

THE **G**

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REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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Art: Artists lend to the relief effort

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+ GIG GUIDE × CITYMAP × TRAVEL IDEAS × FOOD

JFDR

Bríet

THE 2021

REYKJA

GRAPE

MUSIC

VIK

VINE

AWARDS



COVER PHOTO:

Briet & JFDR, the winners of the Artist of the Year, Album of the Year, and Song of the Year awards at the 2020 Grapevine Music Awards.

Photo by Art Bicnick

First



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EDITORIAL

Strong Year In Music



If you feel down because of the pandemic, the boring storms and the strong winds beating on you all the goddamn time,

don't despair: Reykjavík Grapevine's Music Awards are out! We got an incredible panel to find out who were the best musicians of the dreadful pandemic year, and it turns out that we had some seriously good music this year. We have a new star rising as the artist of the year, Briet, who came literally like a storm to the Icelandic scene. Her album, Kveðja, Briet (Best regards, Briet) was one of the strongest debuts we have seen for years in Iceland. On top of that, she sang straight into the nation's soul which couldn't get enough of her best song of the year, Rólegur Kúreki (Easy now, cowboy), which is not something many new artists manage to do.

An old friend of Reykjavík Grapevine, JFDR, showed the nation, once again, that she is one of Iceland's top artists, and won the best album of the year award for her ethereal, sincere EP, Dream On. Both of these women have in common the courage to bare their soul, something that the Icelandic nation did not only appreciate, but

needed in the odd time of social restrictions and distance from other people.

The last year in music was good, but it was a seriously hard year for artists at the same time. Many have lost their living because of the strict social gathering rules while others used the time to record new music. Yet musicians did not forget their most vulnerable brothers and sisters: Frosti Jón Runólfsson made an incredible video of Jónsi's song, Sumarið sem aldrei kom (The summer that never came), where Frosti followed houseless people and their hard days in his shocking video, creating a true momentum in Iceland when the video came out. We also have unique artists, like Hekla, who is one artist you should have heard. Her usage of the Theramin and her classical approach to it shows us that creativity in Icelandic music is bustling. The same goes with the odd couple in Holdgervlar, the one you should be watching. All in all, this year in Icelandic music was much stronger than anyone anticipated. So go to your streaming platform, or better, buy the albums you like, because, well, Icelandic artists are struggling like so many of us. ♡

Valur Grettisson
Editor-in-chief



Megan Massey is an award-winning QWOC poet from Bedford, England. She writes about women, magic, and the Indian diaspora. She recently graduated from the University of London with a BA in Creative Writing. She is currently in law school.



Hannah Jane Cohen is based out of Iceland by way of New York. She's known for her love of Willa Ford, David Foster Wallace, and other such "intellectuals." Her visionary work is known for expanding the definitions of emotion, introspection, and above all else, taste. Hannah is also the current Drag King of Iceland, HANS.



Polly is a hard-working journalist by day and an enthusiastic ball-catcher by night. A four-year-old dachshund mix with an IQ of a five-year-old human, Polly has been the official Chief Of Morale at the Grapevine for eight months and is a regular contributor to the Grapevine Newscast on YouTube. Woof.



Shruthi Basappa is one of Iceland's most knowledgeable foodies. She's covered local restaurants for years and has also been involved in various food competitions in Iceland, such as Food & Fun and more. By day, she works as an architect at Sei Studio.



Sveinbjörn Pálsson is our Art Director. He's responsible for the design of the magazine and the cover photography. When he's not working here, he DJs as Terrordisco, hosts the Funkþátturinn radio show, or sits at a table in a Laugardalur café, drinking copious amounts of coffee and thinking about fonts.



Art Bicnick is an international man of mystery. He moves like a shadow through the subcultures and soirees of Reykjavík, never still, often ghosting the scene in a puff of blue smoke—the exhaust fumes of the elusive, well-travelled Bicnick Mini.



Andie Sophia Fontaine has lived in Iceland since 1999 and has been reporting since 2003. They were the first foreign-born member of the Icelandic Parliament, an experience they recommend for anyone who wants to experience a workplace where colleagues work tirelessly to undermine each other.



Jess Distill is a musician, artist and wannabe writer from St. Albans, England. As a long time lover of Iceland, and recent copywriting diploma graduate, Jess came to the Grapevine to expand her writing portfolio whilst seeing if she could hack it as an Icelandic resident.



Valur Grettisson is an award-winning journalist, author and playwright. He has been writing for Icelandic media since 2005. He was also a theatre critic and one of the hosts of the cultural program, 'Djöflaeyjan' at RÚV. Valur is not to be confused with the dreadful football club that bears the same name.

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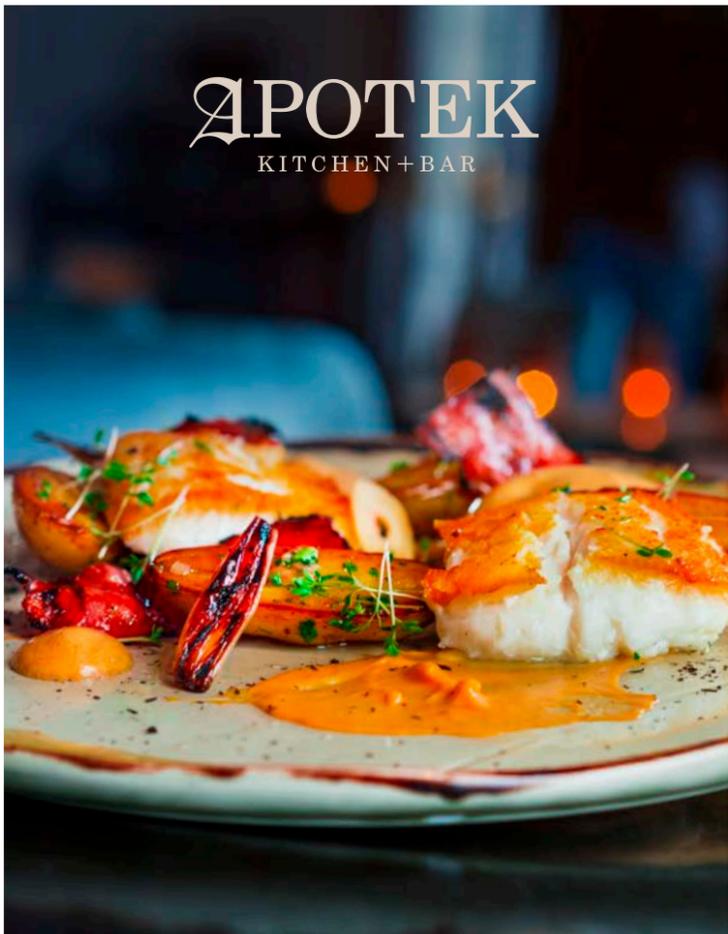


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Photo from Wikimedia Commons

What Are Icelanders Talking About?

The topics that are getting people banned from the comments

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine**

NEWS Good news and bad news: the good news is, for a few days we had a respite from the endless stream of coronavirus-related news. The bad news is, it was because of the white supremacist **insurrection at the US Capitol** that dominated headlines worldwide. Numerous Icelandic pundits weighed in on the events, with Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir calling the riots “an attack on democracy” and political scientist Silja Bára Ómarsdóttir astutely pointing out that they were a symptom of the divisiveness in the United States, which she predicts is not going away any time soon.

Other Icelanders were concerned about a **Trump supporter at a Sacramento protest carrying the Icelandic flag**, with speculation swirling about whether or not this person is Icelandic. The US embassy has, at the time of this writing, been completely silent on the matter. Reporters would later learn this was because they had been ordered to refer all press inquiries to a tweet by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo or an overseas infodesk.

Most entertaining of all has been **Icelandic conservatives likening the Capitol riots to the 2008-2009 Pots and Pans Protests**.

Yes, a bunch of far-right insurgents storming the legislature with the intent to kidnap and kill is just like Icelanders of all stripes peacefully demonstrating for the government to resign in the wake of total financial collapse—you literally can't tell them apart!

Don't worry, though; **the coronavirus is back in the headlines**—and most of the news has been quite positive. The rollout of the Pfizer vaccine has been going well and the first shipment of Moderna vaccine arrived on January 12th,

with a deal with AstraZeneca expected to be finalised by the end of the month. Health authorities have been prioritising vaccinating the elderly and frontline workers, but it appears as though the vaccine should reach nearly everyone by some time this summer. We say “almost everyone,” because there is still a very small minority of people who have no interest in getting vaccinated.

Lastly, **Minister of Justice Áslaug Arna Sigurbjörnsdóttir has been asking for public feedback** on a special page of her official website. There, people can give a smiley face, a thumbs up, a thumbs down or an angry face in response to her job performance. Those who react positively are thanked, those who react negatively are asked to explain what she can do better. She is, as far as we can tell, the first and only government minister in Iceland to try this. 🍷



Áslaug Arna Sigurbjörnsdóttir. Photo by Art Bicnick



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Trans Iceland objects to the high fee

Nonbinary People Officially Recognised, For A Price

MPs question the wisdom of the move

NEWS

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine**

Photo: **Alisa Kalyanova**

About a year and a half after Iceland's gender determination law established that people must be allowed to register their gender as nonbinary, the National Registry has finally made that option available.

The law pertains not only to private companies, but also to government

offices that issue official documents, such as passports and other IDs. This includes having passports and other such public documents offering X, in addition to M and F, and where applicable. Other institutions are reminded to start offering male, female, nonbinary, other and the option to decline to

answer.

But the cost matters

However, the cost of this registration, 9,000 ISK, is being criticised by Trans Iceland as prohibitively too high, in a statement posted to Facebook.

"It is unacceptable that trans people need to pay for such corrections and it is an important matter of justice that trans people have unhindered access to such changes," the statement reads in part.

Trans Iceland points out that the fee can hit trans people especially hard as, for one, "trans people are more likely to have difficulties finding work, housing and attending school due to discrimination and prejudice." In addition, there is the cost of having to completely renew all of their legal ID documents, such as passports and driver's licenses. On top of this, there are the costs trans people incur as a part of their transition, such as hormone replacement therapy and other processes that are not wholly covered by health insurance.

The fund begins

In an update posted by Trans Iceland, the National Registry replied saying they understand that the cost has been criticised as high, but that the money goes to the government treasury; not to the Registry. As such, the Registry has no power to eliminate the cost. Trans Iceland is now setting up a special fund for trans people who require financial assistance to register their proper name and gender marker. They are also working to update existing laws to make matters easier. ♡

LOST IN GOOGLE TRANSLATION

Rise Of The Machines

"Independents want to equate the appliance revolution with the attack on the US Congress" - **Visir.is**

In a news story reporting on various Icelandic conservatives comparing the failed insurrection at the US Capitol

on January 6th to Iceland's mass protests of 2008-2009, the Google translation of "Sjálfstæðismenn vilja leggja búsá-haldabyltingu og árasina á þinghúsið í Bandaríkjunum að jöfnu" becomes "Independents want to equate the ap-

pliance revolution with the attack on the US Congress." For the record, "Búsá-haldabyltingin" is more commonly translated to the "Pots and Pans Revolution." Calling it "the appliance revolution," while a direct translation,

is more evocative of some kind of post-apocalyptic uprising of the toasters, air fryers and coffee makers that we have come to depend on for our survival. Which is admittedly pretty cool.

Also, these critics are most certainly not "independents," as most people would understand it. Whereas a political independent is more often than not a closet conservative who fancies themselves a free-thinking

Independents want to equate the appliance revolution with the attack on the US Congress

Jakob Bjarnar writes © January 11, 2021 1:51 PM



iconoclast (with the notable exception of Bernie Sanders), in this Google translation, "Independents" is a direct translation of the name of Iceland's largest

conservative party, Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn, literally "the Independence Party."

So if you read the Google translation of this news story and didn't

know better: Iceland has yet to experience the robot wars. But our time will come. **ASF** ♡

ASK AN
Ant Expert
Q: Have Ants Colonised Iceland?



While Iceland has mercifully few insects, ants are among them. While you might think they are an innocuous insect, these ferocious creatures are known for their vicious inter-species battle—in fact some species have almost spread all over the world. So, have ants colonised Iceland, and if so, how many species are there? **Marco Mancini**, who researches ants in Iceland with his partner **Andreas Guðmundsson** and curates a webpage about it, broke it down for us.

"Since the beginning of our research in mid-2019, we have found six different ant species— Roger's ant, black garden ant, Pharaoh ant and ghost ant, while the last two type of ants, at present, have only been identified at the genus level—Pheidole sp. and Crematogaster sp. Ants are among the most widespread invasive species worldwide. The first record of ants found in Reykjavik dates back to 1974 and, since then, more than 500 new cases of Hypoponera punctatissima (Roger's Ant) colonies have been officially recorded by Náttúrufræðistofnun Islands.

"At present, more than 30 years after their study, we can say that a massive supercolony of H. punctatissima probably lives around the pipes of the sewers and the hot water systems that run underground Reykjavik and, also, it is practically impossible to exterminate colonies since the location of the nests is always nearly inaccessible.

"Almost the entire Icelandic fauna had to colonize the island after the last glacial period. The location of the island in the middle of the North Atlantic does not make it particularly conducive for colonization (Ministry for the Environment & The Icelandic Institute of Natural History, 2001). Just over 1,000 years ago, human colonization opened the opportunity for animals to settle on the island and increased travel and imports in the last 50 years have opened the floodgates for alien species to settle in Iceland." ♡

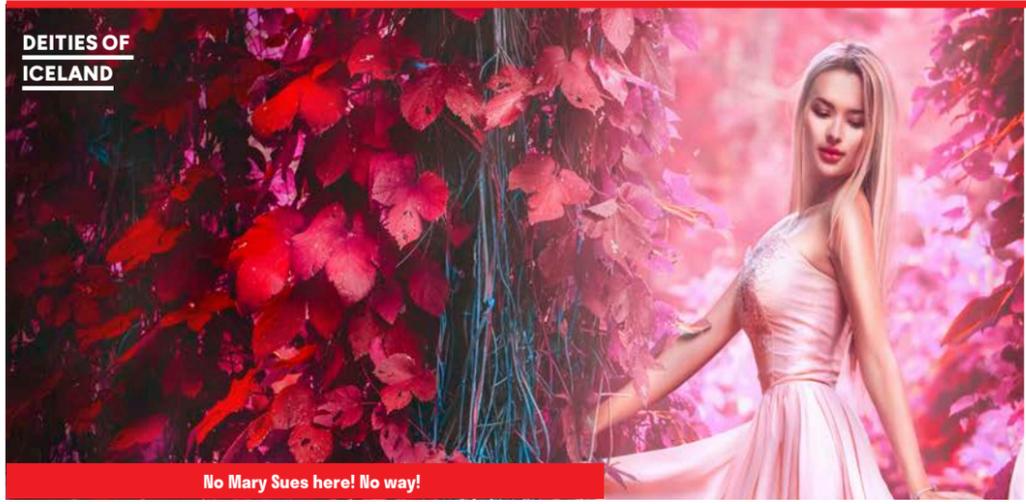
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DEITIES OF ICELAND

No Mary Sues here! No way!

Sif

A totally fully-fledged character!

Words: The Goddess Sif, like most women in history, is primarily defined by her appearance and relationship to men. The wife of Thor and mother of Þrúðr, Sif is, um, well, she's, er, she's a great, like...well...uh...

Actually, you know what? Never mind. Skip this whole \$%#Σ€~≠ article.

Superpowers: Beautiful blonde hair. A great wife.

Weaknesses: Beautiful blonde hair. A great wife.

Modern Analogue: A great wife with... beautiful blonde hair.

Why? Because according to practically every online and literary source about Sif, there's only two notable things about the immortal deity. Despite being an invincible, all-knowing, supremely powerful being, apparently the bitch only has two characteristics worth documenting. And what are they? Hold your horses, mister! I'm going to attempt to spin them into a 500-word article, so strap on in.

Beautiful blonde hair

Yup, you guessed it. The number one

thing you need to know about Sif is that she has beautiful blonde hair. It's pretty much all anyone talks about actually. Of course, some refer to it as "golden locks" or "a mane the shining colour of wheat" but really, when you boil it down, it's just beautiful blonde hair. She's a beautiful blonde-haired woman much like, oh, I don't know, January Jones. She's basically just January Jones with omnipotent powers and a way lamer name.

Some online bloggers try to argue that her golden hair represented wheat and then do some bizarre mental gymnastics to claim she was a fully-fledged character who was massively important despite rarely being mentioned (if at all). Some even go so far as to call her a feminist icon, which I totally agree with, as I'm so tired of people talking about my personality and not just reducing me to my sexy hair colour, which is actually a beautiful raven black. I'm not just a brain, mister! I have a body, too!

What I'm trying to say is that beautiful wives of famous men do not get their fair share of objectifying media cover-

age, so I'm happy to see a revolutionary character like Sif in the Eddas, who gets to be reduced to her dead cells rather than her live ones. Werk sis! Yaaas!

But that's enough of that,. Let's get onto Sif's second trait—it might shock you.

A great wife

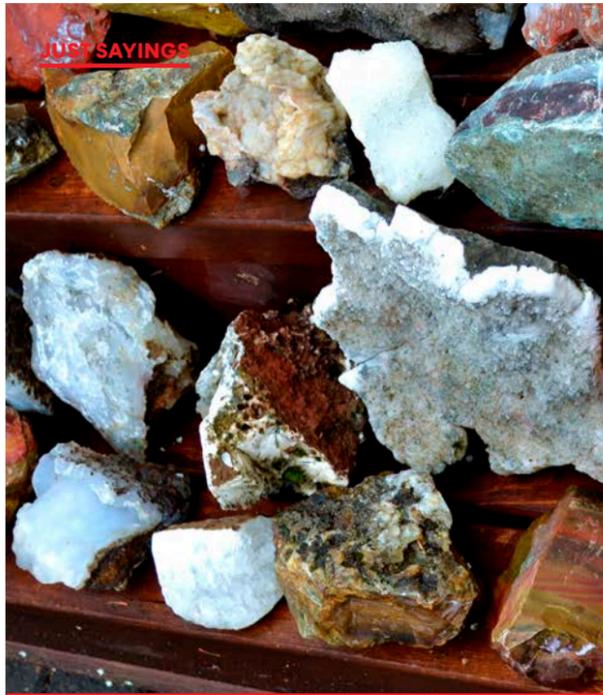
Boom! I tricked you! I actually said Sif's second important characteristic in the first paragraph and it was so boring that I'm sure you thought, "There has to be more to her character than this!" Nope!

Yes, Sif was the wife of Thor, who you might know for his passions, hobbies, flaws, strengths, multiple plot-lines, familial trauma, illegitimate children and many other things that culminate in a well-rounded character and lends itself well to franchise wvork. The two have one child together named Þrúðr, who is very much like her mother, in that all we know about her is that she has a fiancée. Unfortunately, it's a dwarf who later gets turned to stone.

That said, Sif does have one moment in the sun. In the Prose Edda, there's this one moment where Loki does this sweet prank and cuts off Sif's hair, which we can only assume leaves her entirely devoid of half her life-force.

But in the end, it's no big deal, because Loki just goes to the dwarves Brokk and Sindri and then performs what might be the first hair transplant on Sif and suddenly she has new locks that are made of actual, literal, gold. So really, in the end, Sif just rises stronger than ever.

So all hail Sif, our beautiful blonde wife. She's actually a big inspiration to me, as I once bleached my hair too and hope to get married one day. Feminist icon, right? ♡



JUST SAYINGS

[Insert really good joke about getting stoned]

„Dropinn holar harðan stein“

This saying is one of my all-time favourites and is still widely used today. Translated, "Dropinn holar harðan stein" literally means: "Drops of water will make a hole in the stone." As it goes, most people have their own personal interpretation of this idiom, but the basic meaning is that with time, even a small, concerted action will have an effect. Basically, persistence is key, and if you needed an illustration of

this saying, just watch 'The Shawshank Redemption.' Sorry for the spoiler, people who haven't watched films since 1994. Incidentally, torturers through the ages have also understood this saying and have used it to inflict pain on their victims by letting a drop of water drip on the same place on their forehead until they feel like someone is hitting them with a hammer. So, yeah, it's also that. VG ♡

GRAPEVINE PLAYLIST



Bashar Murad - MASKHARA

Bashar Murad—you might know from his collaborations with Hatari and appearance at Airwaves 2019—is here to sway away the bullshit. This track, which feels super groovy until you see the lyrics, invites you into Bashar's soul as a young queer man in occupied Palestine, navigating mental health, the lethargic chaos, and the overwhelming hopelessness of living in such a situation. That said, there's a somewhat sanguine vibe to the whole thing, which is fully actualised in the video that includes some stellar greenscreen work by Grapevine Award Winners Rough Cult. In particular, there's a rather moving shot of Bashar grooving in front of Israel's famed "security fence" while it tumbles down. HJC



Sycamore Tree - Western Sessions

Look, I'm a simple girl. Put Águsta Eva in a cowboy hat and I'm there. In fact, we're all there. Please donate to our crowdfunding campaign to get Sycamore Tree to play at the upcoming Grapevine sveitaball. Low key though, I enjoy this new EP. It's got all you need from country style music—dramatic lyrics about loss and homecoming, that thing they do where they raise the note at the end of the note and even a harmonica!! Yee-haw Gústa!!! HJC



Oscar Leone - Aloha "Aloha" is solid indie-country with a hint of Britpop—kind of like if Arcade Fire did an Oasis cover. Still Oscar manages to take it further with his own chilled, characteristic charm, serving up a warm and friendly ambience that we are grateful for in the midst of this pandemic. VG



LaCrystallized - Bomarz & GDRN

If you feel like you need more sugar in your life but you're way into your keto diet, "Crystallized" is the remedy. A solid pop track with Iceland's biggest pop star GDRN singing and promising producer Bomarz, this song is bound to be played every hour on FM957 and some dramatic teens will definitely find meaning in the text. That's a good thing, if you weren't sure. VG



Birnir & Páll Óskar - Spurningar

Asking the big questions aren't you? A slow-burn melancholic dance song about love. Great song to cry in the shower to without arousing suspicion. HJC

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The High Cost Of Living

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine** Photos: **Art Bicnick & Timothée Lambrecq**

Renting and being foreign in Reykjavík

Upon first moving to Iceland, the primary factor that must be arranged is a place to live; if one is from outside the European Economic Area, in most cases this has to be established before even setting foot in the country. For immigrants who are moving to Iceland on their own or with their family, this will invariably mean renting a room or apartment

Reykjavík's rental market is daunting at best. Demand for affordable housing has increased while the supply has not. As a result, the cost of renting has been climbing steadily. But cost and availability are not the only challenges that immigrants hoping to rent in Iceland must face. A lack of knowledge about housing rights, a financial catch-22 created by the banks that locks the working poor (who are more often than not immigrants) and single parents out of housing loans and a reluctance by national and municipal actors to take a more active role in creating more affordable housing can keep many trapped in what is effectively a permanent underclass with potentially deadly consequences.

It does not have to be this way and authorities can take material steps to alleviate the situation—but they are not. In this article, we examine exactly what challenges await new arrivals to Reykjavík seeking an affordable place to live.

Who is the market?

One of the most expedient ways to search for a place to rent in Reykjavík is in any one of the Facebook groups dedicated to advertising rooms and apartments for rent. These groups, however, by and large favour property owners over tenants through an administrative double standard.

First off, many of the spaces for rent being advertised do not openly disclose what the actual rent and insurance deposit amounts are. Even when they



are, feedback from prospective tenants is often shut down with the admonishment from group admins that if someone has objections with the listing, they can simply keep scrolling. At the same time, a common response to “the asking price is too high for this kind of property” is that the “market will decide” how much rent any given property can demand—raising questions about how what is considered fair rent can be determined without renter feedback.

There is a fallacy hidden in this notion that renters on the open market decide how high the rents can go. Unlike a manufacturer of goods, a property owner is not mass producing apartments on an open market competing with other mass producers; most times they are offering a single space. The property owner, in a position where demand vastly exceeds supply, is also not trying to appeal to hundreds or thousands of customers to buy enough of their products to keep their business afloat. A property owner has a single unit and only needs one person to agree to the price. According to a Zenter poll conducted for Íbúðalánasjóður in 2018, the largest proportion of renters (35.1%) are renting from a single property owner; only 15.7% rent from an established rental company. This same poll showed that rental prices from individual property owners also tend to be much higher than those from other sources. It also bears mentioning that while a manufacturer sells a single unit once, a tenant buys a property owner’s “prod-

uct” over and over, month after month, with the price almost always rising. The “market” is clearly not deciding how much can be charged for any given property; the person capable of paying the most for the least on offer decides.

When rental properties can advertise without disclosing the price, renters cannot provide public feedback on the asking price, so when the single highest bidder—not prospective renters as a whole—determine what the highest rent can be, it stacks the deck against other prospective renters. Further muddying the waters is that available data on how much rent in Reykjavik has grown over the years—and it has nearly doubled since 2011—is based solely on properties that have registered with the district commissioner. Many renters, immigrants especially, live in places that are not registered, sometimes without even a valid contract. With that being the case, the real average cost of rent of Reykjavik is hard to determine, as a wide swath of properties being rented are not being factored into the total.

Why not just buy an apartment?

Icelandic culture leans heavily towards buying properties rather than renting them, so often times people are advised to buy apartments as a solution for getting out of the cycle of renting.

However, this is not exactly an option for people who have newly arrived in the country. Furthermore, there is a vicious circle that arises for immigrants, who are more often than not minimum wage earners.

As rent in Reykjavik can be at least 50% of a person’s salary—and for minimum wage workers, even more—it is all too easy to fall behind on paying bills. Doing so, however, puts the debtor on a credit black list, which then automatically disqualifies them from being able to take out a loan to buy an apartment.

Laufey LINDAL Ólafsdóttir, who is on the board of social housing for the city, Félagsbústaðir, and lives in social housing herself, succinctly answered the question of why more people don’t simply buy apartments.

“Because they’re not allowed to,” she told us. “They don’t get the loans that they need. There’s no programme for social lending in this country.” You cannot qualify for loans if you’re on the black list for not paying bills, which is more likely to happen if you’re making minimum wage. And you’re more likely to be a minimum wage worker if you’re an immigrant. “This puts you on the rent market. As usual, being poor is more expensive than having money. This is why the poor keep being poor. It’s the poverty trap.”

Renting from your boss

One experience unique to immigrants to Iceland is the prospect of renting housing being provided by your employer. The quality of these places can vary, but they have far too often come up in the news for being overpriced and in poor condition. One prime example was in an investigative news story by Kveikur concerning largely Romanian workers. Up to ten workers at a time shared a single room, with each one of them paying 50,000 ISK per month for this rudimentary shelter. Furthermore, they typically worked 220 hours per month, six days a week, for salaries that were far below the minimum wage. One of the workers interviewed said that after rental deductions and other charges he was paid a paltry 38,000 ISK for two weeks of work.

But the most notorious example is Bræðraborgarstígur 1, which in June



Laufey Lindal Ólafsdóttir, Member of Félagsbústaðir

“If an Icelandic person is having certain problems [with the rental market], the problems are not going to be less for the immigrant.”

2020 was set ablaze by a tenant, killing three and leaving many more without a home. Apart from not even being registered as a residential property, making it illegal to rent the place out for people to live in, some 73 people were registered as living at the property, although the real number was likely close to a dozen. In 2015, Stundin interviewed a former resident of the house, who described the house as dilapidated, infected with mold and housing mostly foreign workers who paid as much as 90,000 ISK per month in rent for a small room, with no fire exit apart from the main entrance. In 2018, journalist Eiríkur Jónsson also reported on the unsanitary living conditions visible even from outside the house.

Sanna Magdalena Mörtudóttir, who is the Socialist Party representative for Reykjavik City Council, in fact cites company housing first amongst the challenges immigrants face on the rental market.

“Then you have to rely on your boss for both work and housing,” she points out. “I’ve seen cases where money for the housing is taken out of wages. Bosses may say ‘this is something they chose and are OK with’, but at the same time, if you’re put in that situation, if you quit your job, are you also going to lose your home? Should they not be separate? Even if it’s not illegal, it’s definitely unethical.”

Ignorance not just of the law but also of social norms contributes to this.

“People are coming to the country, maybe not knowing a lot about the country and think this is normal, maybe you don’t want to upset your boss,” she says. “You’re supposed to be paying people who work for you in money; not in something else. These two things need to be totally separated. It could be so dangerous, so many people living in one place. I think the city needs to take more action into this.”





Sanna Magdalena Mörtudóttir, Socialist Party City Councilperson

“The city and the national government has a lot of responsibility to socialise housing. It's a commodity now, but it shouldn't be.”

The AirBnb Effect

While the pandemic has effectively torpedoed the market for AirBnb properties this year, in normal situations these properties can have an outsized impact on the rental market.

As one example, the law caps the amount of time per year that a property owner can rent their property on AirBnb to 90 days. While this sounds reasonable enough, a side effect of this is that it has become increasingly difficult to find renewable, 12-month contracts. Before the pandemic, it was very common to see properties being offered for rent specifying “available until June”, which is typically the start of the tourist high season. This put renters in greater housing precarity; instead of being able to live in the same property, year by year, many renters face the prospect of having to find a new place to live at the start of each summer.

AirBnb had broader effects as well. Ólafur Heiðar Helgason from the Hous-

ing Financial Fund (HFF), found that AirBnb has contributed to apartment prices increasing by 5% to 9% from 2015 to 2017. Ólafur added that landlords can often make twice the amount on AirBnb that they would make renting their properties out to locals, undercutting incentives to provide housing for people who actually live here.

“The effect of AirBnb on the increase of property values are twofold,” a report from Arion Bank noted in 2017. “First of all, it leads to an increased expectation of profit for renting a room or apartment in that people are ready to pay a higher amount. Second of all, AirBnb reduces the supply in the apartment market. The first effect is difficult to quantify but carries with it the great increase of property values in downtown Reykjavík.”

And that's just largely counting the landlords who are abiding the law. 60% of landlords using AirBnb beyond the 90-day limit did not register their properties as a vacation rental, depriv-

ing Reykjavík of millions in revenue — all these factors combined, it can make renting out properties through AirBnb far more lucrative for local landlords than providing housing for the already-choking rental market.

Laufey notes that in areas where AirBnb is dominant, “I can safely say that there are not as many children in Austurbæjarskóli (a downtown elementary school) for example, because the families have moved away. A lot of families moved out of downtown during [the boom time of AirBnb] because there were so many problems around AirBnb properties, such as the noise and there being no neighbours; just people coming and going 24 hours a day.”

Social housing

Social housing is a very common phenomenon across Europe, but Iceland is exceptional in this regard, in that qualifying for social housing is extremely difficult and the wait is very long.

Sanna says that there are some 500 people on the waiting list for social housing. The wait can last for about three years, although sometimes less, but they need to have lived in Reykjavík for a year to even begin to qualify. “So a lot of people are renting on the black market, because they can't rent a single flat that might be 180,000 to 200,000 ISK per month, because that would be pretty much all of their salary. When they rent on the black market, they're not eligible for rent assistance,” as it is dependent on the property being registered.

Laufey, who being on the board of Félagsbústaðir understands the situation intimately, has criticisms of her own.

“As long as it's run as an independent body, although owned by Reykjavík City, the funds and operations are in the hands of the company,” she says. “Their only ‘controllable’ source of income is rent, so if there are losses, their only means of meeting that is increasing rent. We have been calling for more cooperation between the City and the team of Félagsbústaðir, which has increased a lot, but we feel it's a crazy set-up. The tenants are among the city's most financially vulnerable people and the last thing they need when times get hard for Félagsbústaðir is for their rent to go up.”

“And like I was saying about the housing benefit system, this is supposed to be the tool to protect people who are renting, both within the social system and outside it,” she continues. “This is simply not working as the system has too many flaws and obstacles. The rent for tenants of Félagsbústaðir is lower than that on the free market but it's still high, considering the tenant's income. The tenants are mostly minimum wage workers and people on social benefits... The criteria for qualifying for social housing is being not only financially vulnerable, but also socially vulnerable, so many of the tenants come from poor or working class backgrounds, are immigrants, have poor safety-nets and many are also dealing with health issues that limit their options on the job market. Some form of rent control would obviously be needed to protect people who rent in general, but I think this is a decision for Parliament to make and there has been a reluctance to discuss this as it has been heavily opposed by the right wing.”

All this can be fixed

The solutions to these problems are many, requiring concerted effort from both the City of Reykjavík and Parliament. A lot of that goes towards education for immigrants on what their rights even are.

“It should be that when you first arrive in the country, the first thing you get in your hands is contact information for your union representative and a printed sheet of your rights,” Sanna offers. “If it isn't clear already, put it into the law that if you're renting from someone you're working for, they cannot take the money for the rent from your salary. It should be the worker's right to get the bill and pay it, instead of someone with so much power taking money out of their salary.”

Laws on suitable housing apply to company housing as well, she says, but “the reason why it's so difficult to make sure that this housing follows the law is that it's not our house. We can't just like storm in and check that it's all suitable. But it should raise a red flag if in the National Registry there are over 70 people registered in one house or flat. The municipality should get a notification saying ‘this doesn't add up, you should do a house call’. But right now, you can just register your home as being anywhere.”

“I think we have all the answers of what needs to be done,” Sanna continues. “I don't understand why it's so difficult to implement it into law. Why can't we just knock on the door and say, ‘Hey, there's a lot of people registered here, and we've been getting complaints and tips from neighbours that this place needs to be fixed up. Can we just take a look inside?’ I know we need to respect people's privacy, but why can't we establish regulations to watch people's safety, to prevent something like this?”

Overall, Sanna would also like to see an expansion of social housing.

“Housing needs to become more social,” she says. “We have social housing for the most vulnerable in our society, but in other countries, it's more common and available to other groups in society. Make it more available so that people aren't forced to live in a situation that is dangerous. The city and the national government has a lot of responsibility to socialise housing. It's a commodity now, but it shouldn't be.”

Sanna adds: “I want to stress that it shouldn't be the job of immigrants to tell us what needs to be fixed, but I would be glad to see, instead of us politicians saying ‘this and that needs to be done’, if we could see the direct voice of immigrants that want to tell us what needs to be fixed—if they could do that, I think that's the best thing really.”

“We need more social housing and more options for people on a low income. It should be available to a broader expanse of people—more like what we see in Europe. It's terrible to be on the free market and have a family and you have a short-term contract. It's a terrible insecurity to never know where you're going to be next year. The free market is not working as a solution. They're not building what we want fast enough. Obviously, whatever is being done now is not enough.”

In the end, while all low income workers on the rental market in Reykjavík face challenges, immigrants are always going to be more vulnerable. As Laufey points out, “If an Icelandic person is having certain problems [with the rental market], the problems are not going to be less for the immigrant. You have xenophobia adding to the myriad things that affect all of us.” Still, there are at least practical solutions that can be taken to ensure housing for all of Iceland's residents, foreign-born and domestic, provided the political will is there. ♥

THE 2021
REYKJAVIK
GRAPEVINE
MUSIC

VIK
VINE
AWARDS

Artist Of The
Year: Briet

Honourable
Mentions:
Skoffin, Vikingur
Heiðar Ólafsson

Song Of The
Year: Briet
- Rólegur
Kúreki

Honourable
Mentions:
Briet - Esjan, GDRN
- Vorið,
Skoffin - Sætar
stelpur

Album Of The
Year: JFDR -
New Dreams

Honourable
Mentions:
Ultraflex - Dreams
of Ultraflex,
Skoffin - Skoffin
hentar
íslenskum
aðstæðum



Briet & JFDR: In Conversation

Words:
Hannah Jane
Cohen

Photo:
Art Bicnick

Panel:

Hannah
Jane Cohen
(Chairwoman
Of The Panel,
The Reykjavik
Grapevine)

Alexander Jean
Edvard Le Sage
De Fontenay
(Journalist, DJ,
Design Student)

Geoffrey Þór
Huntingdon-
Williams
(Prikið, Sticky
Plötuútgáfa)

Sigtryggur
Baldursson
(Iceland Music)

Maria-Carmela
Raso (Curator,
Musician)

At the 2021 Grapevine Music Awards, the three biggest categories—Artist, Song and Album Of The Year—were decided the quickest. In fact, they were more or less unanimous the moment each was brought up, with little debate among the panel.

2020 was unequivocally the year of Briet. From her explosive debut release ‘Kveðja, Briet,’ to a slew of unforgettable livestream performances, to her opus—and our Song of the Year—‘Rólegur Kúreki’, Briet came onto the scene this year, made her own rules and consistently wowed. With such a legacy, it was no-contest that she’d win Artist Of The Year too and while we’ve never given two of the biggest awards to one single artist, this year, to deny her one would be disingenuous. “Briet deserves this and she’ll remind us of why she won these awards in years to come,” one panel member concluded.

On the album front, it was JFDR’s stunning ‘New Dreams’ that caught the panel’s eye. This was another moment where the moment the release was brought up, it was quickly decided on as a winner. “‘New Dreams’ sticks with you. It’s vulnerable in a way that’s so relatable that you can’t forget it. It’s an album that stops you in your tracks,” raved another judge. “JFDR has done it again.”

Both women unleashed starkly raw and intensely emotional releases this year that cut to the heart of the panel. And while their projects existed in vastly different sonic worlds, we couldn’t help but see a thread connecting them. We therefore thought that if these awards were already going to be unorthodox, we may as well throw the rule book out the window and chat

with them together, or more accurately, witness them talking to each other. And so, we put them in a room together, asked them a few questions and documented the outcome. What would they have in common? Would they get along? Do they even know each other?

A perfect yin-yang

“Briet and I haven’t really properly met before today,” Jófríður says as she takes a sip of tea—it’s a cold Reykjavik afternoon. “But then we were just doing the photoshoot for this and we had our faces next to each other and it was like, ‘Hello Briet!’” She smiles broadly as she turns towards the pop star to her right.

“I kind of liked meeting in that way!” Briet responds softly, a small grin illuminating her face.

“It’s like well I’ve seen your face very closely now,” Jófríður says. “Yes, I know your eye colour,” Briet interjects. And together, they laugh.

In truth, talking to them is like watching a yin-yang in real life. They are both somewhat the opposite of what you’d expect and of each other. Watching Briet onstage, you might assume she’d be commanding or brash, but in truth, she’s extremely self-possessed and thoughtful. She pauses before she talks and chooses her words carefully—never uttering a superfluous line.

Meanwhile, Jófríður is animated. She speaks in a stream of consciousness style, constantly dissecting her own words and thoughts as she goes along as if she’s discovering herself at the same time you are. Hearing her answer a question is a bit like jumping on

a sailboat. You don’t know where you’ll end up but you’re sure the view will be worth it.

Two personal albums

Both ‘New Dreams’ and ‘Kveðja, Briet’ are viscerally personal releases, which is what initially made the panel decide to talk to them together. Each lay their songwriter’s stories bare—dissecting love, heartache, pain and regret with a fine-tooth comb.

“I feel like I manage to veil things enough for it to make sense to me because I’m not going into super specific details, though I appreciate when people do that, like Joni Mitchell,” says Jófríður. “But I also think that what I do tends to be a bit cathartic at times and I imagine you [Briet] feel the same way. There’s a catharsis in putting out your raw feelings, but there’s also—and this is maybe cheesy—the sense of a higher purpose as well. You’re placing something inside a little context, which is the song, and you’re releasing it so that other people can resonate.”

Briet nods. “Writing while feeling. Exactly. My album is my journal,” she explains. “I don’t feel that I’m putting myself out there. It’s just what I’m doing.”

“I think that people sense that,” Jófríður says.

The panel certainly did, certainly when it comes to ‘Rólegur Kúreki.’ The smooth, acoustic country-pop track details a relationship with a partner that always puts you down and makes you feel bad. And in it, Briet cuts to the core of the insecurity and doubt that kind of relationship creates.

“‘Rólegur Kúreki’ could just as easily

fit at Djóðhátíð as it could at Prikið,” one panel member said. “A lot of people are jumping into the cowboy boots but not doing the line dance. And they’re not changing the line dance moves into their own, like Briet is doing,” another added.

The responsibility of vulnerability

“I knew a few people were meeting on Zoom to go through my album and analyse how my relationship was, and that’s so weird,” Briet says, looking down.

“How does that make you feel?” Jófríður asks.

“It made me feel like it was hard for him. Because I’ve dealt with it for some time, but for him, people talking about him—he found it very uncomfortable,” she responds quietly.

“Because he’s not the one in charge of the discussion,” Jófríður posits.

“That’s the hard part of having this responsibility of making art about feelings and people. That’s a lot of responsibility,” Briet concludes.

“It is a lot of responsibility,” Jófríður says calmly. “I think for me no one knows who I’m talking about. I hope not. I’m so private. But I also like it when people are brave enough to say, you know, this is what happened. This is me. This is my past. This is my future. I think it’s really cool to disclose it all.” She looks over at Briet—a fellow young, profoundly honest songwriter—and they share a small smile. “I think it’s a very cool thing to do.”

A longer version of this interview will be available on grapevine.is

THE 2021 REYKJKA — GRAPE MUSIC

The guerilla-style shoot sent Frosti all around the city, looking for gems in the wild. “Midway through shooting the video I sat back down, looked at some footage and listened to the song, very loud and was filled with such emotion I can’t even describe it,” he explains. The panel felt similarly, calling it both heartbreakingly nostalgic and also undeniably modern. For Icelanders, it’s an emotional video and one that resonated.



Frosti Gringo

Video of the Year: Jónsi — Sumarið sem aldrei kom

Honourable Mentions: GusGus - Higher ft. VÖK, Sillus - Dapoly, IDK IDA - Tomorrow’s Heartache

“Jónsi wanted to show the other side of Iceland, not the delusional version we’ve seen in the ‘Inspired by Iceland’ campaigns. The flip-side of the coin—arguably the more real version of our country,” director Frosti Jón Runólfsson (Frosti Gringo) explains. The panel agreed with the vision, calling the result a living, moving tribute to Iceland in all its forms.

Joyful & melancholic

The video, a nitty-gritty and undramatised documentation of this county featuring everyone from swimmers to gymnasts to more downtrodden members of the city, is joyful and melancholic in equal measure. “It is Iceland and it isn’t. It’s not landscapes and frozen tundras, it’s likely and unlikely characters that everyone has seen before at one time in their life,” one panel member praised. In the end, it was close to a unanimous win for Frosti and Jónsi.

A moving tribute

“It was really touching to see the reactions. Both for me personally and for the people I had asked to expose their vulnerabilities and their personal moments in this video,” Frosti concludes. “Sadly one of the characters from the video passed away while I was editing. He had been living hard for too many years. After the video came out, the mother of his children actually contacted me and thanked me for the video, which is the most beautiful review yet.”



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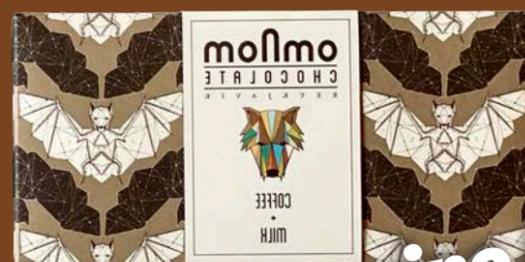
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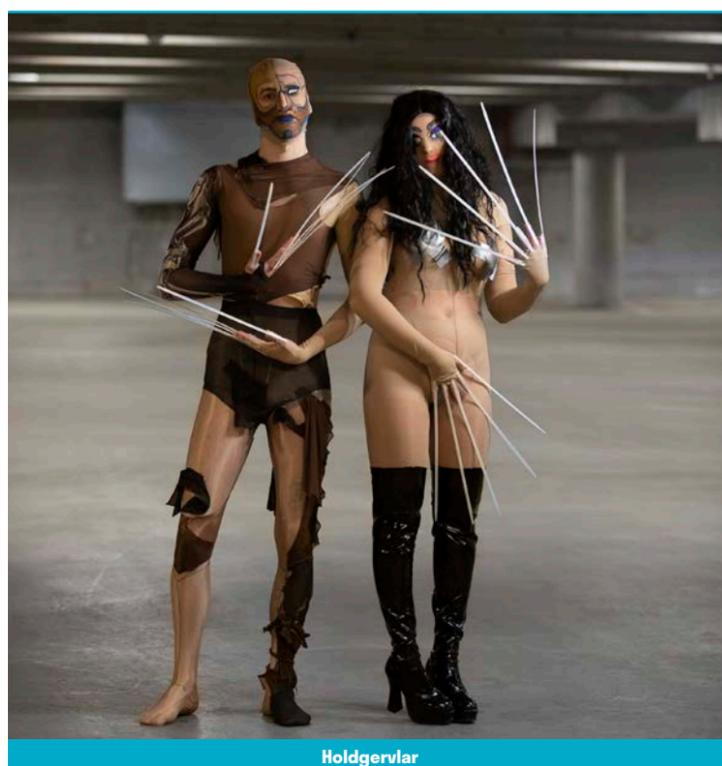
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Holdgervlar

Artist To Watch: Holdgervlar

Honourable Mentions: gugusar, Ingibjörg Turchi, Laufey Lín

“The Holdgervlar themselves are xenobots, ready-made organisms, with human roots. They look back with nostalgia at human cultures, but with different levels of attachment to their roots. They see themselves as the same as their makers, but are only as clear a reflection as their makers allowed them to be. Looking at their ancestry through rose-coloured glasses, they believe that they can fill in what they’re missing by mimicking their human counterparts. They’re beings of speculative sexuality, beauty and everyday

function that experience emotion without it’s essence.”

And so Holdgervlar, the winner of our “Artist To Watch” award, makes it clear that they are the ones watching us.

The seediest districts of space

Holdgervlar has lurked in the background of the alternative arts scene in Reykjavík for the last few years, but only came into the blacklight this year with the release of their debut effort, ‘Ger-vihold,’ in September on Myrkfælni’s newly-established label.

As you can expect from their

above quote, the album is a sensual, mysterious ride that brought to mind the types of music they’d play in the darkest clubs in the seediest districts of space. It was a shame 2020 saw few goth nights or other such parties—Holdgervlar would no doubt have been the soundtrack to such illicit activities.

“Holdgervlar sound like synthetically emotional beings mimicking human music from the past. Finding soundtracks from 80s city flicks set at night, familiar in an unconsciously dishonest way,” the duo explains. “What specifically attracts these cyborgs to giallo, goth and go-go dancers is a question that remains unanswered.”

Welcome to the planet

The panel praised the interplay of Holdgervlar’s visuals and music, calling their project an all-encompassing world. They are, quite literally, a group you just want to watch, one panel member emphasised, and they’ve built a world and a story into the foundation of their music, which must be applauded. They’re on their own level, or more accurately, their own planet (granted, they are cyborgs) and you can’t help but want to see what they’d do with a massive stage and large budget.

“The masks we wear on stage were first used as a tool against stage fright but quickly took over the whole concept and transformed it into what it wanted to be, these beings,” they explain, exposing their human roots for but a minute. “They pick their own scenes and depictions, ask and answer questions about human nature with humans as their mirrors.”

VIK VINE AWARDS

Best Livestream: Live From Reykjavik & Post-sessions

Honourable mentions: Prikíð livestreams

Live From Reykjavik by Iceland Airwaves

“They went big. I appreciated the spectacle,” one panel member said of the Live From Reykjavik by Iceland Airwaves livestream, which featured high-production big numbers by artists like Hatari, Of Monsters And Men, JóiPé & Króli and more over a two day celebration. The panel enjoyed the ambition and execution of the project—with no Airwaves, it felt like a fitting tribute to the loss of the festival this year. “This might sound weird, but I wish I had been able to pay for it!”

Post-sessions

“The Post-Sessions that Post-Dreifing did are fantastic. They are also a great contrast to the Airwaves livestreams in that they are totally DIY,” the panel determined. The sessions, filmed in cosy venues across the city, showcased the best of Icelandic music in a totally lovable manner. There are currently 13 out, featuring live performances interspersed with interviews.

Honourable mentions: HAM x Shoplifter, Hljómskálinn, Víkingur Heiðar Ólafsson

Rough Cult:

Production company Rough Cult, the panel concluded, has a knack for elevating whatever song they’re entrusted to visualise. Composed of four key members—Baldvin Vernharðsson, Bryngeir Vattnes, Berglaug Petra Garðarsdóttir and Gabriel Benedikt Bachmann—the Cult has had their Kool Aid in a number of surreal, unforgettable and inimitable music videos this year including “Píla” by Joey Christ, “Higher” by GusGus ft. VÖK, and “MASKHARA” by Bashar Murad.

“The name Rough Cult says a lot about us as we like to go our own way and step outside the box and try new—or old—things. We love analog,” the Cult said. “No idea is a bad idea.”

“They’ve been making excellent things consistently,” one panel member determined. “If you hear an artist is working with Rough Cult, you know it’s going to be something. They are upping the standard.”



Hekla

You Should Have Heard This: Hekla & RYBA

Honourable Mentions: hist og, dirb, Inspector Spacetime

Hekla:

The Grapevine Music Awards panel is composed of experts from many disciplines—we have techno fanatics, rap connoisseurs and many things in-between. None, unfortunately, are therein devotees, but all were still completely enamoured with the eerie there-min stylings of Hekla Magnúsdóttir and her ‘Sprungur’ EP.

“I like to create terrifying sounds and big sounds in contrast with thin high pitched sounds,” Hekla explains. “I guess it explores negative space or kind of a big black void of sound. On ‘Sprungur’ I was exploring imagery of mythical beasts and the dark cold winters.”

The panel concluded that Hekla really found her own on this release, proving that she not only knows her sound, but that she’s confident in it. “I think the there-min is not an instrument you typically think could be emotional, but Hekla’s has found deep and intense emotion in its tones. Out of all the winners, I can’t wait to see what she does next,” one panel member said. “Can someone please give her a film score?”

RYBA:

RYBA’s 2020 debut album ‘Phantom Plaza’ meanders seamlessly between beat-driven and jangly rock ‘n’ roll, 90s trip-hop, shoegaze and everything else. “It’s a kind of supergroup, with seasoned members of other projects, including Grísalappalísa, Kælan Mikla and Andi,” one panel member raved. “Fine-tuned vibes echoing the past so elegantly into the present.”

The fact that RYBA didn’t get more attention this year was a sobering fact for many judges, and so the group was a shoe-in for the “You Should Have Heard This Award.” They’re currently working on their second effort, which you should also listen to.

“I see the album usually as a psychological voyage which was supposed to happen a few decades ago but it’s happening now like a ghost, it has some unresolved business,” RYBA told the Grapevine. “This album is not trying to meet anyone or help society to become better, more like using it and reflecting what we see in it a little bit like a ghost.”



Rough Cult

Shout Out: Rough Cult & Auður

Auður:

Auður did drop an EP in 2020, but this Shout Out is to recognise his work in, as we called it, keeping culture alive over the pandemic.

Over the last 12 months, Auður lent his hand to many different collaborations with artists of vastly different disciplines, both famous and unknown. Our favourites included his fantastic song with up-and-comer gugusar, beautiful animated video by Águst Eli, RÚV performances with mezzoforte and

Briet and, of course, one cannot forget his capacity for livestream. Lastly, he founded a new studio space for local musicians alongside Krassasig. Nothing stopped Auður’s drive this year and that kind of optimism needs to be applauded.

To be honest, the panel was even hesitant to give him this Shout Out because he’s rumoured to be releasing an album in 2021 and knowing Auður, that’ll be sweeping all the awards this time next year.

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[11:30 - 16:00]

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Five Vegan Eats On The Cheap(ish)

And they said veganism was expensive... smh...

Words: Megan Massey Photos: Art Bicnick

Reykjavík is widely known for being one of the most expensive cities in Europe and veganism is often reported to be one of the most expensive diets in the world. With that in mind, the term ‘cheap’ is being used pretty loosely here. However, that doesn’t change the fact that these vegan eats are totally yum and worth every króna, so if you’re sick of cooking lentils and rice at home, here are some spots you should hit up.

cream cheese and avocado bagel, a glass of OJ and any hot drink). The cinnamon rolls are also a great value because seriously: they’re huge. We’d put forth that they are not a dessert, not a snack, but in fact, a full meal. During your visit, you might also notice the 70s/80s U.K. music they’re playing—on my last visit, it was “Roxanne” by The Police—which makes this the perfect spot to hit if you’re a Brit missing home (like me).



Absolutely Anything At Emilie & The Cool Kids

Hverfisgata 98

This French-owned café has it all: bagels, pastries, scones and more! Prices range from just a few hundred ISK for sweet pastries to 1,990 ISK for the Vegan Breakfast (vegan



Hamborgara Bullan's Vegan Burger

Geirsgata 1

This 1,190 ISK veggie burger—if you want it made vegan, you need to specify when you order—is hands-down the best vegan burger in

Reykjavík (in my opinion, at least). The only thing that could be done to improve it would be if Bullan could add a slice of Violife cheddar but this burger is certainly impressive enough as it is. The glossy bun encases a deep-fried veggie patty, topped with crunchy lettuce and all the condiments you’d expect to find in a picture-perfect junk food burger. Go for the meal deal (1,990 ISK) and you get fries and a drink, too.



Taj Mahal's Vegan Special

Tryggvagata 26

1,990 ISK might sound like a lot, but at Taj Mahal, that’ll get you a main, a side of rice and a whole naan bread. The two vegan mains on offer are the Tofu Tikka Masala (bright red and perfectly spicy) or the Mixed Vegetable curry (equally yum and contains at least one of your five-a-day, probably). Historically speaking, spicy = pricey, so it’s no surprise that Taj Mahal’s vegan options are among the more expensive on this list. However, their portions are generous and delicious. Taj Mahal’s menu also boasts an array of vegan sides, starting at 790 ISK. With masala fries and masala onion rings, samosa and pakora—you’ll find comfort at this authentic South Asian restaurant.



Mandi's Falafel

Veltusund 3b & Faxafen 9

A good falafel wrap can totally change your day, but a Mandi falafel wrap will change your whole week. With prices ranging from 650 ISK for a falafel bowl with hummus and salad, to 1,650 ISK for a falafel meal, you can get your falafel fix at the price point you choose. If you order the falafel wrap and want to make it vegan, remember to specify that you want it without yoghurt sauce. There are two Mandi locations in the city, so you’re never too far away from this classic vegan option.



Brauð & Co.'s Legendary Cinnamon Roll

66°North, various locations & shop.grapevine.is

This humble dessert would definitely be classified as broadly Nordic rather than strictly Icelandic, but Iceland certainly knows how to do cinnamon rolls right and Brauð & Co.’s is incredible. The colour of the dough alone gives everything away: baked to a beautifully caramelised hue and topped with sugar crystals. The filling itself is a perfect blend of sweet and cinnamon and, at 490 ISK, this treat is the cheapest item on this list. If you’re a loyal customer—which you soon will be once you’ve tried these cinnamon delights—you can buy a snazzy Brauð & Co. tote bag and get 10% every time you bring your bag in-store. Their sourdough loaves are also very good if you’re looking for a more savoury treat. 🍞

BEST OF REYKJAVÍK

Best Place To Buy A Wool Sweater



Handknitting Association

Skólavörðustígur 19

“This is a no-brainer,” one panellist said, the moment the category “Best Place To Buy A Wool Sweater” came up. “Handprjónasamband Íslands is the real deal. It’s real Iceland. Many places mass-produce and import their lopapeysa [traditional Icelandic wool sweaters] nowadays, but [at Handprjónasamband], you’re buying a freshly-knitted sweater directly from the maker, who is probably a grandma that poured a lot of love into it.” Stacked from floor to ceiling with cosy woolly goodness, the store offers sweaters, gloves and more, in every colour of the rainbow.

Red Cross

Laugavegur 12 & 116 & Skólavörðustígur 12

The Red Cross is not only the cheapest option for a second-hand wool sweater, but it’s also one of the more unusual spots to pick one up. Racks of sweaters of various styles and vintages greet you at the stores, and while perusing, it’s easy to imagine you’re snatching up something owned previously by a Westfjords farmer named Þórgrímur. Hey, you could be.

Farmers Market

Laugavegur 37 & Hólmaslóð 2

For a different take on the Nordic-style sweater, look no further than Farmers & Friends. Their designs update the traditional garment into a fitted and distinctly high-street getup. Pair it with fitted trousers and heels and you’ll blend right in at any Scandinavian fashion event.

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January 15th—February 11th

In Your Pocket



Reykjavík Map

Places We Like

Best Of Reykjavík

Perfect Day

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“I live in a cabin in the woods so there are birds here, mainly blackbirds that need their bread in the morning...”

Words: Valur Grettisson
Photo: Art Bicnick

Oscar Leone

Oscar Leone's folk-inspired indie rock has that good ole' guitar strumming and smooth harmonies that just make you want to go on a road trip. He just released the new song "Aloha," which you can find on all streaming services. Here's Oscar's perfect day in the city.

First thing in the morning

I would wake up around nine and drag myself to the mountain Helgafell to watch the sunrise. I don't do this often enough but every time I do, it puts me one step closer to a great day—just realizing that there are bigger things at play here than the local media or gossip. After that, I would go home and meditate for twenty minutes. Then, I'd write out three pages in my journal without thinking too much about it. I live in a cabin in the woods so there are birds here, mainly blackbirds that need their bread in the morning so I would give them very delicious sour-

dough bread from Brauð og co. After that, it would be time for a blueberry collagen-infused smoothie.

Lunch

I love it when my friends that I grew up with and I have a lunch date. I would go with them and have tea and possibly a Snickers raw cake at Gló and just talk and laugh. I try to incorporate "people time" in my weekly schedule since living alone in the woods can make you weird real quick.

In the afternoon

After that, I would go to Systrasamlagið and have a cup of cacao and attend to my emails, writing, music, acting, whatever, all while meeting all kinds of good people (they tend to hang out there). I would then lay out three Tarot cards and see how fortune favours me that day. The best days are those that I go to see my friend and producer Arnar Guðjónson in his studio at Grandi and record

something beautiful. Going to Vesturbæjarlaug afterwards would be ideal and doing my pool routine which consists of chilling out in the warm tub and then doing twenty laps of swimming followed by enjoying the steam bath for a little and ending it with an ice bath afterwards.

Dinner

I quite enjoy coming home and putting on my headphones to listen to a nice podcast and cook dinner and take my time. I end up barbecuing most of the time. Yeah, that's my fondest time of the day—where I wind down from the day and settle into the soft evening routine.

In the heat of the night

I would love to chill with friends and have nourishing conversations and play some music together. Let that inner child out a little bit and connect heart to heart.



Bar & Restaurant
Hverfisgata 26

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Venue Finder

Venues

The numbers on the right (i.e. E4) tell you position on the map on the next page

Austur Austurstræti 7	D3	Kaffibarinn Bergstaðastræti 1	E4
American Bar Austurstræti 8	D3	Kiki Queer Bar Laugavegur 22	E5
Andrými Bergþórugata 20	G6	Loft Bankastræti 7	E4
B5 Bankastræti 5	E4	Mengi Óðinsgata 2	F5
Bió Paradís Hverfisgata 54	E5	Nordic House Sturlugata 5	H2
Bravó Laugavegur 22	E5	Ólsmíðjan Lækjargata 10	E3
Curious Hafnarstræti 4	D3	Paloma Naustin	D3
Dillon Laugavegur 30	E5	Papaku Reykjavík Klapparstígur 28	E5
Dubliner Naustin 1-3	D3	Prikið Bankastræti 12	E4
English Pub Austurstræti 12	D3	R6013 Ingólfrstræti 20	E4
Gauririnn Tryggvagata 22	D3	Röntgen Hverfisgata 12	E5
Hard Rock Café Lækjargata 2a	D3	Reykjavík Roasters Karastígur 1	F5
Hressó Austurstræti 20	D3	Stofan Café Vesturgata 3	D3
Iðnó Vonarstræti 3	E3	Tjarnarbió Tjarnargata 12	E3
Kex Hostel Skúlagata 28	E7		

Museums & Galleries

ART67 Laugavegur 67	F7	The Penis Museum Laugavegur 116	F8	Kjarvalsstaðir Fókagata 24	H8
Ámundarsalur Freyjugata 41	G6	Kirsuberjatréð Vesturgata 4	D3	Ámundarsafn Sigtún	
Aurora Reykjavík Grandagarður 2	B1	Kling & Bang Grandagarður 20	A4	Reykjavík City Library Tryggvagata 15	D3
Ásgrímur Jónsson Museum Bergstaðastr. 74	G4	Listastofan Hringbraut 119		Reykjavík City Library Tryggvagata 15	D3
Berg Contemporary Klapparstígur 16	E5	Living Art Museum Grandagarður 20	A4	Reykjavík City Library Tryggvagata 15	D3
Exxistenz Bergstaðastr. 25b	F4	Mokka Kaffi Skólavörðustíg. 3A	E5	Saga Museum Grandagarður 2	B2
Galleri List Skipholt 50A	H10	Museum of Design and Applied Art Garðatorg 1		Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum Laugarnestangi 70	
Hafnarborg Strandgata 34, 220		The National Gallery of Iceland Frikirkjuvegur 7	F3	SÍM Hafnarstræti 16	D3
Hverfisgalleri Hverfisgata 4	D4	The National Museum Suðurgata 41	G2	Tveir Hrafnar Baldursgata 12	G4
i8 Gallery Tryggvagata 16	D3	The Nordic House Sturlugata 5	H2	Wind & Weather Window Gallery Hverfisgata 37	E5

Vital Info



Useful Numbers

Emergency: 112
On-call doctors: 1770
Dental emergency: 575 0505
Taxi: Hreyfill: 588 5522 - BSR: 561 0000

Post Office

The downtown post office has moved to Hagatorgi 1, open Mon-Fri, 09:00–17:00.

Pharmacies

Lyf og heilsa, Egilsgata 3, tel: 563 1020
Lyfja, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045
and Lágmúli 5, tel: 533 2300

Opening Hours - Bars & Clubs

Bars can stay open until 23:00 on weekdays and weekends until further notice.

Opening Hours - Shops & Banks

Most shops: Mon-Fri 10-18, Sat 10-16, Sun closed. Banks: Mon-Fri 09-16

Swimming Pools

Sundhöllin, the downtown pool at Barónsstígur, is an indoor swimming pool with hot tubs and a diving board. More pools: gpv.is/swim
Open: Mon-Thu from 06:30-22. Fri from 06:30-20. Sat from 08-16. Sun from 10-18.

Public Toilets

Public toilets in the centre can be found inside the green-poster covered towers located at Hlemmur, Ingólfrstorg, by Hallgrímskirkja, by Reykjavík Art Museum, Lækjargata and by Eymundsson on Skólavörðustígur. Toilets can also be found inside the Reykjavík City Hall and the Reykjavík Library.

Public Transport

Most buses run every 20-30 minutes
Fare: 480 ISK adults, 240 ISK children.
Buses run from 07-24:00, and 10-04:30 on weekends. More info: www.bus.is.

A



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C

Wine bar & food



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The Map

Get the bigger, more detailed version of The Reykjavík Grapevine City Map at your nearest hotel or guesthouse, with selections from our Best-Of awards, vital info, downtown bus stops and a wider view of the city.

Dining

1. Austur-Indíafjélagið

Hverfisgata 56

Still going strong 20 years on, Austur-Indíafjélagið is an institution. Make a meal out of the delicate salmon pollichathu, kozhi mappas and kulchas and share it family style. Keep your eyes peeled for the vegetarian and vegan dishes as well.

2. Gaeta Gelato

Aðalstræti 6 + Hlemmur Mathöll

Gaeta Gelato is owned by recently-arrived Italian transplants with nearly 25 years of experience as gelatai. Their artisanal and authentic flavours, from blueberry to Piedmontese hazelnut, are made with fresh and well-sourced Icelandic ingredients. Though only recently opened, Gaeta Gelato has already won over a crowd of committed regulars.

3. Sæta Svinið

Hafnarstræti 1-3

With big portions and a tasty menu, this hip restaurant offers everything you might desire, from crispy broccoli and big bowls of mussels to a great leg of lamb and a taste of lobster. Try and get a seat upstairs: it'll be like dining under a starry sky in the most romantic, dim-lit set-up.

4. Valdís

Grandagarður 21 & Frakkastígur 10

This beloved ice cream parlour—which has a Grandi and downtown location—makes everything in-house each morning, and you can tell. If you like liquorice, try Tyrkisk Peber. While it looks like liquid cement, it tastes heavenly. The spot doesn't have a large seating area, so take your cone on a stroll along the harbourside or enjoy it in a parked car, Icelandic style.

5. Bastard Brew & Food

Vegamótastígur 4

This downtown drinking hole is something of a beer and bar-food palace. It's an English pub style environment, without the sense of history, but with eleven beers on tap, a great happy hour, and the phenomenally good 'Fat Bastard' burger on offer, it's a firm Grapevine favourite. Their tacos are pretty notable, too.

6. Noodle Station

Laugavegur 103

Billowing clouds of coriander scent are a mouth-watering introduction to Noodle Station. Choose beef, vegetable or chicken, and add an extra spice or flaky chilli sauce until your nose runs, your tongue throbs and your gums howl. It's bar-style stool seating and cheaper prices (for Reykjavík) attract prudent solo travellers.

7. Grandi Mathöll

Grandagarður 16

Grandi Mathöll has an immediately comfortable feel, with various stools, benches and couches scattered through the space. There are nine concessions and a bustling, social feel as people meander between the vendors, who shout out names as their orders are ready. Our tip: Vegan food from Spes and friend chicken from KÖRE. Everyone's happy!

8. Vitabar

Bergþórugata 21

This old-school burger 'n' beer joint is right downtown—near Sundhöllin—but feels like a real neighbourhood bar. Its unassuming exterior hides a cosy, no-frills dining room, where you'll mostly be surrounded by locals. For once.

9. Salka Valka

Skólavörðustígur 23

For a piece of good ol' Icelandic fish, there's no better spot than Salka Valka. The restaurant serves up a steamed fillet in their Fish Of The Day meal, with the fish options depending on what is the freshest available. They also have potentially the best plockfiskur in the city, some stellar soups, and—quite recently—a pizza menu.

10. Bæjarins Beztu

Tryggvagata 1

Icelanders have a weird obsession with hot dogs—trust us, you won't understand until you've been here. It's universally agreed though that the tiny stand Bæjarins Beztu serves the best one. Pro-Tip: When they ask what toppings you want, say "All." This is the only way to eat it.

11. Mama

Laugavegur 2

Nothing tastes better than ethics, which is why we love to try the rainbow salad and "nicecream" bowls at Mama, a plant-based restaurant with big dreams. The company is

proudly environmentalist—they hope to use their profits to invest into land so that the kitchen can become self-sufficient. The restaurant also doubles as a wellness space offering a whole host of yoga sessions and breathing workshops. Have your plant-based prayers been answered?

Drinking

12. Röntgen

Hverfisgata 12

Röntgen is a party bar in the purest sense, with a rowdy dance floor, delicious cocktails and a fanbase that's just growing and growing. Run by the legends behind Húrra (RIP), Röntgen unexpectedly grabbed the runner-up for the Best Goddamn Bar category at the 2020 Best Of Reykjavík awards. We stan.

13. Lebowski Bar

Laugavegur 20a

This fully carpeted bar honouring the "Lebowski" Lebowski (not The Dude, man), is a nice place that offers two vibes: start the night nice and cosy with an artisanal White Russian, and end it on one of the rowdiest and most underrated dance floors in the city. Yup, Lebowski is a great place to hang at, but that could just be, like, our opinion man.

14. Jungle Cocktail Bar

Austurstræti 9

The verdant Jungle Cocktail Bar came in like a tropical storm last winter. Devoted to the elevation of all things cocktail culture, some of Jungle's stranger offerings over the past months have included a kale cocktail, but there's no shortage of level-headed concoctions like the signature "The Bombshell" (tequila, rhubarb & vermouth) along with any classic you can name.

15. Port 9

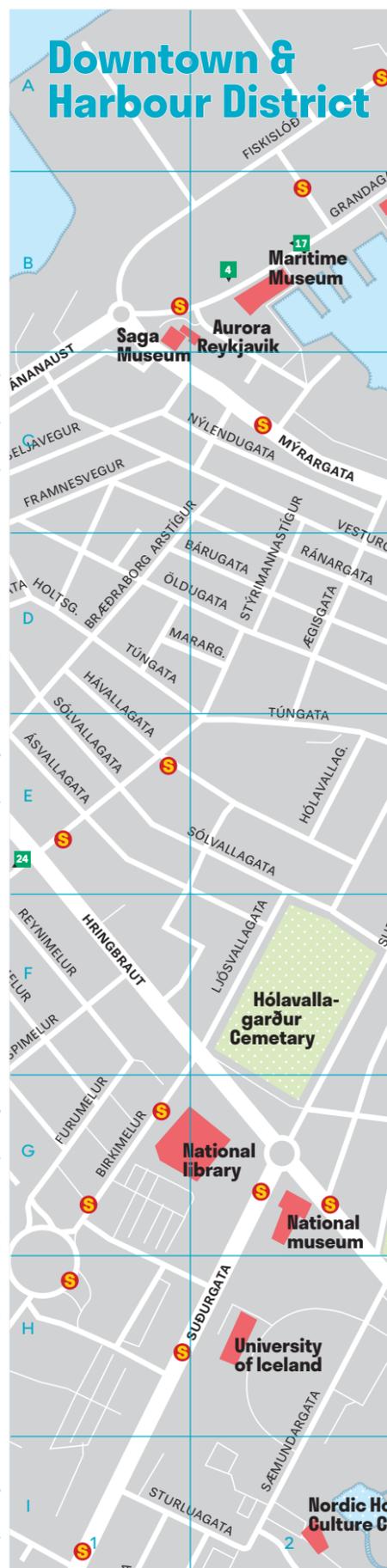
Veghúsastígur 9

Cosy and tucked away with a secretive vibe, Port 9 is a true hidden gem, hosting a delicious wine list as well as potentially the most intimate atmosphere in Reykjavík. It also has a nice balcony—the ideal locale for sipping some Pino in the summer sun.

16. Mengi

Óðinsgata 2

Mengi's concert room is more white cube than dive bar. The programme encourages new collaborations and experimental performances, so even if you know and love the work of the musicians you're seeing, you might be treated to something brand new on any given night.



17. Luna Flórens

Grandagarður 25

Luna Flórens is Iceland's only "gypsy bar." Part flower-child, part spiritual and with a whole lot of whimsy thrown into the mix, this cosy and hand-crafted bar is so intimate it makes you wanna spend the day musing about geodes, lunar cycles and tarot card readings. You can do all this and more while sipping on their excellent house cocktails and an excellent slice of vegan cake.

18. RVK Brewing Company

Skipholt 31

Yes, there is a bar on Skipholt, and yes, it is one that you need to check out. The RVK Brewing Company has slid

E

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New In Town ☆



Chickpea

Hallveigarstígur 1

Chickpea describes themselves as a small, family-run, street food style restaurant with nutritious and authentic food made from scratch, every day. Occupying the little nook next to Krónan, they are also an extremely cute locale for a nice lunch. So family-run? Nutritious? Authentic? Cute? We'd be down for making this our religion. All jokes besides, it's a true feat to open up a restaurant in the midst of a virus pandemic and we seriously need more good vegetarian/vegan places. Especially as the Grapevine is currently undergoing Veganuary. **HJC**

under the radar since it opened, but now, we're here to bring it out of the shadows. The brewery and beer hall offers a varied list of brews, most of which they make themselves locally. Come and experience your new beer-addiction.

19. English Pub

Austurstræti 12

True to its name, the English Pub offers many different kinds of lager on tap and a whiff of that genuine UK feel. Try the famous "wheel of fortune" where one can win up to a metre of beer with a single spin while a steady team of troubadours engage the crowd in classic sing-alongs every night. The only thing missing is the salt & vinegar crisps.

Shopping

20. Hildur Yeoman

Laugavegur 7

Hildur's got a fresh new boutique on Laugavegur. As well as selling her own designs—womenswear characterised by flowing shapes made from fine fabrics with colourful, distinctive, busy prints—Hildur Yeoman's boutique also features sunglasses by Le Specs, jewellery by Vanessa Mooney, French tea, and other interesting trinkets.

21. nomad.

Frakkastígur 8f

A relative newbie to the Laugavegur scene, nomad. was a surprise runner-up for the Best Design Store at the 2020 Best of Reykjavik awards. They have a fantastically curated selection of books, lamps, candles and more. Plus, the owner is a photographer and often has exhibitions on the lower floor.

22. Wasteland Reykjavik

Ingólfsstræti 5

For super á la mode downtown Reykjavik looks—i.e. cheerleader uniforms, Guy Fieri t-shirts, and astronaut-esque jumpsuits—this second-hand store is the go-to.

23. Lucky Records

Rauðarárstígur 10

Lucky Records is the punky, underground horse of the Reykjavik record scene. It's one of those shops that is easy to get lost in—expect to easily spend an entire afternoon perusing their selection.

24. Melabúðin

Hagamel 39, 107

For foodies looking for artisanal deli meats, fresh figs, rare cheeses and all sorts of unexpected, hard-to-find treats, Vesturbær's beloved Melabúðin should satiate your desires.

25. Pastel Flower Studio

Baldursgata 36

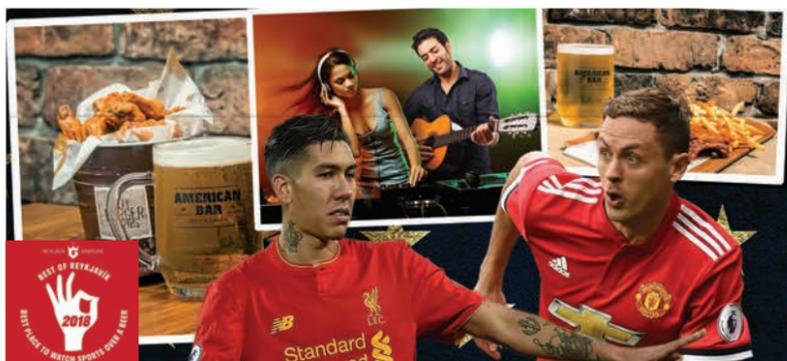
Pastel Flower Studio is only open on

Fridays and Saturdays from 13:00 to 18:00—so plan accordingly. The studio uses cut, dried, and fresh flowers to create unique arrangements that reference classic Icelandic nature in an unexpected and innovative way. Trust us: You won't find a florist in the city that's in any way comparable.

26. Street Rats Tattoo

Hverfisgata 37

Kristófer, a.k.a. Sleepofer Tattoo, has proven himself to be a fresh, experimental artist whose works have become a somewhat coveted symbol in the city. So if you're looking to get your travel tattoo, go there. It's way more interesting than a Vegvisir.



F

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Yup, this is the picture they sent for their big magazine article

“Everything dissolves. Everything ends. Everything will return to nothing.”

people’s moods before they hear the rest of the album,” he continues. “And after that is the shortest song, which is possibly the easiest to digest out of the whole album. Then it just keeps on going downwards.”

So it goes

While Núll’s overall veneer of pointlessness has provided an apt soundtrack for 2020, the album was written far before the pandemic. It was merely, as T.I. calls it, fate that it was released in the midst of it. But right now, the group is looking towards the future, awaiting the days they can play live shows again. But if not, as is fitting a band based around the concept of nihilism, they’ll deal.

“Wasn’t it Nietzsche that said that all an artist needs is bread and his craft?” T.I. questions. This earns a rare laugh from D.G. “I was reading that today!” he responds. “Twilight of the Idols.”

T.I. smiles. “So when it all comes down to it, if we can sustain ourselves and practise our craft, we have enough. We would still be writing and recording music even if nobody was listening and we will continue to do it even if there are no gigs or audiences. That’s not what matters. And I mean, of course, this is Núll,” he concludes calmly. “Nothing matters.”

A Glorious Shrine To Nothing...

Núll is the band to not-exist to

Words: **Hannah Jane Cohen** Photo: **Julie Schneider**

Album

Check out Núll at 0000000.bandcamp.com and pick up the ‘Entity’ LP at van-records.com

In years prior, I used to always describe Núll with silly epitaphs like ‘The Most Un-googleable Band In Iceland’ or other such nonsense. I’m going to stop that now. There’s nothing funny about this group and to even approach their music with humour now feels totally disrespectful and idiotic. ‘Entity’—their sophomore effort, which came out in August—is so naked and soul-scraping that you need to respect it. It’s a release that, to be frank, you should feel privileged to even hear. I certainly do.

The band, which has put in nearly a decade in the local scene, resides somewhere within the murky depths of black metal, doom and DSBM, but putting a label on them feels reductive. In fact, I’m only doing it right now to provide some basic bit of context for readers. Núll doesn’t exist within a genre; it exists within an ideology. There’s an ethos behind the group that’s impossible to ignore—one that permeates every aspect of their existence.

Nothing

“Nothing,” guitarist D.G. responds when asked about this ethos. In typical black metal style, the members of the group prefer to only use initials. “The idea of nothing,” he repeats simply; his voice deadpan in a disarmingly steady manner.

Drummer T.I. nods. “Núll means nothing,” he reiterates bluntly. For reference, the word “núll” in Icelandic is zero, so it’s therefore hard for me to tell if, with this statement, T.I. is explaining the literal translation of the band-name, echoing the philosophy of the group, or doing both in a rather pithy man-

ner. I’d lean towards the latter. “It’s more centred around non-being, kind of like the Hebrew concept of Ain,” T.I. continues. “The nothing before the nothing.”

Ain refers to the state of God before they created the universe. It can be more broadly explained as the substance of non-existence, which lies in direct contrast with the fabric of God post-creating light. Existence vs. non-existence. Matter vs. anti-matter. Something vs. nothing. Núll vs. Entity.

Everything

“[Entity is] pretty much the opposite of what Núll is,” D.G. admits impassively. “It’s irony. It’s a sarcastic title.”

Núll is notorious for such sarcasm. Over the years, they’ve consistently messed with what people would expect from them, showing up to gigs in Adidas tracksuits or drag—a far cry from the dark, ritualistic clothing many of their contemporaries don. But these aren’t laughs or stunts, no, just measures to point out the ridiculousness of everything—your expectations of a show included.

“[The album] revolves around the absolute futility of anything. It’s nihilistic but not in the sense that we’re all beat up and sad about it, it’s just a statement of fact. Everything dissolves. Everything ends. Everything will return to nothing,” T.I. states simply. “It’s also kind of a sarcastic remark in itself. We spent so much time working, recording the album and making it sound as grandiose as we could because, like the rest of mankind, we are essentially building a glorious shrine to nothing.”

The glorious shrine

My first experience with ‘Entity’ was painful. It’s not an easily digestible listen, even to a black metal

fan like myself. As soon as singer S.S.’s first screams hit a few minutes into the fittingly-titled opening track “None,” I felt viscerally uncomfortable. It’s been a while since a release affected me in such a way.

And that was just the first song. From there, things only got more intense, crescendoing into the last two minutes of “An Idiosyncratic Mirage,” which

might be some of the most overwhelming music you’ll ever hear.

“It’s supposed to be oppressive,” D.G. responds, when I tell him this. “You can’t control it. It’s just there. And it dawns upon you without a warning.”

The album is even designed to feel uneasy. “I always thought it was a pretty funny idea to start with the longest and slowest song just to ruin

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Event Picks



Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Daniel & Adams ★

January 28th - 20:00 - Harpa & RÚV - 2,400-5,700

Ya boi Daniel Bjarnason—resident classical stud and Grapevine favourite—is conducting some Schumann and Adams

and you know it'll be dumb litty, fam. Ok, sorry about that, we're just staying to stay hip on the slang, you know, to attract new

readers. We'll stop. So—the program will also feature the Icelandic premiere of Daniel's "Over Light Earth," which was inspired by the abstract expressionism of artists Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollock. Daniel is a soon-to-be Grammy winner—or at least we hope because we bet our retirement savings on it—with his work with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. Oh, we hear you say, you're not comfortable going to in-person gatherings yet? Don't worry—it'll be broadcast live on RÚV. **HJC**



Tóma Mengi | Ólafur kram & we are not romantic ★

January 15th - 20:00 - Mengi FB Live!

Band We Are Not Romantic started one of the most legendary Grapevine office debates of all time when words and metaphorical fists flew while discussing their 2019 video "Nokia Calling." Now, you can catch them live onscreen. Don't punch your wall, Kyle. **HJC**



Icelandic Music From A-Z ★

January 27th - 12:30 - Your Friend In Reykjavik FB Live

Dr. Arnar Eggert Thoroddsen knows literally everything about Icelandic music, which is why we are so happy he hasn't opened a rival publication to ours. He'll be doing a little livestream to show you what you've been missing in the scene. But you could also just read our Music Awards, btw. **HJC**



MUSIC NEWS

It's that time of the year again. Yup, Icelandic artists got their art stipends.

All in all 2,150 artists received government stipends for their projects, although the time of each stipend varies. When it comes to music, 237 musicians applied for grants but only 62 received them. Of these 62, 34 were women and 28 men. Most notably, RnB artist and Grapevine favourite GDRN got a year funded as did jazz keyboard sensation Tómas Jónsson. Another Grapevine favourite, Bárna Gísladóttir, received a year-long stipend to focus on her compositions. We can't imagine what intriguing tones will come out of that one. Based on that list, it's clear that Iceland can expect a lot of great music in 2021 from artists that will no longer have to starve while making it. **VG**

We'd have event listings here if Trump wouldn't have fired all the virus experts way back when



Exactly What It's Supposed To Be

Ingibjörg Turchi reflects on 'Meliae'

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen Photo: Art Bicnick

Album

Stream 'Meliae' on all platforms and pick up the LP at shop.grapevine.is

In Greek mythology, the Meliae were a type of tree nymph. According to some sources, mankind actually originated from them. But regardless, the group represented the core of the primal, natural world, existing as creatures that were at once earthly and ancient while also completely indefinable and unbounded. It makes sense then, that bassist Ingibjörg Turchi took this to be the name of her ineffable debut effort 'Meliae'.

The album, a melange of jazz, minimalism, rock and experimentalism, burst onto the scene in July and served up a vastly unique and surprising collection of bass-driven

tunes. It ultimately won a 2020 Kraumur Award, among other accolades—surprising in a scene that seems to favour vocal-driven music over instrumentals.

Diverse sounds

Ingibjörg only started playing the electric bass at 20, after having studied flute, piano, accordion and guitar for many years. Something about the instrument immediately grabbed her and she turned her full focus to it.

"You can play very diverse things on the bass," Ingibjörg explains. "There's always something new. I love lyric bass—playing melodies on the bass—but I also love the groove of it, the range of the instrument and the contact you have with the drummer."

Though Ingibjörg had previously played in many ensembles, it was only when she started working on her 2017 'Wood/Work' EP that she fell fully in love with songwriting. "It's not that long ago, only five years, but when I started working on 'Wood/Work', I went 'Ah! I really love this!'" she says smiling.

A 3D effort

'Wood/Work', a 20-minute long minimalist effort, thrust the peculiarities of the bass into stark, broad daylight. From light, delicate plucks to droning, strong dulcet chords, the 7-track release hinted at Ingibjörg's capability to push the bass to its limits—something that was fully actualised years later in 'Meliae'. In fact, a few of the songs on 'Meliae' are new, reworked versions of 'Wood/Work' tracks.

"It's just exactly what it's supposed to be," says Ingibjörg of the album. "Everything is mixed-up and then added to that is the flavour of all the musicians playing who are all great and unique." Said musicians include Hróðmar Sigurðsson on guitar, Magnús Trygvason Eliassen on drums and

percussion, Magnús Jóhann Ragnarsson on piano, mellotron and vibraphone, and Tumi Árnason on tenor saxophone and clarinet.

"With the band, the songs expanded and came into 3D. You see it," she says. "It's all live, just played through together. We have all these nuances when we play. I love when stuff changes when played live."

While asking Ingibjörg to pick a favourite song from the album is a bit like asking her to choose between her children, she does particularly enjoy the last song 'Hydra', especially when she's given the opportunity to play it live. "We always do that one last in shows because it's so calm," she says. "We've gone all over the place, all around, and after all of that, it's calm. I just like that."

Work/Work 2021

Of course, Ingibjörg hasn't gotten many chances to play the album live, though she was lucky enough to have her release concert and play the Reykjavik Jazz Festival during that small window of summer when concerts were allowed. That said—in full 2020 style—she did indulge in many livestreams over the year.

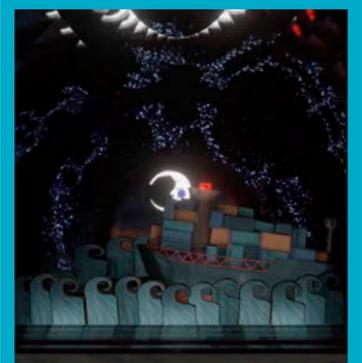
"It's always fun to play, of course, but you do miss the element of people in the room because [live music] is nurturing for both the audience and the performer," she smiles. "I see the good in it, but I'm looking forward to when we can play live more."

2021 should see much more for Ingibjörg, though, then just the return of live shows. The composer is currently working on a new album and will also play on upcoming efforts by Hróðmar Sigurðsson and Mikael Máni. If that's not enough, she's also writing a piece for the

Iceland Symphony Orchestra.

But 2020 was exciting enough, Ingibjörg emphasises, and she's particularly grateful for the unexpected and overwhelming widespread

acclaim 'Meliae' received—especially the Kraumur award. "I was honoured," she states simply. "They go through so many records and just choose six. I was very happy." 🐦



Icelandic/Swedish musician Freyr has officially been banned in Libya, North Korea, China and Cuba, four countries which have probably never heard of this sweet Nordic musician and also which could be referred to as dictatorships, though we won't officially use that word for legal reasons. Upon release, his newest song "American Poster" triggered some sort of fascist algorithm alarm which determined it must have been some sort of capitalist propaganda anthem rather than a sweet pop song. That said, you can check out the fantastic song and video on YouTube as well as on the album... that is... if you dare. **VG**



Although the year of the pandemic was hard for most musicians, there was a record streaming of Icelandic music in 2020, which meant that songwriters, performers and labels banked around 230-250 million ISK from streaming services last year. The most sold album in Iceland was surprisingly not a pop album, but a children's album by Hafdis Huld. It sold 3,300 albums, which was just a little more than Briet, who had the most popular song of the year "Rólegur Kúreki" ("Easy Now Cowboy" in English). Another musician that had a good sales year was ya boy Vikingur Heiðar Ólafsson, who was in eighth place with his masterpiece 'Debussy - Rameau'. He's always first in our hearts, though. **VG**

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Together For Seyðisfjörður

Artists lend a hand in rebuilding the village

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine**
Photos: **Lama-sea Dear**

The devastating landslides that struck Seyðisfjörður in December are still wreaking havoc in their own way. While no one was killed or injured, 14 homes in the east Iceland village were destroyed and, while many residents were allowed to return soon after the entire village was evacuated, many are still without a place to live. Even for those who have been allowed to return, there are still extensive repairs to be done and the clean-up is daunting.

Fortunately, not everyone is sitting idly by. A new initiative, "Saman fyrir Seyðisfjörð" ("Together for Seyðisfjörður") has been launched, a collaborative effort started by Lama-sea Dear, who lived in Seyðisfjörður for a year and has worked there periodically over the past five years.

Something must be done

"I'd recently moved to Copenhagen and was sitting on my computer refreshing the news and speaking to friends on the phone," she

recalls of the wake of the landslides. "I felt so far away and like there wasn't anything I could do to help, so I came up with the idea for this project so that we could raise awareness for the town and do something. If I were there, I'd pick up a shovel and start digging, make someone a cup of tea, or at least hug my friends. This was my way of doing that."

She contacted a couple of people, including Simon of the Heima Art Residency and together they have been running the project together along with the assistance of others.

"We've created a platform for Facebook and Instagram and are in the process of setting up a website [which will be up and have content after the 25th] where we will be able to host videos and art that have been donated by the Icelandic creative scene," she explains. "In the spirit of Seyðisfjörður, it's a hodge-podge of wonderful creativity, with professionally recorded sessions from big name Icelandic musicians, but also, creative little videos that artists sort of whipped together on their iPhone just to

find a way to support."

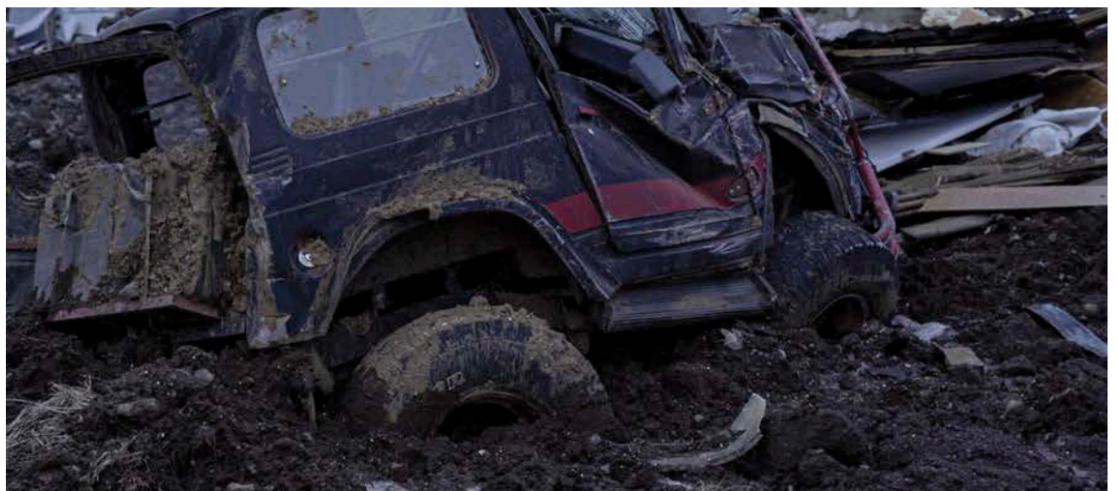
A positive response

"People have been really positive, it's been wonderful, you know," she says. "The main point of us doing this is we are supporting the community of Seyðisfjörður, so we have been in communication with people who are in the town, because we wanted to make sure that they were ready for it, that it was something they were willing to accept and something that they wanted. We didn't want to be stepping on any toes and publicising something that is such a personal thing that all these people are dealing with."

The team has been working in collaboration with the Icelandic Red Cross, where they set up a specific fund. All of the money will be used by the Red Cross, in collaboration with the town. They have also been in collaboration with the town, who will assemble a team to best allocate the funds for rebuilding the community.

"Even from people not directly affected by the crisis, they have so much love for the town" she says in closing. "It's just amazing, the effect this small community in this tiny fjord has on so many people across the world, that they just come together and want to help it." 🍀

You can follow Saman fyrir Seyðisfjörð on Instagram at @saman_fyrir__seydisfjord and on Facebook, with a website pending. You can also go to gefaraudikrossinn.is/9544 to donate to the fund.



Our Picks



★ Yrurari

Opens on January 21st - Museum of Design & Applied Art

You'd be a little taken aback if your doctor turned up with green lips, vampire fangs and dental braces or a giant tongue covered in a dozen tiny tongues—although maybe not in these strange times—but these are just the sort of surreal realities that Yr Jóhannsdóttir—artist name Yrurari—creates. She burst into the world consciousness over the pandemic with her creative re-imagining of the humble surgical mask. Now she's in the Museum of Design & Applied Art, in a studio project that will see her make her tongue-filled projects using only discarded sweaters from the Red Cross. Catch her on Instagram at @yrurai, and then catch her live and in-person at the workshop. Lick it up. **HJC**



★ 3 Generations of Pink

Until January 24th - Midpunkt

Gíga Jónsdóttir presents a photographic dissection of the patriarchy, sisterhood, mothers, daughters, aunts, granddaughters,

grandmothers, and basically every other familiar woman-woman relationship where there's a love/hate dynamic. Naturally, she uses pink. **HJC**



★ Ragnar Axelsson

Opens on Jan. 30th - Hafnarhús

Hot off his newest book, which documented the lives of Greenlandic sled dogs, Ragnar Axelsson is here with a special exhibition

featuring works from all his Arctic series. Looking at Ragnar's pictures provides a visceral experience, allowing you to enter a remote world that feels lost in time. **HJC**



★ Í hvaða litum dreymir þig?

Until January 17th - Núllið Gallery

Kuggur—Guðmundur Óli Pálmarson—explores the exodus from the Icelandic countryside in a series which

presents desolate farms amid forgotten landscapes. If you like thinking about the ephemerality of time using expired polaroids, well, have we got the exhibition for you. **HJC**

January 15th-February 11th

Art Listings

Events are listed by venue. For complete listings and detailed information on venues, visit grapevine.is/happening.

Send your listings to: listings@grapevine.is

Opening

LIVING ART MUSEUM

IS THE SPIRIT AWARE OF THE MATTER?

Is the spirit aware of the matter? Woah! Big question. Explore that query here with works by Ragnheiður Gestsdóttir, Sigrún Hrólfssdóttir and Sindri Leifsson in an exhibition that explores the systems that mankind has created for itself throughout history. Think social, economic, political, cultural and very serious stuff.

- Opens on January 16th, 2021
- Runs until February 28th, 2021

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

Barren Land

In 2004, landscape painter Georg Guðni bought a plot of land and built a studio, which he entitled Berangur ('Barren Land'). This name could really be applied to all his works he created there—they are all touched with a rugged sensibility of the craggy weather-beaten barren land on which they were made. Check out a selection here.

- Opens on January 30th, 2021
- Runs until April 25th, 2021

HELLO UNIVERSE

It's 2021 and we're over Earth. Enter Finnur Jónsson. The avant-garde art of Finnur—the first Icelandic artist to address outer space in his works, in the first half of the 20th century—presents the artist's unfettered interpretation of the marvels of the celestial bodies, which are the theme of this exhibition. Always remember: We are but matter experience itself on a pale blue dot.

- Opens on February 5th, 2021
- Runs until January 9th, 2022

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS

Ragnar Axelsson:

Where The World Is Melting

Grapevine-favourite Ragnar Axelsson presents a not-to-miss exhibition with selections from his 'Faces of the North', 'Glacier', and 'Heroes Of The North' series. Ragnar has been documenting the Arctic for over 40 years, and in stark black-and-white images, he captures the elemental, human experience of nature at the edge of the liveable world.

- Opens on January 30th, 2021
- Runs until May 9th, 2021

Raw Power

Wait, another Erró exhibition? You bet! This one places Erró's works from different periods in the context of contemporary Icelandic art. It's a diverse selection that, as always, contain the numerous media reference the artist has become known for.

- Opens on February 18th, 2021
- Runs until May 25th 2021



GALLERY PORT

Viktor Weissappel - Í blóma

Flowers. Nature. Shapes. Colours. Collage. All this and more can be found at Viktor Weissappel's newest exhibition at Gallery Port. As big fans of nature—our magazine is actually made of trees—we couldn't be more excited.

- Opens on January 16th, 2021
- Runs until January 31st, 2021

Ongoing

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

Treasures Of A Nation

A selection of over 80 works chosen from the national gallery's collection displays the evolution of art since the 19th century.

- Runs until February 14th, 2021

Threads Of Art

Celebrate the centenary of the birth of textile artist Ásgerður Búadóttir. If you thought there wasn't a rich contemporary textile scene, you have no idea just how experimental this medium can be.

- Runs until January 24th, 2021

EINAR JÓNSSON MUSEUM

Permanent Exhibition

The museum contains close to 300 artworks including a beautiful garden with 26 bronze casts of the artist's sculptures.

REYKJAVÍK CITY MUSEUM

Settlement Exhibition

As Viking ruins meet digital technology, this exhibition provides insight into Reykjavík's farms at the time of the first settlers.

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Nocturne - Hrafna Jóna Ágústsdóttir

Hrafna Jóna Ágústsdóttir's photography exhibition Nocturne takes its viewers on a creative fairytale night wander through Icelandic cityscapes. Explore the mixed emotions of the night: secretive and uncanny, but also at times warm and beautiful. Ordinary suburban scenes take on a surreal magic when daylight disappears and is replaced by the cool glow that falls from streetlights and windows.

- Runs until February 1st, 2021

REYKJAVÍK MARITIME MUSEUM

Fish & Folk

Name a better duo than fish and Iceland. You can't. So come learn about the history of Icelandic fisheries from row boats to monstrous trawlers.

Melckmeyt 1659

Melckmeyt was a Dutch merchant ship that crashed near Flatey Island in 1659. Explore the wreck here, with two images of different origins against each other.

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART

100% Wool

What's our favourite four-letter word? WOOL! Icelanders will proudly tell you that they have the best wool on Earth. Seriously, to call it integral to the foundation of this country would be downplaying the importance of the material. So celebrate wool. With wool art.

- Runs until January 31st, 2021

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS

Erró: Cyborg

This series of the great Erró was inspired by technology, science and the combination of the human and the mechanic. In particular, it examines how technology invades the body and how the human body adapts to the machine. The images offer questions concerning the borderlines between human beings and technology.

- Runs until January 31st 2021

Gilbert & George: The Great Exhibition

Perhaps two of the most influential contemporary artists of the last five decades, Gilbert & Georg are known for their pioneering performance pieces, bold photo-based graphics and anti-elitist "Art for All" ethos. At this special exhibition, come challenge the prevailing bourgeois ideas of taste and

decorum while empowering gays and other minority groups. What else could you want?

- Runs until January 17th, 2021

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSSTAÐIR

Jóhannes S. Kjarval: At Home

Jóhannes Sveinsson Kjarval (1885-1972) was one of the pioneers of Icelandic art (the museum is literally named after him) and is one of the country's most beloved artists. His connection to, and interpretation of Iceland's natural environment is thought to have taught Icelanders to appreciate it anew, and to have encouraged pride in the country's uniqueness and the world of adventure to be discovered within it.

- Runs until March 14th, 2021

Sigurður Árni Sigurðsson: Expanse

In this mid-career retrospective, Sigurður Árni Sigurðsson presents a series of paintings which dissect just how we view the world around us. Sigurður's works are known for exploring the limits of our field of vision and how that forms the basis of our worldview.

- Runs until March 14th, 2021



GERÐARSAFN KÓPAVOGUR ART MUSEUM

SCULPTURE / SCULPTURE

Presenting: two solo exhibitions by artists Ólöf Helga Helgadóttir and Magnús Helgason. The aim of the series is to explore contemporary sculpture and the development within three-dimensional art, not only as an important part of art history, but also as a living visual language within contemporary art. The series is intended to honor the sculptor Gerður Helgadóttir (1928-1975), who Gerðarsafn museum is named after.

- Runs until February 28th, 2021

HAFNARBORG

What Meets The Eye

A retrospective of works by local goldsmith and artist Gunnar Hjaltason. He painted in oil, acrylics and watercolour, but this exhibition will focus on his prints. The images depict landscapes, town views of Hafnarfjörður and the Icelandic nature

- Until January 31st, 2021

Hafnarfjörður:

Works from the collection

The exhibition is a selection of works from the Hafnarborg collection that all showcase Hafnarfjörður in a unique way. Few towns in Iceland are as picturesque as Hafnarfjörður and the nature surrounding it also offers spectacular points of view. And we're not just saying that because our editor is from there.

- Runs until March 7th, 2021

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART HÖNNUNARSAFN ÍSLANDS

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Exhibitions:

100% Wool
Closing January 31

Designer in Residence - Yrurari
Opening January 21

Icelandic Ceramics 1930 - 1970
Opening February 13





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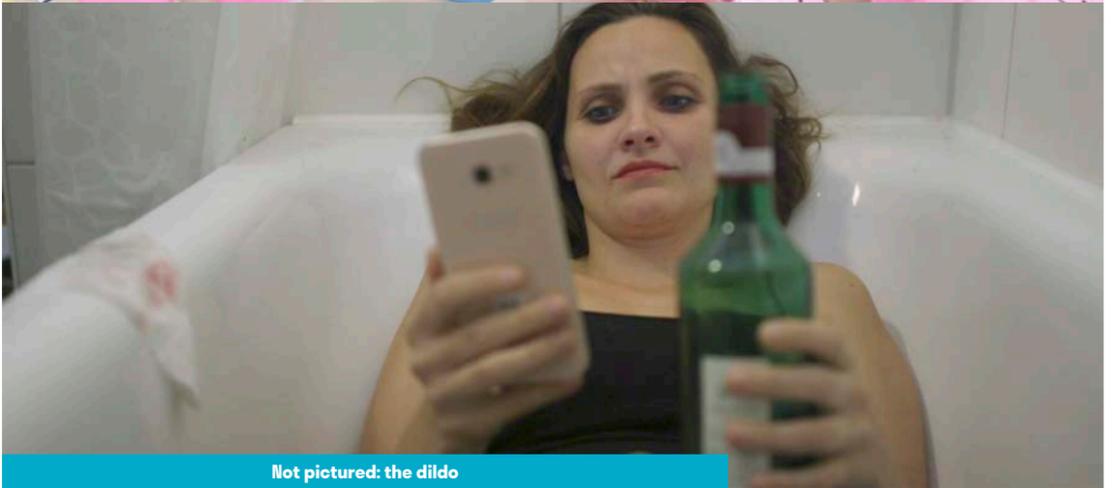
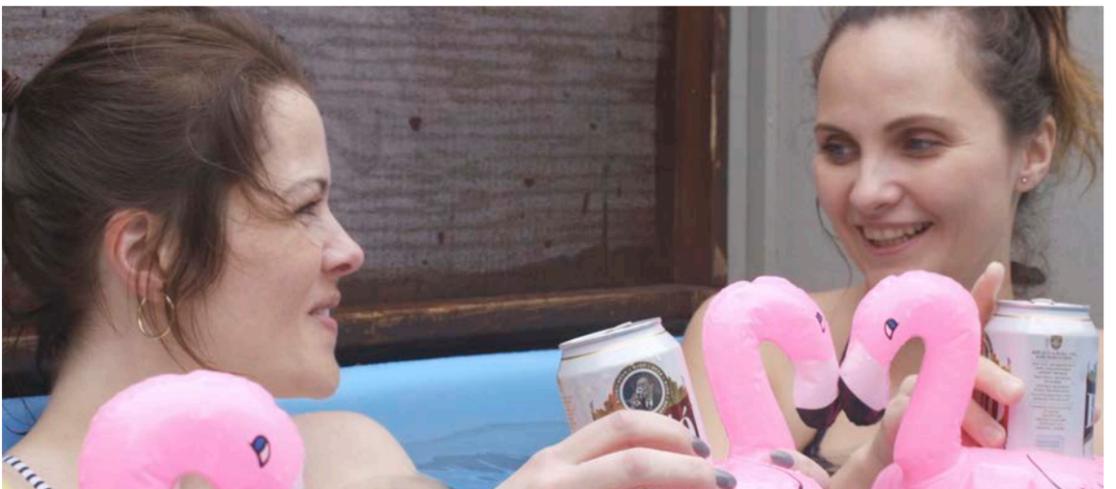
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Not pictured: the dildo

Remember That Girl Who Cried, Left The Party And Moved To Berlin?

'Norms' is a web series about her

Words: **Hannah Jane Cohen**

Photos: **Provided by Lost Shoe Collective**

Album

'Norms' is available to watch until Jan. 17th on rvkfemfilmfest.is. Follow Norms on Facebook and @norms.webseries on Instagram for updates on release schedules.

"This is a story about a dildo."

And so begins the trailer for 'Norms', a new web series by the Lost Shoe Collective that premiered on January 14th at the Reykjavik Feminist Film Festival. The series documents the life of Sara, a queer Icelandic woman who, in the midst of an impulsive, self-destructive breakdown, escapes Reykjavik for the noise of Berlin, or as it's called, the "city of lost souls."

It's a tale as old as time: woman leaves her comfortable life to find herself in the fringes of society. That said, Lost Shoe Collective have put their own spin on this classic by centering their story around an openly queer protagonist, which is all part of their vision of telling stories that aren't told and telling them in a funny, relatable, realistic manner. Hence, the dildo.

Queer reality

"I feel that the story is a represen-

tation of how we as queer people are just that—people, regular people that live regular lives, full of joyful, dramatic and funny moments," writer Sólveig Johnsen explains in a COVID-safe virtual interview. Just like Sara, she identifies as a queer woman. "Our stories aren't only about coming out, facing prejudices and so on, sometimes we are insecure in our life's purpose or cheating on our spouse, just like anyone else of any sexual orientation or identity."

The group, therefore, sought to portray the mundane, everyday struggles of Sara's life and in doing so provide a more nuanced take on the queer female experience. And as a woman-led collective with a high percentage of queer members, this was certainly their story to tell.

"It was important to us from the beginning that Sara was someone everyone could see themselves in, in a way, but that she would be a flawed person who makes mistakes. [She] doesn't always do the right thing—rarely even—but she tries," director Júlía Margrét Einarsdóttir says. "Sara is just like so

many European young adults. She has everything in a way: a well-paid job, a great group of friends and a girlfriend who cares for her... [But] Sara starts realising that there's something missing in the relationship that causes an empty space within herself. She cheats on her girlfriend with someone who is exciting and excited about a part of her that Sara has been hiding from the world and herself."

"In the end it's not the world she needs to face, but her own demons, passions and struggles to find happiness," Júlía continues. "Sara is clumsy, selfish, funny and adorable and I love her."

No explosions here

Júlía approached the project with a concrete basis in realism, which was necessary to highlight the internal arc of the characters. "Nothing explodes, there are no dinosaurs, we're not telling a story that's never been told, no monkey-business," she explains. "What makes the show interesting is the characters and how we relate to them so it was important to me that the scenes were realistic, that I got the tears, the laughter, the jokes and the pain at the right moment."

And it's a relatively personal story for Júlía, who experienced a similar struggle years ago, when, stuck in a job she didn't like and feeling unfulfilled by life, packed her things up and moved to New York for film school.

"Even though they say that you can't escape all your problems or your own demons—like we may learn from Sara in the show—you can definitely drown some of them in beers at a diner in Brooklyn while writing a movie-script and, as you might imagine, I don't regret that decision," she says. "Especially not today." ☘

"Sara is clumsy, selfish, funny and adorable and I love her."



This here: The kraftgalli is coming back

Electro Poets Of The 21st Century

Möller Records turns 10 years old

Words:
Valur Grettisson

Photo:
Art Bicnick

Through almost 100 albums over a span of 10 years, Möller Records has delivered cutting-edge premium electronic music to a market of just around 360,000 people. Árni Grétar, or Futuregrapher as he calls himself, compares the survival of the label to how people get weirdly obsessed with golf and then just do it all the time forever. Pure resilience, he explains.

We couldn't meet with Árni Grétar in-person because of COVID-19 so we decided to talk together for three days through email about Möller Records' upcoming anniversary and 100th release, which they are currently crowd-funding through Karolina Fund. Here is that unfiltered email conversation.

valur@grapevine.is

Now then, you started Möller records a decade ago in the turmoil of Iceland's total financial collapse, a decade before the worst pandemic outbreak in the last 100 years and, during all that, there's been an incredible global surge of populism, fascist ideology and just overall political insanity. How the hell have you survived all of this as a small electro-indie label in Iceland?!

ag@mollerrecords.com

I would like to think that staying outside of politics and what others are doing around you has helped quite a bit. And what has helped a small label like Möller to stay alive and to grow is the drive from the inside—because if we

look into the whole electronic scene here in Iceland, then it's quite big if you compare it to other countries.

We have many artists and a lot of labels who are doing great here. And the music is getting around globally—thankfully—and that is first and foremost because of the quality. Lastly, I would like to say that all good things come out of passion and love—and we got that here. And Frosti (Bistro Boy) has held this together very nicely the last few years. He is the Obi-Wan and has the best ear. I started this with Jóhann (Skurken) only to release music from us two and maybe a few other friends. But Möller is still here.

valur@grapevine.is

So what you're saying is that you are technically on another planet, where you have nothing less than Techno-Jedis? Makes sense actually. But it's true what you say, the scene here is quite strong in electronic music. Why is that? Does the Icelandic scene have a unique sound? And I can't help wondering—what Jedi or space creature would Futuregrapher be?

ag@mollerrecords.com

Maybe we are... far, far away in another galaxy. But yeah, if you look at it, we have such a strong scene. I think it is because it starts from digging yourself out of something. And Icelanders are good at that, right?

You get a drum machine, you get a

synth and you try to make it work. And in the meantime there is really bad weather outside—windy and cold—so you just stay inside until you have mastered the craft.

The Icelandic scene has a bit of ambient in it all and is very experimental. We have great talents in all genres of the electronica world, but to me, there is a great soundtrack to them all. That cold, windy stuff... yet beautiful.

I am a Han Solo type. The Jedis are the likes of Bistro Boy, Skurken, Ruxpin and such.

valur@grapevine.is

Talking about cold, windy stuff. How the hell has Möller records managed to release 99 albums? Have you not slept for a decade? And what was the hardest one to get out or the most memorable (you have to choose one biz story here)?

ag@mollerrecords.com

Well, it takes hard dedication to do pretty much nothing else than focusing on music. Which I do pretty much myself, [as do] Frosti and the people around us. We are just those kinds of people. Some people play golf—we do this. The first releases were mastered by Jóhann (Skurken) and then I took over in some projects and for the last few years Frosti has been managing this with pride.

Not every release is physical, so that helps. But still a lot of work. But we like it. The hardest one to put out at first

was probably my first solo album as Futuregrapher which was entitled "LP" and came out in 2012 (Helga012). It was supposed to be one of the first releases, but I was still drinking at the time and partying so it always got postponed. But after many sleepless nights—literally—it finally came out in August and I sobered up and have been sober ever since.

Also me and Jóhann were good friends with Bjössi Biogen who was also my mentor in the biz. We were talking about putting out an album with stuff from him. He was excited and we were stoked. But he said goodbye before that happened. We still miss him and I will always love him. Möller wouldn't have happened without him, because I met Skurken through Bjössi at a Weirdcore event at Jacobsen many moons ago.

valur@grapevine.is

We have to talk about money. I'm truly sorry, everybody hates it but needs it at the same time. How does one finance such an underground label in such a niche market? Is an electro musician perhaps the poet of the 21st century, always broke but full of wonderful ideas?

ag@mollerrecords.com

Haha, I like that. Poets of the 21st century. I'll take that <3 There is little or like no money in this business. That's why we all have day jobs. Like I said, to us—this is like golf. A hobby. We are good at it, for sure, but we aren't working professionals. Some might think we don't take it seriously then, but the beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This is what makes us happy.

We have always kept a policy at Möller Records that the artists own the rights to their songs and if they want to do physical copies of their releases, then the artist themselves will pay for it and get all the money for those sales themselves. We help them to make it happen and point them to the right direction. But mainly we are focusing on Spotify, bandcamp and the digital venues. Many artists on the label have also got some help financially in making their physical copies from applying for national grants or to make it happen via Karolina Fund (like we are doing now).

And because the artists own their songs they get their collected royalties via Stef or another collecting society. So Möller is kinda like an umbrella over the artists who are releasing here.

valur@grapevine.is

Tell me more about this project about the hundredth album you are crowd-funding for? What artist will be on it, and how has the older stuff aged?

ag@mollerrecords.com

This is basically music from most of the artists that have been releasing on Möller for the past 10 years and will be available in double LP—which will be four records in total. Bistro Boy, Einar Indra, Skurken, Futuregrapher, Steve Sampling, Tanya & Marlon, Röskva, Subminimal, Gunnar Jónsson Collider, Fu Kaisha and many more will be on it. We are working on the final arrangements, so the tracklist isn't 100% ready, but it will be a great spotlight on all those years and great compilation. The older stuff has aged really well and the first few albums on Möller got a lot of praise and were critically acclaimed.

Listening back to the catalog is great and some of the first albums are in my honest opinion very, very good. It will be a great addition to the collection for any electronica fan.

Emails have been edited for formatting. 🍷

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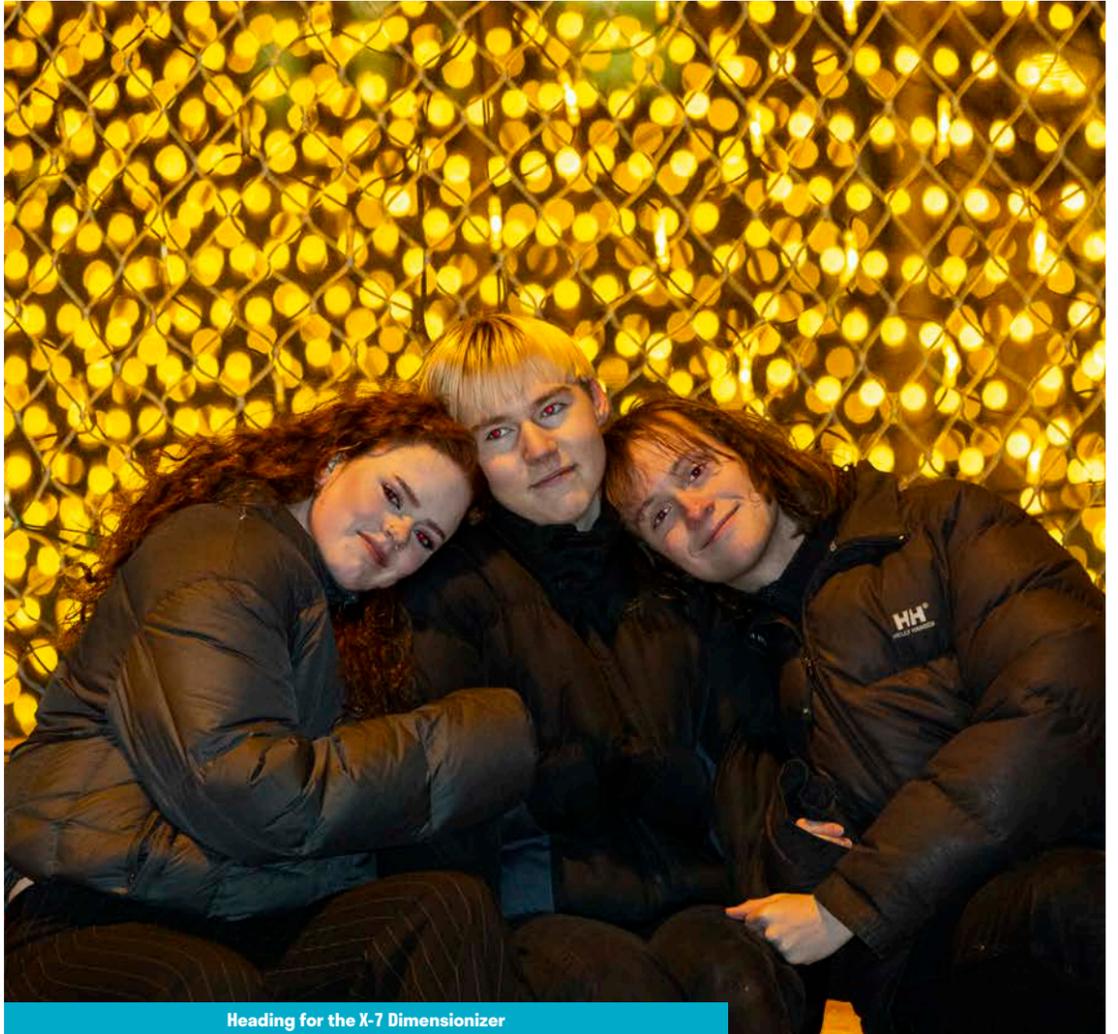
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Heading for the X-7 Dimensionizer

‘Inspector Spacetime’ By Inspector Spacetime

Space is really the most dramatic location for a dance party

Words: **Hannah Jane Cohen** Photos: **Art Bicnick**

Track By Track

Check out *Inspector Spacetime* on all streaming platforms.

Dance-lovers Inspector Spacetime—Egill Gauti Sigurjónsson, Vaka Agnarsdóttir and Elías Geir Óskarsson—walk us through their debut effort track by track.

Intro

The simplest track on the album is the silliest at the same time. The sample at the beginning is the origin of the band's name, which is from ‘Community.’ This summer we basically only spoke in ‘Community’ references, which was very annoying for almost everyone involved—except for us, of course.

The intro was based on this goofy bassline. It's very simple and fun, which was convenient because Elías accidentally deleted the whole album this summer. So we had to remake everything and it actually sounds a lot better now. So deleting everything was maybe a blessing in disguise!

Dansa og bánsa

This is probably the most energetic tune on the album. It's definitely the happiest one. We made it on the first day we officially created the band and just kept throwing vocals on and creating huge choirs of funness. The lyrics are basically “I like to dance and bounce and dance and bounce” so it's basically a song for children. All our songs

are basically songs for children. We make songs to help children practise their grammar. We try to give back, you know?

When we had nearly finished it, we thought it needed something a little more extravagant so we decided on a flute solo. We wrote one and showed it to our flute-playing best friend and apparently, it was just impossible to play—just the worst notes you could possibly play on flute! So she helped make it not so disgusting and now we love this fun, fantasy-disco song.

Teppavirki

“Teppavirki” means “Blanket Fort.” It's definitely a lyrical miracle. Our original concept was a love song about blanket forts because they are so cute and soft and comfy and cosy. It's a bit dramatic but many people have made their own meanings of it, which we love.

Hitta mig

This U.K. garage track follows every rule of pop music. Verse, chorus, verse, chorus, bridge, breakdown and then final chorus. We should have had a key change, but there are some extra special harmonies on the last chorus, so that adds something. Still, the lack of a key change is a huge regret of ours in this juicy, cheesy pop song.

SMB

The “bloop de bloop de bloop” sample is our friend Finnur and was recorded at a pool party for the

freshman at our school. We tried to put it in as a joke and it just fit the vibe of the song—a little too well actually.

Bósi ljósár

Bósi ljósár = Buzz Lightyear! In this song, Inspector Spacetime and Buzz Lightyear have a passionate love affair. But then Buzz goes back to space. He takes the kids, the dogs—it's a very messy, horrible divorce, leaving the Inspector heartbroken. It's deep, dramatic stuff. We're getting into real troubles here—the nitty-gritty of modern-day relationships—in space of all places, which is really the most dramatic place to have a love affair.

Hvað sem er

We are so nostalgic for this song that it's kind of embarrassing. It feels like years since we released it but it's only been like six months. We like our house tunes and if you are going to dance and bounce, you need a house song, so we made one and thought it'd be the perfect first single. A safe, solid house track. It's always good to drop a safe song first so you don't get judged. We at Inspector Spacetime are—say it with me—afraid of being judged! Definitely.

Inspector Spacetime

The titular track. Two words. Inspector Spacetime.

We love drum and bass so we had to have a drum and bass song. It's a simple song and the only one where we show our tough side. We are not to be messed with on this track! No, the claws are coming out, bucko! That's definitely the vibe we try to give out. We are, as we said earlier, afraid of being judged but also don't mess with us... because we WILL be afraid! That's an important message and one I think we are very successful at conveying on this album. 🐾

**A GUIDE THAT
FUCKS YOU UP**

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**Every
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Hour**
in 101 Reykjavík

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Beer 850 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

APOTEK
Every day from
15:00 to 18:00.
Beer 890 ISK,
Wine 990 ISK.

BASTARD BREW
Every day from
16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 500 ISK,
Wine 700 ISK.

BEER GARDEN
Every day from
15:00 to 19:00.
Beer 500 ISK off
draft beer!

BRAVÓ
Every day from
11:00 to 20:00.
Beer 700 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

CAFÉ BABALÚ
Every day from
19:00 to 21:00.
Beer 690 ISK,
Wine 795 ISK.

DILLON
Every day from
14:00 to 19:00.
Beer 600 ISK,
Wine 850 ISK.

FJALLKONAN
Every day from
15:00 to 17:00.
Beer 890 ISK,
Wine 990 ISK.

FORRÉTTABARINN
Every day from
16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

ÍSLENSKI BARINN
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 700 ISK,
Wine 700 ISK.

IDA ZIMSEN
Every day from
8:00 to 10:00.
Coffee 400 ISK.

ÍSAFOLD
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 600 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

**JUNGLE COCKTAIL
BAR**
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17:00 to 20:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 1,000 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

KAFFIBARINN
Every day from
15:00 to 20:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine (On Wed.)
800 ISK.

KAFFIBRENNSLAN
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 550 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK.

KALDI
Every day from
16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 850 ISK,
Wine 850 ISK.

KEX HOSTEL
Every day from
15:00 to 19:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK.

LAUNDROMAT
Every day from
20:00 to 22:00.
Beer 650 ISK,
Wine 1,000 ISK.

LOFT
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK.

MIAMI
Every day from
15:00 to 19:00.
Beer 700 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK,
Cocktails 1,200
ISK.

**PAPAKU
REYKJAVÍK**
Every day from
16:00 to 22:00.
Beer 690 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

PRIKIÐ
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK.

PUBLIC HOUSE
Every day from
15:00 to 18:00 &
23:00 to 1:00.
Beer 890 ISK,
Wine 890 ISK.

PUNK
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 890 ISK,

Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

PETERSEN SVÍTAN
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 1,000 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

ROSENBERG
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 950 ISK.

RÖNTGEN
Every day from
15:00 to 20:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 1,000 ISK.

SÆTA SVÍNID
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 890 ISK,
Wine 990 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

SECRET CELLAR
Every day from
19:00 to 21:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

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Wine 900 ISK.



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Wine 750 ISK,
Cocktails 1,200
ISK

SPÁNSKI BARINN
Every day from
14:00 to 20:00.
Beer 650 ISK,
Wine 850 ISK.

SÓLON
Everyday from
15:00 to 18:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

SUSHI SOCIAL
Every day from
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Beer 645 ISK,
Wine 745 ISK,
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cocktails.

TAPAS BARINN
Every day from
17:00 to 18:00.
Beer 645 ISK,
Wine 745 ISK.

VEÐUR
Every day from
12:00 to 19:35.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

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Every day from
15:00 to 20:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

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and cafe**
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Vegan option

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And Under**

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Matarkjallarinn
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11:30 - 15:00
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soup -1,990 ISK

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We've bet our whole life savings on these winners

Reading Too Much Into The Icelandic Book Prize Nominees

Who will win, who will lose? Here are our predictions

Words: Valur Grettisson Photo: Art Bicnick

In Iceland, you can be sure that two things happen every year in January: bad weather and the Icelandic Book Prize. 2021 is no different, although this iteration of the con-

test did start with a bang. Earlier in the awards cycle, the Icelandic Publishers Association posted an ad online looking for “passionate book-lovers” to be in the panels

for the book prizes. The result was a surprise 280 applications from bibliophiles across the country. Although you can find some familiar names on the list, there are also a

plethora of new and unexpected judges so, in some ways, the book prize has never been as egalitarian as it is now.

But we are here to talk about the books, not the politics—predicting the winners (and snubs) of the Icelandic Book Prize is an annual Grapevine parlour game—the sole purpose of which is to let you in on what’s new in literature these days. That said, only one of these books has been translated to English.

So, here are the contestants for the Icelandic Book Prize, who we will think will win and who we think should win. Just keep in mind that last year, we didn’t predict a single winner correctly, so just assume we’re full of it. In fact, if you’re an author, maybe you should hope we don’t choose you.

Fiction

Critics have said that this wasn’t a particularly lively Christmas book season, but 2020 did bring us some pretty strong fiction. The buzziest buzz was around Ólafur Jóhann Ólafsson’s ‘Snerting’—‘One Station Away’ is available in English translation—which was the most sold book this year at the biggest Icelandic bookstores—no small feat considering that 2020 saw a popular release by the Icelandic crime king himself, Arnaldur Indriðason. Anyway, it seems to be the general consensus that ‘Snerting’ is not only well-written, but powerful in a quiet way. That said, it might be a little too quiet for some readers, but Ólafur Jóhann is no doubt a frontrunner here. In 2006, he received the prize for his short story collection ‘Aldingarðurinn’ (‘Valentines’) so this could be his moment to win the big award.

‘Snerting’ would be a no-contest winner if it weren’t for the widely-loved and adored Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir, who is nominated for her novel ‘Dýralíf’ (‘Life Of Animals’). Auður kind of snuck through the backdoor of the world of Icelandic literature. She is wildly famous in France and was nominated for the Nordic Council Book Prize in 2009 for her novel ‘Afleggjarinn’ (‘The Greenhouse’). But she wasn’t nominated for the Icelandic Book Prize that year. Her sales in Iceland were actually quite low compared to her acclaim abroad, which perhaps explains her absence from the list, but the snub was still a scandal. Auður didn’t really find fame here in Iceland until she won the Nordic Council Book Prize in 2016 for her book ‘Ör’ (‘Hotel Silence’), for which she was also awarded the Icelandic Book Prize that year. She could easily take it again this year.

But there is another option—a larger-than-life bohemian genius who could also grab the gold. Elísabet Jökulsdóttir, Iceland’s fusion of Bukowski and Sylvia Plath, is nominated for the book ‘Apríl-sólkuldi’ (which is not a word easily translated, but means ‘April, Sun, Cold’). Elísabet had a rough upbringing; alcoholism was a big part of her life, which she writes about in this merciless reflection of her own existence. Elísabet is my favourite to win, although others in the office are torn between her and Auður Ava.

That said, there is a rule though when looking at literature in Iceland and that is never underestimate the up-and-coming writers. Jónas Reynir Gunnarsson as well as Arndís Þórarinsdóttir are two young and incredibly

talented nominees. Jónas Reynir has a serious contribution with his novel ‘Dauði Skógar’ (‘Death Of A Forest’) and is a name you should memorise. He could definitely take the awards unexpectedly—deserving so. Arndís, meanwhile, is the poet of the year. Every year, there is always one at the Icelandic Book Prize and unfortunately, they never win, which always raises the question if there should be a specific category for poets.

Children’s Books

Icelanders understand that the only way to make a book-loving person is to grab them while they’re young, so the children’s book category is both good and very ambitious every year. Our favorite is of course Lóa Hjálm-týsdóttir, which our readers know very well through her fantastic comics that have graced the pages of our magazine for many years. Her book, ‘Grísafjörður’ (‘The Fjord Of Piglets’) has Lóa’s characteristic warm sense of humour as well as her fantastic artwork. Call it nepotism, but we favour her when it comes to the best children’s book of the year. And hey—it’s Iceland. When has a little nepotism ever hurt anyone?

Other nominees are Hildur Knútsdóttir for her young adult novel ‘Skógurinn’ (‘The Forest’). She won in 2016 and the panel tends to choose new writers rather than awarding already decorated authors, so she’s not our top prediction. The crime queen herself, Yrsa Sigurðardóttir, is also nominated for her book, ‘Herra Bóbó, Amelia og Ættbrókin’, which is an interesting side project to her normal mystery novels. Other books are ‘Blökkinn á heimsenda’ by Arndís Þórarinsdóttir—nominated above for her poetry collection—which she wrote with Hulda Sigrún Bjarnadóttir. There’s also ‘Dulstafir - Dóttir hafsins’ a young adult adventure written by another new writer, Kristín Björg Sigurvinsdóttir. And as we said earlier, never underestimate them.

Non-Fiction

Honestly, we won’t go as in-depth into the non-fiction category. It’d be an article in itself and unfortunately, these books tend to be not translated into English for some reason. That said, our favourite is ‘Fuglinn sem gat ekki flogið’ or in English, ‘The Bird That Couldn’t Fly’ by Gísli Pálsson. The book delves into the history of the wonderful, weird great auk, which went extinct around 1900. The book does have a twist though—as much as a non-fiction book can—when it shifts its focus to the extinction of animals in Iceland in the face of global warming.

But who do we think is going to win? ‘Konur sem kjósa - aldar-saga’ or ‘Women That Vote’ by Erla Hulda Halldórsdóttir, Kristín Svava Tómasdóttir, Ragnheiður Kristjánsdóttir and Þorgerður H. Þorvaldsdóttir. This work is a culmination of years of academic research on the struggle for gender equality for over a hundred years. It also takes a look at the political and cultural sides of gender studies in Iceland.

So those are our predictions! Take them or leave them, but always remember that we’ve never predicted correctly. Not even once. 🍷

Sæta Svínid
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FANCIES is where we talk to Reykjavík's most fashion-forward figures about style

Logi Þorvaldsson

Words:
Hannah Jane
Cohen

Photo:
Art Bicnick



Logi Þorvaldsson is a film producer.

Wearing:

- Everything is thrifted! Nothing new.
- Vest from Spúútnik
- Shirt is my Dad's Christmas shirt
- Scarf is vintage Chanel
- Pants are from Samhjálp
- Shoes are Red Cross
- Jewellery from Viðja Jewellery

Describe your style in 5 words:

70s dude. Leather rockstar. Forever-evolving.

Favourite stores in Reykjavík:

All the thrift shops. Hertex, Rauði krossinn, Spúútnik and Wasteland, but my all-time favourite is Samhjálp. That's a hidden gem.

Favourite piece:

This Viðja jewellery gold dragon necklace—it's my favourite piece ever. It's custom-made so there's only one in the world and it's by an Icelandic designer. I also recently bought these leather Versace pants in London, where I live, but when I came to Iceland this year, I thought I was only going to be here for a month so I left them behind. But now I've been there for six months and I've thought about them every day.

Something I would never wear:
H&M. Fast fashion is horrible.

Lusting after:

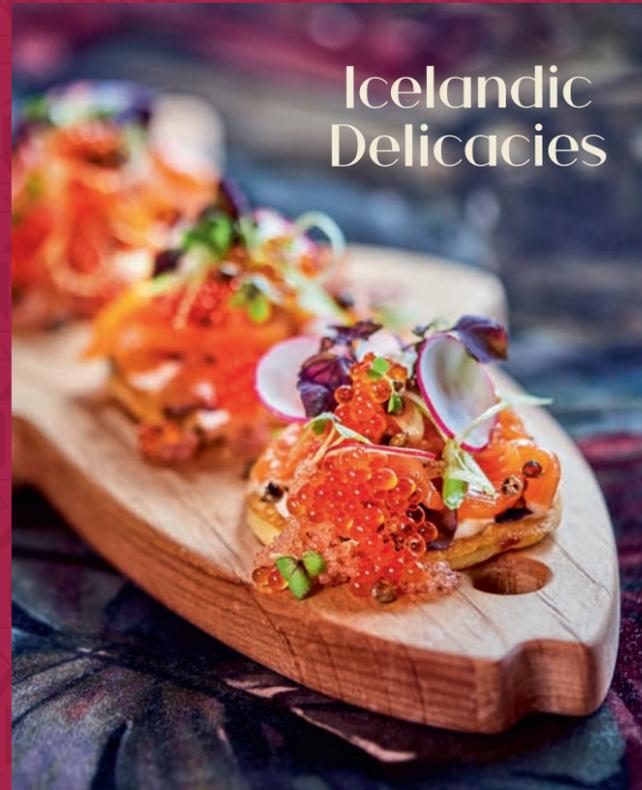
I'm craving something Dior. The dream would be a proper full-on Dior suit, but I've also been eyeing some sporty vintage 90s Dior sunglasses. I've been scouring only vintage sites. 🐉

FJALLKONAN

KRÁ & KRÆSINGAR

Fjallkonan is a new lively restaurant & pub in the heart of Reykjavík offering a selection of Icelandic and international dishes from local ingredients.

Casual and cosy atmosphere yet still fun and festive. Stop by for snacks & drinks, lunch or dinner.



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- > Minke whale, malt glaze
- > Lamb tartar, chive mayo

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Restaurants Reshaping In The Midst Of The Crisis

How restaurants in Iceland are surviving in these volatile times

Words: Shruthi Basappa Photos: Art Bicnick

"You smear the butter all over the dosa," my Dad demonstrates. "Like this," he says, as he tenderly traces the masala dosa with a blob of white butter. I watch, mesmerised, as the fat glistens and disappears, leaving a milky streak behind, glossing the already lacquered dosa with a fresh sheen of fat. I'm about six or eight years old and we are at one of many popular 'darshinis' in Bangalore—fast food joints that are ironically named as most of the menu is a tribute to dishes that are laborious and notorious to make. My normally impatient father slows down here. How to eat a dosa is a secret shared; a little bridge between us. I understood even then that going out to eat is special. There is an air of generosity in restaurants, a magical slowing of time and it touches everyone in it. And I felt lucky to be able to be in on the secret.

As I've grown older, I've continued to enjoy dining out just as I did so long ago as a child. So much so that I have made a career out of it. Restaurants still hold all the magic of Neverland for me. Where your only responsibility is enjoyment while the hubbub of regular life thrums away ceaselessly outside its doors. It is its own spectacular bubble. Everything's better when dining out. Be it at starred restaurants taking you on a culinary adventure spanning textures, flavours and ingredients or bustling street side

joints where smoke singed plates of sizzling deliciousness make mundane evenings memorable.

The nonchalant choreography of plates on the pass, with everything arranged just so, making their way to you from kitchen to the table feels like a private performance put on just for you. Knowing that this intimate dialogue between the chef and you will be but a memory even as the last crumb is swept away heightens its ephemerality. Can you tell that I hopelessly love restaurants?

Pandemic blow

But the pandemic changed everything. Almost overnight, restaurants had to turn their entire operating principle on its head. For an industry that was just starting to come to terms with the latest union negotiations, gathering restrictions seemed to be another nail in the coffin. Tourist footfalls form a large bulk of business for the F&B industry and subsequent relief measures seemed to consistently gloss over the hospitality industry in its efforts to contain the impact on the tourism industry. There simply is no tourism industry without the hospitality industry.

And Iceland, for all its reputation of being expensive has successfully catered to various budgets, the 1500ISK sad sandwich

notwithstanding. Travellers have made exclusive plans just to dine at Dill, Iceland's only Michelin starred restaurant, and waiting lists are the norm at Óx, an exclusive intimate chef's table experience. It isn't an exaggeration to say that a taste of local produce and pristine Nordic cooking has been its own draw. Pandemic food trends

Accessible menus

"If people cannot come to the food, then the food will come to the people," seemed to be the mantra in those early days of the pandemic. Recreating the restaurant experience at home seems straightforward but it is not without its own challenges. Chefs had to be quick footed and adapt dishes that would travel well, rehearse well and in many instances, make their food accessible and bridge generations. While this served well in the early days of the pandemic, it quickly proved to be a stop-gap solution. Dine-in menus too reflected a shift; there has never been an influx of 'safe menus' as in 2020. But as infection rates go down and restrictions lift, I am fervently hoping that chefs are ready to flex those creative muscles and reward us with an unbridled explosion of palate-singeing fireworks.



Kitchen porn

Alcohol reform

Guessing the alcohol tax would make for a great drinking game if only it weren't so steep. Cooped up at home with people you may or may not like are conditions ripe to drown one's miseries and no amount of tax was deemed too steep to tide over the pandemic. Unsurprisingly, alcohol consumption was through the roof in 2020. While monopoly is our mantra second only to 'þetta reddast', the relationship with alcohol here is a curious thing indeed. You can only buy alcohol from state-owned stores. You cannot buy alcohol online locally. It is illegal. One can shop for spirits from international stores. That is legal. We've been through enough, just lower the taxes, allow restaurants and wine bars to sell alcohol online and usher in modern reform already.

Cloud kitchens

At the peak of the pandemic, while the rest of the world seemed to be baking, we were busy pickling. Granted, one couldn't turn a corner in their kitchen without a sourdough starter staring them in the face, but kimchi kitchens seemed to mushroom everywhere and social media pages were hotbeds of booming activity (Veterans like the Filipino kitchen, Pinoy Taste, were well poised for pandemic conditions with their authentic fare). Unsurprising given that the barrier to entry for home chef's and food enthusiasts is so steep in Iceland. If the authorities would simplify regulations and invested in prep kitchen facilities like Eldstæðið, we'd see diverse additions to the culinary landscape.

Digital and delivery innovation

For a small country, Iceland can be painfully slow to adapt to change. Globally, third-party platforms surged ahead leaving restaurants overwhelmed with deliveries. The absence of a robust delivery infrastructure here is telling. Both restaurant self-delivery and digital platforms need an overhaul (early adopter Fönix has done notably well in this aspect). Customers have moved their lives indoors and online and this would be a positive for the industry. Meanwhile, we can continue to enjoy the discounts offered on take-aways to take away the sting of navigating cumbersome websites.

Seasonal restaurants

It is easy to forget that Reykjavik isn't Iceland. The loss of tourism has hit places outside the capital deeply. Reliant on both foreign labour and footfalls, many like Fisherman's in Suðureyri completely shut shop for the foreseeable future. While the success of 'ferðum innanlands' brightened the summer, it was quickly overshadowed by rising infections that followed. What this summer will bring remains to be seen. Veterans like Slippurinn and Norðautur are tangible cultural treasures that need to be protected.

Pop-ups and locals

In Reykjavik, restaurants outside the capital area proved successful with their local clientele. They also became mobile. Deig travelled around Iceland with their baked goods. Fine opened a take-away only window in Hafnarfjörður

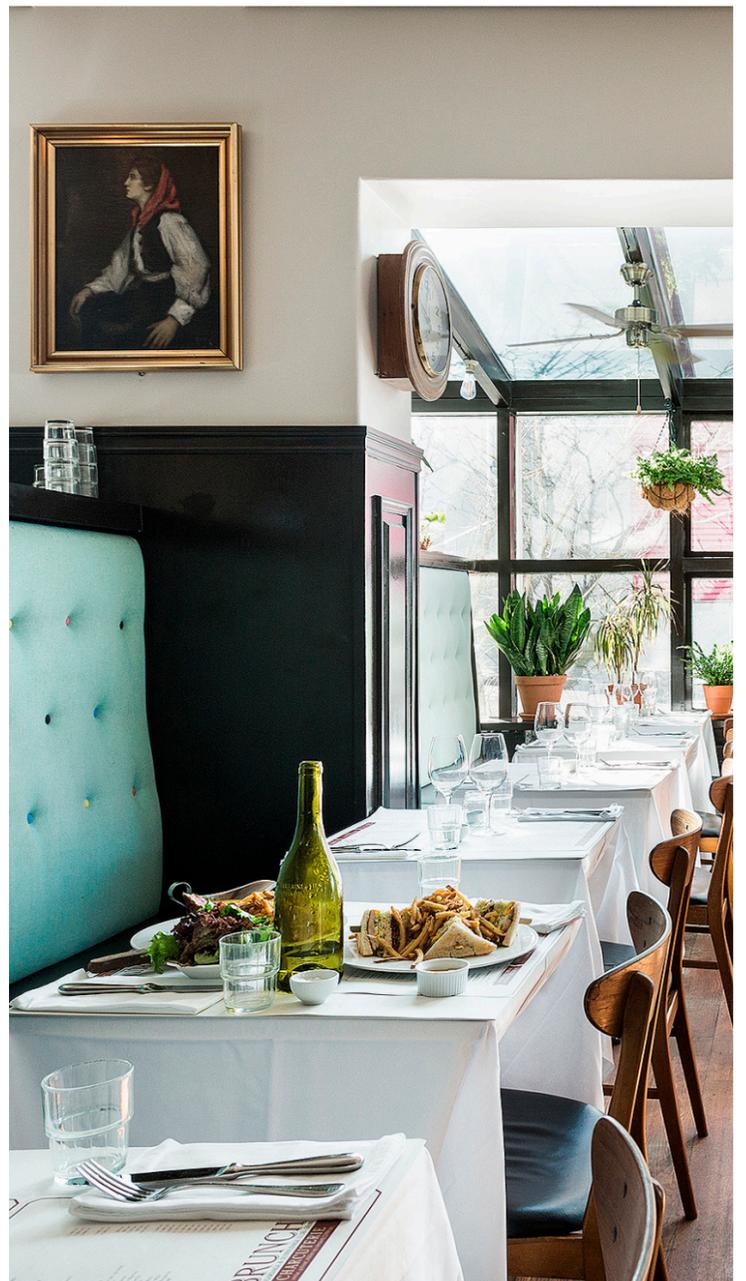
and, quelling rumours of a closure, have opened their doors again on Rauðarárstígur.

Slippurinn regularly extended its reach, birthing an off-shoot burger joint that turned into a gourmet delicatessen. Folks from Mat Bar and Makake joined hands and brought us Dragon Dimsum, a six-week pop-up that proved so successful that it is now a steady fixture. The 160-seater Skelfiskmarkaðurinn has successfully been turned into street food hall, Götumarkaðurinn. Gandhi is now an Indian-ish lounge bar at a new location and Chickpea at Hallveigarstígur is keeping the vegetarian high-street food flag high.

Natural wine bar Mikki Refur, which has been quietly plying us with bubbles and soup from none other than chef Gunnar Karl, will offer wine-paired pop-ups in 2021. The bad boys of Vinstúkan Tíu Söpar are working on a hush-hush restaurant-bar-café at the renovated Radisson Blu 1919.

Bottom Line

History is proof that periods of hardship, war and prohibitions are almost always followed by exuberant freewheeling, cue the roaring 20's and swinging 60's. The pandemic is changing life in tangible ways. While travel may be a distant reality, adventures are to be had right here, right now, to far away distant lands, to the corners of one's own land and to see and taste a future yet to be imagined. And it's yours for the taking at your favourite restaurants. ♡



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WELL, YOU ASKED



Will 2 Power

Words: Valur Grettisson

Got a burning question? In desperate need of advice? We at the Grapevine are here to help.



So, I'm really inspired by the coup thing in the US, but I live in Iceland. How exactly would one plan a coup in Reykjavík, I mean, does anyone even have to use a gun to take power? Best, David.

I'm so glad that you asked, David. I've been thinking about this myself. You just need to get the president, Prime Minister and the leaders of the coalition and the chairman of the Supreme Court to take an elevator at the same time, then get it stuck. This has actually happened once before and no one ruled the country for an hour. So the moment they get stuck, we would send a press release, informing the puny nation of the Icelandic slaves that they have a new king/God/Tzar. Then we would barricade ourselves inside the parliament and hope no one throws us out or ask us politely to leave the parameters. (You are white, right?) Simple. I'll find the elevator, you draft the statement.



I'm thinking of quitting social media. Convince me otherwise.

Well, first of all, think about Mark Zuckerberg's kids. How are they gonna feel about you leaving their father without even saying goodbye? Second of all, think about all of the people that will not get the chance to listen to your hot takes on the current issue. How will they get throughout the day without being inspired by your deep, intellectual thoughts on the world's problems? And finally, what about us?! How are we gonna reach you? Please email your phone number at least! 🍷

For advice, send your quandaries to grapevine@grapevine.is

HORROR-SCOPES

Go Agrarian, Not Vegetarian

Words: Jeffree Star & Kanye West

The Grapevine's team of amateur astrologists followed all pandemic restrictions over their cosmic New Years celebrations. They, along with all 88 constellations, remained light years away from each other while they partied, so you can trust that no fever is adding their minds during these predictions.



Aries

Sit down, Aries. We—along with many dwarf stars—are worried about how many Yummy Mummy blogs you have already consumed in the first week of 2021. It's not healthy and so we're going to tell you the hard truth: No matter how many teaspoons of turmeric you add to your child's formula, they are still going to enjoy YouTube family vloggers. It's just genetic.



Taurus

Wow! An Apple Watch for Christmas! Groundbreaking. Flex on all your haters by pointing it out at every given moment.



Gemini

Your landlord is ghosting you for a reason, Gemini. Our spiritual consultants say it's because you resemble his childhood bully. Sorry.



Cancer

You're right! Learning Latin is a great New Year's Resolution, Cancer. Especially if that one film you watched while drunk is correct and you will one day accidentally stumble upon a time machine and wake up in Rome circa 250 CE. Just kidding—the Latin you're learning is a mixture of ten centuries worth of language with a modern, ecclesiastical-tradition pronunciation and without a doubt, no one in the empire would understand you. You useless bitch.



Leo

What's the point of life? We know you spend a lot of time mulling over such deep questions, but if we are all going to die in the

end, what's the point? Live in the moment, girl. Stop spending your weeknights dissecting the nature of godliness and spend it Zooming with hotties like the goddess you are. And no, don't you dare start unpacking the term "goddess."



Virgo

Remember that anime phase you had, Virgo? Well, it shouldn't have been a phase. You messed your fate up the moment you sold your manga, but the gracious planetary bodies are now giving you a moment to rectify it. Here's your second chance: Don't blow it.



Libra

Keep on rocking this week, Libra. And what's the best way to keep on rocking? Pepper your next texts with rocking emoticons like \m/ or, for more advanced rockers, \m/(><)\m/ and bd(OoO)bd. All that's left is to pump some iron to Five Finger Death Punch.



Scorpio

We're proud that you've kept the personal manipulation to a minimum so far in 2021, Scorpio. It shows real personal growth and, frankly, the tea leaves did not expect such maturity from someone with such a storied past. That said, the ex you robbed will be frequenting your local grocery store over the next few days, so



Sagittarius

FAME. FORTUNE. LOVE. These are just a few of the blessings you can expect in 2021 if you keep a positive, open mind. 'The Secret' who?!



Capricorn

When you heard the voices of the cosmos tell you to "go vegetarian" for 2021, you misunderstood. They actually meant "go agrarian". Yes, it's a common misconception and one that's definitely contributing to the declining rate of communes worldwide. But don't worry—we got you, you future farming legend.



Aquarius

Ho it up this year Aquarius. We stan an empowered woman.



Pisces

Don't ho it up this year Pisces. In fact, actively not-ho it up and loudly judge anyone who does. For more inspiration, check out the temperance movement. 🍷

CITY SHOT by Art Bicnick



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Travel

Murder And Aliens And Elves, Oh My!

A hair-raising hike up Hjørleifshöfði

Words: Jess Distill Photos: Art Bicnick



Travel distance from Reykjavik:
200 km, Route 1

Car provided by:
gocarrental.is

Hjørleifshöfði is a curious place. At once bleak and majestic, the vast black sands and sweeping panoramas tell ancient and mysterious tales of murder, elves and alien planets.

Hair-raising moments

Named after Hjørleifur Hróðmarsson, the brother of the first Norse settler in Iceland, Ingólfur Arnarson, Hjørleifshöfði was, for a short time, Hjørleifur's home—until he was brutally murdered by his ill-treated slaves, that is. His burial mound can still be seen at the top of the mountain, along with the graves of later settlers who lived on a farm in the shadows of the mountain.

The weather was perfect for the hike up. A popular area with walkers, the path up the inselberg is a relatively simple one—if a little steep—with easy paths winding up to the peak and back down the other side. We set off on our jaunt at about 11 a.m. and, despite a couple of hair-raising moments in which I casually declared I have a heart condition that was playing up and we all genuinely questioned whether or not I'd make it to the top without having a heart attack, the climb was pleasant. We reached the top by noon and were

instantly blown away—metaphorically by the views and almost literally by the crazy wind. Sprawling beaches, foaming seas and snow-capped mountains dominate the landscape and, in clear weather, you can see for kilometres. Here we sat for a while, catching our breath and regaining our composure, before heading to Hjørleifshöfði's famous cave.

Super-skilled Jedi Knights

Heading down the mountain, we pass by the eerie ruins of an old farmstead. Hikers beware, here be elves. Legend has it that hidden folk dwell among these stones, wreaking havoc on those who dare linger. Ever since the time of the settlement, Hjørleifshöfði has been known as a place of mysterious happenings. Many who come here still experience unexplainable things, and are drawn back to the area again and again to try and figure out their cause. Fortunately for us, the only unexplainable thing that happened that day was me making it the entire way without falling on my arse or needing helicopter rescue.

Like many parts of Iceland, Hjørleifshöfði has become film-location

famous, posing as the planet Lah'mu in 'Star Wars: Rogue One'. [Editor's note: Hjørleifshöfði was not featured in the film. Our journalist succumbed to fake space news. Oops.] The area wasn't particularly popular with tourists until the film was released in 2016, but it now welcomes thousands of visitors who long to take a photo on alien sands. The highlight for many is the cave. We were surprised to learn that this cave was, in fact, not one of the reasons this location was chosen for the film—despite the fact it is shaped, rather uncannily, like Yoda. Of course, knowing that we were going to be spending some time here, the ever-prepared Art Bicnick packed some lightsabers allowing Iona

and I to enjoy a few moments pretending we were super skilled Jedi Knights.

While we were keen to get home, we made sure to stop for lunch in Vík. It's well worth exploring this cute little town on your way to or from Hjørleifshöfði. The black beaches are a must and the view from the church is sure to get you all the Instagram likes. Having been fairly sedentary within the confines of the city lately, the climb was the most exercise we had done in almost three months. We left the south coast behind us and headed back to the city: tired, windswept and glad that there is still plenty of adventure to be had in Iceland. Even in the midst of the pandemic. 🍷

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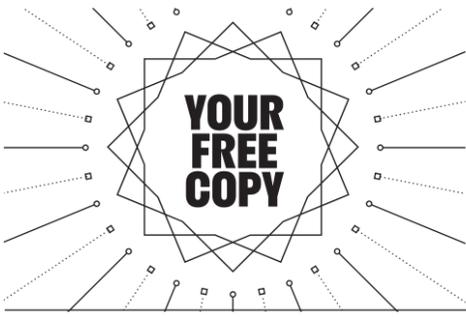
Anakin would hate this sandy place



Hjørleifur Hróðmarsson's mound at the top



Jess presents Hjørleifshöfði mountain. Thanks Jess!



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“[The album] revolves around the absolute futility of anything. It’s nihilistic but not in the sense that we’re all beat up and sad about it, it’s just a statement of fact.”

The most ungoogleable band in Iceland, Núll, explains the idea behind their album. **P18**



“It’s always fun to play, of course, but you do miss the element of people in the room because [live music] is nurturing for both the audience and the performer. I see the good in it, but I’m looking forward to when we can play live more.”

Bass wonder Ingibjörg Turchi misses playing live. We all do. **P19**

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