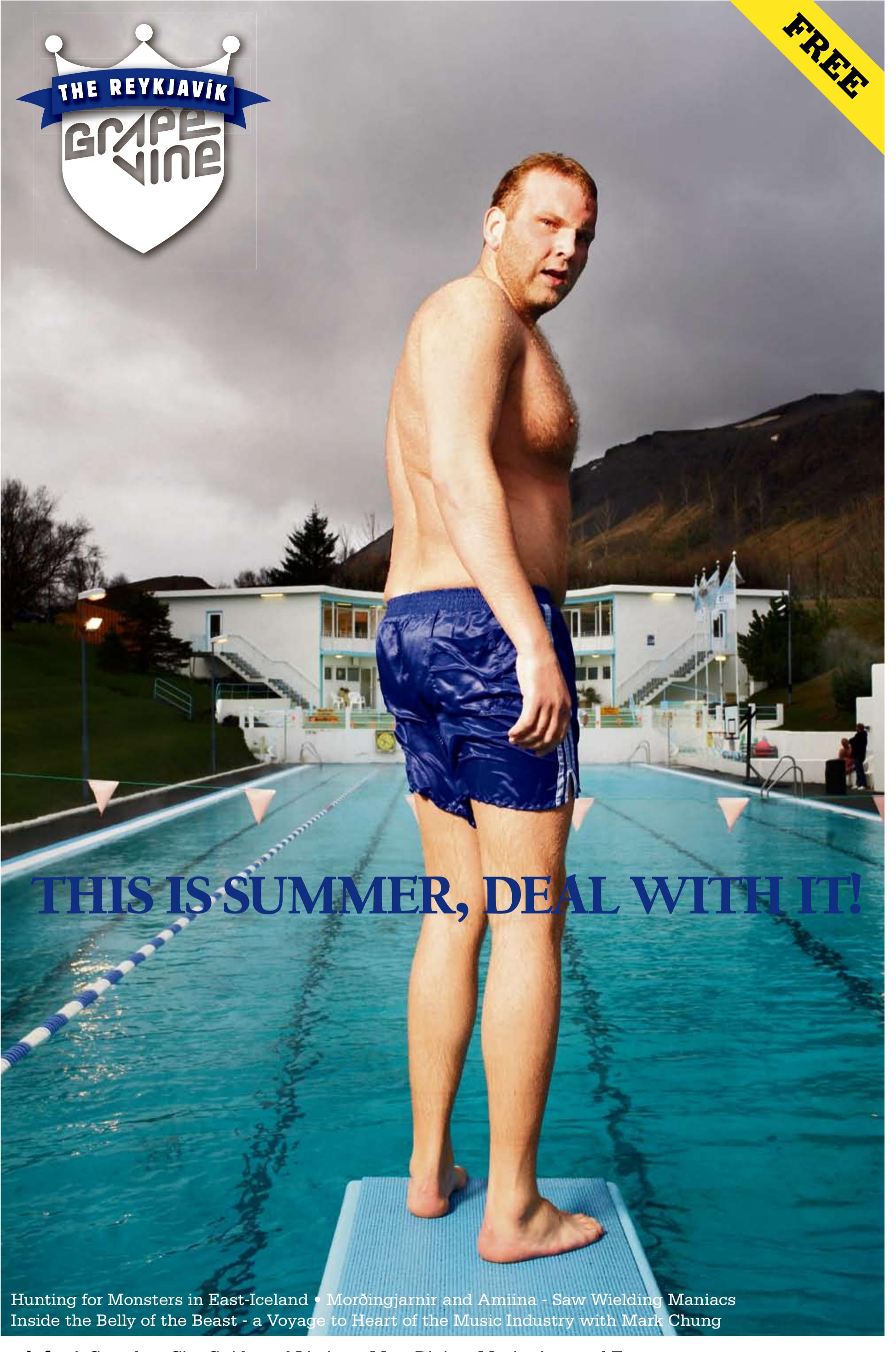




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Hunting for Monsters in East-Iceland • Morðingjarnir and Amiina - Saw Wielding Maniacs
Inside the Belly of the Beast - a Voyage to Heart of the Music Industry with Mark Chung

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Opinion

The wild in wilderness	08
An opinion by Marie-Alexandra Hertell	
Striking Gold	08
An opinion by Gabrielle Guðbjartsson	

Articles

The Media Watch Dog	06
Interview with Arash Mokhtari of Quick Response	
Football Mania	10
The Grapevine predicts the upcoming football season	
Concert Reviews	18
Sólstafir / / Morðingjarnir / Grapevine's Summer Party	
CD Reviews	19
Walking Reykjavík	24
A photo journey through town	
Destinations	25
Icelandic Towns	

Features

The Fallacy of Excess: Inside The Music Industry With Mark Chung	12
Music exec spills guts	
Academy of the Arts – Graduation Exhibition	14
School's out	
Morðingjarnir, meet Amiina	16
The two bands you'd never expect to see together.	

Outside Reykjavík

Stumbling Around Glaciers	26
Ice climbing in Sólheimajökull	
Chasing Monsters in East-Iceland	28
On the trail of the Lagarfljót Worm	

info.

Listings	B2
Food Reviews	B10
Grandmother's Records	B12
Thomas Humery	B14

From the Editor's Chair

This turned out to be the most difficult issue of the Grapevine that I have ever worked on. As I write this, it is eight in the morning, and I've not slept for 24 hours, so you'll excuse me if I keep this brief. The issue goes off to print in three hours. Under usual circumstances, we would have put this sucker to bed around midnight yesterday... or would that be today. But, this proved to be anything else than a usual press time. It seems as if the printing gods conspired against us. To begin with, we were down one regular journalist who is on vacation. Our loyal graphic designer was also on vacation, but he was replaced with the heroic efforts of a young man who tried his best to learn our wicked ways on the fly; and almost succeeded, if not for

that last night, the computer we used to lay out the issue decided that enough was enough and committed suicide, leaving us stranded for more than four hours as we scrambled to retrieve the data from the hard drive. On top of that, our regular proofreader took ill and we had to find a last minute replacement for her as well, luckily another young(ish at least) man stepped up to the plate and bravely steered us through our regular comma and apostrophe crisis. And the worst is yet to come. The coffee machine broke down. At times like these you seek solace in the fact that so heavy burdens are only placed on those with extremely broad shoulders.

I would like to thank all these people for

coming to my rescue at the ultimate hour. Steinunn, who kept me going when everything seemed lost. Hjalti for the bravery he showed in face of an overwhelming task. Jim, who stepped up at the last minute. Gulli, the man who salvaged the unsalvageable. Alli who slaved in the kitchen so the rest of us could eat. Tec wiz Oddur who found the hidden files. I always forget someone, but you people know who you are. It makes me proud to work with such a great group of people. Thanks guys!

To you, dear reader, I say, enjoy the issue. There was a lot of hard work put into. Blood, sweat and tears really. But I choose to look at it as our bad luck for the summer just ran out.

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Sour Grapes

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Dear editor,

Whilst I have some sympathy from the truck drivers and others who earn their living on the road, the high-jacking of the fuel price protests by the 4x4 travel club undermines the legitimate concerns of the professional drivers. The travel club are recreational drivers, basically demanding a state subsidy to pursue a hobby. Furthermore, for all that Icelanders are rightly proud of their natural environment, the 4x4 travel club, compiled of members who enjoy travelling to visit some of its most breath-taking sites, fail to reflect on the damage their very pursuit entails upon the environment they so treasure. These are the same 4x4 drivers who leave their engines running as they drop-off and collect their children from kindergarten – literally without thought as to the consequences for the air quality surrounding their own and other infants.

Complaints and protests in Akureyri by private drivers are particularly gnawing, given that there is a perfectly adequate – and free – bus service. 8 months pregnant, I am a frequent user, often accompanied by my 2 year old. It is laziness and a sense of entitlement that is keeping drivers behind the wheels of their own private vehicles.

Before the 4x4 drivers throw their toys out of the pram again, they might consider exchanging their vehicles for ones that consumes less fuel and emit less pollution, especially for short, urban journeys. Or they might get out of their cars, walk 200 hundred metres and take a bus, thus avoiding the fuel spike altogether.

Dr. Rachael Lorna Johnstone

Dear Rachel,

The incredible tastelessness of the 4x4 traveling club has kept me up at nights with laughter. In fact, I am rolling on the floor as I type this. Don't expect other people to bail you out from your own stupidity, I guess that is the lesson we all need to learn here.

Dear Editor,

I would like to be one of the first people to congratulate the local Reykjavík administration for their strategic masterstroke of employing truck drivers to keep the civil peace whilst the Police were partaking in their recent anarchic demonstrations. The truckers did a remarkable job to keep such a rowdy bunch of cops at bay and I sincerely hope that the Police can resolve their dispute soon (maybe they don't get enough Kleinur's and coffee on the current budget?). But I, for one, am happy to sleep comfortably at night knowing that the truck drivers are keeping the normal folk of Reykjavík safe...

10-4 Stephen Taylor-Matthews

Dear Stephen,

I agree. These police officers have made a mockery of protests in Iceland. Hopefully, this matter will be put to rest soon and the police reprimanded for acting like bafoons.

Editor

Dear Editor

I would to reply to the letter published in the Grapevine issue 2 on Friday, February 08, 2008, written by Jessica. I am a

South African-born woman who has been living in Iceland for 12 years and has Icelandic citizenship.

Growing up in South Africa during the Apartheid era, I made the decision not to judge people on their race or religion but rather on their personalities. For the most part I have been well received by the Icelanders that I have met socially and professionally. At the moment I am working at a salt fish factory in the West of Iceland and enjoy working with people from Poland and Bosnia, as well as some of the Icelanders. Unfortunately for the past three years I have been subjected (I don't use the term victimized, as I don't want to be a victim) to racial slurs and verbal abuse at the hands of three Icelanders whom I work with. I am a polite person and treat people as I would like to be treated but if I don't like someone then I still try to work with that person and show them basic courtesy, without resorting to name calling or backstabbing. Unlike the aforementioned three individuals, who for some reason have decided that I can't do anything right.

The factory manager and the owner have tried to resolve the issue by getting representatives from Alþjóðahús to come and talk about communication between Icelanders and foreigners in the workplace but it had no effect on them. The push finally came to a shove with me confronting two of them resulting in one walking out of her job and her husband giving notice because as is the case with bullies, when confronted they can't do anything besides shouting and becoming verbally abusive. The remaining woman seems to have changed her attitude and I sincerely hope that she has.

I will be leaving my current place of employment at the end of the month but I hope things may improve for the foreigners for who will continue to work there and that they can do their work without being referred to as "Helvítis útlendinagar/Pólverjar".

Finally, I love living here and enjoy the privileges of having an Icelandic passport. I truly hope that Iceland can find a solution to the problem of racial prejudice, as it does go both ways, before we see incidents as in Denmark happening here.

Natalie

Dear Natalie,

I am sorry to hear how some people's stupidity seems to make the incapable of feeling for another person and show minimum human decency. Your boss should have fired them on the spot if they are incapable of treating a fellow workers with the respect they deserve.

Stay strong,

Editor

Hello

I am a girl. I am 30 years old. I wonder your culture. It is now difficult to visit your country. Can I get Lapa Peysa and Vikings. Thank you.

Emel Turan, Turkey

Dear Emel

By lapa peysa, I suppose you mean lopapeysa, Icelandic woolen sweater. They are readily available in almost any souvenir shop. The Vikings might prove to be more of an obstacle. Most of them turned to farming in the 11th century. Reportedly some moved to Greenland but we have not heard from them since they left. But if you find any, do let me know.

Editor

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**Reykjavík
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As a project manager for Quick Response, Arash Mokhtari conducts therapeutic sessions with journalists. Photo by GAS



The Media Watchdog

"What we essentially do is we follow the eight biggest newspapers in Sweden and we research how immigration, integration and xenophobia are covered in those newspapers."

Arash Mokhtari is a project leader for Quick Response in Sweden, a journalistic watchdog organisation that is focused on the portrayal of immigrants in the Swedish Media. Mokhtari was recently in Iceland where he addressed a conference for journalists about immigration issues in the media. A Grapevine reporter sat down with Mokhtari for a quick lecture on journalistic etiquette in a multinational society.

Let's start with you telling me a little about Quick Response, and how it came to be.

Quick Response is an organisation of journalists that study how the media portrays immigrants and the integration issues and xenophobia. We are journalists who investigate other journalists or journalism, so to speak. It came to be in 1997 during the European Year Against Racism. At the time there were a lot of misconceptions in the media regarding immigration, the numbers didn't add up, and there was a lot of things that people thought were wrong. So we contacted many different organisations, and asked if there was an interest in an organization like Quick Response that could respond to the failures of the media when they happen. We became a part of the Red Cross Youth, and we were a part of that until 2007, when we became a part of the Red Cross.

So you are a journalist, and studied journalism?

Yes, I am a journalist and I work as a project leader for Quick Response. My co-worker does more editorial work, and she is a journalist and an ethnologist. So we have different studies behind us. I also studied film theory where I was researching how men and women are portrayed in films, and then how women exclusively are portrayed and the power structure behind that. I was able to transfer that experience into what I am doing now, with immigration issues. There are certain norms, and then there are people who don't fit the norm.

How does it function? What is it that you actually do, are collecting data, or statistics or writing articles?

What we essentially do is we follow the eight biggest newspapers in Sweden and we research how immigration, integration and xenophobia are covered in those newspapers. We collect the news, and we often have eight different types of stories on the same event, depending on what paper is writing about the event. Sometimes the papers will write that the suspect was from Tunis, but the same news story will be written in a totally different way in another newspaper, it will perhaps focus more on the crime, rather than the suspect's ethnicity. We write articles on this subject for our website, www.quickresponse.nu. When we update our website, we send out a newsletter to journalists, politicians and other stakeholders in

Sweden. We want journalists to use this as a tool to improve their work. When we notice that the same journalists or organisations are repeatedly writing stories that focus on ethnicity or immigration, rather than the actual news, we will sit down with the journalists to talk to them and ask why they write the way they do, why it was important for the story to include the ethnicity of the suspect when the ethical guidelines for the Swedish Journalist Association explicitly state that you should not include information on persons if they are not relevant to the news story itself. We also visit the newspapers and give lectures.

Is there a difference between different newspapers? Or is there a difference between different types of newspapers? Is the evening press worse than the morning press?

This is a question that we often get. But honestly, we have not been able to detect a noticeable difference. We follow both morning papers and evening papers, and what we see is that sometimes the morning papers are worse than the evening papers and vice versa. You cannot make the distinction between the two types of newspapers. What we see is that the difference is mostly between the different journalists. Even the public service media, that is supposed to be the best and is run without any profit demands, they often make mistakes as well. We use articles that we think are interesting to discuss; we copy them and distribute them when we give lectures. We show examples of how the media can be used as a tool to exclude certain groups of people, or include certain groups of people. That is, the media plays an important role in how successful integration is in the society.

When I think about it, I would tend to focus more on the negative aspects, but what are some of the positive examples that you could mention?

What we have seen in the last ten years that is positive is that people with an immigrant background are more visible now in the media in different kinds of articles. It used to be that immigrants were only visible in news stories about crimes or discrimination or exotic cultures. But now you will see that people with immigrant backgrounds are interviewed about their opinions on popular culture or the weather. They are included more today as regular persons, rather than being different from the norm. That is positive. That is normalisation. People are presented as normal people in a way. I'll show you an example. This is a clipping from one of the Swedish daily newspapers. This is a Muslim woman who has been stopped in the street and asked what she is wearing. In Sweden we have between 350 – 400.000 Muslims, and they usually only make the news in relation to Islam

and war, or Islam and terrorism, but this is a very simple way to.... I mean, this may not be very serious journalism, but it is a simple way to show that you can talk to people of different backgrounds about clothes and fashion, it doesn't always have to be about religion or war or terrorism. News reflect identification, who we identify with, and in certain cases you can see that the person who writes the article does not identify with the people that are maybe not born in Sweden, or doesn't look like an ethnic Swede. These are the things we discuss.

Quick Response was founded in 1998. Have you seen a lot of change in these ten years?

We don't really do any quantitative measures per se, there are other researchers that do that. We work more qualitative. Right now, the Swedish media is very consumed with the murder of a young girl in Sweden. So we are looking at how they describe and cover the murder. Do they describe it as having cultural motives, or do they describe it as the act of a madman. We focus more on the quality. But we also follow what other researchers are doing, so if a researcher publishes something that relates to what the media is doing well or doing bad in this matter, then we interview them and publish that on our website.

Does Quick Response suggest or formulate ethical guidelines for newspapers or the media to follow?

No, we simply work within the ethical guidelines of the Swedish Journalist Association, the same as all journalists should follow. When we see other journalists break these guidelines, we discuss with them why they were broken. We do not enforce any guidelines beyond that. I don't think it would work if we came up to journalists and told them they were doing a bad job and shouldn't be writing they way they are doing. We only try to make sure they follow the ethical guidelines they have agreed to themselves. According to the Swedish ethical guidelines, a journalist should not mention the origin or nationality of a person unless it has a direct relevance for the news story. If you understand the news story without knowing the nationality of the person in question, then it should not be mentioned. Obviously there is also the Swedish law to consider as well. There is a law against hate speech in Sweden. You are not allowed to write 'kill all blacks' in Sweden for example.

So the majority of the work is discussing the issues with journalists?

Yes, discussions and lectures for journalists.

So you could describe this a therapy session almost?

Yes, almost. Consultation and Therapy.

By Sveinn Birkir Björnsson



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Striking Gold



Gabrielle Guðbjartsson moved to Iceland in 2006. She will one day run a Fortune 500 company.

How likely is it that a foreigner moves to Iceland, builds a sufficient amount of capital, starts a business and becomes a success? In my opinion, it's not that likely at all. Even though the Icelandic market is not completely saturated and there are plenty of opportunities for entrepreneurship, just finding a decent paying job alone can be a daunting task. However, there are always those with the courage to swim upstream. As it turns out, Letitia Jónsson, Director of Frístundir Ísland (www.fristundir.is), has no qualms about striking gold in this Icelandic mine.

Jamaican born and raised in England, Jónsson moved to Iceland in 2004 along with her husband and two and a half daughters (she was very pregnant at the time as she recalls). At the time she felt very isolated and without sufficient information on involving herself and her children in social activities – hence the birth of Frístundir Ísland.

Frístundir Ísland is a brainchild of Jónsson's that has been in the works for the past two years. When Jónsson moved here in 2004 she experienced the difficulty in finding a variety of activities for her three daughters. The concept of Frístundir Ísland is that all children's activities (from age 0–18) available in Reykjavík and the surrounding municipalities are centralised and in one specific location. This is so that parents have a variety of options in front of them to make an informed decision about their children's extracurricular activities. The information presented on the website, as well as in a detailed handbook, also comes in multiple languages including Icelandic, English and Polish. She talks about the fact that newcomers like herself need to feel as if businesses are

making an effort to make their products inviting to all types of families inhabiting the community.

GG: Why did you decide to start Frístundir Ísland?

LJ: When I first came to Iceland information on activities for children was very limited. Everything was in Icelandic and finding courses for the kids was trial and error. So the idea came to me to centralise the information for parents and make it extremely accessible....accessible by way of crossing municipalities and by being available in multiple languages.

GG: Have you had any problems starting the business based on the fact that you're a foreigner?

LJ: Nothing overtly obvious. If I spoke Icelandic more fluently, contacting clients would be easier and the process would flow more smoothly. I am a people person and if my language skills were present things would fall into place much quicker.

GG: Do you foresee any obstacles in the way?

LJ: Well, the idea is very new for people. When I present the idea to a client, they think it's brilliant and they love it, but I think it's something that they're simply not used to seeing here. My background is in project management. Working in business process reengineering, I was streamlining and making things more cost effective so business enterprises would run more efficiently.

People just need to get used to this idea.

GG: With the Icelandic economy's current position, do you think it's a good time to start a business?

LJ: People will always want activities for their children. My middle daughter, Thea, has always been committed to handball and no matter what the financial commitments are my family will always do what it takes to support her.

GG: What is your advice for other foreigners starting their own business?

LJ: You have to have thick skin and you can't take no for an answer. You have to have the type of personality of someone who is not afraid to persevere. You have to keep trying and you must keep on.

GG: What will it take to make Frístundir Ísland a success?

LJ: It'll take clients buying in and believing in the idea. This is also about integration, bringing people in and making this business accessible to all groups in Iceland.

Jónsson not only has a strong mindset for the business world, but she's also thinking about the bigger picture in terms of creating a multi-cultural friendly business attracting all types of families in Iceland. All parents living in Iceland want the best for their children and it's about time someone did something about it.

The Wild in Wilderness



Marie-Alexandra Hertell hails from Puerto Rico. She is a child of nature.

As I braved the howling wind with gusts that swayed my petite body like a dandelion seed, I could hear the fervent roar of the snow-covered Gullfoss waterfall plummeting beneath monstrous icicles. I guarded each step with my dear life as a flimsy toothpick-like rope marked the vertigo-inspiring precipice. I felt pure awe and wonderment (along with some jittery butterflies in my stomach) as I came face to face with tons of blue water that descended this magnificent cascade resembling a staircase. The sheer exhilaration of standing so close to the edge was mixed with the fear of falling to my death.

This is what I love about Iceland: the liberty to do what you please. Here you have the freedom to die in a waterfall if you are stupid enough or brave enough to get just a little too close. Natural attractions in Iceland aren't tampered with. This does not hold true in many countries in which governments behave like overzealous parents or are so paranoid about a lawsuit that nature-loving tourists are given ridiculous restrictions. Walls are built in order to prevent curious sightseers from meeting untimely deaths. Building concrete slabs surrounding a pristine waterfall in order to "protect" the spectator is an oxymoron in the same way that a caged bird is. If a tourist behaves reck-

lessly let him or her deal with the consequences of their actions. Why does nature have to be ruined? In many countries a common sight is a beautiful waterfall surrounded by a concrete mess in order for us humans to get the best view the easiest way. Anyone who has seen the Niagara Falls knows what I am talking about. This famous waterfall has been made so convenient and safe for the lazy tourist that the road passes right beside it so you don't even have to get out of your car to view it.

Another thing I love about Iceland is that here I have the freedom to visit a waterfall at moonlight or a geyser during the midnight sun. I have actually done both in order to avoid other tourists and relish in the deep tranquillity of being alone amongst echoes and wind. This is also not the norm in other countries. In Puerto Rico the national rainforest has a gate and closes at six. Last summer I was taking my time hiking around and skinny-dipping in several waterfalls when I noticed it was 7:30. It wasn't even dark yet. When I tried to leave, the rickety gate was closed and I had to summon a guard to open it. I thought to myself, this is not a mall. How can nature have a closing time? I am always reminded of this experience every time I explore Iceland's jaw-dropping nature and really appreciate the fact that I can hike at any

hour around Skaftafell National Park.

I feel that Iceland and its inhabitants truly understand and allow their wilderness to remain like its name indicates: wild. For this same reason Landmannalaugar has rustic cottage accommodations that blend into the sand coloured mountains and is not an eyesore. Thankfully there is no five-star swanky hotel, which would ruin the feeling of immersing yourself in the lava-covered landscape. The more I travel abroad in search of inspiring nature the more disillusioned I get. Instead of finding more Icelands, I find more Niagaras. Recently upon a trip to Morocco, I was disgusted upon seeing the death of the Todra Gorge. I tried to block the image of the luxury hotel situated smack in the middle of the gorge from my mind and decided that this must have been such a beautiful place once upon a time but now relegated to corniness and convenience.

Basically, I just want to say thank you to Iceland for allowing me to enjoy nature at its pristine glory. In a country where every summer the number of tourists surpasses the local population, the tourism industry could have exploited the nature for every dime its worth. Instead purity is preserved and that is what keeps people coming back.



We shape society My kształtuje społeczeństwo



On the occasion of May Day, International Workers' Day, AFL sends solidarity greetings both to workers in the East and to other workers throughout the whole country.

AFL - the East Iceland Federation of Trade Unions - came into being with the amalgamation of trade unions from Bakkaþjörður in Northeast Iceland to Skeiðará river in the Southeast. AFL has tackled the massive tasks accompanying the huge construction projects in the middle of East Iceland. Yet AFL has also kept at the forefront in the labour movement, through progressive efforts in education, employment retraining, and the concerns of foreign workers in the Icelandic labour market.

We within AFL look forward to the future, ready and willing to take on the challenging task of social reform.

May Day gives us an opportunity not only to look back and judge our achievements, but also to look forward and prepare ourselves for the struggles awaiting us.

*Greetings from the board, staff and shop stewards of
AFL - the East Iceland Federation of Trade Unions*



Z okazji 1-go maja, międzynarodowego dnia Święta Pracy, AFL przesyła waleczne pozdrowienia wszystkim robotnikom na wschodzie Islandii a także w całym kraju. Związek Zawodowy AFL powstał przez połączenie związków zawodowych od Bakkaþjörður na północy do Skeiðará na południu. AFL podejmował się dużych zadań, które związane były z powstaniem aglomeracji w środkowej wschodniej Islandii. Związek jest również prowadzącym w realizowaniu projektów na polu edukacji, resocjalizacji oraz problemów emigrantów na islandzkim rynku pracy. Ufnie patrzymy w przyszłość i jesteśmy gotowi podjąć wymagające zadania w kształtowaniu społeczeństwa.

1-go maja spoglądamy przez ramię i szacujemy nasz rezultat, równocześnie patrzymy w przyszłość i przygotowujemy się do walki w następnych semestrach.

Kierownictwo, pracownicy oraz mężczyźni zaufania związków zawodowych AFL

AFL Starfsgreinafélag | AFL Labour Union | AFL Zwiazki Zawodowe rejone
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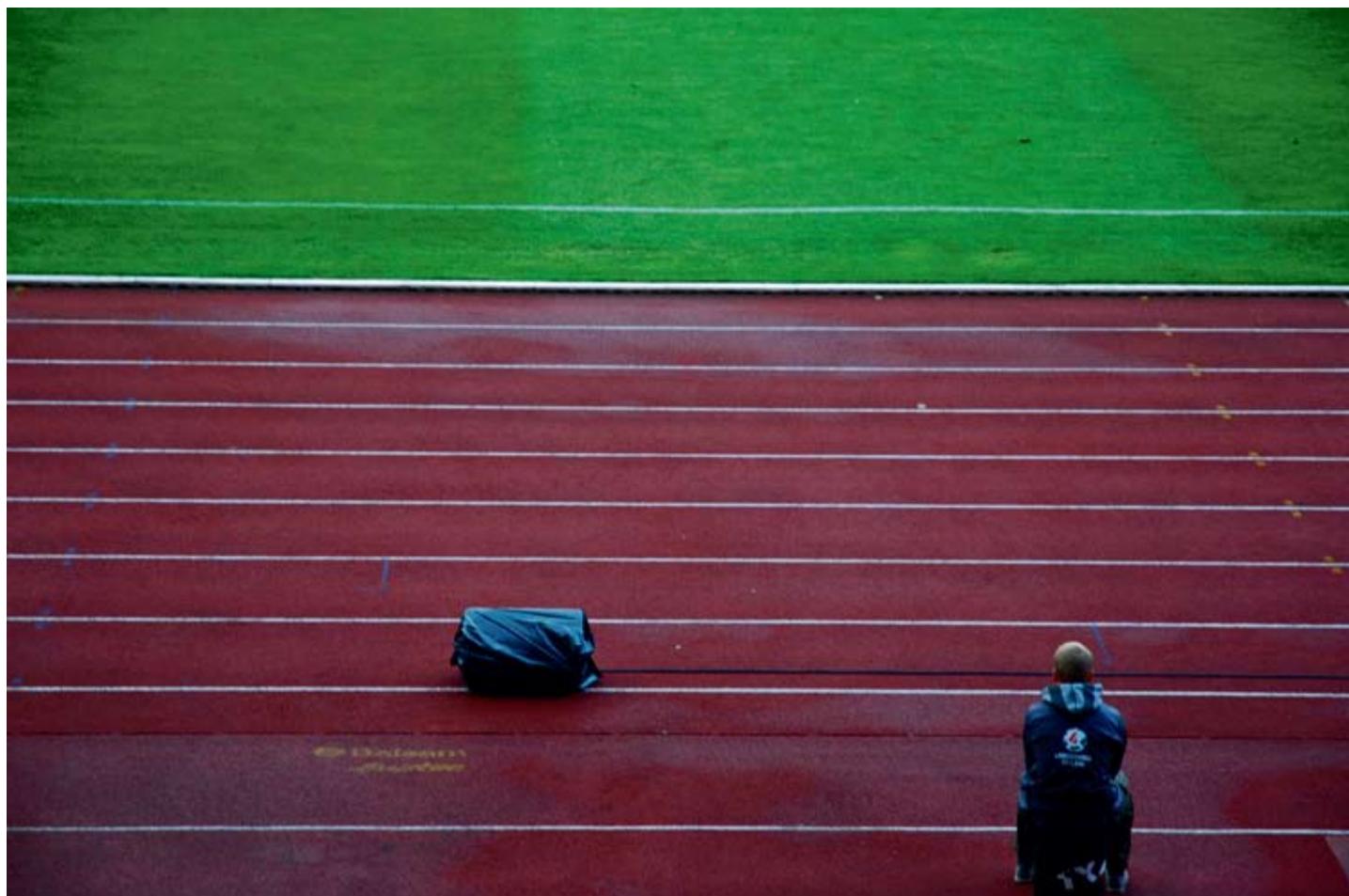
**Fire is needed by the newcomer
Whose knees are frozen numb;
Meat and clean linen a man needs
Who has fared across the fells.***

**The Icelandic Sheep,
Keeping the people alive since 874 AD.**

*From the Hávamál, 1300 AD



blaður@gmail.com / photo: ÁJS



Soccer Mania

This year we should witness a mixed bag of goodies from Fylkir. But their supporters will undoubtedly still cling to the hopes of the nineties.

Saturday May 10, the Icelandic soccer season kicks off with the first round of play in the men's premier league for the ninety-sixth year. The following Monday, May 12, the ladies start their season. The Grapevine, being both infested with soccer fans and highly philanthropic, kindly provides you with predictions for the summer, greatly researched in the most scientific ways known to man. You would be wise to place your bets according to this prediction. You'll be guaranteed to make some easy money in the coming recession.

Men's premier league:

12. relegated



Originally formed by the working poor shortly after the Second World War, Próttur is a relatively young club. Their home games are played at the national stadium in Laugardalur. Last year they played in the first division, as they have done almost every year they've been in competition. The few years they have spent in the premier league haven't been fruitful and this year will be no exception.

11. relegated



Much to anyone's surprise HK escaped relegation from the premier league last year, finishing ninth (in 2007 only one team was relegated in order to increase the number of teams to 12). Hailing from neighbouring Kópavogur, their budget is low and they will hardly repeat last year's fluke performance.

10.



Grindavík is a small fishing village on the Reykjanes peninsula. Their home turf has seats for every resident of the town – the people of Grindavík take sports very seriously. A few years back they were battling for the top seats, mostly on account of money funnelled into the club from local fisheries. The spending is less this year and they will do well to avoid relegation.

9.



In Keflavík, soccer has always been the second sport after basketball. They have still managed to be crowned champions four times, but that was in the seventies and the eighties. Their home pitch is their strongest asset, probably because the local players are used to the high winds that are constantly blowing, while visiting teams mostly look befuddled.

8.



Fjölnir is youngest team in the division founded 1988. They hail from suburban heaven in Grafarvogur and have never played in the premier division before. Last year they reached the final of

the league cup where they lost in a close match to FH. They will surprise a lot of people this year by not finishing last.

7.



This year FRAM celebrates their 100th year of existence this summer. They founded the Icelandic premier division back in way back when. They've won the title 18 times but the last one came in 1990. They are notorious for firing their managers every time the team concedes a goal. They will stay around the middle of the division.

6.



Out of the suburb of Árbær comes the continuously disappointing Fylkir, who were predicted in the late nineties to become the Icelandic equivalent of the Manchester United dynasty, but have mostly remained in the middle of the division. Their supporters will undoubtedly still cling to the hopes of the nineties.

5.



A superpower in the women's division, Breidablik haven't done as well in the men's competition. With almost the same squad as last year they should reap similar results.

4.



FH subscribed to the Championship from 2002-2006. This year, FH has a strong team, but not strong enough to win the title. With a fiercely loyal fan base in their hometown of Hafnarfjörður, their fourth place finish might be a disappointment to many.

3.



The oldest team in the league and the most historically successful one, with 24 titles in all. Despite an enormous budget and an all-star squad, the team was almost relegated last year, much to the surprise of everyone. They will be in contention for top billing this year, but still won't win them any titles.

2.



Last year's champions Valur will be playing on a brand new pitch this year, curiously named the Vodafone Arena. Historically this is a successful club with strong Christian YMCA ties, but their win last year was a bit of a surprise. The team has not changed much between seasons, and that complacency simply won't be enough.

1.



ÍA hails from the small town Akranes and has a long history of soccer. They've won the title 18

times, with all championships coming after 1950. Their coach this year is the mercurial Guðjón Þórðarson, who has managed several English clubs. He drives his men hard, harder than most, and will reap a title this year, with a young and mostly local squad.

Women's premier league

10.-7.



These four teams will battle amongst themselves, avoiding the two relegation places and hoping not to lose games in double digits to the more skilful teams. The Pór/KA team comes from Akureyri and will probably be the least successful of these four, although it is hard to tell one poor team from another.

6.



Ambitious newcomers who won't win the top teams, but might score a draw now and then.

5.



Their strong home pitch will secure their place in the division. The same laws of physics apply when it comes to the Keflavík pitch as in the men's division: the wind will put the visiting team off.

4.



This is the only team in the premier division who plays on artificial turf. Historically they've been among the top teams, claiming an upset victory from time to time.

3.



The superpower of Icelandic women's soccer. They've won the title 15 times, which is amazing considering the premier league started in 1972. This year they will battle the other two titans of the league but ultimately fall short.

2.



This year will be a close race between KR and Valur to the championship, much as it has been for the last few years. This year around KR will finish second.

1.



In the last four years, Valur has won three titles. The national team is mostly made up of their players, with wunderkid Margrét Lára Viðarsdóttir heading the attack – a player who could hold her own in any division. They will repeat as champions this year.

By Páll Hilmarsson



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Graduation Exhibition –

Creativity, cleverness and noise filled the Reykjavík Art Museum at Kjarvalsstaðir last month when graduate students from the Iceland Academy of the Arts invaded the museum. For two weeks, 63 students graduating from graphic, product and fashion design, visual arts and architecture displayed their final projects and used every bit of space, inside and even outside the museum, to present their creations. The exhibition was a huge success, but more than 11,000 people visited the museum to view the latest innovations in art and design. Grapevine contacted a couple of students and found out about the ideas behind their projects.

1.

"'Góða mamma' (Mommy Dearest) is an installation and video where a giant ball of yarn is grotesquely placed upon a woman's body, handicapping her as she tries to go about her daily duties in the modern, linear, masculine environment of business and managing. The ball of yarn is a feminine symbol, representing among other things the domestic heritage and irrevoable motherhood and acts as a counterpoint to all the square, sharp and dark shapes of its environment. It also makes for an amusing visual experience, kind of sad and amusing at the same time. I also used sound to amplify the hindrances our protagonist encounters, including a tea-kettle adding sinister and domestic suspense to the whole setting."

Svala Ragnarsdóttir – Art

2.

Culture and Nature Centre in Álftanes. One of the main goals in the new urban planning for Álftanes is to create a living environment with all the services that are needed for a small town like Álftanes. The location of the Culture and Nature Centre is an extension of the existing plan and is situated at the end of the main street. The entrance of the culture centre is therefore a beginning of the new urban plan. The location is also well suited to connect the existing paths that wind around Álftanes to the culture centre. The house has therefore two entrances, one that extends itself into the main street and takes a part in the urban environment, and then another that serves the purpose of connecting the cultural centre to the nature of Álftanes. In that way the house is working both with the existing environment and the urban plan.

Bergur Þorsteinsson - Architecture

3.

"My exhibit is entitled 'Nang Jáadaas', which means The Woman in the Haida language. The Haida are a First Nations tribe that have lived on and around the Queen Charlotte islands of the northwest coast of Canada for thousands of years. My project sprung from my B.A. thesis, in which I explored the formal and technical principles which govern the native art of the northwest coast. My exhibit is a triptych of illustrations in this style, which display my personal 'crest' of sorts, the women in my life and their significance to me."

Sigurður Oddsson – Graphic Design

4.

"Belonging to an on-going series called 'Babel Bible', this Last Judgment is my personal interpretation of the dramatic Bible episode; playing with the classic models of representations of the episode, I present these scenes in a surrealistic and humoristic way and try to divert this visual tradition in order to add my personal language and messages."

'The Last Judgment', consists in seven photographs that are presented like an altar. We see the scene of the judgment, heaven and hell, the travel of humans towards the two different places, and two angels looking at the viewer of the work. Through these different scenes and symbols, I want to create layers of mean-

ing and ask questions. For example, this work shows the absurdity of the dogmatic division between hell and heaven, heaven and hell being illusions and replicas. It addresses a critic of narcissism, a phenomenon of our society that is linked to our use of the media, and then it tries to question the viewer to ask him/herself the value of a situation, but also his/her way of looking at artworks.

Being a work for a graduation exhibition, my work asks also the values, the seriousness of the event itself, but also comes back to the whole idea of judgement: in school, in art.

Etienne de France – Art

5.

"Krossgata: (2-7) deep space / in your face - a window-box. July 1969: Michael Collins goes alone 30 times around the moon – 59 hours, 30 minutes, 25.79 seconds. (He never felt lonely)"

Páll Haukur Björnsson – Art

6.

The floor lamp 'Illuminant' is made in our belief that all our thoughts and doings come back to us. The lampshade is made of reflective material, and hangs from the ceiling in a fish-line. The light-bulb is placed in a little foot on the floor and over that is a grating with plastic film in various colours. You choose the colour you prefer and place it over the light, and the lampshade gives you back your colour.

Kristín Birna Bjarnadóttir – Product Design

7.

"This collection is a story about a woman who is sensual, sexy and fragile so she dresses in heavy armour to be able to make it in the brutal world we live in. The colours are black, silver, off-white and fleshy pink. The models wore corsets and bum-rolls to exaggerate their feminine curves and make their legs appear longer."

Arna Sigrún Haraldsdóttir – Fashion Design

8.

'Growing Jewellery' is a redefinition of modern day values. It's a clash of jewellery and gardening – couture and organism. It is a collection of hand jewellery, which is designed for people in metropolitan cities and is an experiment in drawing nature toward man, as nature being the presupposition of life.

Hafsteinn Júlfusson – Product Design

9.

"Stuðlar are corrugated-paper modules that link together in a simple and easy manner to form a wall that is as functional in the home as in the office. Stuðlar were developed during a workshop run by Hrafnkell Birgisson, where each student was required to design a product for a local manufacturing company. I selected Kassagerðin-Central Packaging and developed a product using the company's basic production materials and techniques."

Friðgerður Guðmundsdóttir – Product Design

10.

"The development of Blackletter typefaces stopped in the first half of the 20th century, as they fell out of favour for social and political reasons. In the decades that have passed, the legacy of the 500-year history of Blackletter has been mostly forgotten, and Blackletter typefaces are rarely used, apart from beer bottle labels and for rock-music graphics. In researching my BA thesis, I discovered that in Germany, until around 1940, it was quite common to use Blackletter typefaces for books and other large texts. I wanted to attempt to make a book-typeface based on the Blackletter form, in a modern style. To try to envision where the Blackletter form would have developed had it not lost its standing."

Sveinbjörn Pálsson – Graphic Design

By Steinunn Jakobsdóttir



Icelandic Academy of the Arts

4.



5.



6.



7.



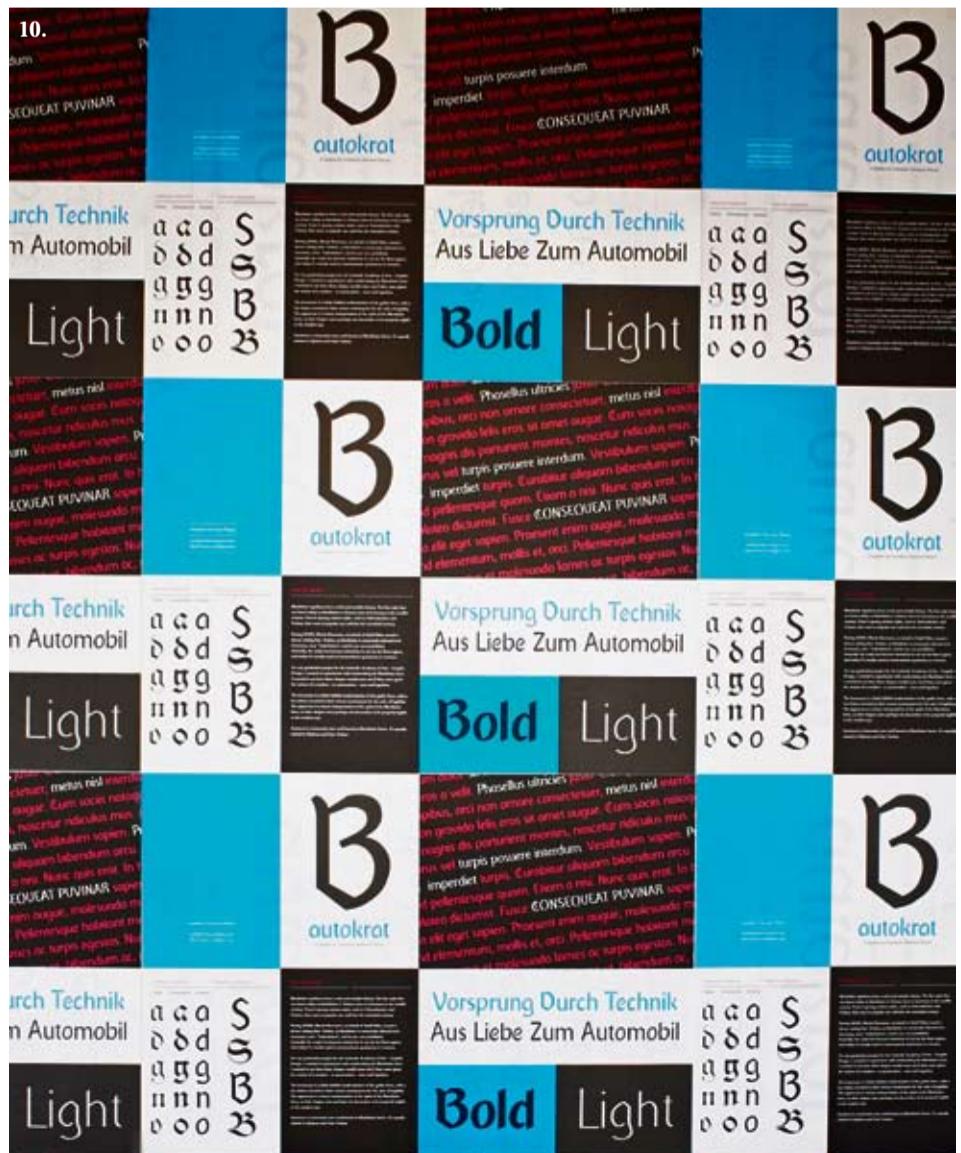
8.



9.



10.





The Fallacy of Excess: Inside The Music

“...people reminisced fondly about hanging with Walter Yetnikoff [notorious former CBS/Sony Music exec] in the preceding years: “... and we were on a boat with a lot of hookers, and there was all that coke and everybody got gold watches to take home as souvenirs after the party...” It isn’t like that any more.”

English-born, German-raised entrepreneur Mark Chung first made a name for himself in the early eighties as bassist for the highly influential industrial band Einstürzende Neubauten. Early on in the band’s life Chung undertook the task of administering its finances, which would eventually lead him to a fruitful career in the global music industry running his own publishing company as well as heading Sony Independent Network Europe. Among other things, it saw him working with many of the musicians that dominated the FM waves of the last decade. Chung, who now reigns over his own Berlin-based publishing firm, Freibank Musik, recently visited Iceland on business and agreed to tell the Grapevine about some of his experiences in the collapsing empire that is the global music industry, where it’s taken him and where he sees it going.

How did I get started in the business? As most musicians know, the bass player is the most economic thinking person in the band; they hardly practice and girls can’t tell the difference between them and the guitar player. Thus when you become a bass player, you’ve already got a grasp on the laws of supply and demand. Every band needs a bass player, while there’s plenty of guitar players around. So if you want to be in a band, it’s a good idea to play bass.

Now, being the economic thinking person in my band, I was soon put in charge of taking care of business, and business pretty soon became pretty complex in our band because we had to find ways of making a living off a rather exotic type of music. So we did a lot of contracts and international deals that had to be managed. We worked on a country-to-country level, finding enough people in Japan or the UK who were interested to release our albums there, and so on, selling a couple of thousand copies in every country. We’d sell about 100.000 copies of an album worldwide in the late eighties. Was it a lot of work? Well, we were quite lazy and toured very little. Another

thing that saved us a lot of time is that we never rehearsed, which is not a concept I recommend for young artists. We only rehearsed once in our time, when we’d gotten bored by our way of doing things and thought it would be good to challenge ourselves by rehearsing for our next album. I’m not going to say which album it was; it wasn’t one of the better ones.

I played with the band for 14 years, and for the last five we started our own publishing company because we were unhappy with the situation we found in the market. We built a very efficient company, which we soon realized would be even more efficient if we helped some of our friends who had asked us why we couldn’t handle their copyrights as well as our own.

We Didn’t Strive to Dominate the Market

I saw an opportunity to build what I call an artist friendly publishing company, based on efficiency and improvement of copyright collection and administration of copyrights. And that was definitely missing in the market, so for a couple of years I tried to do both the band and the business, but that wasn’t really working because we would go on tour for three months and then had to start over, which makes it hard to develop a new business. It was easier to focus on one or the other, and obviously I’d played in bands for twenty years at that point so I thought it was time to focus on the business side. I am glad that I did, and I have to say that I was very lucky; after spending some time building the publishing company the people from [international indie label] Play it Again Sam came along and wanted to build a European independent label.

I worked on that indie label for two years and the majors were always coming up to us to ask if we could help them develop new artists, because it seemed like we were a bit better at handling artists at an early point in their careers than they were. They wanted to give us some of their baby artists to develop. However, it wasn’t until Paul

Russell from Sony records approached me that the idea seemed viable for us, as he was the first one to want to let us keep the artists after they’d had their success.

So we made the Sony Independent Network Europe model and that worked well as a concept for five years. We had a lot of success; the indies under our helm broke artists at home and within very short periods of time we could turn that into global success stories, which worked out pretty well for everybody. We had our failures as well, of course. The way we combined the strength of the majors and the indies is that we’d mostly let the indies under SINE do their thing, and then Sony would come in with their strong and efficient marketing department. Having a presence in every territory of the world and having a structure in every country made for a very efficient structure. I was surprised by how many records you could sell at that time; we sold 70 million albums operating a small team over five years.

Conferences, Cocaine and Hookers

Decadence in the record industry, you say? Well, when I joined Sony in ‘96 it was really the tail end of decadent 90’s era. Still a bit excessive, but when you went to conferences people reminisced fondly about hanging with Walter Yetnikoff [notorious former CBS/Sony Music exec] in the preceding years: “... and we were on a boat with a lot of hookers, and there was all that coke and everybody got gold watches to take home as souvenirs after the party...” It isn’t like that any more; it must have been more in the late eighties and early nineties. What happened is that a) the record industry convinced the artists that CDs were really complicated and expensive, so everybody agreed on taking a royalty reduction of 25% and b) they convinced the buying public that CD technology was so expensive that they had to raise the price: when of course the truth was that the format very soon became much cheaper to manufacture than vinyl. The profit margins were incredible, they blew up, and a lot of re-

buying was going on as well, with people replacing their old vinyl collections with CDs. Those were ten or twenty years where, frankly, I think the music business created a lot of the problems that it’s had later on. It grew so fat and rich that a lot of very mediocre-to-bad managers survived very well by just being there, and even managed to show a profit. For a lot of people in the major companies, the strategy was to attach yourself to something that was successful, and distance yourself from what was not. That was a survival strategy that worked and kept a lot of incompetent people in the business.

Collapsing Old Industry

In that sense, it was a good thing and a right thing that the bubble burst; a shake out on the structure level wasn’t so bad for the music industry at all. However, after the fourth round of firing people, you could tell that some really good people were getting let go. I realized that the SINE model wasn’t working anymore when I went to Sweden – at one point, some Oasis album had just come out and we weren’t getting the second single on the radio. “Hang on. The Oasis single? Whaddaya mean it’s not on radio?” I arrived at Sony’s Swedish office and I found the lady who was head of radio promotion in the mailroom, packing parcels. I realized she was the only radio promotion person left with Sony Sweden, and she was responsible for the entire international repertoire, and the entire Scandinavian roster, and SINE. And her assistant had just been fired the week before. Which is why she was in the postal room, actually sticking sellotape on records that were to be shipped to radio. So the Oasis record was probably somewhere in that pile of records to be mailed out.

But what we did at SINE, and what we’re proud of, is that we managed to introduce new artists into the system, artists that had maybe been well known at home but lacked international recognition. And that ability, to develop new artists internationally, has been lost by the major companies. And that’s still the situation because



"What happened is that a) the record industry convinced the artists that CDs were really complicated and expensive, so everybody agreed on taking a royalty reduction of 25% and b) they convinced the buying public that CD technology was so expensive that they had to raise the price. When of course the truth was that the format very soon became much cheaper."

Industry With Mark Chung

of how they've reacted to diminishing revenues, reducing their staff to a level where development is near-impossible.

The financial people have become very influential and with the major assumption that "...since we're doing a profit on J. Lo and Christina Aguilera, we should only do those releases, and then we can be quite profitable." And what they're missing is that sometimes the J. Lo records don't sell as much as you would expect – and they have nothing to replace them with, because most success stories start at the bottom. For instance, I had the pleasure of working with Travis, who sold six million copies of their second album while their first one only sold thirty thousand. The situation today is that bands like that probably don't get to release their potentially six million selling second album, because the company is afraid to invest in them.

How Americans Killed the Singles Market

When file sharing became the norm, the big labels were paying up for their years of excess, and it's well deserved. Especially in the case of the multinationals, because they carry a big share of the blame for the various policies.

For instance, Americans killed the singles market. It worked well for them to make two or three singles with an artist that they would produce very nicely, and only make them available as a package on an album that was filled with inferior songs that the consumer had no interest in purchasing. There's a difference between an album that's conceived by an artist, and one that's conceived by the record company because they want to charge the price of an album for two singles. They forced the public to purchase twelve songs that they weren't interested in, to get the two that they wanted. That's not a consumer friendly business model, but it was very profitable. One of the attractions of file-sharing and downloading is that you just pick up the tracks that you want, and you don't have to deal with all the stuff the record company

stuck on there to make a more valuable product.

It was hard for major labels to face the fact that they might have to reduce the prices of their product, which they did later, although it took them a really long time. The arrogance of the majors is remarkable in that respect. It also has to do with the pure human fact that it's really hard to let go of a thing that works. You see this now with the film industry, they're having the same problem of letting go of the nice DVD business that's giving them a lot of revenue right now. They aren't managing it very smart, and it's hard to see what's going to protect them from the destiny of the record companies.

Subsidizing the High-tech Industry

How do I see the future? The music industry needs to reinvent itself. I am not in the business of predicting, I've lived long enough to know that it's pretty much impossible, but there are a couple of things that I'd like to say. I think there's a chance at the moment to set things right, and one of the things that might help us in Europe is that the political landscape has changed. Politicians have realized that what they refer to as the creative and cultural industries – of which the music business is an aspect of, along with film, TV, advertising, books, newspapers, magazines, etc. – are crucial to them.

Once you add all these things together, you realize that section of the economy is much larger than had been assumed, around 4-5% of the Gross Domestic Product. Bigger than the automotive industry, or the chemical industry. For all these years, politicians have supported those industries, while the culture industries have been left on their own. Now they've realized that they're going faster than the others, and have a better chance to survive in the next twenty years. Europe isn't going to survive well in the shipbuilding industry, in competition with Korea or China who can do it at a much cheaper price. The steel industry is in a bad shape... but producing content – art, television series, books, music – is a

business just like any other, and it has more future potential than any of them. This has become common knowledge lately, which is very positive.

Second, people have started to realize that the wide on-line availability of content is one of the biggest drivers behind the explosive growth in the high-tech industries for the past decade. This has been established by a lot of research; people will buy a new phone, a faster computer or a better broadband connection to access music and films on-line. What happened in the past decades was that artists and small and medium sized businesses working out of bedrooms all over – vulnerable businesses – have been subsidizing the development of the technology sector, which has been highly profitable. It's obvious that an imbalance has happened, and I think that people have realized that.

Some very promising developments have happened lately. In France, Sarkozy has succeeded in bringing together the Internet Service Providers and the content providers, who now say that they should be working together. That they shouldn't have one industry thriving while another dies. Looking at it from the French perspective, if they lose the creative structure there after the years it took to market and develop, they'll get more of the destruction of independent distribution and record companies, which will in turn encourage the Anglo-American dominance of global culture. They're saying: "We have a national interest here to preserve, which every country might have." So they've signed an agreement, the ISPs and the content/culture industry, to work together and address the issue of illegal file sharing and how it affects everybody. And that sort of thinking might actually get us somewhere.

As told to Haukur Magnússon

Licensing and registration of travel-related services

The Icelandic Tourist Board issues licences to tour operators and travel agents, as well as issuing registration to booking services and information centres.

Tour operators and travel agents are required to use a special logo approved by the Icelandic Tourist Board on all their advertisements and on their Internet website.

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Department of Welfare is changing address!

On May the 15th 2008, the department of welfare will move its residence from **Tryggvagata 17** to **Borgartún 10-12**. Telephone number will stay the same.

As before, service centers around town will continue to provide information about various issues.

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
- **Miðborg and 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
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- **Ábaer and Grafarholt**, service centre for the residents of the districts of Ábaer and Grafarholt, Bæjarhals 1, tel. 411-1200
- **Miðgarður**, service centre for the residents of Grafarvogur and Kjalarnes, Langarimi 21, tel. 411-1400

MORÐINGJARNIR

"I hate to punch a clock in the morning, so I just want to make punk or movies, and hopefully one of the other will work out and then I won't have to work..."

So, your second album is out, and it has received glowing reviews from every critic.

Haukur: Well, I'm not going to tell you that we received better reviews than what we expected. We expected it to receive very good reviews. But it is still fun.

The punk scene has not been very prominent in Icelandic mainstream media. It has been a long time since I've seen a punk album receive such favourable reviews in the mainstream media. Is this the beginning of a punk revival you think?

Atli: I don't know. Music is often difficult to define; I don't really know who is doing punk anymore.

Haukur: There is lot of punk bands actually, but most of them never make an album.

Atli: Yes, you often hear one song on Myspace, or see a band play live one or two times, and then they disappear. Nothing happens. Today it is really easy to make a record, using this new digital technology, so that shouldn't be a problem. We did our first record for almost no money. But we are putting more into the second album.

Haukur: But I don't know how truly punk we are. A lot of bands just make punk music as sort of a joke. And really, that's how this band started initially, until we got more serious about it. But I think a lot true punkers, the one's that have safety pins in their cheeks, they probably don't think we are really punk.

I reviewed your album in the last issue, and I said that there was a lot of influence from (Icelandic punk greats) Innvertis on this album.

Haukur: Yes, that is a little strange; you are not the first person to say that. When we made our first album, we were listening to Innvertis a lot, and hanging out with them and we thought they were really cool.

Atli: They even played on one song on that album.

Haukur: But now, they could all be dead to me. I don't see them and I don't hear from them. And now we make an Innvertis album. This was not a conscious decision.

It must have seeped in at the time.

Haukur: Probably. But we are still a lot better than Innvertis. But we are not unhappy with the comparison.

Atli: A lot of times when we are working on songs, they have working titles from the bands that we think is sounds like. The Pixies Song, The Slayer Song and so on. Maybe we are not the best people to judge this.

How did this band come about?

Atli: After Dáðadrengir folded, which is the band we were all in before Morðingjarnir, we were just hanging around, the three of us in our practice space and we wanted to make some music.

Haukur: And Dáðadrengir sure as hell were not going to be making music.

Atli: No, and Haukur is not a very good guitar player, and I am not a very good bass player, but Helgi is an OK drummer, so it made most sense to make some punk. If we had decided to make prog-metal, it would probably have been a complete failure. Or anything else for that matter. Punk was just a starting point for us, at some time, we even considered doing something else, but..

Haukur: We didn't really form this band because we think punk is the greatest musical genre in the world. It is just one of many types of music that we like. We are more accidental punkers. But we have discussed our ideas for making a ska-record and an industrial record, and so on. But we just don't feel like it.

Atli: Now, obviously, we have become an established punk band.

Haukur: We have made two punk albums already. Our next album is probably going to sound a lot better but be a little less interesting musically. That is the usual arch of a punk band. More of the same, only worse.

I wanted to ask you about a song you wrote

especially for the Iceland Airwaves festival and Morgunblaðið (Iceland's biggest daily newspaper) called it the worst song ever written, or something similar.

Atli: Ah, yes. We found that to be a very remarkable comment.

It was particularly remarkable because it was written anonymously and did not appear in relation to any review. It just appeared in the middle of the page, totally out of nowhere. It would have made more sense if this was written as a review by someone.

Haukur: I still wouldn't have understood it, because I think it is the best song ever written in Iceland.

Atli: Still, we were kind of happy with the comment. I think it is a very perky song, perky to the point where it becomes intolerable. Very in-your-face. I could understand if people found it intolerable, and to get such a harsh comment on it, that's a lot more fun than if someone had said it was mediocre. Being mediocre sucks.

Haukur: The question is if we have created a tradition. Whether we will make a new Airwaves song for the next festival or if the radio stations will just keep playing this one.

Many reviewers have noted the lyrics on the album especially, which are great. How do you go about writing the lyrics?

Haukur: I write the lyrics, mostly. The music is more of a collaborative project, but I have taken responsibility for the lyrics, at least for this record. I was either just inspired by something that I wanted to write about, but a lot of times I just grabbed the rhyme dictionary and worked from there.

Some of the lyrics are a very sharp criticism of our society; they are not all as perky as the Airwaves song.

Haukur: No, that's true.

Is that just a part of being in a punk band? Writing critical lyrics.

Haukur: No, although we are in a punk band, I don't think we are your typical punks per se. We both went to the Commercial College of Iceland.

Atli: I bought this sweater in Jack & Jones.

Haukur: The lyrics as such are not intended to fill out the punk stereotype. I am just this clever, you see.

Atli: Every time Haukur comes in with a new songs, he has a little story constructed around it. 'You guys know this type, right? The drug addict, he is this old, has a girlfriend that's a lot younger and they both wear jogging pants and hang out at the bar Monaco and shoot up in the toilet.' He always has this little scene constructed around each song.

Haukur: I think the best lyrics are the oldest ones, and the ones I wrote a quarter to midnight the day before we went into the studio. A lot of lyrics ended up in the trash. I don't think I am a very good poet. Or, I think I am a great poet, I am a very good poet, but I have excellent quality control.

It is a little tempting to relate your lyrics to the fact that you have been going to film school and you are becoming a film maker. Are your lyrics another manifestation of your desire to tell stories?

Haukur: I really like telling stories, that's true. But I have never related the two, but you are right, there is probably a relation. But the main thing is that I hate to punch a clock in the morning, so I just want to make punk or movies, and hopefully one of the other will work out and then I won't have to work in a mayonnaise factory.

Atli: I want to add that I have known Haukur for more than ten years, and he is still telling me new stories. I think there is a lot to the hypothesis that this is nature as storyteller breaking out. He really is a great storyteller.

Haukur: That's probably true. I really enjoy meeting new people for example, because that means I can start at the beginning and retell all the stories I know.

By Sveinn Birki Björnsson





AMIINA

"We debated whether it should show Kerið and Lee Hazelwood's name, date of birth and death, but then we decided to keep the scene open for speculations."

Let's start with the obvious first question. What's going on with Amiina?

María: There are plenty of things. Too many really. We're finishing a movie soundtrack and will soon go on tour with Sigur Rós. The biggest project at the moment are concerts we are organising for the Reykjavík Art Festival where we collaborate with Kippi Kaninus. The concerts will take place at Reykjavík Art Museum (Hafnarhús) on May 15 and 16.

Usually, there are only the four of you when you play live, but these concerts are of much bigger scale.

Sólrún: Yes, it's a much bigger project than we have done before. We got the idea to do a collaborative project and thought it would be ideal to include Kippi, as he had toured with us in Europe last year. The project soon expanded and more musicians joined us.

Edda: We'll be 16 in total.

María: We have had this dream, to produce a different live set, for a long time. Our music has many layers so when it is only the four of us on stage we are busy trying to comprise everything. We wanted to let our music come into its own without us running around, swapping instruments. We wanted to grab the chance to look at our music from a different angle, rearrange it and also create something new. We've done arrangements for a string quartet as well as a brass section so the concerts will be different from both our previous live performances as well as from the songs on our albums. The title, 'Amina, Kippi and Friends in Wonderland' is a reference to how everything will become a little twisted.

Sólrún: Something that was once very tiny suddenly becomes very big.

You also mentioned a movie soundtrack.

María: We've been composing the soundtrack for a British film called 'Is There Anybody There?' by Irish director John Crowley. He put a lot of responsibility on our hands, to help shape the characters with the music. Although the timing couldn't have been worse we decided to go for it because we liked the film so much.

Sólrún: It's a story of a ten-year-old boy and an old man, played by Michael Caine, who's brilliant in his role by the way. The film deals with the way they try to help each other out, dealing with life and to live in the moment.

María: This is a beautiful and intimate film, filled with many small details and great closeness to the characters. The film is in post-production and scheduled to premiere by the end of this year.

How did you get this project?

Edda: Wasn't it thanks to Yoko Ono?

Sólrún: That's true. There is this radio show, called Desert Island Discs (on BBC Radio 4), where people are asked to name records they would take with them to a desert island. She picked John Lennon, Sean Lennon and also Amiina, among others. The director heard this show and bought the album.

When this project is over, what are the plans for the summer?

María: After we finish the score for the film we'll jump on the plane to tour with Sigur Rós for the next three months.

Sólrún: We'll support them in concert but not play our own set this time. We decided to take a break from Amiina this summer and just have fun. Emphasise on one job, instead of two.

María: To play two concerts each night can get really tiring.

Sólrún: We did that for one year. It was a great experience but at the same time very exhausting.

María: Considering how much time we've spent together for the past ten years it's unbelievable that we are still friends.

Sólrún: It's been great fun though.

Has it been that long, ten years?

María: Well, it's a bit complicated. We started to

play with Sigur Rós in 1999 and before that we played classical music together in school.

Sólrún: We started as the string quartet Aníma in 1998. That's the beginning.

Edda: Four years ago we started to create our own music together.

Are there any defined roles in the band today or do you just pick up whatever instrument you want and start playing?

María: There really are no clear assignments. When we get an idea, we just work around it and each one of us picks up the instrument they think will fit the best. It's a very liberating process in many ways, but at the same time a bit restrictive, because no one has the role of a leader. All of a sudden, we're maybe all going crazy playing solos. We're not the typical band with a singer, bass, guitar and drums. There is no front and no key melody, really. But that's what we like about it because that way other parts become more prominent.

Your debut album 'Kurr', released last year, saw some good reviews in the international press. Were the responses beyond expectations?

María: Yes and no. Before we released the album we had played our songs for a diverse audience when opening up for Sigur Rós. We therefore had some idea how people felt about our music, that they at least didn't hate it.

It must be a big plus for a young band to be able to try out their material in front of such a big crowd.

María: Absolutely. I guess we can say that we started on the completely wrong end. Our first real concerts were at Laugardalshöll and our first concert in L.A. was at Hollywood Bowl, in front of 10,000 people. When we started to organise our own tours we had gained good experience so we weren't as nervous as we maybe should have.

Sólrún: I have to say that I find it easier to play large venues. When you play in front of thousands, the crowd becomes more like a big mass rather than individuals. As soon as you move into a small venue where you can look at people's faces, it becomes much harder.

Hildur: You realise that there are real people watching you, who will have opinions about the show.

Edda: I feel much more vulnerable in those circumstances.

Your collaboration with Lee Hazlewood in the single 'Hilli (At the Top of the World)' got good coverage, especially since it was his last recording before he died. How did this collaboration come about?

Hildur: His manager got this idea, if Amiina and Hazlewood wouldn't be a weird and funny combo...

Maria: ... and unbelievably, he said yes.

Sólrún: We never imagined that he would agree so this was a pleasant surprise. He died only a couple weeks later.

Maria: We've been huge fans of his so this was all very surrealistic.

I have to ask about the video to the song (viewed 20,431 times on YouTube), especially the scene in the end, where two girls scatter ash into the crater lake Kerið. This is supposed to represent Hazlewood's remains, right?

Maria: The making of this video was very interesting and happened quite fast. We were actually abroad when it was filmed.

Sólrún: The director flew to Iceland and produced the video without us, although we were part of the process.

María: We debated whether it should show Kerið and Lee Hazelwood's name, date of birth and death, but then we decided to keep the scene open for speculations. It of course strongly indicates that we are spreading his ashes over Iceland's nature. As surrealistic as the song came to be, I have to say this video is just as surrealistic.

By Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

CONCERT

Photo by GAS

CONCERT

Photo by GAS

CONCERT

Photo by GAS

Morðingjarnir**Where:** Iðnó **When:** April 24, 2008

First off, any establishment that sells bottled beer for 700 ISK is clearly the wrong venue for a punk concert. Settings aside, this proved to be a pretty good night for music. By now, Sudden Weather Change is a firmly established indie rock outfit that plays fast-paced and multi-layered guitar rock. I am pretty sure there is an audience for their music, it just doesn't include me. They are accomplished musicians and occasionally show spurts of creative energy, but I have never been able to connect to this band.

Reykjavík's scream-charged audio assault was unleashed next. Their performance was the usual high-octane delivery of punk rock mayhem that audiences have come to expect and demand from this band: a barrage on all senses, including that of humour, delivered with such ferocity that you could actually hear the guitars go out of tune with every hit of the strings. Their set was topped by a great cover of Dr. Mista and Mr. Handsome's Boogie Woogie – a surprising but effective choice. Midway through their set, guitarist Haukur showed the good taste to remove what may have been the ugliest pair of jeans in the history of mankind and played the rest of the set in his briefs. The females in attendance collectively ovulated.

With the crowd sufficiently riled up by Reykjavík's power trip, Morðingjarnir took the stage under the national anthem, a fitting intro song for a band that has just released an album titled Áfram Ísland (Go Iceland). Morðingjarnir is a band that draws influences from across the alphabet. Well, from the Dead Kennedys to White Zombie at least. They blazed through nearly 20 songs, occasionally stopping to give the frenzied audience a taste of Icelandic Brennivín liquor. They left the stage and returned for an encore and then

By Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

Summer Celebration**Where:** Organ **When:** April 23., 2008

I was sure the editor of Grapevine was busting my chops when he asked me to cover The Reykjavík Grapevine's Sólarsamba Concert at Organ. Reasons being the following: my own band was playing. I was partaking in the planning the event and I manage the venue. But I could see where he was coming from: He wanted the insider's look on a night like this.

The event drew a big crowd early on and everyone got into positions to enjoy the evening's opener, Swords of Chaos. The band delivered a tight set of high-energy, best described as Battles battling Mike Patton's grandmother in queue at Wal-Mart. Very interesting.

Next up were indie-folk darlings Seabear who cooked up a warm brew of lo-fi pop while back-stage conversations brewed between bands and friendliness seemed to be the theme. Excitement grew in the air, for the highlight of the night drew nearer: Maggi Kjartans, legendary old-timer of the Icelandic music scene was present to perform his contribution to the 1988 Eurovision semi-finals, Sólarsamba.

It had been 20 years since the song made its way into people's hearts and it had never been performed since with Magga Gauja, Maggi's daughter who sang the song with him when she was 12 years old. I was excited to see how people would react to this rather strange addition to the already indie-ish line-up. As they jumped on stage, it was clear that it hit the spot. In the 15-minute medley, the crowd danced, smiled and laughed like Eddie Murphy was in the house and even danced the Conga!

Kimono were up next, but since I was on stage for that, I can only give you our point of view: fun fun fun.

Skátar closed the night with their weird-rock antics, a set that could just as well have been performed in Las Vegas at a tanning convention. Their songs are as entertaining as looking at pear-shaped men in golden spandex tights. Come to think of it..

By Gylfi Blöndal

Sólstafir**Where:** Organ **When:** May 6th, 2008

Organ was packed good, at least considering that it was a Tuesday night. Most people were obviously there to see Sólstafir so the interest in newcomers Polymental, who started the night, was politely disinterested. Their set, frankly, didn't do much to change anyone's mind. Their old school metal is skillfully executed; these guys are all great musicians, but lacks originality. Their singer showed some classic metal wailing – which was nice, but not enough to make the performance memorable.

Sólstafir are an institution in the Icelandic metal scene, starting out in 1995 with a traditional death-metal sound. Since then Sólstafir have carved quite a niche for themselves, especially in the European metal scene, their albums generally receiving glowing reviews in international metal magazines.

At Organ Sólstafir played material from a forthcoming album, "Köld", to be released in Europe this summer and in Iceland in the fall. It is hard to describe the Sólstafir sound, without sinking into some old clichés, so bear with me: their sound is unique, it is epic, it is orchestral and sublime. Sólstafir make long metal symphonies, hard hitting metal that is, at least in Iceland, entirely unique.

Sólstafir played 5 new songs and 2 old ones – but it was by no means a short set. The average Sólstafir song is on par with the length of a full length Ramones album. The new stuff sounded big – it sounded as if the next album will be a really important release – both for Sólstafir and the Icelandic metal scene. Sólstafir seem to understand that the visual performance of a band is almost equally as important as 3 minute guitar solos and the Organ performance was no exception. A great concert indeed.

By Páll Hilmarsson

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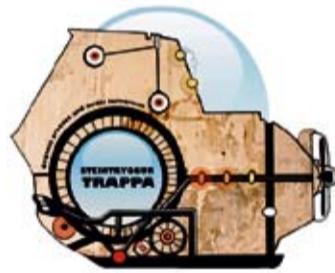


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CD
Sweaty Psalms
Klive

Klive is the solo project of Úlfur Hansson, bass player for the metal-core band Swords of Chaos. This pretty much as far removed from the dark world of SoC as can be. Low strung but experimental electronica that radiates a neurotic vibe but is still atmospheric enough to avoid the collapse into total darkness. It is dark, but not eerie enough to sound discomforting. This is a pretty powerful debut, and should keep all fans of electronica waiting for his next release.

Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

CD
Trappa
Steintryggur

They call themselves rhythm freaks, which is partially true. Steintryggur is all about rhythm and this album is freakishly enjoyable. Steintryggur is the collaboration of percussionist and tabla drummer Steingrímur Guðmundsson and former Sugarcubes drummer Sigtryggur Baldursson. On this album they are duly assisted by the wizardry of Ben Frost, credited for aural terrorism, programming and recording, and a host of guests who step in to create a unique concoction of various world music influences. The songs are built up around the rhythmic compilations of the two drummers (call this the drummer's revenge) with layers of various electric rhythms, throat singing out of a Tibetan temple, sitar, saz and oud. The opening song Melur is the sort of song that could make or break an art house movie, probably the best song I've heard all year. If you are open to new experiences, and only invest in one new CD a year, this one should probably be it.

SBB

CD
Minni karla
Skuggasveinar

Minni karla is an all-Icelandic tribute to the swamp rock legend Tony Joe White. That is, Tony Joe's music, performed by Icelandic musicians, with Icelandic lyrics performed by various singers. The musical delivery is exemplary and does justice to the tunes, but as often is when various guests are brought in to do a tribute, the singing is hit and miss. I particularly enjoyed Þorsteinn Einarsson's, Ragnar Kjartansson's, Óttar Propp's and Megas's delivery. They all have the vocal qualities to bring the desired character and life to the to these songs. Most of the other's fall flat. Jens Ólafsson, one of Iceland's best rock singers sounds way too cautious and Björn Jörundur, a fine singer in his own right, is completely out of his element here. A bright spot is the adaption of the Icelandic lyrics though, some of which are really good. SBB

BOOK
Love is a Mix-tape
Rob Sheffield

Rob Sheffield is a music-scribe for The Rolling Stone magazine, a prestigious member of small world of people whose whole life revolves around music. More or less. In Sheffield's case, that proves to be half accurate at least. He has his music, his Pavement CDs and his mix tapes, and then there is the love of his young life, Renée. After falling in love they quickly marry and seven years later she dies. In this memoir, Sheffield recounts their story, using the mix tapes they made as a vehicle to convey the highs and lows of their short marriage. He's kept them all, each song hand-picked to create a certain vibe that serves as a guide through their life together, and his life afterwards.

This is a touching book, but Sheffield's most remarkable achievement is to avoid falling into melodrama or emotional pornography. Throughout, the book is funny and heart warming, despite the heroine's tragic fate. It is easy to fall in love with Renée along with Sheffield as he paints a portrait of a independent and extroversive woman that was undoubtedly a lot of fun to hang out with and discuss music with. It is also enjoyable to read how truly unpretentious Sheffield is in his writing, his love of music, even some truly bad music, his wife and his vinyl.

A curious side story is the demise of the cassette age. Anyone who has ever made a mix tape will probably share Sheffield's enthusiasm for this lost art. A generation that has grown up with the drag and drop simplicity of creating iPod playlists will surely have a difficult time understanding the mastery it takes to create the perfect mix tape for every occasion (the Break Up tape, the Fall In Love tape, etc.).

CD
Bergmann
Bergmann

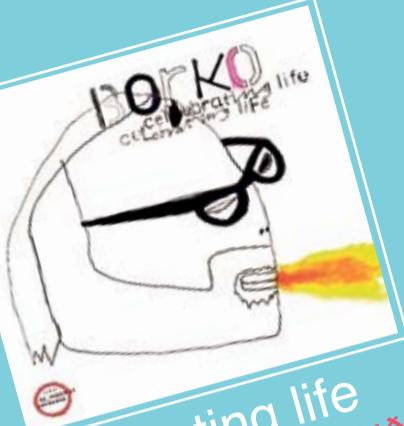
Sverrir Bergmann first made a name for himself as a musician when he won the singing competition of the Icelandic secondary schools, with a particularly cheesy re-edition of Always by New Jersey's second favourite son, a performance that still makes me cringe every time I think about the Icelandic adaption of its lyrics. But let bygones be bygones. This is his first album, and he has brought out the big guns, but sadly, he has badly overshot the target. The opening track hints at something that might rise above tear jerking pop clichés, but ultimately, it proves to be a teaser. The album consists of calculated power-pop exercises built for radio rotation on stations for lonely housewives who cringe on to the promise of one day finding true love. Which is sad, because Sverrir has a great voice created for heartfelt delivery, if only he had something to original to deliver. SBB

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Icelandic Heroes of the Silver Screen

Peter Ronson

One Hollywood box-office smash and then retirement, Peter Ronson aka Pétur Rögnvaldsson was the ultimate one hit wonder. He landed a role in the big budget Journey to the Centre of the Earth in 1959, opposite such star names as James Mason, Pat Boone and Arlene Dahl, but then turned down all subsequent movie offers.

Ronson played Hans, the dependable, Icelandic guide. Hans was tall, strong and laconic and weirdly attached to Gertrude the duck, and every watching ten year old idolised him. Squeaky clean teen-idol Boone couldn't compete. Ronson even got to deliver his dialogue in Icelandic.

As Hans, Ronson had the opportunity to show his prowess against prehistoric monsters or rather back projected lizards with rubber crests and frills glued on. After the movie he faced another physical challenge – competing for Iceland in the 110m hurdles in the Rome Olympics in 1960. For the record, he clocked in at 15.2 seconds and came sixth in his heat. Plenty of sportsmen try to break into movies (OJ Simpson, Vinnie Jones, Eric Cantona) but there aren't many who take the opposite route.

Gunnar Hansen

Since Boris Karloff back in the 1930s, the man behind the monster has often proved the opposite of his cinematic face. So it is with Gunnar Hansen, the iconic Leatherface in Tobe Hooper's groundbreaking horror movie, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. Leatherface is a brutish, inbred, Texan cannibal. Hansen is a mild mannered journalist, poet and historian born in Reykjavík.

Hansen is undeniably effective as the chainsaw-wielding killer. His workman-like despatch of one victim with a lump hammer is particularly chilling, even if the final scenes, in which Leatherface chases the heroine and a very fat passing trucker in and out of the lorry and down the highway, do conjure up the Benny Hill theme tune.

He turned down a part in West Craven's The Hills Have Eyes to concentrate on his writing. He published a well received book about America's barrier islands, their ecology and inhabitants, but the lure of schlock was strong. Since the late eighties, Hansen has built himself a career in mostly straight-to-video horrors like Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers, Hellblock 13 and Witchunter. Next up? Hansen goes back to his roots with The Reykjavík Whale Watching Massacre, currently in pre-production.

Jóhann Pétursson

Jóhann Pétursson is more obscure than the other actors in this series but nevertheless had a long acting career. It spanned nearly forty years, from 1943 to 1980, but he made just three films in that time. Not surprisingly, his 2.34 metre (7'8") stature had him typecast as a giant.

The first film was a Danish art house movie called Hjertetyven. Then in 1950 he appeared in the kitsch fantasy, Prehistoric Women, a mix of sling-shot-wielding amazons, a pterodactyl that looks like a duck and the discovery of fire. Jóhann is Guddi: "savage, merciless and possessed of Herculean strength...the most feared thing in the prehistoric world", as the ever-present narrator tells us. He makes bone-crunchingly short work of a tiger but can't cope with tribesmen with flaming torches. The whole thing is nonsense of course but kind of fun with a couple of beers.

Thirty years later he showed up in Carny, alongside such star names as Jodie Foster, Gary Busey and the old film noir fall guy, Elisha Cook Jr. Carny would have been familiar territory for Jóhann, as he spent many years in carnivals in several countries, often billed as The Viking Giant.

In trying to find out a little more about him, I asked a friend who was related to an exceedingly tall man if this were him. No, came the reply, but he rented a room from my great grand parents in Dalvik. Only in Iceland.....

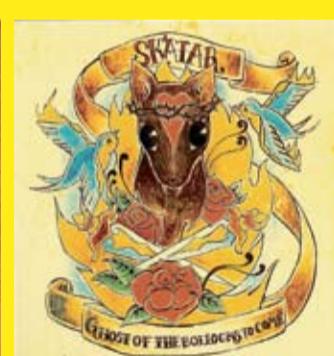
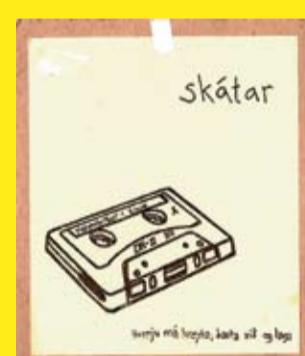
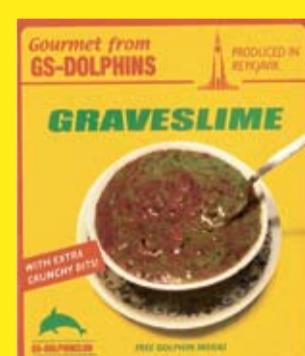
By Andrew Clark

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Reykjavík Then & Now

In the 1960s...

The round'about was still an alien concept.
And cars were considered a commodity.



In 2008...

the round'about has solved any traffic problem known to man and cars are considered a birth right. Photo by GAS



THE WILD ICELAND

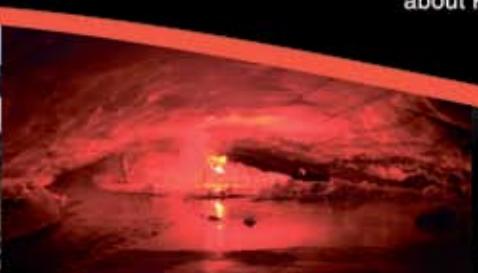
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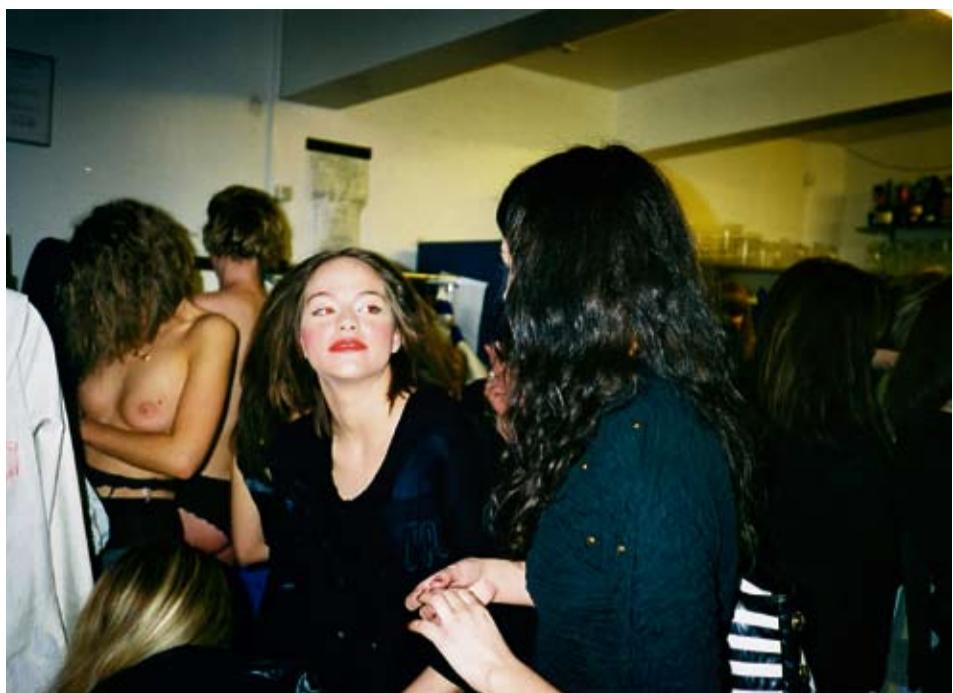
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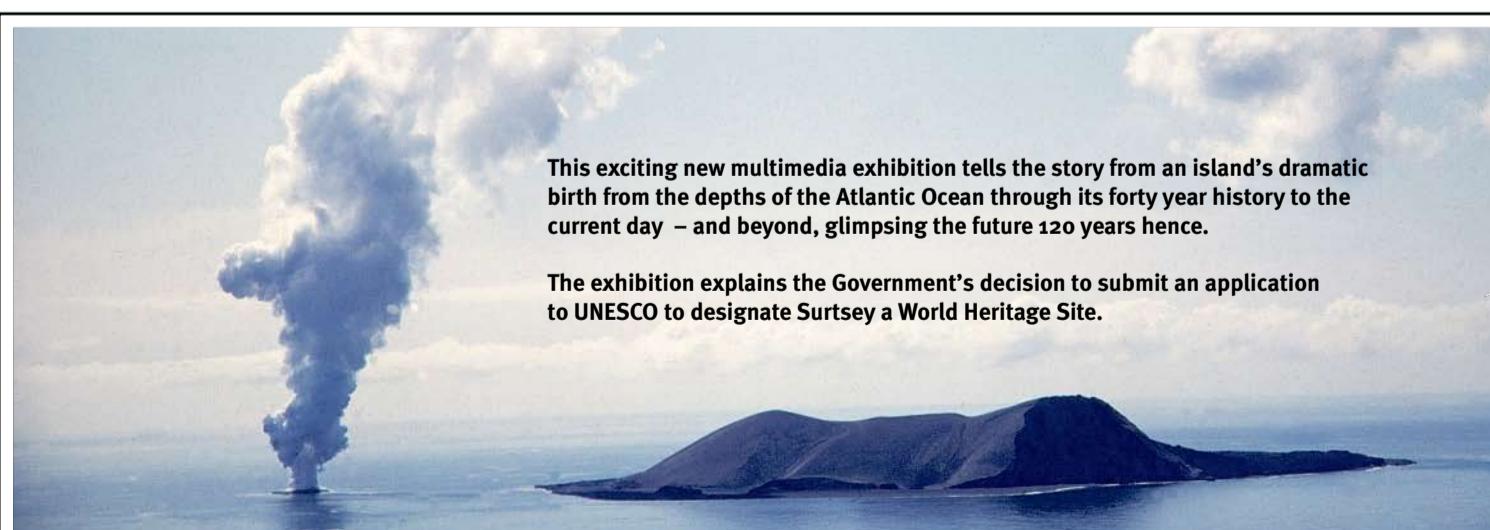
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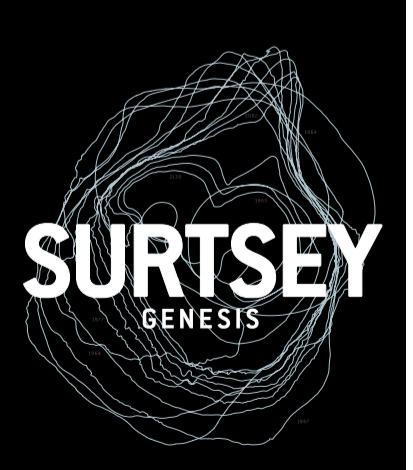
Backstage Pass

2nd year students of fashion design at the Iceland Academy of the Arts recently showcased their winter's work at Apótekið. The Grapevine's photographer was present backstage and joined the circus. (Honestly, we believe he was just there for the tits and ass) Photos by GAS.



This exciting new multimedia exhibition tells the story from an island's dramatic birth from the depths of the Atlantic Ocean through its forty year history to the current day – and beyond, glimpsing the future 120 years hence.

The exhibition explains the Government's decision to submit an application to UNESCO to designate Surtsey a World Heritage Site.



SURTSEY – GENESIS. EXHIBITION AT THE CULTURE HOUSE



The Culture House - Þjóðmenningarhúsið
National Centre for Cultural Heritage
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Telephone 545 1400 www.thjodmenning.is

Open daily between 11am and 5pm

The admission fee grants entry to all exhibitions at the Culture House. Adults ISK 300. Senior citizens ISK 200. Students ISK 200. Free entry for children 16 years of age or younger. Admission is free on Wednesdays.





Walking Reykjavík

There's a lot to see in Reykjavík if you open your eyes. The trick is to get away from the tourist traps on Laugavegur, walk through the back streets, and savour a bit of diversity. Depending on how hard you look you'll observe a number of odd, sometimes depressing, but ultimately fascinating little details. In a single day you can walk much of the city and see things that you would never have noticed by car or bus. Graffiti is undoubtedly an issue that sometimes detracts and sometimes adds value to the scenery. It's easy to dislike the scrawls defacing much of the city's backstreets, but at the same time it shows that the whole place is alive and has something to say. Personally, I love Reykjavík warts and all. It's unique, with a culture that reflects its geographical position somewhere between the Scandinavian Europe and the USA. The locals can be either kind and welcoming or abrupt and impersonal; the whole place keeps you on your toes. The following are a few photos I took as I wondered around the capital.

Hydrant Face – This is one of the many examples of graffiti in Reykjavík that brings a bit of a smile to your face along with the fire hydrant's.

Automobile – Icelanders firmly believe that the bigger the tires, the more power you wield.

Beach House – These little fishing huts were used as storage for fishing equipment, now they are canvas for the graffiti artists of the city.

Fish – Fish left out to rot, an Icelandic delicacy – or so I'm told. It presents a great photo opportunity as long as you are not standing downwind.

Tubes – Another backstreet in Reykjavík 101, another great photo opportunity. I did wonder exactly what was coming out of the cooling pipes.

By Laurence Edmondson



Photos by Laurence



Photos by Thorsten Henn and others.

*distance from Reykjavík in kilometres.

1 *ca. 390 km



Akureyri

Located on the shore of the majestic Eyjafjörður fjord on the north coast, Akureyri is the second largest town in the country and a popular weekend getaway. Activities for travellers are multiple as the town is rich with culture, history and a diverse music scene. The town centre boasts numerous bars, restaurants, cafés, art museums, galleries and fashion shops and during weekends the whole area turns into a vibrant nightlife destination for those in the mood to party. Options for visitors looking for a more relaxed recreation are multiple as well, and a stroll around the Kjarnaskógur wood, an 800-hectare preserved outdoor area south of Akureyri, comes highly recommended. Another possibility is a ferry trip to Hrísey, the second largest island off the coast of Iceland, which will only take about 15 minutes. With a population of only 200 people, the island is extremely beautiful and rich with birdlife. Afterwards it's ideal to go for a swim in the Akureyri swimming pool.

2

ca. 50 km



Akranes

A town of 6,000 people, Akranes is only a 35-minute drive from the capital. Two Irish brothers settled the town in 880 and today the townspeople celebrate the settlement annually with a family festival called the Irish Days, taking place on July 6 to 8 this year. Activities for visitors are varied and range from exploring interesting museum exhibitions in the Garðar area, sunbathing on the town's famous sand beach Langisandur or relaxing in the public park Garðalundur, a spacious area with lakes, trees and a large playground for the children.

3

ca. 170 km



Stykkishólmur

The small village of Stykkishólmur is considered one of the more magical municipalities in the country. Surrounded by historical sites and natural beauty, the town is located on the north shore of the Snæfellsnes peninsula. The small and colourful houses are built around the harbour where fishing boats are docked alongside cruise ships and ferries. The town is the gateway to the Breiðarfjörður islands and several companies organise daily sightseeing trips among the thousands of small islands where one can spot wild birds flying around the boat while tasting freshly caught scallops.

4

ca. 480 km



Húsavík

The fishing town Húsavík, which sits at the shore of Skjálfandi bay, has been experiencing a great increase in tourism in recent years. The biggest draw for travellers is the fact that the Skjálfandi bay is known for being an excellent whale-watching spot and many companies offer daily whale-watching excursions from the harbour. Visitors should also check out the Whale Museum, located by the harbour. The museum was founded in 1997 and provides information on cetaceans and Iceland's whaling history. The Húsavík church, which is one of the oldest wooden churches in Iceland, is also worth a look.

5

ca. 460 km



Höfn í Hornafirði

The small coastal town Höfn in southeast Iceland is surrounded by natural beauty. Various fascinating trips can be organized from Höfn, including sailing around the ice blocks on the Jökulsárlón lagoon, taking a bus trip to the Nature Reserve of Lónsöræfi and drive up the giant Vatnajökull glacier in a superjeep. For those fascinated with the nearby ice cap, a new museum featuring an impressive glacier exhibition focusing on glaciology, nature conservation, national parks and researches done in Vatnajökull is open daily all year round.

6

ca. 680 km



Seyðisfjörður

This charming community in East Iceland is renowned for its natural beauty and artistic creativity. The tiny village of 700 inhabitants is located by the end of the Seyðisfjörður fjord and surrounded by steep mountains on three sides. Small and colourful wooden houses and an old harbour characterise the town, which is an extremely attractive and lively holiday spot. During the summer months, artists from all around the country flock to town to throw exhibitions or take part in culture festivals. The summer highlight is the annual Lung.A art and music festival, taking place on July 15 to 22 this year.

7

ca. 50 km



Garður

Located on the northern part of the Reykjanes peninsula, the small community Garður is only a ten-minute drive from the Keflavík international airport. The town's trademark is the two old lighthouses down by the coast which offers a great panoramic view over the Faxaflói bay. The coastline also happens to be an excellent bird-watching spot. As Garður is an old fishing village, a museum dedicated to fish processing, The Garður Folk Museum, was established in 1995 and features a collection of old boat engines, fishing gear and other historical items.

8

ca. 450 km



Ísafjörður

A trip to the capital of the Westfjords, Ísafjörður, is a worthwhile journey as the town and its surroundings offer plenty of activities for travellers. The town is renowned for being a mix of a thriving fishing and music community and is for example home to the annual music festival Aldrei för ég suður, growing in size and popularity every year. The nearby mountains and valleys boast many scenic hiking trips, after which you can relax at a downtown café with a drink in hand and chat with friendly locals.

9

ca. 190 km



Vík

The small coastal village Vík í Mýrdal is the southernmost town in the country and contains many interesting sights to explore. The town's natural surroundings offer attractions such as green meadows, expansive sand deserts, glaciers and glacial rivers and only minutes away from town is Dyrhólaey, a long preserved promontory stretching from the coast and out into the ocean. The area is rich with birdlife and picturesque views and while hiking down to the town's beautiful black sand beach you can view the large Reynisdrangar rock pillars in the near distance.

Stumbling Around Glaciers

"Please be extremely careful when crossing the crevasses. They can be 20 metres deep. If you fall down I'll have troubles getting you up again," our guide, an experienced mountaineer, warned the group before leading us to the margin of Sólheimajökull glacier. Sólheimajökull is an outlet glacier, extending from Mýrdalsjökull ice-cap on the south coast of Iceland. It's eight kilometres long but like most glaciers, Sólheimajökull is retreating and the movement creates crevasses and ice-caves, beautiful but a little dangerous to explore.

The glacier is a popular destination for first-timers as examining its surface is usually an easy hike. We left Reykjavík in a calm weather but typical with Iceland's unpredictability, the breeze had changed into a storm after the two-hour drive. All geared up with crampons on our feet and ice axes in our hands, we walked slowly up the ice-tongue with the wind beating us harshly. The storm grew with each step until it became almost impossible to stand still. I asked the guide if they ever took groups up in worse weather. "No, the limit is 16m/s" he replied. By now, it was more than 20m/s in the worst blows. Needless to say, we had a hard time standing on two feet. The wind literally lifted one girl only minutes after her mother had stepped one foot through a thin snow-bridge covering a crevasse. Luckily she didn't fall down but both were pretty shaken after the incidents.

For me, battling Mother Nature while exploring ice-crystals and sculptures shaped by the moving glacier, made the hike much more fun. The storm had calmed down when we stopped near our starting point to admire an ice-cave, carved by the water melting from the glacier. The ice looked like shining marble and I asked if it was possible to go down and take a closer look. "Of course not", was the answer I was expecting but not hoping for. The ice could easily collapse, the guide explained, leading to a certain disaster.

A group of tourists had now arrived on a bus, photographing the glacier and the cave. Little did they know about the troubles we'd been through for the past three hours. Although a bit exhausting, it was though definitely a much richer experience.

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Unexpectedly Awesome

Chances are that your handy rough guide doesn't mention this. From the road, it appears that someone has transplanted colourful buildings from the city centre and placed them in the middle of a homogenous suburb of identical housing tracks and eerie new shopping centres. For the planners of Árbærsafn, the Reykjavík City Museum, this was exactly the idea: to preserve a piece of 19th Century Iceland right in the midst of the ugly, overdeveloped suburb..

Currently on display is the "Disco and Punk- Different Cultures?" exhibit, which documents the frustrating history of the two subcultures in Reykjavík from the 70's onward. Almost unheard of elsewhere, the disco and punk scenes bonded uniquely over their exclusion and small size. Árbærsafn has divided the highly interactive exhibit into two sections: a teenage punk's room and a teenage disco's room. In the punk section, one can find flyers from old punk shows, records, and pictures of the once-punk Bubbi Morthens with hair. The garage is complete with brand-new band equipment that guests can use. The disco section includes a representation of the 70's disco club "Hollywood," with a light up dance floor and blaring Bee-Gees. The panels are in Icelandic, so English speakers should be sure to take the tour.

A replicated turf house (turf houses were banned in the city in 1894) is the Mona Lisa of Árbærsafn. Inside are preserved rooms with artefacts such as paintings made with human hair, old stoves, a loom and family portraits. I found it disturbing when my guide showed me that the entire family of six slept in the same room. But when he told me that the family invited a respected guest to take the bed with the oldest daughter, I was mortified. Detailed explanations of turf-placement and sheep-dung cooking techniques were fascinating.

Coming soon to the museum is an early locomotive and fire engine section, featuring cool models of old Reykjavík and the Great Fire of Reykjavík of 1915.

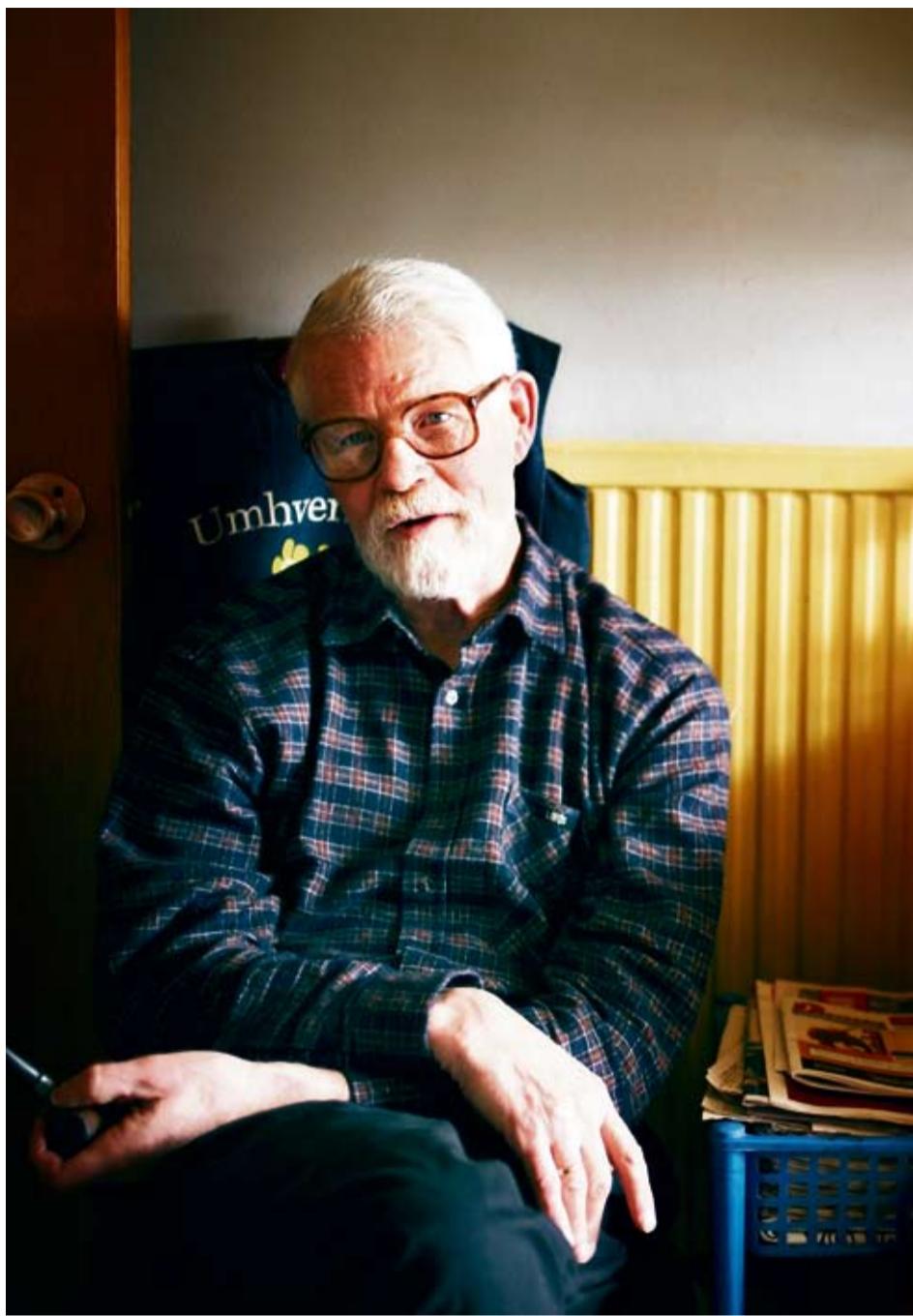
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Text by Chandler Fredrick

Photo by GAS



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Chasing Monsters in East-Iceland

"There are sightings that cannot fully be explained by reason," Hallgrímsson contends. "My opinion is that these are paranormal activities, much like people who claim to see ghosts, elves and hidden people. That is why some sightings can't be explained, and why only some people can see the Worm. As a scientist, I have at least not been able to fully explain this"

MULDER: A prehistoric animal living in a lake is not without precedence. Last August they pulled a Bull shark from Lake Onaga in Massachusetts.

FARRADAY: An anomaly. Which proves nothing. It only serves as fodder for pseudo-scientists with nothing better to do than chase fairy tales.

MULDER: It's been reported for centuries in dozens of countries. From the monster in Loch Ness, Nessie, to the Ogopogo in Lake Okanagan.

SCULLY: And Lake Champlain, Lagarfljót, Iceland... From *The X-Files*, episode 3x22 - Quagmire (1996)

Like most small towns in Iceland, Fellabær (pop. 350) seems to be little more than a random collection of houses surrounding a gas station. The village lies on the banks of lake Lagarfljót in East-Iceland and, with the neighbouring town Egilsstaðir, it was built primarily as a retail and service centre for the farms in the area, back when farming was still considered a viable career choice. I lived there for the better part of my childhood, and when I was seven-years old I encountered the local monster, a terrifying serpent-like beast that lives in the lake. I was scared shitless, but I escaped unharmed. Last month, I returned for some serious journalistic research on the beast, and preferably to get a photo. I partially succeeded.

The Lagarfljót Worm

The first sighting of the monster, or The Worm as the locals know it, was reported in 1345. There are numerous sightings recorded since, many of them in the 20th century and mostly by people who have generally proven to be reliable. And sober. In 1963, Sigrúnur Blöndal, head of the National Forest Service, witnessed a long streak that moved along the water, rising and falling above the water level. As a man of science, he has never been able to fully explain what it was he saw. In 1998, a group of students and a teacher in Hallormsstaðir School, located along the river, witnessed a similar mysterious stationary long snake-like streak in the river. The sighting lasted for over ten minutes. According to most accounts, the monster resembles other known lake monsters, such as the Ogopogo in Canada, and the Champ in Lake Champlain, NY. It is described as a long, worm-

like creature. As a cryptid¹, it would likely be classified as a lake monster of the 'many humps' variety, rather than a 'long neck' type like the Loch Ness monster, which more resembles a swimming brachiosaurus. The 'many hump' characteristically arches its body in a series of humps above the water level, hence the name. Some stories claim The Worm is capable of blowing poisonous fumes and wrecking death and havoc at a whim. Other stories claim that the beast stretches from one end of the lake to the other, full 30 km in length. The monster appears in annals regularly, and is usually considered to foreshadow great misfortunes or natural disasters, such as earthquakes, or volcanic eruptions. Some truly bad stuff. But how did it all start?

The Myth

Lagarfljót is glacial river that runs 140 km from Eyjabakkajökull – one of surging outlet glaciers of Vatnajökull – to the Atlantic Ocean towards the northeast. The river water used to be opaque whitish-green resulting from the glacial flour the river carries, but recent damming developments at the river's base have resulted in a more brownish hue. On its way to the ocean, the river becomes placid and forms a 53 squarekilometres lake², also known as Lögurinn. This is where the beast is believed to live.

The legend of the Lagarfljót monster is a common one, known around the world in various versions. In its essence, it is the old fairytale about the dragon protecting the gold. As the story goes, a young girl living at a farm by the lake received a gold ring as a gift from her mother. She asked what she should do with the ring, and her mother told her to place it in a chest underneath a worm (in some versions it is a slug), and then the gold would grow with the worm. When she checked on the gold a few days later, the worm had grown so much that the chest could barely contain it anymore. Frightened by the sight of the giant worm, she grabbed the chest and hurled it into the lake, where the worm kept on growing.

The Worm soon became a menace that terrorized the region. Helpless against the beast, the farmers in the area called on the help of two Finns (Saami shamans) to contain the beast with spells

and witchcraft. The Finns battled the Worm in the lake for a long time. When they emerged, they said they could not overpower the beast, but that they had managed to tie its head and its tail to the bottom, where the worm would stay bound to the end of days, incapable of harming anyone.

Both of these legends are common urban myths that have been retold in different versions around the world at different times. It is easy to trace the origin of these stories to mythological figures, whether it is Sigurd the Volsung fighting the dragon Fáfnir, retold in Wagner's *Niebelungen Ring*; the mighty Thor fighting the Midgard Serpent; or Beowulf fighting the sea monster.

22 – The Number of the Beast

In 1983, contractor Valdimar Benediktsson led a group of men assigned to furrow telephone cables in the ground in East-Iceland. When the farms on one side of Lagarfljót were done, the cable had to cross the river to continue on the other side. A specially strengthened cable had been ordered for this task, wrapped in a thick hose made of steel wire and engineered so that it wouldn't wind or kink, but lie straight on the bottom of the lake from one bank to the other.

"When we initially went out on the lake to perform depth measurements, we noticed a mysterious mass that was lying under a hollow bank at considerable depth on the eastern side of the lake. The mass seemed to be organic and moved around as we performed the measurements," Benediktsson explains when we meet him in his giant machine shop in Egilsstaðir.

¹ *Cryptozoology* is the scientific study of, and search for, cryptids – animals that fall outside of contemporary zoological catalogs. This also includes animals that fall outside of the taxonomic records due to a lack of empirical evidence, but for which anecdotal evidence exists in the form of myths, legends, or undocumented sightings, such as the Loch Ness monster and the Bigfoot. Some people believe it to be a pseudo-science.

² Which, coincidence or not, is almost exactly the same area the Loch Ness lake covers, at 56.4 km². Due to their depth, the bottom of both lakes are also considerably below sea level.



Opposite page, left: Helgi Hallgrímsson, right: Valdimar Benediktsson. This page: The Worm as displayed by a local artist. Photos by GAS.

"That fall we started the project. I had a very capable group of men working on this, and we had been working on furrowing cables all summer around East-Iceland. We used boats and prams with special cable trestles to do the job. When the job was done and we tested the connection through the cable, it turned out it was broken. We had the instruments to locate the failure, and it turned out to be where we had witnessed the mysterious mass earlier."

When the cable was pulled up, it became clear that something was out of the ordinary. "This cable that was specially engineered so it wouldn't kink was wound in several places and badly torn and damaged in 22 different places," Benediktsson says. "I believe we dragged the cable directly over the belly of the beast. Unless it was through its mouth."

The Hidden Worm

Helgi Hallgrímsson is 73 years old. He is a biologist, educated at the University of Göttingen in Germany and in Edinburgh, Scotland. As an expert on Lagarfljót, he is a reliable as they come. He has spent years researching and studying the lake and the river and recently published a book on the subject. We met with Hallgrímsson in his home to learn the basics of Lagarfljót wormology. He talks slowly, and occasionally pauses to smoke his pipe. "Centuries ago, when people first started referring to the Worm, the word had a wider definition. It was used in much the same way as we use the word 'monster' today," he explains. "There are different descriptions of the thing. It is usually depicted as being long and narrow, but sometimes it is described more like a dragon." Hallgrímsson says that the Worm often draws comparison to the Loch Ness monster, which is obviously the most famous lake monster of them all. "There are some similarities between Lake Lagarfljót and Loch Ness. Both lakes are long and narrow, about equal in size, and both are very turbid, so visibility is very limited."

In Hallgrímsson's opinion, we should draw a distinction between the urban legends surrounding the Worm, and actual accounts of Worm sightings. "We should be careful not to confuse the two. The legends are just that, legends. The sightings

however, are actual occurrences that need explanation. People see a lot of things in the lake, and when there is no obvious explanation for what it is, people will use the Worm as an explanation."

As it happens, Lagarfljót is full of natural phenomena that might require explanation. The bottom is a rich source of methane gas, which is formed when plants and biodegradable matters rot in the oxygen deprived conditions. The gas is trapped under thick layers of silt on the bottom and when the silt breaks, the gas rises from the bottom in large quantities and when it does, it can blow columns of water up in the air, raise giant bubbles, thrust up a lot of material from the bottom, and even break the light in a different way than the air around it, forming optical illusions.

Ice from the surrounding mountains, tree trunks and vegetation from the neighbouring forest, Hallomrstaðarskógar, and other physical objects are also known to find their way into the river and gather in big tangles where the currents shift and where the river meets the lake. These tangles can easily take a mysterious shape or the form of a mythical creature. Hallgrímsson says these phenomena could explain many of the reported sightings. But not all. He believes that the myth of the Worm can be divided into three categories. 1) Legends drawn from urban myths of dragons and witchcraft. 2) Natural phenomena such as gas and vegetation, which are facts. 3) Paranormal phenomena, sightings that are beyond the scope of scientific understanding.

"There are sightings that cannot fully be explained by reason," Hallgrímsson contends. "My opinion is that these are paranormal activities, much like people who claim to see ghosts, elves and hidden people. That is why some sightings can't be explained, and why only some people can see the Worm. As a scientist, I have at least not been able to fully explain this" I ask how this opinion adheres to his scientific training, if this is something he believes as a biologist. "I think there are a lot of things that we can not explain by science. I've not found any conclusive explanation for life for example. I don't believe this to be all just a big coincidence."

After some consideration, and a few puffs of the pipe, he adds: "If I am right, and this is a

paranormal activity, I think we would be better off by forming a good relationship with it. I think we need to treat it with proper respect and we should certainly not use its legacy to make a profit."

The Brotherhood of the Worm

Skúli Björn Gunnarsson heads the Gunnar Gunnarsson Institution in Skriðuklaustur, a cultural institution that preserves the legacy of author Gunnar Gunnarsson. He does not share Hallgrímsson's concerns. He has led a group of stakeholders in the area that have formed an unofficial companionship called The Worm's Shrine. The group mostly consists of people who work in tourism or related fields. Gunnarsson explains that historical and cultural tourism is a growing industry, and every area must capitalize on its particular distinction.

"This is a company of people who want to maintain testimony and preserve the heritage of the Worm," he says. "We want to market it with dignity. It would be easy order a container full of cheap artefacts and pass it on as Worm memorabilia. That's not what we want to do. We want to approach this with respect and create a unique experience for visitors."

Gunnarsson admits that many inhabitants in the area feel that this should be approached with caution. "They feel that we need to be careful," he explains. "There is a certain fearful respect for the Worm here. Why do people believe that there is little fish in the lake? You could operate a trawler here; there is so much fish. Why do people believe that the waves and the currents on the lake are stronger than anywhere else? Why do people here believe that fish caught in the lake are inedible? People's belief in the Worm is still quite tangible. Many have seen mysterious objects on the lake. Not all of them have been fully explained," he points out.

Worms: a User's Manual

It is easy to imagine how seemingly inexplicable natural phenomena could have been attributed to a mystical being or a monster in more primitive times. Superstition can be a powerful force and easily maintained when there is something unexplained to support it. But there is still a mystical

character surrounding Lake Lagarfljót. Whether it is superstition or a serpent-like monster, all has not been laid to rest. As Valdimar Benediktsson stated, "I would like to see if there is ever going to be full explanation of what people have been seeing all this time. I find it hard to believe that people would lie about witnessing something in Lagarfljót for centuries." I not sure I fully agree with him. Perhaps some things should not be fully explained away. There is added value in travelling through East-Iceland in the off chance of witnessing the monster.

By Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

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Photo by GAS

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company is looking for part time Work
from home Account Manager and sales
representatives, it pays \$500 per week
plus benefits and takes only little of your
time. Please contact us for more details.
Requirements - Should be a computer
Literate. 2-3 hours access to the internet
weekly. Must be over 19yrs of age. Must
be Efficient and Dedicated. If you are inter-
ested and need more information, Contact
ALEX COLE Email: calexco08@yahoo.com

SUMMER JOB IN ITALY
Be a summer camp tutor, teach english
to Italian children while travelling through

Italy.

If you have a very good level of english,
love children and enjoy making new
friends and experiences, check out this
web site: www.acle.org and apply!

For rent:

Furnished 22m2 studio for rent in Hafnar-
fjordur for the summer.
el_kael@hotmail.com

Education:

Qualified English teacher (native British
speaker) available for private lessons.
Masters Degree Applied Linguistics and
TESOL qualified (University of Cambridge).
Call Russell 849 7337 or e mail: russell-laldersson@hotmail.com for further details

Personals

Looking for a penfriend, preferably an Ice-
landic 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 correspond-
ence. My address: 18 Cedarbrook Ter-
race, IDALIA, TOWNSVILLE 4811, North
Queensland,Australia.
Thanks.

Denise Moore
denise@townsvilleofficefurniture.com.au

Other:

I am a chinese girl and will go back to
China in June. I am looking for travel
partners in Iceland.
Contact: Liuying via email: tiffanyuseonly@hotmail.com

I am a native British speaker and qualified
PA with more than 10 years
experience across a variety of business
sectors, working at senior manager
and director level. I am currently learning
Icelandic and would be willing
to consider working in exchange for help
building my verbal and written
skills. Please contact Linda Barton at
email: reykjavik@btinternet.com

WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS

News // Culture // Dining // Travelling // Shopping // Articles // Interviews

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. 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,** Viðimelur 29, Tel: 552 6751

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

Internet Access

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

- **Ráðhúskaffi City Hall,** Tjarnargata 11
- **BSÍ Bus Terminal,** Vatnsmýrarvegur 10
- **Ground Zero,** 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
- **Úðafoss,** Vitastígur 13, Tel: 551 2301, www.udafoss.is

Getting Around

Public Transport

The only public transport system in Reykjavík is the bus. Most busses run every 20 minutes and price per fare is 280 ISK for adults and 100 ISK for children. Complete route map at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700. Busses run from 07:00-24:00 on weekdays and 10:00-24:00 on weekends

Rent a Bike

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

Taxi

- **Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir,** Tel: 553 3500 or 588 5522
- **BSR,** Tel: 561 0000
- **For disabled travellers:** Reykjavík Group Travel Service, Brunastaðir 3, Tel: 587 8030, www.randburg.com/is/reykjavik_group_travel_service/
- **Car Rentals**
- **Átak Car Rental,** Smiðjuvegur 1, Tel: 554 6040
- **ALP,** Dugguvogur 10, Tel: 562 6060
- **Avis,** Knarravogi 2, Tel: 591 4000
- **Eurocar,** Hjallahauna 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,** Reykjavíkurflugvöllur, Tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is
- **Air Vestmannaeyjar,** Tel: 481 3255, www.eyjaflug.is

Bus Terminal

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

Flybus

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

Samferda.net

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

Cultural Centres and Tourist Offices

■ The Intercultural Centre

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

■ Icelandic Travel Market

Bankastræti 2, Tel: 510 5700, www.kleif.is Information on day tours, accommodations, car rental and everything else you need to know when travelling in Iceland.

■ Iceland Visitor

Austurstræti 17, Tel: 511 2442, www.icelandvisitor.com A travel agency offering travelling package trips and custom-made tours as well as car rental, day tours and accommodations for visitors.

■ Tourist Information Centre

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

■ The Icelandic Tourist Board

Lækjargata 3, Tel: 535 5500, www.visiticeland.com All information needed before travelling in Iceland.

■ Nordic House

Sturlugata 5, Tel: 551 7030, www.nordice.is The Nordic cultural centre organises various cultural events, conferences and exhibitions.

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

Useful Information

Where to Learn Icelandic as a Foreign Language

■ Icelandic on the Internet,

www.vefscoli.is

■ Mímír Continuing Education,

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

■ Námsflokkar Reykjavíkur,

Fríkirkjuvegur 1, Tel: 551 2992

■ Fjölmennung, Laugavegur 59,

Tel: 511 1319, www.fjolmenning.is

■ The Icelandic College of Engineering and Technology,

Höfðabakki 9, Tel: 577 1400, www.thi.is

■ Íðnskólinn í Reykjavík,

Skólavörðuholti, Tel: 552 6240, www.ir.is

■ The University of Iceland – Department of Continuing Education,

Dunhagi 7, Tel: 525 4924, www.endurmenntun.is

■ Language School Lingva,

The University of Iceland, at Sturlugata. Tel.: 561 0351, www.lingva.is

Religious Movements

The national church in Iceland is the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Masses are generally held on Sundays at 11:00. Service in English is at Hallgrímskirkja every last Saturday each month, starting at 14:00. The Roman Catholic Church also has masses in English and Polish. Other religious movements in Reykjavík are for example:

■ The Muslim Association of Iceland, Ármúli 38

■ Ásatrú Association, Grandagarði 8

■ Bahá'í, Álfabakka 12

■ The Church of Evangelism, Hlíðasmári 9

■ The Icelandic Buddhist Movement, 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, Saetún 1, Tel: 535 5600, www.asi.is

■ The Federation of State and Municipal employees, Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8300, www.bsrb.is

■ The Association of Academics, Borgartún 6, Tel: 581 2090, www.bhm.is

■ Efling, Saetún 1, Tel: 510 7500, www.efling.is

■ The Commercial Workers' Union, Kringlan 7, Tel: 510 1700, www.vr.is

■ Union of Public Servants, Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8340, www.sfr.is

Useful Websites

■ www.visitreykjavik.is (The official tourist website of Reykjavík)

■ www.gayice.is (Information about the gay scene in Iceland)

■ www.fjolmenningarsetur.is (The Multicultural Centre)

■ www.hostel.is (Hostel International in Iceland)

■ www.vinnumalastofnun.is (Public employment services)

■ www.gulalinan.is (The yellow pages)

■ www.leigulistinn.is (Rent a flat)

■ www.ja.is (Icelandic telephone directory)

Where to Get ...

■ Work and residence permit: The Directorate of Immigration, Skógarhlíð 6, Tel: 510 5400, www.utl.is

■ Insurance and benefits: The State Social Security Institute, Laugavegur 114-116, Tel: 560 4400, www.tr.is

■ Icelandic citizenship: Unless you come from a Nordic country, foreign citizens have to have had an unrestricted residence permit in Iceland for at least seven years in order to get an Icelandic citizenship although some exceptions exist to that general rule. Applications are at the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Skuggasund, Tel: 545 9000, www.domsmalaraduneyti.is

■ Unemployment benefits: Directorate of Labour, Public Employment Service, Tryggvagata 17, Tel: 515 4800, www.vinnumalastofnun.is

■ Icelandic social security number (kennitala): National Register, Borgartún



REYKJAVÍK'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE MAGAZINE

ISSUE FIVE: MAY 09 - MAY 22



Gott til
endurvinnslu

YOUR FREE COPY

Stuffed with stuff

On Saturday May 10, the Icelandic soccer season kicks off with the first round of play in the men's premier league for the ninety-sixth year.

The Grapevine predicts the upcoming football season.

Page 10

We were quite lazy and toured very little. Another thing that saved us a lot of time is that we never rehearsed, which is not a concept I recommend for young artists.

Einstürzende Neubauten's Mark Chung gives us the lowdown on the music industry.

Page 12

I think a lot true punkers, the one's that have safety pins in their cheeks, they probably don't think we are really punk.

Punk favorites Morðingjarnir sound a little unsure of themselves.

Page 16

Their performance was the usual high-octane delivery of punk rock mayhem that audiences have come to expect and demand from this band

Reykjavík played lónó

Page 18

"I find it hard to believe that people would lie about witnessing something in Lagarfljót for centuries."

Monster survivor Valdimar Benediktsson on the Worm in Lagarfljót.

Page 28

OK. So you figure the name's supposed to invoke irony. I mean, the five releases that so far make up Grandmother's Records catalogue don't sound like anything any grandmothers I know would approve of.

Haukur Magnússon investigates the curious collective Grandmother's Records

Page 29



Dedeen Dniwer ON*

with grapewire.net

*Tape sold separately

 **grapewire**

grapevine.is

info.

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

plus Grandmother's Records · Reykjavík Arts Festival · Sam Amidon at Organ



above Photographer Thomas Humery exhibits portraits at The National Museum (B14)

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MONDAYS:	WEDNESDAYS:	SATURDAYS:
Minced steak w. onions	Salted lamb & pea soup	Fried fish fillets
Lamb cutlets	Lamb cutlets	Lamb cutlets
Fishballs	Lamb meat & broth	Roast pork
TUESDAYS:	Lamb cutlets	Roast pork
Gratinated fish	Lamb chops	Lamb cutlets
Lamb cutlets	Lamb cutlets	
Meatballs		

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Sheep's head and Coke

Fish dishes

Hamburgers

Salat bar

Sandwich bar

Coffee and cakes



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The Modern Conjuror

The focus will be on folklore and stories of conjurers in Jóhannes Atli Hinriksson's exhibition 'Tenebrae' at 101 Gallery. Myths, sarcasm and various clichés derived from the pop-culture have played a large role in Hinriksson's previous installations. He uses bizarre

yet somewhat scary creatures and fetishes to project conflicts and the circulation of life. Hinriksson's installation in 101 gallery this time is made out of plastic bottles, metal, paper and other recyclable material that suit the modern conjurer. The exhibition, which

is Hinriksson's seventh solo exhibition, opens on May 16 at 17:00.

May 16 – June 27
101 Gallery, Hverfisgata 18a

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

Music

■ 12 Tónar

Skólavörðustífigur 15

Fri May 9: Live performance by Klive.

■ Bar 11

Laugavegur 11

Fri May 9: DJ Óli Dóri

Sat May 10: DJ Biggi Maus

Fri May 16: DJ Gulli Ósóma

Sat May 17: DJ Matti X-FM

Fri May 23: DJ Biggi Maus

Sat May 24: DJ Gulli Ósóma

Fri May 30: DJ Gulli Ósóma

Sat May 31: DJ Matti X-FM

Fri Jun 6: DJ Matti X-FM

Sat Jun 7: DJ Gulli Ósóma

■ Barinn

Laugavegur 22

Fri May 9: DJ Casanova and Helgi Már

Sat May 10: DJ Kári

Sun May 11: DJ Kotelett

Wed May 14: DJ Tryltti Hjörtur

Thu May 15: The Eastern Square

Fri May 16: Hugsandi Danstónlist

Sat May 17: Breakbeat.is presents: Leopold, Ewok and Kalli

Wed May 21: Unity Night (Hip Hop night)

■ Broadway

Ármúla 9

Sat May 17: Flex Music and FM957

present: Eric Prydz. Also performing are: Sean Danke & Scheizer Goodman (Live), Barcode Crew and Ghozt. For more information see: www.midi.is

Fri May 23: Johnny Logan concert:

Tickets at www.midi.is

■ Brons

Pósthússtræti 9

Every Thursday: DJ Lucky

Every Friday: History Sound System

Every Saturday: DJ Gauti

■ Café Paris

Austurstræti 14

Fri and Sat: DJ A. Ramirez

■ Classick Rock

Ármúli 5

Fri May 16: Concert: Bastard, Helshare,

Gone Postal and Embrace the Plague.

Starts at 22:00.

Sat May 24: Hvar er Mjallhvít followed by DJ Maggi

Thu May 29: Beerfest, performance by Tryggvi Vilmundar

Sat May 30: Menn ársins followed by DJ Maggi

■ Fríkirkjan Church

Laufásvegur 13

Fri May 9: Hörður Torfa concert. Tickets at www.midi.is

Sat May 10: Whitesun Jazzconcert with Bláir skuggar. Starts at 20:00. Tickets at www.midi.is

Sun May 11: Whitesun Jazzconcert with Sigurður Flosason and Gunnar Gunnarsson. Starts at 16:00. / Whitesun Jazzconcert with Kristjana Stefánssdóttir and Sigurður Flosason quartet.

Starts at 20:00. Tickets at www.midi.is

Mon May 12: Whitesun Jazzconcert with Sigurður Flosason quartet. Starts at 20:00. Tickets at www.midi.is

Mon May 12: Whitesun Jazzconcert with Sigurður Flosason quartet. Starts at 20:00. Tickets at www.midi.is

Mon May 12: Hallgrímskirkja Motet

Choir and soloists: Vesper by Rachmaninov. Tickets at church entrance. Starts at 17:00.

■ Hallgrímskirkja Church

At Skólavörðuholt

Sat May 10: Photographic Exhibition.

Hallgrímskirkja - The Friends of the Arts Society of Hallgríms church

Mon May 12: Hallgrímskirkja Motet

Choir and soloists: Vesper by Rachmaninov. Tickets at church entrance. Starts at 17:00.

■ Hásklabíó

At Hagatorg

Thu May 15: The Icelandic Symphony

Orchestra: Swingle Singers

Sat May 17: The Icelandic Symphony

Orchestra

Thu May 22: The Icelandic Symphony

Orchestra

Sat May 24: Concert: Wayne Shorter

jazz quartet. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival. Tickets at www.midi.is

■ Hressó

Austurstræti 20

Fri May 9: Performance by Dalton fol-

lowed by DJ Maggi

Sat May 10: Performance by Johnny

and the Rest

Sun May 11: Troubadours Alexander

and Örvár

Thu May 15: Performance by troubadour Helgi Valur

Fri May 16: Menn ársins followed by

DJ Maggi

Sat May 17: Tepokinn followed by DJ

Bjarni

Thu May 22: DJ Bjarni

Fri May 23: Dalton followed by DJ

Maggi

Sat May 24: Hvar er Mjallhvít followed

by DJ Maggi

Thu May 29: Beerfest, performance by

Tryggvi Vilmundar

Sat May 30: Menn ársins followed by

DJ Maggi

■ Iðnó

Vonarstræti 3

Sun May 18: Ólafur Arnalds release concert. Starts at 20:00

■ Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

Sat May 10: DJ Magic

Sun May 11: Alfons X

Sat May 17: DJ Casanova

Wed May 21: Óskar Guðjónsson

Thu May 22: DJ Leopold

Fri May 23: DJ B-Ruff

Sat May 24: Dansa Meira: performance by Már and Nielsen.

■ Laugardalshöllin

Laugardalur

Fri May 16: Concert: Jet Black Joe with Reykjavík's Gospel Choir. Tickets at www.midi.is

Wed May 21: John Fogerty concert. Tickets at www.midi.is

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



Art

Simplicity in a Complicated Environment

Photographer Björn Árnason recently opened his first solo exhibition inside the trendy hair salon/gallery Gel at Hverfisgata. In his exhibition he displays photographs shot in many places around Reykjavík for the past year or so. Simplicity is the key element in

his pictures that reveal strong forms, bright colours and curious shapes in the environment regular passers by wouldn't necessarily notice when strolling around the city. The photographs are all for sale for 20,000 ISK or 40,000 ISK, depending on the size. The

exhibition will be open until May 28.

*April 26 – May 28
Gel Gallery
Hverfisgata 37*

■ Prikið

*Bankastræti 12
Fri May 9: DJ Andri followed by DJ Anna
Sat May 10: DJ De la Rósa
Sun May 11: DJs Anna Rakel and Kári
Wed May 14: DJ Kvikindi
Thu May 15: DJ Óli Hjörtur
Fri May 16: '80s night: Herbert Guðmundsson followed by DJ Árni Sveins
Sat May 17: DJ Danni Deluxe
Tue May 20: Euro Trash Week begins.
Wed May 21: DJ Maggi
Thu May 22: Eurovision night. DJ Rósa performs.
Fri May 23: Franz and Krísto followed by DJ Danni Deluxe
Sat May 24: Eurovision finals/Tetris night with performances by DJ B-ruff and Fingaprint*

■ Tunglið

*Tryggvagata 22
Fri May 9: DJ Impulse and DJ Eyvi
Sat May 10: Eric Prydz pre-party. Open deck night
Sun May 11: DJ Kalli and DJ Lelli
Sat May 17: DJ Platurn & Jagúar
Sat May 31: Ghozt & Brunheim*

Art

■ 101 Gallery

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

Tenebrae

Installation by Jóhannes Atli Hinriksson

■ Artótek

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

■ ASÍ Art Museum

*Freyjugata 41
Tue-Sun 13-17
Free Entrance
May 16-June 15*

What Volcanoes?

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

■ The Einar Jónsson Museum

*Eiríksgata
Tue-Sun 14-17
www.skulptur.is*

Permanent exhibition:

The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson.

■ The Culture House

*Hverfisgata 15
Open daily 11-17
www.thjodmenning.is*

Ongoing exhibitions:

The Medieval Manuscripts – Eddas and Sagas

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

Christianisation.
SURTSEY - Genesis

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

Across the Oceans

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

The Journey's End

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

■ Dwarf Gallery

*Grundarstígur 21
Opening Hours: Fri and Sat 18-20
www.this.is/birta*

■ Fotografi

*Skólaðröstígur 4a
www.fotografi.is
May 3-June 6*

Chaos

Photographs by Stigur Steinþórsson

■ Gallery 100^o

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

May 16-June 27

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

■ Gallery StartArt

*Laugavegur 12b
Tue-Sat 13 – 17
Free entrance
www.startart.is*

May 1-May 13

Filmmaker Tjörvi Guðmundsson exhibits photographs and videos of street children in Ukraine

May 1-May 13

Exhibitions by Rafn Hafnfjörð and



Photo: Agnes Gefell

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The master's program in Coastal and Marine Management prepares students to engage with one of the most compelling and important subjects today: natural resource management and utilization.

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Further information: www.hvest.is

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www.greatwall.is
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in s'n's sauce
Almond Chicken
Fried Noodles

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

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



Upcoming concerts

BACH TO BEATLES
WITH THE
SWINGLE SINGERS

THURSDAY, MAY 15TH @ 7:30 PM

Conductor :: Bernhardur Wilkinson
Choir :: Swingle Singers

MAXIMUS MUSICUS
- A FAMILY CONCERT

SATURDAY, MAY 17TH @ 14 PM

Conductor :: Bernhardur Wilkinson
Aaron Copland :: Fanfare for the Common Man
Ludwig van Beethoven :: Symphony nr. 5, 1st mvt
Maurice Ravel :: Bolero
Sigvaldi Kaldaóns :: A ride through the highlands

TWO LORDS
OF THE TROMBONE

THURSDAY, MAY 22ND @ 7:30 PM

Conductor :: Christian Lindberg
Soloist :: Charles Vernon
Christian Lindberg :: Chick 'a' Bone Checkout
Jan Sandström :: Tango de los Hönsens
Pyotr Tchaikovsky :: Symphony nr. 1, "Winter Daydreams"

LADY AND BIRD

THURSDAY, JUNE 5TH @ 7:30 PM

The music of Barði Jóhannsson and Keren Ann Zeidel

20 HORNS
AND A SOLOIST

FRIDAY, JUNE 20TH @ 7:30 PM

Conductor :: Stefan Solyom
Soloists :: Radovan Vlatkovic
Richard Strauss :: Eine Alpensinfonie
Richard Strauss :: Horn Concerto nr. 2
Richard Strauss :: Till Eulenspiegel

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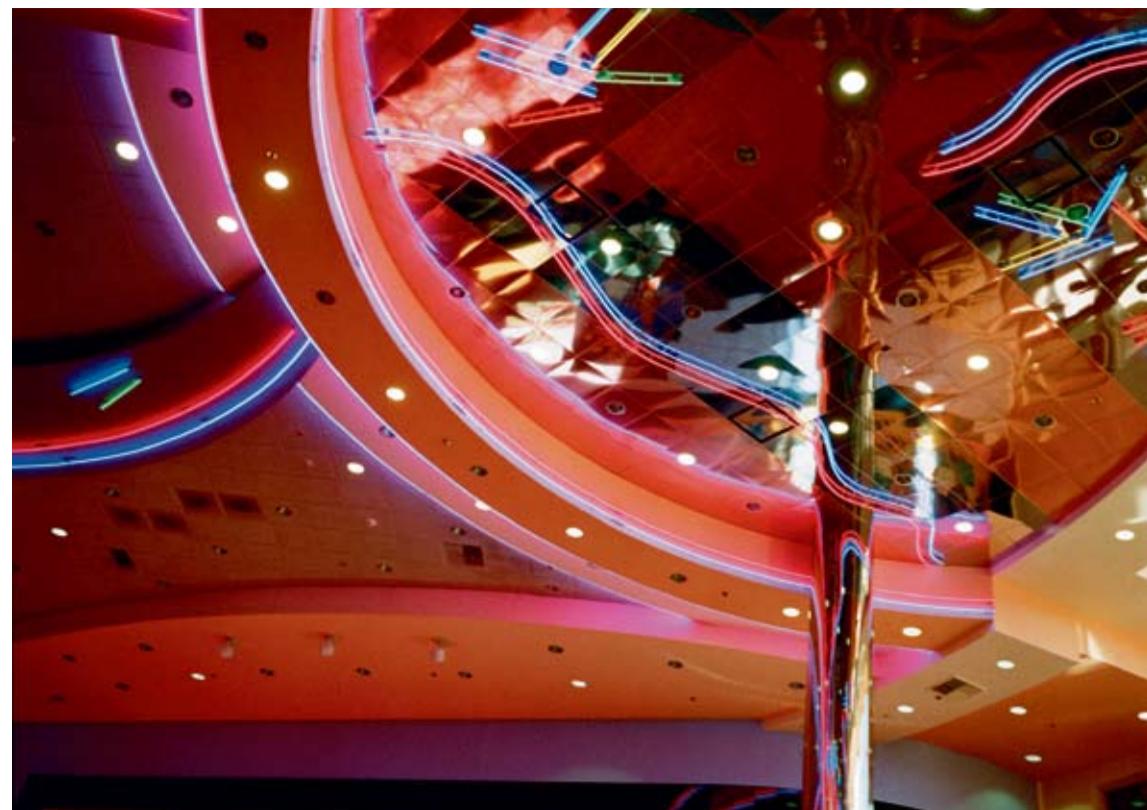
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"They put on such a
beautiful meal for us.
We had the most
amazing freshest fish I've
ever had in my life.
It was all so perfectly
cooked too...Beautiful!"
Jamie Oliver's Diary



L A P R I M A V E R A
RISTORANTE

Austurstræti 9, Reykjavík Tel: 561 8555



Event

Reykjavík Arts Festival.

Five-year-olds expressing their world through photographs, gumbé rythms by Super Mama Djombo, world premiere of a new dance piece and art events inside a moving gallery space are examples of the many happenings taking place around Reykjavík and the countryside during Reykjavík Arts Festival this year. The an-

nual festival will open at the Reykjavík Art Museum on May 15 with a collaborative project between the string quartet Amína and electronic musician Kippi Kaninus and 11 other musicians. The next days will see numerous exhibition openings and other fun performances but the programme offers a variety of concerts, the-

atre, exhibitions, dance and opera. For a full schedule see: www.artfest.is.

May 15 – June 5
Various venues

Nína Gautadóttir

May 15–June 30

Flooding

Video installation by Rúrí. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ **Gallery Ágúst**

Baldursgata 12

Wed–Sat 12–17

www.galleriagust.is

May 16–June 28

S M A R T

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

■ **Gallery Fold**

Rauðarárásíður 14–16

Mon–Fri 10–18

Sat 11–16

Sun 14–16

www.myndlist.is

May 3–May 25

Blómastillur

Exhibition by Pétur Gautur

■ **Gallery Kling & Bang**

Hverfisgata 42

Thursday - Sunday from 14–18

Free admission

this.is/klingogbang/

May 16–June 22

Uncertainty Principle

Exhibition by Sirra Sigrún

Sigurðardóttir. Part of the Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ **Gallery Turpentine**

Ingólfssbraeti 5

Tue–Fri 12–18

Sat 11–16

www.turpentine.is

Current Exhibition:

Hildur Ásgeirs dóttir – Jónsson

■ **Gel Gallery**

Hverfisgata 37

Mon–Fri 13–18

Sat 11–16

Sun 14–16

www.myspace.com/gallerigel

Apr 26 – May 29

Björn Árnason photographic exhibition.

■ **Gerðuberg Cultural Centre**

Gerðuberg 3–5

Mon–Thu 11–17

Wed 11–21

Thu–Fri 11–17

Sat–Sun 13–16

www.gerduberg.is

May 3–Sep 7

Between Mountain and Shore
Exhibition of Landscape paintings
from popular-artist couple

Michael Guðvarðarson and Ósk

Guðmundsdóttir

May 3–Sep 7

Magical Beings From the Folk Tales of Iceland

Drawings from Jón Baldur Hlíðberg

4 Mar–7 Sep

A Date with Collectors III

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

■ **Hitt Husið - Gallery Tukt**

Pósthússtræti 3–5

www.hitthusid.is

Apr 26–May 17

Exhibition by visual art students from FB

■ **i8 Gallery**

Klapparásíður 33

Tue–Fri 11–17

Sat 13–17 and by appointment

www.i8.is

May 16–June 28

Brazilian artist Ernesto Neto exhibits large-scale experiential installations. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ **Living Art Museum**

Laugavegur 26

Wed, Fri–Sun 13–17

Thu 13–22

www.nylo.is

Ongoing exhibition:

Nylo celebrates its 30th anniversary

May 16–June 30

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

■ **The Lost Horse Gallery**

Skólastræti 1

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

www.this.is/subqua/losthorse.html

■ **The National Film Archive of Iceland**

Hvaleyrarbaut 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**

Frikirkjuvegur

Tue–Sun 11–17

Current exhibition:

Magnús Tómasson, Pétur Már Pétursson and Tolli

■ **Reykjavík Art Museum**

– Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture

Museum

Sigtún

Open daily 10–16



Music

Bedroom Community at Organ

American folk singer Sam Amidon and Bedroom Community's ringleader Valgeir Sigurðsson will kick off their scheduled Europe tour with a concert at Organ on May 10. Amidon is signed to the Bedroom Community label and recorded his album 'All is Well' in Valgeir's studio Gróðurhúsið. The album

was released in February this year. Valgeir, who's one of Iceland's leading producers, recording acts such as Björk, mún, Bonnie 'Prince' Billy and CocoRosie, released his first solo album, 'Ekvilíbrum' last year. Both albums have seen great reviews locally and internationally and although it's not a

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.

May 16 & May 18

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

May 29

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

Reykjavík Art Museum

- Kjarvalsstaðir

Flókagata

Open Daily 10–17

Free entrance.

18 May–31 Aug

Dreams of the Sublime and Nowhere in Contemporary Icelandic Art: This exhibition includes many new works of photography and video art by Iceland's most outstanding artists, building on their disparate ideas about nature as a phenomenon.

18 May–20 July

I Hate Nature

Martha Schwartz exhibition

18 May–31 Aug

Where Am I?

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

18 May–31 Dec

Jóhannes S. Kjarval – Key Works

The current exhibition in

Kjarvalsstaðir's east gallery features key works from the museum's collection along with works on loan from the Labour Unions' Art Gallery and from the collection of Ingibjörg Guðmundsdóttir and Þorvaldur

Guðmundsson.

■ Reykjavík City Theatre

Listabraut 3

May 16–June 5

Five

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

■ Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Grandagarður 8

www.sjominjasafn.is

Will reopen on May 31

■ Reykjavík Museum

(Árbæjarsafn)

Kistuhylur 4

Open daily from 10–17

www.arbaejarsafn.is

Current exhibitions:

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

■ The Reykjavík Museum of

Photography

Grófarhús, Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor

Weekdays 12–19

Sat–Sun 13–17

Free entrance

www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is

Feb 23–May 25

Places: From a Visual Diary 1988–2008

Photographic Exhibition by Einar Falur Ingólfsson.

Apr 9–June 3

Photographs by Jirka Ernest

■ Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Laugarnestangi 70

Open Tue–Sun 14–17

Permanent exhibition:

Works of sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson.

Outside Reykjavík

■ Hafnarborg

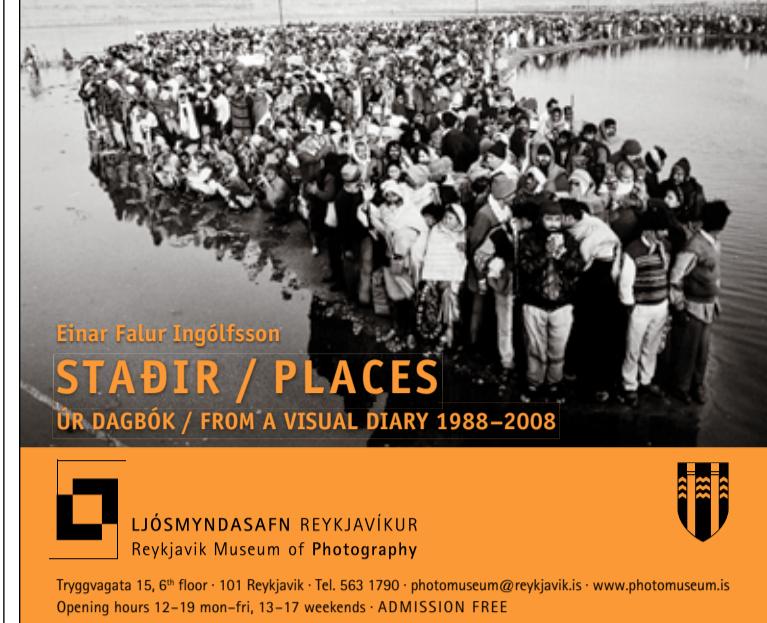
Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður

Mon.–Sun. 11–17

www.hafnarborg.is

Apr 26–May 25

23.2.–25.5.2008



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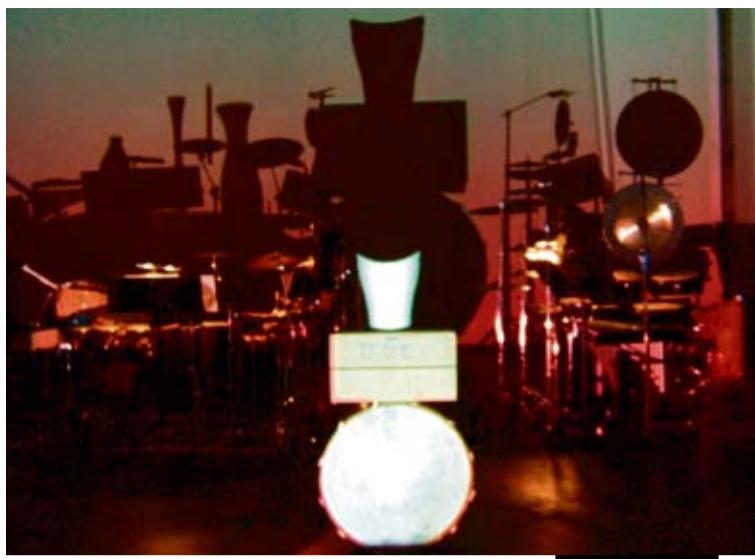
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TUBORG



Music

Indoor Inselhopping

On May 19, the collaboration between musician/performance artists Egill Sæbjörnsson and percussion ensemble Percusemble Berlin will come into light at the Reykjavík Art Museum. Last year, the ensemble commissioned new pieces from Icelandic, German and Irish composers with the idea to create an environment that might re-define the traditional framework of a concert and bring something new to the audience. The programme, entitled 'Inselhopping' consists of works by these com-

posers, but Sæbjörnsson's involvement will be to sculpture the environment in which the performance takes place, as well as create a corresponding choreography for the performers. The event is part of Reykjavík Art Festival. Tickets at www.midi.is

*May 19
Reykjavík Art Museum, Tryggvagata 17*

Wanwood
Reliefs, floor pieces and vertical structures by Hannes Lárusson, Guðjón Ketilsson, and Helgi Hjaltalín. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

Skaftfell
Austurvegur 42, Seyðisfjörður
www.skaftfell.is
Vatnasafl / Library of Water
Bókhlöðustígur 17, 340 Stykkishólmur
www.libraryofwater.is
Open daily from 11-17.
Permanent exhibition:
Roni Horn installation. She has replaced stacks of books with glass columns containing water gathered from Iceland's glaciers and glacial rivers.

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

Akureyri Art Museum
Kaupvangsstræti 12, Akureyri
Tue.-Sun. 12-17
www.listasafn.akureyri.is
Facing China

Paintings and sculptures by nine prominent contemporary Chinese artists. Part of Reykjavík Art Festival.

Dalí Gallery
Brekkugata 9, Akureyri
Mon.-Sat. 14-18
www.daligallery.blogspot.com

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

Kunstraum Wohnraum (Home gallery)
Ásabyggð 2, akureyri
Open by appointment. Tel.: 462 3744
Horton (Hears a Who!)

Smárabíó, Háskólabíó, Samþíðin Selfoss

In the Valley of Elah
Smárbíó Álfabakki

Iron Man
Smárabíó, Samþíðin Álfabakki, Samþíðin Kringlan, Laugarásbíó, Samþíðin Keflavík, Samþíðin Akureyri, Samþíðin Selfoss

Made of Honor
Smárabíó, Samþíðin Álfabakki, Háskólabíó, Regnboginn, Borgarbió

Over her Dead Body
Samþíðin Kringlan, Samþíðin Keflavík, Samþíðin Akureyri

P2
Samþíðin Kringlan, Samþíðin Keflavík, Samþíðin Akureyri

Shine a Light
Samþíðin Álfabakki

Stóra Planið
Samþíðin Kringlan

Street Kings
Smárabíó, Háskólabíó, Borgarbió, Samþíðin Keflavík

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Thursday evenings until 22:00

HOW TO DRIVE IN ICELAND

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

LIVESTOCK ON THE ROAD

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

SINGLE-LANE BRIDGES

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

ROAD TRAFFIC DIRECTORATE

Further information on www.drive.is

■ Superhero Movie

Smárabíó, Borgarbíó, Sambíóin Keflavík, Sambíóin Selfoss

■ The Hunting Party

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin Kringlan, Sambíóin Keflavík, Sambíóin Akureyri, Sambíóin Selfoss

■ The Ruins

Regnboginn, Sambíóin Akureyri

■ The Spiderwick Chronicles

Laugarásbíó

■ Tropa de Elite

Regnboginn

■ Undrahundurinn (Underdog)

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin Akureyri

■ What Happens in Vegas

Smárabíó, Háskólabíó, Regnboginn

■ Nim's Island (May 14)

■ Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay (May 14)

■ Never Back Down (May 14)

■ Love in the time of Cholera (May 22)

■ Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (May 22)

■ Flawless (May 23)

■ Sex & the City (May 30)

■ The Forbidden Kingdom (May 30)

■ Deception (June 6)

■ Speed Racer (June 6)

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 Reykjavík, Tel. 421-1170

■ Selfossbíó, Eyrarvegur 2

800 Selfoss, Tel. 482-3007

Events**■ Reinventing Harbour Cities**

May 10

On Saturday, May 10, the second part of the conference 'Reinventing Harbour Cities - Urban Planning and Art in Public Space' will be held at the Nordic House from 10:00 to 17:00. The conference is organised by CIA.IS in cooperation with the Iceland Academy of the Arts and the Nordic House and is aimed to open discussions about urban development and the role of art in public spaces. Among the guest speakers will be Martin Biewinga, Louise Mielonen and Vito Acconci. For more information visit www.cia.is/news/conference.htm.

The Nordic House, Sturlugata 5

■ Micro-Dance Festival

May 10

This year, the sixth annual Micro-dance festival will be dedicated to the mental and spiritual aspects of dancing and will therefore not take place in the material realm. Last year, the festival took place in the time-space between 15:00 and 3 minutes past 15:00. Everybody in the world was a participant. Seeing how the only limit for the size of this year's festival is the human imagination there's no telling how massive it might get. The festival will be held at 15:00 at *Kaffivagninn in Grandi*.

■ Brazilian Samba Workshop

May 10 and May 11

Capoeira enthusiasts in Iceland have organized a Brazilian Samba workshop which will be held at Mjölnir on Mýrargata from 14:00 to 18:00. Capoeira is an exciting Brazilian form of art that combines fight, dance, rhythm and movement. Teacher Vilnius will teach the basics of Capoeira and samba for 5.000 ISK per day. For more

info and to register for the workshop visit www.capoeira.is.

Mjölnir, Mýrargata 2

■ Experiment Marathon Reykjavík

May 15 – August 24

The centrepiece of this year's Reykjavík Art Festival is the project Experiment Marathon Reykjavík at the Reykjavík Art Museum (Hafnarhús). This is the most broad reaching art event that the Reykjavík Art Museum has undertaken since its inception and will bring together over forty renowned artists and scientists from the international community. The Experiment Marathon Reykjavík is a two-fold event: a vibrant laboratory conducting its work before the public eye during the opening days of the exhibition, and installations in diverse media on display throughout the summer. The exhibition and entire enterprise are curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist in collaboration with artist Ólafur Elíasson. A catalogue will accompany the exhibition and will be distributed internationally.

Reykjavík Art Museum, Tryggvagata 15

■ Diamantina Deep

May 20 to May 23

As part of the Reykjavík Art Festival, the international Berlin based artist group 'Hypno Theatre' presents a unique mix of music, puppet performance and visual art in Hjörleifur Jónsson's children show 'Diamantina Deep'. This is a story of the marvellous adventures of the young Indian Sea Turtle Purbayan Ranjan Biswas and his incredible curiosity. The audience accompanies the turtle on a journey where his quest is to find out what lies at the bottom of the sea. The theatre group will travel the country from May 20 to May 23. For more info see: www.artfest.is

■ Contemporary Dance Theatre

May 23 to May 25

The Iceland Dance Company and The Norwegian Company of Contemporary Dance will collaborate for the Reykjavík Art Festival and stage the dance piece 'Ambras' at the Reykjavík City Theatre. A total of 21 dancers will appear in the performance, which is choreographed by Ina Christel Johannessen, who is considered one of Europe's most exciting choreographers today. Original music is composed by two Icelandic female musicians, Kira Kira and Hildur I. Gudnadottir, along with their German counterpart Dirk Desselhaus. The show starts at 20:00 and tickets at www.midi.is

Reykjavík City Theatre, Listabraut 2

■ Open House at the Intercultural Centre

Every Friday night

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

The Intercultural Centre, Hverfisgata 18

■ Israel-Palestine Cinema

First Tuesday of each month

The Iceland-Palestine Association hosts a screening of films related to the Israel-Palestine situation. The screenings are at Café Cultura inside the Intercultural Centre, at 20:00 the first Tuesday of each month. For more info see: www.palestina.is

The Intercultural Centre, Hverfisgata 8

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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 Gráí Kötturninn

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 Hljómalind

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.

13 Svarta Kaffi

8 EATING

Eldsmiðjan

Bragagata 38a

Grapevine's favourite pizzeria in Reykjavík, 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 Reykjavík, 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

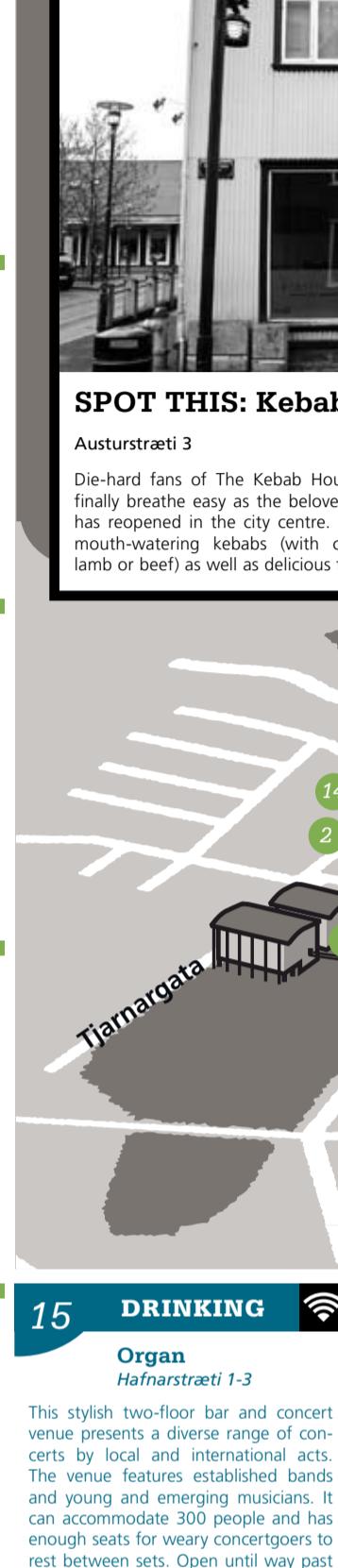
Aðalstræti 2

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.

15 DRINKING

Organ

Hafnarstræti 1-3



16 Prikið

Bankastræti 12

This two-floor café/pub has been part of Reykjavík's bar scene for decades. With a large and fairly cheap bistro menu, Prikið attracts a mix of university students with their laptops and 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.

17 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

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

18 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.

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.

20 Barinn

Laugavegur 22

Barinn is quite a popular hangout among Reykjavík 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.

21 Cafè 21

Austursstígur 21

On a sunny day, Cafè 21 is the busiest outside cafe featuring fine food and service. The stylish interior and friendly evening atmosphere make it a cosy inside bar and funk on weekends.

22 Nasa

Thorvaldseyr 22

In recent years, Nasa has earned its reputation on the majority of Icelandic bands have performed here as a variety of international acts. One of the bigger clubs in the city, there's always something happening during weekends, diverse as the crowd.

23 Óliver

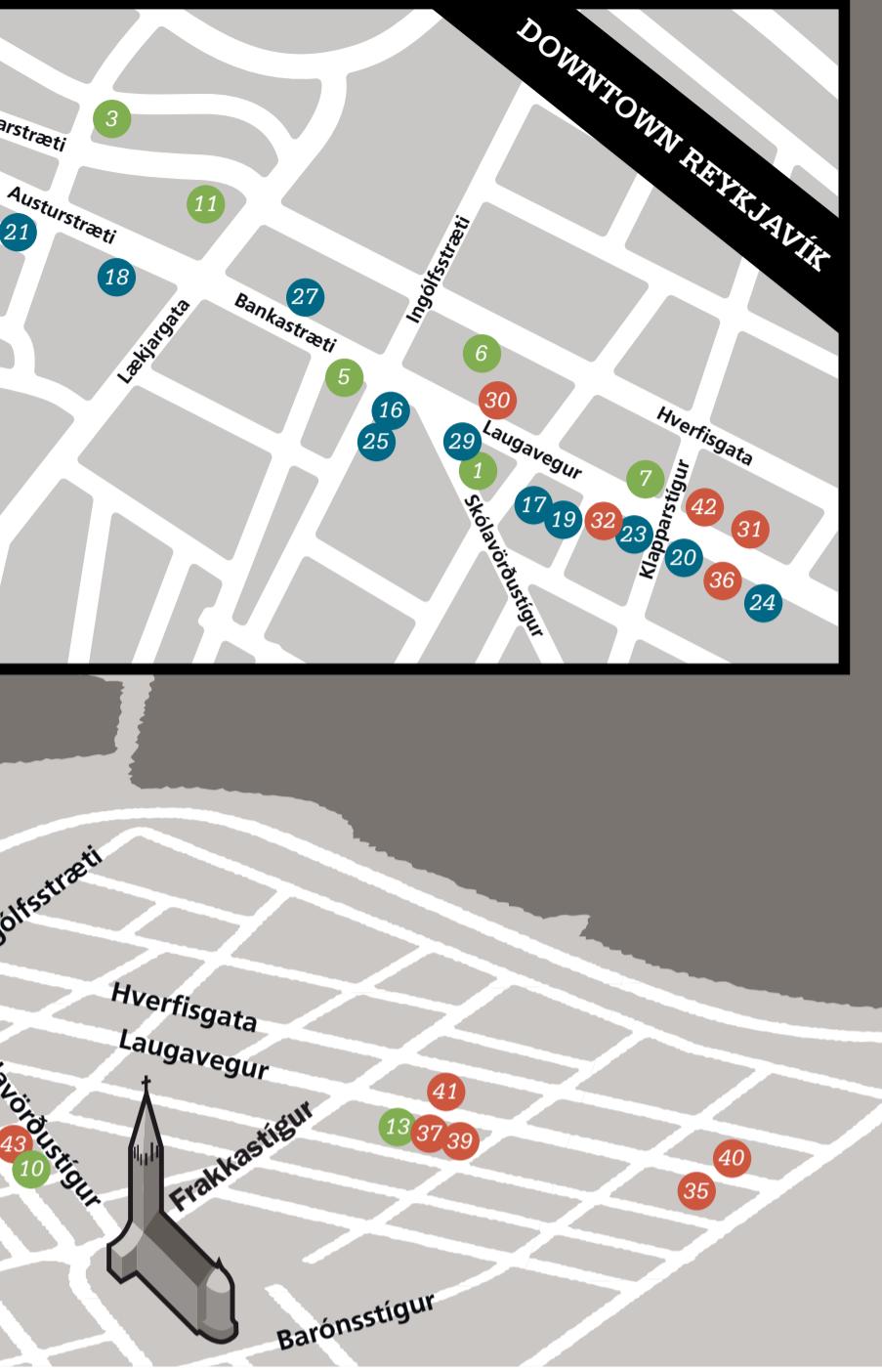
Laugavegur 23

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ORANGE



París
stræti 14

24

Boston
Laugavegur 28b

27

B5
Bankastræti 5

Café París is one of the best places in the city centre, with its friendly and attentive service, relaxing music and atmosphere make it a must. DJs play soul and blues.

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

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 styled bars in town, with a "whiskey room" resembling a buccaneer's jail, and another room reminiscent of a high-class Manhattan bar.

ldsenstræti 2

25

Q-Bar
Ingólfsstræti 3

28

Gaukurinn
Tryggvagata 22

Q-Bar has been building live music acts. The more established at Nasa as well international acts. Being concert venues in the something going on and the acts are as good they attract.

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.

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 Reykjavík. This is the place to enjoy live music from upcoming bands (at a high volume) and some of the cheapest beer prices in town.

r
egur 20a

26

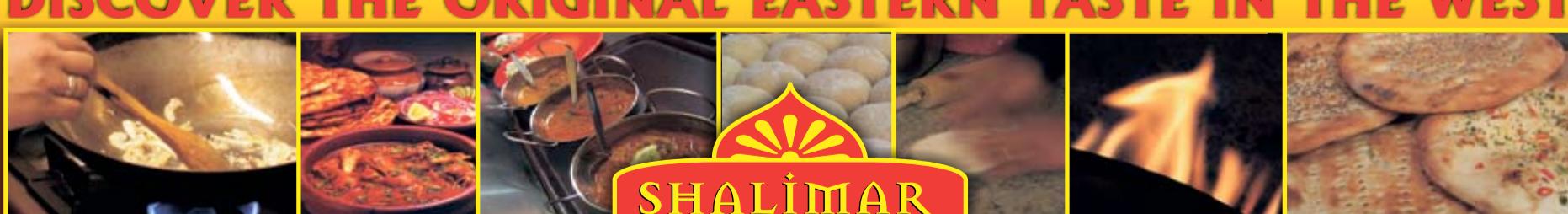
Glaumbar
Tryggvagata 12

Glaumbar follows in the American sports bar tradition as it boasts a humongous 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.

Party-types who dance to a mix of music where you counts on the spa-stylist Oliver is the or all the others who party, the good air-food and excellent during the day make a good choice for mid-

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.

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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.

SHOPPING

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.

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.

33 Underground Veltusund 1

Located in a basement by Ingólfstorg, 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.

34 Kirsüberjatréð Vesturgata 4

A co-op gallery/gift shop owned and operated by ten women artists and designers, known for their unusual choices of materials, Kirsüberjatréð 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.

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.

Sisters Bára and Hrafnhildur 'Raven' Hölmgeirs Þóttir 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.

36 Skifan Laugavegur 26

Skifan 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. Skifan operates three outlets in Reykjavík and the one on Laugavegur is open daily to 10 pm.

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 linens.

SHOPPING

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.

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 lóð Husið.



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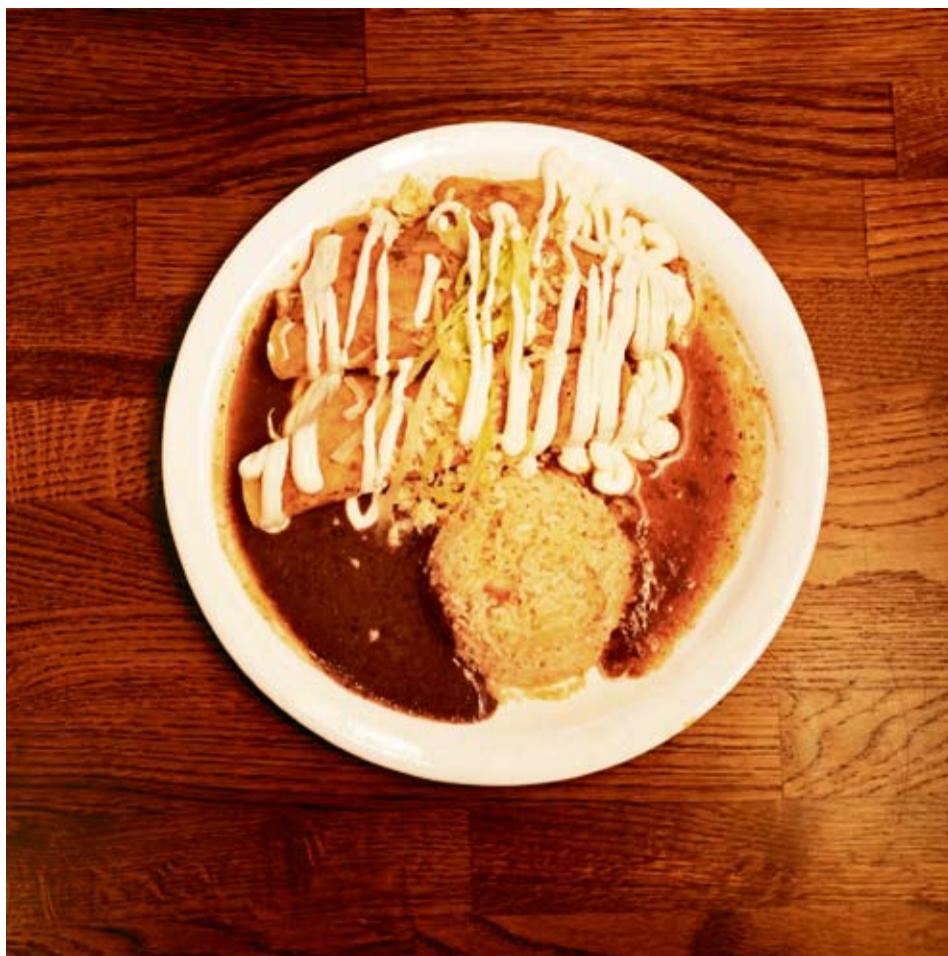
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VIDTIÐRNINA@SIMNET.IS



Photos by GAS

Santa María

Don't you just love it when you discover a new restaurant, one with fair prices and good food? The kind that leaves you feeling surprised and satisfied. Well that's how I'm feeling now upon my return home from Santa María.

This Mexican-style bistro, located at Laugavegur 22a, has just recently opened its doors. The aim, the owner told me, was to create an affordable place where one can find real Mexican food, the kind you come across in an ordinary Mexican household. And that's precisely what they've done.

First it should be noted that the prices are among the lowest I have encountered in a restaurant in Iceland. Not one course was priced above 1000 ISK. Now many of you are probably thinking that cheap prices equal poor food. Well a lot of times you would be right in that assumption, but not this time.

The sheer amount of authenticity that characterises the courses at Santa María is enough to make you wrong. The real taste of Mexico, the way it's meant to be, is what you'll get. You won't come across the watered down, American versions we're all so used to, and that is what separates Santa María from all the dull and often disappointing "Tex-Mex" places we have so many of in Reykjavík.

But on to the food. For starters, my date and I decided to share a course of Molletes, which are bread buns with Mexican beans, melted cheese and Pico de Gallo. It turned out to be a light, enjoyable and surprisingly hot course. As for the main courses, we had Enchiladas de Mole and Tacos Dorados de Pollo. Now for those of you who aren't fluent in Spanish, that translates to enchiladas with mole sauce and fried corn tortilla with chicken. If you haven't tried mole sauce before you should absolutely have the enchiladas. The sauce is one of Mexico's oldest secrets, made from six different kinds of chillies, various spices and chocolate. There's just nothing like it. Both of the dishes came with salad, onions, sour cream and cheese. And just in case you're wondering, they were both absolutely delicious.

Santa María is a wonderful addition to the restaurant flora and fauna in Reykjavík. The food is excellent and the service is warm and personal. Whatever the occasion, Santa María comes highly recommended.

Address:
Laugavegur 22a
101 Reykjavík
552 7775

Reviewed by
Sverrir Hjálmarsson

Sushibarinn

Since opening its doors, Sushibarinn has become the talk of the town among Reykjavík sushi-lovers, and for good reason as their rolls are among the best in the city.

The whole setting inside the small bar makes for a good fusion between oriental tradition and the somewhat more familiar settings of the West. All the staff wear traditional Japanese robes and the stylish and warm interior gives you a feeling of being somewhere else than in Reykjavík, Iceland. This feeling became even stronger when I was greeted by an English-speaking chef with a German accent. While we waited for our food I enjoyed taking in the scenery, especially the view coming from a TV-monitor in one of the corners. It was showing what I'm sure must be the Japanese version of Power Rangers, only this one is much better.

For starters we had miso soup and seaweed salad. I had never tried miso soup before and to be honest I didn't like it. But my companion for the evening assured me that it was very good and since she has more experience than me in this field I'm going to take her word for it. The seaweed salad on the other hand was deliciously fresh and exotic. Our next course was the "best for one" dish which consisted of twelve different kinds of sushi. We got Nigiri rolls, small rolls, inside-out rolls, battleship sushi and so on. The mix changes from day to day depending on the availability of fresh ingredients. Next the waiter brought us six pieces of salmon uramaki (inside-out rolls). As expected they were delicious. Last but not least we were served minke whale tatake which came with ginger, mustard and dipping sauce which had a liquorice taste to it. It was so good that I'm sure that if we gave it to Paul Watson he would abandon his ridiculous crusade and become a whale hunter.

It has always been a dream of mine to visit Japan, but until that happens I'm going to make the most of the little piece of Japan found at Laugavegur 2. I hope you will too.

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Reviewed by
Sverrir Hjálmarsson

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Grandmother's outfit Skátar on stage at Organ.



The Story of Grandmother's Records

Grandmother's Records is by all means an accidental gathering of like-minded folk, one that has been growing organically and joyfully since that first release.

OK. So you figure the name's supposed to invoke irony. I mean, the five releases that so far make up Grandmother's Records catalogue don't sound like anything any grandmothers I know would approve of. Noisy, skronky blasts of puerile satisfaction do not delight them much. So you don't know what they're about, and you see their album covers, you hear their records and you stumble into their concerts at well past midnight; these are smart, hip young(-ish) kids in shiny pants that don't seem take themselves or anything else seriously. So of course the name is an ironic gesture. "Ha ha ha, delightfully noisy records for grandmothers!" But therein lies a conflict, because Markús Bjarnason, singer and keyboard player of staple Grandmother's acts Skátar and Sofandi and apparent ideologue-slash-creator of the concept underlying the whole Grandmother's Records business, comes across as an urgently honest young man. Whether in conversation or in concert, he feels like he is constantly trying to bare his soul to you, as if he's had some shocking revelation that the whole world needs to hear, and he intends to make it listen by any means necessary. He also has a surreal sense of humour, which colours the Grandmother collective's output and activities considerably. In a red-eyed five a.m. e-mail, he explains to me what the Grandmother's Records moniker means, and why: "The last track of Anguma, Sofandi's first record [and the label's first release] has lyrics about the period in life where all your

drawers and cupboards are filled with crap, when the TV only has eight channels and you want to watch the ninth. And how good it feels to visit your grandmother at a time like that, and have a chat with her. And how Everything (sic) becomes OK after a chat like that. And when we needed a name for the label, we immediately thought of Grandmother's Records." So, it turns out that it isn't ironic. Not really. Grandmother's Records is by all means an accidental gathering of like-minded folk, one that has been growing organically and joyfully since that first release. Says Markús: "When we, the members of Sofandi, started making our record, we knew we would have to pay for it out of our own pockets. We fully realised that our music wasn't going to appeal to most people. We had competed in the Battle of the Bands and listed our category as Baroque music, which metamorphosed into "Bar rock" in the newspapers. We lost the contest, and nearly got kicked out of it for acting "weird" backstage. So we knew, and we recorded that album with a passion and released it ourselves, on our own label. Our friend Stína did the cover, and our friend Krissi did the layout. This is the way we have worked since. "When our friends in Graveslime wanted to release their record, it was self evident that they should do it on Grandmother's. Because it was never anything but a name, an umbrella over a group of friends that liked hanging out in rehearsal studios and attempting to make music. And so they did it all themselves, and we

helped where help was needed. Which is what this entity has evolved into, and perhaps always was, a co-dependent mutual self-help organization. You do things yourself, and if you want our help and to learn from our experiences, you can come to us."

And those friends are having a party tonight (given that you read this on this issue's street date of 05.09.2008) where they will celebrate the fact that their catalogue is now available on-line via Grapewire.net. And everyone's invited. The party will feature some schizophrenic performances and a DJ set by Iceland's premier noise artist, which says a lot about the collective which is releasing its sixth long-player shortly, a début by the mighty RETRON.

And if you read this in time, you should pay them a visit. For your début might be the next one on the label. They really want everyone to join.

Grandmother's catalogue:

Sofandi – Anguma (2001)
Sofandi – Ugly Demos (2001 – originally released by Thule Musik)
Graveslime – Roughness and Toughness (2003)
Skátar – Heimsfriður í Chile (2004)
Skátar – Ghost of the Bollocks to Come (2007)
RETRON – TBA (2008)

By Haukur Magnason

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Experimental Museum

The annual Reykjavík Arts Festival is just behind the corner and as usual, the Reykjavík Art Museum will present a packed programme for the occasion. One of the festival's highlights is the Experiment Marathon Reykjavík, an exhibition and program of various events, organised by the Reykjavík Art Museum and the Serpentine Gallery in London. On Friday, May 16, the museum at Hafnarhús will transform into a laboratory for the next three months where over forty leading local and international artists, architects, film-makers and scientists will create an environment of invention through a series of installations, screenings, performances and experimental films.

The Marathon is curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Director of International Projects and Co-Director of Exhibitions and Programmes for the Serpentine Gallery in London; in collaboration with artist Ólafur Elíasson. They've done everything in their power to promote art and science to the public in a diverse and entertaining way with numerous intriguing experiments, exhibitions, performances, workshops and panel discussions exploring the connection between art and science. To enrich the whole experience, the audience is supposed to take part in the events.

The focus of the project is experimentation in all its forms and numerous international artists and scientist will do curious exhibitions and experiments. To name just a few, a project organised by Mexican artist Pedro Ryes, 'Ideas

for Iraq', focuses on the state of the war in Iraq where participants will be able to illustrate their strategies towards possible solutions for the war. Scientist and hydrogen expert, Þorsteinn Ingólfsson, will do the performance 'The Taming of the Proton' while artist Marina Abramovic will take the audience on a soul exploration journey in an experiment with German psychosexual therapist Dr. Ruth and Hans Ulrich Obrist. The list also includes electronic musician and record producer Brian Eno, who will presents sound installations, Hungarian artist Attila Csörgő and Luc Steels, a professor of Artificial Intelligence at the University of Brussels.

Nature as a Phenomenon

Interesting exhibitions will also open at Reykjavík Art Museum's second largest venue, Kjarvalsstaðir, during the Art Festival. In the collaborative exhibition 'Dreams of the Sublime and Nowhere', curator Æsa Sigurjónsdóttir brings together a group of Icelandic artists of different backgrounds and generations (Ragnar Kjartansson, Icelandic Love Corporation, Ólafur Elíasson and Spessi, among others) to explore the place of the "sublime" in Icelandic visual arts. Different ideas of nature and natural phenomena in photographic and video art will be presented. The exhibition features early twentieth-century black-and-white landscape photographs to multi-media installations with the aim to "showcases diverse visions and interpretations of the "sublime" and "nowhere",

through classical, melancholic, ironic, or radically ecological images".

As an opposition to Sigurjónsdóttir's exhibition, American landscape architect and visual artist Martha Schwartz will display an aluminium-installation in the courtyard of Kjarvalsstaðir. Her installation is titled 'I Hate Nature' and "alludes both to the artist's experience of nature as explored in the exhibition Dreams of the Sublime and Nowhere and to the debate over environmental protection versus exploitation"

And there is more. The North Gallery of Kjarvalsstaðir, will see an exhibition for the whole family, related to the nature theme of the aforementioned exhibitions. Entitled 'Where Am I?' children and adults will be able to contemplate their planet, their country, and the landmarks of their environment through various games and puzzles.

All these exhibitions will stay open through the summer and entrance is always free. For more info visit www.listasafnreykjavikur.is

The focus of the project is experimentation in all its forms and numerous international artists and scientist will do curious exhibitions and experiments.



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Interpreting the Icelandic Psyche

"I was attracted to Iceland because of its isolation and its supposed strong conditions. I was projecting in my mind a lot of images, feelings and intuitions, wrong or right. So my project in Iceland was to produce portraits of young people with different backgrounds, paraphrasing the "Portrait of a young man/woman.""

"My pictures are silent descriptions, staging melancholy, fragility and nobleness of the ordinary life," says French photographer Thomas Humery. On May 16, he will open his first solo exhibition in Iceland at the National Museum. Entitled 'In the Mist', the exhibition features landscape photos and portraits, documenting young Icelanders and their surroundings.

Humery, who has exhibited around Europe and contributed to various magazines and newspapers for the past decade, including Libération, L'Officiel Voyage, Monocle and Glamour, has worked on the Icelandic photo series for approximately nine months. He visited Iceland five times during that period and got locals to pose for a series that depict young people in their own daily environment. Humery says that he is mostly influenced by 19th century photography, portraitists Ingres and Verspronck and painters Van der Weyden and Bronzino. In his portraits, he works with simple settings and lets the expressions on his subjects' faces reveal their thoughts and feelings. To tell a story of the young people's lives he mixes the portraits with family-houses, public buildings and outdoor-areas.

Humery's project began in 2005 when he took part in a residence program in Finland. "I went during the winter and was interested to take pictures of young people during that tough period of the

year. Nevertheless, this documentary aspect wasn't enough. I thought that I should put something more in my pictures, something more ambiguous and in a way out of time. I started to compose my portraits like old paintings from the Dutch period with this strict protestant aspect. From that point, I was interested to continue this approach between documents and references in another Nordic context and in a larger scale," he explains.

Asked why he chose Iceland for his next project, Humery says: "From France, Iceland is a bit mysterious and what is mysterious is of course very attractive. But more seriously, besides the idea of young people in the stiffness, where they are patient during the long winter, turned to their inner world and rebirth during a fleeting summer, I was seduced by the fact that the people are very connected to each other and very social. It was precious for me to meet all these different people and to be able to produce a large gallery of portraits."

He continues: "I was attracted to Iceland because of its isolation and its supposed strong conditions. I was projecting in my mind a lot of images, feelings and intuitions, wrong or right. So my project in Iceland was to produce portraits of young people with different backgrounds, paraphrasing the "Portrait of a young man/woman" that we find as a topic in the history of painting. I have added

with the same approach some landscapes and views more or less connected to the young people's occupations or hang-around places. At the end, my project is more a personal interpretation of the Icelandic psyche than a geographic or sociologic study," Humery concludes.

The exhibition will be open from May 16 until mid September.

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By Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

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Reinventing Reykjavík

On Saturday May 10, the second half of a two-day international conference 'Reinventing Harbour Cities – Urban Planning and Art in Public Space' takes place at the Nordic House. Organised by CIA.IS (Centre for Icelandic Art) in cooperation with the Iceland Academy of the Arts and the Nordic House, the aim is to open public discussion on urban planning. The future of Reykjavík as a modern harbour city will be debated and the role that artists and designers can play in urban development discussed.

The conference brings together groups with interest in Reykjavík's development, emphasizing that the city's reconstruction is a shared responsibility of policymakers, corporations, urban planners, artists, and individuals. The goal is to try to find common interests between people working in the private and public sector as well as local residents, artists and architects and to offer a forum for opinion making. Speakers will come from across the globe and include Jürgen Bruns-Berentelg, CEO of HafenCity Hamburg; Vito Acconci, an architect and designer from New York; and FREEE, an art collective from London. The organisers, Christian Schoen and Shauna Laurel Jones from CIA, stress that all these different aspects are important and will hopefully lead to creative discussions that can help improve the city.

Creating a New Image

"I think it is necessary to bring in foreign knowledge and foreign expertise, look at foreign examples and different approaches," says Christian Schoen, director of CIA. He sees a growing interest in the field of urban planning and names the discussion on the future of Vatnsmýrin area (where Reykjavík's domestic airport is located) as an example. He's satisfied with the international planning competition for the area and how the proposals were introduced to the public, although all future development plans are still very uncertain, due to political disputes. He emphasizes that the public should be involved and have a say in how the city develops: "Public space is always a political matter, because it belongs to everybody and everybody should know about what's going on. We're talking about our future and our kids' future. It is a long process and we should really spend good portion of time on discussing how to develop our city."

In recent decades Reykjavík has seen great economic growth and the cityscape has rapidly changed. Introduction and consultation with locals though is often missing. "To have a public discussion is the first step. That means that everyone involved in the city-making process has to take the public's opinions into consideration. That's

the aim of this conference. That's why we invited professionals from different groups, like creative people working for landscape architects and architects of course

As the city expands, mistakes have been made and what the city seems to need the most today is a clear development policy. Empty buildings on Laugavegur and Hverfisgata are depressing symbols of how the policy-making is stuck between the private and public sector without any clear solution of how the centre should develop. Schoen points out that what is obviously lacking is a sustainable master plan for the future. "We're talking about identity and city planning, not short-term interests of investors. The Concert and Conference Centre down by the harbour is in my view a fantastic landmark-creating opportunity, but that is not enough. It is important to think of the whole structure and that, of course, is of public interest", he adds and continues: "We need to ask ourselves: How do we see the future of the city in say 2050? What do we want to create? What kind of image? Today, I don't see the answers."

www.cia.is/news/conference.htm

"Public space is always a political matter, because it belongs to everybody and everybody should know about what's going on. We're talking about our future and our kids' future. It is a long process and we should really spend good portion of time on discussing how to develop our city."

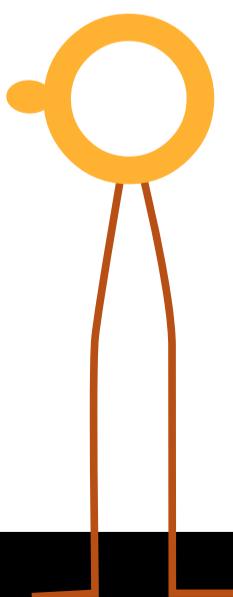
Breakfast special



Cappuccino + bagel + joghurt = Kr. 690

roma

Rauðarárstígur 8



benni hemm hemm & ungfónía

ásamt góðum gestum

iðnó 19. júní

kl. 19 - sitjandi tónleikar - miðaverð: 3.000
kl. 22 - standandi tónleikar - miðaverð 2.000

miðasala fer fram á midi.is og í verlsunum skífunnar og bt á landsbyggðinni