

# The Reykjavík Grapevine



Free copy

Volume 20

Issue 18 2023

Best before January 5

## Rán Flygenring's Playful World

Culture

Music

Travel



# In This Issue

8

Top tips to start an art collection

12-14

Award-winning artist Rán Flygenring defies definition

15

Radar Reykjavík adds a blip on the city map

28

II Lab imbues instruments with artificial intelligence

30-31

The dazzling truth to Michelin-spangled Óx

38

Charlie Winters puts an end to the Yule Lads' barbarous actions



## Editorial It's The Most Creative Time Of The Year

WORDS Catharine Fulton, Editor in Chief

It's a hectic time of year as the holidays approach. There's shopping to be done and family with which to visit and a house to clean ahead of festive gatherings. But, if you look outside of the big chain stores, there's a lot of creativity and beauty to be found at this time of year. It's at the Christmas markets that you can discover new makers and artists who might just become your favourites and whose work you want to bring into your home to add a touch of beauty to your life year-round.

Rán Flygenring is no stranger to seeing the beauty and oddity of life around her. She takes in her surroundings and uses it as inspiration for many of her illustrations – including for her book *Eldgos*, or *Volcano*, which was just awarded the Nordic Council Children and Young People's Literature Prize. Iryna Zubenko sat down with the illustrator to learn more about her inspirations and motivations. It turns out it's all child's play. Read the full interview on pages 12 - 14.

It's inspiring to slow down and appreciate the people around you and their talents at this time of year – and always. There are so many phenomenally talented and skilled people in this little city that I, at least, don't spend enough time recognising and acknowledging. So go to the Christmas markets, buy art for your walls, support local designers and producers, and go out with someone you love for a nice meal. If the past years have taught us anything, it's that a whole lot can change in an instant, so we had better be living to the fullest while circumstances allow.

See you in 2024. ■

## Contributors



CATHERINE MAGNÚSDÓTTIR

Catherine studies culture and literature in Iceland and came to the Grapevine for the internship but ended up freelancing for the magazine. When she's not trying to reconnect with her Icelandic roots, she's usually watching video essays or attempting to finally come up with that one good story idea that she can actually finish writing.



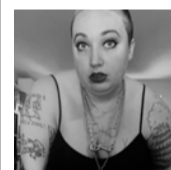
JÓHANNES BJARKI BJARKASON

Jóhannes Bjarki is a Reykjavik local, straight out of Grafarvogur. Having been active as the frontman of the post-punk band Skoffin and in the post-dreifing art collective, Jóhannes is fascinated by the Icelandic music scene. Among his interests are politics, history and pop culture.



IRYNA ZUBENKO

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



REX BECKETT

Rex Beckett has been a fixture in the Reykjavik culture scene for over a decade as a longtime music/art writer and as former synthpunk diva Rex Pistols. They are currently working on a series delving into the influence of Garfield on queer millennials.



SHRUTHI BASAPPA

Shruthi Basappa traded the warmth of Indian summers for Arctic winds of Iceland. She's a food enthusiast masquerading as an architect at Sei Studio and loves obsessive attention to detail. When not leading our Best of Reykjavik food panel, Shruthi can be found trying to become a Michelin restaurant inspector.



## On the Cover

Artist Rán Flygenring made headlines in November for winning the 2023 Nordic Council Children and Young People's Literature Prize for her book *Eldgos* (*Volcano*). But her raw sketches have been captivating audiences long before this recognition. In a conversation with Rán, Iryna Zubenko delves into what fuels the artist's creative journey and explores the intriguing connections between birds, horses, elves and a child's play.

COVER ART BY:  
Rán Flygenring

PHOTO BY:  
Art Bicnick

A LOCAL FAVOURITE FOR OVER 20 YEARS



OUR KITCHEN IS OPEN FOR

# LATE NIGHT DINING

until 23:00 on weekdays  
and 24:00 on weekends



BOOK YOUR TABLE

TAPASBARINN | Vesturgata 3B | Tel: 551 2344 | [tapas.is](https://tapas.is)







# Farmers Market

ICELAND

OUR STORES IN REYKJAVÍK: FARMERS & FRIENDS



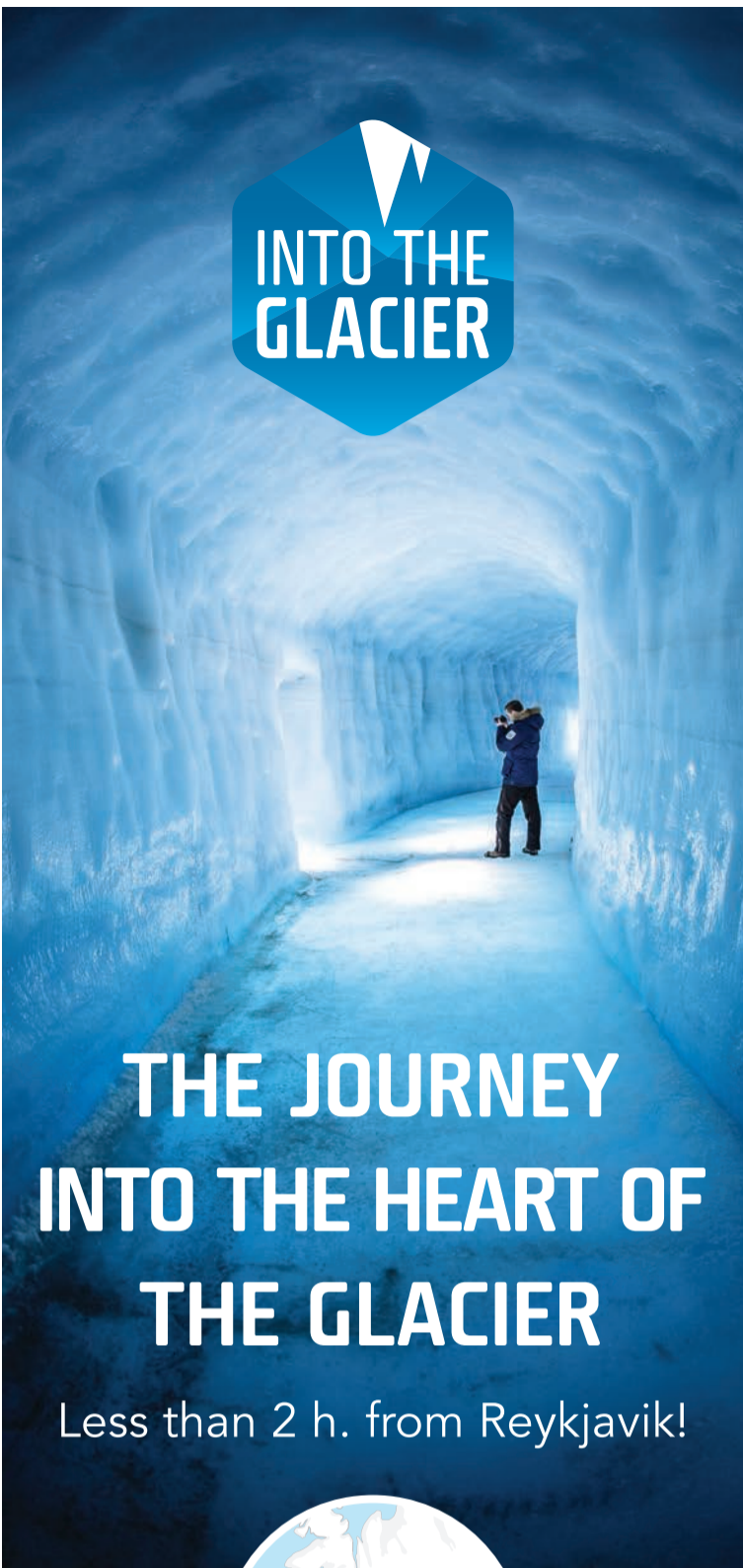
Laugavegur 37



Hólmahlóð 2 / Grandi

[WWW.FARMERSMARKET.IS](http://WWW.FARMERSMARKET.IS)





# THE JOURNEY INTO THE HEART OF THE GLACIER

Less than 2 h. from Reykjavik!



Go see for yourself



intotheglacier.is



What The News!?

# All The Phases Of The Rainbow

A selection of stories making headlines in recent weeks

WORDS The Reykjavik Grapevine  
IMAGE Art Bicnick

suddenly directly beneath the town and, on the afternoon of Nov. 10, the quakes were non-stop, with several high magnitude events taking place.

intrusion has solidified. Though an eruption is still possible, experts are saying it would most likely occur closer to Sundhnúkur, toward the northeast end of the intrusion.

MORE THAN ONE REASON TO BE ALERT

By 23:20 on Nov. 10, head of Iceland's Civil Protection and Emergency Management Viðir Reynisson – who Icelanders only ever see when the news is going to be bad – was on live TV declaring an Emergency/Distress Phase for the area and announcing the mandatory evacuation of Grindavík's 3,700 residents. Informing that decision were measurements from the Icelandic Meteorological Office showing a lava intrusion had formed under the town.

Meanwhile, in the Westman Islands, there's concern that the pipelines supplying water to the archipelago will give out at any moment after being damaged on Nov. 18 by an anchor dragged by the trawler Huginn VE. An Alert Phase has been declared for islands.

A statement from the National Commissioner of Police states that the damage is extensive and serious. The pipes will have to be replaced ASAP.

**T**here's no question what the top news story in Iceland has been since the last issue of the Reykjavik Grapevine hit the streets – and no, it's not the potential sale of Icelandic food processing giant Marel to an American conglomerate for a mind-boggling sum.

In fact, in the days that followed, it was announced that the intrusion was assumed to stretch 15 km, from just northeast of the Blue Lagoon and Svartsengi Power Plant, running in a southwesterly direction under Grindavík and out beneath the sea floor. The seismic activity of Nov. 10 had also caused a section of the town to drop, forming a graben roughly a metre deep.

The water supply to the Westman Islands is still operational and meeting the needs of residents. Plus, there is a 5,000 tonne supply on the islands that would supply drinking water for another week, should the pipelines give way. Still, preparations and evacuation plans are being made. They include moving the most vulnerable groups, patients, and the elderly, to the mainland. However, it is assumed that people can stay on the island until the new pipeline is installed.

IT'S GRINDAVÍK!

The small town on the southern coast of the Reykjanes peninsula has been making headlines in Iceland and around the world after the seismic activity that had begun ramping up on the peninsula in late October (as it had prior to the eruptions around Fagradalsfjall in 2021, 2022 and July 2023) took a turn. The epicentre of the activity was

But, what happened next? Nothing. The residents of Grindavík remain displaced, but the earthquakes have weakened and the emergency preparedness level was downgraded on Nov. 23 to an Alert Phase. Professor of Geophysics at the University of Iceland Magnús Tumi Guðmundsson also told the national broadcaster on Nov. 26 that 90% of the magma in the aforementioned

Never a dull moment, folks. ■

Keep on top of the latest from Iceland at [grapevine.is/tag/news](https://grapevine.is/tag/news)



The Reykjavik Grapevine

PUBLISHER  
Jón Trausti Sigurðarson  
[jontrausti@grapevine.is](mailto:jontrausti@grapevine.is)

EDITOR IN CHIEF  
Catharine Fulton  
[editor@grapevine.is](mailto:editor@grapevine.is)

PHOTO & MEDIA EDITOR  
Art Bicnick  
[art@grapevine.is](mailto:art@grapevine.is)

JOURNALISTS  
Iryna Zubenko  
Jóhannes Bjarkason

PUBLISHED BY  
Fröken ehf.  
Aðalstræti 2, 101 Reykjavík  
[www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)  
[grapevine@grapevine.is](mailto:grapevine@grapevine.is)

Member of the Icelandic Travel Industry Association  
[www.saf.is](http://www.saf.is)

PRINTED BY  
Landsprent ehf.

CONTRIBUTORS  
Áslaug Torfadóttir  
Catherine Magnúsdóttir  
Charlie Winters  
Francesca Stoppani  
Jelena Čirić  
Ragnar Egilsson  
Rex Beckett  
Shruthi Basappa  
Pórir Georg

PHOTOGRAPHY  
Donal Boyd  
Frank Nieuwenhuis  
Ian Dawson

PODCAST & LISTINGS EDITOR  
Rex Beckett

SALES DIRECTOR  
Aðalsteinn Jörundsson  
[adalsteinn@grapevine.is](mailto:adalsteinn@grapevine.is)

STORE MANAGER  
Helgi Þór Harðarson  
[helgi@grapevine.is](mailto:helgi@grapevine.is)

FOUNDERS  
Aldis Pálsdóttir  
Hilmar Steinn Grétarsson  
Hörður Kristbjörnsson  
Jón Trausti Sigurðarson  
Oddur Óskar Kjartansson  
Valur Gunnarsson

EDITORIAL  
[editor@grapevine.is](mailto:editor@grapevine.is)

ADVERTISING  
[ads@grapevine.is](mailto:ads@grapevine.is)

DISTRIBUTION & SUBSCRIPTIONS  
[distribution@grapevine.is](mailto:distribution@grapevine.is)  
PRESS RELEASES  
[events@grapevine.is](mailto:events@grapevine.is)  
GENERAL INQUIRIES  
[grapevine@grapevine.is](mailto:grapevine@grapevine.is)

The Reykjavik Grapevine is published every month by Fröken Ltd.

Nothing in this magazine may be reproduced in whole or in part without the written permission of the publishers.

The Reykjavik Grapevine is distributed in and

around Reykjavik and at key locations along Iceland's route 1.

It is also available at all major tourist attractions and information centres around the country.

The Grapevine is an independent publication. You may not agree with what we print, but at least our hot takes aren't paid for.

None of our editorial is directed or influenced by sponsors or advertisers, and all opinions expressed are the writer's own.





# ONE OF THE FOOD WONDERS OF THE WORLD

**ICELANDIC LAMB IS THE FIRST ICELANDIC FOOD PRODUCT TO BE PDO-MARKED**

Icelandic lamb has acquired the PDO label, the highest level of geographical indication in Europe, placing it in the company of the world's best-known and most sought-after quality products.







# Ask An Expert Why Do Icelanders Honour The Dead On Christmas?

We turned to a historian and a cemetery curator for answers

WORDS Catherine Magnúsdóttir  
IMAGE Art Bicnick

If you've ever spent the holiday season in Iceland and have walked around the urban areas, you've probably noticed how bright and colourful not just the homes of the living are, but also those of the dead. Most graves are festively decorated with candles and it's tradition to visit the resting places of loved ones on December 24. But why on that specific date? How come the dead are honoured on Christmas and not during Autumn, as is tradition in so many other parts of the world? To learn more, we spoke to not one but two experts: historian Sólveig Ólafsdóttir and her husband Heimir Björn Janusarson, the curator of Hólavallagarður Cemetery.

made not of wax but of fat, so they could even be eaten. It's best not to imagine the smell of a bunch of fat candles burning down in an old *baðstofa*. But the time also coincides with the winter solstice when you would light big bonfires to light the sun back up; help restart it, so to speak."

Sólveig adds that, "Christmas and this solstice period also mark a big change, in the weather for instance. January is when it gets really bad, so Christmas is almost like the last respite. You were encouraged to work as little as possible in the time between Christmas and the New Year. So far up north it is also possible that the solstice was even more meaningful in all this darkness."

Light carries a lot of meaning both in a practical sense – in the everlasting darkness of the Icelandic winter where one lit candle can already make all the difference – but also in a strongly symbolic way.

As Heimir explains, "Remembering the dead is also a big tradition and you do that with light. Though it wasn't very common to have light outside in Iceland for the longest time. You see this tradition of remembrance in other communities as well, like the Polish one for instance, when they visit the cemeteries on All Saint's Day, bringing candles to the clocktower (at Hólav-

allagarður) or to the memorial of Polish sailors at Fossvogskirkjugarður."

As for the difference in timing Sólveig points out that, "Halloween in Europe is also at the end of the harvest season, which in Iceland is much sooner, around September when the sheep are brought back from the mountains and sorted."

Both Sólveig and Heimir also point to Iceland's transition from Catholic to Lutheran in the 1500s as an important aspect in Christmas becoming a day of remembrance. "We just killed all our Saints in one blow," as Sólveig puts it. "And with them all the various church masses and feasts spread out over the year, but they couldn't kill Christmas the same way." Christmas and New Year's festivities arguably took on the extra weight of those remembrance celebrations. Thus we can see a culmination of factors, from seasonal circumstances to historic determinants and light as an ever-present focal point to see why Icelanders go to visit the graves of their ancestors on Dec. 24.

"With older graveyards like Hólavallagarður, it's less about grief and more of a celebration," Heimir says. "It can be a meeting point for more distant family members, too. And often it's kids coming with their grandparents to give parents at home some preparation time." ■

**"C**andlelight has always been really important, going back to Iceland's old farm societies," Heimir begins. "It was tradition to keep a candle lit throughout Christmas night. Children would also have to get at least one new item of clothing as well as at least one candle, though back then they were



# Do Shit Celebrate Christmas Like An Icelander

The Útlendingur's ongoing guide to getting shit done

WORDS Catharine Fulton  
IMAGE Art Bicnick

Yes, putrified. The scent will make that abundantly clear not just to you, but everyone else within a two block radius of where the "delicacy" is being prepared. Dig in. Just be sure to leave all the windows open and consider vacuum sealing your clothes ahead of time, lest it too smell of rotten fish.

If you want to follow in the footsteps of around 90% of Icelanders, you'll also eat *hangikjör* at least once during the holidays. Literally "hung meat," *hangikjöt* is a salted and smoked lamb or sheep, often served with *bechamel*, peas and potatoes. Pro tip, take off all your rings prior to eating *hangikjöt* as it will make your fingers swell to double their size from the excess salt.

But hey, you can wash it all down with sickly sweet malt og *appelsin*, to give Christmas the air of dining at a fast food restaurant.

Finally, the holiday season isn't complete without a constant barrage of fireworks. Who's setting them off during the daylight? Who cares! It's fun! Plus, fireworks smell suspiciously close to *hangikjöt*, so it's also somehow oddly appetizing?

Fireworks are sold by the Search and Rescue teams to support their efforts to keep Icelanders and tourists safe throughout the year. If you don't buy fireworks – are you even trying to be Icelandic – you can still show your support by donating to [icesar.com/en/support-us](https://icesar.com/en/support-us)

Gleðileg jó! ■

**T**he holidays are upon us. Well, not really *right* now as I'm typing this, but it will indeed be December by the time your eyes are scanning this page, so let's run with it.

You likely have your own holiday traditions that you'd be hard pressed to give us. I hear you. After nearly 15 years here, I refuse to celebrate Christmas on December 24. Christmas morning is Dec. 25 and that is when the good baby Jesus wants me to open the presents delivered via flying reindeer sleigh.

But if you're going to Christmas like an Icelander, you may have to bring yourself to unwrap a package or two on Christmas Eve. Maybe even when sitting around awkwardly with your in-laws, smiling politely at one another but not really engaging in much actual conversation. How festive!

Christmassing like an Icelander will also involve making some suspect food and beverage choices. A few days before the big event, you'll have to indulge in putrified skate.

**HVAMMSVÍK**  
HOT SPRINGS

DAILY BUS TRANSFERS  
ONLY 45 MINUTES FROM REYKJAVÍK

THE #1 BEST THING TO DO IN THE WORLD  
—Time Out Magazine



# THE ONLY LIVE LAVA SHOW IN THE WORLD

BOOK NOW



LAVA SHOW

REYKJAVÍK - FISKISLÓÐ 73 - 101 REYKJAVÍK

VÍK - VÍKURBRAUT 5 - 870 VÍK

LAVASHOW.COM





Money Moves

# Art Collecting For Beginners

Art without a splurge: a myth or reality

WORDS Iryna Zubenko  
IMAGE Art Bicnick

If you're currently navigating a rental market crisis, while trying to keep whatever job you still have (with a big global employment crisis looming on the horizon), but want to start an art collection – we've got you covered. We asked an industry insider, Dorothea Olesen Halldórsdóttir, Associate Director at i8 Gallery, to dispel our stereotypes about expensive art. Turned out art was, is and will always be expensive, but she offers some helpful tips for starting your collection.

**GV: DO YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT THAT ART USED TO BE MORE AFFORDABLE THAN IT IS NOW?**

Art has always been expensive. It's just obviously inflating with everything else. I remember a story from when my mom was graduating – she went to an exhibition and saw this beautiful painting by an Icelandic

female artist. The work cost around one month's salary. She was considering buying it but decided not to do it. Today, that artwork is a part of the collection of the Icelandic National Gallery.

**GV: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE COMPLETELY NEW TO ART COLLECTING AND WANTING TO START BUILDING THEIR COLLECTION?**

My recommendation would be to find what you love and save up to buy what you love. Art is something that is not necessary. We all want to buy a house because we feel like that's maybe necessary, but art is more a way to present your inner thoughts or present yourself or your surroundings, making you feel happy in your environment. I think it's worth trying to buy something that you love.

If you think about it, the work of mid-career artists will be more expensive than that of art students. You can follow emerging artists and buy more reasonably priced pieces from younger artists. One thing that has always happened is that people get older and prices usually rise. You can look at it this way – art will never lose its value. It rarely does, except if something horrible happens, like a big scandal.

Because I'm passionate about art, I don't recommend buying art solely as an investment. It may feel disrespectful to the artist. Most artists would rather have their works go into good collections or to someone who genuinely appreciates their pieces.

If you've never collected and want to start, visit shows, museums, art fairs, artist exhibitions, or spaces. Talk with your friends about art, and ask yourself, "What do I like? Why do I like it? Why don't I like it?" When you have that conversation with yourself, if that's an artist of mid- or late-career and they don't have any smaller works, maybe you could look into whether they've made an edition work – these are limited numbers of the same work, which means they're often not as pricey as a unique piece. But if you're drawn to the emerging and the avant-garde, then maybe it's worth saving a bit more to get a bigger, unique piece.

Sometimes, people are afraid to ask for more information when they visit galleries or even independent artists' shows, but I think everyone would be happy to help. That's why we're here. So, ask questions, request to see more works by the same artists, follow the artists and gather information. You can take a long time to decide before you buy anything. You can sometimes even negotiate, but be mindful of that. At the end of the day, these are the artists' and the galleries' salaries. It's not like you can decide whatever you want to pay, but if you have a friend who is an artist and you have a skill set they desperately need, they might be open to a discussion about a work exchange.

**GV: HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR BEGINNERS TO HAVE A CLEAR FOCUS OR THEME FOR THEIR ART COLLECTION?**

Anything is fine. It comes down to you and what you're drawn to. Some-

times, it's also fun to own works you don't understand. You should try to avoid trends and stay true to your own vision and thoughts. If somebody else doesn't like the artwork, it doesn't mean you shouldn't like it. I think it's interesting when people collect diverse art, but you can also have a focus – for example, focusing on just female artists or artists younger than 30. It doesn't really matter to the collection, but what matters is being diverse, open, critical and challenging yourself.

You may only want to collect living artists, young artists and contemporary artists, but there's also plenty of art by non-living artists that may have been underrepresented. Sometimes, an artist who is long gone pops up but has never really been represented, especially with minority cultures.

**GV: IS THERE AN OPTIMAL SEASON TO BUY ART? ARE THERE SALES OR "BLACK FRIDAYS" OF THE ART WORLD?**

No. There's a difference between selling a product and selling art because, first of all, art is subjective. Art is worth whatever somebody's willing to pay for it.

Summer is usually quieter, but that doesn't affect the prices. It just means that there are maybe fewer sales because people are thinking about the summer holidays. The art market is one of the few unregulated markets in the world, which means that it doesn't really go by the same laws as, for example, traditional stores that sell products for a specific price. In the art world, the prices mostly stay the same and gradually

become more expensive or worth more. That can also happen in connection with the artist's career. For example, if a young artist's career takes off rapidly, their artwork prices will increase just as quickly. But the problem there is that your client base is those who can afford buying your work, which means if you raise it really high, you will have fewer clients who can buy your work.

**GV: HOW CAN BEGINNERS EDUCATE THEMSELVES ABOUT DIFFERENT ART STYLES, GENRES, AND ARTISTS TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS WHEN PURCHASING ART?**

I don't think you need to know everything about art history, or educate yourself. It's more about acquiring a sense because it can be overwhelming. There are so many artists and so much art – why is *that* more exciting than *this*? Or why does *this* cost more than *this*? You can get a sense by looking around and inquiring about a work. It doesn't mean you have to buy anything. It just means that you're showing interest in it and want to learn the price of the work. Then you maybe get a little bit of a sense of the whole art world here, but also internationally. Today, you can also buy anything on the internet – you can check out pages like Artsy, gallery pages and artists pages. ■

Dorothea's book recommendation: *A Poor Collector's Guide to Buying Great Art* by Erling Kagge.



## SANDHOLT REYKJAVÍK

Come by our time-honoured artisan bakery for intensely delicious baked goods, a savory brunch or one of our homemade sodas or craft beers

Find us on Laugavegur 36,  
every morning from 7:30 AM.

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





Side Hustle

# The Santa Claus

Introducing Torfi: a jolly Santa with a side of rock'n'roll

WORDS Iryna Zubenko  
IMAGE Art Bicnick

At first glance, Torfi Guðbrandsson could be anyone. Add a wig and a beard, and he becomes unrecognisable. A school teacher by day, after hours throughout the holidays Torfi takes on different roles to bring joy to people. And he does it in style.

Torfi Guðbrandsson, 34, a teacher

I teach Icelandic for teenagers in a school in Kópavogur. On the side, I'm a Santa Claus and also an Elvis impersonator.

My father is Santa Claus. Not the real one, though. I was a teenager when he started taking me to gigs. It just grew bigger and bigger, and I've been doing it ever since. There are four of us – my father and uncle, and my cousin and I. We have a lot to do. Every year, we get the same customers who say, "I just want you. I've tried others, but there's no one like you." I think we give it a little bit more edge and we're always trying to create a new act every year.

This side hustle is like a 13th salary for us. I think I wouldn't do it if I didn't get paid. I enjoy it, though. While I'm doing it, I get in the Christmas mood. We are usually hired by companies that host big Christmas parties, but also by kindergartens and schools. I also often go to people's houses for smaller gatherings.

I used to work at a youth centre where the working hours allowed

me to do more gigs. It got trickier when I started this job because the events in kindergartens and schools are during school hours. Now, I'm missing out a bit on the weekdays. Sometimes I have to take three days off when there are many gigs at the same time. But I do a lot more gigs on the weekends and also just after work.

## HO-HO-WHO?

Iceland is such a small country and at big Christmas parties, I know at least one person in the crowd almost every time. I greet them by their name while in full costume and they're always like, "Whoa, how do you know my name?"

The best thing about being a Santa Claus is just seeing the joy on the kids' faces. It's the only time in a year when I feel like I'm really valued. I'm like a god to them. It's so sad that behind the beard I'm not real. The kids always say "I love you," "I write you a letter every year," "You're my favourite Santa Claus." It's also a personal struggle – I have two daughters, who believe in Santa Claus. I've been keeping this secret from them. I even performed as a Santa Claus for them, but they don't know it. They said, "Daddy, there was Santa Claus in our kindergarten today," and I was like, "Yeah? I didn't know."

## SANTA CLAUS ETIQUETTE

One thing that most people do incorrectly is that you have to be invited in as Santa Claus at the beginning. When you go into people's houses and you're like, "HO-HO-HO," that's when the kids get

scared, especially the little ones. I always come in very gently and I ask the kids, "Can I please come in? Is it okay?" Don't scare them away at the beginning; then you've lost it and you have four crying babies and parents consoling them. That's my tip for future Santa Clauses. Also, the worst fear for us Santa Clauses is that somebody will take off our hats. It happened to my dad once. Kids can be hostile.

## ACCIDENTAL ELVIS

The Elvis Presley gig started when I was in college. I was in a play and there's an unwritten rule that you have to change something about the act. I was playing a doctor and I found this Elvis wig backstage, so I just went on stage with the wig on, in Elvis mode. Then I did it once at a party in 2010. It was supposed to be just a one-time thing, but someone saw me in the crowd and said, "Can you come to my birthday next weekend?" Then I had to buy a costume and learn songs. It just got bigger with time. These days I do it two or three times a month. Elvis works everywhere and for everyone. I've also tried doing Elton John a couple times, but Elvis is my guy. ■

The family of Santa Clauses has recorded a Christmas album to get you into the holiday mood. Listen to *Jólasveinalögin* by Skyrghámur og Kjötkrókur on Spotify.

If you ever need a Santa, visit [jolaveinninn.is](http://jolaveinninn.is)

Want to share how you're making ends meet? Email us at [grapevine@grapevine.is](mailto:grapevine@grapevine.is) with the subject line "Side Hustle." We'll happily keep your identity anonymous.



Templarasund 3,  
101 Reykjavík

537 5070

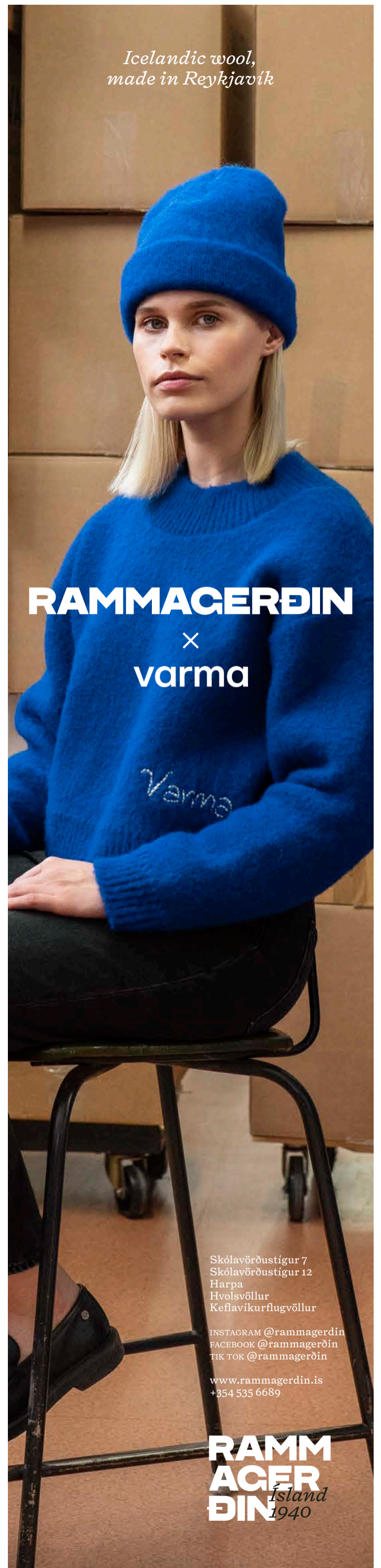
[www.labarceloneta.is](http://www.labarceloneta.is)

Icelandic wool,  
made in Reykjavík

RAMMAGERÐIN, ÍSLAND 1940

RAMMAGERÐIN  
×  
varma

Home of Icelandic design



Skólavörðustigur 7  
Skólavörðustigur 12  
Harpa  
Hvolsvöllur  
Keflavíkurflugvöllur

INSTAGRAM @rammagerdin  
FACEBOOK @rammagerdin  
TIK TOK @rammagerdin

[www.rammagerdin.is](http://www.rammagerdin.is)  
+354 535 6689

RAMM  
AGER  
ÐIN  
Ísland  
1940

RAMMAGERÐIN.IS





Neighbourhood Watch

# Nothing But Ideas – And 3D Printers

Fab Lab Reykjavik teaches people how to make almost anything

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason  
IMAGE Art Bicnick

## FROM MASSACHUSETTS TO VESTMANNAEYJAR

Spreading from its roots at the famed Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the original concept behind Fab Labs was a course called “How To Make Almost Anything.”

“We have a wide group of users,” Þóra explains. “Everywhere from people learning the basics to folks trying to fix their stuff. We also serve entrepreneurs, who are usually developing green innovation solutions. So, we have a wide breadth, but focus on building a DIY community

need to pay for materials and use of the machines, though.

“We’ve tried to design the lab in a way that most people can start easily. That doesn’t mean you’ll walk out with a wind turbine on your first visit. You’ll probably start with reflective badges or labelled glasses,” Þóra says. “But it means you’ve tried a certain machine, which develops your understanding of it.”

they are intended for the giant Yule Cat display on Lækjartorg, installed every Christmas by the City of Reykjavik. “It lost its claws,” Þóra jokes, demonstrating the lab’s capacity.

Odd jobs aside, Fab Lab has supported the development of a number of entrepreneurs. They are offered the necessary facilities to prototype their inventions. For most users, though, they make use of the lab for their own personal benefits.

**You don’t need to have an idea when you walk in. There are a lot of people that think, “I’m going to create something that saves the world.”**

At Fab Lab, the sky’s the limit – except for one category of items. “Weapons,” Þóra replies sternly when asked what people *can’t* do at the lab. “What we make here is supposed to improve the environment and society. Harmful items are banned,” she expands. “This is a movement that’s supposed to support community development.”

“You don’t need to have an idea when you walk in. There are a lot of people that think, ‘I’m going to create something that saves the world.’ We don’t have such high demands. The biggest task is to step over the threshold and decide which machines you want to learn on,” Þóra clarifies. ■

“How to make almost anything” is the thesis statement of the global Fab Lab movement. Fab Labs – short for Fabrication Laboratories – are essentially small-scale workshops for personal fabrication. They are equipped with the necessary tools, resources and knowledge to make almost anything. Often associated with DIY philosophies and the maker-movement, Fab Labs are operated around the world in over 100 countries, with more than 1750 labs worldwide – 12 of them are located right here in Iceland.

“They expected the programme to be filled with young engineers, interested in utilising their knowledge,” explains Þóra Óskarsdóttir, programme director of Fab Lab Reykjavik. “That was incorrect. Instead, it got filled with all kinds of people across the university.”

for people to support each other. That’s an important aspect in every Fab Lab.”

## SUPPORTING MAKERS OF ALL KINDS

Located in the Fjölbautarskóli Breiðholts secondary school and open to everyone, the Reykjavik Fab Lab averages around 8,000 annual visits per year. Individuals over the age of 15 can visit on their own, while younger inventors will need a parent or guardian accompanying them. You don’t even need to know what a 3D printer is to start learning. Users do

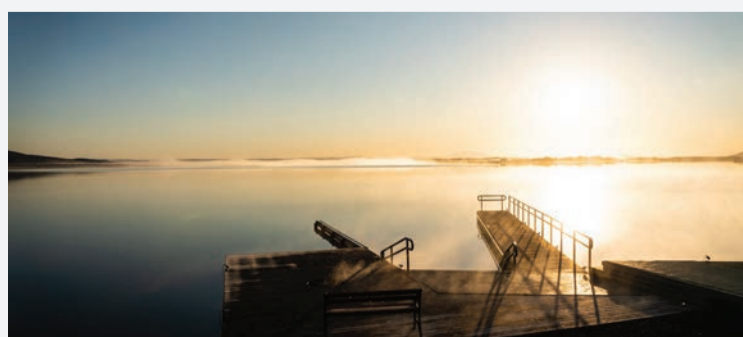
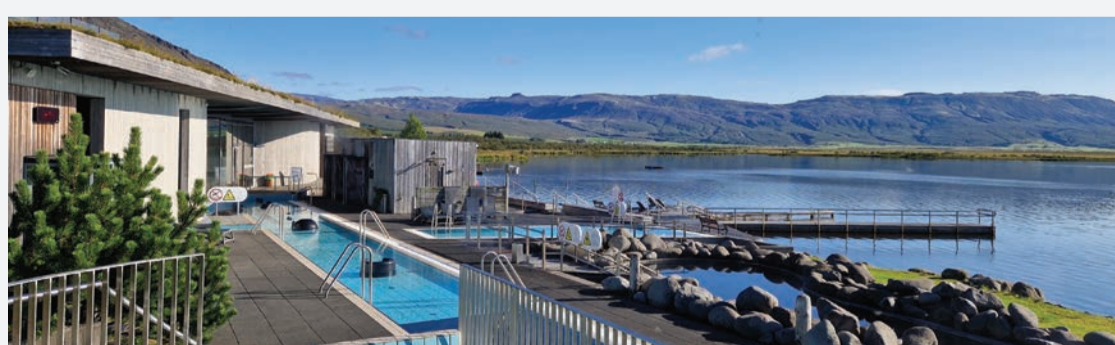
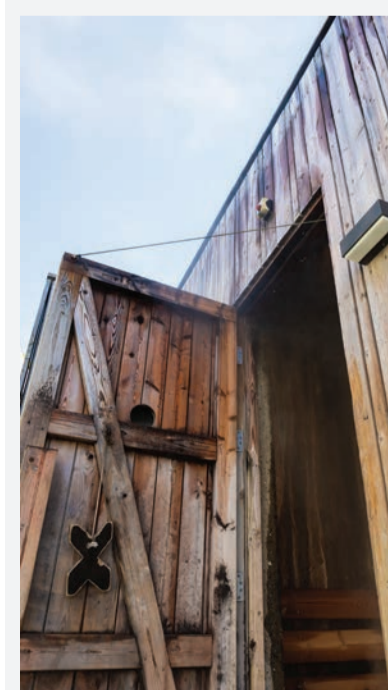
The concept took root in Iceland in 2008. Interestingly, the first Icelandic Fab Lab was in the Westman Islands. Reykjavik followed suit and opened a lab in 2014. It’s now the country’s largest Fab Lab and the only one located in the capital area.

**We’ve tried to design the lab in a way that most people can start easily.**

## THE YULE CAT’S LOST TALONS

Showcasing some of the items made in the lab, Þóra brings out two large, 3D-printed talons. It turns out that

Now is a perfect time to visit Fab Lab Reykjavik to make personal, handcrafted holiday gifts. Visit their website [www.flr.is](http://www.flr.is) for more information.



Geothermal baths • Natural steam baths • Geothermal Bakery

LAUGARVATN  
**fontana**  
Geothermal Baths

fontana.is

fontana@fontana.is

+354 486-1400



# LOW PRICE FUEL

with Orkan card to your Apple/Google wallet



72

Stations around Iceland



Scan QR code to get your Orkan card  
or visit [orkan.is/english](http://orkan.is/english)





# Feature Rán Flygenring Never Stops

With a shiny new prize, a just-released book and many projects in the works, Rán Flygenring's creative journey is just getting started.

WORDS Iryna Zubenko  
IMAGES Art Bicnick

**"T**his is not my problem," says Rán Flygenring, sitting in her studio on Ásvallagata on a crisp Tuesday afternoon.

"Maybe it is, when I have to write a biography or put a title in a box somewhere, but this is not the problem that I have with myself. I feel fine with all the different things that I do." Rounding her year with the prestigious 2023 Nordic Council Children and Young People's Literature Prize for her book *Eldgos (Volcano)*, the 36-year-old creative refuses to confine herself to one medium. Her projects span from illustration, writing and teaching to environmental activism and more. "There's an old saying that being a freelance artist is like being a potato. Sometimes

you're fried, sometimes boiled, sometimes mashed," she says.

As she offers me a cup of coffee, I take some time to look around Rán's studio. I admit I was nervous walking here as she didn't tell me the full address, just the street name. "Well, this building doesn't have a number," she says in her defence while the coffee is brewing. Finding Rán turned out to be easier than I had anticipated. Just as I walked close to Ásvallagata, on the approach to Reykjavík's Vesturbær neighbourhood, I spotted a large window with an anti-whaling poster Rán created during the summer. I knew I was at the correct address.

The coffee is ready now. I take a sip and we launch straight in.

With an Icelandic mother and a Norwegian father, I'm curious whether Rán thinks of herself as Icelandic or Norwegian. Understanding how difficult, and frankly, in such a globalised world, often unnecessary it is to put oneself under any labels, I try to ease it with a joke, "Are you team Hraun or team Kvikk Lunsj?" [arguably the best candy bar offerings of each nation]. Rán pauses for a moment and says, "Good question. How do I answer this?"

She admits that having a bit of heritage from both sides has definitely had an impact on shaping her personality – an experience she's grateful for. "I guess I never felt completely Icelandic and, at the same time, I don't feel Norwegian either," says Rán, adding that since both are relatively close cultures, her definition of herself has never caused much internal turmoil.

She admits, though, that after getting a degree in graphic design

in Iceland, she wanted to immerse herself in Norwegian culture independently, free from her parents' influence, such as frequent visits to her dad's side of the family. Rán moved to Oslo in 2014 to pursue a Master's, which turned out to be, in her words, "a reality check with Norway." She explains, "Then I sort of found out that I am not Norwegian in some way." Rán speaks of feeling an outsider in Norway as being "big and wild." "That was an interesting look in the mirror," she says.

## THE LANGUAGE OF RÁN'S HOME

Despite speaking different languages with her parents growing up, Rán was quickly immersed in a creative environment. Both her mom and dad had been running an architecture studio from home. "I was always sort of half in there," she remembers. "Even though, at the time, I thought they worked a rather boring office job, of course, having parents

always used drawing as a practical tool to explain things. "They were so used to drawing to demonstrate and explain things. It was their tool, basically."

Early on, Rán knew she would pursue a creative path, even though she wasn't sure exactly what that path would be. Horses were another passion of hers and she spent every summer working with them, even training them for other people. She considered equine studies at Hólar University if she didn't get into the Iceland Academy of the Arts on her first try [which she did].

At the mere mention of "finding her voice," Rán says it's a question that often comes up in interviews or conversations with starting artists. "I don't want to sound cocky, but I don't feel like that was something that I had to look for in a way," she says. "Everyone has a different line. I'm talking about a literal line when you draw a circle. There's a charac-

ter in it," she speaks of having that line and developing it over the years.

ter in it," she speaks of having that line and developing it over the years. "I don't have that thing where I need people to take me seriously," she says. "I don't feel like I have to elevate the work. It seems to reach people anyway, through the sketches." She believes that there's something about the rough sketch approach that helps her get the story across in the most effective way. "I'm just not good at the other thing. I'm just not good at painting," Rán modestly adds. "I'm always so eager to tell a story or get the message through that, frankly, I sometimes get bored with the process. I just want the drawing to tell what I need to tell and then I'm on with it."

## ORDINARY INTERACTIONS, EXTRAORDINARY IDEAS

While in recent years, Rán has been making waves as a book illustrator and writer – her first book, *Vigdís*, a picture book that tells the story of the world's first elected female president, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, received the Reykjavík City Children's Literature Prize in 2019 – her projects embrace various industries, from collaborating with the Iceland Post to create a hot dog stamp to designing murals at airports and ferry terminals.

"This was sort of where it all started," Rán says of the summer of 2011 when she applied for a summer job as an official illustrator for the capital. At that time, the local youth centre Hitt Húsið was offering scholarships or "summer salaries" for various group and individual projects. "So, I applied with this title in mind – I said, 'I'm going to be the Official Illustrator of Reykjavík. I'm going to walk around in the summer, draw

**I don't have that thing where I need people to take me seriously. I don't feel like I have to elevate the work. It seems to reach people anyway, through the sketches.**

that were doing a creative job and applying problem-solving thinking shaped me."

"There were always pencils and paper around. They would be drawing, I would be drawing. Drawing was just one language in the home," Rán highlights that her parents

ter in it," she speaks of having that line and developing it over the years.

Her art never felt like a conscious choice, yet it is very distinct – raw sketches that seem a little goofy, often poking fun at herself or those around her, like sketching her review of Eurovision acts or humorously de-





# s Playing

ted

what's happening and then make an exhibition."

Observing people remains one of Rán's primary sources of inspiration. "I can name artists, art pieces, books and places that inspire me, but I think mostly it is kind of stepping a little bit out of yourself and becoming an audience to the world, as if taking a step back and looking at it as if it was a theatre," Rán is confident that many ideas come from looking at how we interact with ordinary things.

Over the years, she has collaborated with writer Hjörleifur Hjartarson on a series of books, *Fuglar (Birds)*, *Hestar (Horses)* and *Álfar (Elves)*, the latter having its release party on the night of our conversation.

Having read an interview where Rán confesses she couldn't care less about birds, I'm curious to ask how the *Fuglar* project came about. "I used to, before we did the bird book," Rán chuckles. "I didn't think about birds much. After the bird book, I'm a total bird fan. I have to watch out not to turn into a bird weirdo."

"I've been so fortunate to see, through different drawing projects, how fascinating things become when you start digging," says Rán, adding that the meeting point between nature and people has been the focal point of her work. "I mean, people are nature, but there's something really interesting in between. I'm totally inspired by this."

She admits that there's no logic in how the topics for the book series were chosen, before correcting herself, "I mean, this is logical in our minds. Birds are fascinating in the sense that we have so many stories

about them and how they connect the whole world. Horses really shaped the nation. They've been with us here since people settled in Iceland. They have had such an immense impact on the land, just who we are and surviving here. There are so many interesting stories to tell in that," she pauses. "And then the elves have this same quality – telling about them tells us as much about

known and lesser-known stories about elves, but they presented them in a slightly different light.

Interestingly, the book was created in a way where only those who wish to see the elves would be able to do it – the hidden people are printed with seemingly invisible ink, a mere sheen on the page. "In the book, there are illustrations that resemble

**I'm always so eager to tell a story or get the message through that, frankly, I sometimes get bored with the process. I just want the drawing to tell what I need to tell, and then I'm on with it.**

us as birds and horses. I think that's how it kind of connects but in very different ways."

Unlike other illustration projects, where Rán normally works with a ready manuscript, she describes working with Hjörleifur as a very collaborative process, where they shape the story together and spend a lot of time deciding what's better told through a drawing versus text.

#### ILLUSTRATING THE UNSEEN

Despite often being labelled as a "tourist fairytale," the belief in Huldufólk (hidden people or elves) is deeply ingrained in Icelandic culture. "When you start digging, everyone has a story involving elves," admits Rán, adding that in the book, she and Hjörleifur collected both well-

the world as it is, but then there is a layer of activity that sort of interacts with the other drawings," explains Rán. "That was something that I immediately thought had to be like that. Because how are you going to draw elves? That's such a massive thing to take on. How do you decide what elves look like? The magical thing about them is that they cannot be seen by everyone at the same time, in a way. So that's why I just thought immediately that they had to be hidden, as well."

She describes working on the book as a struggle, in which the deadline was approaching, but there was no progress until she had a vivid dream, as if a supernatural force was guiding her. The dream took her to the funeral of her co-author, Hjörleifur. "I could see the tapestry on his coffin in detail. All the people he knows

were there and I was in the audience at the funeral. I felt like I was shown this vision." Rán says that after the dream, her work on the illustrations really kicked off.

There are no specific instructions in *Álfar*, but the book is still going to be informative even if you're "the sort of person who prefers not to see elves." Rán says, "If you see them, you see them, if you don't, there's nothing we can do about it."

#### "MANY THANKS TO NEW MOUNTAINS"

Rán describes her visit to the Eyjafjallajökull eruption in 2010 as "one of the biggest experiences I've had in life." Naturally, when the eruption in Geldingadalir began in 2021, "I went there and I was absolutely amazed," Rán says, explaining how her admiration for volcanoes came to be. "No, I was just absolutely gobsmacked – isn't that a negative word?"

"It was just a really big experience," she continues. "I went there again and again – in total, like 18 times or something. I couldn't stop."

"In between, I was just looking at the live feed, and I was not alone in being so fascinated by it and how close to us it was. It was so big and crazy and unlike anything else in our world – especially our manmade world," Rán continues, as excited as if we were standing right next to the eruption right now. "And yet it was like so small. Why isn't it just ripping the whole earth apart?"

Her numerous hikes to the volcano site grew into an eponymous book, a project in which Rán acted both as an illustrator and a writer. *Eldgos*, published in English in the trans-

lation of Jonas Moody, follows the story of a young boy, Kaktus, who joins his mom at work – on a tour around Iceland because his school got closed due to a lice outbreak. The story takes an unexpected turn when Kaktus and the tourists see a volcano.

The story was born out of fascination and observation. "There were people doing all sorts of things – toilet paper everywhere, people getting married, painting portraits, doing fashion photography, throwing frisbees over the lava, frying sausages," Rán recalls. She wanted to tell a story and the inspiration gradually developed through her interest in observing people and "the big nature that isn't beautiful or nice. You cannot pet it. It's totally untamed."

She speaks of how the volcano reminded her of how incredibly small and mortal we are. She started bringing sketchbooks to the volcano site and drawing what she saw. "That's just my way of processing something. Here's something really interesting and I want to draw it because that's how I work to understand things," Rán says.

She admits that she never thought of the story as a children's book, but in the reality of today's publishing market, when you publish an illustrated book, it just gets labelled as a children's book.

Rán's candid about her surprise at winning the Nordic Council Children and Young People's Literature Prize, specifically competing in a category with countries that have richer and older traditions of picture books. She adds, "I was really glad when I got the nomination, because the description picked up on those threads that I was working with, like





the relationship between the human and the nature.”

“I opened my book, because once you publish a book, you don’t really look at it that much, at least voluntarily. I opened it and I was like, ‘Someone has to get this illustrator under control. It’s way too crazy,’” she says with a laugh.

Any recognition that comes with the prize, as well as being able to take full credit for this work, admittedly feels good to the illustrator. “I acknowledge that the written word is very respected. Illustrations always come kind of second [billing] on traditional book markets,” she ponders. “So, when I’m collaborating, it’s easy to say this is the part that wins the prize.”

A total of 14 Nordic picture books, children’s books and youth novels competed for the prize. The winner was awarded the Nordlys statuette and 300,000 DKK (6,051,058 ISK or 43,991 USD). The awards ceremony took place at the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet. Rán, who dyed the tips of her blonde hair red for the ceremony, says she wasn’t planning to prepare a speech. “But [Icelandic author] Arndís Þórarinsdóttir, who was also nominated, said, ‘Regard-

less of what you think or not, you do not want to be the idiot that screws up on national TV! So, I did have a speech prepared. It was just a crazy moment that I’ll never forget.”

**DRAWING FOR CHANGE**

While many of Rán’s projects are intimately connected to nature, she shares that a few years ago, she grappled with climate anxiety, which led to a period of feeling lost. “I just took it to heart,” she says. “Just following the news was enough that I was unable to just go to the supermarket and choose something because I felt this overwhelming sense of responsibility to do the right thing. And that’s not a very productive nor a very creative state to be in.”

True to her nature, Rán turned to drawing to help navigate her emotions and seek clarity. A little later, she began studying philosophy at the University of Iceland, focusing primarily on environmental ethics, ecofeminism and ecotheology – an experience that taught her to formulate her thoughts better and dive deeper into topics in which she already had an interest.

Last summer, as whaling was set to resume in Iceland, sparking mass

anti-whaling protests, Rán didn’t sit still. She joined the activist group and created an opinion piece for *Vísir* that later spread across social media, titled “A Visual Guide To The Rather Incomprehensible Situation Of Whaling in Iceland.” She explains that whaling in Iceland has upset her for a long time. In fact, her first activism started when she was five or six years old. Together with a friend, she was so upset about the treatment of Keiko (the orca from *Free Willy*) that they wrote to newspapers and attended radio interviews. “It’s just so wrong. If this isn’t something we can’t stop, well, what can we then stop?” says Rán about the current whaling industry in Iceland, which is run by one man, Kristján Loftsson.

On a personal note, one of my first encounters with Rán’s work was *Hótel Nýlundabúðin*, or the Grand Puffin Hotel Nýlundabúðin, in 2021. Back then, I didn’t really dig into what the project was really about, frankly, I was just curious about the quirky idea of a hotel for puffins. But now, with Rán right here across the desk, I’m eager to hear the full story.

“Puffin shops, in general, have had such a bad reputation. And the puffin has become such a character that even Icelanders don’t want to

own anymore in a way,” explains Rán. With these thoughts in mind, Rán teamed up with fellow illustrator and bird enthusiast Elín Elísabet for a collaboration that resulted in a two-stage project in Borgarfjörður eystri – *The Nýlundabúðin Puffin Shop* and its sequel, *Hótel Nýlundabúðin*.

What Rán and Elín Elísabet aimed to explore and highlight was, on the one hand, the puffin’s transformation into the face of tacky tourist shops and, on the other, to bring awareness to the puffins as a fascinating bird species. Over the last 30 years, Iceland’s puffin population has declined by 70%, primarily due to food scarcity caused by warming sea temperatures. This led to their classification as “Critically Endangered” on the Icelandic Red List of Birds in 2018.

**CREATIVE FORCE AT PLAY**

An hour in Rán’s company is like getting an intravenous injection of inspiration. I’m feeling slightly overwhelmed by the sheer number of projects we discussed, but Rán seems to be maintaining her composure. Maybe it’s the black turtle-neck and glasses, but she appears calm. Her projects are interconnected in her mind in what she refers to as “child’s play.” She’s also considering starting a church and wants to create a TV series for non-human audiences.

How does she do it all, I ask, and she tells me what she and Hjörleifur have been telling kids on their current tour of local schools: “Being an artist is like being a kid, you just never stop playing. You never close

**Once you publish a book, you don’t really look at it that much, at least voluntarily. I opened it and I was like, “Someone has to put this illustrator under control. It’s way too crazy.”**

“The Puffin Shop was basically an open studio where we were doing mockery products with puffins on them that were not for sale,” Rán explains, adding that the puffin hotel was opened a year later. “Hotels are popping up everywhere. They’re all for humans. We thought maybe we could bring this extremely human-focused industry out of the anthropocentric scene and provide accommodation for puffins. So we did that.”

While Rán and Elín Elísabet took a break from puffin-themed projects, they are bringing another “shop” to Reykjavik this winter. Rán explains they wanted to draw attention to consumption and sustainability during the biggest shopping season. “Maybe not directly linked to puffins, but I think of it in the same way – as a site-specific theatre slash art installation project,” says Rán. “It’s the only shop in the world that sells everything. You can buy whatever you want or whatever you want to give to someone without cluttering their garage or their living room – a kayak to an air fryer to a Tesla, or just a book,” she explains that you’ll receive the purchase on paper, completely carbon footprint-free.

Kaupakkertbúðin, or “buy nothing shop,” will be running at Rán’s studio on Ásvallagata from December 1 through December 3, 12:00-18:00.

off those senses that see all the weird things around us.”

“Training your attention, being aware of what you notice, and just having a little pause before just walking on is so precious,” Rán continues. “When you’re a kid, you don’t say ‘I am limited to one medium,’ right? You just have something to tell. And you will find the best way to do it.”

Before leaving the studio without a street number, I insist on Rán choosing her favourite candybar. Is it Norwegian or Icelandic? “I must say Norway has some good candy,” she admits. “I also always have Brunost in my fridge.” ■

Discover the magic of Rán’s art at [ranflygenring.com](http://ranflygenring.com)

Grab some of her books with wild illustrations at [shop.grapevine.is](http://shop.grapevine.is)



**Welcome to our new DJI Authorised Retail Store in downtown Reykjavik**

Save up to 14% from EU Prices with a Tax Refund.

**dji** | **REYKJAVÍK**  
AUTHORIZED RETAIL STORE  
[djireykjavik.is](http://djireykjavik.is)

Lækjargata 2a, 101, Reykjavik



## The Grapevine's Top Picks

### CHRISTMAS ART & CRAFT MARKETS

With gift giving season upon us, it's many a shopper who is stumped at where to find truly unique gifts for their loved ones. Luckily the delightful Christmas markets come to the rescue! Whether you love the thrill of getting a one-of-a-kind treasure straight from the source, or you're ready to smash capitalism, here are a handful of markets that will solve your gift shopping woes.

**ÁSMUNDARSALUR CHRISTMAS EXHIBITION**  
December 2 – 23  
Ásmundarsalur

This group exhibition doubles as an art and book market comprising 32 local artists and close friends of the gallery, many of whom created works specifically for this event. Find the perfect piece for the contemporary art lover in your life.

**FÍNIR HLUTIR ART MARKET**  
Sunday December 3  
Héðinn Kitchen & Bar

Showcasing unique products from well known brands and new designers and artisans, this arts and crafts market includes clothing, artwork, design, scents, and more. Your friend who loves quirky handmade goods will thank you.

**FLÆDIXLOFT HOLIDAY ART MARKET**  
December 2 & 16  
Loft Hostel

Artist-run gallery and ceramics studio FLÆDI continues their long collaboration with Loft Hostel for another season of art markets! With over a dozen cutting-edge grassroots artists showing and selling visual art, ceramics, textiles, and more, this vibrant market truly supports emerging talents. Plus there will be music and beer!

**SAMAN CULTURE & CULINARY MARKET**  
Saturday December 9  
Harpa

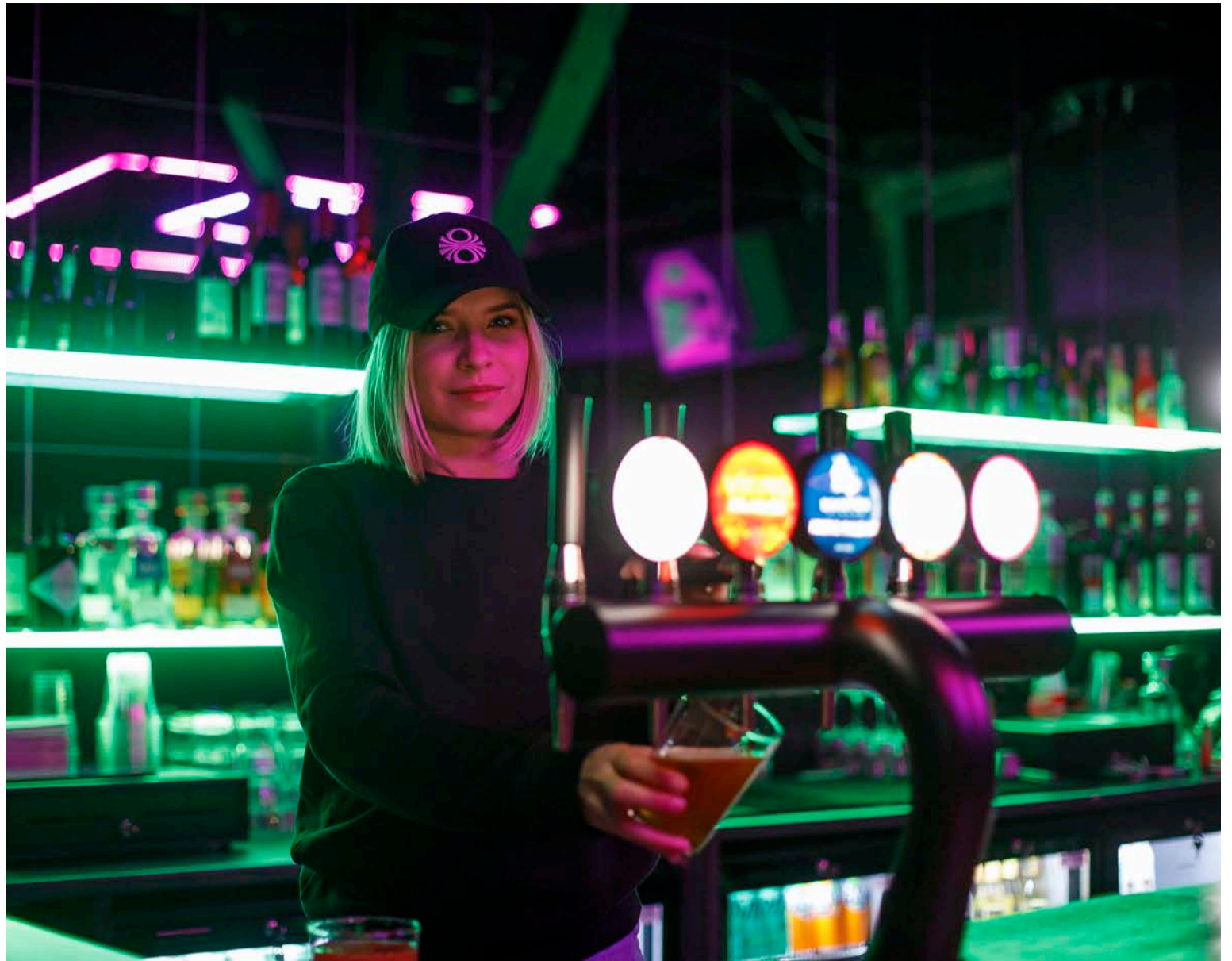
Hosted by the folks behind Pop-up Verzlun and Lady Brewery, this decadent market of food, drink, art and design is a true celebration of Icelandic craft producers. Happening for one day only, the market will feature the sweet sounds of Kaf-fibarinn's men's choir Bartónar while you shop.

And so many more! Happy shopping and happy holidays! **RX**



**ART FOR PALESTINE ONLINE AUCTION**  
Until December 12  
Online

If you are looking for Icelandic art and also wanting to contribute to a good cause this holiday season, the Art for Palestine online auction combines both into one seriously important initiative. With the devastating humanitarian crisis ongoing in Gaza, millions of people around the world are watching and wondering how to help. Through the Instagram account List Fyrir Palestínu, you can bid directly on pieces donated by local artists until December 12, with 100% of the proceeds going directly towards providing emergency relief via the Iceland-Palestine Association's humanitarian projects. Peace on earth. **RX**



Culture Article

# Continuous-Rave Radar

Scanning Reykjavík's hottest new club

**WORDS** Rex Beckett  
**IMAGE** Art Bicnick

It's a cold night. The mind races. You think about the club. The one friend who hasn't betrayed you. The only one who will still be there at sunrise. Your detector is going off. You are ready to get on the Radar.

artist and one half of Radar's ownership team. "Places like Nasa, Broadway and Faktory, for example, were perfect venues for our culture, but they shut down 10 years ago. Some even longer ago. Radar is a venue bringing the standard of proper clubbing in the same fashion as in the European electronic scene, for the locals to enjoy."

Focusing solely on electronic music, Radar is a venture by the same team behind Bravó, a place that for several years has served as something of a microclub, a de facto home for the dance-floor-bound techno lovers who live and pass through here. With their regular programme of electronic DJs and artists blowing up the tiny corner bar, they had long outgrown the space constraints. The recent closure of Húrra presented the perfect opportunity for growth.

Along with co-owner Klaudia Gawryluk, Sam and the team gave the interior a stripped down to the bones, ultra dark and cool makeover, giving

it a sleek Neon Demon-esque feel.

"The place had most of its infrastructure there but we cut out and replaced what we wanted to change, in order to renovate but also in order for the place to be fit for our culture," says Sam of the black-and-neon no-frills décor that highlights the original structure while futurising the atmosphere. "Our team designed a unique custom made sound system and changed the whole stage production of lights and visuals to fit our direction."

Despite the size of the city and the ongoing stigma of drugs being omnipresent in dance music culture, the Radar team envisions the club as a haven for lovers of quality electronic music and the freedom of dancing.

"Iceland is very progressive in many ways, but at the same time heavily old timey when it comes to [others]," says Sam. "We want our doors to be open for anyone who wants to listen

and dance in a comfortable and safe space that offers a standard of quality that is unique in Reykjavík in terms of curation and experience."

Freshly inaugurated, the team is still getting the space up to full use. Plans to book live acts are taking shape, as are arrangements to transform the downstairs space into a visual arts space. Soon, this place truly will have everything. For now, Radar is already a hit with those who have followed the signal.

"We are very happy to experience joy from people expressing their positive thoughts and feedback so far," says Sam. "The ones that are here for this culture are excited and thankful at the same time, which is without a doubt the best type of feedback we can get, because it means we are working correctly on our precious objective: bringing the standard of electronic clubbing in Iceland to an international level." ■

**O**n the same weekend that Iceland Airwaves filled our city with music, a brand new and much anticipated bar entered the scene. Radar Reykjavík (or simply Radar) turned on their soundsystem and fired up the neon lights in the legendary Naustin locale that previously housed such hot spots as Gaukur á Stöng, Bakkus and, most recently, Húrra. More than just a bar, really, Radar positions itself as a proper club set to bring Reykjavík's clubbing culture out of the shadows.

"We have not had such a place in Reykjavík for way too many years now," says Sam Wise, an electronic



## WHERE MIDDLE-EASTERN FLAVOURS ELEVATE ICELANDIC INGREDIENTS?



🏠 Grandagarður 7 & Borgartún 29
☎ 557-9777
✉ lambstreetfood@lambstreetfood.is



**THE LAVA TUNNEL**

# Breathtaking Experience

- » Only 30 min. from Reykjavík
- » Every hour on the hour
- » Easy access winter and summer

★★★★★  
The highlight of our Iceland trip!  
Reviewed on TripAdvisor

For booking and further information:  
thelavatunnel.is or call +(354) 760 1000



Festival Review

## The Cozy Crime Conference Caper

Iceland Noir brought big names and dark conversations to town

**WORDS** Áslaug Torfadóttir & Ragnar Egilsson  
**IMAGE** Ian Dawson, Norð

“...celebrating darkness in all its forms,” the first time guest might be forgiven for expecting ghoulish authors lecturing pale-faced weirdos about the best way to hide a body. But the atmosphere of the festival is quite the opposite.

Sure, talk does turn to how to kill someone and get away with it, but the smiles and laughter are a sure sign that it’s (probably) all in jest.

The line-up this year was exceptionally star-studded, with cultural touchstones like Louise Penny, Dan Brown, Lisa Jewell, Neil Gaiman and Irvine Welsh making it an unmissable event for any 90s kid who saved up for a first printing of *Sandman* or marvelled at a poster of a smacked-out Ewan McGregor.

The writers were wrangled into an array of different panel discussions and events, but with over a hundred

indie icon who shaped your youth.

It’s amazing how quickly the sense of community builds as you start to recognize the faces attending different panel discussions. Iceland Noir manages to capture an air of kids returning to summer camp among those who have attended before. Repeat visitors greet old friends and catch up on each other’s lives between crime fests.

While common themes quickly emerge in the panel discussions – how the setting inspires the story, whether true crime inspires the authors and, of course, the best way to kill someone – the constant introduction of new voices (we did say there were 100+ authors attending) with interesting additions to these common themes keep festivalgoers from feeling they’d heard this take before.

### Iceland Noir manages to capture an air of kids returning to summer camp among those who have attended before.

If you’ve ever wondered how to commit the perfect murder, yearned to bask at the feet of Sara Blædel, or to dance to Irvine Welsh’s acid house, then Iceland Noir 2023 was the place for you.

While Reykjavik’s culture-hounds bemoan the city’s dwindling selection of truly cultural festivals, one such happening has been creeping under the radar over the past decade, and has now blossomed into the most varied and exciting literary event the city has to offer.

#### EXPOSITION

Established in 2013 by crime writers Yrsa Sigurðardóttir and Ragnar Jónasson, Iceland Noir aimed to ride the mammoth Scandi-noir wave and bring the cadre of Icelandic crime writers to an international audience. Billed as a “literary fes-

... authors on the lineup, the festival organisers made sure that everyone got their moment to shine and create an atmosphere of equality that’s virtually unheard of in other festivals.

#### PLOT

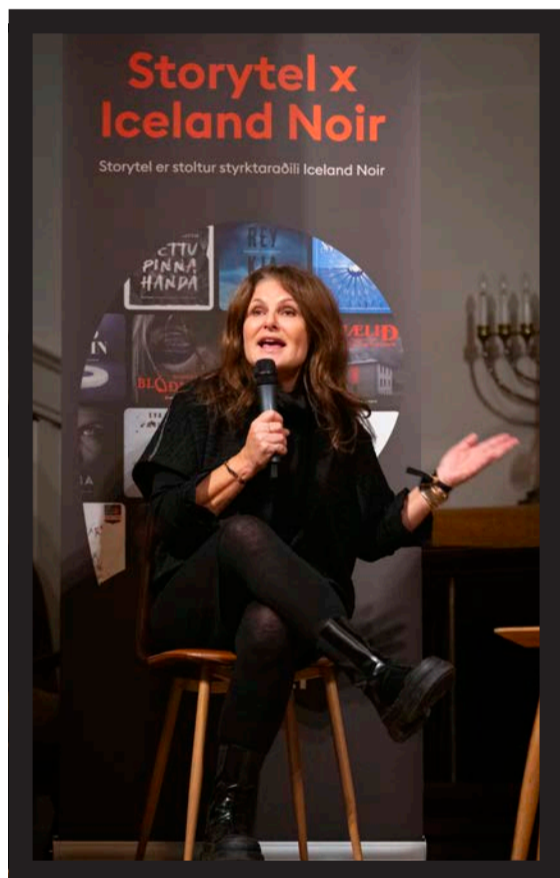
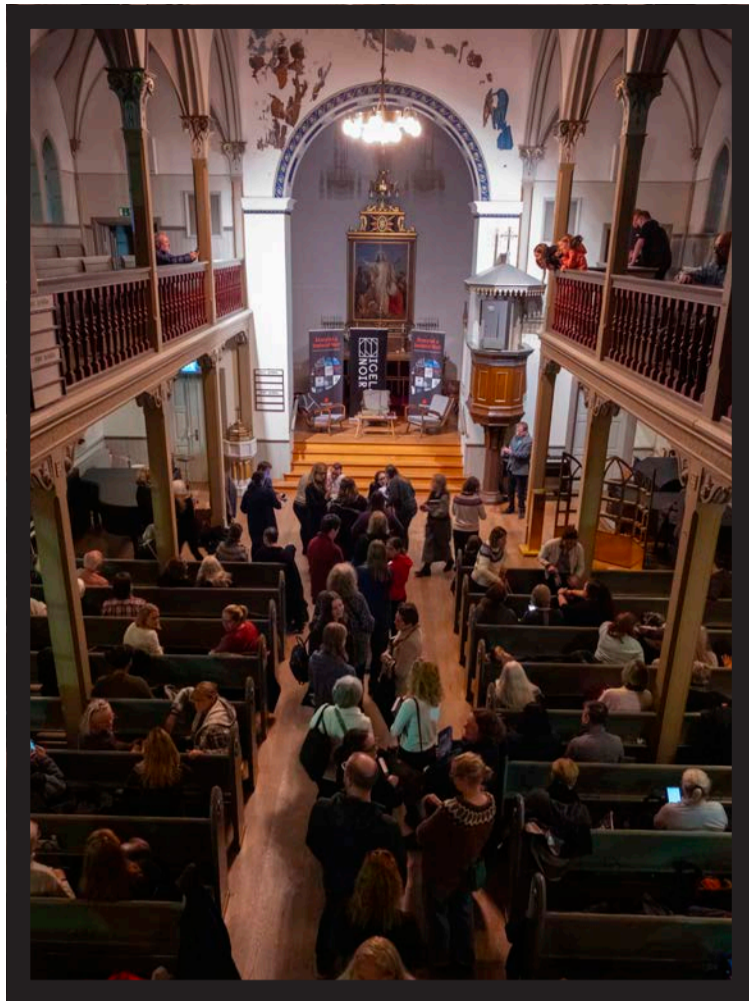
With Vinnustofa Kjarvals serving as a sort of festival hub, visitors and authors had the chance to rub elbows and talk shop over coffee or wine, before heading out again for another panel on dark deeds and murder. Split across Vinnustofa Kjarvals, Hannesarholt and Frikirkjan; Iceland Noir has the feel of a much bigger festival, closer to something like Edinburgh Fringe. Although the festival it most reminded me of was the now-deceased music festival All Tomorrow’s Parties, which had a similarly egalitarian vibe of waiting in line for a slice of cake next to an

Another common theme that started to emerge after the first couple of days was the sense that “it’s never too late to start.” Many of the authors started writing later in life, after retirement or after having decided to change horses mid-stream to follow their dreams of fantasising about killing ex-boyfriends in exotic locations. Because it really is never too late.

#### PROTAGONISTS

The headliners of this year’s programme certainly weren’t resting on their laurels. Irvine Welsh was pulling double-shifts, first was a conversation about his transition into crime fiction from his usual tapeworm-narrated literary fiction. Naturally, one talk ended with him waxing lyrical about the wonders of DMT.





The ever amiable Dan Brown could be seen popping up at various venues to chat with attendees.

Neil Gaiman appeared twice – once in a one-on-one-on-one conversation with the festival founders at Frikirkjan church, which felt appropriate considering the worship he inspires in his most ardent followers; and again in a more intimate discussion with Yrsa and Sara Blædel where they started off by each sharing a secret. The audience was sworn to secrecy, but let me tell you Gaiman's was a doozy! Yrsa proved to be an unconventional, free-wheeling moderator and the atmosphere in the small room in which the panel was held quickly felt like a chat between friends about mostly non-crime related things.

Yrsa's chat with Pétur Guðmannsson, Iceland's only forensic pathologist, also proved surprisingly delightful, highlighting how small a community Iceland still is and yielding such tidbits as the fact that forensic pathologists will often have a sauna at work. It makes total sense once you stop and think about it.

#### TONE

The importance of a good moderator is made painfully clear when

you're attending panel discussions from 10:00 to 22:00. A good moderator can lift the discussion higher, relax nervous authors and elaborate on interesting subjects or themes being touched upon. They make you excited to read the books that are being discussed.

By the same token, a bad moderator can drag things down by drawing undo attention to themselves or stifling interesting discussions and making you very aware of that dull ache in your butt while warming a church bench.

#### FOIL

One would have expected the most controversial guest at this year's edition to have been tarnished wunderkind A.J. Finn, who proved to be a fascinating study in denial and the subtle art of failing upwards.

Instead, the spotlight was grabbed by first-time crime co-author Hillary Clinton, who appeared at a side event in Harpa at the conclusion of the festival proper. Mrs. Clinton's views on the Israel-Palestine conflict prompted a group of Icelandic authors to publicly boycott the festival. This was unsurprising in and of itself, as public opinion in Iceland is overwhelmingly against the actions

of the IDF (this includes the vast majority of the people I spoke to at the festival). But it was odd to see high-brow establishment authors choose to target the festival itself and vocally boycott an annual event they have dutifully ignored for the past 10 years.

It's easy to see why people found Clinton's presence objectionable, but one has to wonder if you can boycott an event that you were not invited to and had no intention of attending in the first place. If so, I'd like to take this opportunity to announce that I will be boycotting this year's Oscars, The Nobel Prize award ceremony and my niece's ballet recital.

Provided that this year's protest didn't bury the festival and provided they don't decide to invite someone like Vladimir Putin or E.L. James, you can count me in for Iceland Noir 2024.

#### FOOTNOTE

Iceland Noir was held November 15 to 18. This year's event was sold out months in advance, so keep a close eye on IcelandNoir.com and sign up for their mailing list to be the first to know about tickets for the 2024 event. ■

## BERG Contemporary



Ian McKeever: Henge Paintings  
October 14 – December 2

Smiðjustígur 10  
Klapparstígur 16  
101 Reykjavík  
Iceland

Tuesday – Friday 11–17  
Saturday 13–17  
[www.bergcontemporary.is](http://www.bergcontemporary.is)

## Odee Exhibition

The new exhibition

*Cognitive Collage* by the digital  
artist will be open in Gallery Fold  
from the 2nd to the 20th of December



**FOLD**   
GALLERÍ • UPPBOÐSHÚS

Rauðarárstígur 12-14 · 551 0400 · [www.myndlist.is](http://www.myndlist.is)





Film Feature

# Disappearing In Plain View

*In a State of Change* provides much-needed food for thought

WORDS Iryna Zubenko  
IMAGES Donal Boyd, Frank Nieuwenhuis

“Sorry, that it made you feel sad,” says director Donal Boyd through my laptop screen one Monday morning. After seeing *In a State of Change*, a documentary co-directed by Donal and Frank Nieuwenhuis, this summer at the Hornstrandir Film Festival, we’ve made several attempts to meet for an interview. Yet, as often happens, life gets in the way, so this one is long overdue. The film follows Iceland’s diminishing glaciers from a personal perspective. And, honestly, it left me feeling heavy-hearted. “But one of the difficulties with this topic is that it inherently makes us sad,” continues Donal.

**D**onal, a wildlife photographer/conservationist, and cinematographer Frank, share similar journeys of

relocating to Iceland – both moved here around the same time, captivated by Icelandic nature. The creative duo first came together in 2021 making the short film *Volcano for the People*, which follows the 2021 eruption through the lens of collective experience. *In a State of Change* is their second collaboration – an attempt to explore the implications of Iceland’s changing landscape through Donal’s eyes.

“The film was inspired by many different things,” Donal shares. “We’ve seen a lot of physical changes in Iceland – just from the places that we love to go to in the mountains and highlands that drew us here in the first place. Seeing them change in such a short period was an underlying basis of inspiration.” The book *On Time and Water* by environmentalist and best-selling author Andri Snær Magnason served as another major inspiration for the documentary. In it, Andri Snær explores the difficulties of talking about climate change.

“Donal and I share a similar journey with Iceland,” shares Frank, who always wanted to make a story about Iceland’s changing climate and environment. “We came around

the same time in 2015. We both saw the changes through our cameras and felt the need to do something about it.”

“Both of us were living in our Land Rovers at that time,” laughs Donal.

### FAMILIAR LANDSCAPE: THEN AND NOW

While *In a State of Change* provides some scientific information, it was never meant to unload all the heavy facts on the viewer, but rather to

Eyjafjallajökull. That photograph shows the glacier 100 years prior,” shares Donal.

“With the film, we wanted to recreate that moment that we had when we both were in Þórsmörk and we both saw that photo,” Frank explains. The stark difference between the photograph from a hundred years ago and the glacier today was shocking. “We were there, we were familiar with that glacier and then we saw that picture. That’s when we realised more in a connected way that this is

**We both saw the changes through our cameras and felt the need to do something about it.**

make an emotional connection through beautiful visuals and personal stories. For Donal and Frank, it all started with one photograph. In his first years in Iceland, Donal lived in Þórsmörk, in the Volcano Huts area in the mountains. “There is a photograph on the wall in the Volcano Huts of a view of Steinsholtsjökull, one of the glacial outlets from

what climate change is doing,” Frank continues, adding that while most people are aware of the effects of climate change, it’s only through hands-on visual representation that you can truly grasp the scale. “Because we had that moment, we wanted to share that with the rest of the world. So they could experience that as well.”

The original idea was to create a photo project comparing the transformation of Icelandic glaciers over the years. However, Donal questioned whether static images could evoke emotion as effectively as human stories. “One of the messages of the film that we wanted to get across is that we need to bring this to an emotional and relatable level. Photography is great for the impact and the immediacy of it. But I’ve learned and am still learning how powerful film can be for transforming people’s mindsets and understanding of the topic,” he says. Additionally, during the filming process, they discovered that similar photography projects already existed. One of them is even showcased in the film; that of Dr. Kieran Baxter, who has been documenting the glacier landscape in Iceland by combining historical photographs and drone photography.

### SHIFTING BASELINE

The directors explain that the concept for *In a State of Change* came from shifting baseline syndrome. Shifting baseline syndrome refers to how people’s perspectives and standards change over time based on their first reference point. For

1



Norræna húsið

# \* Advent

---

## HÁTÍÐAR-DAGSKRÁ

Allar helgar fram að jólum \*

2

3



4





Donal, that was coming to Iceland and seeing Steinsholtsjökull for the first time. “Everything that I saw change was compared to that,” explains Donal. Then when Donal saw the 100-year-old photograph of the glacier at the Volcano Huts, his baseline changed from five years to more than 100 years back.

“When we don’t look back at photographs of old places, or we don’t understand or truly connect with that period, we don’t have a baseline and our baseline shifts to a newer

English, her daughter was translating. “We had high expectations for it,” Donal remembers. “But the interview just didn’t feel like it was lighting up.” Weeks later, the directors asked an Icelandic friend to translate the interview word for word and got an unexpected result. “She was sassy, sharp and witty. We didn’t get that at first,” explains Donal.

The film brings about personal perspectives of a cast of other people as well – starting with writer Andri Snær Magnason, glacier guide

## The idea was to shift people’s baseline back with photographs and stories from people living in Iceland.

timeline because the previous generation forgets,” he says.

In recent years, we have consistently come across news about the ongoing melting of glaciers, but trying to grasp the scientific data can be challenging, particularly if you don’t have anything to compare it to. “The idea was to shift people’s baseline back with photographs and stories from people living in Iceland,” Donal explains. It’s hard to comprehend complex scientific figures, “but if a woman who lived next to the glacier her whole life tells you a story about how she used to cross the glacier as a child to go pick berries and now she’s sitting in the spot where she used to walk to pick the berries, and you can see the glacier’s way far back and depreciated, and she shows you old photographs and talks about it, that’s a shift of the baseline.”

### LOST IN TRANSLATION

The woman mentioned above is Laufey Lárusdóttir, who grew up by Svinafellsjökull glacier. Donal and Frank highlight Laufey as their favourite interviewee, but it didn’t necessarily start out that way. They managed to get Laufey, who was 94-years old at the time, on the glacier, but since Laufey didn’t speak

Olafur Kristinsson, environmental humanist Dr. Þorvarður Árnason and more.

### FINDING YOUR ROLE

In 2019, Iceland hosted a funeral for Okjökull, a glacier lost due to climate change. While often referred to as “the first deceased glacier,” dozens of unnamed bodies of ice preceded it and many more will follow. Some of Iceland’s beloved and oft-photographed ice caves may even disappear within the next year. The glaciers could lose half of their volume by 2100 – that may seem like a long way off, but it really isn’t.

Feeling overwhelmed, Donal and Frank almost gave up several times while making the film, before they realised that communicating about the problem is already a starting point. “Getting people to think about it in different ways – to empathise and to transform their understanding is already doing something,” says Donal. “Just from you watching the film, reflecting on your sadness, and trying to understand yourself, that is sort of the action that we hope people would take.” ■

Watch *In a State of Change* online via [waterbear.com](http://waterbear.com)



ANDRI SNÆR MAGNASON  
WRITER & POET



# Centre Map

We're here to fill you in on our personal favourite places around town – and a few to consider avoiding.

## Dining

**1 NAPOLI**  
Tryggvagata 24  
We love places that do one thing and do them damn well. This takeaway place is a case in point. Napoli offers sourdough Neapolitan-style pizzas with a menu to match – think margherita, quattro formaggi, parma, calzone – plus vegan options and magnificent sandwiches. Look out for their lunch offer, every day from 11:30 to 15:00. JT

**2 GAETA GELATO**  
Aðalstræti 6 & Hlemmur Mathöll  
Gaeta Gelato is at the centre of a heated ongoing debate at the Grapevine office about who makes the best ice cream in the country. For those keen on the deep tastiness of Italian gelato, this place is IT. They are also located right smack downtown, so you can take that icecream for a stroll – we suggest a stroll to their other location for another scoop. JT

**3 PLANTAN**  
Njálsgata 64  
This cute little neighborhood cafe is 100% vegan and does a few things right: their soup of the day menu updates every week and uses seasonal produce, they mastered the plant-based cheese bun recipe to perfection, and this might be the most hearty vegan brunches in town. Look out for the daily bun and coffee deal, it truly is like a warm hug. IZ

**5 CAFÉ BABALÚ**  
Skólavörðustígur 22  
This quirky café hangout is a great choice when you're looking for a cozy, chill experience. Decked with kitschy decor and plush chairs, the café is perfect for a refuge from an instant shower of rain. If you're looking to snuggle up with a book and a good cup of coffee, look no further. JB

**6 BAN THAI**  
Laugavegur 130  
The absolute GOAT – as they say – in Thai cuisine in Reykjavik. Ban Thai's menu is dotted with little symbols of chili, denoting the spice level of each course. You're welcome to order a level-5 chili course, but do so at your own risk. JB

**7 GRÁI KÖTTURINN**  
Hverfisgata 16a  
This no-nonsense downtown staple has been serving Reykjavik dwellers quality breakfast food since 1997. Tucked away in a cute cellar, the diner boasts retro Icelandic design charm, while its menu is far from outdated. Pancakes, bagels and frying oil all have their special place at Grái Kötturinn. As Grái Kötturinn closes at 14:30 every day, it's not a place for nighthawks, but early-birds. JB

**8 CHICKPEA**  
Hallveigarstígur 1  
This Mediterranean-inspired restaurant is a great place for a quick bite. Servings are generous and the

food nutritious, meaning you'll go full well into the day. They do wraps, falafels, and all kinds of salads exceptionally well. Prices aren't extremely steep, but nothing to write home about either. JB

**9 KRÓNAN**  
Hallveigarstígur 1 & more locations  
If you're ever in a pinch while looking for something cheap to eat if you're downtown just go to Krónan and pick out some flatkókur. Flatkókur goes great with everything. Be it the Mediterranean/Icelandic fusion of lathering some with hummus, or turn it into a poor-man's pizza with pizza sauce and cheese. Honestly, the flatkaka is an empty canvas for you to paint your wildest dreams on. JB

**10 JÓMFRÚIN**  
Lækjargata 4, 101 Reykjavik  
Icelanders may have a love-hate relationship with the Danes, but let's be honest, who can resist craving a delicious smørrebrød every now and then? If you get what we are talking about, there's no better place in town for an authentic Danish smørrebrød than Jómfrúin. This family-run restaurant specializes in serving Danish and Scandinavian dishes, and to top it off, it boasts a fantastic outdoor terrace where you can relax, sip a beer and complain about politics overlooking the Icelandic parliament. IZ

## Drinking

**11 APERÓ VÍNBAR**  
Laugavegur 20b  
A wine bar that is both opulent and accessible? Yes please. The small team at Aperó remember the orders of regulars and make first-timers feel like regulars. If you know what you like, Aperó will tick your boxes; and if you're new to wine, the sommelier will soon unite you with your ideal glass. CF

**12 KEX HOSTEL**  
Skúlagata 28  
The former biscuit factory now serves as a trendy hostel, with a bar, restaurant and a live concert space. There's always something going on, and if not, it's a great spot to grab those after-work drinks. With a rotation of foreign tourists who stumble onto a heavy metal show happening in the restaurant, you're always bound for an enjoyable experience. JB

**13 KAFFIBARINN**  
Bergstaðastræti 1  
No words are needed for Kaffibarinn. The hangout spot for the who's who of Reykjavik. Frequented by Blur members in the 90s, drug dealers, and middle-managers, Kaffibarinn is an establishment in itself. JB

**14 VITABAR**  
Bergþórugata 21  
If you're staying in Reykjavik more than a few days, you ought to find your own dive bar – this is ours. It seems like the time froze at Vitabar,

but we love it that way. People come for their famous blue cheese burger, but stay for a few pints and delicious fries. Sometimes I wish Vitabar discovered craft beer, but I go back nevertheless – for a late night bite and Thule on draft. IZ

**15 VÍNSTÚKAN TÍU SOPAR**  
Laugavegur 27  
There are a few bars in Reykjavik that have learned how to do wine right, and Vínstúkan Tíu sopar, although located in the middle of the chaos and tourist buzz of Laugavegur, is one of them. Craving Pét-nat? In the mood for orange wine? Ready to explore small Slovenian wineries? You name it – the bar's staff will be ready to come up with suggestions that will suit any pocket. Don't get me started on their small bites to pair with wine – I'm already dreaming about their grilled peppers and torched broccoli with salted lemon. IZ

## Shopping & Activities

**16 BÍÓ PARADÍS**  
Hverfisgata 54  
Sometimes the smell of popcorn fills the air of Hverfisgata, as if beckoning you to come inside. You succumb and find yourself in the cutest art house cinema with colourful posters on the walls and vintage-looking bar straight outta Wes Anderson movie. There's always a film screening and you rarely need to book tickets in advance, so enjoy the old school walk-in experience and one of the best Happy Hours in town. IZ

## Random Spots

**17 EINARSGARÐUR**  
Laufásvegur 79  
This little green space nestled into the curving juncture of Laufásvegur and Gamla Hringbraut is an oasis in the city. Exposed to full sun seemingly all the time, it's a peaceful spot to stroll through, climb trees, luxuriate on the grass or toss the ball for your four-legged friend. Don't do that last thing, though. It's not allowed. CF

## Be Warned

**18 101 BISTRO**  
Austurstræti 3  
The bistro on the corner of Ingólfs-torg and Austurstræti that has a plaque outside saying, "Come in and try the worst [insert popular food item] that one guy on Tripadvisor said we had", or something like that. It's a trap, do not go there. That plaque has been in the same spot ever since Hrunið. RG

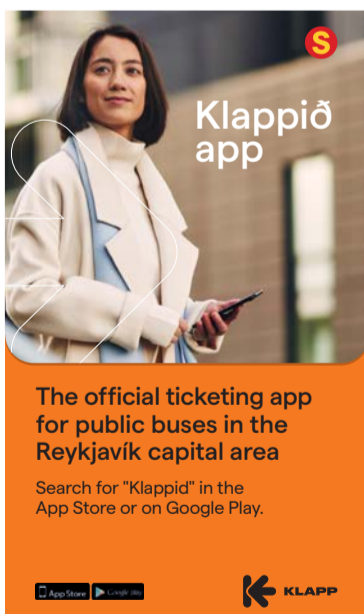
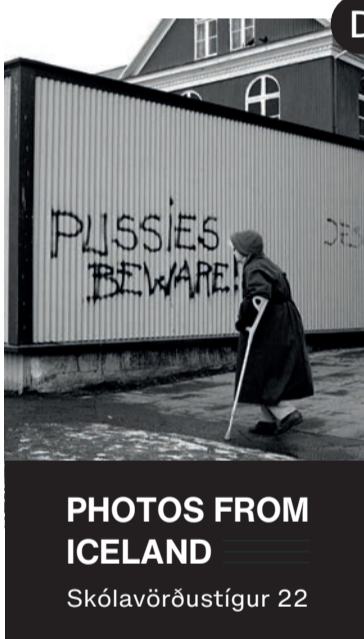
**19 SBARRO**  
Austurstræti 17 & Vatnsmýrarvegur 10  
"What is this shit?" is how Greil Marcus famously opened his review of Bob Dylan's 1970 album in Rolling Stone. It is appropriate here. It



looks like pizza, it is sold as pizza, it's priced like foie gras, but it tastes like salted shit. Avoid. RG

**20 REYKJAVÍK FISH RESTAURANT**  
Tryggvagata 8  
Our beef with this place has to do with their "plokari" (Traditional Icelandic Fish Stew). Taste wise, there is nothing wrong with how Reykjavik Fish makes their "plokari", the problem is that the volume you get for the price is unacceptable; a tiny cast iron pan of fish stew for 2.690 ISK. An outrage. RG

**21 PHO VIETNAM**  
Laugavegur 3 (Multiple locations)  
If you like rat shit, look no further than Pho Vietnam. Its parent company, Vyprif, was sued by the Reykjavik Health Inspection for the improper storage of food. During the health authority's visit, rat droppings, vermin carcasses, and evidence of human habitation in the storage was found. Eugh. AVOID. RG ■







**E**

## WELCOME TO ICELAND'S LARGEST BOOKSTORE

Fiskislóð 39 | Reykjavik | [www.forlagid.is](http://www.forlagid.is)

**11**

## APÉRO

GASTRO | WINE | BAR

HAPPY HOUR 16-19 | @APERORVK

**15**

## Forsetinn

OPEN • CAFE • BISTRO

Open from 10-22  
In the heart of Reykjavik

**F**

## DISCOVER ICELAND

three delicious food

**FOOD CELLAR**  
MATARKJALLARINN

Alfubraut 2, 101 Reykjavík, t. 598 0090, matarkjallarinn.is

**G**

**NANATHAI / MIXED**  
THAI RESTAURANT  
simple, inexpensive and delicious

open mon-fri : 11.30 – 21.00  
sat : 16.30 – 21.00 closed sun

[mixed.is](http://mixed.is)  
[nanathai.online](http://nanathai.online)  
nanathai125@gmail.com, tel: 588-1810 / 588-1818  
Hverfisgata 125, 105 Reykjavik, við Hlemm

New In Town

# Saumastofa Hassans\*

Hverfisgata 78

Going strong since 2019, the best little tailor shop in downtown Reykjavik has just moved on up to bigger, better and brighter digs. Owner and master tailor Hassan Shahin has been keeping the city's duds repaired and refurbished with excellence from his small basement studio on Hverfisgata. He has now moved just a couple of blocks up the road into a huge street-level shop that screams style. Bring your threads by to get the love they need, or just peek through the window at their skillful craft in action.

Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday 11:00 - 18:00  
Saturday 11:00 - 16:00  
Closed on Sunday ■



**B**

## FOOD HALL & BAR

# PÓSTHÚS

PÓSTHÚSSTRÆTI | 101 REYKJAVÍK

BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2023  
BEST NEWCOMER FOODHALL

HAPPY HOUR  
16:00 - 18:00  
FOOD HALL & BAR



# Art Exhibitions

# 01.12-04.01.2024

Gallery openings, happenings, showings and pop-up exhibitions all around the capital region

## Opening

- Á MILLI**  
*Elsa Jónsdóttir – BIRDS*  
 Wood carvings using the bird as a focal point.  
 Opens December 1  
 Runs until December 10
- ANDRÁ REYKJAVÍK**  
*Kristín Johnsen – Skrúður*  
 Paintings of flowers that grow in Iceland, colour analysed and deconstructed in abstraction.  
 Opens December 8  
 Runs until January 8
- ÁSMUNDARSALUR**  
*Christmas Exhibition*  
 Exhibition and art market comprising 32 artists plus a book market.  
 Opens December 2  
 Runs until December 23
- GALLERY PORT**  
*Jólagestir Gallery Port*  
 Exhibition, comprising over 20 multidisciplinary artists, both emerging and established.  
 Opens December 2  
 Runs until January 6
- HÉÐINN**  
*FÍNIR HLUTIR Art Market*  
 Market showcasing unique products from well known brands and new designers and artisans.  
 Single event  
 Sunday December 3, 11:00
- KAFFI LAUGALÆKUR**  
*Ingimar Flóvent – Við Krokandi Tiru*  
 This exhibition sheds light on the various creatures that lurk in the depths in their simplest form.  
 Opens December 1  
 Runs until December 31
- LISTVAL**  
*Lily Erla Adamsdóttir – The*

- Multiplicity In Between*  
 Works on the boundaries of art, design and crafts, exploring handmade repetition and its possibilities.  
 Opens December 2  
 Runs until January 6
- LITLA GALLERY**  
*Eyrún Ósk Jónsdóttir – Nearness*  
 Collage artwork exploring the blurred line between the distant and that which is near.  
 Opens December 7  
 Runs until December 10
- Sigtýr Ægir Kárason – Far too cold?*  
 A collaboration between the artist and the reader.  
 Opens December 14  
 Runs until December 24
- LOFT HOSTEL**  
*FLÆÐIXLoft Holiday Art Market*  
 The event brings together artists' versatile works: visual art, ceramics, textiles, and more.  
 December 2 & 16, 14:00
- NO NO YES OF COURSE**  
*Second Anniversary Exhibition*  
 Group exhibition celebrating the anniversary of the artist-run gallery No No Yes Of Course.  
 Single event  
 Saturday December 2, 16:00
- NORDIC HOUSE**  
*Unearthed: Exhibition in the Greenhouse*  
 This exhibition presents a combination of artistic practice along with geological research.  
 Opens December 2  
 Runs until December 10
- REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY**  
*The School of Photography Graduation Show*  
 Graduation works, showing diverse subjects, artistic visions, and aes-

- thetics.  
 Opens December 15  
 Runs until January 14
- ## Ongoing
- ÁSMUNDARSAFN (REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)**  
*Mentor – Ásmundur Sveinsson and Carl Milles*  
 Sculpture  
 Runs until January 2024
- EINAR JÓNSSON MUSEUM**  
*Hildur Henrysdóttir – Hamskipti / Change of Heart*  
 Mixed media, autobiographical works  
 Runs until January 2
- GALLERY GRÓTTA**  
*Valgerður Yr Walderhaug – Bragðarefur Með Sniglaskeljum*  
 Mixed media  
 Runs until December 9
- GALLERY KVERK**  
*Kristín Gunnlaugsdóttir – Selfie*  
 Photography  
 Runs until December 9
- GALLERY SKILTÍ**  
*Lukas Bury – Zigaretten nach Berlin*  
 Installation  
 Runs until December 15
- GALLERY UNDERPASS**  
*Sigga Björg Sigurðardóttir – Cross The Line*  
 Runs until February 2024
- GERÐARSAFN (KÓPAVOGUR ART MUSEUM)**  
**GERÐUR**  
 Sculpture works of Gerður Helgadóttir from the museum's collection.  
 Runs until December 31
- Sculpture/Sculpture*

- Group exhibition, sculpture  
 Runs until January 7
- GERÐUBERG**  
*Kristín Ómarsdóttir – Look At Your Beauty*  
 Drawings  
 Runs until December 30
- GLERHÚSIÐ**  
*Þorbjörg Höskuldsdóttir – New Works*  
 Paintings  
 Runs until January 14
- HAFNARBORG CENTER OF CULTURE & FINE ART**  
*Landscape for the Chosen Ones*  
 Mixed media, group exhibition  
 Runs until December 30
- VALUE: 40 Years Since the Founding of Hafnarborg**  
 Archival works, mixed media  
 Runs until December 30
- HAFNARHÚS (REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)**  
*Kaleidoscope: Icelandic 21st Century Art*  
 Multidisciplinary group exhibition  
 Runs until December 31
- Erró – Cunning Scissors*  
 Works spanning the entirety of Erró's vibrant art career  
 Runs until December 31
- D50 Klävs Liepiņš & Renāte Feizaka – Doom Loop*  
 Mixed media, installation  
 Runs until January 11
- Collection Creatures*  
 Digital & 3D artworks  
 Runs until January 2024
- HÖFUÐSTÖÐIN**  
*Shoplifter/Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir – Chromo Sapiens*  
 Installation, colourful whole body experience  
 Permanent exhibition
- 18 GALLERY**  
*Yui Yaegashi – Nichinichi-So*  
 Paintings  
 Runs until December 23
- 18 GRANDI**  
*B. Ingrid Olson – Cast of Mind*  
 Installation, mixed media  
 Runs until December 20
- ÍÐNÓ**  
*Refraction*  
 Multidisciplinary, group exhibition  
 Runs until December 12
- KJARVALSSTAÐIR (REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)**  
*Kjarval and the 20th Century: When Modernity Anchored*  
 Paintings, drawings  
 Runs until December 31
- Hekla Dögg Jónsdóttir – 0° 0° Null Island*  
 Photography, installation  
 Runs until February 2024
- MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ARTS**  
*Lily Erla Adamsdóttir – Artist in Residence*  
 Textile works

- Runs until December 30
- Dolinda Tanner*  
 Ceramic, textile works  
 Runs until December 30
- Lothar Grund – Archiving Drawings*  
 Drafts, drawings and design  
 Runs until December 30
- At Home in the Design Museum*  
 Over 200 examples of Icelandic design from 1900 to the present  
 Runs until March 2026
- NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND**  
*Ásgrímur Jónsson – A Window in Reykjavík*  
 Paintings  
 Runs until December 31
- Egill Sæbjörnsson and Infinite Friends of the Universe*  
 Mixed media, installation  
 Runs until February 25
- Some Recent Works – New Acquisitions*  
 New works in the museum's permanent collection  
 Runs until February 25
- NORDIC HOUSE**  
*Advent Calendar*  
 Multiple holiday family events and workshops  
 Runs until December 17
- Under the Polar Ice*  
 Mixed media, interactivity, workshops  
 Runs until March 31
- PORTFOLIO GALLERY**  
*Sigurður Sævar Magnússon – Millilending*  
 Paintings  
 Runs until December 15
- REYKJAVÍK MARITIME MUSEUM**  
*Heimir Freyr Hlööversson – We Are Earth, We Are Water*  
 Video installation  
 Runs until February 2
- REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY**  
*Gréta S. Guðjónsdóttir – 19, 24, 29, 34, 39 Fate and Destiny*  
 Photography, testimonials  
 Runs until December 10
- Anni Kinnunen – The Great Escape*  
 Photography  
 Runs until January 28
- THE SCULPTURE ASSOCIATION GARDEN**  
*Bryndís Björnsdóttir – origin*  
 Sculpture  
 Runs until December 31
- SIGURJÓN ÓLAFSSON MUSEUM**  
*Þura – Home & Away*  
 Paintings  
 Runs until Spring 2024
- ÞULA**  
*Áslaug Íris Katrín Friðjónsdóttir – Open*  
 Paintings  
 Runs until December 23 ■

## Art Picks



*Jack Armitage – Strengjaverá*  
 December 9 & 10  
 Nordic House  
 Free

What if you took one of those old-timey player-pianos that appeared in hokey old movies and took it several levels up by having it controlled through AI and electromagnetism? Bringing together the perfect intermingling of art and science, the new installation by composer, producer, performer and researcher Jack Armitage (aka Lil Data) will have viewers asking big questions about humanity and technology while being marvelled by beautiful acoustic piano sounds created in fascinating ways. With big words like “biomimetic simulations” and “agential systems” describing the work, we don't deign to fully understand it, but we can't wait to experience it! RX



*Sigtýr Ægir Kárason – Far Too Cold?*  
 Opens December 14  
 Runs until December 24  
 Litla Gallery

An exhibition, a book launch and an interactive choose-your-own-art adventure all rolled into one. Emerging artist Sigtýr Ægir Kárason's upcoming show turns the tables on the visitor to become the artist. Their new book “Far Too Cold?” consisting of illustrations of micro-landscapes – the kind of things you see when you get low and close to the ground – is a practice where the words follow the art and not the other way around. The reader's experience is unique, with the book meant to be drawn on, chopped up, or preciously preserved. In the launching show, a fully dismantled book will give guests their first chance to collaborate in the work. RX



*Anton Logi Ólafsson – Brennuöld*  
 Opens December 1  
 Runs until December 20  
 SíM Gallery

You're hanging out with your grandma one day, sipping tea and listening to stories, and suddenly she tells you that your ancestors were burnt at the stake for witchcraft in the 17th century. What is one to do? How does one proceed? After visual artist Anton Logi Ólafsson's grandmother revealed this grim family history to him, and having this confirmed through historical records, he channelled the sadness, anger and rage that ignited in him into this new collection of works. Named for the “burning age,” the dark era of witch hunts and executions in Iceland, the works reflect the raw intensity and flame-licked emotion of generational trauma. RX

Gallery Port, Laugavegur 32      December 2nd - January 6th



# Events 01.12-04.01.2024

Concerts, comedy, movies and other happenings that defy categorization

If you're putting something on for the general public, send us a line to: [events@grapevine.is](mailto:events@grapevine.is)

## Friday December 1

**Spacestation (DJ set)**  
21:00 12 Tónar

**Elin Hall**  
12:30 Bókasala Stúdenta

**Flying Elbows**  
20:00 Dillon

**Apocalypstick Drag Kabaret**  
21:00 Gaukurinn

**Thor & BenSol**  
23:00 Kaffibarinn

**Mugison**  
20:00 Kex Hostel

**Halli Guðmunds Album Release Show**  
20:00 Mengi

**Skyn, Bensin & Thorkell Máni**  
20:00 Radar

**DJ KGB**  
23:00 Röntgen

**Ella Fitzgerald Christmas Tribute**  
20:00 Salurinn

## Saturday December 2

**DJ Lub og Gus**  
21:00 12 Tónar

**Fitzgerald & the Strawberry Jam**  
20:00 Dillon

**Steinar Sigurðarson**  
16:00 Forsetinncafé

**Ayla Schafer**  
19:30 Frikirkjan

**Devine Defilement's Holiday Extravaganza**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

**Organ Matinée Concert: Eyþór Ingi Jónsson**  
12:00 Hallgrímskirkja

**DJ Steindór Jónsson**  
23:00 Kaffibarinn

**DJ Tóti**  
20:00 Kex Hostel

**Heart Attack! Drag Night**  
21:00 Kiki Queer Bar

**GRUNGE Live Tribute Band**  
23:00 Lemmy

**Handel's Messiah**  
16:00 Nes Kirkja

**Oculus & Gunni Ewok**  
20:00 Radar

**DJ Glówdís**  
23:00 Röntgen

**Ella Fitzgerald Christmas Tribute**  
20:00 Salurinn

**Purrkur Pillnikk Album Release Show**  
17:00 Smekkleysa

## Sunday December 3

**Kliður Choir Christmas Show**  
17:00 Aðventkirkjan

**Djöflamessa: Svartþoka, D.I.A, Hekla & Rafeind**  
19:00 Gaukurinn

**Baroque Advent Concert**  
17:00 Hallgrímskirkja

**Mukka**  
20:00 Hornið

**DJ Cyprie**  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

**Drink & Draw Night**  
20:00 Loft Hostel

## Monday December 4

**Bring The Laughs! Comedy Night**  
20:30 Gaukurinn

**Hrikalegur Kjöthleifur**  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

## Tuesday December 5

**Christmas Concert**  
20:00 12 Tónar

**Karaoke Night**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

**Silja Glömmi**  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

**Harry Potter Movie Night**  
20:00 Loft Hostel

## Wednesday December 6

**Sólstafr**  
21:00 Gaukurinn

**DJ Ómar E**  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

**Erik Qvick & the Jazz Messengers**  
20:00 Múlinn Jazz Club

**Silva & Steini: Christmas Concert**  
20:30 Röntgen

## Thursday December 7

**Diamond Dolls**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

**Rebekka Gröndal**  
18:00 Hotel Holt

**Jónbjörn (Lagaffe Tales)**  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

**Christmas Quiz**  
20:00 Kex Hostel

**Hausar: D&B December**  
21:00 Radar

## Friday December 8

**The Doors Tribute**  
20:00 Dillon

**Sycamore Tree**  
19:30 Dómkirkjan

**International Student Night**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

**The Vintage Caravan**  
21:00 Iðnó

**Karítas**  
23:00 Kaffibarinn

**Per:Segulsvið Christmas Concert / DJ Óli Dóri**  
20:00 Kex Hostel

**ROFNAR Album Release Show**  
17:00 Mengi

**Agzilla & Lafontaine**  
20:00 Radar

## Saturday December 9

**Ungfrúin Góða**  
20:00 Dillon

**Halldóra Björg Haraldsdóttir Evensen & Börkur Birgisson**  
16:00 Forsetinncafé

**Flozi**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

**Valdimar Christmas Concert**  
17:00 & 20:30 Harpa - Eldborg

**Allenheimer & Steinberger**  
23:00 Kaffibarinn

**kef LAVÍK**  
20:00 Kex Hostel

**Karaoke Night**  
20:30 Loft Hostel

**EZEO Birthday Jam**  
20:00 Radar

**Stand For Palestine! Rex Pistols, Merkúr, Geðbrigði & More**  
19:00 TPM Hellirinn

## Sunday December 10

**Singer-Songwriter Night**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

**DJ Lamp Vader**  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

**Drink & Draw Night**  
20:00 Loft Hostel

**Sunday Club**  
20:00 Radar

## Monday December 11

**Language Café**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

**DJ Júlala**  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

## Tuesday December 12

**Karaoke Night**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

**Fu Kaisha**  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

**Harry Potter Movie Night**  
20:00 Loft Hostel

## Wednesday December 13

**Hafnar.Haus Showcase**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

## Event Picks



**Ægir: BRIDGES II Album Release Performance**

Saturday December 16, 13:00  
Dansverkstæðið  
Free

Almost two years ago, virtuoso drummer Ægir Sindri Bjarnason set up camp at Dansverkstæðið to knock out ideas for a dance score. Falling in love with the rehearsal space, Ægir was drawn back to it for a week, more instruments in tow, to record his experimentations, which turned into a ten-hour long album. Whoa. Ægir now celebrates the release of that album, BRIDGES II, with a concert the full length of the album. Ten hours long. Throughout the day and night, he will be joined by guests, including Maria-Carmela Raso, Sólrún Mjöll, Sóley Stefánsdóttir, Þorsteinn Eyfjörð, Þórir Georg and Þórunna Björnsdóttir (AKA Trouble). And likely a choir. And more. Whether you pop in or stay put, you will be blown away. RX



**PROM: Bjartar Sveiflur & Inspector Spacetime**

December 21, 21:00  
Gamla Bíó  
2.900 ISK

Time to ask your crush out, rent a limo and find the perfect dress because it's once again time for the Bjartar Sveiflur's annual winter prom! Despite the fact Reykjavík's best cover band didn't get the memo that prom typically happens at the end of the school year, we still love an excuse to get dolled up, go on a date, dance like idiots and pass around that bottle of Cointreau stolen from our parents' liquor cabinet. This year's prom will be totally A-list, with cool kids Inspector Spacetime joining the show. The battle for king and queen will be more devastating than ever, but remember that the tiara is just plastic. So get your boss' old prom dress, sneak out after mathletes, watch out for the pig's blood and cut loose. Happy prom! RX



**Andkristni MMXXIII**

December 21 & 22  
Gaukurinn  
4.666 ISK

Ahh, yuletide. The time that for thousands of years, pagan cultures celebrated the longest day of darkness and the soon-to-return light with wild partying and carnal pleasures. And then the Christian church came around, got mad that it wasn't about them and that people were having drunken orgies so they rebranded the whole thing as "Christmas"! Having none of that, the Andkristni ("Antichrist") metal festival has embraced the origins of the season with dark, heavy, extreme music. This year's lineup includes Auðn, Formán, Hekla, Kælan Mikla, and many more, who will celebrate the solstice weekend with all the doom and gloom they can muster. So fact check your bible for no mention of Jesus' birthday and come celebrate Saturnalia instead! RX ■

listasafn.is

National Gallery of Iceland  
Frikirkjuvegur 7  
The House of Collections  
Hverfisgata 15  
Home of an Artist  
Bergstaðarstræti 74

## Egill Sæbjörnsson and Infinite friends of the Universe



Egill Sæbjörnsson (1973). From the book *When Egill met the Trolls* and took them to Venice, 2017. Property of the artist.



Listasafn Íslands  
National Gallery of Iceland

## Reykjavík Art Museum

One museum  
Three locations



**Hafnarhús**  
Tryggvagata 17  
101 Reykjavík

**Kjarvalsstaðir**  
Flókagata 24  
105 Reykjavík

**Ásmundarsafn**  
Sigtún  
105 Reykjavík

**Open daily**  
[listasafnreykjavikur.is](http://listasafnreykjavikur.is)  
[artmuseum.is](http://artmuseum.is)





# Events 01.12-04.01.2024

Concerts, comedy, movies and other happenings that defy categorization

If you're putting something on for the general public, send us a line to: [events@grapevine.is](mailto:events@grapevine.is)

*Nat King Cole Holiday Tribute*  
21:00 Harpa - Kaldalón  
*Leon S Kemp (Nordic Voyage)*  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

**Thursday December 14**

*Ekkert Um Jólin*  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
*Marína Ósk*  
18:00 Hotel Holt

TBA  
22:00 Kaffibarinn  
*Christmas Bingo*  
20:00 Kex Hostel  
*Yung Nigo Drippin*  
20:00 Radar

**Friday December 15**

*Kveinstafir*  
20:00 Dillon  
*StripLab*  
21:00 Gaukurinn

*DJ Óli Dóri*  
23:00 Kaffibarinn  
*Gugusar & Klaki*  
20:00 Kex Hostel  
*Alsæla*  
20:00 Radar

**Saturday December 16**

*Ægir: Ten-Hour Concert*  
13:00 Dansverkstæðið  
*Guitar Gods*  
20:00 Dillon

*Eik Haraldsdóttir*  
16:00 Forsetinncafé  
*ReykjaDoom Special Event*  
21:00 Gaukurinn  
*Ingibjörg Steingrims*  
20:00 Hannesarholt

TBA  
23:00 Kaffibarinn  
*Ylja / Babies Christmas Dance*  
20:30 Kex Hostel  
*MENGI MIX: Youth Workshop with Sól Ey*

12:00 Mengi  
*BETONAGE*  
20:00 Radar  
*Silva & Steini: Christmas Concert*  
18:00 Röntgen  
*Nordic Affect*  
15:00 Salurinn

**Sunday December 17**

*RMSSSDLP Play Party*  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
*Christmas Carols & Lessons*  
17:00 Hallgrímskirkja  
*Classical Sundays: Caudu Collective*  
16:00 Harpa - Norðurljós

*Briet*  
18:00 & 21:00 Harpa - Silfurberg  
*Ninja & Júlía*  
22:00 Kaffibarinn  
*UMBRA: Yuletide Show*  
20:00 Laugarneskirkja

*Drink & Draw Night*  
20:00 Loft Hostel

**Monday December 18**

*Bring The Laughs! Comedy Night*  
20:30 Gaukurinn  
*Hrikalegur Kjóthleifur*  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

**Tuesday December 19**

*Karaoke Night*

20:00 Gaukurinn  
*DJ Halaköttur*  
22:00 Kaffibarinn  
*Harry Potter Movie Night*  
20:00 Loft Hostel

**Wednesday December 20**

*Kingkiller*  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
*Árni Sveinsson Christmas Disco*  
22:00 Kaffibarinn  
*Teitur Magnússon Christmas Concert*  
20:00 Kex Hostel  
*TOMASHEVSKY*  
20:00 Radar

**Thursday December 21**

*PROM: Bjartar Sveiflur & Inspector Spacetime*  
21:00 Gamla Bió  
*Andkristni MMXXIII*  
19:00 Gaukurinn  
*Gissur Páll Gissurason*  
18:00 Hotel Holt  
*Housekell*  
22:00 Kaffibarinn  
*Spacestation, Gróa and Supersport! / DJ Jökull Logi*  
20:00 Kex Hostel  
*KrBear & Addi Stefans*  
20:00 Radar

**Friday December 22**

*GG Blús*  
20:00 Dillon  
*Andkristni MMXXIII*  
19:00 Gaukurinn  
*Simon fkhndsm Xmas Extravaganza*  
23:00 Kaffibarinn  
*Ólafur Kram*  
20:00 Kex Hostel  
*XWIFE, kosmodod, Jadzia, ThizOne & where is jason*

20:00 Radar

**Saturday December 23**

*Brimbrot*  
20:00 Dillon  
*Marína Ósk*  
16:00 Forsetinncafé  
*Karaoke Party*  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
*Kaffibarinn Christmas Party*  
23:00 Kaffibarinn

**Sunday December 24**

*DJ Santa*  
22:00 Kaffibarinn  
*Christmas Movie / Drink & Draw Night*  
20:00 Loft Hostel

**Monday December 25**

*DJ Rúdolf*  
22:00 Kaffibarinn  
*Christmas Movie Night*  
20:00 Loft Hostel

**Tuesday December 26**

*Christmas With Bach*  
17:00 Hallgrímskirkja  
*DJ Valdi Farewell Tour*  
22:00 Kaffibarinn  
*Harry Potter Movie Night*  
20:00 Loft Hostel

**Wednesday December 27**

*Cozy Vibes*  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
*Brynja (Girls Gang XMAS Party)*  
22:00 Kaffibarinn  
*Festivus Seinfeld Pub Quiz*  
20:00 Kex Hostel

**Thursday December 28**

*RASK Collective*  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
*Kristjana Stefánsdóttir*

18:00 Hotel Holt  
*Jesper Lemke & King Lucky (Lucky Records)*  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

**Friday December 29**

*Morose*  
21:00 Gaukurinn  
*KrBear*  
23:00 Kaffibarinn  
*Simon fkhndsm*  
20:00 Kex Hostel  
*After Eight / Apex Anima, FRZNT & ex.girls*  
20:00 Radar

**Saturday December 30**

*Andrés Þór Gunnlaugsson & Böðvar Reynisson*  
16:00 Forsetinncafé  
*Árstíðir Holiday Concert*  
21:00 Frikirkjan  
*Licks: KISS Tribute*  
21:00 Gaukurinn  
*Benni B Ruff & Leynigestur*  
23:00 Kaffibarinn  
*DJ KGB*  
20:00 Kex Hostel

**Sunday December 31**

*New Year's Eve Party*  
21:00 Gaukurinn  
*Festive New Year's Sounds*  
16:00 Hallgrímskirkja  
*New Year's Eve Party: Young G&T*  
23:00 Kaffibarinn  
*Harvey McKay, Samwise & Thorkell Mani*  
20:00 Radar

**Monday January 1**

*Lord Of The Rings Movie Marathon*  
12:00 Bió Paradís ■

See more at [events.grapevine.is](http://events.grapevine.is)

**Sæta svínid**  
ICELANDIC GASTROPUB

**HAPPIEST HAPPY HOUR IN REYKJAVÍK**

**Happy HOUR**  
15-18

**BEER 1.090 KR. COCKTAILS 1.790 KR.**

SÆTA SVÍNID / Hafnarstræti 1-3 / Tel. 555 2900 / [saetasvinid.is](http://saetasvinid.is)

**Jómfrúin**  
DANISH THE ICELANDIC WAY

*Jómfrúin is proud to carefully combine superb Icelandic ingredients with age-old Danish heritage so that guests can enjoy a culinary experience like no other. Jómfrúin stands for quality tradition that is worthy of preservation.*

[jomfruin.is](http://jomfruin.is)



Appy Listings

# Some Of The Happiest Hours In Town

If your bar has a happy hour, email us on [events@grapevine.is](mailto:events@grapevine.is) with the details.

## 101 HOTEL

Wednesday to Saturday from 16:00 to 19:00

Beer 1.390 ISK, Wine 1.590 ISK  
12 TÓNAR

Every day from 14:00 to 19:00

Beer 1.100 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK  
AMERICAN BAR

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00

Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK  
APÉRO

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00

Beer 950 ISK, Wine 1.100 ISK  
BÍÓ PARADÍS

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00

Beer 850 ISK, Wine 850 ISK  
BJÓRGARÐURINN

Every day from 15:00 to 19:00

Beer 900 ISK, Wine 900 ISK  
BODEGA

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00

Beer 900 ISK, Wine 900 ISK  
BRAVÓ

Every day from 12:00 to 20:00

Beer 750 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK  
BREWDOG

Every day from 15:00 to 17:00 &

22:00 to 00:00  
Beer 1.290 ISK, Wine 1.290 ISK  
BRÚT BAR

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00

Beer 700 ISK, Wine 750 ISK, 2F1 on  
wine and beer on tap  
DEN DANSKE KRO

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00

Beer 750 ISK, Wine 750 ISK  
FJALLKONAN

Every day from 15:00 to 18:00

Beer 990 ISK, Wine 1.190 ISK  
FORRÉTTABARINN

Every day from 16:00 to 18:00

Beer 800 ISK, Wine 900 ISK  
FORSETINNCAFÉ

Every day from 15:00 to 18:00

Beer 990 ISK, Wine 990 ISK  
FRÖKEN REYKJAVÍK

Every day from 16:00 to 18:00

Beer 990 ISK, Wine 1.100 ISK  
GAUKURINN

Every day from 16:00 to 21:00

Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.100 ISK  
HOTEL HOLT BAR

Wednesday to Saturday from 16:00

to 18:00

Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.350 ISK  
THE IRISHMAN

Every day from 12:00 to 19:00

Beer 850 ISK, Wine 850 ISK  
JÖRGENSEN KITCHEN &

BAR  
Every day except Thurs. 16:00 to

18:00, Thursday 16:00 to 20:00

Beer 890 ISK, Wine 1.100 ISK  
JUNGLE COCKTAIL BAR

Every day from 16:00 to 18:00

Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.100 ISK  
KAFFI LÆKUR

Every day from 16:00 to 18:00

Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK  
KAFFIBARINN

Every day from 15:00 to 19:00

Beer 800 ISK, Wine 900 ISK  
KAFFIBRENNSLAN

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00

Beer 850 ISK, Wine 900 ISK  
KALDI BAR

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00

Beer 950 ISK, Wine 950 ISK  
LOFT HOSTEL

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00

Beer 990 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK  
LÓLA FLORENS

Every day from 15:00 to 18:00

Beer 1.200 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK  
ÖLSTOFAN

Every day from 15:00 to 20:00

Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK  
PETERSEN SVÍTAN

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00

Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK  
PRIKIÐ

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00

Beer 700 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK  
PUNK

Every day from 16:00 to 18:00

Beer 850 ISK, Wine 950 ISK  
RÖNTGEN

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00

Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK  
SÆTA SVÍNID

Every day from 15:00 to 18:00

Beer 1.090 ISK, Wine 1.390 ISK  
SATT RESTAURANT

Every day from 15:00 to 18:00

Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK  
SKÚLI CRAFT BAR

Every day from 12:00 to 19:00

Beer 900 ISK, Wine 900 ISK  
SLIPBARINN

Every day from 15:00 to 18:00

Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK  
SPILAKAFFI

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00

Beer 1.000 ISK, no wine or cocktails  
STUDENTAKJALLARINN

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00

Beer 710 ISK, Wine 850 ISK  
TIPSÝ

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00

50% off select cocktails  
UPPSALIR BAR

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00

Beer 750 ISK, Wine 950 ISK  
VEÐUR

Every day from 12:00 to 19:35

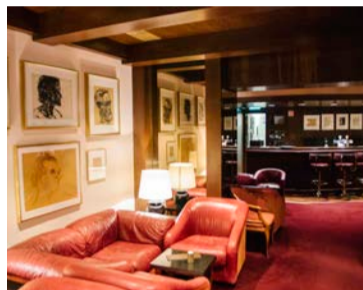
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 800 ISK  
VINSTÚKAN TÍU SOPAR

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00

Beer 1.300 ISK, Wine 1.600 ISK  
VOX BRASSERIE & BAR

Every day from 16:00 to 18:00

Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK



Featured

## Hotel Holt

Bergstaðastræti 37

For the ultimate hibernal cocktail hour experience, we can't think of a place with more opulent cosy elegance than Hotel Holt's classy bar. The grande dame of Reykjavík's old hotels beckons guests and well-wishers with its iconic neon pink letters hovering above downtown, and the inside is just as dazzling. In the warm, woody comfort of their drinkery, you can sink into buttery soft loungers and enjoy a nicely priced beverage, without the fishbowl-like feeling of the street-side pub. With live jazz music every Thursday evening, you will still feel super cool.

Happy hours

Wednesday to Saturday from 16:00 to 18:00

Beer for 1.000 ISK,  
Wine for 1.350 ISK ■

\* We do our best to keep these prices current, but prices are constantly changing. Inflation, amirite!?

DISCOVER ICELAND  
*thru delicious food*

DISCOVER ICELAND menu

SLOW-COOKED COD - smoked lamb, almonds, truffles

SMOKED ARCTIC CHAR - horseradish, skyr, fried bread

GLAZED LAMB FILLET - celeriac, fennel, mashed potatoes, lamb glaze

RHUBARB PIE - marzipan, vanilla ice cream

FOOD CELLAR  
MATARKJALLARINN

Aðalstræti 2, 101 Reykjavík · +354 558 0000 · matarkjallarinn.is

You can pick up your copy of The Reykjavík Grapevine in Krónan all around Iceland!

KRÓNAN

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART

Garðatorg 1  
210 Garðabær

AT HOME  
IN THE  
DESIGN  
MUSEUM

200 DESIGN OBJECTS FROM THE ARCHIVE

Open  
Tue—Sun 12—17

WWW.HONNUNARSAFN.IS

## Cheap Eats

Here are some sweet meal deals that'll fill your tummy and without draining your bank account.

2.190 ISK every day except Sunday,  
from 11:30 - 14:30

### GLÓ

Bowl of the Month

2.290 ISK all day, every day

### HAMBORGARABÚLLA TÓMASAR

Tuesday Special: burger, fries & soda

1.890 ISK all day on Tuesday

### HLÖLLABÁTAR

Lunch Offer: Choice of any sub and soda

2.195 ISK every day until 14:00

### ISLENSKI BARINN

Soup of the Day

1.850 ISK all day, every day

### LEMON

Combo of the Month: large sandwich & juice

2.195 ISK all day, every day

### MAI THAI BISTRO

Lunch Offer: daily curry meal  
2.090 ISK weekdays between 11:00 - 14:00

### NAPOLI PIZZA

Lunch Offer: choice of menu pizza or sandwich

1.690 ISK every day from 11:30 - 15:00

### PÍTUBARINN

Veggie pita sandwich

1.990 ISK all day, every day

### REYKJAVÍK ROASTERS

Breakfast menu & sourdough toasts

580 ISK - 1.800 ISK, all day, every day

### SHALIMAR

Curry in a Hurry Lunch Special

1.590 ISK weekdays from 12:00 - 15:00

### ZORBIAN HOT

Chicken shawarma wraps & falafel wraps

1.490 ISK all day, every day ■

\* We do our best to keep these prices current, but shit's outta control. Let us know if you spot a sweet deal: [grapevine@grapevine.is](mailto:grapevine@grapevine.is)

### APÓTEK

Soup of the Day

1.990 ISK all day, every day

### ARABIAN TASTE

Falafel Roll

1.590 all day, every day

### BÆJARINS BEZTU

Hotdog and soda

990 ISK all day, every day

### DEIG

Poor Man's Offer: filled bagel, doughnut & drink

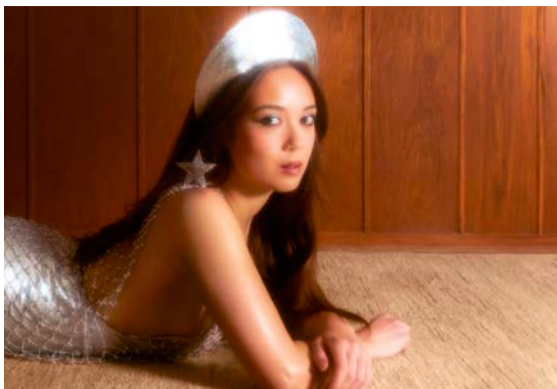
1.850 ISK weekdays after 10:00

### DRAGON DIM SUM

Lunch Offer: choice of any two dumpling baskets



# Music News



## Artists Laufey and Ólafur Arnalds Nominated For Grammy Awards

Jazz-pop sensation Laufey and neo-classical composer Ólafur Arnalds are among the 2024 Grammy nominees. The list of nominations was announced November 10. Laufey is up for "Best Pop Vocal Album" for *Bewitched*, sharing a nomination with heavy-hitter Bruce Springsteen. Ólafur Arnalds is recognised for his

album *Some Kind Of Peace (Piano Reworks)* in the category "Best New Age, Ambient, Or Chant Album". This is Laufey's first Grammy nomination. Ólafur Arnalds received two nominations in 2022. The 66th annual Grammy Awards will be hosted on February 5, 2024.



## New Björk Single "Oral" Out November 21

Early in October, Björk announced a forthcoming collaboration track with artist Rosalía. The announcement came at a time of public opposition against sea-based fish farming in Iceland – an industry that is both destructive to the marine environment and threatens the country's wild salmon stock. Multiple instances were recorded where farmed

salmon escaped into Iceland's rivers, contaminating the genetic composition of the wild salmon. All proceeds from "Oral" go towards Aegis, a non-profit dedicated to the fight against sea-based fish farming. This is Björk's and Rosalía's first collaboration. "Oral" was released on November 21, with an accompanying music video.



## Legendary Punk Band Purrkur Pillnikk Release Anthology Album

Seminal 80s punk band Purrkur Pillnikk will release their complete anthology collection, *Orð Fyrir Dauða*, on December 1 via Smekkleysa. The group, which featured former Sugarcubes member Einar Örn Benediktsson, rose to prominence in the Reykjavik scene and were featured in the influential 1982 documentary

*Rökk í Reykjavík*. Despite only being operational between 1981 and 1982, Purrkur Pillnikk was a prolific outfit, releasing four studio albums and one live album. *Orð Fyrir Dauða* features five new recordings, the band's complete remastered discography and a 48-page booklet. ■



Otherworldly Music

## No-Wave, Nihilism And

Electronic trio ex.girls ponder existentialist questions on their newest album

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason  
IMAGE Art Bicnick

and the eponymous electronica label borne out of that same social circle.

Both Gylfi and frontwoman Tatjana Dís Aldísar Razoumeenka joined the project in 2016, which up until then had been the sole creation of mastermind Guðlaugur "Gulli" Hörðdal. Having prepared "four of our most ready songs", the trio's first EP, *Sisters & Brothers*, was released via the German label hfn music in 2017.

A CONTROVERSIAL NAME CHANGE

Touching on the nature of their Skúlagata stomping ground, Gylfi describes it as a sort of community centre. There, the band was able to experiment with their sound, working at a pace suitable for them. "We hung out a lot there. There was always something going on," Gulli reminisces.

**D**renched in Nordic cool, there is something intrinsically 90s about electronica group ex.girls. With seven years as a band under their belt, they've attracted both domestic and international attention with their energetic stage performance. While innately old-school, there's also an element of timelessness surrounding the group. Nihilistic, esoteric, with a slight hint of danger, the outfit's long-awaited debut album *Verk* was unleashed November 17.

"We'd been making music together at Skúlagata," explains Gylfi Sigurðsson, a long-time drummer for teenage riots Retro Stefson, distinguishing between the actual street

Everybody was like, "This is awesome," and I thought, "Damn, people were so drunk last night."

"I only sing on one track, which turns out to be our most popular song to date," says singer Tatjana. "It's a funny story, as it's the first recording where I sing anything. It was just at a party when we recorded 'Autopilot.' Everybody was like, 'This is awesome,' and I thought, 'Damn, people were so drunk last night.' But it's funny, because it ends up being..." she trails off as Gulli finishes her sentence, "Our most played song."

"It's a good song though," chimes Gylfi.

"You could spend the night just walking around different rooms and studios. If you'd get bored of one room you would just enter the next one," explains Gylfi. "It was a total zoo."

It's this affiliation of multiple collaborators and influences which play a big part in ex.girls' idiosyncratic sound. "While some artists might think about what's trending today, we've never been too current," says Tatjana.

**A UNIQUE GIFT SHOP IN THE HEART OF REYKJAVÍK**  
LAUGAVEGUR 12b theheartofreykjavik.com







# Band Name Changes

from *Verk*

"We've just focused on making stuff we dig," adds Gulli.

Fans of *Sisters & Brothers* were likely surprised to find out that the band had undergone name change. Following the invasion into Ukraine in February 2022, the trio decided the moniker "russian.girls" needed a change. Without an official statement of any sorts, the outfit quietly rebranded themselves to the current ex.girls. Asked about the decision, Tatjana replies, "It kind of explains itself, doesn't it?"

The provocative and vague nature of the name apparently caused the trio some strain when it came to booking international shows. "When we made the decision to change the band name, it was because we were trying to book a European tour. It was just a hassle for us. It wasn't necessarily something we wanted to do. We found it a bit ridiculous to change the name," explains Gulli.

"It was either change the name and perform abroad, or keep it and don't go anywhere," Tatjana adds.

## TERMINATOR ENTERED THE CHAT

Like so many musical ventures, *Verk* fell victim to the 2020 pandemic pushing its release date way back. However, the trio consider this a blessing in disguise. With early concepts drafted in 2019, the band dropped three singles off the album between 2021 and 2022.

"We decided in 2019 that it was going to be an LP, but until we release 'Halda Áfram/Drepa Mann' in 2021, we considered us ready to release this record. Then came COVID, which I think was fortunate because we've developed a lot in that time," confesses Tatjana.

As fate would have it, the trio ran into fellow musician Guðmundur Ari

Arnalds (associated with Mengi Records) who joined them in the final production stages of the release.

"I knew of him," says Gulli, "I just knew he was doing the most exciting stuff here at home. He did a lot for the album," he says.

"He's like Terminator with his vision," Gylfi jokingly adds, imitating laser noises. "A pure workhorse and perfect for the role."

## NO-WAVE DYSTOPIA

Rooted in no-wave aesthetics and philosophy, *Verk* is an esoteric mix of electronica, avant-pop and experimental music. Just by looking at the album cover, which depicts an overcast fjord with thousands of shovels standing upright in the mudflat, you get a sense of what's in store.

The visual motif of shovels keeps cropping up within the band's work. In the 2019 music video "Bíóbabb"

## You can use a shovel to either bury a person or to bury a secret

featuring Kraftgalli, the trio kidnap their collaborator and bury him. "We dug him a grave and buried him. So that ties together visually and I associate [shovels] heavily with the band. You can use a shovel to either bury a person or to bury a secret," Gylfi ruminates.

The ambiguous album title *Verk* – in Icelandic either means "creation" or "action" – reflects the humdrum, existential human actions that propel the everyday. "When we started compiling the songs, we realised that they all make fun of human existence or at least question it," contemplates Tatanja.

The overall atmosphere featured on *Verk* is raw and grim. At times, it evokes images of a too-close-to-home dystopia, wherein paranoia is the reigning emotion – perhaps most evident on "Hundrað í hæt-tunni".

## LIGHTS IN THE FJORD

This overall feeling is only exacerbated by Tatjana's wonderfully sombre vocals. The album's main lyrical themes explore the shadowy aspects of human nature, all neatly wrapped up within 20th century nihilism. The track "Halda áfram" starts out with a clunky bossa nova beat, with Tatjana half-mumbling, "Keep going. Give up. Dreams live. Dreams die."

The singer reminisces about the song's inception. "I remember working on 'Halda áfram'. I had hummed some words to it and immediately thought, 'This is so corny.' I didn't dare to show the guys. But some-

how I had a feeling this was great. I appreciate that memory because I often think about if I had let that feeling of cringe take over," Tatjana comments.

However, the album is not all doom and gloom, as *Verk* contains a plethora of bright moments to keep spirits high, with thumping bass beats fit for the raunchiest of nightclubs. The group will even prepare a remix version of the record, in order to capitalise on the feeling of a sweaty night out. ■

*Verk* was released November 17 via bbbbbb records. Follow their ventures on Instagram, @ex.girls

**The Grapevine Recommends:**

**Volcano**

On an impromptu bring-your-kid-to-work day, Kaktus goes on a bus trip with tour guide and mother extraordinaire Brá. Together with a group of eccentric sightseers they venture on a classic day tour of waterfalls, furry horses and postcard perfect landscapes. But their day takes an unexpected twist when Kaktus spots something glowing red hot in the distance...

Award-winning author and illustrator Rán Flygenring is a true volcano aficionado.

shop.grapevine.is

**CHRISTMAS MARKET**

Hjartatorg

All weekends (sat & sun)  
and 21, 22, 23 dec

STREET FOOD  
DRINKS  
ROASTED ALMONDS  
ARTS  
CRAFTS  
CHRISTMAS  
GIFTS

Jóla. borgin  
MIDBORGIN





About Last Night **The Dream Is Over**

Hardcore Group ROHT Is No More

WORDS Pórir Georg  
IMAGE Art Bicnick

babysitter had fell ill – we would not be able to play. Having cancelled multiple shows through the last few years for similar reasons, I decided to figure out a way to make it work this time.

I frantically spent the next couple of hours putting together a new version of our backing tracks. The first ever ROHT show was a solo performance and now this, the last ROHT show, would be a solo performance as well. Full circle. I entered Gaukurinn at the last minute with very little time to spare and headed straight to the stage to set up my equipment.

I gulped down an energy drink and got ready to perform. The performance was a blur of heat and anger and left me both physically and mentally drained. I did my best to enjoy the rest of the night in my post-show mental state but must admit I felt a wave of relief hit me when it was over. I exited the venue into the cold, dark, autumn evening. The show was over, the band was over. Time to get some sleep. ■

**A** ROHT show is a rare event these days. Since my partner in the band – and in life – and I had our first child, the band hasn't been a top priority.

We had, however, been wanting to get together with what we consider the cream of the Icelandic crop for a proper hardcore punk show. So,

**The performance was a blur of heat and anger and left me both physically and mentally drained.**

when we booked a show with our besties in Dauðyflin and our favourite Akranes weirdos in Gaddavir, it definitely brought a little spark back to our little band's flatlining heart.

As luck would have it, fate intervened. On the day of the show, our



Skynet: The Musical

**Do Androids Dream Of Composing Music?**

Research project Intelligent Instruments Lab designs artificially intelligent instruments

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason  
IMAGE Art Bicnick

say, he makes for a highly interesting conversation partner.

"We've always used algorithms in music," Thor replies when confronted with the question of what creative AI means. "Since the invention of writing and later notation, we've formalised algorithms for music. With computers, we begin using machines to follow and even create these algorithms," he says, pointing out the 1957 composition "Illiac Suite" as the first musical piece written with machine learning.

how does AI become a part of them? We study how we feel about the agency of instruments. How does it feel when the instrument starts to react to what we do? It's sort of like a flower that grows, or a dog that you train," he explains.

As AI allows people to create sounds previously inaccessible to hobby musicians, Thor is positive that the technology can have positive effects in democratising music, enabling more people to enjoy making music.

**S**ince 2021, Intelligent Instruments Lab has made technological breakthroughs within the field of artificial intelligence and instrument design. The lab's mission is to research the role of creative AI in contemporary culture, through the design of tech-augmented instruments. An example of their work, the cello-like halldorophone by inventor Halldór Úlfarsson, was even used by composer Hildur Guðnadóttir for her multi-award winning score for the film Joker.

UPDATING AN ICELANDIC CLASSIC

II Lab's first research project and subsequent invention was the proto-langspil – a refurbished instrument based on the traditional Icelandic langspil. Implemented with electronic components and machine intelligence, the proto-langspil was handed over to a select group of musicians. Their goal was to make new compositions based on the instrument, which II Lab has compiled in the upcoming release *Strengir Tímans*, which is set to be released February 2, 2024.

Situated on the upper floors of the Iceland University of the Arts' brutalist complex in Þverholt is Thor Magnusson's office. The project's principal investigator, Thor's background is in music, computer science and philosophy. Needless to

**How does it feel when the instrument starts to react to what we do? It's sort of like a flower that grows, or a dog that you train.**

Of course, it took decades until artificially intelligent tools would be available to the general public, as is the case today. With the proliferation of AI, select tools have gone public, including the text-based Chat-GPT or the visual generator Dall·E. AI-based music programmes are no exception.

A DEMOCRATISING TOOL OR A DEMORALISING ONE?

With machines capable of writing and performing music, it presents a fundamental question about creativity: can computers be creative?

"This automatic AI used in writing music is, in my opinion, an exciting philosophical task. The question whether computers can be creative is an interesting philosophical question happening right now. It sheds light on what we mean by creativity, artwork, or even copyright?" Thor ponders.

"We like investigating these questions, but our focus is on the embedding of intelligent algorithms in physical musical instruments. So,

"I think [AI] will open new dimensions for amateurs working on music at home," he says. "To be able to whistle a tune into a program, which then produces a saxophone or a clarinet sound."

However, new technologies tend to produce unfortunate consequences. In this case, the possibility of obsoleting instrumentalists. Thor is unfazed. "It may be that there will be less demand for string players if film composers just use AI to create string sounds. But I don't think we'll stop going to concerts at the symphony and we won't be watching robots play the violins," he opines.

"Music is, in its essence, a living art form. We attend shows because we enjoy going out and focusing on music in a specific environment with other people," he concludes. "AI will never substitute that." ■

II Lab's album *Strengir Tímans* is out on February 2, 2024. The singles "Gufunes" by Keli and EstHer, and "Trio For Lokkur, langspil and proto-langspil" by Berglind María Tómasdóttir, are out now





## Track By Track **When One Root Is Pulled, Another One Grows**

Jelena Ćirić's *Shelters Two* highlights human connections

**WORDS** Jelena Ćirić  
**IMAGE** Supplied by Jelena Ćirić

Jelena Ćirić's beautifully serene EP *Shelters Two* was out October 26. Self-described as "the long lost love child of Regina Spektor and Joni Mitchell", Jelena's music is mellow and contemplative. *Shelters Two* is a four-track release, reflecting Jelena's immigrant experiences, human connection and the boon of a driver's license.

### ROME

When I perform this song, I always introduce it by saying it's about Romulus, Remus and Tinder. I find myths and legends super inspiring, and I think their plot lines are more realistic than many people give them credit for. While I admittedly don't know anyone who was raised by a she-wolf, two brothers killing each other over who gets to rule a city is not at all removed from what's making headlines these days. The human experience has been remarkably consistent throughout history: loving, longing, heartbreak. That's mostly what this song is about.

With the heart-wrenching chorus and lavish strings, it's maybe the closest I'll ever come to writing a pop hit. Or maybe I'll finally cave in to the pressure of every stranger who's told me to enter the Eurovision Song Contest immediately upon learning I'm a musician. Only time will tell.

### OTHER GIRLS

I think every woman sometimes gets caught up in comparing herself to other women. Inevitably, we judge ourselves to be inferior. Our real enemy is not each other, it's the patriarchy that pits us against one another for its own benefit. This song is about dismantling that, very softly, with piano. Musically, it hints at my past life as a jazz singer in Mexico. That sounds like a joke, but is actually what I was doing before I moved to Iceland.

### INSIDE WEATHER

I wrote this song during my first winter in Iceland. It was cold, it was dark. I was a newcomer in a strange new place and the stormy weather felt like a reflection of the inside of my head. That was a few years ago. Now I have friends and a driver's licence, so life has improved dramatically. I've learned to embrace

the winter – or buy a plane ticket to somewhere warm, like any other Icelander.

My two band members and collaborators Karl Pestka (viola) and Margrét Arnardóttir (accordion) open this track beautifully and sprinkle their magic throughout. I'm so grateful for the depth and richness they add to my songs.

### FIG TREE

The most personal song on the EP. It's about the fig tree my grandma used to have in her garden. That tree represents the immigrant experience for me: the things that you leave behind when you uproot yourself and things you gain when you put down roots in a new place. I originally wrote this as an a cappella song (just voice, no instruments), but Karl adds the most delicate, inspired accompaniment in this recorded version. It's my favourite song to sing live because I get to stand up from the piano and face the audience and without fail, it sparks beautiful moments of connection. That's when I really feel what a gift it is to be a musician, to open space for others to feel what they need to feel. ■



Filthy  
Interview

## Nyrst's Ritual Of Pain

Black Metal Band Nyrst Introduces Forthcoming Release *Völd*

**WORDS** Francesca Stoppani  
**IMAGE** Supplied by Nyrst

In this Filthy issue, I met up with Eysteinn and Snæbjörn, lead guitarist and vocalist/lyricist, respectively, of mystical black metal band Nyrst. Though the focus of our conversation was their forthcoming release, *Völd*, I was surprised to learn what Nyrst is really about – and that some things are better left untold.

### ON BEAUTY AND BRUTALITY

Formerly known as Skuggsjá, Nyrst emerged onto the Icelandic metal scene in 2013. The name change happened in 2016 when they released a demo that served as their entry into Hell's Pit. As the band developed musically, they began to craft more advanced material that led to the release of *Orsök* in 2020, orbiting between Norwegian and Icelandic black metal.

The group's concept, succinctly summarised in their forthcoming release, is about nature's dominion over mankind, portraying the inherent power imbalance between the two and perpetual human vulnerability. In the face of past and ongoing volcanic events here in Iceland, Nyrst reflects on and works through the raw force of nature, reminding us of the brutality we have to endure to catch a glimpse of the world's beauty.

### SPELLBINDING STORMS

"There was a time when you could not see the sun because there was so much ash in the air. This is what interests us," says Snæbjörn, explaining the origins of the band's soundscape and visual cues. Black

metal is often theatrical on stage and Nyrst's performance is no exception. Those visual elements help amplify their performance and make it more impactful. "We want to portray something primal and primitive," says Eysteinn.

One music reviewer described Nyrst's live shows as a volcanic ritual. Given that Nyrst's members seem to fall into a trance while performing, the description is more than fitting. Reportedly, the band has a track record of summoning storms as they set foot on the stage. "During our Summer Breeze gig, one of the largest German festivals after Wacken Open Air, a hellish rain and wind came out of the blue causing the backdrop flag to fall over the drumset," Snæbjörn recalls.

### VOCALS, PLEASE

*Völd* is the second time that Nyrst releases through the Norwegian label Dark Essence Records. With the support of producer Haukur Hannes, Nyrst took several approaches to recording and used a separate studio for drums. The writing process involved their previous guitarist, Davíð, who contributed new elements to *Völd* before being replaced by Birkir. Eysteinn handles most of the composition, while Svenni takes care of the percussion. Eysteinn notes that the album has a harsher sound compared to their previous, more melodic offerings – it's more intense and relentless, emphasising the vocals.

After entering Doomstar Bookings' prestigious roster, Nyrst is planning a tour abroad next year. They are already working on new material. As for *Völd*'s release show, it is planned for early 2024. Meanwhile, brace yourselves for its explosive release on December 8 and follow the band on Instagram, @\_nyrst. ■

# EXPLORE UNSEEN ICELAND

## ON THE ULTIMATE FLYING RIDE

**FlyOver**  
ICELAND

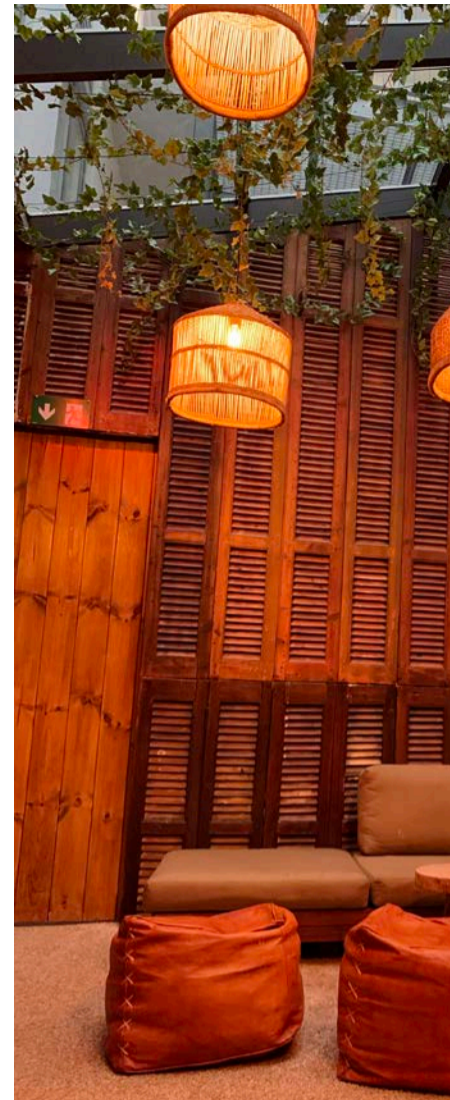
OPEN EVERY DAY | [flyovericeland.com](https://flyovericeland.com)





BAKERY // RESTAURANT  
OPEN 07:00 22:00

BANKASTRÆTI 2  
101 REYKJAVÍK  
@BAKABAKA.IS



**Food** True Beauty Behind A G

Óx dazzles from start to finish

WORDS Catharine Fulton  
IMAGES Catharine Fulton

number of massive moments to the family memory bank this year, 2023 also somehow became my year of Michelin dining.

Óx was awarded a Michelin star in 2022, becoming the second Icelandic restaurant to receive the prestigious distinction. Dill was the first and Moss at the Blue Lagoon received theirs this year to become the third.

A THEATRICAL ARRIVAL

Óx has been a legend in Reykjavík since chef/owner Þráinn Freyr Vigfusson first set up the kitchen fixtures inherited from his grandmother in the back room of his restaurant Sumac on Laugavegur. There, he presided over a chef's table experience for 11 diners. It has since moved a short walk down the street, where the slightly expanded 17-seater culinary experience is hidden behind a graffitied door identified only by a doorbell labelled AMMA DON.

It's at that door that the experience really begins. Pressing the doorbell sets into motion a three-hour experience that won't soon be forgotten.

Manuel's voice comes gently through the speaker of the doorbell – "come on through" – and the electric lock of the door clicks faintly, indicating it's time to enter. Over

I don't know if it's the scary and uncertain few years we've all been living through or my own personal stressors of the past 12 months that I was seeking out opportunities to momentarily forget, but I made a conscious decision at the outset of 2023 to partake of more big memorable experiences. Things I had always wanted to do – for myself, for my family – but had shied away from or put off for one reason or another. In addition to adding a

To be abundantly clear, lest I come across wildly out of touch, "year of Michelin dining" does not mean I've been indulging weekly at awarded restaurants. I dined solo at an establishment in London and felt like I was truly pampering myself, taking my time, enjoying every bite and sip, quietly absorbing the ambience. I celebrated my birthday at another starred establishment in France, where my kids' gift to me was promising to try everything and to say something thoughtful about it, even if it was "that bite wasn't my favourite" – the refrain we agreed upon instead of "eww" or "I don't like that." Yes, I brought my kids to a Michelin restaurant, after confirming ahead of making the reservation that it was allowed.

So when the opportunity to lunch at the acclaimed Óx presented itself by way of an invitation from restaurant manager and head sommelier Manuel Schembri, I giddily accepted.



Laugavegi 28  
537 99 00  
sumac@sumac.is  
sumac.is



## lovethaifood

### LOVE BAN THAI

---

### BEST THAI FOOD 2023

Also best 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010 AND 2009

**Best goddamn restaurant 2011**  
TOP TEN : BEST RESTAURANTS IN ICELAND  
DV. 17.06.11

### Large selection of vegetable dishes

Ban Thai is not "fast food" restaurant  
food made fresh from scratch, it's not pre-made



## banthai

www.banthai.is  
Laugavegur 130, Hlemmur, 105 Reykjavík  
PHONE : 5522-444, 692-0564 banthai130@gmail.com










# graffitied Door

the threshold, the long dark hallway stretching ahead continues to lend the arrival a sense of mystery. Walking toward the literal light at the end of the tunnel, I don't know what to expect next. I find myself in an exterior metal stairwell, but Manuel's voice draws my attention to where to go next. "Welcome, Catharine," he calls from one floor down where he's standing in the doorway of a shuttered greenhouse ... inside a building, but also outside again and downstairs. Where am I?

## WELCOME TO AMMA DON

This isn't the entry into Óx proper, but rather to Amma Don, the speak-easy bar that fronts the restaurant. Named for Chef Þráinn's other grandmother – here's to strong women! – Amma Don is the living room of every grandparent, with low seating around a coffee table, an

smooth purée that I sighed over the memory of while writing this article.

There's no quick-fire succession of plates here. The pace is in line with the pace of life in any grandmother's living room. Manuel casually lowers himself to sit on the hearth of the fireplace to explain each small course. A whipped rapeseed oil dusted with rutabaga is impossibly light to the point of floating atop the thin potato chip provided as the tool with which to enjoy it. A small bite that follows – a concoction of chicken liver and sugar fermented beet – is Christmas in a single mouthful. We're instructed to eat the choux pastry that comes next, piled high with caviar and stuffed with duck egg, in a single bite or very carefully in two.

## TRICKS UP THEIR SLEEVES

together in their travels, gushed that this was the best they'd experienced.

## MORE THAN A MEAL

It goes without saying that the dishes served by Chef Þráinn and his team were impeccable.

A tomato consomme with shrimp and habanero was so bright and fresh I held myself back from drinking every last drop directly from the bowl. The salmon was so delicately smoked it melted on the tongue. The lamb, smoked for two hours before resting beneath its cloche with arctic thyme and dried birch, parted at the sight of a knife. The dessert incorporating locally-grown wasabi was an herbaceous and not-too-sweet bridge away from the savoury courses and toward the chocolate cake and toffee that ended the meal.

But what really stands out at Óx, just as much as the 18 courses, is the sheer talent of every individual there. Watching them operate first in Amma Don and then in the theatre that is Óx was like witnessing a master painter at work. It is a remarkable and inspirational experience to witness the unique abilities of a group of truly gifted people. What they do is so intricately thought out and carefully planned – heck, a mussel stock being grated over one dish starts as eight litres of liquid before being painstakingly reduced to a single 40 gram flavour bomb – you can't help but feel you are tasting art. Each dish was an expression of their collective genius. The level of care and service is a marvel.

Sated and slightly tipsy, I made my way back through the greenhouse that is both indoors and out, up the metal stairs and back down the long dark hallway to exit through the graffitied door that I had entered three hours earlier. In my year of seeking out memorable experiences, my year of Michelin dining, this was something else.

Óx is something else entirely. ■

**It's at that door that the experience really begins. Pressing the doorbell sets into motion a three-hour experience that won't soon be forgotten.**

old television set playing, tapestries hanging on the wall, an embroidered table runner and a crystal bowl of potpourri. The washrooms have threadbare hand towels and old housecoats hanging on the back of the door.

I was directed to a space on the sofa with a purple cushion, beside a couple from Manchester who are visiting Iceland for a birthday celebration, and a handful of Icelandic diners. Only seven of us would be enjoying lunch that day, and it began around that coffee table in Amma Don's sitting room.

A floral teacup is the vessel for the first taste: a delightfully rich and deeply flavoured kjöt súpa, or meat soup. There are no tough hunks of stewed lamb here, just a beautifully

It's at this point in the lunch service that the time arrives to actually go to Óx.

Manuel guides the small group of diners toward a bookshelf at the back of Amma Don and pauses. Knowing returning guests have their phones ready and recording. Then, tilting one of the books just so, the entire bookshelf swings open to reveal the expansive wrap-around dining table with Chef Þráinn's inherited kitchen at the centre. That repeat guest says that reveal never gets old and I believe it wholeheartedly.

What came next was, as I typed into Notes on my phone, "a revelation." The couple from Manchester, who earlier shared that they'd gone on their first date to a Michelin restaurant and have since enjoyed dozens

# TÓST FOR BREAKFAST

VINSTÚKAN  
 ÞU SOPAR  
 by night

## HAPPY HOUR 17:00 – 19:00

Buy a bottle of wine and get two courses for free!



# Multi-award winning Tattoo & Piercing Shop



**BLACK KROSS**

Hamraborg 14a  
200 Kópavogur  
Iceland  
+354 680 6662  
blackkross@blackkross.is




Get the **taxi** app





# MEKÓ




Design Market

## Bringing It All Together

A new market brings Icelandic brands to the people

WORDS Catharine Fulton  
IMAGE Art Bicnick

Perhaps the most publicly recognisable project of the duo is Lady Brewery, the craft brewer that Pórey launched in 2017 with a friend. Then there's Soda Lab, which sees Pórey and Baldur teamed up with the couple behind Ramen Momo to craft sparkling teas and artisanal sodas. Then there's And Antimatter, the couple's design studio producing impossibly cool housewares, from sculptural lamps to modular sculptures.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Once upon a time, there was the Popup Verzlun series of markets that Pórey started in 2009 with her fellow designers and friends to create a space to showcase and sell their wares. And now the couple are launching Saman, an art, design, food and beverage market being held at Harpa on December 9.

"Popup Verzlun was just designers and artists," explains Pórey of the

designers and artists began incorporating popup kitchens with guest chefs before they put the brand to rest with the arrival of COVID.

"Now when I think about it, it was kind of a market of that era. It was two things, art and design, but because now we're doing Soda Lab," she continues. "And Lady Brewery, obviously," Baldur interjects before Pórey finishes her thought, "and we're starting to do And Antimatter again, so now we're having all our interests combined and together."

Baldur continues: "Now that it's all together, we decided to call the market that, also. Saman."

A FOCUS ON VARIETY

For one day, Saman will bring together 40 vendors to sell their wares directly to their clients. Pórey explains that curating the list of participating vendors has been an involved process, with the couple reviewing applications and product

**For small producers, opportunities like that aren't many, really – we felt that in our businesses.**

long-time project that inspired the idea for the new undertaking.

"We started to expand it a little bit after we started getting more interested in food and drinks," Baldur continues before throwing it back to his wife, who explains that the now defunct annual popup market of

offerings to achieve some balance among the variety of products being offered.

"With Popup Verzlun, I realised that having 40 designers in one space is a lot of competition," Pórey says with a chuckle. "So we have maybe 10,000 people coming through all

**H**ow many projects do you have going at any one time. With business and life partners Pórey Björk Halldórsdóttir and Baldur Björnsson, it's hard to keep track.





day – depending on the year and the weather – to see 40 designers. They are all doing different stuff, but there might be four with ceramics, five with fashion or textile products and so on. So you have a lot of competition in one place.

“So that’s another thing that I was thinking when we started talking about Saman,” Þórey continues.

doesn’t work, how do they need to improve?”

Baldur continues: “For small producers, opportunities like that aren’t many, really. We felt that in our businesses. Let’s say you’re producing something, going into a supermarket is a major thing. It’s at least six months of prep, just to get in there. Even your production capacity prob-

shops or hotel chains is potentially massive. This dynamic duo has put in the serious time and effort to establish themselves and their brands and they’re now putting in the work to bring other established and up and coming brands along for the ride with them.

“I just thought we needed something new in the landscape,” Þórey says. “I feel like there are so many (events) that had been happening for a really long time, and then COVID came in and kind of just undid everything. I think that every time Mother Earth shakes you should do something new. As creatives, that’s what we do – I love to create something new and exciting and fresh. That’s probably why I have so many businesses! So it’s, I think, yeah, like, I think it’s just like, now is the time for something new, a breath of fresh air.”

“We also thought how amazing it would be to go somewhere and you can get something from every category and you never know what you’ll find,” Baldur concludes. “So you can be buying drinks here and suddenly you’re seeing a book there and a pair of shoes over there. Technically you could even finish 80% of your Christmas shopping in one day – which would be a blessing for everybody.” ■

Check out the inaugural Saman market at Harpa on December 9 from 12:00 - 18:00. Follow Saman on Instagram at @saman.maturgmenning for more information on vendors and future happenings.

**As creatives, that’s what we do – I love to create something new and exciting and fresh. That’s probably why I have so many businesses!**

“Like, why don’t we combine (our interests) and then you get 10,000 people or whatever coming to the market, but there are only 10 designers and there might be just one with ceramics, one with blankets, one with scarves or other textile products. So we’re also trying to balance it – a more curated market.”

While Saman will present a curated experience for shoppers, it also provides vendors with a unique opportunity to meet with their customers face-to-face. “We want to create something for people in small businesses, family businesses,” Þórey explains, “giving them a platform not only to sell – because we all want to sell, of course, and you should buy Icelandic product from local community – but to give them a platform for introducing themselves, figuring out the interaction with their client, figuring out what works, what

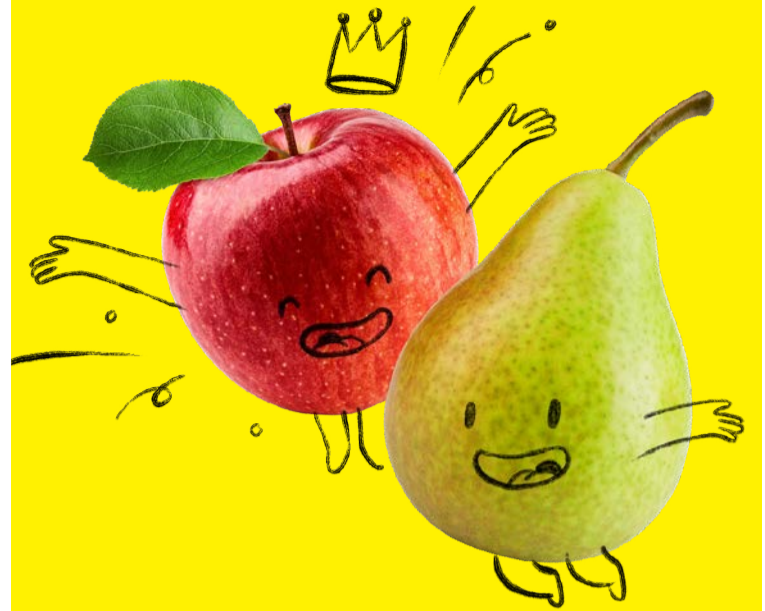
ably doesn’t even match what they would need. So anything that helps with recognition of your brand and to sell your product is good.”

#### PASSION PROJECT

It’s infectious listening to Þórey and Baldur discuss their plans for the inaugural Saman market and the many places they’re already thinking about taking it in the future, which will remain under lock and key for the time being. In striving to better the position of their brands, they’re eager to bring other Icelandic brands along for the ride so everyone benefits.

The creation of more opportunities for Iceland’s grassroots designers, artists, and food and beverage producers to present their creations, meet their customers and maybe catch the eye of buyers for local

# KRONAN



## 26 stores across Reykjavík and Iceland

With fresh products and low prices!

**Krónan offers a great selection of top-quality, fresh products, including a wide selection of vegetarian and vegan options.**

Stop by our stores for low priced groceries! You’ll find them in various locations in Reykjavík and the capital area, and also on your journey around Iceland.

REYKJAVÍK  GRAPEVINE

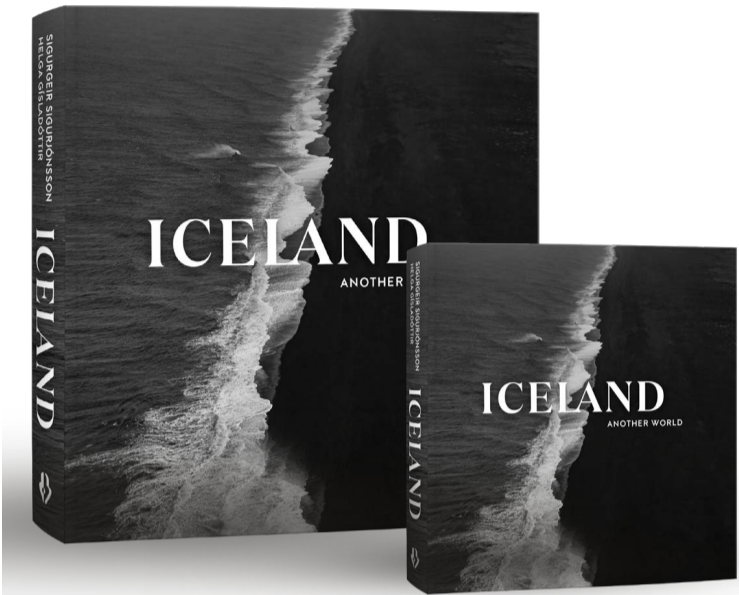
BEST OF REYKJAVÍK



BEST GROCERY STORE

View locations and opening hours at [kronan.is](https://kronan.is)





**ICELAND'S LARGEST BOOKSTORE**  
Forlagið bookstore | Fiskislóð 39 | [www.forlagid.is](http://www.forlagid.is)

**THE PUFFIN BLANKET**  
100% WOOL  
EVERY ITEM TELLS A STORY

ISLENSK.IS  
[www.islensk.is](http://www.islensk.is)



# Art Deck The Halls With Bra

Fa La La La La, Gallery Port

WORDS Catharine Fulton  
IMAGE Art Bicnick

ket. It runs this year from December 2, when a DJ will add some party vibes to the Laugavegur storefront, through to January 6, though hours will be sporadic between Þorláksmessa on Dec. 23 and the 12th of Christmas.

IT'S ALL ABOUT FRIENDS, OLD AND NEW

"It's a harvest party," says gallery co-owner Skarphéðinn Bergþóruson while sitting toward the back of the quirky space at Laugavegur 32. "So many people that have had shows with us come back with their pieces and you get to see what's been going on in that year."

friends who have worked here for exhibitions."

What will set this year apart is the lack of other locations hosting similar events. While Port was among the first to introduce an art market eight years ago, recent years have seen other downtown galleries trying to get in on the fun, with many of the same artists showing in multiple galleries. "It was not that fun," Árni recalls of the past couple of years, "because the scene is so small. So we basically had four different spaces with the same artists and even the same work most of the time. I think it will be more fun for us to do this this year."

**T**here are a few harbingers that Christmas has rolled into town once again. There's the massive light-up Jólaköturinn prowling in Lækjartorg, the Oslo tree taking up its position in Austurvöllur and the walls of Gallery Port being decked out with the works of 60+ artists, beckoning the more cultured holiday shopper to pop in and pick out a piece for their loved one – or themselves.

For the eighth year running, Gallery Port is hosting its Christmas Mar-

**It's a really fun time for us because it's all of our friends displaying work.**

"It's a really fun time for us because it's all of our friends displaying work," adds co-owner Árni Már Erlingsson. "They come downtown during Christmas and come by – we have a lot of artists, most of our

Árni is also looking forward to the more relaxed programming of the Christmas market. Unlike the rest of the year when Port is strictly curated, the Christmas market gives them more freedom to work with

**SJÁVARGRILLIÐ**  
SEAFOOD GRILL

UNLEASH YOUR TASTE BUDS WITH THE FINEST ICELANDIC GRILL EXPERIENCE





## and New Artwork

younger artists or people who they weren't able to work with during the year. "They can come here and participate in this group exhibition and maybe from that we will do some more work together in the future," he says.

### EVENTS WITHIN AN EVENT

While Árni and Skarphéðinn were admittedly too busy to plan an opening party for this year's market, there are unique happenings within the span of the month that will be an added incentive to pay Port a visit. One such event is acclaimed pianist Magnús Jóhann playing for the crowd one afternoon closer to Christmas – "that's less of a special event and more for the atmo," Árni insists.

On December 9, Port will host the launch party of the Proskahjálp Almanac. Proskahjálp is an organisation working with persons with intellectual disabilities, autism and related impairments. Every year, they fundraise through the sale of a calendar featuring the art works of their members and this year Port will be launching the calendar

and selling some of the original art pieces featured in the calendar. Rather than mixing in the art from Proskahjálp throughout the duration of the Christmas market, holding a separate event within the event aims to ensure the organisation gets the most out of it.

"We otherwise don't have space for events during the market," says Árni. "There's always plenty of people coming in and they are here for one purpose, and that's looking at and buying art."

So intent are the masses on doing just that, that last Þorláksmessa (Dec. 23) – when Icelanders take to Laugavegur en masse to buy last-minute gifts, greet their neighbours and soak up the holiday spirit – the paint chipped off the floors at Port from the constant traffic of sleet and sand covered boots.

### THINKING OF BUYING?

While there's been a lot of talk in recent years about your people investing in art, Árni warns against starting a collection with investing

front of mind.

"We need to treat it more for what it is, and that's part of our culture, part of the timeline," Árni says. "Of course some (art pieces are) good investments, but that will never be interesting for you to hold on to pieces only to be good investments.

**We will bring the energy with us to the new location, though. With the old Port, it was tiny, it was hidden, but we created energy and we took that energy here. People will come with us.**

"When I started collecting, I wanted to have my friends on my walls, so most of the works I have are from them. Of course, I have one or two pieces from some people I look up to, but most of them are friends that I want to have around when I get old-

er. I want to see some kind of history of what we have done with all these people. I also tell people they'd have to have an investment piece for at least 20 years – are you always going to have some boring work just because you can get some money or do you want to have something that you relate to and enjoy having in your home?"

### THE END OF AN ERA

This year's Christmas market will be the last that Port will host on Laugavegur. As soon as the market closes in January, Skarphéðinn and

Árni will be packing up shop and moving to new digs on Kirkjusandur, beside the Iceland University of the Arts.

Just as I begin to enquire about whether they're concerned about losing the foot-traffic of the city's main drag, a friend walks in, silently strolls to the back of the gallery where we're sitting, to pat Skarphéðinn on the head and then walk back out the way he came.

"We'll get less of these people just coming in and stroking us," Skarphéðinn jokes. "We will bring the energy with us to the new location, though. With the old Port, it was tiny, it was hidden, but we created energy and we took that energy here. People will come with us."

"We raised a lot of following and a trusted group of clientele and artists that we work with," Árni says. "And I think we'll just take that with us." ■

Visit Gallery Port's Christmas Market starting Saturday, December 2 at 15:00. New works will be cycled into the mix throughout the month, so go back often to find the piece you love.

**EXPLORE UNSEEN ICELAND**  
ON THE ULTIMATE FLYING RIDE

**FlyOver ICELAND**

OPEN EVERY DAY | [flyovericeland.com](http://flyovericeland.com)

Get Grapevine Merch!

[shop.grapevine.is](http://shop.grapevine.is)  
[shop.grapevine.is](http://shop.grapevine.is)  
[shop.grapevine.is](http://shop.grapevine.is)  
[shop.grapevine.is](http://shop.grapevine.is)  
[shop.grapevine.is](http://shop.grapevine.is)

Don't Hesitate! Act Now!

\*You only need to type the URL in once





The Haul

## A Holly Jolly Shopping Bag

Here's your Christmas shopping sorted ... especially if you're shopping for me

WORDS Catharine Fulton  
IMAGES The World Wide Web

### 01. RAMMAGERÐIN'S 2023 JÓLAKÖTURINN

Designed by Björn Steinar Blumenstein at Studio Björn Steinar – 30.000 ISK – Available from Rammagerðin, Skólavörðustígur 12

### 02. SATAMA PAINT COAT BY MARKO SVART

80.000 ISK – Available from Svart-bySvart & Friends, Klapparstígur 29 (pop-up shop open until end of year)

### 03. ICELANDIC WOOL SOCKS BY VARMA

€ 25 – Available from Shop.Grapevine.is

### 04. ANDVARI SCARF

14.900 ISK – Available from Andrés, Laugavegur 16

### 05. 2024 MOON CALENDAR, DESIGNED BY EINAR GUÐ- MUNDSSON

10.990 ISK – Available from Mikado, Kolagata Hafnartorg

### 06. COLORFUL STANDARD MERINO WOOL TOQUE

5.600 ISK – Available from ORG, Laugavegur 46

### 07. BELMIO COFFEE AD- VENT CALENDAR

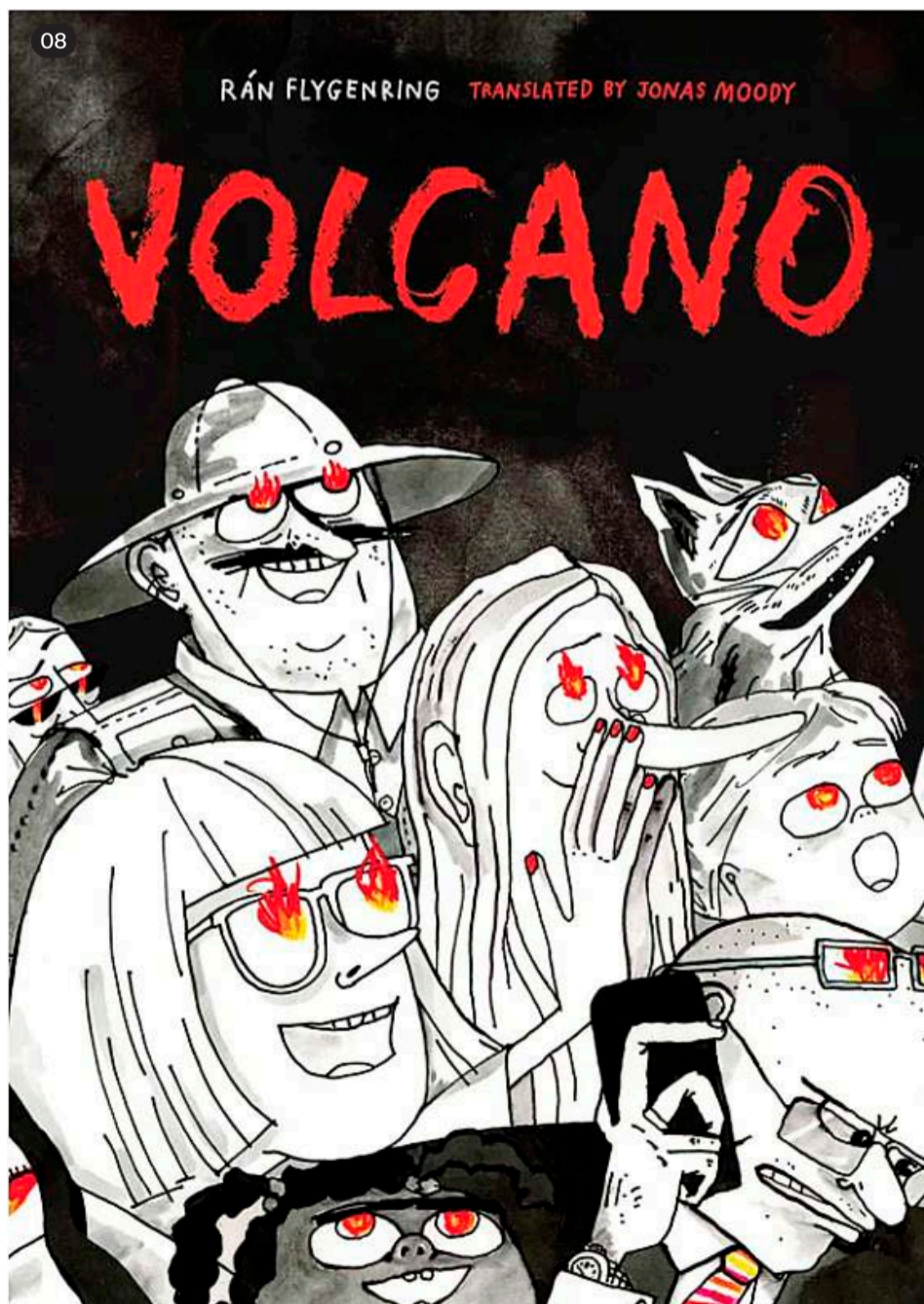
1.890 ISK – Available from Krónan.is

### 08. VOLCANO BY RÁN FLY- GENRING, TRANSLATED BY JONAS MOODY

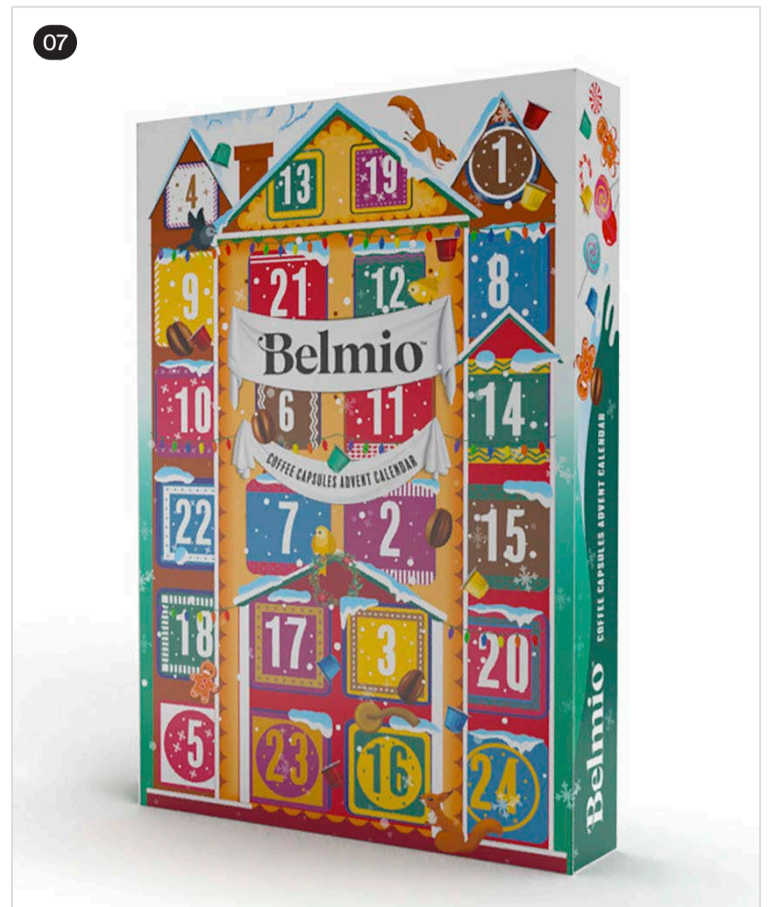
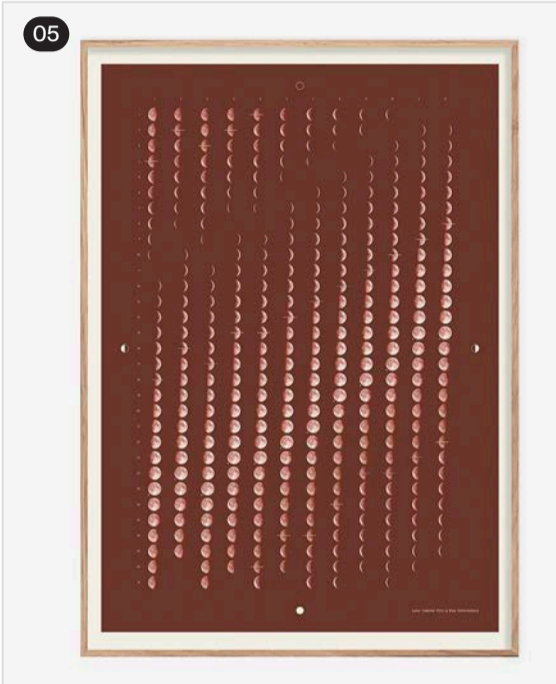
4.296 ISK – Available from Bóksala Studenta, Sæmundargata 4 ■

**C**an you believe the holidays are just around the corner? I'm usually pretty good at getting my shopping done and dusted well in advance, but this year I'm admittedly way behind. I've leaned into giving experience gifts to my family in recent years, but there's always something to be said for unwrapping something beautiful on Christmas morning – or Christmas Eve, if you really insist, though it's not something I'll ever get behind.

I've scoured the shelves of my favourite places to shop – many of which are certified Best™ in our Best of Reykjavík sister magazine – and put together this shopping bag that's a little for us, a little for loved ones and a lot for your own shopping inspo. Spend wisely, friends.







••• FISCHERSUND PERFUMERY •••

# JÓL

*Clementines piled  
in small wooden cases.*

*Densely decorated fir tree  
stretches to the ceiling.*

*Burnt sugar candy  
melts in your mouth.*

*Christmas greetings being read  
out on the radio while snow  
piles up on the sidewalks.*

**COME AND SMELL  
OUR KIND OF CHRISTMAS**





**2 FOR 1**  
 Barsnack offer  
 Sundays–Wednesdays



**HAPPY HOUR**  
 Every day  
 From 4–6 pm



**JÖRGENSEN**  
 KITCHEN & BAR  
 Laugavegur 120, Reykjavík  
 jorgensenkitchen.com



**Yule Lads, Your Days Are Numbered**

**Their mischief has gone too far**

WORDS Charlie Winters  
 IMAGE Art Bicnick

been good each leaves a gift in a shoe by your window. I never got any gifts, I just got potatoes. I'm going to have to stop these monsters, and a proper cryptid hunt begins with proper research. Disguised as someone not on Borgarbókasafn's list of personae non gratae, I was off to the library!

Among the ancient dusty tomes of the children's section, I came across a strange artifact. A book called *Christmas is Coming* by one Jóhannes úr Kötlum. In 1932, Old Jóhannes penned this secret guide to understanding the Yule Lads. Creatures of terror spawned from the mighty crotch of the ogress Grýla, a ferocious woman vilified for boiling naughty children into a depraved stew (God forbid a woman has hobbies). Presumably short-

bed, waiting to violate my beautiful askur. Door-Slammer stood in my hall for hours waiting for me to sleep so he could return to his sacred duty. Skyr-Gobbler saved me from lactose intolerance but left me skyrless. When I awoke with my pecker missing, I knew that Sausage-Swiper had visited. Window-Peeper peeped through my window for things to steal, but that cutie only stole my heart <3. What Door-Sniffer did, I dare not share here. My veganism served to thwart Meathook, who went home empty handed. Finally, I watched in disgusted horror as Candle-beggar shoved fistfuls of burning wax into his fat gob.

Emboldened by the fury of the crimes committed on my person and equipped with the knowledge gained from Old Jóhannes, I was

**T**hey come down, just as they do every year, from the mountain in their Christmas Conga Line. You've seen them on milk cartons, on cheap memorabilia sold in the tourist shops, or even projected as bad CGI holograms across the city. They're praised and beloved, but they've always been a menace. Someone has to put a stop to this. I'm going to kill the Yule Lads.

I am sure that all of you will have noticed the return of this blight to our streets. Every year, in the 13 days leading up to Christmas the Yule Lads torment this small island nation. A local folklore tale that some doubt, but I believe to be true. Each Yule Lad comes on one day of their choosing and these bedraggled men with extremely specific pastimes crawl out of their little holes and harass the townsfolk. Each has a modus operandi, and if you've

**When I awoke with my pecker missing, I knew that Sausage-Swiper had visited.**

ly after conception, these mitotic clones of Saint Nick developed their extremely specific affinities, each detailed within Jóhannes' text.

Just as he recorded, they have plagued me as follows:

Stiff-Legs came first, drop kicking my sheep with his pointed little peg legs. Gully-gawk snuck into my barn (which, like all Icelanders, I totally have) and stole my milk. Stubby yonked my precious pan crusts leaving me not just crustless, but sad. Spoon-Licker's saliva still coats my cutlery no matter how much I wash it. Pot-Scraper stole my left-overs and my weed. I don't know how long Bowl-Licker has been under my

ready to kill the Yule Lads. I dressed in my most tattered clothes to blend in with the Yule crowd. I sought my trusty steel axe, which I keep in the barn that I totally have. My friend Bjarki and I hitched a ride in a pickup truck into hálendið. The highlands were cold, rough and merciless. We set up camp and we waited for the Lads. For their stupid little red coats and big beards to come walking out to attack the nearby village.

What was that?  
 Bjarki? Where did you go?  
 Shit! I forgot about the fucking cat!  
 \*Meow\* ■





Well, You Asked

# This One's For You

The Grapevine's finest answers your most pressing questions

WORDS Catherine Magnúsdóttir  
IMAGE Art Bicnick

king attire, Ready To Take A Chance Again. I mean, have you seen those blazers?? But now I'll have to Make It Through The Rain in sloppy thrift attire to get roasted by the other kings and queens, attempting to get through my rendition of Copacabana with Mandy and Sandra heckling me while I'm Tryin' To Get The Feeling Again. Some Kind Of Friend you are!

and power to the Reykjanes peninsula, hence a bunch of protective measures in the works to protect the plans as well as some emergency backups like drilling for another water source. Last I heard defensive walls were in the works – probably not the ones my therapist talked to me about – to divert potential lava. There was also talk of needing a “protective dyke,” but I haven't been contacted yet.

DOES BARRY MANILOW KNOW YOU RAID HIS WARDROBE?

Giving you the answer to that question, Mr. Bender, right now actually, which is: he sure does now doesn't he!? Goddamn snitch, I had a good thing going here! I was slowly but surely putting together my new drag

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE SUPPLY OF HEAT AND SO ON IF THE SVARTSENGI POWER PLANT GETS DESTROYED BY LAVA?

So, that would be classified as “not good,” to put it bluntly. It is not the only power plant, so it's not like the entire island would be in the dark or something, but it does provide heat

WILL A GIANT BLACK CAT REALLY EAT YOU IF YOU DON'T GET NEW CLOTHES FOR CHRISTMAS?

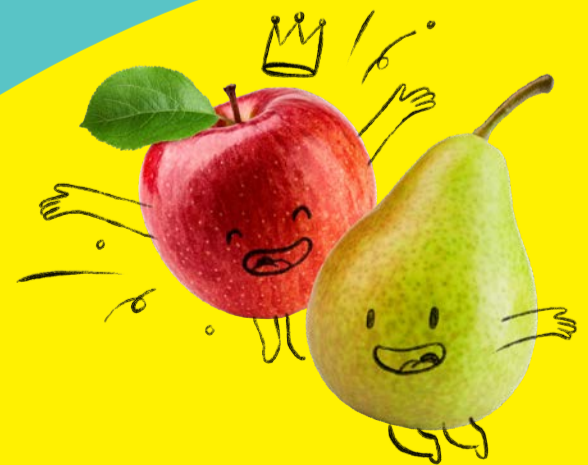
I feel like there is a joke to be made involving a lack of clothes, eating and pussy, but my parents read this paper... ■



Last Look IMAGE Art Bicnick

## 26 stores across Reykjavík and Iceland

With fresh products and low prices!



# KRONAN

View locations and opening hours at [kronan.is](http://kronan.is)





## Potent Quotables

Find what you love and save up to buy what you love.

A gallerist explains what to look out for and what to avoid when starting your art collection on page 8.

You don't need to have an idea when you walk in.

Anything but weapons. Þóra Óskarsdóttir talks about how the town's maker-space Fab Lab works on page 10.

Being an artist is like being a kid, you just never stop playing. You never close off those senses that see all the weird things around us.

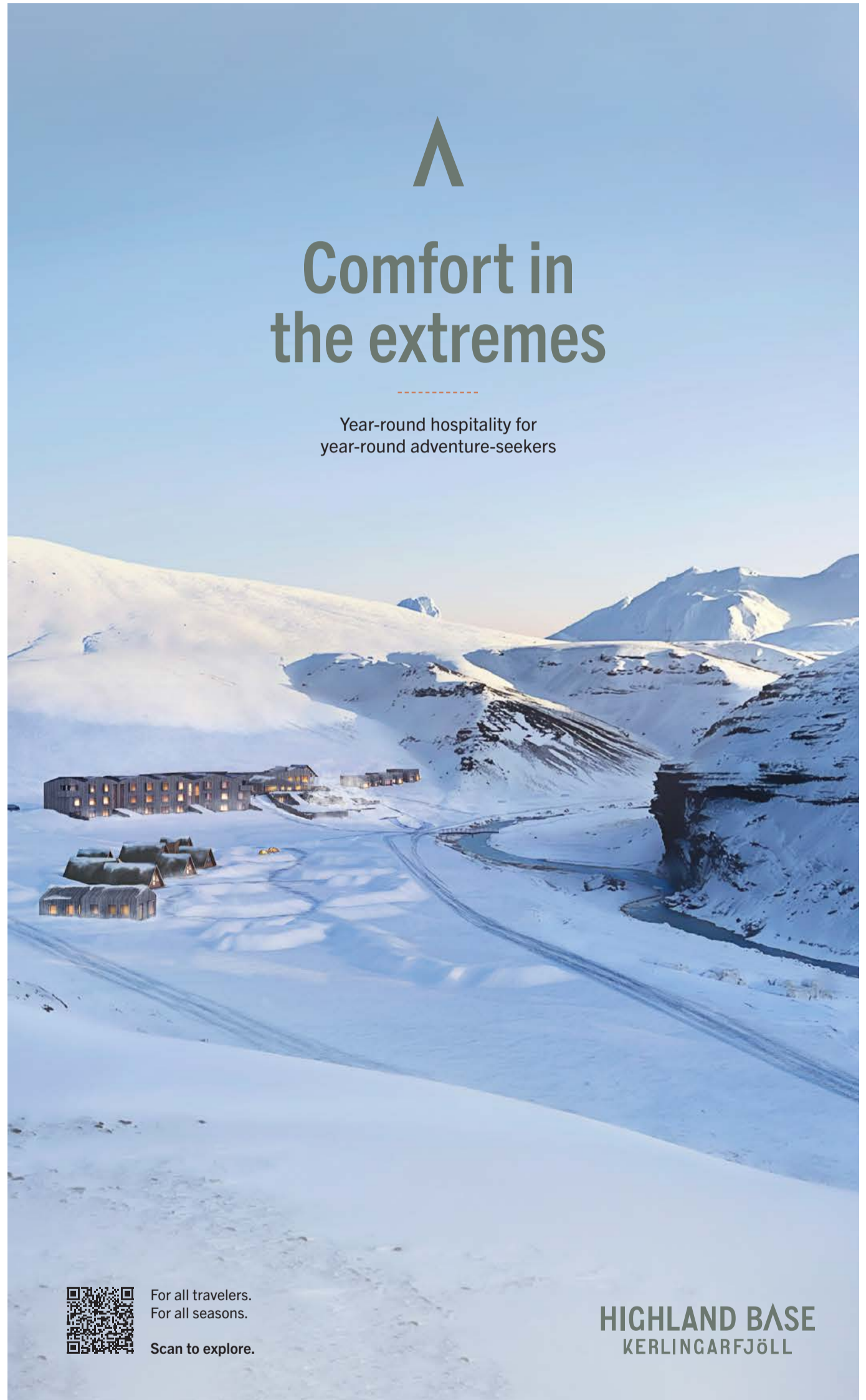
Award-winning artist Rán Flygenring juggles multiple projects but continues to fuel the kid inside. Read all about it on pages 12-14.

Pressing the doorbell sets into motion a three-hour experience that won't soon be forgotten.

Catharine Fulton sets out on an 18-course dining experience at Michelin restaurant Óx on page 30.

Someone has to put a stop to this. I'm going to kill the Yule Lads.

The Yule Lads' mischief has gone too far. Charlie Winters is after them on page 38.



## Comfort in the extremes

Year-round hospitality for year-round adventure-seekers



For all travelers.  
For all seasons.

Scan to explore.

HIGHLAND BASE  
KERLINGARFJÖLL

## JÓLAGJAFAHANDBÓK ELKO ER KOMIN ÚT

Þú getur nálgast blaðið á [elko.is](http://elko.is), í næstu verslun ELKO, Krónunnar og á þjónustustöðvum NI

