorities to grant Bobby Fischer political asylum. When it became clear that such a gesture would not be enough to stop his deportation to the United States, the Icelandic congress granted him citizenship by passing a special law, a unique event in the history of the country. He arrived in Reykjavik an Icelandic citizen on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2005.

Text by Páll Hilmarrsson

The only certainties in life are death and taxes. For US citizens, that is true twice over...  
Photo by GAS



## Two Holes in Your Pocket

**Meanwhile, welcome to February. Tax season is coming up. American citizens in Iceland have a double-strength filing headache to look forward to**

You're an Icelander, studying at an American university, and you're pregnant. You had planned to go home to Iceland to have the child. But then you find out that anyone born in the U.S. is automatically entitled to U.S. citizenship. American citizenship might make it easier for your child to study or work in America later on. Why not stay in the States for the birth?

It sounds like a good idea. But there's a catch: American citizens must report their income and pay taxes to the United States for their entire life. No matter where they live. The United States is just about the only country that taxes its citizens in this way. Normally, people are taxed only in the country where they actually live. The American approach is controversial. Many people think it is unreasonable. There has been a lot of commotion about it in the U.S. Congress. The law was recently changed again - not in overseas taxpayers' favour, though. Further changes are likely.

Meanwhile, welcome to February. Tax season is coming up. American citizens in Iceland have a double-strength filing headache to look forward to. And Icelanders who are tempted to give birth in the United States should think carefully about the tax consequences for their children when making their plans. There is some good news. Americans in Iceland can usually avoid most U.S. income taxes, because U.S. tax law allows you to take a deduction or credit for foreign-earned income. But there's more bad news than good. You still have to file. And these deductions and credits only cover a limited set of circumstances. American citizens in Iceland can find themselves owing money to the U.S. government if they have substantial income from interest, capital gains, self-employment, or owning a business, or if their regular salary is relatively high.

### Double Social Security Contributions too

The biggest problem for many Americans in Iceland is not income tax but social security contributions (tryggingargjöld). This means the money that you pay into the old-age pension system, both in both America and Iceland. If you work for someone else, your employer sends this money to the government on your behalf. If you are self-employed, you pay it all yourself.

Under United States law, all U.S. citizens, anywhere in the world, who have self-employment income of more than \$433 per year must contribute a part of that income to the United States social security system, at a rate that normally amounts to 14.1%. That means that American citizens in Iceland who run their own unincorporated businesses - anything from translating to piano lessons to jewellery making - have to pay twice: 5.79% in Icelandic social security contributions, and 14.1% to America too (using IRS Form 1040-SE).

Realising that this kind of situation is not

very workable, the U.S. Social Security Administration has made agreements with many countries under which Americans abroad only have to contribute to one system (local or American), but not both. These agreements are called social security totalisation agreements. Every other Nordic and Western European country, and every other legacy OECD country, now has a totalisation agreement with the United States. Iceland still doesn't. The U.S. Embassy in Iceland has recently turned its attention to this issue, and has had Iceland placed on the Social Security Administration's list of countries with which a totalisation agreement would be desirable. This is a very welcome step forward. However, the negotiation process is slow, and relief for Americans in Iceland is still at least several years away.

In the meantime, one way to get around the Social Security problem is by starting an Icelandic company and becoming its employee, thus having no self-employment income. The down side is that besides the regular cost of starting and running a company, any American who owns a corporation abroad has to file the dreaded IRS Form 5471. This form is so complex and time-consuming that it absolutely requires a tax accountant skilled in international matters.

The lack of a totalisation agreement has wider effects. Americans who have moved to Iceland, and Icelanders who have moved to America, do not always get the full benefit of the two countries' social security systems after they retire. A written understanding between the two governments, dating from 1981 and meant to be provisional, ensures that they do receive a very basic level of support. But a totalisation agreement would ensure fully fair treatment, not just for mobile workers, but also for their survivors and dependents.

### Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some answers to the tax questions I commonly hear from Americans in Iceland (I am not a tax attorney, though, so please consult one before making any important decisions):

*Q. I grew up in America but have lived here for quite some time, and quit filing years ago because I never owed anything. Isn't that OK, practically speaking? I can't imagine that the IRS cares.*

If anything, enforcement is getting tougher. If you think you might ever use your American citizenship - by moving back or even just travelling back to the United States - it is especially important to file. Even if you owe nothing. Jane Bruno, a tax accountant who specialises in Americans overseas, notes that the IRS and the U.S. immigration authorities are working more closely together. She says, "I advise my clients who are travelling or relocating back to the U.S. to have at least 3 years of prior tax returns available to show if they are

asked. Just make it a part of your travel packet." U.S. passports now include the following warning: "All U.S. citizens working and residing overseas are required to file and report on their worldwide income."

*Q. Come on. Do I really have to pay American self-employment tax? I mean, the work is barely worth doing if I lose an extra 14% in tax. And I am already contributing to the Icelandic system.* Unfortunately, according to the law, the answer is yes. But there are some things you can do to minimise your U.S. self-employment tax: (1) Think broadly and deduct as many business expenses as you possibly can. (2) Form an Icelandic corporation and become its employee, if you have enough turnover to make this worthwhile. (3) Let the Social Security Administration know of your interest in getting a totalisation agreement signed as soon as possible, by writing or having your congressman write to them using the instructions at [www.ssa.gov/international/agreements\\_overview.html](http://www.ssa.gov/international/agreements_overview.html). In practice, overlooking a few hundred dollars in self-employment income on your American tax returns is perhaps unlikely to get you punished, and is probably a lesser sin than not filing at all. But it leaves you wide open to penalties from the IRS, and creates a slippery slope if your self-employment income grows over the years.

*Q. Can't I get out of this all by renouncing my United States citizenship?*

It's not that simple. After renouncing your citizenship - a consequential decision that shouldn't be taken lightly - you can file Form 8854 with the IRS in order to signal the end of your tax liability to the U.S. But if you have not fulfilled your tax obligations to the United States during the five years before renunciation, or if you have assets over a certain level, the U.S. will consider you subject to U.S. tax at an even higher, penalty rate for ten years after your renunciation.

*Q. Where can I go if I need help from a tax accountant who understands both the U.S. and Icelandic systems?*

I don't know of a tax accountant in Iceland with expertise in the American system, but there are accountants in America who specialise in expatriate issues. You can contact Jane Bruno through her website, [www.oceanwavestax.com](http://www.oceanwavestax.com), where she also sells The Expat's Guide to U.S. Taxes, an electronic book designed to help Americans abroad. The website of American Citizens Abroad, [www.aca.ch](http://www.aca.ch), offers news updates, basic tax advice, and a chance to join in lobbying for simplified income tax filing for Americans abroad.

Text by Ian Watson

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# SCENES FROM SUBURBIA

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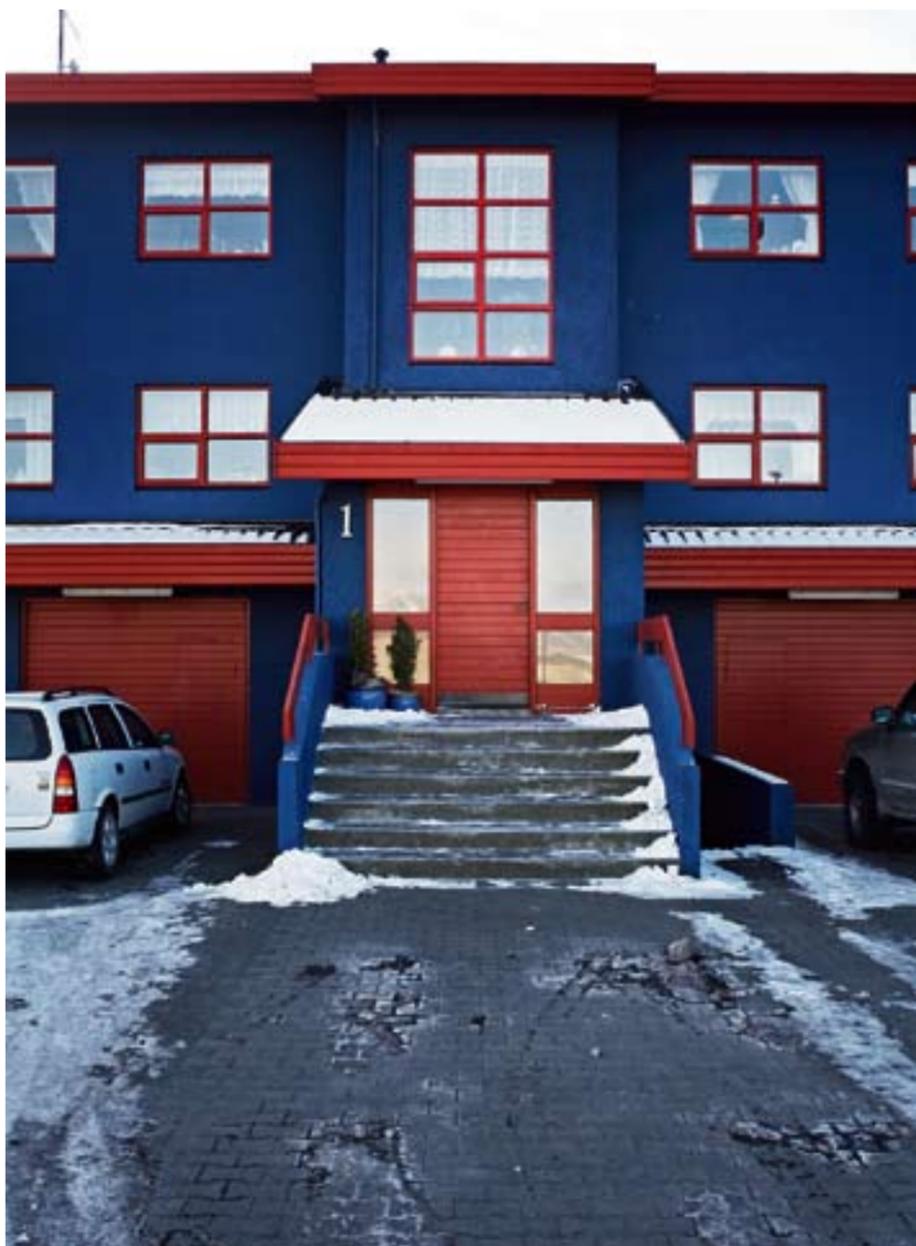
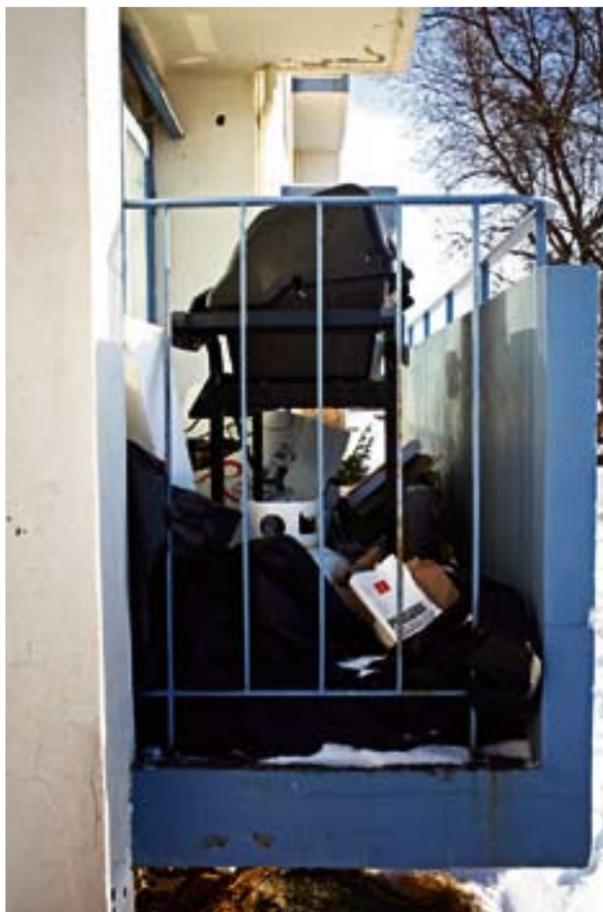
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Photos by GAS

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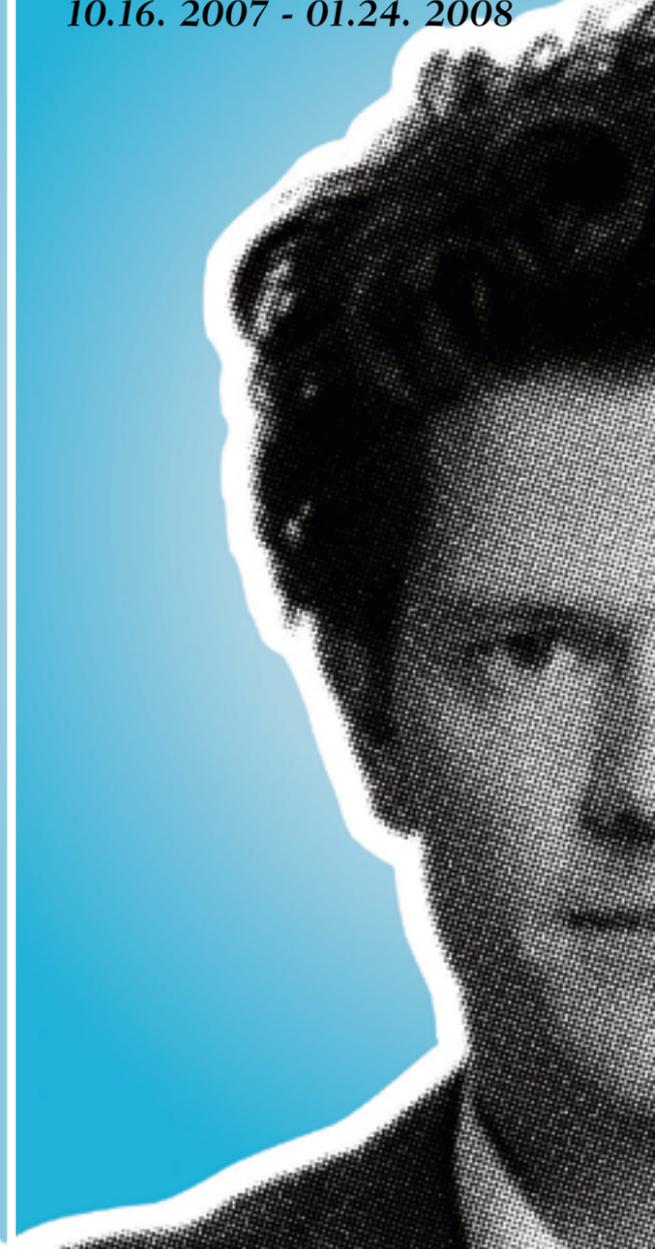


**Vilhjálmur Þ Vilhjálmsson**

06.13. 2006 - 10.16. 2007

**Dagur B Eggertsson**

10.16. 2007 - 01.24. 2008



## City Hall: Theatre of the Absurd

*All of us who are concerned for peace and triumph of reason and justice must be keenly aware how small an influence reason and honest good will exert upon events in the political field.*

– Albert Einstein

Since the May 2006 municipal elections, city politics in Reykjavík have closely resembled an absurdist play where Machiavelli waits for Godot. During that 20-month period, the city has had three coalition governments, each one formed under more controversy than the one it replaced. What follows is a synopsis of the plot since the 2006 elections. Be warned: this is reading for advanced scholars of political absurdity only.

### Prologue – The 2006 Elections

*Those who are too smart to engage in politics are punished by being governed by those who are dumber.* – Plato

Before the 2006 elections, The Independence Party made it clear that all emphasis would be placed on reclaiming the mayoral seat they had once dominated, but lost in the 1994 elections. The race for City Hall was predicted to be extremely close and according to most polls, a few votes could swing the election either way.

As the election drew to a close, however, it became obvious that voters did not care much either way. Only 77% of registered voters in Reykjavík could be bothered to participate, one of the lowest turnouts in the history of the Reykjavík municipal elections, and a frightfully low number in a country that has historically put a lot of pride in their active participation in the democratic process.

When the votes were tallied, the Independence Party had not managed to secure a majority on the City Council, with only seven members. The Social Democrats won four, The Left-Greens two and The Liberal Party and the Progressive Party one representative each.

Thus, the table was set for a round of political one-upmanship. With a working majority needing the support of eight out of fifteen City Council members, the most likely candidate to lead a coalition was The

Independence Party, which only needed the support of one extra representative. The parties scrambled to secure a position of power, but the wheels set in motion the morning after the elections are still turning.

### Liberals Get Duped

*Politicians are the same all over. They promise to build a bridge even where there is no river.*

– Nikita Khrushchev

Early on Sunday morning, the day after the election, rumours were surfacing that the Independence Party and the Liberal Party had started formal majority negotiations. This was confirmed later that day. At that time, leader of the Liberal Party, Ólafur F. Magnússon, said that he had spoken to members of the other parties earlier that day, but the Independence Party had shown much interest in preliminary discussions, and he considered that option more likely to bear fruit than a coalition of four different parties.

Before the election, the location of the Reykjavík Airport was a matter of great discord between those two parties. The Liberal Party was the only party in Reykjavík that strongly supported plans to maintain the airport in its current location in the heart of the city. Meanwhile, The Independence Party – as well as the other parties actually – had strongly opposed the airport in its current location, supporting instead plans to move the airport outside the city and use the land for development.

On Monday, the news came that all talks between the two parties had been suspended. Independence Party leader Vilhjálmur Vilhjálmsson had had a change of heart and was now in bed with the Progressive Party as the Mayor of Reykjavík City. This new development fuelled speculation that the initial talks between the Liberal Party and the Independence Party had been a ploy, staged to buy time while the Independence Party ironed out the wrinkles with the Progressive Party. Ólafur F. Magnússon of the Liberals, who now found himself on the outside looking in, had this to say when I spoke to him after the elections:

“It was very unpleasant to experience this from Vilhjálmsson. He contacted us early on Election Day, before the polls were even closed. His representative

approached me with an offer for cooperation, and told me that any disagreement over issues could be worked out. They presented us with blueprints for a new design for the Reykjavík Airport that would have allowed the airport to remain where it is, and he assured me that we could reach an agreement over this issue. We had planned a meeting on Monday at 13:00. He never showed up for the meeting, and called me at 14:00 and told me that he was putting further talks off, since he could not see us reach an agreement over the location of the airport.”

“It turned out it was all a ploy intended to keep us out of any meaningful discussions with the other parties, while the Independence Party and the Progressive Party worked out their differences,” said Ólafur F. Magnússon. “I have to admit that I was duped.”

### The First Coalition

*“If two men agree on everything, you may be sure that one of them is doing the thinking.”*

– Lyndon B. Johnson

The Progressive Party in Reykjavík was led by a young upstart by the name of Björn Ingi Hrafnsson. A once proud party, and used to being a force in city politics, the Progressive Party’s support had plummeted in recent years. Although heavily criticised for spending copious amounts of money on his somewhat misguided campaign – he used a Hummer H2 as an official campaign truck – Hrafnsson managed to gather 6.3% of the popular vote. Hrafnsson, by all accounts a capable spin doctor, hailed this as a ‘defensive victory’ and it was enough to propel him onto a city government coalition with The Independence Party.

Although there was some concern among the public as to whether Hrafnsson’s 6.3% support really warranted the power he was now wielding, the coalition seemed to be a harmonious affair. Björn Ingi Hrafnsson was accepted amongst Independent Party council members as one of the family, and to this day Reykjavík Independence Party leader, Vilhjálmur Vilhjálmsson, maintains that there was never a shadow cast on their cooperation. That is, presumably, until Hrafnsson sold them out.

### Coalition Loses Steam Over Reykjavík Energy Invest

*“Too bad ninety percent of the politicians give the other ten percent a bad reputation.”*

– Henry Kissinger

One of the crown jewels in the city’s company portfolio is Reykjavík Energy, a publicly owned company that supplies Reykjavíkians with both electricity and geothermal hot water. It is a company of considerable expertise in the field of geothermal energy, and is often called upon to consult on international experimental projects in the field.

In March 2007, the directors of Reykjavík Energy passed a resolution allowing the investment of up to ISK 2 billion in the development of international geothermal opportunities through a new subsidiary, Reykjavík Energy Invest ehf. Then chairman of Reykjavík Energy, Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson of the Independence Party, stated that the purpose of the investment was to capitalise on the global leadership of RE in utilizing sustainable energy from geothermal sources.

In October last year, it was announced with great fanfare that Reykjavík Energy Invest would be privatized and that the company would merge with Geysir Green Energy – an investment company in the field of geothermal energy recently established by Icelandic investment company FL Group and Glitnir Bank. The merger was set to create a global leader in the field of geothermal energy with the total value of 65 billion ISK, with the sole intention of investing in sustainable geothermal energy opportunities around the world.

The decision caused a massive uproar among the public and city officials alike. As the details of the merger surfaced, and the stench of political corruption grew stronger, it became clear that this was a back-room deal cut between Icelandic investors and two members of the coalition, party leaders Björn Ingi Hrafnsson and Mayor Vilhjálmur Vilhjálmsson, who acted without support from the rest of the City Council, which coincidentally only learned about the merger the day it was announced. The Independence Party split on the subject, with Mayor Vilhjálmsson isolated as the solo proponent of the

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# *info.*

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

**plus** Fjalakötturinn Film Festival · My Summer as a Salvation Soldier Concert

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**above** Vatnsmýri planning competition – exhibition opening (B14)

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Art

## Fish on Dry Land

Danish-born photographer Nanna Bisp Büchert has opened a photographic exhibition in gallery and photo-shop Fótógrafi in Skólavörðustígur titled "Fiskar á þurru" or "Fish on Dry Land." For the past seventeen years, throughout her travels across the world, Nanna has procured a collection of photo-

graphs of fish in various manifestations. Nanna, who was born in Copenhagen but lived in Reykjavík until she was 21, has worked as a photographer in Denmark for nearly 35 years. She has exhibited in nearly fifty private exhibitions around the world, and has published four books of her works. She

now returns to Reykjavík exhibit 20 of her photographs in Fótógrafi. The exhibiton is open through March.

Fótógrafi, Skólavörðustígur 4a, 101 Reykjavík

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

## Music

### ■ B5

*Bankastræti 5*  
 Fri Feb 8: DJ Andrés  
 Sat Feb 9: DJ Dick Cassidy  
 Thu Feb 14: Groovy Thursday  
 Fri Feb 15: Maggi Lego  
 Sat Feb 16: DJ Shaft  
 Thu Feb 21: Groovy Thursday  
 Fri Feb 22: DJ Lazer  
 Sat Feb 23: Jack Schidt  
 Thu Feb 28: Groovy Thursday  
 Fri Feb 29: DJ Casanova  
 Sat Mar 1: DJ Andrés  
 Thu Mar 6: Groovy Thursday  
 Fri Feb 7: DJ Shaft  
 Sat Feb 8: DJ Magic

### ■ Bar 11

*Laugavegur 11*  
 Fri Feb 8 to Fri Mar 7: Biggi from Maus, Gulli from Ósóma, Matti from Xina and Óli Dóri will perform on weekends.

### ■ Barinn

*Laugavegur 22*  
 Fri Feb 8: Yamaha (DK) (1<sup>st</sup> floor) / Ási Ýr (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)  
 Sat Feb 9: Kári (1<sup>st</sup> floor) / Ernir and Jói (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)  
 Sun Feb 10: J. Dilla Tribute Night with Introbeats  
 Wed Feb 13: DJ Manny ( Chicago, U.S.A. )

Thu Feb 14: DJ Moonshine ( Sometime ) Hip Hop/Funk Night

Fri Feb 15: Karius & Baktus (Electro/ Minimal) (1<sup>st</sup> floor) / D.J. Panick (Hip Hop/R&B) (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)

Sat Feb 16: DJ Casanova (Electro & Techno) (1<sup>st</sup> floor) / Soffia Ice Release Party. Hip Hop/R&B Party (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)

Sun Feb 17: Vinyl night with Gauti – Bring your own vinyl records and Gauti will play them for you.

Wed Feb 20: "Extreme Chill" Featuring Melge and Troopa

Thu Feb 21: Egner

Fri Feb 22: To be announced.

Sat Feb 23: Helgi Már and Andri.

Wed Feb 27: Hip Hop night.

Thu Feb 28: DJ Buzby

Fri Feb 29: DJ Manny

Sat Mar 1: Impulse and Ghost (1<sup>st</sup> floor) / Tryllti Hjörtur (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)

Thu Mar 6: Breakbeat.is night

### ■ Brons

*Pósthússtræti 9*

On Thursdays: Wild Mojito Nights. DJs perform from 10 pm. - 1 am.

On weekends: DJs from 10 pm. - 1 am.

### ■ Café Paris

*Austurstræti 14*

### ■ Gaukurinn

*Tryggvagata 22*

Fri Feb 8: DJ set.

Sat Feb 9: Commitments Show and Sólon

Thu Feb 13: Charity rock concert featuring Hoffman, Benny Crespos Gang, Hookerswing, Cliff Clavin and Æla.

Entry costs 1,000 isk but donations are welcome.

Sat Feb 15: Latvian Jazz band Riga Groove

Sun Feb 16: Superman.is party

Fri Feb 22: X-FM 977 presents Munich

### ■ Grafarvogskirkja

*Logafold 1*

Sat Feb 9: World renowned violinist Shlomo Mintz will perform Niccolò Paganini's 24 Caprices for the first time in Iceland.

### ■ Hellirinn (TBM)

*Hólmaslóð 2*

Fri Feb 8: At the Borders of Arcadia concert. Opening bands will be Dornah and Muck.

### ■ Hljómalind

*Laugavegur 21*

Fri Feb 01: Kaffi Hljómalind will say goodbye to its current location by throwing a concert that will start at 2 pm. and end sometime that night. Amongst the performers are: KK and Ellen, Pikknikk, Lay Low, Retro Stefsón and many others.

### ■ Hressó

*Austurstræti 20*

Fri Feb 01: Troubadours Gotti and Eisi followed by DJ Bjarni

Sat Feb 02: Johnny and the rest followed by DJ Jón Gestur

Thu Feb 7: Corona electro party – Performance by DJ Maila and DJ Paul Wayne

Fri Feb 8: Jazz group Tepokinn followed by DJ Maggi

Sat Feb 9: Troubadours Alexander and Örvar followed by DJ Maggi

Thu Feb 14: Corona electro party – Performance by Mr Silla

Fri Feb 15: Performance by jazz group BonSom followed by DJ Maggi

Sat Feb 16: Disel followed by DJ Bjarni  
 Thu Feb 21: Corona electro party –



Film

## Fjalakötturinn 2008

Beginning February 17, The Reykjavík International Film Festival will sponsor for the second year in a row the movie-club Fjalakötturinn. The club will hold weekly screenings on Sunday and Monday nights of 15 movies in four major categories. The first category, Foreign Jewels, includes films that didn't make it onto the RIFF bill in the fall, including the documentary Joy Division (2007), which was meant as a follow-up to the

highly successful Control. The second category highlights three films from the newly blossomed German film-making scene. Hans-Christian Schmid's Requiem (2006) tells the true story of a young Catholic German girl who was believed to be possessed by demons and died after a failed exorcism in 1976. Requiem stays true to the storyline which served as a loose basis for Hollywood's The Exorcism of Emily Rose. Six films

will be screened in the Scandinavian category, showing films from Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Iceland. Five films will also be shown by famed director Francois Truffaut who played a pivotal role in the French New Wave.

For a full schedule, visit [www.riff.is](http://www.riff.is).

Performance by Thundercats

**Fri Feb 22:** Dalton followed by DJ Maggi

**Sat Feb 23:** Pub Lic followed by DJ Frikki

**Thu Feb 28:** DJ Thor

**Fri Feb 29:** Alexander and Örvar followed by DJ Maggi

### ■ Kaffibarinn

*Bergstaðastræti 1*

**Fri Feb 8:** Maggi Lego

**Sat Feb 9:** DJ Magic

**Thu Feb 14:** Maggi Lego

**Fri Feb 22:** Terrordisco

**Sat Feb 23:** DJ Lazer

**Sat Mar 8:** Maggi Lego

### ■ Langholtskirkja

*Sólheimur 13*

**Mon Feb 11:** The Student Opera will perform The Marriage of Figaro

**Wed Feb 13:** The Student Opera will perform The Marriage of Figaro

### ■ Laugardalshöll

*Engjavegur 8*

**Sat Feb 23:** Concert featuring Hinn Íslenski Púrsaflokkur and Caput

### ■ Nasa

*by Austurvöllur*

**Thu Feb 14:** Hjaltalín Concert

**Fri Feb 15:** Dusty Kid, Jack Schidt and more

**Sun Feb 24:** Hayseed Dixie Concert

**Sat Mar 1:** Hjálmar Concert

### ■ Organ

*Hafnarstræti 1-3*

**Fri Feb 8:** Barcode presents DJ FEX

**Sat Feb 9:** One Be Lo (usa), DJ Flip (Ire) and more.

**Wed Feb 13:** Weircore: Biogen, Ruxpin and Frank Murder

**Thu Feb 14:** My Summer As A Salva-

tion Soldier, Tentacles of Doom and Reykjavík!

**Fri Feb 15:** Hjartsláttur (Heart Beat): DMX CREW

**Sat Feb 16:** Jón Jónsson presents: Dusty Kid, President Bongo and Jack Schidt

**Wed Feb 20:** Munich (DK)

**Thu Feb 21:** Monitor party: BB & Blake and Appledog (ES)

**Fri Feb 22:** DJ Stæfhund

**Sat Feb 23:** Kraftwerk Orange: Retro Indie night hosted by Kitty Von Some-time

**Wed Feb 27:** To be announced.

**Thu Feb 28:** To be announced.

**Fri Feb 29:** To be announced.

**Sat Mar 1:** The Pains of Being Pure at Heart (USA), Singapore Sling and Lada Sport

**Wed Mar 5:** Viðkiptaráð HR presents: Pétur Ben

**Fri Mar 7:** Jón Jónsson presents: Yuksek - Relish / UWE.

### ■ Prikið

*Bankastræti 12*

**Fri Feb 8:** DJ Árni Sveins

**Sat Feb 9:** DJ Danni Deluxe

**Thu Feb 14:** "Old School Night" - DJ Anna Brá

**Fri Feb 15:** Frískó followed by DJ Gísli Galdur

**Sat Feb 16:** DJ Anna Brá

**Thu Feb 21:** DJ Sara

**Fri Feb 22:** DJ Rósa

**Sat Feb 23:** DJ Danni Deluxe

**Thu Feb 28:** Free Thursday - Prikið, friend of the little man, will invite guests to something free on the last Thursday of each month. DJ performance later that night.

**Fri Feb 29:** DJ Óli Hjörtur and De la Rosa

**Sat Mar 1:** "Beer day" - DJ Kári will perform

### ■ Q-Bar

*Ingólfsstræti 3*

**Fri Feb 8:** DJ Manny (Pop, Electro, Chicago House)

**Sat Feb 9:** DJ Maggi Lego (Electro, Minimal, Disco)

**Fri Feb 15:** DJ Manny

**Sat Feb 16:** DJ Kári accompanied by vocalist Berglind Ágústsdóttir and bass player Raggi.

**Thu Feb 21:** Q Bar celebrates its first birthday. Elín Ey & Myrra, Sometime and more!

**Fri Feb 22:** Q Bar celebrates its first birthday. Surprise guests.

**Sat Feb 23:** Q Bar celebrates its birthday. Surprise guests.

**Fri Feb 29:** Eva María & Birna Glimmer Party

**Sat Mar 1:** Peter Parker and other performers.

**Thu Mar 6:** Tryllti Hjörtur

### ■ Salurinn

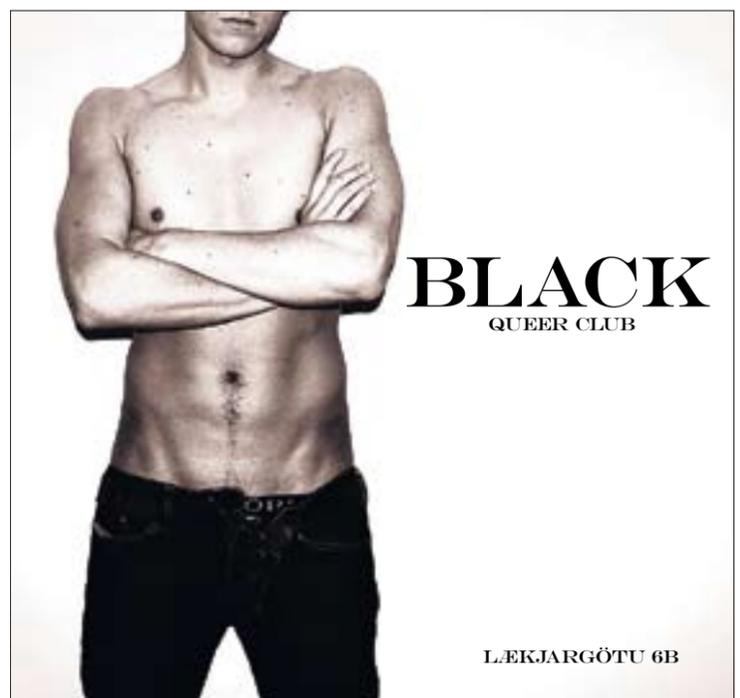
*Hamraborg 6*

**Fri Feb 15:** Memorial concert in commemoration of songwriter and activist Bergþóra Árnadóttir. Ragnheiður Gröndal, Magga Stína, Lay Low and Steingrímur Guðmundsson will be among the performers.

### ■ The Icelandic Opera

*Ingólfsstræti*

**Fri Feb 8:** Premiere of La Traviata by Giuseppe Verdi



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and a delicious lobster  
at Fjörubordid in Stokkseyri



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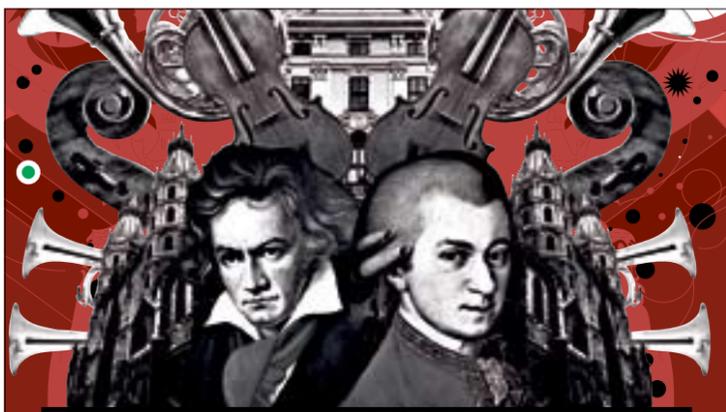
**Meal 2:**  
Hot n' sour soup  
Pork w onion  
s'n's King Prawn  
Fried Noodles

**Meal 3:**  
Chicken Satay  
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Sacha sauce  
Mixed Meet Dish  
Fried Noodles

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Laugavegur 2

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Dj playing on weekends and dancing  
Open until 5:30 on weekends



# Upcoming concerts

## A VIRTUOSO CELLIST

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST @ 7:30 PM**  
 Conductor :: Eivind Aadland  
 Soloist :: Daniel Müller-Schott  
 Joseph Haydn :: Cello Concerto, D-major  
 Ludwig van Beethoven :: Symphony nr. 6 "Pastoral"  
 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart :: The Magic Flute, Overture

## LISZT/BRUCKNER

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH @ 7:30 PM**  
 Conductor :: Arvo Volmer  
 Soloist :: Ewa Kupiec  
 Anton Bruckner :: Symphony nr. 3  
 Franz Liszt :: Piano Concerto nr. 2

## THE SECOND VIENNA SCHOOL

**THURSDAY, MARCH 6TH @ 7:30 PM**  
 Conductor :: Rumon Gamba  
 Soloist :: Sigrún Eðvaldsdóttir  
 Alban Berg :: Violin Concerto  
 J. S. Bach :: Ricercare from the Musical Offering  
 Johannes Brahms :: Piano Quartet in G minor

## EASTER CONCERT

**THURSDAY, MARCH 13TH @ 7:30 PM**  
 Conductor :: Johannes Fritzsich  
 Soloists :: Dorothee Jansen and Terje Stensvold  
 Choir :: Söngsveitin Filharmónía  
 Choir master :: Magnús Ragnarsson  
 Bohuslav Martinu :: Memorial to Lidice  
 Johannes Brahms :: Ein Deutsches Requiem

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 OR TEL. 545 2500

All concerts take place in Háskólabíó.



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Art

## Holmes Exhibition at the Lost Horse Gallery

Graphic designer Hólmsteinn Össur Kristjánsson, also known as Holmes, is currently exhibiting at the Gallery Lost Horse. Holmes has for the last few years worked for various large design companies in Europe, the United States and Iceland. The exhibition, named Hressandi #2, picks up where his previous one, Hressandi #1 (shown at Gal-

lery Crush last summer), left off. Vivid colours, digital graphics and hand-painted elements on canvas characterise Kristjánsson's work. For the last couple of years his art has evolved into a fascinating mix of traditional painting and digital work. The exhibition is at Skólastræti 1 and is open every weekend from 13.00 to 19.00. The exhibition

runs from February 16 until March 16. At the opening on February 9, there will be light refreshments and jazz legends Árni Ísleifsson and Papa Jazz will play.

Gallery Lost Horse, Skólastræti 1.  
 February 16 - March 16

## Art

### 101 Gallery

Hverfisgata 18  
 Thu.-Sat. 14-17 and by appointment  
[www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery/](http://www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery/)

### Artótek

Tryggvagata 15  
 Mon 10-21, Tue-Thu 10-19, Fri 11-19,  
 Sat and Sun 13-17  
[www.sim.is/Index/Islenka/Artotek](http://www.sim.is/Index/Islenka/Artotek)  
 Feb 8 - Mar 9

Ljósbrót: An exhibition of artwork chosen by author and artist Kristín Marja.

### ASÍ Art Museum

Freyjugata 41  
 Tue-Sun 13-17

Free Entrance

The museum is closed for repairs until the 8th of March 2008.

### Auga fyrir Auga

Hverfisgata 35  
 Open Thu-Fri 15-19, Sat-Sun 14-17

### Café Mokka

Skólavörðustígur 3a  
 Open daily from 9-18:30

Current exhibition:

Exhibition by Unnur Ýrr Helgadóttir.

### The Einar Jónsson Museum

Eiríksgata  
 Tue-Sun 14-17

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

Permanent exhibition:

The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson.

### The Culture House

Hverfisgata 15  
 Open daily 11-17

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

Permanent exhibitions:

Medieval Manuscripts; The National

Museum - as it was; The Library

Room; The Road to Zion; Berlin

Excursion.

Current exhibitions:

Surtsey - Genesis

The exhibition traces the emergence and evolution of the island Surtsey until the present day and predicts its geographical and ecological development over the next 120 years. Journey's End - Jónas Hallgrímsson 1807-1845

This exhibition focuses on renowned Icelandic scientist and poet Jónas Hallgrímsson and is a celebration of his 200th birthday.

### The Nation and Nature

A nature film by filmmaker Páll Steingrímsson.

### Dwarf Gallery

Grundarstígur 21  
 Opening Hours: Fri and Sat 18-20  
[www.this.is/birta](http://www.this.is/birta)

### Fotografi

Skólavörðustígur 4a  
[www.fotografi.is](http://www.fotografi.is)

Feb 2 - Mar

Fish on Dry Land: An exhibition by photographer Nanna Bisp Buchert.

### Gallery 100<sup>o</sup>

Bæjarháls 1  
[www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/](http://www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/)

Open weekdays from 08:30 - 16:00

Current Exhibition:

Kraftbirting - A photographic exhibition that focuses on water.

### Gallery Ágúst

Baldursgata 12  
 Wed-Sat 12-17

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

Jan 12 - Feb 23

Absalút gamall kastale

Davíð Örn Halldórsson exhibition.

Mar 1

Guðrún Kristjánsdóttirs exhibition

opening.

### Gallery Fold

Rauðarárstígur 14-16

Mon-Fri 10-18

Sat 11-16

Sun 14-16

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

Feb 9 - Feb 24

Exhibition by Sara Vilbergsdóttir.

The band Mongolidos will perform at the opening.

### Gallery Gel

Hverfisgata 37  
 Mon-Fri 13-18

Sat 11-16

Sun 14-16

[www.myspace.com/gallerigel](http://www.myspace.com/gallerigel)

### Gallery Turpentine

Ingólfstræti 5  
 Tue-Fri 12-18

Sat 11-16

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

Current exhibition:

Euphora

Arngunnur Ýr exhibition.

### Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

Gerðuberg 3-5  
 Mon-Thu 11-17

Wed 11-21

Thu-Fri 11-17

Sat-Sun 13-16

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

### Hitt Húsið

Pósthússtræti 3-5  
[www.hitthusid.is](http://www.hitthusid.is)

From Jan 12:

Progress, Ink and Tea

Hanna Aniela Frelek exhibition.

### i8 Gallery

Klapparstígur 33

Tue-Fri 11-17

Sat 13-17 and by appointment

[www.i8.is](http://www.i8.is)

Feb 28 - Mar 29

Exhibition by Egill Sæbjörnsson.

### Living Art Museum

Laugavegur 26

Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17

Thu 13-22

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

The Museum will be closed until

Feb 8 to prepare for a special

30th anniversary itinerary. Some

happenings will still take place and

announcements on events will be

posted on [www.nylo.is](http://www.nylo.is).

Feb 8 - May 8

Exhibiton by Hildigunnur

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- Hãy góp phần vào việc bạn thích
- Hãy tiếp tục học mãi
- Hãy rút kinh nghiệm qua lỗi lầm của mình
- Hãy vận động thường xuyên hằng ngày sẽ làm tinh thần thoải mái.
- Đừng tham gia vào những việc vô ích
- Hãy cố gắng hiểu và khuyến khích người khác
- Đừng đầu hàng, chịu thua vì thành công trong cuộc đời là sự đúc kết của một chuỗi dài phấn đấu
- Hãy nhận biết và trau dồi khả năng của mình
- Hãy đặt cho mình mục đích và cố gắng thực hiện giấc mơ của mình

**Geotrækt**

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

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

City of Reykjavík  
 Department of welfare

Tryggvagata 17  
 101 Reykjavík  
 Tel: 411 9000  
[www.velferdarsvid.is](http://www.velferdarsvid.is)



Art

## Mikines Retrospective Exhibition in Kjarvalsstaðir

The painter Sámuel Joensen, also known by his nickname Mikines, was an important Faroese artist and the first professional artist from the Faroe Islands to achieve recognition abroad. Mikines has been called the father of Faroese painting and his position as a pioneer and role model for younger artists in Faroese art history is frequently

compared with Jóhannes Kjarval's place in Icelandic visual art history. The exhibition, called A Retrospective, takes place in the Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum between January 26 and April 6. The show, which consists of over 40 landscapes and figure paintings spanning the artist's entire career, is on loan from the Faroe Islands Art Museum.

This is the first exhibition of Mikines's work in Iceland since 1961. Opening hours are from 10.00 to 17.00 daily.

Reykjavík Art Museum – Kjarvalsstaðir, Flólagata. January 26 - April 6.

Birgisdóttir.

### ■ The Lost Horse Gallery

Skólastræti 1  
www.this.is/subaqua/losthorse.html  
Feb 16 – Mar 16

Hólmsteinn Össur Kristjánsson a.k.a. will open his new exhibition Hressandi #2, a collection of hand-painted and digital prints on Canvas. The exhibition Hressandi #2 is a follow up to Hressandi #1 which took place at Gallery Crush mid-summer last year. Árni Ísleifsson and Papa Jazz will also be performing.

### ■ The National Film Archive of Iceland

Hvaleyrarbraut 13  
www.kvikmyndasafn.is  
The National Film Archive of Iceland screens old movie classics and masterpieces twice a week for 500 ISK per ticket.

### ■ The National Gallery of Iceland

Friðkirkjuvegur  
Tue–Sun 11–17  
Free Entrance  
www listasafn.is

Nov 2 – Feb 10

Kristján Davíðsson exhibition.

Nov 2 – Feb 10

Works from the collection of Markús Ívarsson.

### ■ The National Museum

Suðurgata 41  
Open daily 10–17  
natmus.is/  
Permanent exhibition:

The Making of a Nation

### ■ The Nordic House

Sturlugata 5  
Tue–Sun 12–17  
www.nordice.is/  
Jan 19 – Feb 10

Af jörðu ertu komin  
Rebekka Guðleifsdóttir exhibition.

### ■ The Numismatic Museum

Kalkofnsvegur 1  
Open Mon–Fri 13:30–15:30.

Free admission.

### Permanent exhibition:

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

### ■ Reykjavík 871 +/- 2

Aðalstræti 16  
Open daily 10–17

### Permanent exhibition:

The Settlement Exhibition

### ■ Reykjavík Art Museum – Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum

Sigtún  
Open daily 10–16  
Free entrance.  
www listasafnreykjavikur.is

### Current exhibition:

The Shape of Line

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

### ■ Reykjavík Art Museum – Hafnarhús

Tryggvagata 17  
Open daily 10–17 and on Thursdays from 10–22  
Free Entrance.

Jan 10 – Mar 2008

The Golden Plover has Arrived  
Steingrímur Eyfjörð's installation was Iceland's contribution to the Venice Biennial in 2007.

Jan 10 – Mar 2

D7

Ingi Rafn Steinarsson

Feb 7 – Apr 27

Superheroes by Erró, curated by Ólöf K. Sigurðardóttir.

Feb 7 – Apr 27

Silence: Curator JBK Ransu has commissioned four well-known visual artists, Finnogi Pétursson, Finnur Arnar Arnarson, Haraldur Jónsson, and Harpa Árnadóttir to create an exhibition which revolves around

silence.

Feb 8 from 19 – 1

### Museum Night – Light and Movement

An assortment of educational and entertaining programmes in all three Reykjavík Art Museum buildings.

Feb 14 – Feb 21

Vatnsmýri - Ideas on a city

An exhibition on the proposals received in the international competition for ideas on a plan for the Vatnsmýri area in central Reykjavík with an emphasis on the prize-winning proposals.

### ■ Reykjavík Art Museum – Kjarvalsstaðir

Flólagata  
Open Daily 10–17  
Free entrance.

Jan 5 – Apr 6

Jóhannes Sveinsson Kjarval – From the Museum's Collection.

Jan 26 – Apr 6

Selected sculptures by Nína Sæmundson (1892-1965) from the Reykjavík Art Museum collection.

Jan 26. – Apr 6

Mikines – A Retrospective

A retrospective of the work of the distinguished Faroese painter Samuel Joensen-Mikines.

Until – Apr 6

Architecture at Eyelevel. Curated by Guja Dögg Hauksdóttir.

### ■ Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Grandagarður 8  
www.sjominjasafn.is  
Closed for renovations.

### ■ Reykjavík Museum (Árbæjarsafn)

Kistuhyllur 4  
Open daily from 10–17  
www.arbaejarsafn.is

Current exhibitions:  
Building Techniques in Reykjavík 1840-1940; Disco and Punk – Different cultures?; Christmas is Coming; History of Reykjavík – from farm to

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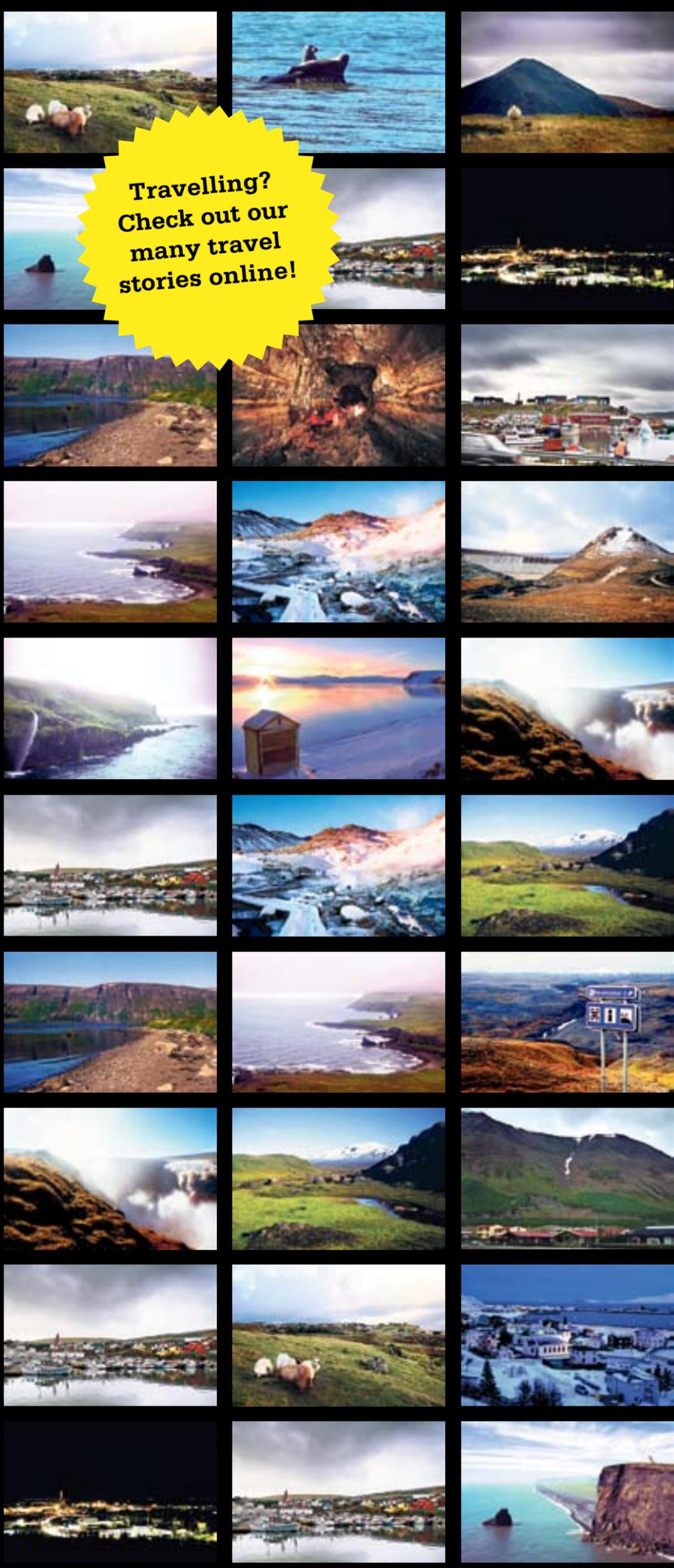


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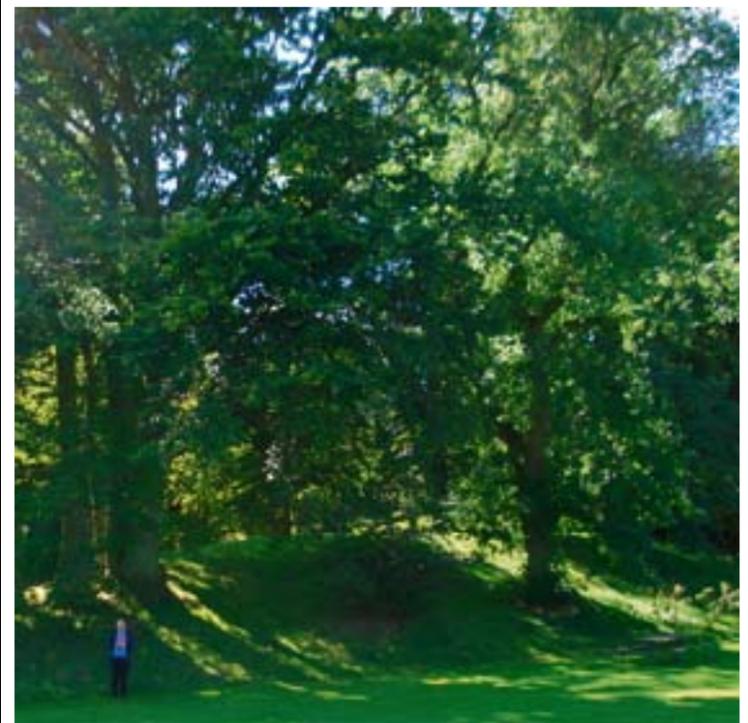
www.framvegis.is



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Art

## My Summer As a Salvation Soldier Release Concerts

MSASS, the nom du guerre of Þórir Jónsson, will be playing two concerts this February celebrating the release of his third album, *Activism*. Previous albums from the soft-spoken, alt-country troubadour, have all been met with great critical acclaim, with his debut album, *I Believe In This*, earning him the title Newcomer of the Year at the Icelandic Music Awards in 2004. Growing from a one-man act, MSASS is now a fully-fledged band. They will be play-

ing two release shows in February to coincide with the album's release. First an all ages gig that starts at 17.00 on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February at Von (Efstaleiti 7) and then on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February at Organ with Tentacles of Doom and Reykjavík providing support. Admission to each concert is 500 ISK.

Von, Efstaleiti 7. February 10.  
Organ, Hafnarstræti 1-3. February 14

city; Memories of a House; Living and Playing

### ■ The Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Grófarhús, Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor  
Weekdays 12–19

Sat–Sun 13–17

Free entrance

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

Dec 1 – Feb 17

Exhibition - Flickr-flakk og heljarstökk.

Dec 20 – Feb 12

Exhibition – Í Skotinu.

### ■ Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Laugarnestangi 70

Open Tue–Sun 14–17

Permanent exhibition:

Works of sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson.

### ■ Start Art / Art Shop

Laugavegur 12b

Tue–Sat 13 – 17

Free entrance

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

Feb 7 – Mar 5

Blowing in the Wind: an exhibition by Hrafnhildur Inga Sigurðardóttir (on the ground floor).

What Stays: a photographic exhibition by Christina Gartner (upstairs).

Opening hours: Tues.–Fri. 14–18; Sat. and Sun. 16–18.

[www.mudesa.org](http://www.mudesa.org)

Exhibitions devoted to Icelandic design.

### ■ The Icelandic Settlement Centre

Brákarbraut 1–15, Borgarnes

Opening hours: May to Sep 10–20; Sep to May 11–17.

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

Permanent exhibitions:

The Settlement of Iceland: The Saga of Egill Skalla-Grímsson

### ■ Suðsuðvestur

Hafnargata 22, Keflavík

Thu.–Fri. 16–18

Sat.–Sun. 14–17

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

### ■ Vatnasafn / Library of Water

Bókhöðustígur 17, 340 Stykkishólmur

[www.libraryofwater.is](http://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

Kaupvangur 1, Sandgerði.

Until Feb 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/jvgallery.htm](http://www.jvs.is/jvgallery.htm)

### ■ Akureyri Art Museum

Kaupvangsstræti 12, Akureyri

Tue.–Sun. 12–17

[www.listasafn.akureyri.is](http://www.listasafn.akureyri.is)

Jan. 19 – Mar. 9

Exhibition on Buddhism. Free admission on Thursdays.

### ■ DaLí Gallery

Brekkugata 9, Akureyri

Mon.–Sat. 14–18

[www.daligallery.blogspot.com](http://www.daligallery.blogspot.com)

### ■ GalleriBOX

Kaupvangstræti 10, Akureyri

[www.galleribox.blogspot.com](http://www.galleribox.blogspot.com)

Current exhibition:

Porbjörg Halldórsdóttir exhibition

## Outside Reykjavík

### ■ Hafnarborg

Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður

Mon.–Sun. 11–17

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

Jan. 12 – Mar. 3

To celebrate its 25th anniversary Hafnarborg will host an exhibition of art from Hafnarborg's Collection.

### ■ Gljúfrasteinn

– Halldór Laxness museum

270 Mosfellsbær

Open daily except Mondays from 10–17.

### ■ Kópavogur Art Museum

– Gerðarsafn

Hamraborg, Kópavogur

Open daily 11–17 except Mondays

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

### ■ The Icelandic Museum of Design and Applied Art

Lyngás 7–9, 121 Garðabær

### ■ Skaftfell

Austurvegur 42, Seyðisfjörður

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

Jan. 12 – Feb. 24

Icelandic Visual Art – 100 years in a nutshell

Mar 2 – Apr 27

Exhibition of artwork created by LHI students under the guidance of Björn Roth and Kristján Steingrímur Jónsson.



## Films

### ■ Aliens vs. Predator II

Smárabíó, Sambíóin Keflavík, Sambíóin Selfoss

### ■ Alvin and The Chipmunks

Smárabíó

### ■ Atonement

Háskólabíó, Laugarásbíó, Borgarbíó

### ■ Brúðguminn

Smárabíó, Laugarásbíó, Regnboginn,

Borgarbíó, Sambíóin Keflavík,

Sambíóin Selfoss

### ■ Butterfly on a Wheel

Sambíóin Selfoss

### ■ Charlie Wilson's War

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Háskólabíó,

Sambíóin Akureyri

### ■ Cloverfield

Smárabíó, Sambíóin Kringlan,

Laugarásbíó, Borgarbíó

### ■ Death at a Funeral

Sambíóin Álfabakki

### ■ Duggholufólkið

Háskólabíó

### ■ Enchanted

Sambíóin Kringlan

### ■ I am Legend

Sambíóin Álfabakki

### ■ Michael Clayton

Sambíóin Kringlan

### ■ National Treasure: Book of Secrets

Sambíóin Álfabakki

### ■ Run, Fat Boy, Run

Sambíóin Selfoss

### ■ Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin

Kringlan, Sambíóin Akureyri

### ■ The Darjeeling Limited

Háskólabíó, Regnboginn,

### ■ The Game Plan

Sambíóin Álfabakki

### ■ The Golden Compass

Regnboginn

### ■ The Mist

Regnboginn, Sambíóin Akureyri

### ■ Untraceable

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin

Kringlan, Sambíóin Keflavík

### ■ Walk Hard

Smárabíó, Regnboginn

### ■ Rambo (Feb. 8)

### ■ The Bucket List (Feb. 8)

### ■ No Country for Old Men (Feb. 8)

### ■ Ástríkur á Ólympíuleikunum (Feb. 8)

### ■ Meet the Spartans (Feb. 8)

### ■ Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium (Feb. 8)

### ■ One Missed Call (Feb. 15)

### ■ P.S. I Love You (Feb. 15)

### ■ Into the Wild (Feb. 15)

### ■ Jumper (Feb. 15)

### ■ There Will Be Blood (Feb. 22)

### ■ Step Up 2 (Feb. 22)

### ■ 27 Dresses (Feb. 22)

### ■ Awake Drama (Feb. 22)

### ■ The Kite Runner (Feb. 29)

### ■ Underdog (Feb. 29)

### ■ Dark Floors (Feb. 29)

### ■ Grace Is Gone (Feb. 29)

### ■ Juno (Feb. 29)

### ■ Fool's Gold (Feb. 29)

### ■ The Water Horse (Feb. 29)

### ■ Be Kind Rewind (Feb. 29)

### ■ Stóra Planið (Mar. 1)

### ■ August Rush (Mar. 7)

### ■ Fjalakötturinn

Sun. Feb. 17: The film club

Fjalakötturinn will begin screening

movies on Sundays and Mondays.

Their will be a total of 15 movies from

4 different categories, as well as other

special events. For more information

see [www.filmfest.is](http://www.filmfest.is)

## Movie Theatres

### ■ Regnboginn, Hverfisgata 54

101 Reykjavík, Tel. 551-9000

### ■ Háskólabíó, Hagatorg

107 Reykjavík, Tel. 525-5400

### ■ Laugarásbíó, Laugarás

104 Reykjavík, Tel. 565-0118

### ■ Smárabíó, Smáralind

201 Kópavogur, Tel. 564-0000

### ■ Sambíóin, Álfabakki 8

109 Reykjavík, Tel. 575-8900

### ■ Sambíóin, Kringlan 4-12

103 Reykjavík, Tel. 575-8900

### ■ Sambíóin Akureyri, Ráðhústorg

600 Akureyri, Tel. 461-4666

### ■ Nýja-Bíó, Hafnargata 33

230 Reykjanesbær, Tel. 421-1170

### ■ Selfossbíó, Eyrarvegur 2

800 Selfoss, Tel. 482-3007

## Events

### ■ Beinagrindin – The Skeleton

Fri Feb 8 at 8 pm Alliance française,

The Reykjavík City Theatre and The

Winter Lights Festival present the

French/Japanese Oki Haiku's circus

"Beinagrindin" or "The Skeleton".

A fascinating mix of circus, music,

dance and light show, actor Keisuke

Kanaí and musician Rui Owada bring

the production to life along with the

help of director Sébastien Lalanne.

Entry costs 3.100 kr. and tickets can

be bought at the The Reykjavík City

Theatre (Ph. 5688000) or at [www.borgarleikhus.is](http://www.borgarleikhus.is). The group Oki Haiku has

come to Iceland before, in 2004 when

they were performing "Hreyfa ekki

hreyfa" or "Move don't move", which

was publicly performed 660 times all

around the world. The circus will also

host a Circus-workshop for children

and teens on Saturday February 9th

at 1 pm..

### ■ The Northern Wave

#### International Film Festival

Fri Feb 22 – Sun Feb 24 The Northern

Wave International Film Festival is an

aply named international film festival

which will be held in Grundarfirði.

The film festival is going to be an annual

event and this year the festival will

emphasize short films and videos. The

Festival received 120 movies from 15

different countries of which 70 were

chosen to be in the festival. Judg-

ing the competition are Hilmar Örn

Hilmarrson, Kristín Jóhannsdóttir and

Mark Berger. Spanish band Appledog

and BB&Blake will perform for the

attendees and Mark Berger and WIFT

(Women in Film and Television) will

both lecture on their experience in

the Film Industry and to finish the day

with a bang a dance will be held on

saturday with Sprengjuhöllin perform-

ing. For more information see [www.northernwave.is](http://www.northernwave.is).

### ■ The Winter Lights Festival

#### (Vetrarhátíð Reykjavíkur)

Thu Feb 7 – Sat Feb 9 The annual

Winter Lights Festival being held for

the 7th time will open on Thursday

the 7th of February and end on the

following Saturday. The Winter Lights

Festival is a celebration which

features visual art, music, design, act-

ing, dancing as well as other art forms,

from Iceland and from abroad. The

colorful spectacle is not unwelcome

after months of long nights and harsh

cold. The attractions will be spread

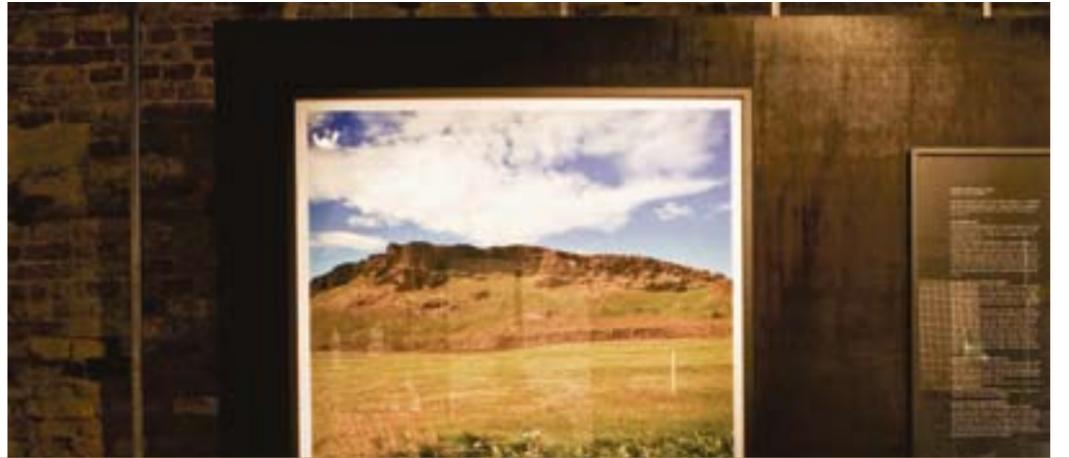
across Reykjavík and there will be a

wide selection of attractions to choose

from. The full itinerary can be found at

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

Listasafn Reykjavíkur  
Reykjavík Art Museum



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The Golden Plover Has Arrived

# Steingrímur Eyfjörð

The exhibition was Iceland's contribution at the world-renowned Venice Biennale in 2007.

Hafnarhús  
10 January – 2 March 2008

Aðgangur  
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Free  
admission



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Silence**  
Ingirafn Steinarsson in D-7

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Thursdays 10 a.m. – 10 p.m.  
Free admission.

CIA.is is the commissioning institution of the exhibition for the Venice Biennale.



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

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## 1 EATING

### Mokka

Skólavörðustígur 3a

Mokka has been attracting coffee-thirsty regulars since 1958, making it the oldest café in the city centre and the founder of a very rich coffee culture in the country. Its old interiors full of character makes the visit both relaxing and comfortable and a great place to linger on a Sunday afternoon. Mokka's regular art exhibits are always worth a look too.

## 2 Fiskmarkaðurinn

Aðalstræti 12

One of the more exciting fine-dining restaurants in the centre, Fiskmarkaðurinn is run and co-owned by members of the national team of chefs. Great thought has been put into every detail to guarantee a laid-back evening. The Japanese fusion menu features classic sushi and sashimi and exotic meat, veggie and fish dishes.

## 3 Bæjarins Bestu

Tryggvagata

There's a good reason why there's always a queue in front of Bæjarins Bestu, no matter the weather or time of day. Selected the best hot-dog stand in Europe by The Guardian – something locals realized decades ago – it has been serving people "ein með öllu" downtown since 1935, making it the oldest fast-food place in the country.

## 4 Grillhúsið

Tryggvagata 20

Roomy restaurant Grillhúsið has served juicy burgers, steaks, fish dishes and sandwiches to hungry regulars at the same downtown location since 1994. The daily lunch offer features traditional reasonably priced home-style food and the special children's menu offers numerous options.

## 5 Kaffitár

Bankastræti 8

At Kaffitár, making coffee is a way of celebrating life. Offering all sorts of delicacies to go with your morning fuel and a nice selection for those with a sweeter tooth, it's an excellent choice for eat in or take away. Their special coffee blends are well worth that little extra change. If you like the blend, buy a bag of beans to take home.

## 6 Grái Kötturinn

Hverfisgata 16a

This small antique-style coffeehouse in a Hverfisgata basement is 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, an American style breakfast consisting of eggs, bacon, pancakes, fried potatoes, tomatoes, syrup and toast. The bagels are also excellent.

## 7 Kaffi Hjómálin

Laugavegur 21

This organic, free-trade café prides itself on being a non-profit company and a dedicated venue for the hardcore and culture scene, 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 and healthy lunch.

## 8 Eldsmiðjan

Bragagata 38a

Grapevine's favourite pizzeria in Reykjavik, Eldsmiðjan's fire-baked pizzas have built a bigger fan base than most other restaurants in the city. El Pollo Loco and the Eldsmiðjan special come highly recommended. You can either eat on the spot or grab a bite to go.

## 9 Ráðhúskaffi

Tjarnargata 11

Located inside the City Hall with a great view over the pond, this coffeehouse has a good selection of cakes and pastries for people wanting to relax after a stroll in the centre. A large topographic model of Iceland and regular art exhibits add to the pleasure.

## 10 Babalú

Skólavörðustígur 22a

When walking up Skólavörðustígur, you can't miss café Babalú, a lovely destination in its own right which has to be ranked among the cosiest places for a coffee and cake. With nice old sofas and bookshelves, you can't help feeling you're at your grandma's place. We could sit there all day, every day, if only our daily chores didn't drag us away again.

## 11 Segafredo

By Lækjartorg

The Italian coffee chain found its spot in the heart of Reykjavik, with its windows facing the Lækjartorg Square. Segafredo serves lunch snacks like paninis and strong espressos for coffee lovers, whether you need to grab a coffee and sandwich on the way to work or want to enjoy your drink on the spot.

## 12 Geysir Bar/bistro

Aðalstræti 2

Bistro-bar and restaurant Geysir is located in the old and dignified Geysir building by the corner of Aðalstræti and Vesturgata. Combining bright, stylish interiors with a casual vibe, this is always a nice place to grab a bite. The menu offers a diverse selection of bistro-style dishes for a reasonable price.

## 13 Svarta Kaffi

Laugavegur 54

A cosy second-floor café offering lunch snacks and cappuccinos every day of the week. The appeal lies partly in the café's famous Súpa í brauði ("Soup in bread"), but also in the romantic atmosphere created by candlelight on every table and easy-listening background music.

## 14 Tapasbarinn

Vesturgata 3b

For those with a bit of money and time on their hands, the evening is well spent at Tapas, where you can while away the evening having course after course of miniature dishes served in an authentic Spanish style. There's also a lounge in case you don't feel like getting up straight away afterwards.



### SPOT THIS: Ráðhúskaffi

Tjarnargata 11, 101 Reykjavik

Located inside the City Hall with a great view over the pond, this coffeehouse has a good selection of cakes and pastries for people wanting to relax after a stroll in

the centre. A large topographic model of Iceland and regular art exhibits add to the pleasure.



## 15 DRINKING

Organ

Hafnarstræti 1-3

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

## 18 Hressó

Austurstræti 20

A spacious neutral place with no special type of clientele, Hressó is a place where the menu spans a variety of lunch dishes during the day and troubadours and tab-beer are the order of the night. It becomes a somewhat basic club during weekends notable for its size and amount of seats.

## 21 Café

Austurstræti 20

On a sunny day, Café is the busiest outside café in the city, featuring fine food and friendly evening drinks. It's a cosy inside bar and funk on weekends.

## 16 Prikið

Bankastræti 12

This two-floor café/pub has been part of Reykjavik's bar scene for decades. With a large and fairly cheap bistro menu, Prikið attracts a mix of university students with their laptops and devoted elderly regulars during the day while the younger clientele fills up the space during the evening, especially on weekends when the music is mostly dedicated to hip-hop and R&B.

## 19 Vegamót

Vegamótastígur 4

Nothing really beats the impressive menu at Vegamót with its tasty, not too pricey dishes served until 10 pm. Whether it's the fish of the day, sandwiches or pasta dishes that attract, its two floors are usually packed during lunch and dinner hours every day of the week. When the kitchen closes, Vegamót becomes a popular hangout, turning into a lively nightclub on weekends.

## 22 Nasa

Thorvaldsgata 1

In recent years, Nasa has built its reputation on a mix of live music and a majority of Icelandic bands have performed there as a variety of interesting acts. One of the bigger clubs in the city, there's always a good time during weekends and diverse as the crowd.

## 17 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

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

## 20 Barinn

Laugavegur 22

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

## 23 Óliveri

Laugavegur 22

If you like trendy parties, Óliveri is like crazy to a lively atmosphere. Glamour is all that's missing on the dance floor, but it's a nightclub for you. For those who hate that kind of atmosphere, fine brunch served during the day and reasonably priced meals.

ORANGE

BLAUGVEGUR 11

DOORS  
OPEN  
FEBRUARY  
2008

5511111 / Gensgata 9 / 101 Reykjavik

# REYKJAVÍK WINTER LIGHTS FESTIVAL

FEB 7-9 2008



## Ghosts and Wights

Supernatural exhibition at the National Museum of Iceland. Friday, February 8, 19:30 – 01:00

## Thursday, February 7

### 19:00 Imagine Peace Tower

In relation to the Winter Lights Festival, Yoko Ono's Peace Tower will be turned on. The Light Tower will shine through the festival from 17:00 - 01:00. *Viðey*.

### 19:30 Opening Act: Winter Carnival

Light Parade from Hallgrímskirkja Church to Skólavörðustígur, through Pingholt, and onwards to the Pond. The walk will be full of surprising events. A brass band and dancers in light costumes will make surprise appearances, and a new world will wait behind every corner.

### 20:00 - 22:00 Evening programme in Dómkirkjan Cathedral

Dómkirkjan Cathedral Choir sings. On the programme: Brahms and Icelandic love songs. Conductor: Marteinn H. Friðriksson. Young musicians from the congregation play their instruments and Rev. Hjálmar Jónsson and Rev. Þorvaldur Víðisson say a prayer and bless the gathering. *Dómkirkjan Cathedral*.

### 20:15 Poetry Slam in the Reykjavík City Library

The Reykjavík City Library, in cooperation with ÍTR introduces a poetry slam festival for children from 13 - 18+. Slam is a form of poetry where the performance of the poem is as important as the poem itself. The theme of the competition is excitement. *Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagata 15*.

### 21:00 Kramhúsið Dance Festival at NASA

Diverse and multicultural programme where teachers and students at Kramhúsið dance and display the latest and most popular dances. Circus artists will perform and the night will end with the Scottish folk musical group The Reel Thing. *NASA, by Austurvöllur*.

### 21:00 Light Winter Jazz

Carl Möller's Quintet, w/ Ragnar Bjarnason, Anna Sigríður Helgadóttir and the Fríkirkjan Church Choir offer a light jazz programme in the *Fríkirkjan Church*.

### 21:00 Dance and Violin

Giovanni Battista Bvonamente: Quarto Libro de varie sonate, Auanti il Quarto Brando, Gagliarde, Corrente for two violins and Basso di Viola. Martin Frewer, Lilja Hjaltadóttir and Dean Ferrell play the violin and students from the Icelandic Ballet School demonstrate the effectiveness of the violin as a dance instrument. *Íðnó, Vonarstræti 3*.

### 21:00 - 23:00 "Wealth" of Miðborg and Hlíðar city districts

Diverse programme with the band Retro Stefson and entertainment from elementary schools in the district. *City Hall*.

### 21:00 What's up? Hundur í óskilum

An evening with the Wheel Chair Company, where they share their view of life with the audience. The programme deals in a very humorous way with access problems facing handicapped people and the lack of action to improve conditions. Hundur í óskilum will sing and dance, and play various instruments, including crutches and bag-pipes. (In Icelandic). *Reykjavík Art Museum – Hafnarhús, Tryggvagata 17*.

### 21:00 An Evening at Smíðaverkstæðið

Open programme related to the production of the play *Le Dieu du Carnage* by Yasmina Reza. Discussion group. (In Icelandic). *Smíðaverkstæðið, the National Theatre, Lindargata*.

### 21:00 Thursday Foreplay

Hitt Húsið Youth Centre celebrates the Winter Lights Festival with a rocking programme from three of the most promising Icelandic rock bands. *Hitt Húsið, Pósthússtræti 3-5*.

### 21:00 Hot and Cold

Grand opening of a suitcase exhibition. 17 suitcases, containing 17 patchworks, from 17 countries, travel around Europe. One of the suitcases is now in Iceland. The patchwork is related to the theme hot and cold. *Fógetastofur, Aðalstræti 10*.

### 21:00 Heavenly Regiment

Exhibition opening at Handverk og hönnun. Páll S. Garðarsson runs the handicraft shop Heavenly Regiment, where he whittles wood, works with paper, wire and other materials. *Handverk og hönnun, Aðalstræti 10*.

### Open to 22:00 Designer of the Day

Guðný Hafsteinsdóttir, ceramic artist, talks with guests, while Gunnar Þórðarson plays the guitar. *Kraum, Aðalstræti 10*.

### Open to 22:00 START ART

Hrafnhildur Inga Sigurðardóttir exhibits landscape paintings relating to Icelandic autumn and winter weather. *START ART, Laugavegur 12b*.

### 20:00 - 22:00 Gallerí Tukt

Sigrún Guðmundsdóttir, student at the Icelandic Academy of the Arts, exhibits colourful paintings that take the viewer on an adventurous trip. *Gallerí Tukt, Hitt Húsið*.

### 20:00 - 22:00 Light and colour

Children at the Kampur day-care centre invite you to attend an art exhibition in Ingólfsnaust. On display are the results of the project Light and Movement, which the children have been working on for the last few weeks. Everyone is encouraged to come and celebrate the array of colours. *Ingólfsnaust, Aðalstræti 2*.

### 20:00 - 22:00 Patterns – Eyjólfur P. Kolbeins exhibits in Ingólfsnaust

Eyjólfur P. Kolbeins, visual artist, has been working on art projects for 20 years and is currently a student at the Reykjavík School of Visual Arts. Eyjólfur calls his work 'coloured pictures', and works from his own inspiration. The exhibition is produced in cooperation with the art festival Art Without Borders, where handicapped and nonhandicapped people work on artistic projects together with great results, leading to an increased understanding between people for the good of society as a whole. *Ingólfsnaust, Aðalstræti 2*.

### Nordic Championship in figure skating

Egilshöll 7-10 February 2008. Unique opportunity to see world-class figure skaters. See [www.skautasamband.is](http://www.skautasamband.is) for further info. Entry: 700 ISK for adults, 300 ISK for children.

## Friday, February 8

### 09:00 - 12:00 Spicy Winter – Conference on diversity in Icelandic Society

A different kind of conference combining lectures on diversity in food, weather and society, as well as various performances. *Íðnó, Vonarstræti 3, in Icelandic*.

### 09:00 - 19:00 Designer of the Day

NOTRUM textile designers talk with guests. *Kraum, Aðalstræti 10*.

### 09:00 Light procession

Children from day care centres in Miðborg and Hlíðar district walk towards Kjarvalsstaðir where they will celebrate Icelandic weather with songs about the rain, the sun and the snow. *Miklatún by Kjarvalsstaðir*.

### 10:00 One directional movement

A performance by students at Hagaskóli. Students will all move in one direction and create a snowflake with lights and movement. *By Neskirkja*.

### 12:00 - 14:00 Bread culture

Bread from all corners of the world. *Íðnó, Vonarstræti 3*.

### 12:00 Winter lunch in Neskirkja

Bacalao days in Neskirkja. Mediterranean bacalao for guests. *Neskirkja, Hagatorg*.

### 13:00 - 16:00 Science Workshop – Light and Movement

Science workshop for children of all ages where creativity and the thirst for knowledge is emphasised through projects relating to light. *City Hall*.

### 16:00 - 17:30 Tango at Háskólatorg

Instructors from The Tango Company offer free instruction for dancers of every level. *University of Iceland, Háskólatorg*.

### 17:00 - 19:00 Winter Games on Miklatún

Family event organised by the youth centres of Miðborg and Hlíðar district. Competitors face five challenges in the snow. 2008 Winter Games Champions selected.

The competition tracks will be in place over the weekend. *Miklatún*.

### 17:30 Jazz Programme at the University of Iceland

17:30 - 00:00 Video installation by Sebastian Nollet and Chooc Ly Tan in a window on the third floor. Look up and experience the light in living pictures at the intersection of Bergstaðastræti and Baldursgata.

### 19:00 Photography exhibition, photography lessons and torchlight procession in Viðey

The exhibition theme is Yoko Ono's Peace Tower. Professional photographers demonstrate the technique of photographing the Peace Tower. Organised by ljósmyndakeppni.is. Sponsored by Hans Petersen, Morgunblaðið, Pixlar and Oddi. *Ferry leaves Skarfabryggja at 19:00, returns at 21:00. Ferry fee: 600 ISK for adults, 400 ISK for children*.

### 19:00 - 21:00 A Starry Night in Vesturbæjarlaug swimming pool

Twisting by the pool. *Vesturbæjarlaug, Hofsvallagata*.

### 20:00 norway.today

A paradoxical play about love and the big questions. Free entrance for viewers from the age 14 - 24. (In Icelandic). *Svið unga fólksins, Lindargata 7*.

20:00 - 22:00 An evening of songs, stories, coffee and waffles for the whole family at Grensáskirkja congregation hall. *Grensáskirkja, Háaleitisbraut 66*.

### 20:00 - 22:00 Moving-Pictures

Arna Valsdóttir exhibits a portrait of a house in Kirsuberjatréd. Using moving pictures, Arna recreates the house that stores the work. *Kirsuberjatréd, Vesturgata 4*.

### Open until 22:00 START ART

Hrafnhildur Inga Sigurðardóttir exhibits landscape paintings relating to Icelandic autumn and winter weather. *START ART, Laugavegur 12b*.



Opening act: Winter Carnival. Starts at Hallgrímskirkja at 19:30 on Thursday.

## Saturday, February 9

### 11:00 - 14:00 Science Workshop – Light and Movement

Science workshop for children of all ages where creativity and the thirst for knowledge is emphasised through projects relating to light. Organised by the Social Service Advisory Centre of Miðborg and Hlíðar in cooperation with the University of Akureyri. *City Hall.*

### 12:00 - 15:00 Let Me Tell You a Story – Awakening

Stories from Reykjavík – leisure in the city. Guests reminisce about memorable art events in Reykjavík. Tapes from the Centre for Oral History. *National Gallery of Iceland, Frikirkjuvegur.*

### 12:00 - 17:00 Designer of the Day

Fjóla María Ágústsdóttir, fashion designer, talks with guests while Gunnar Þórðarson plays. *Kraum, Aðalstræti 10.*

### 13:00 - 16:00 Open house at the National Theatre

Get to know the National Theatre inside out. The programme contains various events, poetry readings, music and an introduction to the history of the house that has recently been restored. *The National Theatre, Hverfisgata.*

### 13:00 - 17:00 Winter biking

Try a special winter-ready bike on a track by Perlan, or watch bikers compete in a BMX high-jump competition, race around Perlan, or Perlan Downhill, where 9 of the best Icelandic mountain bikers race down the stairs of Perlan. Iceland's strongest man will also do a few extraordinary stunts. Various activity clubs introduce their operations, such as radio-controlled cars and boats, and the Icelandic Kayak Club teaches the fundamentals. *Perlan, Öskjuhlíð.*

### 13:00 Good Evening

An adventurous play for children from 3-years old. (In Icelandic). *Þjóðleikhúsið, entrance by Lindargata 7.*

### 13:30 - 17:30 An Afternoon of Singing at the Winter Lights Festival

Open house at the Reykjavík Academy of Singing and Vocal Arts. Continuous programme by graduation students: The programme consists of songs about the Nordic winter and Icelandic folk songs. Light refreshments. *Snorrabúð – Reykjavík Academy of Singing and Vocal Arts auditorium, Snorrabraut.*

### 14:00 - 22:00 Downhill Fun

Reykjavík Skiing Association offers skiing lessons for young skiers in Ártúnsbrekka. After dark, skiing highlights will be projected on a water screen from the waterfall. The programme is dependent on weather, consult [www.ski.is](http://www.ski.is) for further info. *Elliðaárdalur.*

### 15:00 Brass Orchestra Concert

The annual Brass Band of the Working Class children's concert. Special guests, Austurbæjarskóli School Orchestra. Icelandic classics are on the programme, as well as songs by Mika and songs from the musical *Abbababb*. *Reykjavík Art Museum – Hafnarhús.*

### 15:00 Short Stories

Sara Vilbergsdóttir opens the exhibition Short Stories in Gallery Fold. The exhibition contains colourful paintings, people made from paper and photographs of children playing with the 'paper people.' The works deal with the everyday life of people and how they interact. Every work contains a short story, written by the viewer. *Gallerí Fold, Rauðarárstígur 14-16.*

### 17:30 Light procession on Mt. Esja

Departure from the foot of Mt. Esja at sunset. Participants will receive headlights and walk into the darkness where they will create a chain of light up the mountain. In the dark, participants will turn off their lights for a peaceful minute of darkness. Climbers from the Toppfarar climbing company will guide the tour. Bus tours from the parking lot opposite of the University of Iceland, by Sæmundargata, and the Reykjavík Energy headquarters. Participants should bring food and appropriate clothing. *Registration and further info at [www.toppfarar.is](http://www.toppfarar.is).*

### 17:30 - 00:00 Video installation by

Sebastian Nollet and Chooc Ly Tan in a window on the third floor. Look up and experience the light in living pictures at the intersection of *Bergstaðastræti and Baldursgata.*

### 20:00 – 22:00 An Evening at Laugarneskirkja church

Sing-along, stories, music, adventures, prayers and more. This year's confirmation class sells waffles. 22:00 – 23:00 Concert by Svavar Knútur, troubadour. *Laugarneskirkja church.*

### 12:00 – 06:00 Tango Marathon

The marathon starts at noon on Saturday and lasts until Sunday morning. Contestants will enter the tango marathon and compete in tango endurance. Diverse entertainment programme and instruction for beginners and more advanced dancers. Everyone welcome to participate.

#### Programme:

12:00 - 14:00 Registration. Rules reviewed. DJ Riku plays.  
14:00 - 15:30 Instruction for intermediate dancers. Instructors Rika and Samira.  
15:30 - 17:00 Instruction for beginners. Instructors Hany and Bryndís.  
17:00 - 20:00 DJ Riku plays.  
20:00 - 20:40 History of the tango by A. Piazzola. One-act play on the history of the tango, a delicate blend of music, dance and light from South America.  
21:30 - 22:00 Riku and Samira, Bryndís and Hany – tango exhibition.  
22:30 - 23:30 Concert. Hrafnkell Orri with band.  
23:30 - 06:00 DJ Riku plays.  
12:00 Award ceremony and brunch. *Iðnó, Vonarstræti 3.*

### 21:00 Iva Nova in concert

Iva Nova is a Russian all-girl band, hailing from St. Petersburg. The band plays an original mixture of modern rock and Russian folk music based on Russian folklore. Iva Nova is one of the most interesting bands to emerge from Russia in recent memory and is sure to rock the house. *NASA, by Austurvöllur.*

Sponsored by  ICELANDAIR

## Children's International Day Saturday, February 9

The Children's International Day is an exciting opportunity for children of all ages to get to know exotic cultures from far off places. Extensive workshops for children and teenagers will be offered to introduce various elements of world culture. The results will be put on display at 17:00 at Gerðuberg. The exhibition "Allt í plati!" inspired by the stories of Sigrún Eldjárn will be open to guests, as well as the photography exhibition "Hið breiða holt" during the day. Children's International Day is a cooperative project between Gerðuberg Cultural Institution, Miðberg youth centre, Kramhúsið, the Intercultural Centre and Visit Reykjavík. *Gerðuberg & Miðberg, Gerðuberg 3 – 5.*

### Workshops: 13:00 - 16:00

#### The Maracas

How to make maracas and enjoy the South American carnival atmosphere.

#### Scottish Dancing

The art of nimble feet and fast beat. Lively dancing for the whole family.

#### Human Kaleidoscope

Experience the adventure of light and shadows. A giant kaleidoscope makes the human form tiny. Every individual makes a new form by stepping into the kaleidoscope.

#### Salsa – for the whole family

Let the South-American Salsa beat move you.

#### Shadow Play

Strange creatures emerge from the shadows at Gerðuberg library. Make your own shadow figures.

#### Oki Haiku Dan

French modern circus company Oki Haiku Dan is known for creating a magical world of dance, gymnastics and mime. Participants will learn a few well-chosen circus acts. Alliance Française introduces the Oki Haiku Dan Company in cooperation with the French Embassy in Iceland, Cultures-france, the Winter Lights Festival, Peugeot/Bernhard and Grand Hotel.

#### Viking Weapons

Make your own sword and shield and learn Viking swordsmanship.

#### Origami Workshop

Learn the ancient Japanese art of origami.

#### Japanese Calligraphy

Learn to write your name in Japanese kanji symbols.

#### Sri Lankan Calligraphy

Learn the art of Sri Lankan calligraphy and get to know the colourful culture of the 'Pearl of the Indian Ocean.'

#### Magic tricks

A magician reveals some of the world's most secret magic tricks.

#### Hip-hop Dance Workshop

Move to the power of the beat.



Iva Nova in concert at NASA, Austurvöllur at 21:00 on Saturday.



Peace and Multiculture – Opening act of Museum Night 2008. (backpage)

## Museum Night 2008 Friday, February 8

**19.00 The opening of Museum Night –Peace and Multiculture**  
*Ingólfstorg.*

**National Museum of Iceland –Haunted Night at the National Museum**

–19.30 & 20.30 Ghosts and Wights. Ghost stories and stories of supernatural beings for children  
–19.00 - 20.30 **Bones and Ancient Burial Grounds.** Archaeologist Guðmundur Ólafsson educates guests about bones and ancient burial grounds.  
–21.00, 22.00 & 23.00 **Chilling Ghost Stories.** Actor Atli Rafn Sigurðsson tells frightening ghost stories and educates guests about the different types of ghosts, how to wake the dead and exorcise ghosts.  
–19.00 - 01.00 **Slideshow.** Dangerous knowledge of ghosts and the supernatural.  
–19.00 - 01.00 **Orienteering:** Where are the bones? and Who is the ghost?  
–19.00 - 01.00 **Ghost illustration competition.** Best entries awarded .  
*Suðurgata 41.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Hringbraut at 00 – 20 – 40 (minutes past the hour)

**The Icelandic Institute of Natural History –You are the light of my life**  
A programme dedicated to photosynthesis and how the origin of life is related to light.

–19.30 & 21.30 **Nature Runs on Solar Power.** Lecture by Gróa Valgerður Ingimundardóttir, biologist at the Institute of Natural History. Life Turned on in Surtsey. Lecture by Borgþór Magnússon, ecologist at the Institute of Natural History. Möguleikhúsið við Hlemm  
–19.00 - 01.00 Exhibition rooms will be open and a running slideshow is on display between lectures.  
*Möguleikhúsið, Hlemmur 3.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Hlemmur at 05 – 25 – 45 (minutes past the hour)

**Reykjavík Museum of Photography –Flickr era: Digital Horizons**  
Exhibition of photos from Icelandic photographers on the flickr.com photo community

–19.00 - 01.00 **How to Make Your Own Flickr-site.** Photographers assist guests in establishing their own photography sites on flickr.com. Bring your photos on CD or USB memory.  
–21.00 **Vicky Pollard.** Promising young band Vicky Pollard plays a few songs in the 6th floor exhibition room. Photos of the band can be found on the Flickr era exhibition under the tag “music.”  
–00.00 **Performance Art.** Premier of new material from a new tag of the exhibition.  
–19.00 - 1.00 **Skotið:** Kristín Hauksdóttir - Greni / Tannenbaum  
Photo exhibition.  
*Grófarhús, 6th floor.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Tryggvagata 17 at 14 – 34 – 54 (minutes past the hour)

**National Gallery of Iceland**  
19.00 - 01.00 **Let Me Tell You a Story –Awakening.** Stories from Reykjavík – leisure in the city. Guests reminisce about memorable art events in Reykjavík. Tapes from the Centre for Oral History.  
–19.30 - 01.00 **The Long and Narrow Light.** A new look at Katrín Sigurðardóttir’s High Planes VI.  
–20.15 - 21.00 **Panel Discussion.** Icelandic art magazines and art discussion with a focus on

conflict in Icelandic arts. Artíma, society of art students at the University of Iceland, introduces the art magazine Artímarit and Anna Júlía Friðbergisdóttir and Karlotta Blöndal introduce the art magazine Sjónauki. Auditorium 4.  
–21.00 - 21.40 **How Icelandic is Icelandic Culture?** A lecture on art and aesthetic discussion from 1930-40 by historian Benedikt Hjartarson.  
–23.00 - 23.30 **Colours and Light.** Guided tour of an exhibition of works from the collection of Markús Ívarsson.

–00.00 - 00.30 **Light and Movement in the Works of Kristján Davíðsson**  
Guided tour with Halldór Björn Runólfsson, museum director.  
*National Gallery of Iceland, Fríkirkjuvegur 7.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Fríkirkjuvegur 7, at 06 – 26 – 46 (minutes past the hour)

**Reykjavík Maritime Museum**  
–19.00 - 19.30 **Museum opens.** Sailor songs.  
–19.30 - 21.30 **A fish in the sea.** Count the fish, a game for children.  
–21.30 **Wine tasting.**  
–22.00 - 00.00 **Dancing on the docks.** Marínó’s Band keeps the party going with accordion music.  
–00.00 **Light Dance.** Sailor songs.  
*Grandagarður 8.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Grandi at 01 – 21 – 41 (minutes past the hour)

**The Settlement Exhibition Reykjavík 871±2**  
–19:00 - 01:00 An awesome walrus on display.  
–21:00, 22:00 & 23: 00 The walrus in Reykjavík. Lecture about the history of the walrus in Reykjavík.  
*Reykjavík 871 +/- 2, Aðalstræti 16.*

**SÍM – The Association of Icelandic Visual Artists**  
New exhibition series, SÍM member of the month, introduced at the SÍM house. The premiering artist is Ásdís Sif Gunnarsdóttir. The opening starts at 19.00 but a surprise event takes place at 23.00.  
*Hafnarstræti 16.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Tryggvagata 17 at 14 – 34 – 54 (minutes past the hour)

**Museum of Icelandic Printmakers Association**  
Artists of the year for the Icelandic Printmakers Association are: Einar Hákonarson, Ragnheiður Jónsdóttir and Georg Guðni.  
*Tryggvagata 17.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Tryggvagata 17 at 14 – 34 – 54 (minutes past the hour)

**The Reykjavík Art Museum – Hafnarhús**  
–19.00 - 22.00 **The Golden Plover has Arrived – Steingrímur Eyfjörð.** Workshop and a guided tour for children of all ages.  
–20.00 - 23.00 **Behind the Scenes – the Holiest of the Holy.** Guided tours through the museum’s storage facilities. Tours start at 20.00, 20.30, 21.00, 21.30, 22.00, and 22.30. The maximum number of participants per tour is ten.  
–21.00 **ERRÓ – Ghost Rider.** Superhero guidance through an exhibition of Erró’s work.  
–22.00 **Silence – Silence Broken**  
Curator JBK Ransú gives a guided tour with participating artists who discuss their works on display.  
–22.30 **D7 - Ingirafn Jóhannsson**  
Curator Fee Quay gives a guided tour and talks with the artists.  
–23.00 - 01.00 **DJ de la Rosa**

–00.00 **Dancers in light costumes.**  
*Hafnarhús, Tryggvagata 15. Open from 19.00 - 01.00.*

The Museum Night Bus stops at Tryggvagata 17 at 14 – 34 – 54 (minutes past the hour)

**The Reykjavík Municipal Archives**  
–19.30, 20.30, 21.30 & 22.30 **Breiðavík**  
A documentary by Ásgeir Long on the Breiðavík youth home from 1963.  
–19.00 - 01.00 **Documents related to the Breiðavík youth home on display.**  
–19.00 - 01.00 **Exhibition about the houses at Laugavegur 4 and 6.**  
–20.00 **The Health Benefits of Sex**  
Jóna Ingibjörg Jónsdóttir, nurse and sexologist, lectures on the health benefits of sex for body and spirit and increased life expectancy.  
–21.00 **Rauðarárholt – A village in the Land of Reykjavík.** Ómar Ragnarsson talks about the houses and people of Rauðarárholt.  
–22.00 **Body Language.** Arna Björk Gunnarsdóttir, instructor from JCI explains how to read body language.  
–23.00 **Icelandic Serial Killer and the Agents of the EU.** A lecture by Ólafur Ásgeirsson, state archivist and historian.  
–00.00 **Slam Poetry.** BlazRoca gives guests a taste of rap and slam poetry.  
*Grófarhús, Tryggvagata 15, 3rd floor.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Tryggvagata 17 at 01 – 21 – 41 (minutes past the hour)

**Borgarbókasafn**  
–20.00 **Breaking Light.** Grand opening of a group exhibition in Artotek. Author Kristín Marja Baldursdóttir selected the works and opens the exhibition with a short talk.  
–20.30 - 01.00 **Chaos on Canvas.** Author Kristín Marja Baldursdóttir takes the brush for her fictional character, Karítas Jónsdóttir. She will start a painting that guests will conclude. All equipment will be at hand. The painting will be a part of the exhibition Breaking Light, open until March 9.  
–20.00 - 23.00 **Light and Colours.** Workshops teaching different handicraft.  
–22.00 **The Winning Slam.** The winners from the Slam Poetry 2008 competition perform.  
–23.45 - 00.30 **Midnight Swing.** Stefán S. Stefánsson’s Quartet and singer Íris Guðmundsdóttir perform melodic and dance-friendly jazz music.  
*Aðalsafn, Grófarhús, Tryggvagata 15.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Tryggvagata 17 at 14 – 34 – 54 (minutes past the hour)

**The Saga Museum**  
Guests will join Vikings in full armour and watch them work on ancient handicraft.  
*The Saga Museum at The Pearl.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Öskjuhlíð at 18 – 38 – 58 (minutes past the hour)

**The Einar Jónsson Gallery**  
–19.00 - 23.00 **Searching for Sounds in the Halls of the House.** Sound installation by Björk Viggósdóttir and Klara Pórhallsdóttir.  
–23.30 - 00.30 **Pedal Powered Breaths.** Kira Kira plays original works on the organ in the tower.  
*The Einar Jónsson Gallery, Njarðargata.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Eiríkgata at 08 – 28 – 48 (minutes past the hour)

**Reykjavík Art Museum – Ásmundarsafn**  
–19.00 - 21.00 **Workshops for children – Working with clay.** Sigríður Ólafsdóttir shows children how to work with clay in the manner of Ásmundur Sveinsson.  
–20.00 **Ásmundarsafn** has been an important architectural landmark since Ásmundur Sveinsson built the museum in 1942. The artist’s

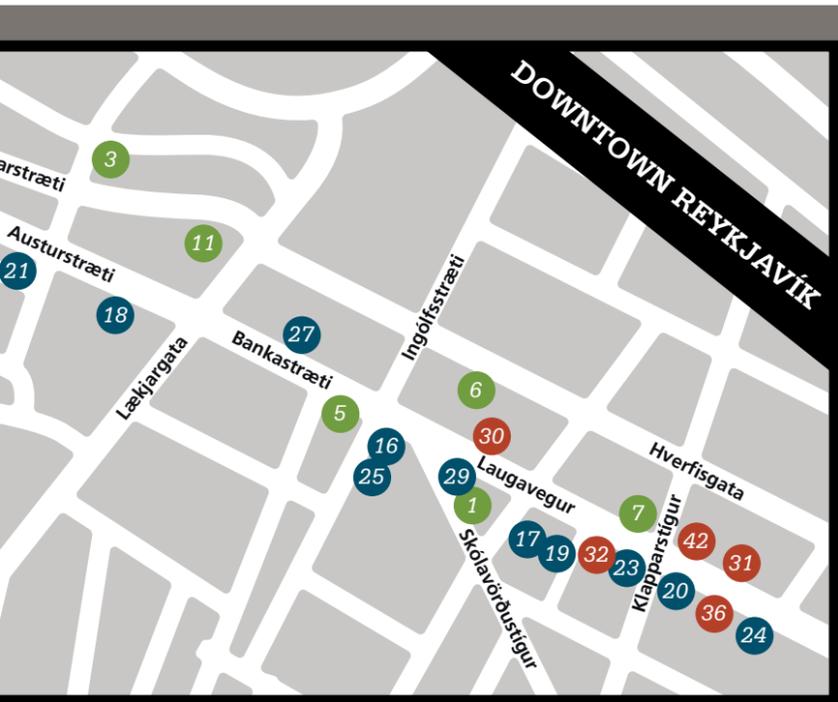
daughter, Ásdís Ásmundsdóttir, gives a guided tour of the house and reminisces about growing up there.  
–22.00 **The Architecture of Ásmundarsafn.** Guja Dögg Hauksdóttir, Head of the Department of Architecture at the Reykjavík Museum of Art, talks about the architecture of Ásmundarsafn museum.  
–23.00 **Animated light-display in the garden and inside the museum.**  
–00.00 **Dancers in light costumes.**  
*Ásmundarsafn on Sigtún.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Sigtún at 14 – 34 – 54 (minutes past the hour)

**Árbæjarsafn –Diverse concert programme**  
–21.00 **Gerður Bolladóttir,** soprano, and Sophie Schoonjans, harp, perform Icelandic folk songs from the Fagurt er í Fjörðum CD.  
–22.00 **Guðmundur Pálsson,** violin, and Steingrímur Pórhallsson, piano.  
–23.00 **Pamela De Sensi,** flute, and Rúnar Þórisson, guitar, play South-American dance-songs. Dancers in light costumes appear.  
*Kistuhylur 4.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Kistuhylur at 10 – 30 – 50 (minutes past the hour)

**Reykjavík Art Museum – Kjarvalsstaðir**  
–19.30 & 20.30 **Kjarval for Kids.** The youngest guests contemplate the work of Jóhannes Kjarval and discuss their questions with Alma Dís Kristinsdóttir.  
–21:00 **Faroese folk music.**  
–21.30 **Mikines – Guided Tour**  
Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson, curator, educates guests about the work of the Faroese artist Mikines.  
–22.30 **Light Music.** Singer Sigríðar Thorlacius, pianist Steingrímur Karl Teague and contra bass player Andri Ólafsson.  
–00.00 **Dancers in light costumes.**  
*Kjarvalstaðir, Flókgata.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Flókgata at 13 – 33 – 53 (minutes past the hour)

**Nordic House**  
–21.00, 22.00 & 23.00 **Baroque Music in the Nordic House Auditorium**  
Battista Bvonamente: Quarto Libro de varie sonate; Auanti il Quarto Brando, Gagliarde, Corrente for two violins and Basso di Viola  
Performers: Martin Frewer, Lilja Hjaltadóttir and Dean Ferrell with dancers from The Icelandic Ballet School, directed by Ingibjörg Björnsdóttir.  
–19.00 - 01.00 **Graffiti Art in the Nordic House Exhibition Room.** Art from the concrete jungle. Sculptures, photographs, installations and music from the edge. In cooperation with grassroots group TFA and hiphop.is.  
–19.00 - 01.00 **Photography exhibition.** Rebekka Guðleifsdóttir exhibits photographs  
–00.00 **Dancers in light costumes.**  
*Nordic House, Sturlugata 5.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Nordic House at 04 – 24 – 44 (minutes past the hour)

**The Culture House**  
–19.00 - 01.00 **Free admission to exhibitions at the Culture House: Surtsey – Genesis; The Medieval Manuscripts – Eddas and Sagas; Journey’s End – poet and natural scientist Jónas Hallgrímsson (1807-1845); From Beyond the Oceans – translations and original writings by Helgi Hálfðanarson; and the nature film ‘Nation and Nature’ by filmmaker Páll Steingrímsson.**  
*The Culture House, Hverfisgata 15.*  
The Museum Night Bus stops at Hverfisgata/ Smiðjustígur at 10 – 30 – 50 (minutes past the hour)



### 30 SHOPPING

#### Liborius Laugavegur 7

This one-of-a-kind fashion shop boasts a nice selection of cutting-edge designer clothing for both sexes. You will find labels such as the Japanese designer brand Undercover, Geoffrey Small, ThreeAsFour, menswear line from Number N(i)ne and Belgian designer Ann Demeulemeester.

### 37 Marimekko Laugavegur 56

The respectable Finnish designer brand Marimekko has found its spot on Laugavegur. The Marimekko concept store stocks a wide selection of the colourfully printed designer products including household items and interior decorations, bags, bed linen, towels and the popular Fatboy beanbag.



### 31 Dead Laugavegur 29

Jón Sæmundur Auðarson's new fashion shop Dead is tucked away in a Laugavegur alley. The artist and designer sells clothing labels such as April 77, Pleasure Principle and Licentious and of course his own rock'n'roll trademark, Dead. His collection includes hand-printed T-shirts, jackets, ties and bags, all bearing the notorious Dead skull.

### 38 Handprjóna-sambandið Lækjargata 2a

The Handknitting Association of Iceland's official store, Handprjónasambandið, sells wool products of uncompromising quality. The store features pullover sweaters, cardigans and other wool accessories. They also sell yarn and the association hosts knitting nights at Iðu Húsið.



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### 32 Green Apple Laugavegur 20

Green Apple's sign reads "aromatherapy, massage oil, bath oil, romance." The tiny shop combines massage and other relaxation products with organic products such as whole grain pasta and chocolate muesli, environmentally friendly cleaning products and a wide range of herbal teas. Green Apple also stocks a wide range of herbal packs for relaxation and to relieve pain.

### 39 Gilbert Laugavegur 62

Watchmaker Gilbert Guðjónsson has sold high quality handmade watches and clocks on Laugavegur for over 40 years. Recently, Gilbert designed his own line of wristwatches that have been extremely popular. Gilbert has a reputation for fine craftsmanship, so expect a quality production.

### 33 Underground Veltusund 1

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

### 40 Gallerí Sautján Laugavegur 91

Stocking many hip fashion labels such as Diesel, DKNY, Lloyd, and Paul Smith, Gallerí Sautján is a unisex store with everything from casual business wear to evening outfits. On the second floor is Eva, stocking fashion labels for women who want to look smart and professional.

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### 24 Paris Austurstræti 14

Café Paris is one of the best in the city centre, and attentive service and relaxing atmosphere make it a well-liked spot. DJs play soul music.

### 25 Boston Laugavegur 28b

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

### 27 B5 Bankastræti 5

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

### 25 Q-Bar Ingólfsstræti 3

A roomy gay/straight friendly bar, the stylish Q-bar is a welcome addition to the downtown nightlife. Some of the greatest DJs in town regularly play there which makes for a great vibe and craziness on the dance floor. Weekends are especially lively.

### 26 Glaumbar Tryggvagata 12

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

### 28 Gaukurinn Tryggvagata 22

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

### 29 Kofi Tómasar frænda Laugavegur 2

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

### 30 Skífan Laugavegur 26

Skífan stocks a wide selection of CDs, DVDs and computer games as well as some Icelandic films with English subtitles. Here you'll find all types of music from pop and rock to classical, jazz and folk. Skífan operates three outlets in Reykjavik and the one on Laugavegur is open daily to 10 pm.

### 31 Fígúra Skólavörðustígur 22a

Forynja stocks colourful children's clothes as well as fashionable dresses, pillows, jewellery and cool gift items by up-and-coming local artists. Eye-catching designer wear and interior decorations can also be found. Forynja's own collection features hand-printed patterns on everything from T-shirts, sweaters and dresses to pillows and bed linen.

### 34 Kirsuberjatréð Vesturgata 4

A co-op gallery/gift shop owned and operated by ten women artists and designers, known for their unusual choices of materials, Kirsuberjatréð is the perfect little gift shop. The selection ranges from clothes, baskets, ceramics, copper sculptures, fish skin items, paper crafts, contemporary jewellery, felt articles, and various other items.

### 41 Belleville Laugavegur 55

Belleville is stuffed with trendy street-wear designs for fashion-conscious shoppers. Limited-edition sneakers, skateboards and funky Japanese Be@rbrick bear-shaped figurines line the shelves. The store also stocks a new jewellery collection from Atelier 11, fashion magazines, books and DVDs on street-culture and graffiti art as well as some rare skate-videos.

### 35 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, with distinctive styles and innovative washings.

### 42 Aftur Laugavegur 23

Sisters Bára and Hrafnhildur 'Raven' Hólmgeirsdóttir are internationally acclaimed designers and stylists and their label, Aftur, can be found in fashion capitals across the world. Aftur's unique collection is available at their shop and studio with the same name on the second floor of Laugavegur 23, open from 12–6 pm.

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Photos by GAS

## Greifinn

Greifinn is a favourite among residents of Akureyri and the many visitors that make a trip to Iceland's capital of the North. This busy, family-friendly restaurant has served hearty meals to its loyal group of customers since 1990. It has steadily grown in size and boasts a roomy dining area with plenty of seats. When my companion and I arrived early on a Tuesday evening, the casual location was filling up quickly with groups of teenagers sampling French fries and families feasting on pizza slices and grilled steaks. By the time we left, the place was almost packed.

Greifinn has become famous for its extensive and varied menu. The selection of both light dishes and calorie-rich temptations range from salads and sandwiches to meat and fish dishes, burgers, pizzas and fajitas. Although almost everything on the moderately priced menu looked tempting, we had to try the legendary hamburger we had heard rumours of before our arrival: a burger described as the easiest treat hamburger lovers could dream of, literally swimming in béarnaise sauce. We asked our waitress who immediately knew what we were on about and within moments an overflowing plate of what could best be described as a pure-evil-to-your-health arrived.

This mouth-watering burger is called an American beef sandwich on the menu and comes with slices of grilled beef, fried mushrooms and onions. Soaked in béarnaise sauce, the burger is served with a huge portion of fries, nacho-salad and cocktail sauce. For 1,690 ISK, this was the juiciest and most generous burger meal we'd tried in ages, and the extra béarnaise sauce in a large bowl on the side only gave it extra points. An absolute must-try.

I actually decided to go for a stomach-friendlier dish and ordered a Calzone (1,590 ISK). Stuffed with cheese, mushrooms, onion, bell pepper and tomatoes, the calzone made it quite understandable why Greifinn is such a popular pizza place. A very filling meal and perhaps big enough for two. With no room left for dessert we concluded our meal with a cup of coffee. Needless to say, we didn't feel hungry until late the next day.

**Address:**  
Glerárgata 20  
Akureyri  
Tel.: 460 1600

**Reviewed by**  
*Steinunn Jakobsdóttir*

## Strikið

Located on the fifth floor right in the heart of the town of Akureyri, brasserie Strikið opened its doors in 2005. The spot used to house restaurant Fiðlarinn, but new owners renovated the space to offer Akureyrians a modern, reasonably priced dining destination. The elegantly designed dining area, with its dark and minimalist interiors, offers a great view over Eyjafjörður fjord. Tables are plenty and when the roomy balconies are open during summer, the restaurant can cater to an even larger group of sunbathing diners from lunch to dinner. When my companion and I arrived on a freezing Monday evening, the place was quite empty and the atmosphere relaxed, but our waitress assured us that weekends were the complete opposite.

The dinner menu is appealing, in terms of both choices and prices, and features an array of hamburgers and pizzas along with inviting fish, pasta and meat dishes. For starters, my dining partner ordered the Parma salad with parmesan cheese (1,590) while I opted for snails fried in garlic butter (1,350). Both dishes were simple and tasty, although the snails could have benefited from a bit more garlic. Our attentive waitress served us Chilean white wine with the meal and made sure our glasses were never empty throughout the evening. For the main course, the seafood options were too appetising to miss. I chose the Seafood pasta (2,150) in creamy sauce with large chunks of lobster, scallops and tiger-shrimps while my companion ordered the Seafood pizza (1,790) topped with tiger-shrimps, lobster, mussels and garlic. Both dishes were excellent and the chef was thankfully very generous with the lobster. For dessert, we decided to share a chocolate cake with meringue and vanilla ice cream (1,250). The cake was pure pleasure, and I wanted to order another portion immediately after the first bite.

Our first visit to Strikið proved to be the best new discovery in a long time. Here you can dine out in a comfortable setting and the prices are more than fair considering the quality of the food served. Combined with a professional and friendly service, this is certainly worth a second trip.

**Address:**  
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**Reviewed by**  
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### In the 1960s...

Laugavegur was the hub of commerce in Reykjavík. Photo by Guðgeir Magnússon.



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Laugavegur has become a museum for old houses. Photo by GAS



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## Menu

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The 150-hectare area in Vatnsmýri, that is currently occupied by the Reykjavík domestic airport is waiting to be planned, it could revitalise the city centre.



## Planning Vatnsmýri

**Obviously, this is a load of doublespeak, but the main idea was that the competition would attract professional planners and architects from all around the world.**

City sprawl is one of the main problems facing today's urban planners. As the city's population increases, the available land for development tends to decrease. As the city's periphery extends away from the city centre, the challenge facing urban planners is to reverse the trend. With an added emphasis on sustainable development, the problems created by sprawling cities, such as traffic congestion, waste from excessive commuting and expensive public transit, have become particularly relevant.

In Reykjavík there is a unique opportunity to create a new and robust urban area in the city centre. The Reykjavík domestic airport was constructed as a military airfield in the Second World War. Located in the middle of a 150 hectare area called Vatnsmýri, it was on the outskirts of the urban area at the time. The question of whether the airport should be moved in order to make room for urban development has been debated and discussed for a number of years and was one of the main campaign issues in the last two city elections.

"I think the airport would be marvelous for urban expansion," said Jonathan Levine, the respected Professor and Chair of the Urban and Regional Planning programme at the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, when the Reykjavík Grapevine interviewed him last year. "I am not sure the huge value of that land would not be put to better use with urban uses. I would like to point out something else as well. We have been talking about places and buildings and I want to talk about people for a second. When you have a system that severely restricts densities in central

areas and, as a consequence, people move to outlying areas, what you get is a systematic gap between people's preferences and what they are actually able to choose.

"What I found in my own research is that if you survey people in suburban areas in the United States, you might imagine that everybody who lives in a suburban area is happy with their lifestyle, the suburban lifestyle, but in fact you will find that about 20 or 30% of them, which is a very large share, actually prefer to live in a walkable neighbourhood. They prefer to use public transport and they prefer to be able to walk to the store or to friends. That is really the problem: people can't get what they want and the skyrocketing prices in downtown Reykjavík are telling you exactly that. Logically, I would deduce that there are many people living in more suburban areas of the metropolitan area who would be very, very happy to live a different lifestyle. And ultimately, with global environmental problems, serving their needs and their preferences can have very significant environmental benefits as well."

### The Vatnsmýri Competition

The Reykjavík municipal plan approved in 2002 calls for a substantial reduction in the size of the airport by 2016, and a full departure by 2024. In 2007, Reykjavík City launched an international competition for new plans for the Vatnsmýri area. "In this Call for Ideas, the goal is to maximise the opportunity offered by Vatnsmýri to strengthen and consolidate the city for the 21st century, providing quality and a strong sense of community. By creating a contemporary and robust urban fabric

with the flexibility required for research, technology and knowledge-based enterprise mixed with significant housing, services and new residential forms, Reykjavík will strengthen its international role and competitive edge," so the original release from city officials reads.

Obviously, this is a load of doublespeak, but the main idea was that the competition would attract professional planners and architects from all around the world. Their role was to offer their ideas for the development of Vatnsmýri, and how the city should plan the area to create a desirable neighbourhood. 137 entries were submitted and 16 of those were selected for further development. The best proposal will then be selected for development with Reykjavík planning authorities.

On February 14, an exhibition will open at Reykjavík Art Museum – Hafnarhús, where the award-winning proposals will be put on display. In relation to the exhibition, the prize winners will introduce their ideas and there will be an open panel discussion on aesthetics and urban planning. Also forthcoming is a book that provides insight into the competition process and contemporary urban planning.

The exhibition will be open for one week only, so make sure you take a day between February 14 – 21 to examine the winning proposals and participate in the future of Reykjavík.

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

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Gallery Kunstraum Wohnraum.  
Photo by GAS



## Art at Home

**Nothing on the outside gives away that there is a thriving art venue inside.**

The art scene in Akureyri has experienced a great boom in the past few years. This is largely thanks to imaginative individuals who have taken matters into their own hands and built up a flourishing art culture within privately run art spaces. In a quiet street, minutes from the centre of town, one such venue can be found. Since 2003, artist Hlynur Hallsson and his wife Kristín Kjartansdóttir have operated a unique gallery, Kunstraum Wohnraum, inside their home, open to all visitors.

Nothing on the outside gives away that there is a thriving art venue inside. When entering the kitchen it looks like an ordinary family apartment, but in the adjoining living room creativity erupts in all corners. Currently on display is a retrospective exhibition of Dutch artist Joris Rademaker. Entitled 'Human Existence', the exhibition displays a series of works inspired by a plastic toy from the 60s. His diverse pieces all show the same human-like figure which is meant to represent the individual in the universe, sometimes alone, sometimes in a group.

Among furniture and household items the artist displays various pieces such as printed cloth decorating a small table and pictures hanging on the walls. Other works are more hidden – tucked behind the sofa, placed in the windowsill and sitting on top of the bookcase – which makes it all the more fun to have a look around.

### No Constrictions

Kunstraum Wohnraum was initially founded in 1994 in Hannover, Germany, where the couple lived for years. The gallery relocated three times within different apartments around the city before

settling in Hlynur's childhood home in Akureyri in 2003. Home to the couple, their three children and four cats, their kitchen and living room are used as both comfort zones for the family and an open showroom almost all year round. This, Hlynur and Kristín say, is a win-win situation for everyone. While they offer their premises for creative use they get a rotation of intriguing artworks to decorate their apartment in return. Between work and usual household chores they then open their doors to curious guests who want to view the outcome.

It is safe to say that their house is not the typical exhibition space. For the artist, it's challenging to work within such an unusual setting and can simultaneously be hard for the family if stuck with large sculptures or noisy installations for weeks. When asked if there have been any conflicts between the artists and the family, Hlynur says that although they usually don't know what will unfold around their dinner table there haven't been any problems so far. "The artists who exhibit do so with the space and the special conditions in mind and are sensitive to the family. They are also careful not to exhibit fragile objects," he explains. The artists are given total freedom to work inside the space, but instead of being overwhelming or annoying, the exhibitions mingle with the typical family-life, which in turn adds an extra dimension to the projects.

Artist Margrét Blöndal was the first to exhibit in the Akureyri location. Since then, the programme has been packed with established as well as emerging artists. Steingrímur Eyfjörð exhibited drawings of toy soldiers, Baldvin Ringsted pre-

sented a sound project, while Alda Sigurðardóttir's exhibition dealt with Icelandic nature and hydropower projects in a critical way. The list goes on and on, but around 50 artists have exhibited during the gallery's 14-year history.

Asked about the usual turn-out of guests they say that there is always someone coming and going but add that they see a clear difference between Akureyri and Hannover when it comes to the habit of dropping by. "It seems as if people are a bit shyer here, and perhaps afraid they are invading the privacy of our home," Kristín explains, emphasising that everyone is more than welcome. After all, that is the main purpose of the gallery. Because of the special circumstances, opening hours are flexible, so it's best to call and make an appointment beforehand.

Joris Rademaker's exhibition is on until March 2 and artist/musician Ragnar Kjartansson will invade the premises on March 16. Six more solo-projects will be put up this year. For the full schedule see: [www.hallsson.de](http://www.hallsson.de).

Kunstraum Wohnraum  
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Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

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## Ólafur F Magnússon

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deal. The situation created a backlash that left the coalition in shatters.

### Second Coalition

*Politics is supposed to be the second-oldest profession. I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the first. – Ronald Reagan*

Following the events of the REI merger, it soon became obvious that the Independence/Progressive Party coalition was non-functional. Rumours circulated that six council members from the Independence Party had reached out to other parties for cooperation without their leader, Vilhjálmur Vilhjálmsson.

Not willing to take his chances of being left out of the loop if the Independence Party decided to move on without him, Björn Ingi Hrafnsson was meanwhile engaged in talks of his own. Behind the scenes, Ólafur F. Magnússon had initiated discussion between the opposition parties and the Progressive party to form a new coalition, his payback for being duped in 2006.

On October 15, the press was summoned to a conference outside City Hall where the new coalition was introduced with members of the Social Democratic Alliance, The Left-Green Party, the Progressive Party and the former representative of the Liberal Party, with Dagur B. Eggertsson, leader of the Social Democrats as Mayor.

Hrafnsson's move infuriated members of the Independence Party who felt betrayed by his actions. Questions regarding his role in the REI merger were quickly silenced when he appeared on television talk shows and declared that he had indeed made a mistake and was deeply sorry for how the REI merger was handled. But Hrafnsson was not the only member of the coalition in a curious position.

Soon after the 2006 elections, the Liberal Party split over immigration issues in Iceland. Ólafur F. Magnússon, the party leader in Reykjavík, and Margrét F. Sverrisdóttir, the second person on the ticket and a Vice City Council member, both left the party. Icelandic voting laws stipulate that political office is tied to the person voted in, not the party receiving the votes, so they were both still in office, without a

party to represent.

Ólafur F. Magnússon, who was now credited as the Godfather of the new coalition for bringing everybody to the table, had at that time been on a leave of absence for nearly a year due to health reasons and his Vice-City Council member, Margrét Sverrisdóttir, had taken his place.

The new coalition, however, was well received by citizens, registering nearly 57% approval rate among Reykjavíkians, with most of the individual parties climbing in approval rates as well. But Adam was only a guest in Paradise.

### 102 Days

*I do not believe in the collective wisdom of individual ignorance. – Thomas Carlyle*

In December 2007, Ólafur F. Magnússon returned from his leave of absence and resumed his position as a member of the Reykjavík City Council. By then, old plans had been set in motion to tear down two old houses on Laugavegur 4-6, to make room for a new building, as early as the beginning of January 2008. Magnússon had made his opposition to those plans very clear, and the preservation of 19<sup>th</sup>-century houses on Laugavegur had been one of his central campaigning issues, along with the Reykjavík Airport.

As the debate over Laugavegur 4-6 became heated, Mayor Dagur B. Eggertsson made a last minute attempt to settle the issue peacefully. He reached an agreement with the contractors who owned the houses that would give the city two weeks to remove the houses from the lot, and put them up elsewhere. At the same time, chairman of the House Preservation Committee said the committee would likely recommend to the Minister for Education that an emergency preservation order be issued for the houses.

Not satisfied, Ólafur F. Magnússon decided to cast his lot elsewhere. 102 days after he orchestrated a new majority coalition in Reykjavík, Magnússon pulled the plug.

### Third Coalition

*"I will make him an offer he can't refuse." – Don Corleone*

Still seething from losing the mayoral chair, Vilhjálmur Vilhjálmsson was quietly waiting in the wings for an opportunity to resume power. At the first sign of trouble between Magnússon and Mayor Dagur B. Eggertsson, Vilhjálmsson stepped in and reopened the talks that he had suspended in 2006.

The revived negotiations proved to be fruitful. On January 24, Ólafur F. Magnússon was announced as the new Mayor of Reykjavík. The Independence Party no longer considered the location of the Reykjavík Airport to be a deal breaker and accepted Magnússon's demands on the issue. The coalition agreement also stated that the city would buy the houses on Laugavegur 4-6 from the developers, who went on to clear over 250 million ISK from the deal.

Ólafur F. Magnússon proudly claimed that the coalition agreement was 70% based on his issues. The Independence Party's reversal regarding Laugavegur 4-6 was no less noteworthy than their reversal on the airport. September 4, 2007, when the Independence Party was still a member of the first coalition, the minority proposed that the city would buy the houses, but the proposal was turned down with eight votes from the coalition majority.

For the ordinary citizen, this certainly looked as if the Independence Party had sold out its own campaign issues in exchange for power. During Magnússon's inaugural meeting in City Council as Mayor on January 24, an estimated 200-400 Reykjavíkians showed up at City Hall to protest. Eventually, the meeting had to be postponed until demonstrators left. Polls showed that the approval rate for the new majority was at a paltry 26%, with 57% claiming that they would rather see Dagur B. Eggertsson as Mayor. A week later, the Mayor's approval rating was measured to be at 16%.

### The Fallout

*"When a man assumes a public trust he should consider himself a public property."*

– Thomas Jefferson

The same day Magnússon took over the office of Mayor, Björn Ingi Hrafnsson of the Progressive Party announced his retirement from politics after a mini-scandal broke out in the press over his free-

spending campaign that saw Hrafnsson buy clothes for himself and aides for nearly 1 million ISK from the party's war chest.

Mayor Magnússon had his own problems with the press. After refusing to answer questions about his year-long leave of absence, he was finally forced to admit that his health problems were mental, although he did not wish to elaborate. His lack of forthcoming did little to change the public's trust in him.

Meanwhile, quiet voices of dissent seeped out of the Independence Party core. Apparently, talks with Magnússon had been initiated by two men – Vilhjálmsson and his ally, City Council member Kjartan Magnússon – and settled in one hour. The rest of the party did not necessarily share their enthusiasm, particularly over the airport.

Magnússon, once more, had his own set of problems. He had entered and finished the negotiations without consulting Margrét Sverrisdóttir, his Vice-City Council member, who had no intention of going along with Magnússon's plan. She remained steadfastly loyal to the previous coalition; leaving Magnússon in a position where he can no longer call in his deputy, say for a leave of absence, since the coalition is, in fact, no longer in majority.

### What Have we Learned?

*A political convention is just not a place where you come away with any trace of faith in human nature. – Murray Kempton*

After three coalition majorities in Reykjavík in the last 20 months, one thing has become painfully obvious: Politics is not about issues; it is about power. The general public feels betrayed by politicians who don't hesitate to go back on their word for a little more suction. Maybe the 23% who stayed home on Election Day had it right. There is no point in voting. It only encourages them.

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson



## Sirkus: the 11th Hour

On January 25 - 27, legendary bar Sirkus on Klapparstígur marked its impending closing and demolition with a three-day-long series of concerts during which more than 50 "friends of Sirkus" performed. The bands, (pictured clockwise from top,) included Hjaltalín, Sigur Rós, and Jan Mayen, among others. Squeezing into the tiny pub throughout the weekend was a crowd that was not only unrelenting but distinctly dissimilar to what is known as the usual "Sirkus crowd." It seems that the farewell ceremony was also cause for a little late night tourism for those who infrequently or never had stepped inside the pub. The weekend was nonetheless a great success, and rallied, among other things, a hoard of signatures for an online petition against the demolition of the house, which was presented to Mayor Ólafur F. Magnússon on January 30. Sirkus is however, currently closed and the lot waiting further development later this year. Text by Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir



Photos by GAS and Guðmundur Óli Pálmason

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## Young American Radio Sweetheart

**At the same time we wanted to make room for things that were ridiculous or just really outlandish, that someone who was cool, in the traditional Miles Davis sense, might reject because they didn't have that reserve, that too-cool-for-school quality.**

*The Sound of Young America initially started as college radio show in Santa Cruz. During the early days of the podcast revolution, host Jesse Thorne, America's favourite radio sweetheart, latched on to the new technology. Today, anyone with a broadband connection can listen to TSOYA on demand. And many people do. During the show, Jesse welcomes guests, mostly from some field of the entertainment industry, and probes them in an intelligent manner. It is a show that doesn't make you feel dumb for liking pop-culture. We called Jesse when he was driving between Boston and San Francisco recently and asked him a few questions about the show.*

**At what time did you start doing the show as a podcast?**

It would have been in December of 2004 I think. The Sound of Young America was the first public radio show, west of Mississippi, to podcast. There was one public radio show in Boston that started before us, but we were very much in the beginning of the podcast thing. A friend of the family is a very tech-savvy, futuristic guy who knew about podcasting right from the very beginning and said I should do it. It took me a couple of months to figure out how, because I'm not great at this kind of thing, but once I did, we started podcasting. iTunes launched their podcast service a few months later, and that was that.

**Did you ever imagine this kind of reception? Like, did it ever occur to you that this would lead to an interview with a magazine in Iceland?**

It is the furthest thing. I would say I had no expectations of what it was going to be. My idea was that if I could get 30 or 40 people to listen regularly to the podcast, it would be worth doing. We got that number pretty early on and then it was in the hundreds, which I thought was great. Then when iTunes launched, there were so few decent podcasts being done that our listenership went through the roof, especially after they started featuring us periodically. I never expected any of it. The amazing thing about the podcast audience is that, you know, when you are on radio, you kind of go into the ether, and you never know what the response is. You never really hear from radio listeners unless they are really, really angry with you, whereas the podcast audience, they already feel connected to you, plus they are also already sitting at a computer, so they are much more vocal.

**Does the podcast format allow you to do things differently from regular radio?**

Well, for one thing, I leave swearwords in on the podcast. I don't really believe that swearwords are evil, but they are illegal on the radio in the US. I usually do one edit with swearwords and one without for the radio. The radio show also has a very specific time format; it has to be 59 minutes long, with two one-minute breaks and so on. With the podcast, I usually leave the interview pretty close

to unedited. If something goes horribly wrong, like a piece of equipment breaks, I will edit that out. Plus, the podcast occasionally gives me the opportunity to do a non-audio thing. I have podcast PDF-files from time to time and I've done a couple of video things.

**How do you go about selecting your guests? Who gets to be on your show?**

Well, the guests mostly come from a few general areas: there are the people involved in the world of comedy, the people involved in the world of music, the people involved in the world of books and then the occasional television or film or some other art person. I mostly choose people based on my own personal interest. If I'm interested in someone, and I can get them on the show, then I do it, basically. There are a few general guidelines: I try to book people who are going to be sort of fun and interesting, as opposed to say, sad and interesting. I wouldn't necessarily book an expert on Anne Frank or the Rwandan genocide; while those things are very important, they don't fit the tone of the show. I generally avoid things that are specifically and exclusively political because, you know, that is for other people to cover. But basically, it's just a chronicle of things that I'm interested in and I think are great. I would say that a lot of times I learn about someone from my listeners who I end up falling in love with. As a good example, I recently had Dan Deacon on the show, who is sort of half-way between an indie-rock and electronic musician. I had never heard of Dan Deacon, but a long-time listener who e-mails occasionally, she said I had to get him on the show. And she knows what the show is about, so I looked into it, and I totally agreed. I booked him, and I'm so happy to have Dan Deacon in my life now.

**One thing I've noticed about the show is the pace. You never seem to rush it, and you leave room for intelligent discussion – well, the intelligence of the discussion could maybe be debated at times, but you give people room to express themselves.**

I certainly agree with you, and I think that tone is sort of a defining characteristic of the show. When we started doing the show, our idea was basically that we could do interviews with the depth and content of public radio, but which had the spirit of fun that you would find on commercial radio, that is, if you were lucky and were listening to really good commercial radio, of which there is not so much. Basically, the idea is that I am trying to explore the passions of the person I am interviewing. I like it when it feels warm and social, and I feel that helps the audience engage, even when it's someone they have never heard of. Just being in this place where people are having a good time is something that people want in a radio show. I have had some people that are very opposed to that style. Mostly people who come from public radio. People who do public radio in the US mostly

come from a reporter background, and the things that they worked on were very, very heavily edited. It is a field where you take maybe a ninety-minute interview and edit it down to 12 or 8 minutes. That's just not what my show is, but unfortunately some people think that it should be, some people with power in the world of public radio.

**Talk about the show's slogan: "maximum fun". What does that stand for?**

TheSoundofYoungAmerica.com was taken, so we were making up all these mottos at the time, and we had made up this ethos, the new sincerity, and a part of this ethos was not being afraid of not being cool. Maximum fun is kind of a silly thing, but I think it's actually what we are shooting for. It is ridiculous to say maximum fun, but it is still what we are striving for, both for the audience and us. Also, the domain was available, which was an important factor.

**You mentioned something else that I wanted to ask you about, the new sincerity movement. Maybe you could talk about that?**

Well this is a thing that Jordan and I came up with and some friends helped fill out. We came of age in a time when the cool people were the generation X types who were really deep into irony. The genesis of this movement was an opposition to that. The idea that there is nothing cool about something that is bad, and there is nothing great about being mean for the sake of meanness, or hating things for the sake of hating things, or even worse, celebrating things for being bad. At the same time we wanted to make room for things that were ridiculous or just really outlandish, that someone who was cool, in the traditional Miles Davis sense, might reject because they didn't have that reserve, that too-cool-for-school quality. So, the way we kind of resolved those was the idea of the new sincerity, which is embracing things that are big and awesome and great. Even things that might be somewhat embarrassing or that seem childish or silly or over the top. Something like a classic new sincerity/irony dichotomy that we hit upon early was the difference between the Rocky Horror Picture Show and Hedwig and the Angry Inch. Both are cult movies about transvestites, but all the things that were intended as an ironic joke in the Rocky Horror Picture Show were pursued with actual passion and real emotion in Hedwig and the Angry Inch. But a part of the new sincerity is that it is a little ridiculous and a big part of it is that we were just excited to make up our own movement. Because if you do, you get to make all the rules and decide what is and what isn't in the movement and make a lot of declarations and write a manifesto that we were very excited about. These are all things that I think are very new sincerity in and of themselves.

Text by Sveinn Birgir Björnsson

There is a reason they call Akureyri the winter paradise. Photo by GAS



## Iceland's Winter-Sports Capital

**We had hoped to make a second trip to the mountains the next day but unfortunately, as is more of a rule than an exception in Iceland, the weather was the total opposite of the weather the previous day.**

It was already dark when I reached the top of the mountain for one last ride. The weather was calm. Only a gentle breeze on my face. Alone, with white slopes in every direction, I turned off the i-pod, my companion for the day, and took pleasure in the quietness. It had been a fantastic day of riding down the slopes of Mt. Hlíðarfjall and now it was time to rest. Although it was minus nine degrees, I was not cold. The starlit sky and the incredible panoramic view over the Eyjafjörður fjord and the town of Akureyri, which looked to be only metres away, generated a warm and peaceful feeling of satisfaction. I couldn't help but lie there in the snow for a little while longer. If not for a noisy group of skiers ruining my alone-time, I easily could have fallen asleep right there on the spot. But the ski area was closing, so off I went again. One last ride.

### Snowboarding Fun!

Akureyri, Iceland's second largest city, is a friendly community nestling at the base of Eyjafjörður fjord in the north of Iceland. To call Akureyri a city is a stretch as it's home to approximately 17,000 people, but Akureyrians are proud of their hometown and sport a metropolitan attitude. The town has all the amenities you'll find in Reykjavík: movie theatres and fashion shops, museums and art galleries, first-class restaurants, nice cafés and some lively bars.

Akureyri's greatest gem has nothing to do with hip clothing or beverages though. The town's pride and joy is the adventurous playground that draws snow-sports enthusiasts from all across the country each winter. For decades, adrenalin-thirsty Reykjavíkians have envied their friends up north for the winter paradise situated right at their doorstep. Akureyri's ski resort, the Hlíðarfjall mountain, is one of the top areas on the island and usually provides a longer season and much more snow than Reykjavík's home grounds Bláfjöll and Skálafell.

The Hlíðarfjall ski area has been open for more than 45 years. It's less than a 10-minute drive from the town's centre up to the slopes, so the tradition to go skiing and snowboarding is rich among townspeople. The pisted slopes cater to all levels, from beginners to advanced. Children who have just learnt how to walk have skis attached to their feet and families in super-jeeps rush to the mountain when the clock strikes five. Thanks to the snow blowers that the 'Friends of Hlíðarfjall' recently invested in, the slopes are now covered in even more white beauty than usual, which makes a trip to Akureyri the ultimate Icelandic winter-sports journey.

This winter is no exception, so on a clear day in January The Grapevine decided to flee the capital and fly straight to Akureyri. The 50-minute flight provided a stunning view over the snow-covered mountains on both sides of the Glerárdalur

valley (which seemed a little too close to the plane's wings at times) and the untouched white landscape below filled us with enthusiasm.

It was a little past three in the afternoon when we reached the mountain and the area was almost empty. The weather was a dream for outdoor activities, with not a cloud in the sky. The guy working in the cafeteria told us that Hlíðarfjall had been open almost daily since December 6 (those lucky bastards). He then charged me 1,300 ISK for the four-hour lift pass. Snowboarding in Iceland, like most other fun things to do in this country, isn't cheap, but some things in life are worth the extra spending, right?

I hadn't been to Hlíðarfjall for years and have to say that the mountain was much bigger in my memory. For riders used to top ski resorts across the globe, Iceland's pisted slopes could seem a bit dull at first glance and the Hlíðarfjall area is very basic. There are a couple of tow-lifts and one new chair-lift that climbs up a 1000 metre hill, so if you're looking for vertical drops or large terrain parks, go somewhere else. The lifts will not lead you to steep hills and the runs are short. I actually timed it. It took 6 minutes 23 seconds to reach the top and 1 minute 18 to ride down.

This doesn't mean that skiing and boarding in Iceland can't be good fun. In Hlíðarfjall, there are plenty of fun canyons offering some nice cascades and when special snowboarding sessions take place, a snow park with rails, big-jumps and half-pipes adds to the pleasure. If you put in some extra hiking-effort, the surrounding area also offers plenty of cliffs and fun off-piste action where you will find fresh pow.

When experiencing Iceland's ski areas, what you can expect instead of huge slopes is the fact that they are almost never overcrowded and if you show up early, you can almost have the whole mountain to yourself, which is a huge rush and a unique experience. When the sun sets, the illuminated mountains offer perfect night-skiing, something not common in most places. Add to this the fact that you will have the chance to ride untouched slopes numerous times and feel the new snow break underneath your feet. If that doesn't get your blood pumping, I don't know what will.

### Damn Destructive Weather

Sharing the hills with a group of teenage boarders and a couple of skiers, I cruised down with my i-pod in my ears. Caught up in my own thoughts, it was already dark when the lifts closed. After a few attempts to hitchhike back to town, a girl was finally nice enough to give me a ride in her jeep. The course was set to the Akureyri swimming pool which, hot-tub wise, is among the country's best pools. It was freezing outside and the hot steam from the tubs created a cosy fog. Incredibly relaxing. When my finger tips started to look like ten tiny raisins it was time to leave.

For me, few things in life are greater than snowboarding, soaking in hot water and relaxing with a cold beer in my hand afterwards. Since the first two missions were accomplished, there was nothing left but to head straight to the bar. It was a Monday evening so nothing much was happening in town. Among the few souls inside Café Amor, we enjoyed our drafts and watched the traffic outside. The same cars passed our window over and over and we realised this was the famous Akureyri "rúntur", which basically means driving in circles and waving to passing cruisers. I could only think: what a weird way to pass the time. We took one last round at Café Karólína, a venue frequented by beer-thirsty students, before heading back to our guesthouse.

We had hoped to make a second trip to the mountains the next day but unfortunately, as is more of a rule than an exception in Iceland, the weather was the total opposite of the weather the previous day. Due to a powerful windstorm, all flights back to Reykjavík were cancelled, the slopes were closed and the only thing to do was to find some indoor activities.

Among other things, we checked out an exhibition at the Akureyri Art Museum where the spirit of Buddha had settled inside the museum's premises. After viewing various art pieces we paused in front of a pillow on the floor, which, as the sign read, was a spot for Zen meditation. Together with the soothing sounds in the room, the atmosphere was calming, almost dozy, something that was totally shattered after we witnessed the Germans defeat the Icelandic national handball team in the European Cup shortly afterwards. I should have kept the pillow to cry in.

We had just recovered from the incredible handball humiliation when a text message informed us that the airline had started flying again so it was time to head to the airport. Our packed plane flew over the same gloomy mountains as the day before, which was not a very cosy feeling this time, considering that huge trucks had overturned and ships had flooded in the violent storm only hours before. But the plane landed in one piece, we lived to tell the story and will return defiantly at the first chance offered.

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

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This page: Mývatn. Opposite page: Seyðisfjörður.  
Photos by Jonah Flicker



## A Different Kind of Country Music

**I climbed a twisting road over a mountain pass and down again, and picked up the pace as I skirted the coastal road to Vopnafjörður. This was one of the only truly scary moments of the trip.**

*Jonah Flicker came to Reykjavík for the 2007 Iceland Airwaves festival. After a long weekend of too much booze and music and too little sleep, he set out to see the rest of the country.*

Waking up to a hangover, a stuffed-up nose, and a soundtrack of pattering rain, this was one of those mornings when you open your eyes in a hotel and you have absolutely no idea where you are. After orienting myself and remembering that I was nestled in bed at the Hotel Alden in Seyðisfjörður, in the midst of a spectacular whirlwind trip around Iceland's Ring Road, I headed over to the empty dining room for a wonderful, hearty breakfast served to me by the hotel's owner, Klas Poulsen. After chatting for a while about his move from Denmark to Iceland some years ago, I hit the road, travelling up the winding switchbacks leading out of the small town, ready for the second half of my trip. My journey would now take me through the northern realms of the country, and as I would soon discover, incredibly different landscapes from the glaciers and fjords I was leaving behind. I passed through the sleepy town of Egilsstaðir once more on my way out. Not much more to see here than I'd seen previous day, but at least there was a gas station at which I could spend another hundred bucks to fill my tank. From here, I was faced with two choices: continue along the Ring Road to Mývatn, an easy journey of a few hours, or wind around the coast for a more lengthy trip and explore some off-the-beaten-path villages. With no real deadlines or time restraints, I decided upon the latter route, with perhaps a second

thought or two as I left the main road for a dirt track that seemed to point me directly into the sea. As I pushed my Explorer to undoubtedly unsafe speeds on these uneven surfaces, I realised that if anything were to happen – flat tire, car flipping, careening off a cliff into the cold surf – I was literally the only person around for kilometres in any direction. So be it.

I climbed a twisting road over a mountain pass and down again, and picked up the pace as I skirted the coastal road to Vopnafjörður. This was one of the only truly scary moments of the trip. Gale-force winds threatened to sweep my car off the road. I actually felt the undercarriage rise up just a bit as I sailed past the occasional farmhouse and flock of sheep. It was clearly time to slow down a bit which, while making me feel a bit safer, did nothing for the wind pounding my vehicle. Perhaps the boxy construction of an SUV isn't the most aerodynamic form for these coastal routes. I pulled over to the side of the road, gathered my thoughts, and tuned the radio to the single station I was able to get out here. To my pleasant surprise, Wilco's "What Light" became my current soundtrack, shoring up my confidence as Jeff Tweedy's cigarette-stained voice became my guide through this stretch of north-eastern Iceland.

This is a beautiful, grassy, windswept area, where snow-capped mountains meet the ocean and grazing herds seem to outnumber people. I passed through Vopnafjörður and Bakkafjörður, finally reaching Þórshöfn, at the bottom of the Langanes peninsula, where I stopped to buy some lunch at the local supermarket. From here,

my route seemed clear: leave the coast to take highway 867 directly across the Melrakkasletta peninsula. Not knowing a thing about the road, the weather, or the distance, this seemed like the obvious choice. As some obscure '80s tune based around the incredibly clichéd notion of "jumping in my car" trickled over the static-ridden airwaves (apropos, nonetheless), I followed suit and hit this rocky dirt road that would surely shorten my journey, ultimately proving to be one of the most solitary, thrilling, and ominous parts of my trip.

I passed through a beautiful, eerie wasteland. Threatening clouds of brown dust floated in the wind above a volcanic desert as the road crunched through dry washes and rocky gullies. This was true desolation. The landscape seemed like something right out of *The Hills Have Eyes*, and I half expected to catch a glimpse of a mutant family peering out of their cave at me somewhere in the distance. Out here, there was no radio signal – the only soundtrack was the grinding of my teeth as I tensely clutched the steering wheel, navigating around boulders and potholes. I couldn't help but feel a sense of triumph as I descended past a few farms at the end of this leg of the trip, my return to civilisation, unscathed and victorious.

### **In the Hoof steps of Sleipnir**

Ásbyrgi, at the northern end of Jökulsárgljúfur National Park, reminded me of the American Southwest, with scrubby brush and a mini version of the Grand Canyon dominating the scenery. Ásbyrgi was impressive, and the wind continued to buffet

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## – Part Two

me as I gazed at the towering cliff walls, supposedly an impression of Óðinn's horse's hoof. No reason not to believe this particular myth, especially on a day when I was virtually the only visitor in the park. This feeling of being utterly alone continued as I headed down through the park, passing through a desolate landscape whose features (or lack of) help one understand why it was the perfect place for training NASA astronauts.

Naturally, the thunderous waterfall, Dettifoss, demanded a stop. This is a breathtaking natural monument, unlike anything I've ever seen. The most powerful waterfall in Europe lived up to its name. It seemed that Dettifoss's show of strength challenged the elements to step up and prove their mettle, as the wind fought me every step of the way to the rocky edge far above the river.

Back in the car, safe from the wind, a curious soundtrack of what I can only describe as field recordings of Icelandic children playing and chattering greeted my ears. I headed south into driving rain, and before long I was safely back on the Ring Road. From here, my destination lay westward towards Myvatn. First up, though, a stop at Krafla, an active volcano near an active geothermal power station, as well as the incredibly stinky bubbling mud of Hverir. The gut-wrenching stench here and the icy rain coming down forced me to cut this stop short, as I also wanted to see some of the lakeside sights before dark.

I rolled into Reykjavík about two hours before dusk, stopping at the sensibly named Hotel Reykjavík, where I'd be spending the night. The

constant supply of complimentary coffee in the dining room was welcoming and inviting. To top it off, the excellent dinner of Arctic char I would indulge in later that night made this an excellent choice of accommodation in the area. Racing to beat the oncoming night, I made my way down the eastern shore of the lake, stopping at amazing natural tourist sites like Dimmuborgir and Hverfjall, remnants of the powerful volcanic activity that has taken place here over the centuries. At this point, the nasty cold I was battling seemed to be winning the fight, so I decided that the only remedy would be a stop at the Jarðböðin nature baths, a sort of smaller-scale and less flashy version of the infamous Blue Lagoon. My visit here was pure bliss, as I spent almost an hour soaking in the slick, geothermal, hot water and sauna, as the cold rain pished down from the skies. The woman at the front desk even offered me a free towel for my visit, good-naturedly indulging my assumption that they were included in the cost of entry (about 1100 kr).

But the highlight of this night would come after dinner back at the hotel, when I had my first encounter with the Northern Lights. The only other guests staying there, a vacationing British couple, and I scurried outside to revel in the beauty of the drifting fields of light sweeping overhead against the dropping temperature and a sky that was finally clearing up. This was a nightcap better than a potent shot of Brennivín.

### Húsavík, Without Phallus

By morning, the temperature had dropped to

nearly 0 degrees Celsius, but I resolved to bundle up and explore the rest of the lake. I made my way down to the southern shores, and took a hike through the pseudocraters near Skútustaðir, whimpering as my Southern California-weakened constitution dealt with an icy wind chill factor. From there, I headed over to climb Vindbelgjar, a smallish peak that rises about 530 metres above the lake. Again, the wind and cold proved to be almost unbearable, and I literally cursed and swore my way up the mountain. But the view made it well worth it, as the clear morning air allowed me to see for kilometres in every direction.

From here, I headed north to the small town of Húsavík, where I had only one goal: to visit the famed Phallogological Museum. To my dismay, I arrived to a note pinned to the door saying that the museum was closed for the season. The owner left his number to call if one really, really wanted to get in, so I did, but he was out of town for the next few days. I headed down to Akureyri, the last stop of my trip and Iceland's second-largest city. My accommodations here were at Gistiheimilið Gula Villan, a sort of dormitory-style arrangement with a shared kitchen and bathroom that seems to be popular with students who are attending university in the city.

After wandering around for several hours, seeing the few sights there are to see, I met up with two students, Balli and Bjarni. We walked down to Strikið, a rooftop restaurant overlooking the harbour, where we indulged in pizza and a couple of Vikings. After establishing an acceptable level of inebriation to break down social barriers with my

new friends, we headed over to a local bar called Café Amour, where a bunch of students were drinking after attending a lecture. Rounds came and went in a blur, and before long we stumbled over to some underground club which I believe was underneath an art museum... but here things become slightly hazy. I do remember a bunch of musicians and artists, thick clouds of cigarette smoke, good Icelandic rock music, and more beer. Before long, it was time to head back to my room to fortify myself with some water and sleep before an extremely early departure the next morning for my drive to the airport and my flight back to the States.

My final day of driving was definitely the longest and most tedious, although I did make several stops and detours along the way at various churches and vistas (including one unexpected stop in suddenly blizzard-like conditions). Although the main focus of this final leg of my journey was to not miss my flight, I had ample time to reflect upon my four days travelling around this beautiful country, and the soundtracks that accompanied me along the way. This was truly the perfect wind-down after the hectic musical debauchery of Iceland Airwaves, and I can't wait to explore parts of the country that I missed if I'm lucky enough to come back for another round this year.

Text by Jonah Flicker



# EDDAS AND SAGAS

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Photo by GAS

## Þorri

*When the you stop salivating, get over to Múlakafi in Hallamúli for a taste of delicious þorramatur.*

We now find ourselves in midst of the old pagan month of Þorri (Thorri), according to the Old-Norse calendar, considered to be the coldest, harshest month of the year. Þorri is celebrated every year with a Þorablót; a word that refers to an ancient pagan worship ritual, often accompanied by a sacrifice to the gods. Today's Þorablót mostly consists of binge drinking and the consumption of traditional Icelandic food known as Þorramatur. The type of food reflects storage methods before the age of the refrigerator. In Iceland, salt was a luxury, so locals resorted to pickling, smoking, drying and rotting the food which was to be consumed during periods when fresh food was scarce. Needless to say, these methods are questionable at best. Here is a short introduction to some of the more popular Þorri dishes.

**Svið:** Seared sheep's head. All parts of the face are edible, but the jaw muscles are considered fine meat. Some people prefer the eyeballs, ears and tongue.

**Sviðasulta:** The meat of the sheep's head, compressed in gelatine – an excellent alternative if you'd rather not look your food in the eye.

**Hrútspungar:** Ram's testicles, soaked in mysa (whey), a sour dairy by-product from skyr. The taste is sour and the texture is somewhat crumbly.

**Slátur:** Blood sausage, not entirely unlike the Scottish haggis. Sheep's blood is stirred to a thick pudding with wheat and oats for added consistency, wrapped in a sheep's stomach and then boiled. Often soaked in mysa.

**Lifrapylsa:** Liver sausage. Ground liver, prepared in much the same way as above. Often soaked in mysa.

**Lundabaggar:** Various internal sheep organs, compressed in a net and boiled, and eventually soaked in mysa. This dish is very fatty.

**Magáll:** Smoked and compressed sheep's stomach, with a typical but intense smoked-meat taste.

**Hákarl:** Putrefied shark. Rich ammoniac flavour from the ureic acid in the shark flesh. Soft, consistent texture.

**Brennivín:** Icelandic schnapps, also known as Black Death for its powerful cumin taste. Guaranteed to get you f'cked up.

In addition, people will celebrate Þorri with hangikjöt (smoked lamb) and harðfiskur (dried fish) consumed with traditional breads, such as laufabrauð (thin, deep-fried flat bread) or flatkökur (flat bread).

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Photo by GAS

## Skiing

The Icelandic ski season is surprisingly short considering the country's name. Although Iceland has not managed to produce the same number of top skiers as our neighbouring countries in the North, there is a proud skiing tradition in Iceland. Icelandic ski resorts usually open around January/February, depending on weather and road conditions. Most resorts offer ski rentals and instructors. Here is a list of the most promising prospects for a ski vacation in Iceland.

### Bláfjöll

Bláfjöll is the largest skiing area in Iceland with 15 lifts. 3.5-10 km cross-country trails are made, weather permitting, and a 5-km section is lit. Bláfjöll is a 30-minute drive from Reykjavik. Tel.: 561 8400, [www.skidasvaedi.is](http://www.skidasvaedi.is)

### Skálafell

Skálafell is a rather large resort in the vicinity of Reykjavik. 5 lifts, 6 trails, and a 10 km cross-country ski track.

Tel.: 896 1318, 530 3000, [www.skidasvaedi.is](http://www.skidasvaedi.is)

### Akureyri

One of the most popular resorts in Iceland, a 5-minute drive from Akureyri. The mountain has four lifts, 9 trails and 5 km of lit cross-country trails. Suitable both for beginners and intermediately experienced skiers.

Tel.: 460 1000, [www.hlidarfjall.is](http://www.hlidarfjall.is)

### Ísafjörður

One of the more exciting resorts in Iceland is in Tungudal and Seljalandsdal above the town of Ísafjörður. The mountain offers three cross-country ski circles totalling 11 km, and 1860 meters of

combined lifts. Well suited for snowboarding.

Tel.: 456 3793, [www.isafjordur.is/ski](http://www.isafjordur.is/ski)

### Dalvík

Böggvisstaðafjall in Dalvík is a large ski resort in the north, about a half-hour drive from Akureyri. 2 km of cross-country paths and two lifts with a combined length of 1,200 metres. Tel.: 466 1010, [www.skidalvik.is](http://www.skidalvik.is)

### Oddsakarö

Between Eskifjörður and Norðfjörður in eastern Iceland is Oddsakarö, one of the highest mountains in Iceland. Three ski lifts and over 1800 meters of combined lit trails make this a great stop for downhill skiing.

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## Across the Country in 40 Days

**I wake up and set off fairly early in the morning. It is common knowledge that wading in large glacial streams should be done in the early hours of the day, when the ice melt is least intense.**

*Last summer, Fabrizio Frascaroli spent 40 days walking across Iceland from East to West. This is his story.*

Hopefully, readers will excuse me if I dwell on the sappy expression “the heart of Iceland” in the course of this story. The phrase had already started to haunt me in Reykjavík while I was planning the trip and gathering information. I spoke to several people about Þjórsárver, supposedly one of the most challenging passages of my journey. The responses were all similar: it is a magnificent place, a unique spot in the Highlands where you truly will experience the heart of Iceland. María Dögg, a veteran guide for Ferðafélag Íslands (The Icelandic Touring Club), went a step further and identified “the heart” as Arnarfell, the 1,100m mountain at the edge of the Hofsjökull Glacier that dominates the underlying plains of Þjórsárver.

Þjórsárver does represent something unique in the whole Arctic panorama. This is confirmed by international treaties and biologists’ statistics. Situated close to the country’s geographic centre, protected by the Ramsar Convention for the conservation of wetlands, the area is also the most populous breeding site for pink-footed geese in the whole world. And yet, for the most, it remains somewhat of a secret and unexplored jewel, nestled among glaciers and a wrath of broad, treach-

erous rivers. Most visitors prefer to steer clear of it, intimidated by the challenges posed by the often-swampy grounds. Long before I reach Þjórsárver, I start fantasising about a hidden core of the island, an oasis of unusually lush vegetation and abundant waters, as so many had described it to me. I imagine it as a forbidden paradise rewarding the traveller’s toils with countless wonders.

Þjórsárver may well be the core of Iceland, but there is another heart in the Highlands, one which pulses with the rhythm of jeep engines and water pumps. I finally reach the Icelandic Touring Association’s hut in Nýidalur late in the evening on July 23. For the whole day, water has been pouring from the sky. The shelter is swarming with people, most already asleep – I hear the distinct murmur of snoring and deep, regular breathing coming from the dormitory inside. And yet, even though night has come and a veil of restfulness has fallen over the house, a sense of activity, together with a pungent smell of kerosene, immediately assails me. Everything is quiet, but nothing is entirely still this night in Nýidalur.

There is a ceaseless sequence of creaks and dampened noises, an acoustic backdrop woven by the efforts of some latecomer intent on washing up the traces of an untimely dinner, sliding a backpack along the floor, or heading out into the cold dimness for a last visit to the restrooms.

Boiling water is still stirring in a huge pot on an oil stove that makes the kitchen possibly the hut’s cosiest spot, an alcove of warmth and intimacy in a place where being alone appears to be a challenge. A dog strolls around, joyfully displaying its tongue while I get rid of the most drenched parts of my outfit. Soffía, arguably one of the very best hut wardens I have ever known, kindly invites me to take a place inside, in the only bed left free for the night.

It had always been in my original plans to take a day of rest in Nýidalur – but contingencies turn it into two. For some reason, the box of supplies I sent there is late. I spend my time lazing around, seeking respite from the harsh wind and enjoying the wonderful hospitality offered to me by the Touring Club. During this forced stay, I have the opportunity to better grasp the evocative flavour that the place exudes. Moments of utter frenzy constantly alternate with moments of absolute quiet in Nýidalur.

All sorts of travellers seem to stop there for a rest – Dutch bikers, Icelandic drivers, solitary French walkers – who all get caught in conversations around a cup of coffee and the common room’s bare tables. Perhaps Nýidalur could best be described as a crossroad of tales and experiences. I cannot avoid thinking back to the epic train in the Old West, as celebrated in so many

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Photos by Fabrizio Frascaroli

## – *Adventures of the Lonesome Traveller, Leg 6*

movies. There are no trains in Iceland but it is easy to imagine this place as a transit station at the edge of the railway, as a neural node of explorers' and adventurers' trails knotted in the bravest attempt to colonise the solitude of the Highlands. Transition, movement, casual meetings and exchanges are what seem to characterise Nýidalur most profoundly.

I recognise some of the faces around from memories of different places. A group travelling with Hálendisferðir proves particularly friendly and keen to save me from the risk of starvation that my missing box has cast upon me. In the afternoon of the second day, two young German hikers hit the hut. They have been going in the opposite direction of a portion of the same route that lies ahead for me. I question them about Þjórsárver and we spend all evening investigating maps, discussing equipment, exchanging tales and GPS points.

I depart from Nýidalur in the first hours of a morning buzzing with movement. My box has finally arrived. It was brought the night before by Siggi, Soffía's husband, and he will be in charge of the hut for the next few days. We exchange some words while sipping the first coffee of the day and staring through the window at the frost that the night has left behind and the array of caravans ready to leave the campsite. "This is the centre of the Highlands" he tells me with a gleam in his eye.

I nod in assent. I cover the ground to Þjórsárver in a few hours of marching under a gentle drizzle, traversing a no-man's-land made of greyness, stones and pebbles.

I wake up to my alarm clock at 3:30 in the night: it is time to wade, and the favour of the morning's earliest hours is required, however masochistic that may feel. The weather conditions look optimal for the upcoming challenges: entirely dry, still, and as cold as it gets in July.

It must be roughly 8am when I start the Þjórsárkvíslar crossing: the dreaded springs of Þjórsá, Iceland's longest river. One after the other, I leave behind all the threads of an endless web of streams and rivulets.

I feel a mixture of relief and disappointment about the smoothness of my progression, but it is not meant to last much longer; it is promptly dissolved by the appearance of the river's last branch, frightening in all its breadth and might, surrounded by the notoriety of grim tales and warnings. The water's depth varies in a range generously estimated to be between 50cm and 150cm. The prospect of confronting a violent flow up to my chest has admittedly been the source of many headaches over the last few days. In the end, however, the Þjórsárkvíslar will not treat me that badly. The water level suddenly rises above my waist, but with a detour upstream I am able to

find a relatively innocuous course in shallow waters, all the way to the other bank. I do not know how long I have been soaking in the river, probably some ten minutes. What's certain is that as I gain the high ground again, the bite of the cold has made me totally hazy, I am speaking in tongues and can hardly remember how to spell my own name.

I climb to the top of Arnarfell, where the metaphor of the "heart of Iceland" gains shape and reality. A tight grid of arteries and veins spreads over the plains of Þjórsárver, vital lymph pumped by the glacier on the periphery of the island. The torment of additional wading is temporarily avoided by cutting across the nearby glacial tongue: the grim and photogenic Múlajökull. It is a breathtaking 5km walk along razor-sharp edges of ice and sudden chasms.

Despite all the thrill and wonder, however, my farewell to "the heart of Iceland" is not an ideal one. I start my third day in Þjórsárver under the encouraging omens of high pressure and a new wind blowing from the South. I naively think that this blessing of the weather gods will descend upon me. Mislplaced hope: in a couple of hours I am bathed in a torrent of rain. For several kilometres I find myself walking in sandals and underwear, my bare legs exposed to the lashes of the wind and water showering from the sky: a last

unpleasantness imposed by the swamps around Nautalda and the sequence of streams left to be crossed.

I assume that I have finally crossed the last river, get my clothes and my boots on only to find out that I am wrong – for the second time that day. The westernmost branch of the Blautukvíslar is still before me – and the evening's late hour and ceaseless rain have roused the river into a muddy fury. I am about to make camp and give up, but the thought that circumstances may not be any more favourable the next morning eventually convinces me to persist. It takes no less than three attempts and plunges into the water, and a number of bruises, before I finally find the right wading spot.

As I reach the other side and set up my tent for the night, I still feel the wet and freezing clutch of the river upon my skin. I am exhausted by what has probably been the hardest and most miserable day in three weeks of walking. Comfort and warmth in the welcoming resort of Kerlingarfjöll, however, now lie only one day ahead.

Text by Fabrizio Frascaroli





When winter strikes, appropriate clothing is necessary.

Photo by GAS

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Paul Shufro at [shufro@wisc.edu](mailto:shufro@wisc.edu).

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## Services

### Useful Numbers

- **Emergency number:** 112
- **Police:** 444 1000
- **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

### 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](http://www.posturinn.is). Stamps are also sold in bookstores, gas stations, some grocery stores and tourist shops.

### Embassies and Consulates

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

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

### Internet Access

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

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

### Opening hours

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

- **Swimming pools:** weekdays 06:30-22:30, weekends 08:00-20:30 although some may be open an hour longer.
  - **The State owned ÁTVR liquor stores:** Mon-Thu 11-18, Fri 11-19, Sat 11-18.
- Banks in the centre are open Mon-Fri 09-16.

### Laundry Service

- **HI Hostel,** Sundlaugarvegur 34, Tel: 553 8110, [www.hostel.is](http://www.hostel.is)
- **Úðafoss,** Vitastigur 13, Tel: 551 2301, [www.udafoss.is](http://www.udafoss.is)

## Getting Around

### Public transport

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

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

### Rent a bike

- **Borgarhjól,** Hverfisgata 50, Tel: 551 5653, [www.borgarhjol.net](http://www.borgarhjol.net)
- **HI Hostel,** Sundlaugarvegur 34, Tel: 553 8110, [www.hostel.is](http://www.hostel.is)
- **Tourist Information Centre,** Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550, [www.visitreykjavik.is](http://www.visitreykjavik.is)

### Taxi

- **Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir,** Tel: 553 3500 or 588 5522
- **BSR,** Tel: 561 0000
- **For disabled travellers:** Reykjavík Group Travel Service, Brunastaðir 3, Tel: 587 8030, [www.randburg.com/is/reykjavik\\_group\\_travel\\_service/](http://www.randburg.com/is/reykjavik_group_travel_service/)

### 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,** Tangarhöfði 8-12, Tel: 587 5544
- **Atlas Car Rental,** Dalshraun 9, Tel: 565 3800
- **Berg Car Rental,** Tangarhöfða 8, Tel: 577 6050
- **Hertz,** Flugvallavegur, Tel: 522 4400

### Airlines

- **Air Iceland,** Reykjavíkflugvöllur, Tel: 570 3030, [www.flugfelag.is](http://www.flugfelag.is)
- **Air Vestmannaeyjar,** Tel: 481 3255, [www.eyjaflug.is](http://www.eyjaflug.is)

### Bus Terminal

- **BSÍ,** Vatnsmýrarvegur 10, Tel: 562 1011, [www.bsi.is](http://www.bsi.is)

### Flybus

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

### Samferda.net

A reasonable choice for the budget traveller. You log on to the website [www.samferda.net](http://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](http://www.ahus.is)
- **Icelandic Travel Market**  
Bankastræti 2, Tel: 510 5700, [www.kleif.is](http://www.kleif.is)  
Information on day tours, accommodations, car rental and everything else you need to know when travelling in Iceland.
- **Iceland Visitor**  
Austurstræti 17, Tel: 511 2442, [www.icelandvisitor.com](http://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](http://www.visitreykjavik.is)  
Offers information for tourists as well as providing internet access, booking service, a phone centre, money exchange service, tax refund and selling the Reykjavík Tourist Card. The Reykjavík Tourist Card gives admission to city busses, various museums, Reykjavík swimming pools, The Family Park and Reykjavík Zoo, The Culture House and the National and University Library.
- **The Icelandic Tourist Board**  
Lækjargata 3, Tel: 535 5500, [www.visiticeland.com](http://www.visiticeland.com)  
All information needed before travelling in Iceland.
- **Nordic House**  
Sturlugata 5, Tel: 551 7030, [www.nordice.is](http://www.nordice.is)  
The Nordic cultural centre organises various cultural events, conferences

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

## Useful Information

### Where to learn Icelandic as a foreign language

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

### Religious movements

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

### Trade Unions

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

### Useful Websites

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

### Where to get ...

- **Work and residence permit:** The Directorate of Immigration, Skógarhlíð 6, Tel: 510 5400, [www.utl.is](http://www.utl.is).
- **Insurance and benefits:** The State Social Security Institute, Laugavegur 114-116, Tel: 560 4400, [www.tr.is](http://www.tr.is)
- **Icelandic citizenship:** Unless you come from a Nordic country, foreign citizens have to have had an unrestricted residence permit in Iceland for at least seven years in order to get an Icelandic citizenship although some exceptions exist to that general rule. Applications are at the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Skuggasund, Tel: 545 9000, [www.domsmalaraduneyti.is](http://www.domsmalaraduneyti.is)
- **Unemployment benefits:** Directorate of Labour, Public Employment Service, Tryggvagata 17, Tel: 515 4800, [www.vinnumalastofnun.is](http://www.vinnumalastofnun.is)
- **Icelandic social security number (kennitala):** National Register, Borgartún 30, Tel: 560 9800, [www.hagstofa.is](http://www.hagstofa.is)
- **Driver's license:** Applications at police stations. (Those who have a foreign license don't need an Icelandic one for the first six months.)
- **Tax card:** Tax office, Laugavegur 166, Tel: 563 1100, [www.rsk.is](http://www.rsk.is)
- **Social Service:** Information and service is provided by district service centres in Reykjavík. To locate the service centre in your neighbourhood see: [www.reykjavik.is](http://www.reykjavik.is)



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 Saemundargata (in the Iceland University quarters of the city)  
 Tel: +354 551 7030  
[www.nordice.is](http://www.nordice.is)



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## Stuffed with stuff

**The Vikings that came and kidnapped young women and children were revolting animals.**

Actress Brynhildur Guðjónsdóttir explains her recent play base on the Icelandic Sagas.

**Page 6**

**Fischer demanded much higher prize money than had previously been awarded. The Icelandic government coughed up US\$125,000 but Fischer wanted more.**

The curious life of Bobby Fisher.

**Page 9**

**Ólafur F. Magnússon decided to cast his lot elsewhere. 102 days after he orchestrated a new majority coalition in Reykjavík, Magnússon pulled the plug.**

A review of three coalition governments in Reykjavík..

**Page 14**

**From here, I was faced with two choices: continue along the Ring Road to Myvatn, an easy journey of a few hours, or wind around the coast for a more lengthy trip and explore some off-the-beaten-path villages.**

Jonah Flicker continues to explore the Reykjavík coast line.

**Page 22**



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Hotel Reyðarfjörður Búðareyri 6 IS-730 Reyðarfjörður Tel: (+354) 436 1600	Apartments in Akureyri Hafnarstræti 67 IS-600 Akureyri Tel: (+354) 462 5600	Guesthouse Akureyri Hafnarstræti 104 IS-600 Akureyri Tel: (+354) 462 5600	Hotel Egilsstaðir Skógarlönd 6 IS-700 Egilsstaðir Tel: (+354) 470 5050

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