



# The Designmarch Issue

## Grapevine Design Awards Winners

Winners of Grapevine Design Awards from left top and clockwise:  
Ragnar Axelsson, Snæbjörn Þór Stefánsson, Klaus Aalto, Eygló Margrét Lárusdóttir, Róshildur Jónsdóttir, Elina Aalto, Einar Geir Ingvarsson, Ari Jónsson

### The Jury:

**Sindri Páll Sigurðsson,**  
Product designer, panel director  
on behalf of Grapevine

**Eín Hrund Þorgeirsdóttir,**  
Project manager, panel director on  
behalf of Iceland Design Centre

**Rúna Thors,** Product designer, on behalf  
of the Iceland Academy of the Arts

**Auður Karítas Ásgeirsdóttir,**  
Art director & producer at MAGG

**Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir,** Spark Design Space

# Extreme Design

“Brute Nature” is the theme at DesignTalks 2017

Words **Bronwyn Marshall**  
Photo **Art Bicnick**

The theme of DesignTalks 2017 “Brute Nature” and our “it’s complicated” relationship with this planet, is perfectly timed for the crazy current moment. A key component of the DesignMarch festival, DesignTalks is a bespoke and intriguing series bringing together an assortment of field leaders who’ll speak from their international experience, about their shared quest of exploring extremes in contemporary design.

Setting the stage and curating the speakers of DesignTalks is Hlín Helga Guðlaugsdóttir. Her background in creative work, design management and teaching were the seeds from which her vision for the series sprang. Her own curiosity, and a desire for a questioning, exploratory dialogue, are evident and inspiring. She’s also perfectly placed to discuss how the small island nation of Iceland is able to engage and lead in such a plethora of creative arenas.

“The theme came very early on,” says Hlín Helga, “from turning on the antennas, and trying to get our heads around what is important now. We’ve seen more social projects that want to deal with complex societal challenges. We are seeing more extremes like beauty and ugliness, and people celebrating really deep human emotions, like love and fear.”

## Hands

The resulting list of speakers each bring their own unique hand to the game. Alexander Taylor is an industrial designer and creative innovator who works in commercial arenas while exploring environmental issues of waste and consumption. Christien Meindertsma explores ideas of industrialisation, and collaborations with architects on the current state of our world. Elisa Pasqual and Marco Ferrari’s work explores ideas of global warming through visual representation and research elements.

## Nature: Reconnecting...

Virtual Reality and CG world is very present also, with Ersin Han Ersin speaking about work that is centered on human exploration. Michèle Degan will talk about her take on exploration and manipulated perfection through her ‘Vulva Versa’ device. And Paul Bennett will speak on his work on a “big picture” societal approach to challenges and strategies.

“There’s this strange, inspiring thing that happens when you go through 3D virtual realities: the urge to reconnect with nature,” says Hlín Helga. “That’s very telling. But at the same time, it’s interesting as a perspective. It’s not just enough to have the technology—you have to ask, ‘How are we going to use it?’ There’s an increase in these kinds of projects. There is a want to make a mark and make a difference, and not just for the sake of it. I think that there is hope.”

Highlighting contrasts and never shying from the uncomfortable, the

common thread of the DesignTalks is one of exposing a certain truth: truth in nature, amongst ourselves and in our work on this weird and wonderful planet. “Natural evolution is full of surprises,” says Hlín Helga, “and the same goes for this project. I’m sure the speakers will reveal something we didn’t expect. The design scene in Iceland is still in its infancy, but things have been moving very fast. What’s interesting is that most Icelanders leave at some point, and then come back, and bring the best back with them. We secretly hope that the DesignTalks and DesignMarch will highlight the potentiality of designers.”

As Hlín Helga says: “The international audience is building, and international interest is brewing. This is very positive for us. The main focus is to support and promote Icelandic design locally and internationally. This has happened very organically, and through collaborations.”

The selected speakers are testament to this. The dishes they are bringing to this metaphorical dinner party are palette-tantalising. Grab a seat.



# What To Do

Our picks from the DesignMarch programme

Words **Bronwyn Marshall**

The design world is getting set for DesignMarch 2017. With the festival bearing down fast, we want to prepare you for the coming canapé hangover with some previews of what’s going down.

The festival’s programme includes DesignTalks, which have been curated to inspire your innermost curiosities and make you question what’s beautiful, crazy, ugly, and important. And there’s a lot to see in quite a short time. Once it arrives, it’s all gonna happen very fast. Here are some things you shouldn’t miss.

## Swimslow

**Exhibitor:** Erna Bergmann  
**Location:** Héðinshús, Seljavegur 2  
Led by stylist and fashion designer Erna

Bergmann, this show centres around sustainable statement swimwear (not words usually seen together). The line is made from recycled materials collected and manufactured in Italy. The locality of this collection and the process behind it aims to highlight the importance of lessening fashion’s carbon footprint, our responsibility regarding sustainable fashion, and the resulting societal ripples.

## Case Studies | Product Design into the 21st Century

**Curator:** Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir  
**Location:** Kjarvalsstaðir  
With a primary focus on Iceland, this show considers the role of product design in production, expression and user

experience. There’s an emphasis on the process of making ideas real, and on materiality and environmental impact. With such a legacy and artisanal history, the collection is an opportunity to experience, understand and appreciate the value of using locally sourced materials, and the effects of this on mass production. There’s also an emphasis on the benefits of ingenuity and innovation.

## People From The Porcelain Factory

**Curators:** Ewa Klekot & Arkadiusz Szwed  
**Location:** Hannesarholt  
This exhibition looks at everyday elements: the ordinary, and the essential. It focusses on tableware and its role in our lives; the fragility of the material is a curious choice, and a point of discus-

sion. Elements of necessity, vulnerability and essentiality are investigated in a visual and tangible way.

## Roundabout: Baltics Plus Iceland

**Exhibitor:** Erna Bergmann  
**Location:** Nordic House  
This exhibition is a visual exploration of the junctions of nature and design, intended and accidental. The story showcases contemporary design from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, and (of course) Iceland. The common thread is the connection of these countries through the Baltic Sea, and the show further explores the varying interpretations of design through lifestyle and ideology.

## Urqbar

The typeface used for headlines in this issue is a new Icelandic typeface. Called **Urqbar**, it is designed by **Gunnar Vilhjálmsson** of **Universal Thirst** foundry.



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FARMERS & FRIENDS  
Laugavegur 37 (Opening April 2017)



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### Peekaboo: Polish & Icelandic Illustrated Children's Books 23 illustrators

The exhibition will tell the story of Polish and Icelandic illustrated children's books by presenting the best works of illustrators from both countries. 16 Polish and 6 Icelandic authors will be featured. The event will be divided into two parts: an exhibition of illustrations and books, and a programme of workshops for children and illustrators. Exhibition is open until 3. April. Curator is Ewa Solarz.

Safnahúsið - Hverfisgata 15

Opening 21.03 17:00



### Uxatindar Milla Snorrason

Milla Snorrason unveils a new line, Uxatindar, in the form of an installation. The main pattern is inspired by Icelandic nature and then fused with striped Scottish wool, silhouettes from the 60's and luxurious colors on silk velvet.

Safnahúsið - Hverfisgata 15

Opening 21.03 17:00 Performance 25.03 15:00



### People From The Porcelain Factory Ewa Klekot / Arkadiusz Szwed

The factory in Ćmielów, Poland, established in 1790, has been active in fine porcelain production since 1838. The exhibition "People from the porcelain factory" features tableware where the traces of the workers touch have become visible. The project combines anthropological research with critical design. The exhibition is open until 2. April.

Hannesarholt - Grundarstígur 1

Opening 23.03 18:00 - 21:00

### Resonance Hulda Guðjónsdóttir / Kyle Branchesi

Resonance is a two dimensional spatial installation of drawings that gives an unrealistic view of an iconic building. The installation plays on the viewer's sense of perception and suggests a different reality.

Hannesarholt - Grundarstígur 10

Opening 23.03 18:00 - 21:00



### CECI N'EST PAS UN MEUBLE Islanders (12 artists)

For the celebration of Islanders' first anniversary, selected artists were handed the same type of furniture and the artistic freedom to expand on the design towards making another work of art. The project is a part of a necessary conversation between design and art. An online auction of the pieces will be held during Design-March.

Ásmundarsalur - Freyjugata 41

Opening 23.03 19:00 - 21:00

### GLÍMA Guðmundur Lúðvík Grétarsson

The artisan Guðmundur Ludvik has throughout his career explored the functionality of shapes in his art and design. Glíma gives us an unprecedented access to the creative process of Lu-vík's work as he wrestles with ideas until they become a finalised product. Guðmundur Ludvik is commissioned by some of the biggest furniture makers in Europe.

Mengi - Óðinsgata 2

Opening 23.03 18:00 - 21:00



### ASTERIAS - AURUM BY GUÐBJÖRG Guðbjörg Kr. Ingvarsdóttir

Asterias is the latest jewellery collection by Guðbjörg Kr. Ingvarsdóttir. Waves quietly breaking on a forgotten shore in the Westfjords. Drops rising above the horizon. The story of Asterias. Black terrain. Rhythmical waves. Everlasting cycle of the water that has no beginning and no end.

AURUM - Bankastræti 4

Opening 21.03 18:00 - 20:00



### A Reading At Hverfisgata 39 Erling Jóhannesson / Helga Ósk Einarsdóttir

Erling Jóhannesson and Helga Ósk invite you to their studio to see how their work has progressed since their current project began at DesignMarch in 2015.

Gullsmiður Erling og Helga Ósk Hverfisgata 39

Opening 21.03 19:00 - 21:00



### 1+1+1 Unpredictable Design & Hugdetta 1+1+1 / Hugdetta / Aalto+aalto / Petra Lilja

1+1+1 is a collaboration between three Nordic designers; Hugdetta (Iceland), Petra Lilja (Sweden) and Aalto+Aalto (Finland). The project examines the object as each studio designs a piece consisting of three distinct parts that can be taken apart and reassembled with other parts. The project began at the 2015 DesignMarch in Reykjavik.

Hugdetta - Barónsstígur 27

Opening 22.03 19:00 - 21:00

Talks and refreshments 25.03 17:00



### 101 Nights by Sturla Atlas Siggí Odds / Sturla Atlas

Sturla Atlas and Sigurður Oddsson showcase a line of cosmetics and other products as part of the band's latest album release, 101 Nights. The showcase is part of the

band's ongoing project with Sigurður Oddsson and photographer Kjartan Hreinsson where the aim is to rethink the concept of merchandise and brand extension in music publishing.

Húrra Reykjavík Women - Hverfisgata 78

Opening 24.03 17:00 - 17:00



### As We Grow Spring/Summer 2017 As We Grow

From an idea sparked by one woolen sweater, the children's clothing brand As We Grow has built a design business with an ambitious, sustainable approach. In just four years the company reached the highest step of the podium at the Icelandic Design Award 2016.

Geysir - Skólavörðustígur 16

Open from 10:00 - 21:00 / 23.03 - 26.03



### Hildur Yeoman + 66°north Hildur Yeoman / 66°north

Outdoor clothing company 66°N and designer Hildur Yeoman unveil a clothing line inspired by the encompassing Atlantic ocean. 66°N has been making protective clothing for Icelandic fishermen since 1926 and Yeoman has often used the sea for inspiration.

66°North - Laugavegur 17-19

Opening 24.03 17:00 - 19:00

### Type+Drafts+Ideas Elsa Jónsdóttir / Björn Loki Björnsson

Studio Kleina invites you to see flavourful characters, functionally formed, free-range fonts and typically tongue twisting typefaces. The artwork along with some fine refreshments will flow throughout the exhibition during the opening evening on Friday, the 24th of March at 9 o'clock.

Gallery Port - Laugavegur 23

Opening 24.03 21:00



### No. 11 List án landamæra

Creative involvement of disabled people in the design world is the topic for a symposium held by Art without Borders. How can we enrich our creative environment through cooperation and what would that entail? After the symposium, an auction of works by disabled and non-disabled artists made at last year's DesignMarch, will take place.

Hlemmur Square - Laugavegur 105

Talks 24.03 15:30

### East Iceland: Make It Happen Again

Karna Sigurðardóttir / SAM félagið

A reunion of attendees at the 2012 Make It Happen conference and an opportunity for others to join the network of MAKE. Creativity, food and music. Oh, and Pecha Kucha lectures. Participants: Garðar Eyjólfsson, ALVARA, Guðmundur Úlfarsson, Roshambó, Designs from Nowhere, Suzanne Arhex, Austurbrú og Hönnun Áfangastaðarins Austurlands, LungA school Stöðvarfjörður, Ólafur Ágústsson, Austurvígstöðvarnar, Prins Póló, Dj Ívar Pétur and more. Curator is Sigurín Halla Unnarsdóttir.

Kex Hostel - Skúlagata 28

24.03 12:00 - 19:00

Events and presentations all day 19:00 Dinner and music 20:30 Concert: Prins Póló



### Case Studies - Product Design into the 21st Century Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir

A collection of excellent projects that shows the range of product design today. The exhibition offers an insight into the main trends in Icelandic product design and the possibilities it opens up when we unleash the forces of creative thinking. Participants: Brynhildur Pálsdóttir, Ólöf Erla Bjarnadóttir, Snæbjörn Guðmundsson, Brynjar Sigurðarson, Sigga Heimis, Tinna Gunnarsdóttir, Unnur Valdís Kristjánsdóttir og Ússur. Curator: Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir.

Listasafn Reykjavíkur Kjarvalsstaðir - Flókagata 24

Open 10:00 - 17:00 / 23.03 - 26.03

Talks

24.03 12:30 - Float 25.03 15:00 - Porcelain Search 26.03 15:00 - Curator



### Design Walk Pink Iceland

Although informal, this informative walking tour of downtown Reykjavik, focuses on design, architecture and the history of the city while making necessary pit-stops at DesignMarch-related spaces. The tour departs at noon from the Pink Iceland Office at Hverfisgata 29 on the 22nd and 24th of March and takes around 2-3 hours. Private tours available on request.

Pink Iceland - Hverfisgata 39

Guided tours 22.03 12:00 24.03 12:00



### Pillars TextilFélagið

The title Pillars refers to the ground-work that today's diversity in textile is built upon. 20 members of the Textile Society exhibit works that are steeped in heritage, but are also innovative and exciting.

Lækningaminjasafn Íslands - Neströð

Opening 22.03 18:00 - 20:00 Designer present 25.03 14:00 26.03 14:00

### Pull Your Socks Up! Tanja Levi / Loji Höskuldsson

A new national football kit by athletes, turned artists, Loji and Tanja. The duo's aim is to bridge the gorge between sport and the arts.

Vesturbæjarlaug - Hofsvallagata

Opening 24.03 17:00 - 20:00

Party at Kaffihús Vesturbæjar 24.03 20:00 - 23:00



### Roundabout Baltic PLUS

### Iceland Norræna húsið, Norræna húsið, Sturlugata 5

Fifty designers from eight countries with shorelines along the Baltic Sea, plus designers from Iceland, present their work in a broad cultural and visual context. The exhibition does not attempt to give a complete picture of what's happening in design in these countries but is rather a narrative that reflects the curator's perspective.

Opening hours 23.03 11:00 - 22:00 24.03 11:00 - 20:00 25.03 11:00 - 17:00 26.03 13:00 - 17:00 CURATOR present 26.03 15:00 - 16:00



### Universal Design Talks

### Sean Vance / Thor Arne Jörgensen / Ulla Kramer / Jacob Deichmann / Harpa Cilja Ingólfssdóttir

Universal Design has become an integral part of the design of man-made environments. How extensive is the ideology of universal design? New research will be presented on the benefits of Universal Design. Key note speaker is Sean Vance, Architect and Assistant Professor of Architecture at the University of Michigan.

Nordic House - Sturlugata 5

Talks in english 24.03 09:00 - 13:00

### Shift: Change in Emphasis, Direction or Focus Emergents / Handverk og hönnun

This exhibition brings together the work of a diverse group of contemporary Scottish and Icelandic designers working in ceramics, jewellery, textiles and wood. They come together for the first time at DesignMarch to share ideas, techniques and skills, and to begin to collaborate. Curators are Carol Sinclair and Pamela Conacher.

Galleri Grötta - Eiðistorg 11, 2. floor

Opening 22.03 17:00 - 19:00

### Runemarks Sigurður Oddsson

What would some of the most iconic signs in Iceland look like if we had never adopted the Latin alphabet and just kept on using Runes as they were recognized 1000 years ago?

Opening 22.03 16:00 - 17:00



### Chair Museum Of Design And Applied Art (Hönnunarsafn Íslands)

Exhibition of chairs ranging from prototypes, chairs specially designed for specific locations, and mass produced chairs by Icelandic and foreign designers. The oldest chair is from the 1930s and the youngest from 2013. The Design Museum will also exhibit photographs of Icelandic chairs in public spaces from various times, and interviews with several designers.

Hönnunarsafn Íslands - Garðatorg 1

Opening 18.03 15:00

Guided tour and Refreshments 26.03 14:00



### ELEMENT Eyjólfsson studio

Aluminum in Iceland. The raw material and its properties have been elevated in selected objects by designers, as well as in utility-focused objects designed by the industry for the industry. An alternative focus will be on aluminum's relationship with energy and landscape.

Río Tinto Straumsvík 220 Hafnarfjörður

Opening 22.03 17:00

### Icelandic Design In All Its Splendour

### Anna Thorunn / Ihanna home / Margrethe Odgaard / Marý / Hring eftir hring / Sigurjón Pálsson

Seven celebrated designers present their work in Epal which has, since 1975, done its fair share to enhance understanding and respect for design in Iceland. The works include furniture, jewelry, carpets and other domestic design objects.

Epal - Skeifan 6

Opening 22.03 17:00 - 19:00



### Textile Design On Stamps

### Örn Smári / Anita Hirlekar / Bryndís Bolladóttir / Ragna Fróða / Vík Þrjónsdóttir

Iceland Post issues new postage stamps in its series Icelandic Contemporary Design. The eighth series features textile design by Anita Hirlekar, Bryndís Bolladóttir, Ragna Fróða and Vík Þrjónsdóttir. A blow up of the postage stamps (designed by Örn Smári) will be displayed alongside the original design.

Epal - Skeifan 6

Opening 22.03 17:00 - 19:00

### Buildings in Art Group exhibition

Exhibition of works from 1890 to the present day by artists that, in one way or another, have worked with architecture, either through photographs, sculpture or paintings. A journey through the nooks and crannies of architecture from a new perspective.

Arion Banki - Borgartún 19

Opening hours 23.03 09:00 - 17:00 24.03 09:00 - 17:00 25.03 12:00 - 16:00

Let's sketch together 25.03 12:00-16:00

Designers assist. Refreshments. Everyone is invited.



# The Reykjavík Grapevine Design Awards

...For Best Product, Product Line, Project and Fashion Design of 2016

Words **Hannah Jane Cohen**

2016 could easily be called the year of Icelandic design. With so many spectacular new products and projects on display, the competition for this year's Design Awards was fierce. Our panel—a carefully curated quintet of Icelandic design experts and tastemakers—spent months combing through the scene in order to determine the winners. The winners are extremely worthy, but all of the competitors were spectacular—you should be sure to also check out the runners up and honorable mentions. So, without further ado, here it is: the Grapevine Design Awards 2016.



## Fashion Design Of The Year Autumn/Winter 2016 Collection

Created by **Eygló**

Eygló isn't afraid to be bold or unpredictable, finding inspiration in everything from dinosaurs to the surface of Mars. "Her collections are never the same," the judges determined. "She just isn't afraid to take chances and be risky." Eygló's pieces—wholly created from silk and natural fibers—revolve around unusual textiles. The Autumn/Winter collection is chock full of them, with eye-catching patterns gracing fitted midi dresses and loose shifts. Some standouts include a lime green 3/4 sleeved dress with an outlined gun printed on the

front, and spiked fabric coming out of the sleeves with a matching leather clutch. That said, Eygló is way more than just plain spectacle—the A/W collection also contains full color fitted muted pieces. Nuanced but still unique, her turtle-necked midis reveal a deep understanding of proportion and the human body. Eygló has consistently shown herself as more than a one-note artist, and her future is looking as bright as her dresses. If you want to check out the collection in person, head over to Kiosk at their new Miðstræti 12 location.

## Looking Forward To Seeing More From

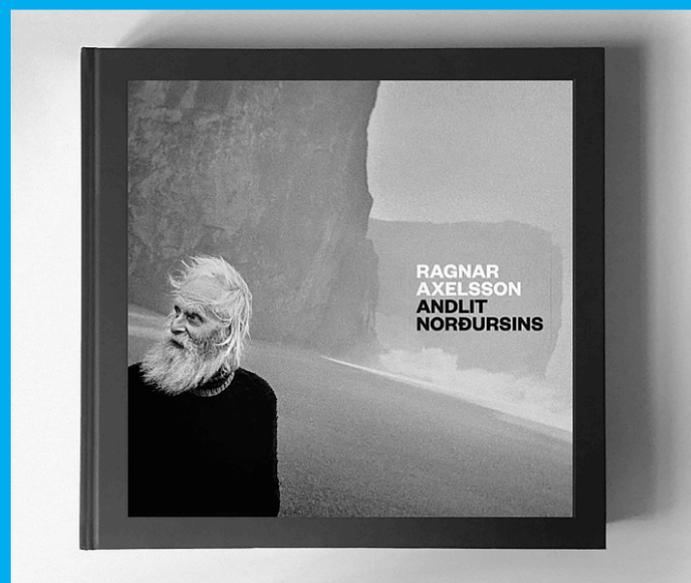
Ground Up II  
By **Theodora Alfredsdóttir**

The mineral feldspar makes up 60% of the Earth's crust, and is a key ingredient in many domestic objects. This obscure fact provided the inspiration for Theodora Alfredsdóttir's dining set, From the Group Up II. While it is technically a product line comprising plates, bowls, etcetera, the focus on substance and material made the panel consider it as a singular product. "There is a beautiful thought behind Theodora's work," they remarked. "People have grown disconnected from where material resources originate, but to be acutely aware of the transformation of the material from its natural state until it sits at your table is fascinating." They also noted that due to Iceland's environment, rocks hold an unusually compelling spiritual relationship to the country.

## Special Mention

**Flothetta**

Flothetta is a swimming cap designed to allow the user to float effortlessly. Released in 2011, it has since become a phenomenon—taken up by fifteen swimming pools around Iceland and used in special health get-togethers. "We like the fact that it is rooted in the old hot tub bathing culture of Iceland," one panellist said. "It has opened up a new world of meditation, relaxation, wellness, and experiencing nature."



## Product Of The Year Andlit Norðursins (Special 2016 Edition)

Created by **Ragnar Axelsson and Einar Geir Ingvarsson**

"Andlit Norðursins II" is about a topic that really matters: a culture and landscape that is disappearing before our eyes," said the panel. The photography book focuses on documenting Greenland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands, specifically focusing on daily life and culture. The original 'Andlit Norðursins' book came out in 2004, but in 2016, Ragnar released a special edition

with three times as many photos. He added a "Behind the faces" section to each country, outlining the subjects and places of each picture, presented with his written diaries. "The whole execution of the book is top-notch," remarked one panellist. "It was done beautifully." 'Andlit Norðursins' can be found at bookstores around Reykjavík and also online.

## Runners Up

VonduGil  
Created by  
**Milla Snorrason**

VonduGil is the work of designer Milla Snorrason, and her newest line was inspired by rock formations. "It is a very ambitious line," said the judges, "that was beautiful, high quality, and abstract." Containing everything from suits to button-ups to a 50s-style silk dress, Milla's work has a sophisticated aesthetic. It's subtle workwear—the kind of pieces you'll think of long after you see them. Find them at Kiosk at Miðstræti 12 and Kraum at Laugavegur 18.

## Looking Forward To Seeing More From

**Guðrún Helga Kristjánsdóttir**

Guðrún Helga only graduated from the Iceland Academy of the Arts this spring, but she immediately put out a complete line of luxurious outerwear and followed it up with a pop-up shop at Nord11. Guðrún employs a lot of textures—she uses suede, fur, silk with rough zippers and visible seams. "The line is incredibly ambitious," one judge said. "It's high fashion but still representative of the Icelandic fashion environment."



## Project Of The Year

**Agari**

Created by **Ari Jónsson**

The Agari water bottle is made with agar, a jelly-like substance created from algae. It is designed to only retain its shape when filled with water: the moment it is empty, it begins to deconstruct. "There's a massive discussion right now about reducing plastic consumption," noted the panel. "This water bottle captured global interest, showing how important the whole project was. It created hope." Ari Jónsson was only a first-year university student when he

made the bottle, but it quickly gained attention online. While the project is still in its initial stages, it shows the possibilities of solving the problems of global consumption. Plastic takes 500 to 1000 years to disintegrate—currently, all the plastic that humankind has ever produced is still somewhere in our environment. "This is a revolutionary idea, but it's a beautifully simple design," the panel noted.

## Runners Up

Ljósafossvirkjun  
- Powering the Future

This new exhibit at Ljósafossstöð outlines the progression of electrical power, from creation to mass production. "Without using language, they communicate knowledge in a lively manner," said the panel. "It's scientific data presented in an exciting and entertaining manner, both visually and in terms of context." Ljósafossstöð is one of the country's oldest hydroelectric power stations, and this interactive centre contains not only written information but also sound installations and kinetic light sculptures.

## Looking Forward To Seeing More From

"Sturla Aqua"  
Created by **Sturla Atlas & Siggí Odds**

Sturla Aqua is a conceptual piece in the form of a refillable glass water bottle made in collaboration with local hip-hop group Sturla Atlas. As music sales decline worldwide, merchandise has become the new musical market, with fans buying physical items to connect themselves to music. "It's a fresh look on how musicians can make their livelihood today," said the panel. "It's a consumer product revolving around the aesthetic of a band's ideals."



## Product Line Of The Year

**1+1+1**

Created by **Hugdetta / Aalto+aalto / Petra Lilja**

The judges had a hard time picking a single product line, but settled on 1+1+1. It's an experimental collaboration between designers from three Nordic countries: Hugdetta from Iceland, Petra Lilja from Sweden, and Aalto+Aalto from Finland. The project examines and reimagines objects: each studio designed an object consisting of three distinct parts and then mixed the parts up into unpredictable combinations.

"We were impressed by their method and design approach," said the judges, "how the designers created a reality of working blindly together with other designers." The beauty of 1+1+1 comes from the fact that these objects sprang from risk-taking, friendship, and travelling. There is no single product that can be representative of the line—it's the methodology that is memorable.

## Runners Up

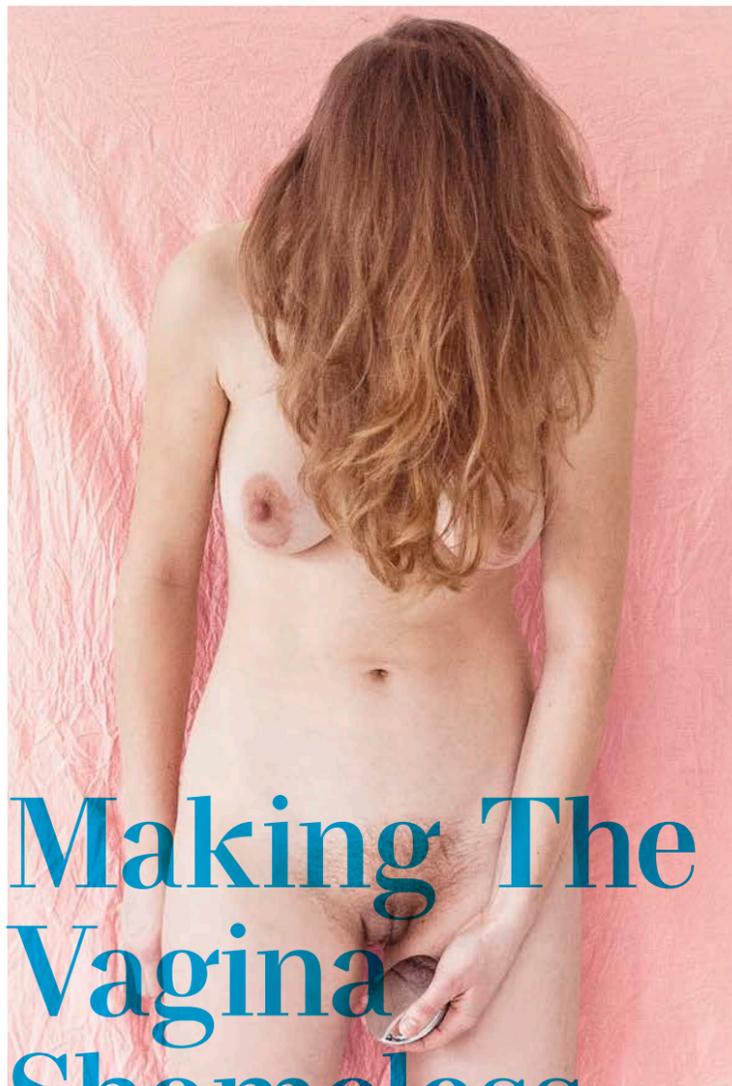
OR Type  
By **Guðmundur Úlfarsson and Mads Freund Brunse**

OR Type is an online store for typography founded in 2013 by graphic designers Guðmundur Úlfarsson and Mads Freund Brunse. The store contains a wide range of typography that the judges called "clean-cut and professional." The panel also praised their website, which is both user-friendly, clear, and entertaining. "Their look is beautiful but also diverse and comprehensive," they concluded. In addition to their online library, they also provide custom licenses and take on bespoke type designs. Their work is available at [ortype.is](http://ortype.is).

## Looking Forward To Seeing More From

"Silfra"  
Created by **ALVARA**

In "Silfra" by ALVARA, silver was dropped into cold water and then retrieved to create a collection of abstract one-of-a-kind trinkets. "ALVARA developed a unique way to use nature without being too kitschy or iterative," said the judges. They were also impressed by the jewelry's framework, which they called simple and clean: "The results not being known in advance captures only Icelandic characteristics. It's a beautiful methodology and juxtaposition." The whole collection can be viewed at [alvarareykjavik.is/silfra](http://alvarareykjavik.is/silfra).



# Making The Vagina Shameless

**Michèle Degen talks  
mirrors, genitals, and  
smashing taboos**

Would you believe it: the “V-word” is still a taboo subject. That’s right, I’m talking about the part of the human anatomy responsible for pleasure, pain, and even giving life. The part society can’t seem to talk about except in hushed tones. The dirty secret hidden between a woman’s legs: the vagina.

Swiss designer Michèle Degen hopes to change all that with Vulva Versa, a mirror designed for women to view their genitals. It’s a piece about exploration and acceptance of female sexuality, and Michèle will present it as part of this year’s DesignTalks.

Michèle was inspired by a project in which she worked with the gynaecological department of the Máxima Medisch Centrum in Eindhoven. She explains: “In the beginning, I had my share of troubles with the topic. I tried to figure out how the visit at the gynaecologist could be more comfortable. But whilst joining the doctor on this practice, and interviewing his patients, I started to realise that a more comfortable chair does not change the situation—there is a broader discomfort around the vagina. We simply do not talk about it.”

## Intimate parts

The mirror itself is, first and foremost, a piece of art. Its beautiful, shell-like design is visually appealing and intriguing—certainly more so than a regular compact mirror. The shape mimics that of a woman’s genitals, and the concave design means you can see everything at once. Using it, a woman would have her vagina, her sexuality and her body in the palm of her hand.

But is it purely symbolic, or is there a practical use to its design? Michèle certainly thinks there is. “It’s heavier than a normal mirror,” she explains, “and makes you automatically look down. and it fits perfectly in your hand.” But probably the most useful feature is that it’s chromed and won’t steam up, “so you can take it to the shower and you can finally see where you shave.”

Despite these user-friendly features, Vulva Versa is currently not for sale, but Michèle has big ambitions. “The main intention is obviously that there is a dialogue,” she says. “That we can have an open conversation about intimate parts... but sometimes I think, ‘What if a Vulva Versa would be something women carry around daily, and obvious like the iPhone?’ I would like to think that I created an indispensable, thoroughly designed object that modern women possess. That the statement has spread.”

## Shattering stigma

Despite the overall positive responses Michèle has received, she does occasionally encounter those who don’t understand her message. She recalls how a woman at her Dutch Design Week show saw her work and exclaimed, “What is this? This is really unnecessary. Why would a woman want see her own vagina?” But Michèle says that such responses just prove that the stigma she’s trying to shatter really exists.

This taboo-erasing objective has female empowerment at its

core. As Michèle puts it: “I believe that if a woman has a good relationship with her own body—and her genitals in particular—she is more at ease, and therefore stronger. It is a sign of self-confidence, in place of shame.”

Her talk is sure to be an interesting one, to say the least. Michèle assures me it will be “a shameless, process-driven presentation, where norms and ideals are questioned.” Vulva Versa is sure to make you think differently about the female body. In a world where autonomy over the female body is somehow still a contentious issue, a design that quite literally puts women’s bodies in their own hands is immeasurably important.



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