

THE 

# REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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## THE EQUALISER

Haraldur Þorleifsson, founder of Ueno and philanthropist extraordinaire, on helping the powerless, giving back to the community, and fighting misinformation

### Skjaldborg

Culture News: Hot new films in the middle of nowhere

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COVER PHOTO:

Photo: Ari Magg

Ari Magg took this strong photo of Haraldur Þorleifsson, a billionaire who has been using his wealth to empower the powerless. This photo is historic for The Reykjavik Grapevine, as this is the first time a disabled person has featured on the cover.

# First



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## EDITORIAL

# The Billionaire's Example

Icelanders are no fan of billionaires. They crashed our economy with greed and a lack of regulation in 2008 resulting in the worst financial crisis Icelanders have ever faced. They tried - with the help of the ruling government - to dump the massive debt on the coming generations in connection with the mess of Icesave. The public stopped this at first through a referendum, and finally, EFTA confirmed that the Icelandic public was right all along; the people had nothing to do with banksters' incompetence and were therefore not responsible for their debts through the government.

While some politicians state the case that the billionaires are somehow important to the economy, Icelanders know better. The economy was literally saved by the brutal forces of nature when Eyjafjallajökull erupted in 2010 which resulted in the biggest tourist boom Icelanders had ever seen. Banksters had absolutely nothing to do with it.

Billionaires also had absolutely nothing to do with the building of modern Iceland and they have absolutely nothing to do with the high standards of life of the Icelandic public. They have nothing to do with the incredible achievement of Icelanders when it comes to art, music and international reputation or the nation's progressive political stand in human rights and gender equality.

So what good are they for society? Not much. It's the harsh truth. Many of them try to hide their profit in offshore bank

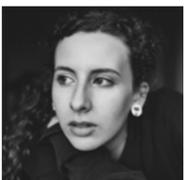
accounts because they don't believe in participating in the mutual responsibility of the public to fund the infrastructure of the country. Every time they participate in the public debate, they only reveal how they are not connected to reality at all. I dare you to ask a billionaire to guess how much a carton of milk costs. At least the answer will be entertaining.

But there is a new billionaire in town, and he's raising important questions about the responsibility of wealth. And he does so by doing. Haraldur Þorleifsson has not only emphasised paying his taxes, which became a headline all over the country for some reason, but he has emphasised empowering the powerless. One form of this is that he covered all the legal costs for some of the people sued for defamation in connection with #Meetoo. One of these cases might prove groundbreaking when it comes to the limits of expression in such a context.

Haraldur also understands the importance of infrastructure. He became paralysed at only 24 years old, due to sickness, years before he sold his company, Ueno, to Twitter. Therefore he made a vow to pay taxes in Iceland to strengthen the welfare system. He has an ambitious plan of making Iceland more accessible to the disabled.

Now, although Icelanders have a wary eye open when it comes to billionaires, they do notice that Haraldur is setting a new standard for other people of money. And this is perhaps his most important contribution to the decadent reality of the wealthy; money has no real power, enriching your community does.

Valur Grettilsson  
Editor-in-chief



**Joana Fontinha** is an Aries baby expressing her soul through photography. She's been obsessed with Icelandic culture since her teens, so much that at 20 she threw herself head-first on a plane to her long-time dream country, Iceland. Driven, energetic and unable to be still, she clumsily moves like a flash and suffers from a serious fast-talking condition.



**Alice Poggio**, quarter-life crisis is all too real, but Alice is making the most of it. Chasing down her numerous interests, which have shaped her into the poster child for the sometimes painful phrase: 'Master of none'. UAL graduate, volunteer, sculptor, freelance artist, wannabe MacGyver, is now eager to play her part within the landscape of Icelandic media.



**Polly** is a hard-working journalist by day and an enthusiastic ball-catcher by night. A five-year-old dachshund mix with an IQ of a five-year-old human, Polly is Chief Morale Officer at the Grapevine, and a regular contributor to the Grapevine Newscast on YouTube. Woof!



**Josie Anne Gaitens** is an arts worker, musician and writer from the Scottish Highlands. She was once erroneously referred to as the Queen of Scotland by a Malaysian newspaper and has been falsely using that title ever since. In addition to her Grapevine duties, she is currently on a mission to have a pint in every bar in 101.



**Iryna Zubenko** is a Ukrainian who has been working on the cross-section of media and technology for the past five years. While she is still figuring out what to do in life, this time her love for travelling, unspoiled nature and Scandi design has brought Iryna to Reykjavik. One day she'll write a non-fiction book.



**Catharine Fulton** is a writer who has been involved with the Grapevine for many years—possibly too many—serving as journalist, food editor and news editor before settling on copy editor. When not wielding her red pen she's often found opining on Canadian politics (professionally), and bitching about Icelandic politics (for fun).



**Asha Edmondson** studies and takes on just about everything back home in the States. From communications to dance to psychology to sailing, there is almost nothing she hasn't tried. An intrusive thought of "What if I spent my summer in Iceland?" turned into reality, bringing her to the Grapevine.



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



**Valur Grettilsson** 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' on RÚV. Valur is not to be confused with the dreadful football club that bears the same name.

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Pride in Iceland

**What Are Icelanders Talking About?**

The news and the chatter

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

**NEWS** A stunning report from national broadcasting service RÚV shed light on **the bullying and harassment that LGBTQ+ youth in Iceland endure**. This may come as a surprise to outside observers, who are familiar with how Iceland has risen up the ranks on the Rainbow Map, but closer to home things are quite different. Many of these young people report being bullied relentlessly in school, online, and in their neighbourhoods. This has prompted far too many of them to turn to self-harm and even suicide. The report has sparked renewed interest in defending some of the most vulnerable people in Icelandic society.

Speaking of vulnerable people, **the government is, at the time of this writing, preparing to deport about 200 people from Iceland**. Many of these people have been living in Iceland for two years or longer, and most of them are going to be sent to Greece, Nigeria, and Iraq—none of them places where refugees can hope to start a better life. The news has not only sparked protest from the Church of Iceland, the Red Cross, and the general public—as deportations tend to do—they also expose a rift in the ruling coalition government. While Minister of Justice Jón Gunnarsson of the Independence Party

staunchly defends these deportations, members of the Left-Greens, including Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir, claim to have different feelings about the matter. However, they haven't really done anything to stop previous deportations, so time will tell if anything will be different this time around.

This is perhaps what makes it understandable that a lot of the criticism directed at the government over these deportations has been aimed at the Left-Greens; the Independence Party does not pretend to care about refugees, while the Left-Greens ostensibly

do. A great example of this was a Facebook status from Davíð Þór Jónsson, a Lutheran minister, saying **there is a special place in Hell for people who seek and retain power by trodding on the most vulnerable**. This sparked an immediate backlash. The Bishop of Iceland scolded him, and a few key members of the Left-Greens have attempted to characterise these remarks as hate speech. If only they could work up the same outrage about the deportations.

Lastly, **earthquakes**. They've been shaking up Reykjanes peninsula again, specifically in the area known as Svartsengi. The surface ground has also been seen to be rising in that area, indicating that magma is looking for a way out. Could it be a new volcano? Well, as scientists are fond of saying, that remains to be seen. 🍷



Mt. Þorbjörn, Vesuvius of the Reykjanes



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# When Is A Deportation Unlawful?

It's up to interpretation

**Words:** Last April, the Icelandic Red Cross put together a detailed report on deportations to Greece. Amongst their conclusions was that sending refugee children to that country contravenes the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. **Andie Sophia Fontaine**

**Illustration:** Lawyers and human rights activists have argued that deporting anyone to Greece is unlawful. Yet the Icelandic **Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir**

government has done so, and plans to do so again. How?

**It depends how you define "inhuman"**

Article 42 of the Law on Foreigners is clear: "[I]t is not permitted to send a foreigner or a stateless person to an

area where he has reason to fear persecution ... or due to circumstances similar to those in the refugee concept, are in imminent danger of dying or being subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment."

Given what numerous reports have said about the life awaiting refugees, even those who have received international protection, in Greece, surely that deportation destination falls under Article 42, no?

## The great lie

You would think so! This is why Minister of Justice Jón Gunnarsson has repeatedly, and falsely, stated that those granted international protection in Greece will enjoy all the rights and benefits of any Greek citizen—if he admitted otherwise, he would probably have to admit Greece falls under Article 42.

This is just one example. The Dublin Regulation, for instance, affords a lot of rights to people who apply for international protection in Iceland that our government does not give them—but we still point to this regulation to justify deporting people.

So really, the answer to the question "when is a deportation unlawful?" is that it depends on who's running the government. Right now, the parties in Iceland's government appear divided on this issue, so time will tell how things turn out. ❄️

## ASK AN EXPERT

### Q: Why Isn't Glass Recycled In Iceland?



Words: **Iryna Zubenko**

The majority of apartment buildings in Reykjavík only have trash bins for mixed waste, plastic, and paper. "Where do wine bottles go?"—wonder those coming from other places. This question has puzzled Grapevine's expat journalists for months, too. We reached out to Jamie Valleau Mo-Quilkin, Research and Development Manager at environmental consultancy ReSource, to help us find an answer.

According to Jamie, glass is more of a hassle to recycle than other materials, such as aluminium. In addition, it needs to be sorted by colour. The problem of recycling glass wouldn't be resolved simply by putting a glass container next door—at least three glass bins would be required, as well as different recycling techniques for broken and mixed glass. "Making new glass containers is a big process—in the U.S., there's around one glass container plant for every 4 million people," Jamie explains.

"In Iceland, it seems like the economics don't favour glass being remanufactured locally and it is expensive to export—this is probably why it isn't collected from households. However, drinks bottles are collected for a deposit refund at recycling centres and other glass can be left there too. For many years, much of this was then smashed and used in construction, notably for the foundations of the GAJA biogas plant at Álfsnes landfill," points out Jamie, adding: "Starting from this summer, significant amounts of glass will start to be exported."

Still, Jamie believes a lot more could be done: "Why are glass bottles not reused locally in Iceland, as is commonly done in Germany, Denmark and other countries? Coca-Cola, Ölgerðin and small breweries produce a lot of drinks, and it seems like it would make a lot of sense—in terms of economics and resource use—to use the bottle deposit scheme to incentivise the reuse of drinks containers."

Jamie asserts the problem with recycling glass in Iceland could be approached better. He sums it up: "If you can't reduce, then reuse—and only then recycle." ❄️

## LOST IN GOOGLE TRANSLATION

# Pigs might bark

Mad-scientists have done it again! Several litters of a new, genetically modified, genius breed of barking pigs, have been raised and trained to be part of an elite healthcare task force. Entrusted to eradicate diseases once and for all. This pandemic was the wake up call they needed. The world shouldn't provide certain people with so much free time that it leads them to believe that they should take up baking.

In any case, the piglets will systematically be visiting every household, from the largest condos in Reykjavik to the most charming little houses in Arneshreppur, delivering vaccines to all residents of Iceland. How, you ask? It couldn't be simpler, your assigned wunderschwein will guide you to the closest mudpit, and have you sit all up in it. Next stick your finger in one of your nostrils, and check for clear

passage. The piglet will recognise the latter as his signal to begin the vaccination process, and will then start barking. Their characteristic barking style, (something between a tired old saint-bernard and a mini pincher exuding Wendy Williams' confidence) also emits a rare sound wave frequency, which alters your antibodies and updates them to their latest version. Take that Zuckerberg, and Musk and all you other brainiacs, Iceland's brightest have created a bluetooth vaccine, delivered to all inhabitants of the land by the cutest lil' mailmen.

Psych! Although this swine-led utopia sounds amazing, this is just our imagination getting the best of us after reading the headline "Pigs Are Barking With Vaccination". As always, the translation bots have taken us for a wild ride which terminates in Disappointment Town. The actual translation should have been "Pigs Are Castrated Through Vaccination". The Icelandic word for castration is **gelda**, and when this word is adjusted to the right tense and case declension, it becomes **geltir** which is the present tense of the verb to bark, from að gelta. **AP** ❄️

## Pigs are now barking with vaccination

Magnús Hlynur Hreiðarsson writes © April 9, 2022 2:03 PM



## Grísir eru nú geltir með bólusetningu

Magnús Hlynur Hreiðarsson skrifar © 9. apríl 2022 14:03



# SMASHED BURGERS AND NASHVILLE-STYLE HOT CHICKEN IN DOWNTOWN REYKJAVIK

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## The Smurf Porn Incident

The age of the videotape was nothing less than a constant moral panic

Words: **Valur Gettisson**

Photo: **Still from some Smurf movie**

It was on a cold day in January 1992 when an unsuspecting mother rented the newest Smurf Movie for her darling children. The mother found the movie in the rack, somewhere between Disney's 'Aladdin' and Whoopi Goldbergs' 'Sister Act'. The Smurf movie had an innocent enough cover. The whole gang was there, Smurfette too, looking into the eyes of the beholder, perhaps with a slightly mischievous grin on her lips.

### In the safe hands of the Smurfs? Think again

The mother returned home and the kids were overjoyed to have the tape in their hands. Not only was it a film about the wonderful adventures of these little blue creatures, it was dubbed in Icelandic by beloved comedian Laddi—in fact, he voiced every character, including Smurfette.

The mother might have had a cup of coffee, convinced that her children were in the safe hands of this silly adven-

ture. She would have the 60 minutes to herself. Finally.

As DV newspaper tells it, the mother was minding her own business when her darling children came to her and told her that there was something strange about the Smurf movie. "There is something ugly happening," they complained.

The mother checked the TV, and to her horror, where she expected Smurfs there was a full-blown Danish porno.

### Don't worry, The Consumer Organisation are on the case

Bewildered and distressed, the mother picked up the phone to inform the consumer organisation about the incident. They were absolutely shocked and escalated the situation to the police. Likewise, the police were not amused.

The film's distributor in Iceland, a company called Steinar realised at this point that the duplicators they hired had, indeed, recorded the Smurfs on the

VHS tapes that had previously featured Denmark's finest pornographic exports. And once the Smurfs had successfully thwarted Gargamel's dasdardly plot, there were still 30 minutes of run time on the adult content—and they were closing in on the money shot.

The spokesman of Steinar said they were horrified to hear this, and pleaded with all Icelandic parents to check their videotapes for obscene material. An absolute moral panic ensued. Was anyone safe?! Won't someone think of the children!?

### The big porn crackdown

The incident resulted in a widespread crackdown on the video-rental market. The police wanted surveillance within this lawless industry—which was, on top of everything else, duplicating movies illegally, according to the government body regulating the market. In short; these bastards had no shame.

Porn was illegal, and yet customers could easily access these kinds of movies through the mysterious "Folder" that could contain up to 500 pornographic titles according to the police spokesperson at the time.

The police discovered that the porn was flowing unregulated in the countryside, and the video rental shops habitually offered these "folders" where customers could see the selections of porn the store had hidden away. The police added an interesting detail in the newspapers, that to avoid detection, the horn dogs tried to visit the rentals early in the morning to avoid any contact with suspicious eyes.

### Trunk-porn in Reykjavik

But the situation was even worse in Reykjavik. Newspapers reported that the police arrested three people—two men and a woman—only a few weeks after the Smurf incident, for selling pornographic videotapes out of the trunk of their car in downtown Reykjavik. What's worse, they had all been duplicated illegally, so no tax was being paid for the trio's commercial efforts. Won't someone think of the taxman!?

### Lost Innocence

Of course, Steinar was charged with exposing children to porn, but the case never found its way to the courtroom. The real victims, the children, were scarred for life, as was innocent Iceland, who abruptly discovered that porn could be everywhere. Even on a harmless Smutt—ahem, sorry—Smurf tape. The good news is that Icelanders learned their lesson—they haven't watched porn since, as it's still illegal in Iceland. 🇮🇸

## NEW MUSIC PICKS



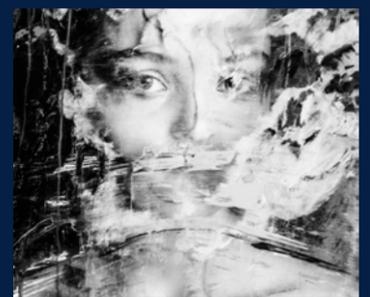
Tilbury  
**Skylights (feat. Mr. Silla)**

Roughly ten years after the release of their second album, Tilbury is back with a brand new single! We were wondering where they've been. "Skylights" is about missing a lost lover and instantly puts you in a reflective mood. The addition of Mr. Silla's vocals makes you feel like you're listening to the journey of two people who, unbeknownst and apart, seem to be feeling the exact same. Their third album is planned for release this October. **KW**



Tara Mobee  
**One Time**

If you're looking for a song to roll down the windows and cruise to, Tara Mobee's new single "One Time" is the song for you. Featuring mesmerising harmonies and a guitar solo that immediately transports you to a beach, "One Time" encapsulates the chill vibes of a sunny summer day. With the recent release of two singles, we can only hope Tara will drop more anthems for us to enjoy this summer. **AE**



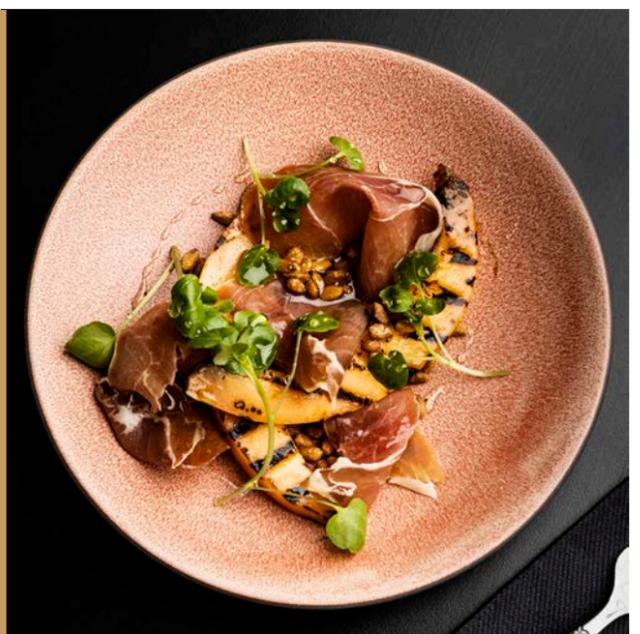
Gugusar  
**Annar Séns**

Gugusar, aka Guðlaug Sóley Höskuldadóttir, is undoubtedly one of the most interesting upcoming artists from Iceland. She rose to fame just a few years ago, at the age of 15. Now an 18-year old, gugusar has just released a new single—"Annar séns", or 'Another Chance'—a mix of lo-fi tunes, electronic beats, indie and pop. **IZ**

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# STRIKING A BALANCE

## Haraldur Þorleifsson on power, misinformation, and levelling the playing field

WORDS: Andie Sophia Fontaine PHOTOS: Ari Magg

Haraldur Ingi Þorleifsson wears many hats. While ostensibly an entrepreneur and businessman who founded the creative technology services company Ueno in 2014 (which was subsequently acquired by Twitter in January 2021), he has also made a name for himself in Iceland for his generosity, his convictions, and his consistently putting his money where his mouth is.

In a time where we see numerous examples of men hoarding vast wealth, either shunting it off to overseas tax shelters or spending it on space vanity projects, Haraldur has decided to use his material gains for the benefit of the less powerful. As will be a common theme in this interview, power imbalances matter a lot to Haraldur. And he hopes to help equalise them.

### MORE MONEY, MORE PROBLEMS

Haraldur downplays the origin story of Ueno, calling it, “not that inspiring.” He explains that his primary motivator was the thought that starting his own company would be, “A good way to put myself into a different context. Putting myself forward as a company meant that I could get bigger projects. I later pulled together some freelancers who I got to work full time with me.”

Over the seven years from its founding, the company grew at a rapid pace, and they received “dozens if not hundreds” of offers for acquisition.

“I turned all of them down,” Haraldur says. “And if it wasn’t for 2020 and the effects of COVID, I would not have sold. Twitter actually asked me before COVID if we were interested, and I said no.”

As was the case for many businesses, the pandemic hit Ueno hard. At one

“I had months where I was so tired and depressed that I worked out of my bed,” Haraldur recalls. “We moved back to Iceland, and I realised that, yes, we had made it through this, but I wasn’t sure if this was what I wanted to keep doing. I loved building the company, but I was really burned out. All the financial rewards were there but I didn’t feel like there was anything else left for me to do. There was nothing left that I cared about.”

### PAYING YOUR TAXES

In the midst of this malaise, Twitter came calling (again) for Ueno. Interestingly, it was the 2020 U.S. presidential elections that helped Haraldur make the decision to green-light the acquisition.

“Twitter had been talking to us for a while,” he says “The week of the election in the U.S., after it became apparent that the losing party was not going to accept that they lost, I saw that there was a huge problem where facts don’t seem to matter anymore. There’s a huge divide. We’d recently gone through the protests with Black Lives Matter in the U.S., the election was happening, there was this existential problem with climate change. There’s so much happening that is in large part influenced by what is said publicly, and a lot of that happens on Twitter. I thought, I’m not a doctor, I’m not a scientist. I can’t save the world. But with my skills, this is probably the place where I can have the most impact.”

A giant like Twitter buying a company started by an Icelander would normally be news for the business section of the newspaper. But Haraldur made headlines following this acquisition for another reason as well: he tweeted that

the fact that at some point [of financial success], we expect people not to pay their taxes. It would not be news if you [the journalist taking the interview] paid your taxes. The news part here is that we accept as a fact that this happens, a lot, so much so that it is news when people don’t do that.”

Why, then, was it important to say publicly? Here, Haraldur’s desire for a fair and just society shows.

“It’s important to me because I grew up here in Reykjavik,” he says. “I grew up with parents who did not have a lot, I have a disease, and there’s a lot of things that are needed in my life that our society has provided for. I know that if I had been born in other countries that don’t have the same kind of system that we do, I would not have been able to do what I did.”

“School was free, health care was mostly free, I went to university and got a couple degrees, which is mostly free. If I had been raised in, for example, America, that would not have been possible. We have a functioning society, and I believe the tax system is the best way to pay for all that.”

### EMPOWERING THE POWERLESS

Haraldur has done more with his wealth, and more for Icelandic society, than simply paying his taxes. Earlier this year, in the midst of numerous women coming forward to talk about the abuse and degradation they endured at the hands of powerful men, some of these men threatened to sue for defamation. Haraldur saw this happening and responded by offering to cover the legal costs of those being targeted by these lawsuits.

important cause. I grew up in Iceland and I understand a lot of the power dynamics and the misogyny. It took me a long time to unlearn, and I’m still trying to unlearn a lot of the things that I learned growing up. I hope we can have a future society where our kids and our grandkids grow up knowing better—knowing that the power that they have over someone is something that they shouldn’t abuse.”

The response he received to his initiative was so great that he had to be selective.

“Part of the problem is that there are so many problems,” he says. “If this happened once every decade, it would be huge for that person, but it wouldn’t be a societal problem. But this is a societal problem, and that means that it happens all the time. Even though I have some money, if I were to focus solely on this, I would spend all my money very quickly. So I decided to focus on a few cases because I believed that would help not only those individuals, which is important, but also the cause, to help things move forward and change perceptions. Women often fight these things alone. As a person with power, I think it’s important to use that in a way that helps the people that need it.”

For Haraldur, this initiative was his own effort at working towards the more equal, future society of the grandkids he mentioned.

“People don’t handle power well,” he says. “I don’t. I think almost nobody does. If people are on equal footing, I think they can solve most of their problems. If someone is lording over someone, it creates this huge rift in society. So yes, I think we should try to even the playing field when we can.”

### RAMP UP!

Haraldur has also spent his money on an initiative called Ramp Up, which built 100 access ramps in Reykjavik, and has since expanded beyond the confines of the city and is aiming to build 1000 more ramps across the country. Haraldur has a genetic congenital muscle disease which compelled him to begin using a wheelchair when he was 24, so he’s experienced firsthand how inaccessible Iceland can be.

He says the response to Ramp Up has been extremely positive.

“This has always been a problem looking for a solution, and a lot of people recognise that this is a problem that hasn’t been solved—and by the way this won’t solve it, there’s a long way to go but this project will help move us forward and 95% of the people that I’ve talked to have offered help,” he said. “The city helped with changing some of their processes so that we could do this in the way that we did and as fast as we

“We seem to have accepted the fact that at some point [of financial success], we expect people won’t pay their taxes.”

point in 2020, it seemed the company could go bankrupt within months. Layoffs followed, and morale was low. But then things began to turn around, due to many companies realising that technology was playing a big part in how people were navigating the pandemic. The clients came back, and soon Ueno was “the busiest we’d ever been. At the end of the year, our revenue had risen far beyond what we expected, even before COVID.”

However, the financial success was not accompanied by existential happiness; quite the contrary.

he intended to pay his taxes in Iceland, which Haraldur himself is still bemused by.

“A lot of things that become news are not because of the person or event or what they say,” he explains. “It’s because the media decides that it’s news. In this case, I just tweeted about [paying taxes in Iceland]. I felt it was important enough for me to say it, but I didn’t feel that it was a huge statement. Any normal person pays their taxes, and so that’s the interesting part of this.”

“Why is it news? Why is it interesting to people? It’s because we’ve accepted

“I think that a lot of the problems that we face in the world are because of power imbalance,” Haraldur says. “I think if we could even the playing field in terms of power, in general, our world would be a lot better. In this particular matter, there’s a group of people who have a lot of power based on their positions and their wealth, and then there’s an even larger group of people who have very limited power. I can’t stop these things from happening, but the obvious thing that I can do is try to lift up the people who don’t have power. It felt like such an easy way to support an

did. People have volunteered. There's overwhelming support for this because we as a society recognise that it's not OK the way it is."

Haraldur sees mobility access as something that faces two fronts.

"The future-facing problem is actually the one that I get bummed out about the most, because every day we're building things that will create these problems in the future," he says. "Even though there are fairly good laws and regulations, we're allowing for shortcuts. That to me is the most immediate thing that we need to fix. It should be a relatively simple solution. Let's look at these laws and regulations to see what we can do there, but mostly, let's just enforce them, and make sure that everything we build from today onward is accessible. The more complicated problem is the past. We live in a city that's a few hundred years old. Most of the houses in this area are 50 to 80 years old, and obviously none of these considerations were put in when we built them. It's relatively cheap to do it when you're building it, but afterwards, it can be incredibly complicated."

While the initiative has been very successful, Haraldur believes there is still a very long way to go.

"This project is set up to help make sure people are at least able to get into the building," he says. "But once you're in the building, there are multiple other problems. Is there a bathroom? Is there an elevator that works? Are the doors wide enough? And this is just for mobility issues. There's obviously people that are blind who have

different needs, there's all sorts of needs that we need to address. So the thing I hope we can nip in the bud and do fast is the future problem, and then we collectively keep working on the past problem."

## COMBATING MISINFORMATION

Circling back to the U.S. presidential elections and how, "facts don't seem to matter anymore," we get to talking about misinformation, and what can be done to combat it.

"There's a huge role that the government plays in fighting misinformation," Haraldur says. "The EU passed a very important act, the Digital Services Act, that addresses this. And I think that's probably the best way to handle this.

There's no perfect solution. There's so many different problems that each solution creates. But I do think it's best if we as a society create some kind of standards for how we want these things to operate."

That said, Haraldur cautions that the state cannot be the be-all and

**"Power and people don't mix well. In a perfect society, the playing field would be levelled."**



end-all in this fight; speech should be as free as possible, to his mind.

"Freedom of speech is hugely important," he says. "And that includes the freedom to say stupid things, things that are just blatantly wrong. I think in almost all cases, the government should not punish citizens for saying things. But then there's a step down from there to some of these places that really amplify misinformation. I think it's a fair limit on freedom of speech if we have some restrictions about your ability to spread misinformation indefinitely. Anyone can go down to the corner and give anti-vax speeches. I don't agree with the point of view, but that's their right. But then the scale of some of these platforms means that you recruit, and you do it in a way that is far beyond what I think people are talking about when they talk about the importance of public speech. It always takes a long time, and it probably should, for governments to catch up. They are reactive in many ways, and this is a huge societal shift but I'm glad they are starting to look into these issues more seriously."

## ON THE HORIZON

Given all the ways Haraldur has used his material wealth so far, his plans

for the immediate future are perhaps unsurprising.

"I'm working on a restaurant/cinema/bar that's named after my mom, Anna Jóna," he says. "I'm really excited for that to open this fall. That's been a very long journey. I saw this space over a year ago, and it was for sale. As I said, I grew up in this area, and my mom died when I was 11. I've always wanted to do something to honour her. Even though I'm not super social, I like to

create circumstances for other people to be social, and I like the idea that across the street from me, there will be people eating and drinking and laughing and talking because of something that I helped create."

He says he and his wife are also about two years out from being about to launch an artists' residency in Kjalarnes, where they bought land, which he describes as, "a place where

artists can come and work that's secluded enough so they can focus but still close enough to the action in the city."

Haraldur has discussed power imbalances throughout, and they matter to him in both word and deed. But is power itself the problem? Yes, he says, concluding optimistically: "Power and people don't mix well. In a perfect society, we would all be on equal footing. There are other problems with human nature that mean we can't create that society, I believe, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't strive for it. [👉](#)



**"People don't handle power well. I don't. I think almost nobody does. If people are on equal footing, I think they can solve most of their own problems."**

# Happening

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## Dancing in the streets! Guru Dudu Silent Disco Walking Tour

June 11th and 12th - 13:00 at IDNÓ  
- 15:00 at Hallgrímskirkja - 2000 ISK

We're not sure if this is going to be a walking or a dancing tour, but we are sure it's going to be a blast! Melbourne comedian David Naylor has been hosting these silent disco walking tours all around the world and this time he will light up the streets of Reykjavík. If you join, that is. If not, we suggest to head over anyway. It will probably be just as hilarious to watch. **KW**



## Happy merry Christmas! Christmas in June

June 30th - 22:30 - IDNÓ - 3,990 ISK

If you're in the mood for a great party and don't mind feeling a little disoriented, why not go to IDNÓ to celebrate Christmas in June? The schedule for the evening consists of acts ranging from comedy, burlesque, and cabaret, to the 'totally unexpected'. As a bonus, since it's unlikely you'll bump into your whole family, you won't have to worry about counting your glasses of jólaglögg. We recommend travelling via scooter rather than a one horse open sleigh, but you do you mate. **KW**



## What the art! Reykjavík Arts Festival

June 1st until June 19th - Downtown  
Reykjavík - Free and ticketed

It's a great month for art! The Reykjavík Arts Festival (Listahátíðar) is taking place from June 1st until June 19th, all over Reykjavík. The acclaimed festival has been creating a vast, international network since its first edition in 1970 and focuses on new commissions and the creative intersection of the arts. This leads to a diverse schedule, ranging from opera and circus to visual art and theatre. Check out their full schedule on listahatid.is. **KW**

## CULTURE NEWS



Kristín Andrea Þórðardóttir and Sigríður Regína Sigurþórsdóttir—organisers of Skjalborg

## Stories And Connections In The Far West

"Skjalborg celebrates stories and people"

Words: **Alice Poggio**

Photos:  
**Joana Fontinha**

The Skjalborg festival has nurtured Iceland's documentary scene since its inception in 2007. Like most other aspects of society, it wasn't exempt from COVID's unrelenting grasp.

As the saying goes: "You never know what you've got till it's gone." Something tells us that's not something Kristín Andrea Þórðardóttir and Sigríður Regína Sigurþórsdóttir, key players in the Skjalborg team, needed to be reminded about. In their own words: "Skjalborg celebrates stories and people. It's not the same without allowing people to connect, converse and reflect on the stories."

The duo's passion for documentary filmmaking is infectious—so much so that it made us want to get into filmmaking, or at the very least, go to the festival! Any chance anyone could drop us off in Patreksfjörður this weekend?

### Setting itself apart

Asked what keywords they would use to describe Skjalborg, Kristín and Sigríður share a pensive look and

say: "It's so difficult to choose!"

So we redirect: what makes Skjalborg special? "It's Icelandic!" Kristín exclaims without hesitation. "And it's the only one of its kind. We want to give a platform to Icelandic filmmakers. If we were to become an international film festival, it would be a completely different concept. It would need to run for at least 10 days. This is a concentrated documentary film festival, celebrating Icelandic films, while also bringing in inspiration from foreign guests of honour."

This year's guest is an especially exciting one: award winning documentary filmmaker Magnus Gertten. He'll be showing two films, 'Nelly and Nadine', which received a Teddy Award earlier this year, and 'Every face has a name', which documents the journey to finding the 2000 concentration camp survivors who arrived in Malmö in 1945. Magnus creates a space for their voices to be heard.

### Iceland's Far West

Location also plays an important role in setting the festival apart. Patreksfjörður, an old fishing village with a tight-knit community, represents all that is quintessentially Icelandic.

"If it was in Reykjavík people attending the festival wouldn't be as close together from morning to evening," Kristín says. Patreksfjörður allows for people who share a love for documentary filmmaking to have more opportunities to meet and be together. She adds: "That is key to documentaries. Their dissemination, and the conversations they spark."

Kristín likens the festival to "an extended family, a reunion". However, she reassures us that it's not closed off to newcomers.

"Even if people just watch one screening, or go to one event, or get introduced to filmmaking, then it will have been worth it," Sigríður agrees. This is why they have made sure that all the screenings and events which take

place in the cinema are free. The only ticketed item is their wristband pass, which mainly covers extra activities and food. Inclusivity is crucial for Kristín and Sigríður.

### Treasures of the everyday

Most years, the festival's theme reveals itself organically, influenced by the submissions, which are chosen by a separate committee. This year's focus is intentionally the past—a celebration of history, prompted by a collaboration with The National Film Archives of Iceland. Sigríður explains that Iceland is unique in the preservation of film records—the cold weather provides better storage conditions. In fact, they have managed to scan footage from between 1930-1970 into 4K and have made it accessible to the public.

The Home Movie Collective is a new initiative made in an effort to involve the local community in collecting, and preserving old tapes. Archivists will be restoring and curating the collected film on June 1st and 2nd, and screening it on the 4th. Sigríður lights up as she thinks about all the great footage they might find and says: "Home movies are special because they record cultural heritage as seen by the people who lived through it, it's not shaped by historians."

### Support for budding filmmakers

Skjalborg is always looking to support new talent, which is why they showcase works in progress. Filmmakers get to present their trailer and receive feedback from the audience. Their finished projects often go on to participate in festivals, and people who previewed the trailer get to see its full evolution. The winners of the festival also receive vouchers for free post-production work from Trickshot and to use equipment from Kukul for their next project.

As our time comes to an end, Kristín and Sigríður both remember that first, unanswered question about keywords. "I think we got them now," Kristín says. "Inspiration, traditions, storytelling."

To top those off, we'll add that Skjalborg also features amazing food, parties, a parade and a comedy show to cap off a fantastic long weekend. **👉**



Home movies feature in this year's festival



“We want everyone who wants to be on stage—to be on stage.”

Fringe on the edge

## This Is Fringe

A celebration of all things art is back for its 5th year

Words: **Iryna Zubenko** Photos: **Joana Fontinha**

“COMEDY! THEATRE! MUSIC! DRAG! CIRCUS! POETRY! CABARET! PHOTOGRAPHY! FILMS!”—reads the website for the Reykjavík Fringe Festival in all caps, but not in an aggressive way. The event, celebrating art in all forms, kicks off in the Icelandic capital on June 24th and invites everyone to join. With over 90 satellite events, Fringe might be a headache to organise, but Festival Director Nanna Gunnars and Production Manager Jessica LoMonaco went out of their way to make it easy to navigate and assured us this one is not to be missed.



“In Icelandic terms, I like to say that it’s like Culture Night and Off-Venue Airwaves had a baby,” says Nanna, who has been behind the festival’s organising team since its conception in 2017. “We make art that Reykjavík didn’t know it needed,” Jessica rushes to add.

Reykjavík Fringe Festival has its roots in the Edinburgh festival, now the largest arts festival in the world. The festival is run by a core team of four and attracts 50-60 volunteers every year. Nanna and Jessica are there to help make the theatre and arts scene in Iceland more approachable and inclusive. “You’ve got this big theatre history here in Iceland. But it’s really hard to approach if you haven’t been raised with it,” Jess points out. “We want everyone who wants to be on stage—to be on stage.”

### It’s all about love

2022 marks the fifth edition of Fringe in Reykjavík—this time, the festival’s central theme is love. “Me and Nanna are both engaged,” Jess shares. “Our partners are on the team as well. We’re all thrilled and we love everything in this scene. The thing that brought us all together was the community and love for the arts.”

“This year we’ve expanded the festival to two weekends,” Nanna explains. “That was for several reasons, both to celebrate our fifth anniversary and because we have artists that we accepted in 2020 and 2021, but they couldn’t make it because of the pandemic.”

### Get a taste of art

Fringe has grown massively over the past year—from about 16 acts to more than 90, divided into thematic groups. To help attendees find what they like, the first weekend of Fringe is more of an introduction of what’s to come. “We have a preview night where every act gets two minutes to introduce themselves, and then we have a comedy taster which has all the comedians doing this,” Nanna is confident that it’s a combination of preparation and flexibility that can help you make the most of Fringe 2022, but adds: “People need to be available to be surprised.”



Is there a limitation to what acts Fringe accepts? Not really. “We try to accommodate everyone,” Nanna explains. Except for times when someone wants to perform outside in complete darkness in July. “Mainly the ones that we say no to are because we don’t have the space.”

To make sure you don’t get overwhelmed with the extensive programme and can truly savour Fringe, we’ve picked Jess and Nanna’s brains to compile a must-see list.

### A mini burlesque festival

This year’s Fringe will host a miniature burlesque festival with six different cabaret artists. From a burlesque 101 workshop and travelling burlesque by Margrét Maack, to tassel twirling tips, bootyswing burlesque, a show on sex positivity and, of course, burlesque that revolves around love. “I’ll basically be living in the burlesque fest,” Jess, who runs the burlesque group this year, can’t hide her excitement.

### Best and worst of stand-up comedy

The Fringe’s stand-up comedy group has it all. Netflix superstar Ari Eldjárn, a horror show from an award-winning Richard Brown, immigrants ranting over the oddi-

ties of the Icelandic lifestyle while they try to fit in—24 events in total. “We have so much comedy,” Nanna says when asked to pick her favourites. “We have political comedy, we have gore, or like, horror-comedy,” the list goes on and on, and Nanna stresses: “It’s so easy to put up. They just need a microphone.”



### Homage to the drag scene

“Borderline between documentary and performance”—reads the description of ‘No makeup’, the only event within Fringe that qualified as a film. “This is a documentary about the Icelandic drag scene,” says Nanna. “We don’t have a lot of actual drag acts happening. They haven’t been able to perform for a while with Covid and everything. It’s almost like a nostalgia of not seeing the drag scene for two years.”

### Let’s dance

Solo dance performance on the intersection of reality and fiction, hilarious acrobatics and dance by an Israeli trio, a playground dance adventure suitable for kids, a truly vulnerable autofictional portrait, a workshop on body flexibility from a neo circus legend—these are not random Google search results on ‘dance’, but just a peek at what’s on offer at Fringe’s dance group. Rumour has it that you will also be able to match with your favourite dancer with the help of the Icelandic dating app. Single hearts, beware.

### All things theatre

“I think one of the greatest things is that we’ve got such a mix of new talent and experienced talent,” points out Jess. “We’ve got artists

who’ve been around Fringe festivals around the world for years. And then we’ve got people who’ve never been with their production on stage.” Theatre performances on Fringe’s lineup are nothing like the traditional theatre: they are an intersection between multi-disciplinary arts, live theatre and even virtual reality. For instance, ‘Dead People are Liking Things on Facebook’ explores our lives on social media long after we are gone. “I’m excited about this one,” Nanna says. “But I don’t know what to expect from the show. Is it sad? Is it funny? Am I supposed to laugh or cry?”

### Beyond genre

“Fringe is a place where you can test out new things or come back with the same stuff that you’ve done, just bigger and better,” Jess is confident that even if your art doesn’t fit into the boundaries of a specific genre, it will still find an audience. A mind-reading show? Yes. Satirical and political rap performance? Yes. Post-Eurovision extravaganza? Yes. A show that is



100% unplanned? Definitely yes. “I think it’s something that Reykjavík needs,” says Jess—and she really means it. “It’s a weird, quirky city and it needs a festival that shows that instead of trying to just elevate everything.”

“Let’s get it on the street. Let’s get it on the ground. Let’s bring everyone to us,” she concludes. “We don’t want the Fringe Festival to ever leave Reykjavík.”

The Reykjavík Fringe Festival will take place from June 24th-July 3rd. Check it out or get involved: [rvkfringe.is](http://rvkfringe.is)

# Farmers Market

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Hólmastóð 2 / Grandi

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# Best of Reykjavík



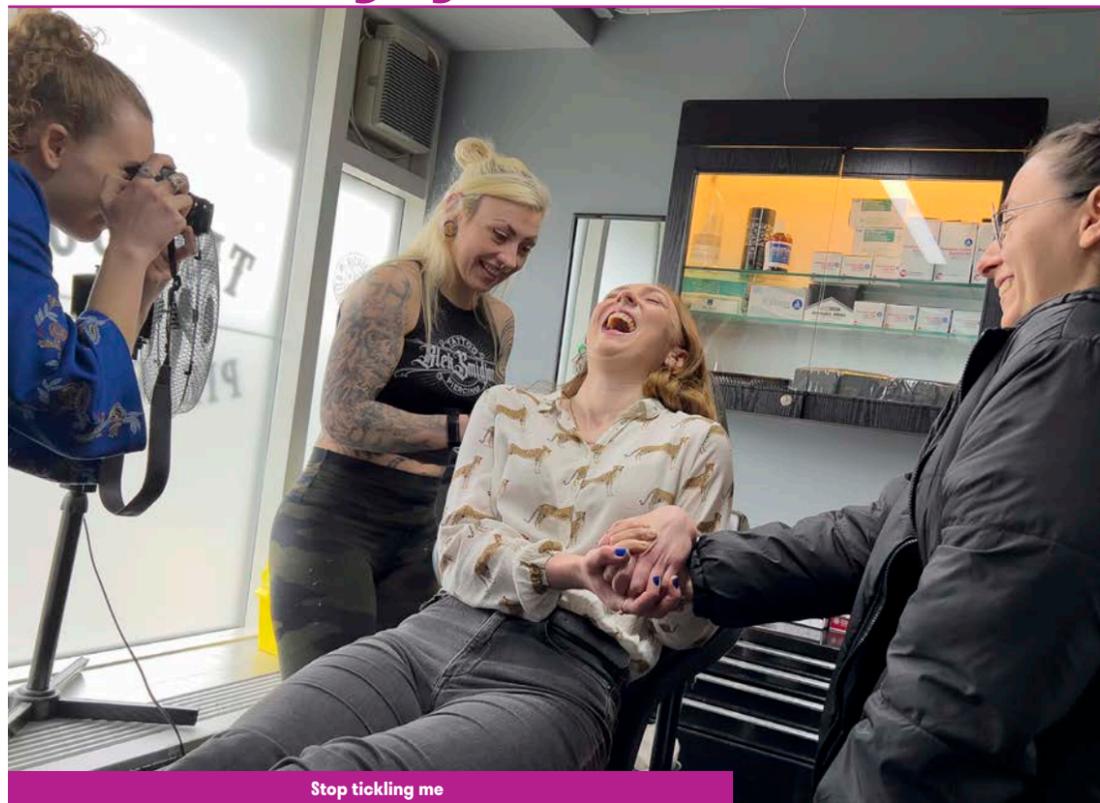
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REYKJAVÍK

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SELFOSS



Stop tickling me

## Piercing Crawl

Our picks for piercings in Reykjavík

Words: **Alice Poggio** Photos: **Joana Fontinha & Art Bionick**

*Piercing has been practised around the globe for centuries, and the general public's opinion has often been controversial. However you feel about it, we at Grapevine think that piercings should be safe and fun. Our team members chose a piercing studio each, and put their ears on the line. Each studio has its own unique character and charm, but all the piercers have the same ideals: passion for piercing and great regard for safety. Here's what we found.*

### Íslenska Húðflúrstofan

Ingólfsstræti 3, 101 Reykjavík

**Piercer: Diljá—Big shoes to fill, but they fit**

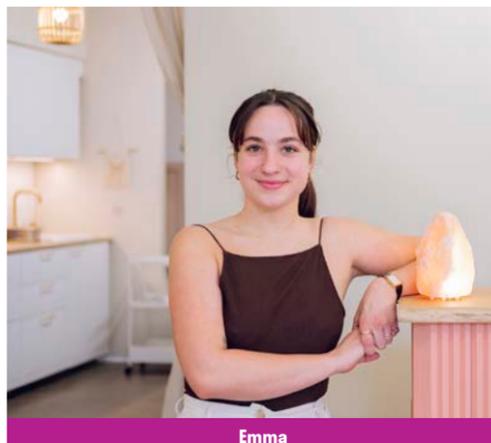
Íslenska Húðflúrstofan, one of the oldest and most established studios in Iceland, has young, bright-eyed Diljá as their piercer. Her mentor had Diljá's job for nearly 11 years. Don't let her youthful looks fool you, she is knowledgeable, professional and has set incredibly high standards for her practice. The piercing room is spotless, with great emphasis placed on sterilisation and following safety regulations. Diljá's focus is on creating safe and positive piercing

process. Diljá recommends piercing one ear at a time, if you sleep on your side.

### Emma Bodyart

Hverfisgata 52, 101 Reykjavík

**Piercer: Emma—Boss ass entrepreneur**



Emma

environment that immediately puts any jitters at ease—you realise that creating a welcoming environment remained her focus. As well as care for safety and quality. She only uses nickel-free solid gold hardware with hand-polished titanium backings, APP approved and with a lifetime warranty. There's also an anodizing machine, which allows Emma to change the colour of jewellery: by altering voltage one can achieve all sorts of colours, light blue, purple, rose gold and much more. The colour can be changed many times.

### Bleksmiðjan

Kringlan 7, 103 Reykjavík

**Piercers: Glódís and Sóla—ear anatomy nerds**

Bleksmiðjan opened in 2010 and Glódís Tara Fannarsdóttir has been there from the start. The veteran piercer's battle cry is, "ban piercing guns!" Although they're still common, most piercers worth their salt would never use a piercing gun. She explains that they're unsterile and, unlike a sharp needle, a gun will tear your skin rather than pierce it. This practice often leads to piercings which are inaccurate and prone to infection. Glódís' right arm, Sóla, also very capable and comforting, was our piercer. Their dedication to safety is reflected in the studio, where a large area is devoted to the sterilisation of equipment. They both love curated piercings, and say it's beautiful to find the perfect



Sóla

Emma Bélisle began piercing in 2015. After moving to Iceland in 2019, she worked odd jobs to save up for a dream that no pandemic could suffocate, and eventually began piercing in a

combination of piercings for someone—like artists arranging artwork in a gallery. "Anatomy is fascinating, no two ears are alike!" Glódís says

*Piercing is a form of body modification, to be done at your own discretion and risk. Make sure you find an accredited piercer that follows updated safety standards. Place cleanliness above all else, listen carefully to your piercer and adhere to the aftercare instructions provided.*



Diljá

experiences. She achieves that by using quality tools and titanium jewellery. For those who are wondering, it's perfectly fine to get more than one piercing at once, it will not lengthen or worsen the healing

barber shop. When asked why she set up shop in such an unusual place, she replied: "I liked the vibe and the people and thought: why not?" Emma's priority was atmosphere. Stepping into her studio—a spa-like

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June 3rd — June 30th

# In Your Pocket



Reykjavík Map

Places We Like

Best Of Reykjavík

## Perfect Day

Dance, jive & have the time of your life



Words: [Alice Poggio](#) & [Helga Kristin Torfadóttir](#) Photo: [Helga Kristin Torfadóttir](#)

### Helga Kristín Torfadóttir

Helga is a young Icelandic geologist, specialising in volcanology. She has been working on the most recent eruption in Reykjanes, while studying for her PhD, researching Iceland's largest and most dangerous volcano, Öræfajökull. When she is not testing out spacesuits for NASA, Helga loves to share her geological knowledge as well as photography on Instagram. There she documents her adventures, and attempts to explain complex geological topics in a more digestible format for those of us who cannot tell the difference between an epicentre and an epi-

dote—her passion for the subject is contagious. Here's how she'd spend her perfect day.

#### Anti-snooze dogs

Since I am working on my PhD research, my time is rather flexible, which allows me to design my mornings however I desire. I usually wake up before 6:30 with a wake-up call from my boyfriend, who is studying for his PhD degree on the other side of the planet. So it is evening where he is. When my two labradors hear that I am waking up, they come running in with excitement and jump into bed with hugs and kisses, so there is no room for snoozing. Then I chat for a bit with

my boyfriend over a cup of coffee, and then it's time for me to head to Cross Fit practice to do some heavy lifting. After that, I can start focusing on my research, which takes up the rest of my day.

#### Brain break

For Lunch, I either bring some delicious dinner leftovers from the day before, usually from my mother in law. But otherwise, I buy some juicy salad from an overpriced salad bar. I always try to eat away from my office to change the scenery and let my brain rest from all the PhD work before diving back into it. If I feel like it, I go for a run or a hike or even a bike ride after work in the afternoon if the weather isn't horrible. But usually, I just place myself in front of the TV to relieve my brain from all the hard work.

#### Salads with attitude

I usually don't go out to dinner unless it's a special occasion, because going out to eat in Reykjavik can be expensive. But a nice versatile meal with my family is always the best. I love healthy meals, and honestly, salads are my favourite but not just boring ones; I need them to be a bit extra. But I also like fast food, and I could never say no to pizza.

#### Unwinding with ice cream and good chats

In the evening, I walk my dogs, and then I call my boyfriend to wake him up, and we chat for 1 hour or so. Some nights I meet my group of best friends. We have known each other since we were children, and it is always nice to catch up and eat some ice cream. ☺



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## Vital Info



#### Useful Numbers

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

#### Post Office

The downtown post office is located at Hagatorg 1, and is open Mon-Fri, 09:00-17:00

#### Pharmacies

Lyf og Heilsa, Fiskislóð 1, tel: 561 4600  
Lyfja, Hafnarstræti 19, tel: 552 4045

#### Opening Hours - Bars & Clubs

Under current pandemic restrictions bars can stay open until 21:00

#### Opening Hours - Shops & Banks

Most shops: Mon-Fri 10:00-18:00,  
Sat 10:00-16:00, Sun closed  
Banks: Mon-Fri 9:00-16:00

#### Swimming Pools

Sundhöllin on Barónsstígur is an outdoor swimming pool with hot tubs.  
For more pools visit [gpv.is/swim](#)  
Open: Mon-Thu 6:30-22:00, Sat 8:00-16:00  
Sun 10:00-18:00

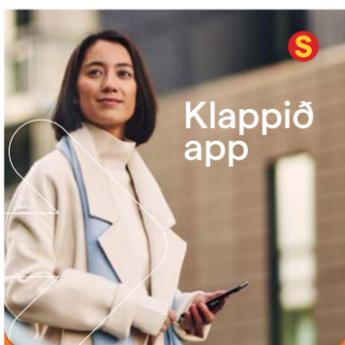
#### Public Toilets

Public toilets can be found at Hlemmur and in the round kiosks on Ingólfstorg, by Hallgrímskirkja, by Reykjavík Art Museum, on 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 to 30 minutes  
Fare: 490 ISK adults, 245 ISK children.  
Buses generally run 6:00-24:00 on weekdays and 7:00-04:30 on weekends. For more info visit [www.bus.is](#)



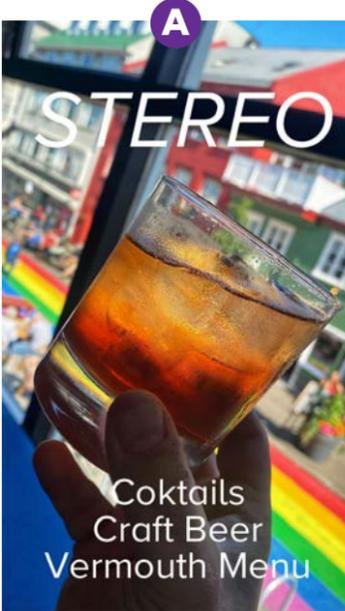


**Klappið app**

The official ticketing app for public buses in the Reykjavík capital area

Search for "Klappið" in the App Store or on Google Play.

KLAPP



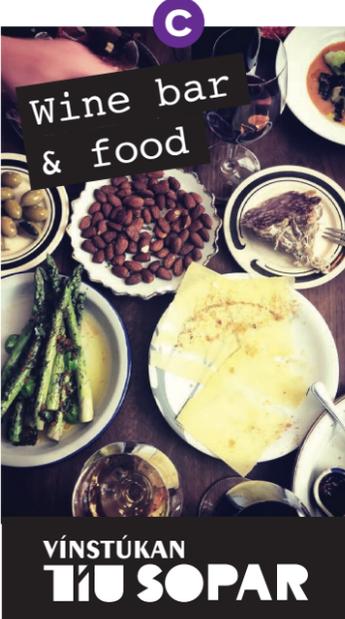
**STEREO**

Cocktails  
Craft Beer  
Vermouth Menu



**PHOTOS FROM ICELAND**

Skólavörðustígur 22



Wine bar & food

VÍNSTÚKAN  
**TÍU SOPAR**

# 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. Blackbox Pizza

Borgartún 26

Blackbox is a solid competitor for best pizza in the city. Thin crust, inventive toppings, delivery—what else could you ask for? We'd particularly recommend the Parma Rucola, which serves up all the parma ham goodness you could wish for. For those journeying outside the city, they've also got a location in Akureyri.

### 2. Chikin

Ingólfsstræti 2

This ain't your mama's KFC. No, Chikin—Reykjavík's first dedicated hot chicken and bao joint—manages to be at once both totally sophisticated foodie cuisine and also food that'll definitely fill the hole in your soul you usually quench with a spicy Twister. So grab some chicken with pickled daikon, shiitake mushrooms, miso mayo and lots of other delicacies.

### 3. Hosiló

Hverfisgata 12

A newcomer on the block who has certainly made a big stir! Hosiló is a small spot—seating around 30 patrons at full capacity—that offers an eclectic rotating menu of local fresh food. The offerings feature meals from around the world, from French cuisine to Northern Africa goodness, and much more.

### 4. Kaffi Laugalækur

Laugarnesvegur 74a

For parents, the cafe stop at the end of a long stroll is the proverbial pot of gold. Kaffi Lækur is especially popular with new parents, with a special kids' corner for crawlers and drawers. The generously topped chicken and pesto 'litla gula hænán' and the 'shawaramabake' are our top lunch picks. Also, if you're keto, don't miss 'em,

### 5. Apotek

Austurstræti 16

Apotek is one of those rare places in Reykjavík that go effortlessly from business lunches, to high tea, to pre-dinner cocktail hour, to languorous dinners without skipping a beat. This perhaps explains its popularity with locals and visitors alike—there is something for everyone at Apotek, no matter the time of day. We recommend starting in the lounge with one of their award-winning cocktails, then making

your way through appetisers (duck and waffles, anyone?) and more cocktails.

### 6. Sushi Social

Pinghóltsstræti 5

If you are a group of friends looking for a fun night about town, Sushi Social is the place to be. The restaurant staff know this only too well and never drop a beat in keeping those drinks and smiles coming all night long. The menu is ideal for sharing—although, who'd want to share something as delectable as the langoustine tempura. Order one—or several—of those colourful drinks with names that recall a tropical holiday to make a fun night even more festive.

### 7. Hlemmur Mathöll

Hlemmur

Once a bus station and now a bustling food hall—we love a repurposed space. Hlemmur Mathöll is a classic in the Reykjavík dining scene, with everything from Vietnamese street food to delicious gelato to old school Italian pizza present. Yum.

### 8. Dragon Dim Sum

Bergstaðastræti 4

For those of us longing for dim sum in Reykjavík, cravings have often had to be satisfied with daydreams of visits past to dim sum houses of Chinatowns abroad. But then Dragon Dim Sum arrived with their fare, which is the perfect marriage between Icelandic ingredients and labouing of Asian dim sum passion. Don't miss their bao or shao mai, and don't worry, their carrot vegan dumplings are also sublime.

### 9. Lamb Street Food

Grandagarður 7

Pure Icelandic lamb with a middle eastern twist—that's what you'll get at this juicy local eatery where pure kebab is served up with no processed meat. For all you vegans though, never fear, the fresh made salads and hummus are equally wowing. This ain't your regular kebab spot.

### 10. Laundromat

Austurstræti 9

Have you ever wanted to have lunch and do your laundry in a public place? You're in luck. The Laundromat Cafe on Austurstræti is open (again) for business. Whether you want brunch, a sandwich, or a burger, they have a quality selection of food made to order. Their brunch ain't nothing to scoff at either,

### 11. Nauthóll

Nauthólsvegur 106

Just behind the University of Reykjavík overlooking the Nauthólsvík geothermal beach is Nauthóll, the definition of a hidden summertime gem. The restaurant is one of those places that downtown Reykjavík rats might call "too far away," but with the advent of public scooters, you can arrive there in style in but 15 minutes. Without hyperbole, there probably isn't a better outdoor view in the city than this place—and their Scandinavian fare is good too.

## Drinking

### 12. Prikið

Bankastræti 12

Prikið is the bar version of the "I'm going to bed early tonight vs. me at 3 a.m." meme. At 22:00 you'll have a bunch of regulars relaxing at the bar sipping brews, but arrive at 3:00 and it's Project X. Their outdoor smoking area should be applauded too. Hang out long enough and you'll be sure to buddy up and find an afterparty.

### 13. Röntgen

Hverfisgata 12

If the cancellation of literally everything is damping your glamorous rock and roll style, Röntgen at Hverfisgata 12 will cure what ails you. This place—a relative newcomer—is already a stalwart in the bar scene, with a stellar atmosphere, great drinks and a lineup of the best DJs in Iceland. Just remember to raise a glass to the good doctor Wilhelm Röntgen (who discovered x-rays) while sipping your tittle.

### 14. Húrra

Tryggvagata 22

Húrra is BACK! ARE YOU SERIOUS? YES, WE ARE! After a despairing absense from the local scene, the beloved favourite has returned with a vengeance. Seriously—in the few weeks they've been open, the bar/venue has already had shows from heavyweights like Skrattar, Skóffin and Mannveira. Stop by for vibes, alcohol and other fun things like that you know. Also, their bathroom renovation is pretty crazy.

### 15. Veður

Klapparstígur 33

This charming, low-key, hole-in-the-wall serves up some great cocktails and a dedicated crowd that has grabbed the heart of the Grapevine, even though we are a magazine and not humans. If you feel fine relaxing and chatting, it's still a nice and sophisticated bar, but they've also got an edge. Sometimes they play punk music. /m/



### 16. Íslenski Barinn

Ingólfsstræti 1a

Of the many nation-themed drinking establishments in Reykjavík, The Icelandic Bar is the only one that is also a restaurant. Go there at night and maybe you'll meet an elf or Björk or something—that's all people know about Iceland anyway.

### 17. Mál og Menning

Laugavegur 18b

Wait, a new bar/music venue? Yup! And you thought the pandemic had destroyed all culture in this town. But never fear—Bókabúðir Máls og Menningar is here. There's live music most nights, from DJs to jazz, and during the day, the legendary Bókin



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**New In Town** ☆

**Noztra Creative Studio**

Grandagarður 14, 101 Reykjavík



Let's just admit it: we are all pottery makers within our souls. But let's all admit as well that none of us are really good at it. Leave the pot-building to the professionals and focus on the decorating part, while also having a lovely cup of coffee. Noztra is the perfect family get-together at the old harbour in Grandi, Reykjavík, and they will even fire your work for you and put it on display. **VG**

**D**  
**12 Tónar**

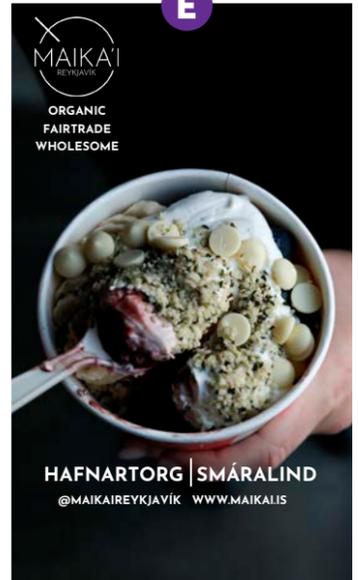
Welcome to our legendary record store, label, venue, bar/café

Open every day of the week



Skólavörðustígur 15

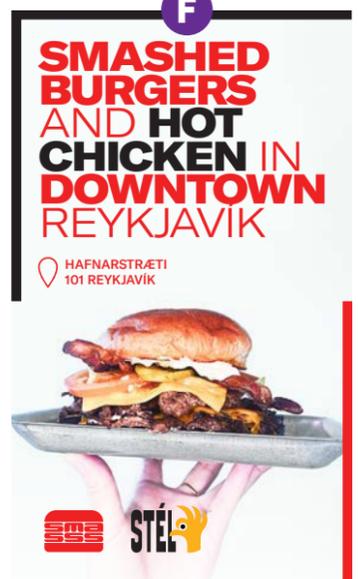
**E**



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**F**



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**I**



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Cocktail hour all days between 20:00 and 23:00  
DJ's all Weekends  
www.facebook.com/kaffibarinn

is operating from the basement. Seriously—we anticipate this place will be a game-changer in the local cultural scene. Takk fyrir.

**18. Dillon**

Laugavegur 30

A mix between grunge and classy, Dillon Whiskey Bar dominates their little stretch of Laugavegur. Crammed most nights with rockers, metalheads, and tourists looking for a place to mumble AC/DC songs into their beer, Dillon boasts a wide selection of over 100 whiskeys and hosts some of Iceland's best hard rock bands on the weekends.

**19. Petersen svítan**

Austurstræti 12

The sun is finally out, which means it's time for your annual pilgrimage to Petersen svítan. Never been? Well, make sure to bring your sunglasses because this place has one of the best views in Reykjavík and also very fashionable clientele. Look over the city and have a beer in almost entirely direct sunlight (!!!!!!!!!!!).

**Shopping**

**20. Íslenska Húðflúrstofan**

Ingólfsstræti 3

This classic shop caters to all styles, with a roster of artists that serve up everything from realism to new-school and more. We'd particularly recommend the hand-poked pieces

by Habba (@habbanerotattoo). Not only are they gorgeously ornate in that straight-out-of-800-AD-way, but they might save you from spirits.

**21. Nielsen Sérverzlun**

Bankastræti 4

Way more than your average design store, Nielsen is filled to the brim with knick-knacks from all over, from gorgeous diaries to cosy towels and all the candles you could desire. Stop by, grab something for a gift and don't forget a little something for yourself.

**22. Fótógrafi**

Skólavörðustígur 22

Fótógrafi claims to have been one of

the first photo galleries in town. While its interior is tiny, there's a surprising number of photos to be found inside. The pictures on display are mainly shot in Reykjavík or elsewhere in Iceland and all of them have a slightly different, edgy take on the island, instead of adding to the abundance of touristy subjects.

**23. Stefánsbúð/p3**

Laugavegur 7

Stefánsbúð showcases local designers and second-hand high-fashion finds (hello 1990's Gucci!) as well as accessories from quirky international brands. Fun and zany, you don't know what you're going to find but you know it'll be exciting.

**H**

**WASTELAND**  
SECOND HAND CLOTHING  
Ingólfsstræti 5  
101 Reykjavík

**WASTELAND**  
SECOND HAND CLOTHING  
Ingólfsstræti 5  
101 Reykjavík



## The Kids Are Alright

Rapper Daniil talks TikTok, leaks and good vibes

Words: **Josie Anne Gaitens** Photo: **Joana Fontinha**

Culture is a strange and amorphous thing, hard to pin down, and driven, often, by the most disenfranchised in society. In particular, young people have always been the harbingers and custodians of popular music—and yes, even just writing the words, ‘popular music’ does effectively illustrate that I can sadly no longer count myself within their ranks. Unlike others however, I am happy to bow out gracefully (as best I can, without putting my back out), without resorting to the wearisome trope of berating ‘kids these days’ and asserting that ‘music was better when I was young’. Newsflash: it was not. When I was young I listened to Busted, for god’s sake.

It was with genuine interest and curiosity, then, that I arranged to meet Daniil, a 20-year-old rapper whose newest track, “Ef þeir vilja beef” just broke the Icelandic record for most streams in one day—and yet whom, prior to this occurring, I had never heard of. When I called to set up the interview, he sheepishly asked me to remind him on the day, in case he slept in. I promised I would, and he responded, “Siíiiiiick.”

### Mother tongues

In the flesh, Daniil is tall in a way that only young men manage to be tall—sort of looming, as if still getting used to their new shape—and astonishingly fair. Half Russian, but born and raised in Iceland, he speaks Russian at home with his mother, and raps in Icelandic.

“I actually started rapping in English,” he explains. “Personally I find it easier to rhyme. But I live in Iceland, and I’m releasing music here—rapping in Icelandic makes sense.”

I’m curious to whether Daniil

sees significance in this, of creating art in a small, indigenous language that some regard as constantly under threat of extinction, but he dismisses the debate.

“I don’t think it matters if you make music in English or Icelandic, just do what you want. Follow your heart,” he says.

### “I respect women a lot”

Nevertheless, loanwords from English feature prominently in his texts. Of course, there is the titular ‘beef’, in his latest release—that’s an argument or disagreement, for anyone who hasn’t been on the internet for the past decade. The song also begins with Daniil shouting “bitch”, in what almost feels like a pastiche of a rap song.

“I wasn’t thinking about it at all, I just said it,” Daniil explains, seemingly a little embarrassed. “It doesn’t even mean anything.”

“I think when people say words like ‘bitch’ in rap they don’t really refer to women these days. At least I don’t.” He adds: “I respect women a lot.”

### Music for the TikTok generation

Although pop music success has always been driven by teens, the process of building fame had always happened in plain sight, via TV appearances and extensive radio coverage. But the mechanics of the music industry are rapidly changing, in part due to the way that music is being distributed and experienced by young consumers, predominantly via TikTok. It’s in this way that “Ef þeir vilja beef” shot to stratospheric fame—before it was even released.

The song was leaked before it was completed, something that

Daniil says is commonplace: “I sent it to someone and they probably sent it to someone else and it just grows.” He explains that this practice is so standard that the record companies (he is signed to Alda Music) don’t even care. “We can tell because of my soundcloud links. If a track goes from 20 to 500

plays, it’s probably leaked.”

In addition, Daniil says that TikTok has affected his music a lot: “I just posted a video of a guy dancing to the song, and it blew up. I was like, okay, sick. I didn’t try and go viral, I didn’t even use any hashtags. I just posted it. I didn’t expect it to get so many views and likes.”

He continues: “I posted another video a week later and said, if this gets 1,000 likes, I’ll drop the track in March.”

“The song was maybe only 30% done at the time,” he says with a smile. “But I got 1,000 comments in 5 hours.”

### Record breaking numbers

The hype surrounding the track was clearly huge by the time it was finished and ready to release (ultimately in May, rather than March). And the resulting numbers did not disappoint.

“I was expecting a lot, maybe 20,000 streams,” Daniil admits. “I woke up 8 hours after it had been released, and it already had 20,000 plays. It just went up from there. By the end of the day it had, I think, 47,000 streams.”

“It feels great,” Daniil says with quiet pride. “It’s like, who has the biggest song in Iceland in one day? Me,” he confirms, smiling.

It certainly shot Daniil and his oeuvre firmly into the wider public consciousness. Next month he will open for UK Grime heavyweight, Skepta, and he is working on a new album to be released later this year. As a parting shot, I ask Daniil what he would say to this newly enlarged potential fan base, to encourage them to listen to his music?

He cracks a wide smile. “Just check it out,” he says. “It’s good vibes.”

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## EVENT PICKS



### ★ Fringe Festival

June 24th - July 3rd - Multiple locations in downtown Reykjavik - Some free, some ticketed

The very first Fringe Festival took place in Edinburgh in 1947 and has since grown into the largest arts festival in the world. Many

countries now host their own Fringe festivals and of course Iceland didn't want to be left out. For the fifth year Reykjavik Fringe will take over the

heart of the city, turn the streets into a stage, transform venues into imaginary worlds, and dazzle us with an amazing, diverse and inclusive programme. There will be comedy, theatre, performance art, installations, dance, music, poetry, burlesque, and anything else you can imagine and interpret as art. Fringe feels like a safe space where nothing is too weird and everything is possible. Intrigued?

We have listed some Fringe events below, but be sure to check out the full schedule on [rvkfringe.is](http://rvkfringe.is). **KW**

## June 4th—July 1st

# Upcoming Events

Send details of your event to: [events@grapevine.is](mailto:events@grapevine.is)

This month is packed with so many great events that we can't possibly fit them all! Check them out on [events.grapevine.is](http://events.grapevine.is) and don't hesitate to add yours!

### Saturday June 4th

**Icelandic Tattoo Convention**  
12:00 Gamla Bío  
★ **Kælan Mikla Release Concert**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**Barbara Hannigan & Sinfó**  
17:00 Harpa  
**The Colour Run**  
9:00 Laugardalurinn  
**Hypergalactic ball: K.óla, Possimiste and Nornagal**  
20:00 Post-Húsið  
**Kitka (SE)**  
21:00 KEX hostel  
**How to become Icelandic in 60 minute**  
18:00 Harpa  
**Sunna Gunnlaugs Trio**  
21:00 Skuggabaldur

### Sunday June 5th

**Icelandic Tattoo Convention**  
12:00 Gamla Bío  
**Black Obsidian**  
20:00 Harpa  
**Unnur Birna & Björn Thoroddsen**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur  
**Singer-songwriter night**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Monday June 6th

**The Gospel of Mary**  
20:00 Hallgrímskirkja  
**"Bring the Laughs" Comedy Night**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Tuesday June 7th

**Domina Convo**  
20:00 Harpa

### Wednesday June 8th

**Imrov for Dance Enthusiasts**  
20:00 Dansverkstæðið  
**Coney Iceland - Freak Show**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**Music workshop with Post-dreifing**  
12:00 IDNÓ  
**Party Karaoke**  
21:00 Sæta Svinið

### Thursday June 9th

**Madame Tourette**  
20:00 IDNÓ  
**Drungi joined by Morii**  
21:00 Lemmy

### Friday June 10th

**Marianna Plays Grieg**  
19:30 Harpa  
**Render (concert)**  
20:00 Mengi  
**Auðn & Nyrst**  
20:00 Húrra  
**Panik Mehlóna**  
21:00 Skuggabaldur

### Saturday June 11th

**A Simple Space**  
16:00 Borgarleikhúsið  
**Guru Dudu Silent disco walking tour**  
13:00 IDNÓ  
15:00 Hallgrímskirkja  
**Distrakt Audio presents Nu Zau, KrBear & Ali Demir**  
22:00 Húrra  
**How to become Icelandic in 60 minute**  
19:00 Harpa

### Sunday June 12th

**Passenger**  
20:00 Harpa (Eldborg)  
**A Simple Space**  
16:00 and 20:00 Borgarleikhúsið  
**Guru Dudu Silent disco walking tour**  
13:00 IDNÓ  
15:00 Hallgrímskirkja  
**Again the Sunset**  
20:00 Tjarnarbío

### Tuesday June 14th

**Death Draws Closer**  
20:00 IDNÓ

### Wednesday June 15th

**Imrov for Dance Enthusiasts**  
20:00 Dansverkstæðið



### ★ Kælan Mikla Release Concert

June 4th - 20:00 - Gaukurinn - 3000 ISK

Last November gloom queens Kælan Mikla released their fourth album titled "Under the Cold Northern Lights". They just got back from touring Europe and are finally ready for their release concert in Iceland. It's about time! Special guests GRÓA and Hekla will join the line-up and Mighty Bear will DJ us deep into the night. **KW**



### ★ Emiliana Torrini and The Colorist Orchestra

June 19th - 20:00 - Harpa Eldborg - 4990 - 14990 ISK

Together with critically appraised Belgian band The Colorist Orchestra, Emiliana Torrini brings new life to her songs. Part of the Reykjavik Arts Festival, this musical collaboration is described as an "enchanted, colourful, vibrant experience not to be missed". It's hard to imagine otherwise. **KW**

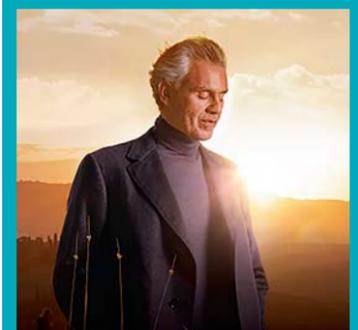


### MUSIC NEWS

BAFTA-winning, GRAMMY-nominated musician Ólafur Arnalds, was finally able to kickstart a tour that's been on hold for two years. The former drummer of Fighting Shit and Celestine was meant to hit the road in the autumn of 2020, but everything got postponed when COVID reared its ugly head. The tour will start in Iceland, before moving to North America and Europe, and finish with select stops around the world. The 50-date tour follows the release of Ólafur's genre-bending album, 'some kind of peace.' Ólafur will play a mix of older compositions and songs from the new album. The tour is currently in North America and will return to Europe on June 26th in Budapest, Hungary. **AK**



Psychedelic rock fans, circle June 1st on your calendar! That's when Icelandic/Russian psychedelic rock duo, Pale Moon—featuring founding Of Monsters and Men member Árni Guðjónsson and his wife Natalia Sushchenko, will release a new album, 'Lemon Street.' The latest offering took two years to make and will be the duo's first album since their 2018 debut, 'Ona Tapes II.' Pale Moon has already released the single "Clown" from the album. The band says the album takes listeners on a sound journey through indie ballads, psychedelic rock and thriving pop. If you want to know what they have to say about their album, check out Track By Track on page 24. **AK**



World-famous Italian opera singer, Andrea Bocelli, was finally able to perform in Iceland again after two years of postponements. Bocelli originally announced his performance in December 2019, but it was cancelled due to COVID. But Bocelli was in town to wow the crowds with his impressive pipes on May 27th—Bocelli's first performance in Iceland since 2007. The first half of the concert featured classical opera pieces and the second half featured Bocelli's most popular hits. The long-awaited concert was a thrill for Bocelli fans, but it also marked a changing of the tides. It was by far the biggest concert held since the beginning of the pandemic. **AK**

### Party Karaoke

21:00 Sæta Svinið

### Thursday June 16th

**Persian Path**  
20:00 Gamla Bío  
**Space Night: Hekla and DJ Airplane and Spaceship**  
21:00 IDNÓ  
**Ash Walker & Laville/Ruby Francis**  
20:00 KEX  
**Wako (NO)**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Friday June 17th

**Moetivi Caravan**  
10:00 IDNÓ  
**TLC**  
19:00 Laugardallshöll  
**Rebecca Goldberg (with LaFONTAINE)**  
00:00 Húrra  
**dAzzleMAZE**  
10:00 and 14:00 Tjarnarbío

### Saturday June 18th

**Ash Walker Experience**  
20:00 Póst-húsið  
**Dance Workshop: Energetic Icons**  
12:00 IDNÓ  
**Doom Metal Feast**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**Rebecca Goldberg (with DJ FUSION)**  
00:00 Bravó  
**BÖSS**  
21:00 Skuggabaldur  
**dAzzleMAZE**  
10:00 and 14:00 Tjarnarbío

### Sunday June 19th

★ **Emiliana Torrini & The Colorists Orchestra**  
20:00 Harpa (Eldborg)  
**Every Body Electric**  
17:00 Harpa (Silfurberg)  
**EXPAT**  
21:00 Open Gallery  
**Enigma**  
19:00 and 21:00 Perlan  
**Dungeons & Dragons Game Night**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Monday June 20th

"The Mystery Mic" Comedy Night  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Wednesday June 22nd

**Imrov for Dance Enthusiasts**  
20:00 Dansverkstæðið  
**Salsa Night**  
19:30 IDNÓ  
**Party Karaoke**  
21:00 Sæta Svinið

### Thursday June 23rd

**How to become Icelandic in 60 minute**  
19:00 Harpa

### Friday June 24th

**Fringe Opening Party**  
21:00 IDNÓ  
**Karaoke Night**  
20:00 Gaukerinn  
**Benjamin Gisli quartet ft. Oscar Andreas Haug**  
21:00 Skuggabaldur

### Saturday June 25th

**Hedwig and the Angry Inch Premiere**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Sunday June 26th

**Triptych Men**  
17:00 IDNÓ  
**How to become Icelandic in 60 minute**  
19:00 Harpa  
**Fringe Preview Night**  
19:30 Tjarnarbío

### Monday June 27th

**Please Step Aside (Stand Up Comedy Show)**  
18:00 Húrra  
**Triptych Men**  
20:00 IDNÓ

### Tuesday June 28th

**Ron Placone**  
22:30 Húrra  
**Joke Show - Game show**  
11:40 Húrra

### Wednesday June 29th

**Imrov for Dance Enthusiasts**  
20:00 Dansverkstæðið  
**Please Step Aside (Stand Up Comedy Show)**  
18:00 Húrra  
**Party Karaoke**  
21:00 Sæta Svinið

### Thursday June 30th

**Ron Placone**  
22:30 Húrra  
**Bootyswing Burlesque**  
20:00 IDNÓ  
**Christmas in June**  
21:30 IDNÓ  
**How to become Icelandic in 60 minute**  
19:00 Harpa  
**Birgir Steinn Quartet**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur



**Alicja Kwade**  
*In Relation to the Sun,  
to Sequences of Events,*  
i8 Grandi — 22.01.22–22.12.22



Ása Dýradóttir, Festival Hub Project Manager

## A Hub Of Activity

Reykjavík Arts Festival Hub is back with a bold new programme

Words: **Josie Anne Gaitens** Photo: **Joana Fontinha**

“The most beautiful thing is when the events unfold. They’ve been in your phone and your Excel sheet for so long, but so much of the worry goes away when people come together and meet each other,” Ása Dýradóttir says, her eyes lighting up with anticipation.

Ása is standing in the middle of Iðnó’s main hall, surrounded by banners, signs and ladders. In just a short space of time, however, the space is set to be transformed into Reykjavík Arts Festival’s “Hub”, of which Ása is the project manager.

“The Festival Hub was a part of the Arts Festival for decades,” she explains. “It went into hibernation for a while but it was reinstated in 2018, and is now a really big part of the festival itself.”

“It’s become a place that you can always come into,” Ása continues. “Every event is free and it’s open for everyone.”

### An Icelandic institution

Reykjavík Arts Festival has been a highlight of the city’s calendar since its inception in 1970. Constantly seeking to push boundaries, challenge norms and raise the bar of artistic excellence, the biennial event aims to strengthen the relationship between Icelandic arts and the international community, often through the commissioning of new works.

Ása sees the Hub as a seamless continuation of the work of the festival as a whole, extending concepts and encouraging discourse. “A lot of the events are linked to the main schedule, like artist talks, or panels related to bigger events,” she says. “But we have also developed a model for

artists takeovers, where we hand over the space to different groups or artists for 13 hours, and they can programme it however they want.”

The range of artists participating in this takeover scheme are broad, including choir/art collective Kliður, youth dance group FWD, grassroots minority arts collective, R.E.C. Arts, Nordic arts group, Project GÁTT, and kids organisation Kidarchy. The latter group will be holding down the fort on June 17th, Iceland’s national holiday, and hosting an event that sounds the stuff of every child’s dreams, featuring a food fight, live music, a water pistol battle and—most importantly—“no boring speeches or rules.”

### The other side

It’s a packed schedule, and one that has been in the works since October 2021. Alongside all the

fun and frivolity—or perhaps it all goes hand-in-hand—the Festival Hub will also provide a space for talks and discussions on more serious topics. The planned talks and panels will tackle challenging subjects such as climate change, conflict and poverty. Ása describes the role of the Hub in providing a platform for this kind of discourse as, “very dear to us, very important.”

“The theme of the festival this year is ‘The Other Side’—which you can interpret in many ways,” she elaborates. “But we want to emphasise the role of The Festival Hub in giving minority groups a platform to experiment with their artwork and their projects, and to meet other people and have a discussion about them.”

“Especially today, everyone is thinking, ‘what can we do?’—we’re trying to respond to the horrible things that are happening,” Ása goes on to say. “It doesn’t matter if it’s war, the pandemic, violence or poverty—you’re always asking, can we use art in this? The only way to do so is to come together and use what we have, together.”

Reykjavík Arts Festival Hub opens on Friday 3rd of June. More information available at [listahatid.is/klubbur](http://listahatid.is/klubbur)

09.04.–29.9.2022

# The Power of Erró Images

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These kids means business



★ **In the Depths of Your Own Awareness**

Until August 28th - Hafnarborg

Gunnar Örn Gunnarsson is considered one of Iceland's most prolific artists. His work features in the collections of prominent international museums like the Guggenheim in New York and Muderna Museet in Stockholm. He

put himself on the map in the early 1970's with his first solo exhibition at Nordic House in which he raised existential questions regarding modern society. This set the precedent for what would be his lifelong inspiration: human existence. Throughout his almost 40 year career he produced drawings, paintings, sculptures, monotypes, watercolours, and

mixed-technique artworks. While he went through multiple artistic transformations which are visible in his work, he consistently used his art to express his personal experiences; the struggle of man against himself, of what it means to be human. This retrospective exhibition features works spanning his career, embodying the artist's spiritual search for answers. **KW**



★ **Landvörður - Jessica Auer**

Opens June 9th, until September 10th - Grófarsalur

Photographer Jessica Auer explores the paradox of Iceland's unique nature. While preserving it is in our collective interest, the tourism industry seeks to exploit it for economical gain. Through her photography, she presents a mediation on this contradiction for viewers to explore. **KW**



★ **Jewellery of Dieter Roth**

Opens June 5th at 15:00, until September 23 - National Gallery

Mostly known as a visual artist, musician, poet, thinker, and trailblazer, Dieter Roth's creation of innovative jewellery is often overlooked. This exhibition showcases his unique and experimental approach to jewellery-making and bears witness to his unconventional methods that make him the versatile artist he is known as today. **KW**



★ **Stitches and Threads**

Opens June 9th, until September 18th - Kjarvalsstaðir

Local artists explore and confront social issues, the poetry of everyday life, and the tenderness of nostalgia through embroidery and use of needlework. The exhibition focuses on this sub-discipline within textile art, and where some honour its heritage traditionally, others approach it via progressive mixed media experiments. **KW**

June 4th — July 1st

# Art Exhibitions

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## Opening

### NATIONAL LIBRARY

**Sir Joseph Banks - Iceland Expedition**

Joseph Banks joined Captain James Cook on his first voyage around the world. Barely a year after they returned, he led the first British scientific expedition to Iceland in 1772, exactly 250 years ago. The National Library opens up an exhibition to celebrate the anniversary of his voyage.

- Opens on June 3rd
- Runs until November 20th

### REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

**Light Space - Shadow Space**

Ester Jóhannesdóttir's work explores how abstract forms and shadows can be transformed into clearer, graspable imagery through photography and the use of natural light. The exhibition displays her photographs of buildings, shot both inside and outside at different times of day, exploring the relationship between opposites as darkness retreats with increased natural light.

- Opens on June 9th
- Runs until August 16th

### GERDARSAFN

**We can talk**

This exhibition marks the end of a collaboration between prominent cross-disciplinary festivals and institutions located in five Nordic countries, initiated by Platform GÁTT. Nine artists showcase their work, reflecting on what it means to be part of the Nordic Region and exploring both the positive and the negative aspects of a shared identity.

- Opens on June 11th at 14:00
- Runs until September 4th

### ALDA

Challenging the boundaries between visual arts and dance, ALDA draws upon the history of women's collective physical labour through repetitive movement and song in order to initiate an intimate, female convergence. The piece is the result of years of collaboration between choreographer Katrín Gunnarsdóttir and designer Eva Signý Berger, co-created by Baldvin Þór Magnússon.

- Opens June 11th at 14:00
- Runs until September 4th

## Ongoing

### GERDARSAFN

**Spin**

Hanna Dís Whitehead takes a spin on old ideas and works by applying new knowledge and methods she has gathered over the past ten years. Mixing materials, colours, shapes, and history she approaches her practice anew from different angles.. 'Spin' showcases her experiments with creating furniture, allowing some processes to be completed while others are left purposefully unfinished.

- Runs until August 5th

### REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS

**Erró: The Power of Images**

Erró is undoubtedly Iceland's best-known visual artist. The Reykjavík Art Museum is custodian of nearly 4000 pieces of the artist's work after he began donating them in the 1980s, and this exhibition of more than 300 of them is the most extensive showing of Erró's works ever seen in Iceland. Videos, graphics, and collages—with larger works in public spaces, and paintings of all scales—showcase Erró's eclectic appropriation of imagery from every possible domain.

- Runs until September 29th

### AUSTURVÖLLUR

**Bótaþegi**

The reality of being disabled and living in poverty in this prosperous country is something Hrafn Hólmfríðarson Jónsson (aka Krummi) draws attention to with his photo exhibition. Krummi explores what it's like to suffer material deprivation in a society that makes you believe money can buy happiness.

- Runs until July 31st

### HALLGRÍMSKIRKJUTORG

**Armors**

When artist Steinunn Þórarinsdóttir visited the Metropolitan Museum in NYC roughly ten years ago, she became fascinated with its extensive armour collection and what armour can symbolise. Today, in collaboration with said museum, she displays three pairs of armoured figures. Their armour, 3D scanned and

turned into cast metal sculptures, is based on three precious mediæval armors originating from Italy, Germany, and England.

- Runs until August 8th

### MUSEUM OF DESIGN & APPLIED ART

**Bathing Culture**

The outdoor geothermal pool is the most interesting public sphere in Iceland. A place where strangers cross paths and acquaintances meet, it is a source of wellbeing and a major part of everyday life for many. This exhibition traces the development of Icelandic bathing culture, showing how architects and designers, pool staff and the public have together shaped the story.

- Runs until September 25th

**Virtual waters**

Taking a philosophical approach to the Iceland bathing culture, Hrund Atladóttir describes diving into water as entering another dimension full of contradictions. In connection with the museum's current 'bathing culture' exhibition, this work challenges viewers to dive into this dimension through virtual reality and experience the effect water can have on perception.

- Runs until October 23rd

### KLING OG BANG

**De Rien**

Ingibjörg Sigurjónsdóttir's De Rien explores tragedy, understanding, beauty and truth in the 21st century. She deconstructs details of everyday life to reconstruct them in an existential context. Using materials as diverse as gold, air, office paper and pigments, Ingibjörg's works represent uncontrollable progression.

- Runs until July 24th

### I8 GRANDI

**In Relation To The Sun**

i8 Grandi is a new exhibition space, the unique concept of which is to focus on year-long shows by single artists. The exhibitions will evolve while on view, allowing their creators to reflect how the passage of time alters their work and encourage repeat viewings to observe those changes. This inaugural exhibition by Alicja Kwade encompasses installation, sculpture and work on paper. Its title—initially "In Relation To The Sun"—will change as the nature of the pieces on display evolves.

- Runs until December 22nd

### EINAR JÓNSSON MUSEUM

**Permanent Exhibition**

In 1909 Einar Jónsson—described as "Iceland's first sculptor"—offered all of his works as a gift to the Icelandic people, on the condition that a museum be built to house them.

The resulting edifice, constructed just over the road from Hallgrímskirkja, now contains close to 300 artworks. There is also a beautiful garden with 26 bronze casts of the artist's sculptures to enjoy.

### NORDIC HOUSE

**Life in the Universe**

The child-friendly exhibition is based on a short story by Zakya Ajmi about Liv, a girl who just learned from her father that space is constantly expanding. Intrigued, she explores the starry sky with her telescope. She suddenly finds herself on a spaceship where her great adventure starts. What is life like from above, away from the city lights?

- Runs until October 1st

### HVERFISGALLERÍ

**Inner Space**

Three dimensional wall works, reliefs, and a colour palette ranging from untreated wood, to principal colours, to neon. Belgian artist Jeanine Cohen's solo exhibition explores the effect colours and shapes can have on our spatial experience. While each piece is a stand-alone work of art, she uses the exhibition space to stimulate a collaborative dialogue between them.

- Runs until September 29th

### HARPA

**Circuleight**

This immersive light and sound installation is inspired by elements of natural Iceland: lava, basalt, glaciers, water, flora, algae, microorganisms and volcanic gas. Visuals are

provided by American arts organisation Artechouse, accompanied by an original score from Högni Egilsson. Circuleight is open from noon until 18:00 every day, and takes 20 minutes to experience.

- Runs until June 30th

### REYKJAVÍK MARITIME MUSEUM

**Fish & Folk - 150 years of fisheries**

Through visuals, objects, photographs and film, this permanent exhibition covers 150 years of Iceland's fishing industry.

- Permanent exhibition

### REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - ÁSMUNDARSAFN

**Spatial Infractions**

Rósa Gísladóttir exhibits her work in conversation with that of Icelandic sculpture pioneer Ásmundur Sveinsson. Rósa is best known for her creations in the medium of plaster, but she often references architecture in her work and here will use Ásmundarsafn, the museum building itself, as a sculpture.

- Runs until August 7th

### NATIONAL GALLERY

**Liðamót / Ode to Join**

Margét H. Blöndal's exhibition honours connections. The title refers to the result of movement when three or more joints come together. Ode to Join consists of drawings made with powdered pigments and oil, and three dimensional works that were made within the space of the museum. Each individual work of art is intended to work in combination with the surrounding pieces, becoming almost a symphonic poem where all are joined together.

- Runs until October 2nd

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART      GARDATORG 1 210 GARDABÆR

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Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson, director of *Berdreymi*

## Beautiful Beings

Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson's second feature film explores the beauty and harshness of friendship

Words: Iryna Zubenko Photo: Joana Fontinha

*Thinking of an Icelandic movie, you most likely imagine waterfalls, volcanoes, hot springs and whatnot. Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson's movie 'Berdreymi' or 'Beautiful Beings' is different—it shows the rawness of Reykjavík, the greyness of its buildings, and, at the same time, the complexity of its residents. We met up with Guðmundur to find out what the movie is really about—whether it's violence or friendship—and managed to take a sneak peek into some locations where the movie was filmed.*

### Once a bully, always a bully?

'Berdreymi' is Guðmundur's second feature film that takes a look back to his childhood in the Reykjaik suburb Árbær. "When I was growing up, there was a very masculine, violent culture among boys," says Guðmundur as we sit outside a pink house on Óðinsgata—the home of Balli, one of the film's main characters. Guðmundur adds that even though the movie is fictional, it was inspired by the culture in which he grew up.

"The movie is about a group of boys who use force to deal with their problems," he recounts. "After one of the boys takes in a bullied boy, the dynamics in the group changes." And so does the plot: Guðmundur masterfully switches the focus from one character to another, but assures the audience that, whether

the principal figure is Balli or Addi, it's the relationship between the two we have to focus on.

The movie is set at the end of the 90s/early 2000s, but it seems like teenage violence is an issue still prevalent in Icelandic society today. Guðmundur agrees: "I think it's more a hidden problem. When I was younger, it was more out in the open." The cast of 'Berdreymi' could also relate to the issue. "You could see the social structure a little bit through the kids," Guðmundur explains. "Kids that were from more upper-class neighborhoods didn't relate to it as much, but they knew about it from other schools."

The director agrees that 'Berdreymi' is a coming-of-age drama but adds, "It's a friendship drama. The friendship of the boys is at the core of the movie, both the beauty and harshness of it."

### Vesturbær—the heart of ugly

"For me, it's a city film," admits Guðmundur, pointing out the lack of epic nature in the background. "It makes sense for the city. I wanted to shoot it in the suburbs in the beginning, but now all the

suburbs have been cleaned up, and they look quite nice. When I was young, they were still being built." He talks about location scouting in search of the ugliest buildings in the capital: "I found out that the rawest part of Reykjavík is basically downtown, in Vesturbær."

### Growing actors

Finding young Icelandic actors was even harder than finding dirty buildings. "We don't have professional actors that age," Guðmundur explains. The team ended up casting a group of actors and trained them for a year, before shooting the film. "We started casting when the boys were 13-14. The most difficult part was trying to foresee how the boys are gonna look. You know, how much are they gonna change in a year?" says Guðmundur, adding, "They change a lot. They come in as babies and then leave as kind of young men."

"The boys got something good out of the process," Guðmundur says. "It's an age where they're quite fragile and you don't want to have a bad influence on them. The film is about a lot of tough stuff, so it was important for us that they would grow and mature in it."

### The power of dreams

Much like the movie's protagonist, Addi, whose decisions are often governed by his dreamlike visions, Guðmundur heavily relies on intuition. Without a moment of hesitation he says his inspiration comes mainly from dreams: "Dreams, and just life," he adds "I think the easiest way to create is to work with the surroundings. No matter who you talk to, if you start breaking down a person's life, there's going to be a lot of interesting stories, characters and things that you can make a film about. It's just a question of what the settings are going to be—is it gonna happen in space, or is it gonna happen in downtown Reykjavík?" With two new projects in the works—a fairy tale and TV series—it seems Guðmundur has been dreaming vividly. 🍷

'Berdreymi' is showing in Reykjavík cinemas over the summer.





“Fúsk has just opened up my whole world. I truly feel like I can do anything”

Twisted fire-starters

## Fúsk it!

“Culture is not a number that you can calculate on paper. It is alive and it has to be nurtured”

**Words:** *An ideal driven laboratory, a creative platform, a community hub, a playground for creatives, an organic and living concept that is difficult to reduce to one meagre sentence. However, its name goes a long way. Fúsk, in Icelandic, means ‘doing something even if you haven’t figured it all out yet.’*

**Photos:**  
**Art Bicnick**

*We met the people behind the project to learn how the first year has been, and what’s next in store for Fúsk.*

### So, what is Fúsk?

“It’s a space where you can make your projects happen,” says Edda Karólína Ævarsdóttir, mural artist and Fúsk’s Co-Founder. In fact, although Fúsk often participates in the projects, they stress that it’s more of a resource—people that brainstorm with you and facilitate access to other individuals. Fúsk’s focus is creating a sense of community, and positive change.

Designer and RUSL Fest Program Director Elín Margot says they want to welcome projects that will feed and strengthen the community. “You don’t have to be an expert—we want to create a space for people to explore their interests.” Artist and Fúsk Co-Founder Elsa Jónsdóttir adds: “You can experiment and step out of your comfort zone, sometimes you’ll have to. Sometimes you’ll be scared and sometimes you’ll be excited about it. I mean I had no idea how to build this,” she says referring to the cosy workshop unit we are gathered in. “Now I do, and it seemed much more straightforward than I thought.”

Fúsk is building a safety net for anyone who might need a push to try new things, or realise a project, so that creatives feel like they can take a leap, without necessarily falling flat on their face.

### Big space, big possibilities

The team has built other units, organised the RUSL festival, discussed matters with the Mayor of Reykjavík,

and generally laid down a strong foundation to guarantee their survival over time. Fúsk has also reached out to other similar creative initiatives abroad, who have been incredibly helpful. “We can learn from other’s mistakes and experience. They are more well established, we have only been running for a year, it’s still small beginnings,” Elsa says humbly.

One event that took place at Fúsk that illustrates how the project can help artists is Edda Karólína’s own gallery exhibition. “I would have never been able to make this exhibition anywhere else,” she says, explaining she was grateful to have received such an overwhelming response. “Here, you just send out a small call for help, and all these people come rushing,” Edda explains, still in awe of the process. “There is something so powerful about building something with all these people that believe in your idea, it’s a strong sense of belonging. Fúsk has just opened up my whole world. I truly feel like I can do anything. When you graduate, you’re quite limited and you don’t know what you are capable of. So much is possible here.”

### What now?

Looking to the future, Elsa knows that there is much to be done. The goal is to nurture a stronger community, by becoming a social hub for Gufunes. Elsa reiterates: “Culture is not a number that you can calculate on paper. It is alive and it has to be nurtured”

The team also wants to build more units in the massive space, with more access to resources, each with a specific focus. Tattooing, metalwork, a sauna—anything really, as long as it serves a purpose for the community and supports the creative scene.

For now there are only three working units and they are looking for people to bring in their own hubs, or containers.

### Valuable waste

An important theme that characterises Fúsk is waste. As Elín explains: “Most of our resources come from trash. But it’s not [trash], it’s materials! We are using it and making beautiful things out of it. Everyone can agree that having huge landfills is not good for the environment, so why aren’t there more systems in place to access material before it’s discarded?” Elín believes that everything has value, if you are willing to spend time and energy on it.

### RUSL

Fúsk’s upcoming event, the RUSL festival, which translates to TRASH, is all

about celebrating makers and designers who are addressing the waste problem through their work. “Many people are doing this, we need to push and give them visibility,” says Elín.

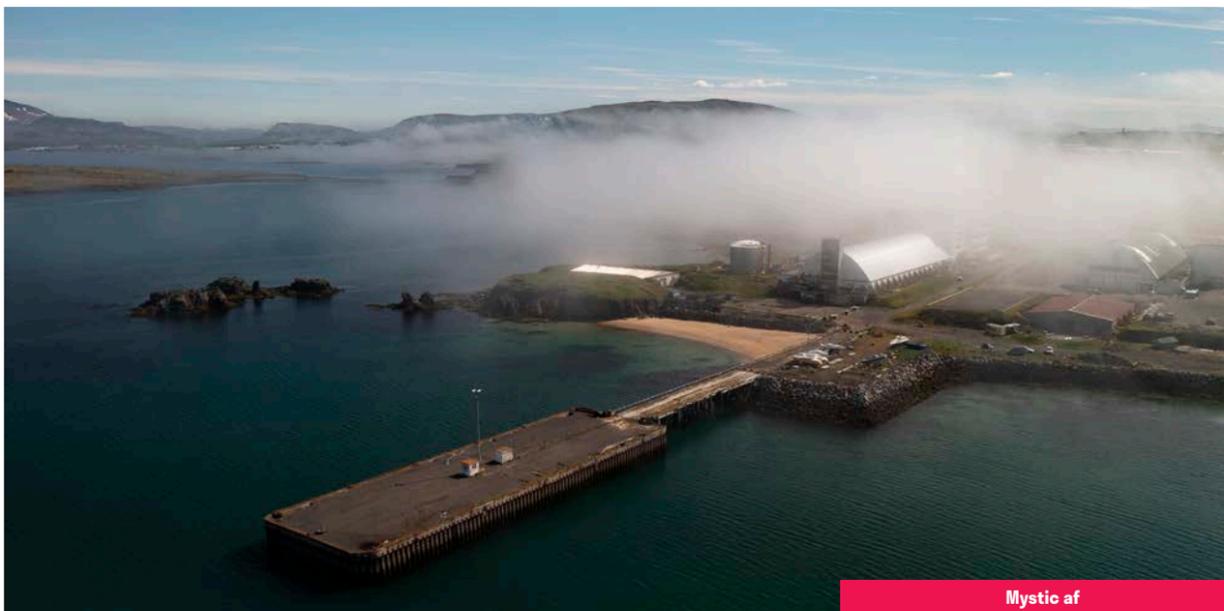
RUSL grew remarkably from its 2021 debut to this year’s edition, largely due to the astounding response they received. Many connected with RUSL’s ideals. Even those who weren’t makers wanted to contribute. Everyone offered what they could: singing, cooking, lecturing and more. What started out as a dumpster-dive dinner, has now become a week-long festival celebrating the circular economy, sustainable thinking, design, culture and art, with five workshops, and numerous concerts.

### Watch the stones please

Through Fúsk, Edda, Elsa, and Elín have learned that many seemingly impossible things can be easy. “An open and creative community is the strongest,” Edda says, and Elsa adds she realised that “it’s possible to have a voice in a larger context, it’s empowering.”

Before we leave, Elsa shares an Icelandic saying that doesn’t quite maintain its poignancy in English: “You don’t trip over mountains, you trip over the stones along the way.”

I wouldn’t worry about Fúsk tumbling though. It is made of exceedingly passionate people, watching their step, while keeping their eye on the peak. 🍷



Mystic af

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## Track By Track



Flower power

## Lemon Street With Pale Moon

Just words, and some clowning

Words: Valur Grettisson & Pale Moon Photo: Pale Moon



### Info

*Pale Moon is an intriguing psychedelic rock band comprised of husband-wife duo Árni Guðjónsson and Natalia Sushchenko and signed to Spanish label AU! Records. The handful of singles they've released to date have piqued our interest, so we at The Reykjavik Grapevine have been waiting with bated breath for their new album, Lemon Street, to drop on June 1st. Now that it's here, we asked Pale Moon to walk us through the offering, track by track. Here's what they had to say for themselves.*

### I confess

Life is such a mess! Your life is not perfect, no matter what your Insta says, forget it.

Life is total chaos, and an utter mess, let's just all admit that and stop pressuring each other into perfectness. It's unreachable and unrealistic. Relax, enjoy, and who is Miley Cyrus?

### Just Words

Just Words is a song about arguing with your partner. Hurt feelings and unpleasant things said out of anger, but hey, they're just words. Don't try to solve things while your blood is boiling. Step back, take 20-30 minutes and then address the issue. Anger makes the brain go dumb dumb.

### Clown

The most psychedelic song. Have you ever been in a situation where a friend of yours is opening him/herself up to you? You feel awkward and uncomfortable. The friend finishes the speech and waits for your reply. Instead of giving a heartfelt answer or life-changing advice you crack up a joke and look away. Acting like a clown.

### Parachute

Summer is here!! Get your gear on, inflate those beach balls, where's that quick tan lotion. Put up your shades and pretend to be a rockstar-ar.

### Truman Show

It takes hell-a-lot of courage to do anything. Then someone comes along with "awesome" opinions and "great" advice (read sarcastically). This song is about not letting these naysayers get to you because it's all a big Truman Show anyways.

### Exile

Our first ever song!! Bits and pieces from childhood, Stand by me, and glimpses of our trip to Cuba

and Mexico, where the song was composed. Tales told in a preachy TV evangelist manner. The hook of this song is the intro and we dare anyone to sample it.

### Strange Days

Take a bit of Bruce Springsteen, a dash of the Strokes, Dayglo and sprinkle Boy Pablo on top. That is the recipe for a song like Strange ays. Please don't get thrown off by; We're all gonna die, we're all gonna die.

That's just us trying to tell you not to forget to enjoy life before it's over, in the most blunt and brutal manner.

### Happier

A break-up story told in a subtle french fashion. Soft breathy voice a la Jane Birkin, paints the picture of a couple separating, whilst in the middle of the road. A sudden and unexpected break up. One of them leaves in such a haste that he/she accidentally leaves a guitar behind. This new possession has a significant change for the one left behind. A beginning of a new life, or maybe just a metaphor for the mark previous partners leave on us.

### Dusty Road

This is a Doors influenced song that took an unexpected turn and became a country song. A lone ranger, with a rugged past, is walking through Arizona towards California. The sun is setting and the cactuses cast a shadow on the red glowing hills. Our hero finds a motorbike and WRRRooooOOoommm into the sunset!

### Stranger

An Oasis meets Elton John inspired singalong ballad, but somehow Fleet Foxes crashed that party. What a Party!! 🍷

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Every day from 12:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 600 ISK,  
Wine 1000 ISK.

**LOFT**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 860 ISK,  
Wine 950 ISK.

**LÓLA FLORENS**  
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 1000 ISK,  
Wine 1000 ISK.

**LUNA FLORENS**  
Tue-Sat from 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 1000 ISK,  
Wine 1000 ISK.  
Discount or a free appetiser.

**MIAMI**  
Tue  
15:00 to 00:00.  
Wed to Sat  
15:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 750 ISK,  
Wine 990 ISK

**PRIKID**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 700 ISK,  
Wine 1000 ISK.

**PUBLIC HOUSE**  
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00 then 23:00 to 01:00  
Beer 890 ISK,  
Wine 890 ISK

**PUNK**  
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 850 ISK,  
Wine 850 ISK.

**UPPSALIR BAR**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 750 ISK,  
Wine 900 ISK.

**RÖNTGEN**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 800 ISK,

Wine 900 ISK.

**SÆTA SVÍNID**  
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 790 ISK,  
Wine 890 ISK.

**SKÚLI CRAFT**  
Every day from 12:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 900 ISK,  
Wine 900 ISK.  
Happy hour includes four selected tap beers

**SLIPPBARINN**  
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 500 ISK,  
Wine 800 ISK.

**SÓLON**  
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 800 ISK,  
Wine 800 ISK.

**SPIKAKAFFI**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 850 ISK.

**STÚDENT-AKJALLARINN**  
Everyday from 16:00.  
Beer 650 ISK,  
Wine 850 ISK.

**SUSHI SOCIAL**  
Sun-Thu from 17:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 645 ISK,  
Wine 745 ISK.

**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.

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



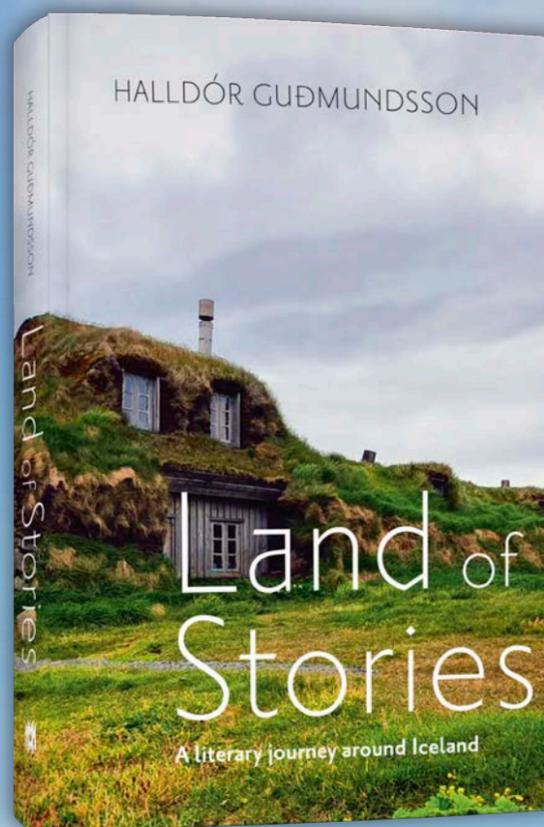
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# A LITERARY TOUR AROUND ICELAND



Storytelling is probably the most important cultural tradition in Iceland and a lot of its places have enthralling tales to tell.

This book is a round trip around the country, with thirty stops at such places along the way.

# Cheap Food

Here are some deals that'll keep your wallet feeling happy and full.

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<b>Hard Rock Café</b> Every day 15:00 - 18:00 Nachos, wings & onion rings - 990 ISK	-1,000 ISK Vegan option
<b>Dominos</b> All day Tuesday Medium sized pizza with three toppings	<b>Sólon</b> Monday - Friday 11:00 - 14:30 Soup of the day - 990 ISK <b>Tapas Barinn</b> Every day 17:00 - 18:00

Selected tapas half price

## 1,500 ISK And Under

<b>Deig / Le Kock</b> Every day - All day Doughnut, coffee & bagel - 1,100 ISK	<b>Hamborgara-búlla Tómasar</b> All day Tuesday Burger, french fries & soda - 1,390 ISK
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**Gló**  
All day, every day  
Bowl of the month - 1,290 ISK  
Vegan option

**Shalimar**  
Monday - Friday  
12:00 - 14:30  
Curry - 1,290 ISK  
Vegan option

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Every day  
15:00 - 18:00  
Chicken wings - 1,190 ISK

**Sólon**  
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Ceasar salad - 1,490 ISK

**Lemon**  
Every day  
16:00 - 21:00  
2f1 Juice + sandwich 1,095 ISK  
Vegan option

**Uppsalar**  
Every day  
11:00 - 14:00  
Burger & fries - 1,390 ISK  
Vegan option

## 2,000 ISK And Under

**Sólon**  
Monday - Friday  
11:00 - 14:30  
Fish of the day - 1,990 ISK

**Matarkjallarinn**  
Monday - Friday  
11:30 - 15:00  
Fisherman's fish soup - 1,990 ISK

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## Books



### Artic Creatures In Trashed Beaches

Three friends found a new meaning for trash in the most isolated places in Iceland

Words: **Valur Grettisson** Photos: **Joana Fontinha**



“We are old friends, me, Óskar Jónsson and Hrafnkell Sigurðsson. We came out of the Icelandic punk scene,” says Stefán Jónsson, one of Iceland’s notable theatre directors. These old friends have now published an interesting book, an extension of an ongoing art exhibition called Arctic Creatures. The project is the result of them hiking around the wilderness of Iceland, artfully repurposing the trash they found on beaches around the country.

#### Great artists hiking

The old friends have come a long way from their youthful years. Stefán is a well-known actor and one of Iceland’s most skilful directors that can switch easily between cutting-edge avant-garde and traditional theatre. Óskar Jónsson has Icelandic cult classic films like *Sódóma Reykjavík* under his belt and Hrafnkell Sigurðsson is a frequent guest in The Reykjavik Grapevine’s art section, in addition to being among the best known visual artists in Iceland for years.

The three have been friends, drifted apart and reconnected again through various projects over the course of their lives to date—Stefán, for example, has acted in Óskar’s films and Hrafnkell and

Óskar have had various collaborations throughout the years.

#### Trash in the wilderness

“And of course, as we get older, we don’t go as often to the bar, so we started to seek out nature,” Stefán explains. They started to hike Hornstrandir, one of the most isolated places in Iceland. They have been hiking together for 12 years now, venturing into the wilderness with nothing but the belongings on their backs and their shared companionship.

“We have to weigh everything, from food to whatever, and then we sleep in tents in whatever weather Iceland throws at us,” he says.

It was during their hikes that the trio started noticing that the beaches of Iceland, no matter how isolated, were littered with junk. Mostly trash from Iceland’s sizeable fishing fleet—everything from nets to plastic barrels and lifebuoys.

Being three highly creative individuals, they started joking around, taking inventive pictures of themselves with this trash, sometimes reenacting historical scenes and sometimes just creating absurd moments. They published the photos on social media and got a lot of strong reactions. So they kept on doing it, while realising that perhaps there was a bigger story here.

#### Plastic can the new cairn?

“The original idea was not to create art, but slowly we got there. There is a lot of pollution on Icelandic beaches, and although we are raising awareness of this, this is not really some kind of a declaration on our behalf,” he explains. “In some ways, we are recycling the pollution in an artistic way.”

The rule they used was simple. They could only reuse the trash on the beaches to create the art and it is incredible to see how complex the props/trash can be.

“We found, for example, an old plastic barrel that reminded us of a cairn in ancient Rome. And we recreated a Roman scenario with a buffet and then we dressed in the nets, which looked like togas. In some ways, it’s an obvious reference to the overconsumption,” Stefán says. He adds that it’s an odd idea also, that hundreds, even thousands, of years from now, these same barrels will be on display like the ancient cairns in museums today.

#### The trash throne

The three friends talked to the publishing house Bjartur and presented the idea of publishing a book with the photos and thoughts about these trips. Bjartur jumped at the opportunity. The book is out now, clocking in at 100 pages and written in English.

Stefán explains that the book is more or less just photos, with titles of the creations and the locations of where each was shot. And on top of this, they have an exhibition at the Pop Up Gallery at Hafnartorg which is nothing less than a grim reminder of the trash on the beaches of Iceland. The artists have picked up hundreds of plastic bottles during their walks and have crafted a throne out of the discarded plastic. Although Stefán, Óskar and Hrafnkell are perhaps not trying to make a political statement, one can not shy away from the disaster of pollution and global warming when observing their photo book and installation. ♡



# Get your summer read on

The books to read while travelling around Iceland

Words: **Valur Grettisson**, **Josie Anne Gaitens** and **Andie Sophia Fontaine**

## Moonstone: The Boy Who Never Was

Author: **SJÓN**



Sjón is hands down the king of Scandinavian magic realism. He has also written scripts for films like *The Northman* and *Lamb*. On top of that, he has written many of Björk's lyrics over the years. So expect nothing less than brilliance. His book, *Moonstone: The Boy Who Never Was*, is a steampunkish novella about a young gay boy in Reykjavik in the year of the Spanish flu. The book is short but incredibly powerful and a must-read when it comes to Icelandic LGBTQ+ literature. **VG**

## Polishing Iceland

Author: **Ewa Marcinek**



There are not many books describing the experiences of an immigrant in Iceland. Ewa Marcinek does just that brilliantly through poetry and short stories in her book, *Polishing Iceland*. The book is slick and elegant and very focused in its narrative, making it an unusual experience for a poetry book. The core of the story is a young woman who endures horrible violence, only to find her footing again in Iceland. The voice is so powerful and fragile at the same moment, comparable, perhaps, to Sally Rooney at her best. **VG**

## Summer Light, And Then Comes The Night

Author: **Jón Kalmann**

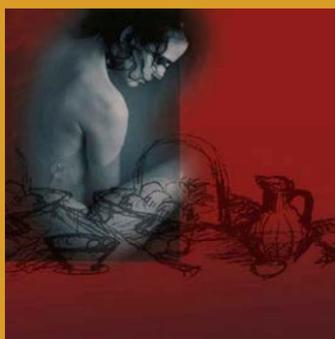


A small Icelandic village and its various, eccentric inhabitants become a microcosm of universal feelings and emotions in Jón Kalmann's beautiful book. Even the name, which invokes the duality of the Icelandic seasons,

tells a story within itself. Although the village in the book is fictional, anyone who has stayed in some of the smaller settlements around Iceland will recognise many of the features of small town life captured in this novel. Jón's writing style is somehow both delicate and devastating, managing to pin down human sentiments with breathtaking accuracy. Best paired with a solo road trip, and delicious summer melancholia. **JG**

## Karitas Untitled

Author: **Kristín Marja Baldursdóttir**



Published in 2004, Kristín Marja Baldursdóttir's novel has long been heralded as an excellent representation of the lives of women in Iceland at the turn of the 20th century. The titular character, Karitas, is a strong-minded and creative young woman, whose singular drive to be an artist keeps getting derailed by the demands placed upon her as a working class woman in a patriarchal society. Through romance, work, familial responsibilities, and grief, Karitas's spirit and grit are a force to be reckoned with. It's a novel that I personally feel can match Laxness in describing the Icelandic psyche—but don't quote me on that. **JG**

## Secrets of the Sprakkar

Author: **Elíza Reid**



First Lady of Iceland Eliza Reid has compiled here a daring, insightful, often humorous and fascinating look at women in Iceland. Drawing from personal experiences that are often relatable in their vulnerability, she interweaves her own story with the words of other women, deliberately seeking out those often overlooked in feminist discourse in this country. In between, she offers historical accounts of powerful Icelandic women over the ages. It's a real page-turner and one that everyone should read, regardless of gender. **ASF**

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## Food



## Food Review: The Greenhouse

The new food court in Hveragerði is restoring lost fame

Words: **Valur Grettisson** & **Valur Gunnarsson** Photos: **Joana Fontinha**

### Fire and bankruptcy

Hveragerði is an odd town, occupying a strange space in the hearts of elder millennials and Gen Xers. The town, which is only 40 minutes away from Reykjavík, used to have the only theme park in Iceland. It wasn't much. There were a few rides, but nothing impressive. The reason this was doable in the '80s in Iceland was because it was inside a huge colourful warehouse that shielded guests from ever-changing weather. Not only that, but there used to be a shop called Eden next to the theme park. There you could play arcade games and buy ice cream. There were rumours that there used to be monkeys in Eden, but if that was the case, they were there for a short time and we never saw them. Later they were replaced with a mechanical monkey that spoke if you gave it some change. His name was Bóbó. And it was silly. We loved him.

But all good things end eventually. The theme park went bankrupt in the 90s and Eden burned down in 2011 after a series of failed ventures in the building. Hveragerði was on the cusp of becoming one more tragic Icelandic small town with a colourful past. But its proximity to the city kept it relevant. Artists, writers and such, started moving to the town because of the low housing costs and the nature. Slowly, tourists discovered this once famed town, and more importantly, the beautiful geothermal area around it, which has one of the best hot rivers in Iceland a short hike away. It has been clear for years now, that Hveragerði has some serious potential as a tourism destination.



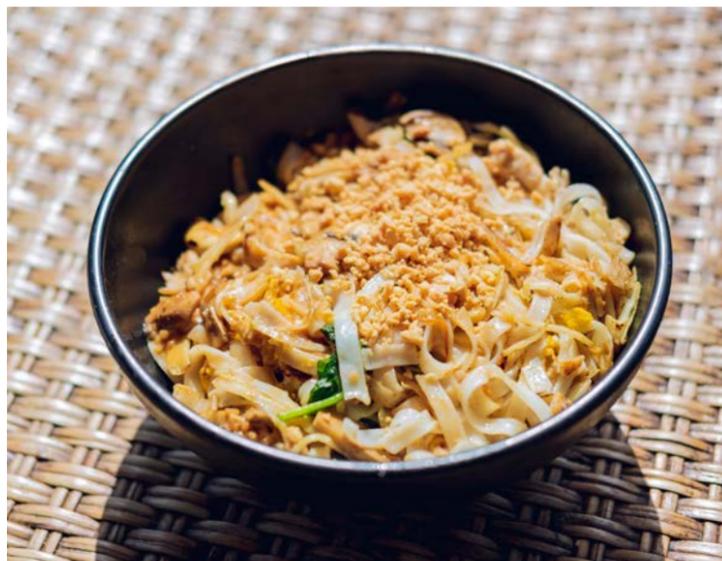
### Fresh oxygen

Things have been looking up in the past few years. And the new addition of Gróðurhúsið (The Greenhouse) to the community provided a serious facelift providing the town with the oxygen it needs to become a bustling little outpost in the countryside.

I, along with my namesake, former Reykjavík Grapevine editor-in-chief and a well-known historian and a novelist, Valur Gunnarsson (we will go by our last names to make things more simple) decided to visit Gróðurhúsið, try out the food and examine the new future of Hveragerði.

### Fantastic interior designing

The house follows the popular idea of a food hall but has also adjusted its business to meet the needs of tourism. It's a hotel as well as a market that offers some of Iceland's best design brands. Although the house doesn't look like much from the outside, the interior design is just off the charts. And there is a good reason for that. Hálfán Pedersen is an interior and set designer responsible for everything inside the house, which is elegant and rustic at the same time. It's easily the best-designed food hall



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### Wok On

**Grettisson:** The “Peanut Dream” was not as impressive as one might expect. It had rice noodles, chicken, mushroom, spinach, cashew nuts, satay sauce and peanuts in it. It could have done with more seasoning to make it more memorable. The dish had no real character but is more than sufficient if you want to have a proper meal between destinations if travelling or you're just plain hungry. The portion was generous.

**Gunnarsson:** I, for one, dream of peanuts often, but I found this dish a bit light on peanuts and heavy on the wok. It's decent as such, but not all peanut dreams came true.

### Tacovagninn

**Grettisson:** The tacos at Tacovagninn follows the Asian and South-American fusion trend and



do so in a solid way. It's a hearty bite to grab and it's inventive enough to make your day if you are up for some fancy tacos. The cauliflower taco was outstanding and the only downside is that we wanted more.

**Gunnarsson:** This is obviously a local favourite, since there was a queue. The best bet seems to be a selection of different tacos. All in all they weren't bad, but perhaps the secret weapon here are the nachos.

### Hipstur

**Gunnarsson:** Hipstur is the Greenhouse fine dining restaurant. The fish was excellent and perhaps the most Icelandic item here, if that's your thing. More importantly, they have beer.

**Grettisson:** Hipstur is hands down the fanciest restaurant at the Greenhouse and offers cuisine of the best possible standard you can find in Iceland. We decided to try out the fish of the day, which happened to be my favourite: ling. The dish was served with cauliflower, grilled onion and cherry tomatoes and was refreshing and multilayered in taste. The freshness of the dish was amazing. The only thought we

had was how incredible it is to have access to such fine food on the road, while travelling in the South.

### PÜNK

**Gunnarsson:** The surprise of the day was PÜNK. You think you know chicken and fries, but this manages to be different. Just the right amount of spicy and the fries are halfway between crisps and chips. The sauces are nice, too.

**Grettisson:** I have to admit that I wasn't really expecting much from PÜNK. Not because it's bad, but because of the fierce competition in the food court. But they surprised in a very pleasant way with a bit of an old school dish executed the right way. The dish was PÜNK signature, which entails two boneless chicken legs, coleslaw, fries and homemade PÜNK sauce. The chicken was perfectly cooked and the fries reminded me in some ways of the 80s when everybody was experimenting with fries in different shapes. This was an honest dish that didn't try to be anything more than it was. I was impressed.

### Yuzu

**Gunnarsson:** A safe choice, but could do with more spice. Perhaps ask for extra sauce.

**Grettisson:** It's hard to add anything more to what we have already said about Yuzu. They are at least one of the two best burger places in Iceland and offer burgers with a South-Korean/Japanese twist. We had the very popular and famous Yuzu dish of deep-fried chicken in kimchi and Yuzu hot sauce with a splash of coriander. The burger was good, the bun was done right, although it felt slightly dry, but nothing to worry about. The chicken was perfect and the whole experience was as solid as it can be when it comes to a burger. That said, it needed a little bit more of a kick in the spice department.

### Overall

The overall experience from the food court is that it is outstanding in various ways. Icelanders have been very excited about the place, and finally, we have one more reason to visit the wonderful Hveragerði, which also has one of the most beautiful swimming pools in the country. Our prediction is simple, and perhaps not a hard one; this could be the hottest destination in Iceland this summer (and in coming years), for travellers and Icelanders alike. 🍷



in Iceland and elevates the experience considerably.

### And then there's the food

But Mr. Gunnarsson and I were there for the food. Gróðurhúsið smartly offers five restaurants, and the foodhall's managers curated them well, ticking most of the eating out options you'd be craving.



Hverfisgata 12



Happy hour / 4–7pm  
Beer / Wine / Cocktails



# Travel



## Islands Of Wonder

Winning the weather lottery in Vestmannaeyjar

Words: **Iryna Zubenko & Alice Poggio** Photos: **Joana Fontinha**



**Distance from Reykjavik:**  
150 kilometres

**Accommodation provided by:**  
Westman Islands Villas & Apartments  
[westmanislandsluxury.is](http://westmanislandsluxury.is)

**Tour provided by:**  
Ribsafari  
[ribsafari.is](http://ribsafari.is)

No matter what the gods have thrown at the Westman Islands (known locally as Vestmannaeyjar)—eruptions, turbulent history, harsh living conditions—it seems only to have strengthened its inhabitants, creating a resilient population that lives with endearing optimism and a complete and utter lack of fear. Unscathed by worldly worries, the locals we met on Heimaey, the largest island of the archipelago, embody childlike wonder—they are dreamers that make things happen. Where else can you find a beluga rehab program with a reintegration facility in the neighbouring bay or a sustainable brewery run by best bros?

For us, Vestmannaeyjar became more than just a fun tourist destination with breathtaking views, but rather a chance to connect with some of the amazing people we met on this oft-overlooked island.

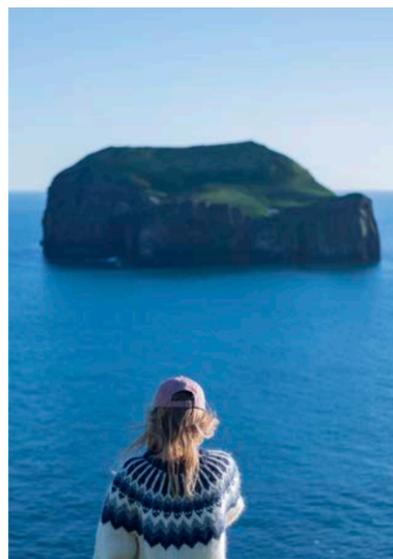
### Hold on to your hats

The only way to see most of the archipelago's raw natural beauty is by boat. Luckily, Ribsafari was available to take us on their popular one-hour tour. The family-run business has mom Helga greeting you at the front desk, while her husband and her son captain the boats. The extremely friendly staff eagerly showed us around the islands they love dearly.

Imagine speeding over the water's surface, inhaling the summer sea breeze and freedom, overlooking crystal clear blue water and Avatar-worthy rock formations. It was pure joy and adrenaline—or at least that's how we felt.

Something we did not expect on a boat ride were all the eye tests the crew gave us, challenging us to partake in one of their favourite hobbies: finding faces and silhouettes in the rocky cliffs. Fictional characters, eagles, elephants, and even a T-Rex.

After the captain showed off his masterful manoeuvring skills—playing with the waves, making us jump off of our saddle-shaped seats—the boat raced past the smaller, rugged volcanic islands. There we noticed tiny solitary houses. Don't rush off to Airbnb just yet though, these are spartan cabins for puffin hunters, surrounded by the cutest living lawn-mowers you'll ever see—sheep, of course. How did they get there? Easy, farmers pull the sheep up the 15-metre cliff using a rope. Fret not, our guide reassured us that they enjoy the ride.



### Local shenanigans

Heimaey natives are protecting their cherished traditions, mainly rooted in hunting and gathering. These include collecting fulmar and guillemot eggs from the cliffs. To do so, one needs to undergo training—that's why you can often spot ropes attached to the cliffs. Nowadays they are also a rite of passage for teens, who swing on the 'spranga' to prove their bravery. We passed on egg gathering, but we did try the infamous rope ... unsuccessfully.

Our pride intact, we moved on to another famed sport in Vestmannaeyjar—football. With the sun disappearing behind the rocky backdrop, we kicked a ball and bantered with Kristján, a curious 8-year-old local. After realising the local football club has won the Icelandic Cup four times and has been around since 1903, we started to understand why such a small island would dedicate precious surface area to numerous football pitches.

### Fantastic beasts and birds

By far the most satisfying part of our trip was also free—admiring the wildlife on our many hikes. Despite Vestmannaeyjar boasting over 1 million puffins during the breeding season,

we rarely saw one flying around. As it turns out, puffins don't love sunshine as much as humans do, preferring to spend a day out at sea to stay cool.

If you're not a diehard birdwatcher, do yourself a favour and go visit the sheep. Heimaey's sheep are quite different from those you can find in mainland Europe, one of the purest breeds of sheep in the world.

Klettsvík Bay—once home to Keikó, the famous killer whale from the 'Free Willy' movies—will soon have two new residents, belugas Little Grey and Little White. For now, you can visit them at the Sea Life Trust Beluga Whale Sanctuary; there is also a puffin hospital.

Although Vestmannaeyjar has some breathtaking camping options, and some lower budget hostels, we urge you to find 11 friends and splurge on 'Westman Islands Villas and Apartments' ocean villa. Grill on the spacious patio while the hot tub fills up, and then go for a midnight dip as the sun slowly sets behind Elephant Rock. Get someone to pinch you!

On the ferry ride back to reality, we were already planning our next visit. However, rumour has it that there are only four days of sunshine per year—two down, can we also claim the rest? 🍷

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Ribsafari



Grapevine had three little lambs



## Bergvin Oddsson

Words: **Alice Poggio**

Photos: **Joana Fontinha**

*Bergvin Oddsson rides his tandem bike through the colourful streets of Heimaey, set against the backdrop of green and misty Vestmannaeyjar. Everyone knows him here and as he rides by, people on the streets greet him affectionately. A restaurant owner, bartender, football player, politician, comedian and writer, Beggi is nothing short of an overachiever.*

*When he ran a hostel, guests occasionally came to him with their complaints. If there was a problem with the lights, he would confidently say, "Seems fine to me". Confused, they'd insist, "There aren't any lightbulbs!" to which he'd reply, "I don't see anything wrong". As the silence grew*

*denser and Beggi struggled to contain his booming laughter any longer, he'd release his amusement, and reassure the confused tourists that he would fix it. Beggi has been completely blind since the age of 15.*

### Hear all, know all

"Everyone is differently blind, people can go into a house 100 times and still not know where the toilet is, I can find it after having been there once," he says.

Beggi smoothly navigates the tables and chairs of his restaurant, 900 Grillhúsið. He goes behind the bar and effortlessly

mixes cocktails. "You want to know how I do this?" He asks. "Everything is like a puzzle, with one piece of information at a time, I can recreate whole buildings in my mind," Beggi explains. He has spent hours familiarising himself with every dent, every step, every broom closet in his restaurant, which has turned him into an omniscient employer.

Nothing evades him; he can tell if the staff threw away leftovers in the wrong bin, if they are drinking out of plastic or glass, or if they are eating something in the kitchen. He can hear if a guest five tables away needs a beer, and immediately starts to pour it from the draft. Sixteen is apparently the magic number when pouring a pint, but whether it's Mississippi-less seconds or not, he won't tell—it's his secret.

### A personal time machine

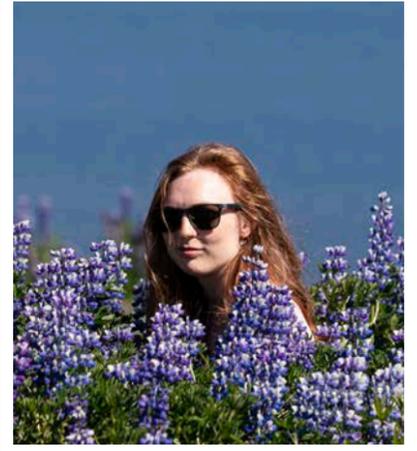
The only place where he cannot create images and buildings out of thin air is in his dreams. Those are stuck in time. His brain only uses the 'footage' from before he was blind, making for a personal time warp he can visit whenever he fancies.

"70% of my dreams take place in Vestmannaeyjar, where I grew up. All my friends still look 14, everything and everyone is how they were 20 years ago. It's strange but fun," he says. "Even when I dream about my time in Reykjavik, it's set in Vestmannaeyjar."

Given how beautiful Heimaey is, maybe it's better this way.

*The Islanders is our series where we interview interesting people in Iceland about their unique lives. Know someone we should speak to? Email [grapevine@grapevine.is](mailto:grapevine@grapevine.is)*

### WELL, YOU ASKED



## Summer Lovin'

Words: **Josie Anne Gaitens**

### How do I sleep with the endless midnight sun?

Ah, Icelandic summertime. All winter we long for it, only for it to arrive in true lacklustre form, like the dear friend who always shows up to the party late and obnoxiously drunk.

Alongside slightly milder temperatures, rain, and, of late, biting flies (what the fuck, have we not got it bad enough?), summer heralds the coming of the midnight sun. From mid April to mid August, there is no Astronomical Twilight in Iceland, which means it never gets dark enough to see the stars—so please, for the love of god, do not show up here in July and ask when you can see the Northern Lights. It's not happening, buddy.

This change in daylight can do odd things to your body clock, and of course there's nothing more confronting than leaving the bar for a smoke at 2 a.m., only to find that it's suddenly as bright as high noon outside.

So, how to sleep? Well, it's pretty simple really. Turn off your phone an hour before bed. Stop looking at your laptop. Get some decent blackout curtains, a face mask, and if needed, a white noise machine. Or, you know—don't. For three sweet months of the year, get out and enjoy the long days. You'll miss them when they're gone.

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### It's June and I've just arrived in Iceland to see the Northern Lights. How do I find them?

Book a flight for October. 🇮🇸

### CITY SHOT by Joana Fontinha



Color Run Kids



*hugge*

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