



The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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IN THE ISSUE Issue 01 • 2011 • January 7 - February 3

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How can we avoid messing up the new one?



Phew. New decade time. This is a joyous occasion, as the one we're leaving behind was by most accounts a failed one (although it did have some awesome bits in between). In our first issue of this shiny new decade, we consult historians, poets, CEOs, authors, politicians, artists, businessfolks, teenagers and seniors alike to try and determine just what happened, and what's in store.

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Illustration:
Hristbjörnsson - this.is/trendy

HOPE and CHANGE and stuff

I watched the Prime Minister's address on New Year's Eve. I should not have bothered. There were no surprises. It was Your Standard Prime Minister Of Iceland's New Year's Address, with no original thought (nor commentary, nor ideas, nor sign of life) managing to seep through the thick cloak of mundane mediocrity that Iceland's government seems determined to shroud itself in.

Even though you could say I support our current government—in the sense that I wouldn't want any of the other parties occupying Alþingi at present governing me—and even though I am rooting for it—in the sense that I agree with most of the goals they've set and I hope that they reach them—I have some very mixed feelings about it. In fact you could say that I don't really... like it.

The governing parties are not behaving in a way that makes me especially proud to have voted them in office, and they neither actively represent nor uphold the values they strive to associate themselves with (and that I quite agree with).

Even though they are far from living up to their promises, they still present no surprises. That such groupings of career politicians working within veteran political structures would jadedly trudge on trying to maintain the system that has bred and fed them is entirely unsurprising.

Maybe what's surprising is that some of us dared hope the great opportunity ICELAND'S TOTAL COLLAPSE presented would perhaps be used to usher in some much needed and positive change. That it would inspire us to try new things; new systems, new ideas and new ways of thinking. That we would maybe collectively envision and implement novel and exciting ways of rebuilding some of our fallen structures, even dropping some dead weight along the way. Y'know.

I might be wrong. Geez, I hope I'm wrong. Perhaps now isn't the time to try new things or different approaches. Perhaps this isn't a time to be fun



and inventive and original and progressive. Perhaps now is not the time for 'hope' and 'change' and stuff. Perhaps there is only one way out of this mess, and perhaps it is the one we are currently trudging along.

And to be fair, the current government was faced with a damn near impossible situation upon taking the reins. It has soldiered on relentlessly. And indeed, it has accomplished many good things in its time, and initiated some much needed change (for instance with regards to gay rights. I am all for gay rights).

And to be fair (fairness is important), some of those we've recently voted in exactly because they promised new things and different approaches appear to be in the process of striking out, too (but to be fair, we will give them a year in office before despairing completely).

But I was still hoping for something different, and something more.

Perhaps it is time I place my hopes elsewhere?

Or perhaps this is a time for hopelessness?

I hope not.



TRACK OF THE ISSUE

Prinspóló: Niðrá strönd

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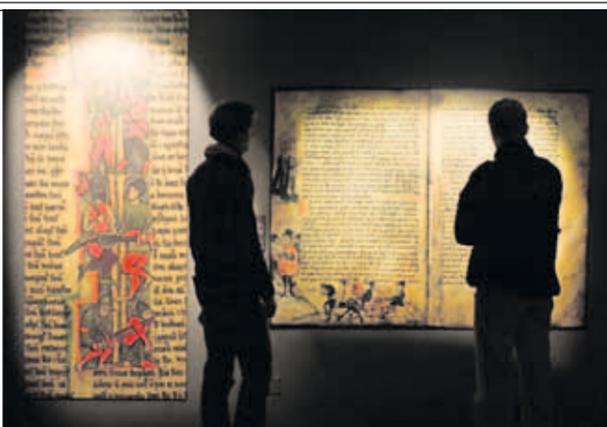
This is pretty much the best Icelandic country song ever written, and by country, I mean real, bona-fide Icelandic country that actually makes you think of Iceland, and not just some fat baby boomer re-doing an American song with Icelandic lyrics. It's queer and quirky without being too pretentious about it, and cynical without being pompous and melancholy. It's really just one guy with a couple of overdubbed guitars singing about a woman he doesn't get, and sometimes, that's all you fucking need right there.

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Comic | Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir



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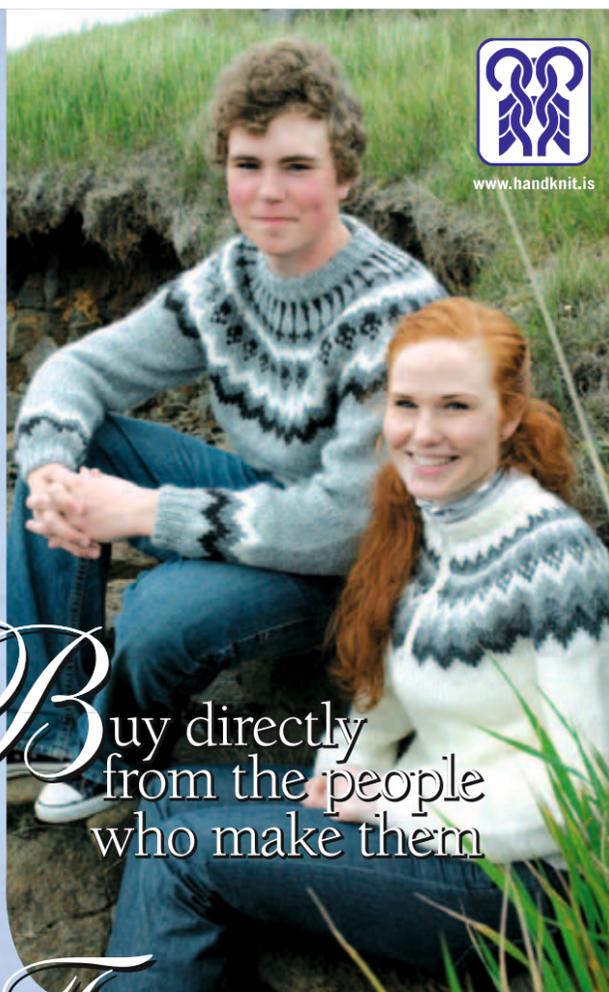
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4 Letters



MOST AWESOME LETTER:

I am not a professional potographer. I really wanted to come to Iceland and take picture. I had tried to speak with NASA, but could not get through to anyone. I also visited with the University of Houston and could get anyone to communicate with me. I visited a library and they were vague. I wanted to be able to get close and take alot of picture of your land. The pictures taken were really beautiful.

Kindest Regards,

Vickie E. Null

Dear Vickie,

thank you for your letter. We must confess, we do not fully understand it, but the fact that you, an amateur potographer, would have been willing to not

MOST AWESOME LETTER

Some excellent music from our good friends at Kimi Records

What's better than starting your New Year off with some new music for your stereo? Nothing, that's what. Well, maybe a free case of beer is slightly better, but we don't have any of those to give away at the moment, so this issue's MOST AWESOME LETTER WRITER will have to settle for some new, free music.

Yes, our prize for sending in awesome letters this month is two whole CDs of music, graciously donated by our friends at Kimi Records. Whoever wrote that letter may pick up his or her prize at the Havarí store in Austurstræti. He or she can choose any two records from the growing Kimi catalogue (browse it at www.havari.grapewire.net) and just sort of grab them from whatever friendly Havarí record store clerk is working when they get there. Now, if you're in the market for free goodies next month, write us some sort of letter. Give us your worst: letters@grapevine.is

only come to Iceland for the sake of taking only one photo of Iceland, but also spoke to NASA and the University of Houston to try to make the dream happen is impressive enough in its sheer audacity. Motherfucking NASA, for Christ's sake. We imagine the conversation must have gone something like this:

NASA: "Hi, welcome to the National Aeronautics and Space Association, how may I help you?"

Vickie: "Good day. I am not a professional potographer, but I would really like to take a picture of Iceland. You will help me do this."

NASA: "I'm... sorry, ma'm, but that really isn't our department"

Vickie: "Your petty excuses do not concern me. You will get me to Iceland, or I will teach you the meaning of pain."

NASA: "Ma'm, I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to le- oh, God, your eyes... no, please, please... I'll do anything you want... hold on, let me get the project chief for Faster-Than-Light travel on the phone, he should be able to help you."

Vickie: "Good, gooooood."

NASA: "Ma'm, I'm... sorry, sir, but he's not picking up. I can't get through to anyone."

Vickie: "Damn."

We hope you do eventually get here. Your picture would be badass. It would be the only picture ever displayed of Iceland. It would be on stamps, license plates and tattooed on the President's ass. In the meantime, enjoy your free CDs, for you, sir or madam, are awesome, and we are awarding with our MOST AWESOME LETTER AWARD.

Hallo together,

I want to report to you an incident which saddened me quite a lot on the last day of my Island stay last August.

On August 28th I was on board a boat for a whalewatching tour off Reykjavik. It was th last tour of that day and only 19 passengers were on the boat.

On our way back to Reykjavik harbour I was shocked to watch a crew member dumping a sack of refuse (what else could it reasonably contain ?) from the rear of the boat into the wash.

Unfortunately I was the only one to witness that, all the other passengers were elsewhere. The man who dumped the sack did'nt notice me.

Had I not seen this I would have firmly denied that a person who lives with and from the sea and it's animals could be able to pollute the element willfully, just for convenience.

I ponder if this is common and tolerated practice in the trade ? Or was the individual just too lazy to carry the sack ashore ? Or was he to save money ?

Sorry for bothering you with this, but I just had to find somebody to tell this.

Regards and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year !

Horst Basermann

Dear Horst,

Hallo together yourself, and we hope the day finds you well.

This is most upsetting news. We don't

know why the sailor did what he did. But what we do know is that sailors are mysterious people. Very secretive. You pose the question "what else could it reasonably contain?" as if it is a given that sailors only dump refuse. Perhaps he was dumping drugs. Or hookers. Or nuns. He might be an Orthodox Christian. You never know.

A man dumping refuse is a sad sight. We know of no man to be seen to dump refuse in an attractive way, or indeed dumping anything in an attractive way. While we are aware that attractive men often dump things (we have seen it on the television), they never become more attractive during the physical act of dumping. It is a fact.

We hope this letter is helpful to you, also: Happy New Year to you and yours.

Snow can cause a lot of troubles, but every snowcrystal is a masterpiece of design. I enclose two snowcrystal photomicrographs of mine. If you want, you can use them freely in your snow-stories/blogs or webside during this winter. The last photograph won the second place in world leading micro-photograph popular vote competition 2010.

www.nikonsmallworld.com/popvote
If you use them, please include the reference for the first picture: Pekka Honkakoski, Finland and for the second picture: Pekka Honkakoski, Finland, Nikon Small World.

Yours!
Mr. Pekka Honkakoski

Dear Pekka,

Your letter was most inspiring. We do not traditionally write snowstories, but in response to your letter and attached photographs, we have decided to try to write one:

I had traversed great lengths across the frigid snow when I first spotted Dr. Snowdon. I saw him through the snow as he waded through it, shielding his face from the blizzard with his snow gloves.

"A fine day for so much snow," he said, snow covering his snow-white beard as I dismounted from my snowmobile.

"Yes, I was expecting sleet, myself, but, as they say, any day has the potential to be a fine snow day."

"Indeed," he replied, and I noticed the black wrinkles in his snow suit gave him the appearance of an anthropomorphic snow leopard. "I say, is that a snow rifle?"

I hefted the snow-white gun off my shoulder, unclipping the snow sling from my snow jacket and handing him the rifle. He reached for it through the snow.

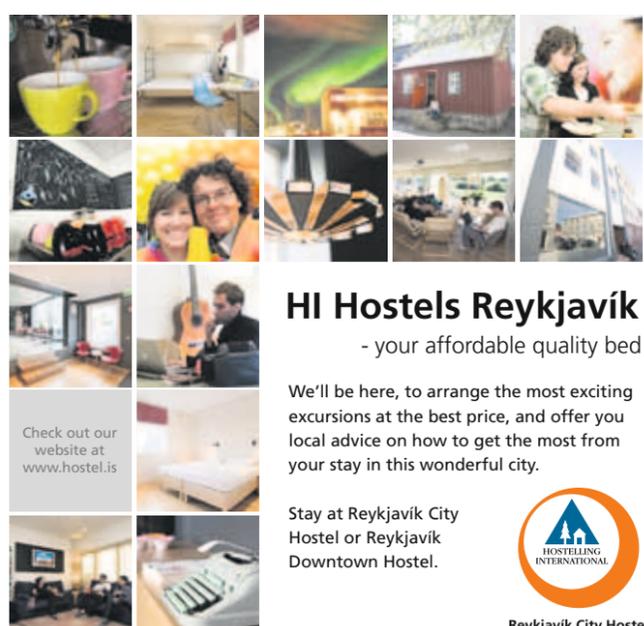
"You know, I expected you here sooner," he said, brushing snow out of the chamber as I absently made a miniature snow angel with my snow boot.

"Yes, I'm afraid I was snowed in this morning."

"Oh, really? Well, when life hands you snow..." he began.

"...you make snowballs," I finished. We laughed, two old friends in the snow...

...you know what, on second thought, fuck this. That was probably the worst story in the entire world. Thanks for the pictures though.



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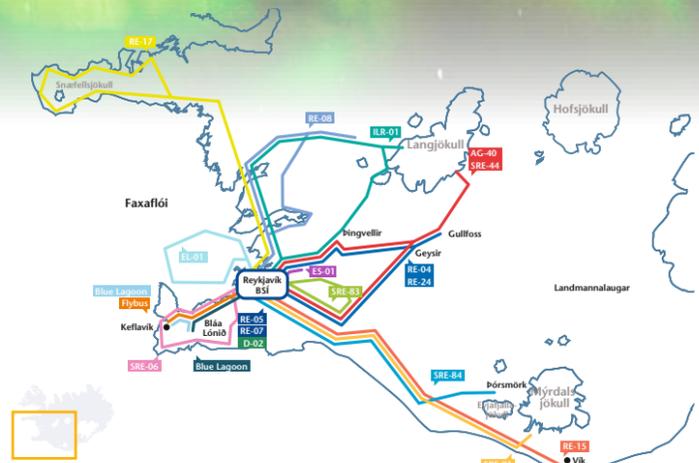
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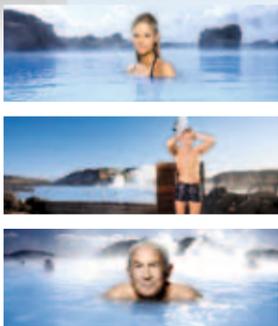
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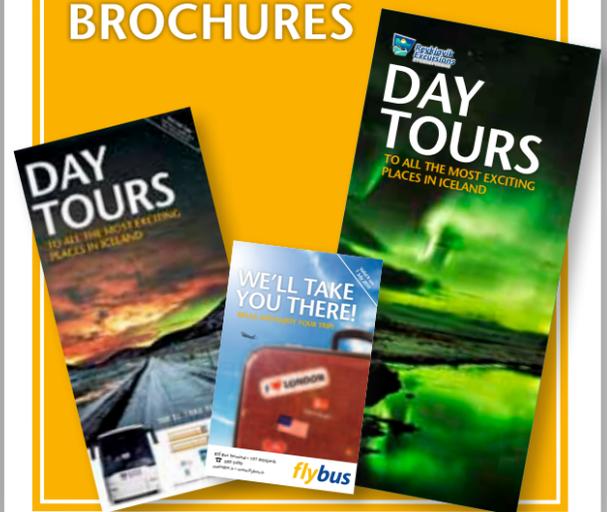
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News | Paul Nikolov

The Stories That Made 2010

The general consensus around here about 2010 seems to be "good riddance". Where 2009 gave us hope that we'd be able to emerge from the rubble of our ruined economy, 2010 was more like striding proudly from said rubble, and falling flat on our faces. Let's have a look at the stories that made this year that special Icelandic blend of disappointment, rage and wry laughter.

JANUARY



The previous December, parliament narrowly passed into law the Icesave deal. Wait, we mean the first Icesave deal. From the beginning, people hotly debated on the one hand that taxpayers shouldn't bail out bankers, and on the other hand, that we're sorta kinda bound by international law to pay up. In the end, Iceland's elected representatives would find the President play his trump card for the second time in Icelandic history when he told the nation that he was not going to sign the bill into law, but refer it instead to national referendum. In fairness to the President, though, the Icesave bill was overwhelmingly rejected by the Icelandic people in the referendum, and the new deal on the table will cost us billions less.

FEBRUARY



This month saw the aftermath of the Icesave deal's veto, with Dutch and British authorities fuming with rage and accusing the Icelandic government of lying to them. There's just no pleasing some people. Iceland also extended help to Haiti, following a devastating earthquake, by sending rescue workers and tonnes of bottled water to the country. The brightest story of the month, though, was the introduction of the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative, a parliamentary resolution guaranteeing protections for whistleblowers and investigative journalists from being pressured by the wealthy and powerful. This resolution would have implications later in the year, when WikiLeaks became one of the top stories in the world.

MARCH



Icesave referendum time! Grapevine live-blogged the event, and the results confirmed what numerous opinion polls in the previous month had been indicating—this thing was dead in the water. Sure enough, over 90% of those who voted on the Icesave deal voted no. The biggest story of the month, however, is undoubtedly the eruption of Fimmvörðuháls in Eyjafjallajökull. It was a "tourist volcano"—pretty plumes of lava shooting up in the air, doing no real damage to anyone or anything. Many pinned their hopes on this eruption of bringing much-needed tourist revenue into the country. Boy were they in for a surprise...

APRIL



With municipal elections coming up, a joke party started by comedian and actor Jón Gnarr called 'The Best Party' began to get more attention. The Special Investigative Commission, which examined the possible causes of the 2008 bank collapse, released its report. Everyone looked at the report which said that conservative ministers were incompetent, the Central Bank turned a blind eye, and that bank managers were insatiably greedy and said, "Duh." The Eyjafjallajökull eruption—which had gone from pretty lava fountain to giant ash-belching machine later in March—shut down air traffic across Europe and parts of North America, making everyone angry at Iceland again.

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

WHAT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW?

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

(+ 'WELCOME NEW DECADE!')

A Call For Intelligent Innocence And Transparency

Sigríður Þorgeirsdóttir



The year began with devastating earthquakes, proceeded on to a volcanic eruption in, and ended with a lunar eclipse. It felt like nature reiterated how big systems are crashing, and how the dirt and dust of lies and corruption surfaces, creating a mixed emotion of hope and despair.

Unsustainable financial systems crumble or are kept alive like a patient in an iron lung. Religious and pedagogical institutions are ridden with sexual abuse scandals, and fundamentalist fanatics threaten hard-won tolerance in religious matters. Instead of service to humanity "industries" and mere commercialism within all kinds of spheres, be it arts, sciences, health or technologies, become increasingly apparent.

The WikiLeaks-phenomenon promises to herald a new era, reviving the promise of the Enlightenment of an enlightened population. Of people who are informed about the movers and shakers of the world, about the driving forces that only have one goal, to secure their wealth and might, regardless of how the Earth fares.

Politics stand on the one hand as a Berlusconi type of corporate power, and on the other hand as the power of people, who wake up from consumerist apathy and act up. There is smoke and fire in the inner cities. The paint-stained car of the Prince of Wales getting stuck in the midst of a crowd of demonstrating students is symbolic for the rage against the regime(s).

Against the lies and the corruption there is a call for intelligent innocence and transparency. For a new kind of politics and for a better-informed population. In post-crash Iceland we see an opening of cracks where the light shines through, but there is also a widespread disappointment over how the murky old forces seize power again.

On a global scale, the openings of the new are threatened by powers that resist to disclose their secrets. The next decade will tell whether they will dominate or burst due to the contradictions inherent to them.

Sigríður Þorgeirsdóttir is a professor of Philosophy at the University of Iceland.

THE NEXT TEN YEARS: "Morality and something... oh yes, trust"

Elísabet Jökulsdóttir



In stores, businesses and public spaces, security cameras have long ago become part of daily life and no one says a word about it. The cameras are supposed to protect us but they do more than that, they rob us of all trust, as we become like animals in a zoo who are not trusted to behave unsupervised. Under these conditions, morality does not come from within, but is created and enforced only externally. After the economic collapse, there were loud calls for ethical reform in politics and business. But why is it that this surveillance of the public is left unchallenged? Between Christmas and New Years I received a call from a collection agency. The voice on the phone said: "Please be aware that this conversation may be recorded." Why? Can't two people be trusted to solve a problem?

It is also with regard to nature that value judgments are created externally, rather than being allowed to grow in our

</2010>

For me personally I think 2010 was the beginning of something new. I think it marked the end of an era of old politics and old ways of thinking and approaching problems. I myself have had just about enough of this anger and frustration; we need to start focusing on the positive things we've got going for us. I think we desperately need to start laughing more... by laughing it's not that we're not taking things seriously; we're just making things a little bit lighter... brighter maybe?

<A new decade...>

I think this will be the decade of less crap and more fun and creative thought.

Heiða Kristín Helgadóttir, Managing Director, The Best Party

</2010>

2010 was the year we were recovering from the shock of the economic collapse, and re-evaluation in all spheres of life took over. We realised that life goes on. We didn't even get food stamps sent in the mail, though surely the numbers grew in the group of people who are in need of assistance from charitable organisations. The economic collapse was maybe the best thing that could have happened to Icelanders. A new way of thinking and creative energy has emerged among many. Many people started to think about what really matters in life. At the same time we suddenly remembered that there are people in the world that really have it bad, in countries where there is no running water and too many children are infected with HIV. We saw that we have it pretty good, despite everything.

<A new decade...>

The next decade will prove good to Icelanders. We will soon be energised and full of optimism. I look forward to the day when every car in this country will be propelled by domestic and clean energy, and we can use all the billions that go toward fuel towards something much more useful. We are starting to understand that our primary resource is our hot and cold water. It has been too easy to let it gush from our faucets, so we took it to be of little or no value. It will bring results when luxury spas are established across the country, and people race to the country in search of refreshment and rest. First and foremost will we be happier and after all the self-scrutiny and creative energy this year, we will slow down the tempo and better enjoy living live in the present.

Bergþór Pálsson, Opera singer

</2010>

2010 was an interesting year. I often had the feeling that we were living in historical times, both because of the political upheaval and also because of the Eyjafjallajökull eruption. The eruption presented a grave danger that our tourism industry would be badly hurt. We managed to prevent this from happening, and one of the explanations is certainly the Inspired in Iceland project, which might be considered the project of the year—a marketing campaign that harnessed social media to put forth a message, and it worked.

The people of Reykjavík sent a loud message in this spring's municipal elections, and new people from outside the conventional party system entered the city government. Their critique of conventional politics entailed that political promises and platforms were irrelevant, because they are never really followed or cast aside when parties enter coalition governments. This criticism isn't necessarily merited in every way, but it will nonetheless be interesting to observe if things change for the better as a result.

<A new decade...>

Let's say that the coming decade will be one of the best in the history of this nation. It'll be a post-banking collapse decade, where people enjoy their existence. Culture will blossom like never before, and will be our main strength.

Áslaug Friðriksdóttir, Managing Director, Sjá

hearts. If the same course becomes established as in the rest of the western world, we are in danger of seeing our nature lost and our connection to it ruptured. In Völuspá it says that the land is made from the body of man. The land is thus a part of man, and when man interacts with the land, he interacts with himself; he is connected to the land and sympathises with it, and in return the land sympathises with him. In this way, our forefathers sought comfort and strength from our nature.

When I stood in protest because of the Kárahnjúkar dam project, I would get calls at night from women in tears because they couldn't stand how the Hellisheiði area was being destroyed by the Hellisheiði power plant. I believe this relationship to nature is deeply ingrained in us humans, and it has endured in Iceland up until these past few years.

Moral consciousness is a feeling, and the trust it creates is a feeling also. And if feelings live in the heart then our hearts are being torn out, along with our liver and lungs.

Elísabet Jökulsdóttir is an author.

WORLD BANK, IMF, NATO, EU

Einar Már Guðmundsson, author



One year is a long time, especially in Iceland, even though the years leap forward and sometimes there are leap years. It has been an exciting year. The world slowed down and that may be a good thing. Planes came to a halt in the air or could not take off. Airlines counted their losses from volcanoes but the volcanoes were not concerned with airlines. The comedian John Cleese took a taxi from Oslo to Brussels, while comedians won the elections in Reykjavík. They won not because they were adept, but because the other contenders were inept.

The government, which describes itself as 'socialist', listens with more interest to the banks' resolution committees than to the people of their country, and the financial sector owns the government's mind and heart. Still, it is the nation's first purely left-wing government, elected in the wake of the greatest riot that this country has seen. The one party

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2010 | ...and on to the future!

that did not come near the debauchery now sits with the debauched mess in its lap.

The elite are acquitted, which is natural since they are well organised. They have institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF, NATO and the EU at their disposal, and compared with those in power, the public is poorly organised.

We are certainly living in an era of change, where everything changes except the economic system. The climate changes, the rivers, the forests, the birds, all of nature. The lives of the lower

classes change, the lives of the middle classes change—everything changes except the system, the lives of the upper classes and the elites that surround them.

If we imagine our economy as an orange, then the IMF plans to squeeze a full crate of orange juice out of what is but one orange. In the course of a decade, the IMF plans to fix the economic downturn in such a way that will leave no room for a decent life in the country.

All of this is done in the name of the market. We receive news of the markets, how they are doing. The prognoses are good one day and bad the next. But who has met this market? Has anyone shaken its hand?

Still, a lot of things have happened in our heads. The times are changing. The power of the market rests on a similar idea as the power of the Pope in the middle ages, on holy indulgences that

are sometimes called bailouts for banks, but are based on transferring society's wealth and public assets over to these faceless financial institutions.

If only Martin Luther were to come back and dismantle the legal bureaucracy. The imagination obtains power and returns to reality.

The poet Hannes Sigfússon once proclaimed that the days of the sincere poem were numbered. Everyone evaluates as they see fit, and a poem can be everything at once: forthright, sincere, heartfelt, funny, sad, hopeless, positive. But poems are just poems, and they are neither political platforms nor constitutions, though of course it is possible to create platforms and constitutions based on them. On the other hand, what matters is: a neutral stance is a political stance, and the days of not taking a stand are numbered, because taking a stand is required...

When the Central Bank of Iceland claims not to take a stand and not to get mixed up in the issues, then it is precisely taking a stand and getting mixed up in the issues. Let's be clear about this, and it is the same when the financial sector suddenly begins to speak of justice when their actions are found to be illegal.

The social vision of crime fiction is usually based on cunningly conceived plots, corruption and crime, and is thus not unlike discussions in our society. Emphasis is laid on the exceptional individual. This was evident in the Madoff case and his fraud racket. He admitted to all the charges, was considered to have worked 'alone' and no further investigation took place. Otherwise it would have come to light that he was not alone, but rather part of the global economic system.

It was also evident in the ENRON case and in the expansion of the Icelandic banks. It was the same system. I envision more direct and political literature, and poetry that is informed by old traditions, returns to Futurism and Surrealism. I furthermore believe that the fusion of storytelling, social sciences and economical studies that we have witnessed the world over, as well as the blurred boundaries between philosophy and literature, is a very fertile ground. Storytelling will direct itself against the discourse of those in power and therefore the boundaries of professional literature and fiction will become fluid in the coming years. The old social novel will gain a new frame of reference.

Libertarianism distorts all realistic subject matter. Now they will be repossessed. The comical story will flourish. Don Quixote has set off but does not yet know where he is heading.

[Einar Már Guðmundsson is an author.]

Iceland, The Cracker Factory

[Steinunn Gunnlaugsdóttir]

For nearly thirty years, dissidence wasn't cool in Iceland. But during one good economic collapse, partaking in revolution became fashionable. A lot of people can feel saved by not missing that Kodak moment.

2010 was a good year for authorities. It proved that a few months of revolutionary status and two days of rioting that led to the fall of a government changed just about nothing. Every grim prophecy made in the aftermath of the collapse has come to fruition without strikes, rebellion or attacks to the capitalistic powers that caused the situation.

Greece, the cradle of democracy, experienced a revolt at the same time as Iceland. Although the two uprisings are in many ways different, they are still interesting to compare. Both places saw a relatively small part of society protesting in the streets compared to how widespread public dissatisfaction had gotten. In Greece, it was the police authorities' murder of a teenage boy that set things in motion. In Iceland, it was an economic collapse. But what boiled underneath was similar: inequality, abuse of power, corruption and other consequences of

the capitalistic structure.

What's entirely different, however, is that in Greece the original revolt went on for a month, but when the first wave slowed down the flames of protest still retained a spark. Opposition has since spread and evolved as a real resistance to the systematic and pointed social destruction and exploitation the government is engaged in under the pretext of recession. But in Iceland, where exactly the same things are happening, everything died down almost as soon as an election was announced.

As this is being written—on December 15, two years after the December revolt—Greece is undergoing a general strike. People of all ages attacked former ministers, burned vehicles, broke the windows of banks and corporations and threw rocks and Molotov cocktails at armed riot police. These people's rebellion shows their dignity and spirit that doesn't bow down so easily to capitalism's attacks on their freedom and rights. This is in striking contrast to the servile limpness that so quickly overtook Iceland after a short-lived revolt of the wage-slaves in Iceland, the cracker factory.

What will the new decade bring? It is easy to see that the situation will keep getting worse in Iceland, and the people's reluctance to resist is a cause for great concern. The surrender and apathy bring the dominant powers even more ways for oppression. But there are other ways. People can look to protesters in Greece and elsewhere for inspiration, because revolt does not only lead to human dignity, but also the possibility of something different, and better.

[Steinunn Gunnlaugsdóttir is an artist and one of the Reykjavík 9, who are charged for attacking Alþingi.]

A Fortunate Nation

[Siv Friðleifsdóttir]

During these past years, our lives have had both positive and negative sides. Before the collapse of the banks, a long period of prosperity prevailed. There was very little unemployment. Purchasing power increased substantially and most people were able to allow themselves to treat themselves and their families better than before.

A group of people came into a position that allowed them to receive wages, which today seem hardly possible to have been paid. These people danced around the golden calf. The government was also able to boost the welfare system, such as health care and education. At the same time, taxes were lowered.

On the other hand, society was characterised by a great deal of speediness, greediness and even alienation. During the collapse of the banks, we woke up to completely different circumstances. It was a watershed. Unemployment has increased and many homes are caught up in debt. This is not a good situation. However, research has shown a positive outcome in that children and teenagers are feeling better today than before the crash because their parents have more time to spend with them.

Now we all have to work together to bring society forward despite having fewer options than before. We need to optimise and prioritise in order to protect those basic elements of the welfare system that are most important. The following years will be characterised by this challenge. However, I have faith that, seeing as Iceland possesses rich resources and well-educated people, we can work ourselves out of the recession relatively quickly. Although we will feel the pinch for a while, we remain a fortunate nation compared to many others.

[Siv Friðleifsdóttir is an MP for the Progressive Party.]

News | Paul Nikolov

The Stories That Made 2010

MAY



Former Kaupthing director Hreiðar Már Sigurðsson was arrested by the special prosecutor for numerous charges of violating financial laws. A few hours later, former Kaupthing bank manager in Luxembourg, Magnús Guðmundsson, was also arrested. A few days later, former Kaupthing chairman Sigurður Einarsson was listed as wanted by Interpol. This month also saw a little-known company called Magma Energy poised to purchase nearly all of Icelandic power company HS Orka, despite the company's CEO, Ross Beaty, assuring Grapevine the previous September that they had no intentions of doing so. Outrage ensued, with artist Björk Guðmundsdóttir spearheading the campaign against the company, and more lies from Beaty followed. The month finished with a bang, as city elections saw the Best Party take the mayoral seat, forming a majority coalition with the Social Democrats.

JUNE



June was a very good month for gay rights. Parliament passed a law that allows single women, as well as homosexual couples, to have access to donor eggs and donor sperm for the purpose of artificial insemination. Also, Iceland's parliament passed a law that eliminated the distinction between "marriage" for straight couples and "civil unions" for gay couples, creating instead one marriage for all Icelanders, regardless of sexual orientation. Jón Gnarr officially became the mayor of Reykjavík, and the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative was passed in parliament. As a resolution, though, not a law. Still, that's something, right?

JULY



Pretty much the single most noteworthy story of this month was the back-and-forth between Magma Energy CEO Ross Beaty and artist Björk Guðmundsdóttir. He made a coy, not-entirely-serious proposal to sell her shares in the company, and she responded to his condescension with expected annoyance. An online petition to put Icelandic natural resources in public ownership began to gather momentum as well. Ultimately, the government would refuse to confirm the sale of HS Orka to Magma Energy, pending an investigation into the legality of the deal.

AUGUST



This month saw continued pressure on Magma Energy, as thousands signed the petition to put natural resources in public ownership. Also, Iceland began to receive more attention on the world stage, thanks to WikiLeaks. Some of the attention wasn't the good kind, though. Liz Cheney—former US vice president Dick Cheney's daughter—called upon US president Barack Obama to compel the Icelandic government to shut down WikiLeaks, while Republican senator John Ensign decided to make his displeasure known by temporarily blocking US President Barack Obama's nominee for US ambassador to Iceland. This month also saw the national church feeling the heat with regards to how they handle cases of sexual abuse within its walls. The resulting kerfuffle saw a rise in de-registration from the church, and great calls for separation of church and state.

</2010>

The year 2010 was the second year of the crash, instead of being the second year of recovery. The political turmoil and emotional fluctuations were hardly bearable for ordinary people. The President's rejection of the Icesave bill, urged by a group of homogenous middle aged men, split the people of Iceland into two conflicting camps. The Special Investigation Commission [SIC] Report gave a short hope of new times, unfortunately not realised as yet. In the local elections in the spring 2010, again a group of males made history in Iceland. The Best Party was certainly not in line with the ethos of the SIC report of responsibility and deference. The year 2010 is the moment of lost opportunities, not least in gender relations, a future that turned out to be a confirmation of a repetitive past.

<A new decade...>

As an optimist I do believe in the future and that human beings can learn from experience, even the people of Iceland. At the same time I must admit that I don't think we have reached the bottom. I'm afraid there will be several years of a continued deep split among people, anger and mistrust in political institutions. We might be facing an atmosphere of extremist ideologies, nationalism, increased xenophobia and sexism. I think that democracy will be put to a test in the next decade, urging a pressure on grass-root activism, environmentalists and feminists to fight back. As long as we have strong people with judgment enough to distinguish between short time gains and real sustainable values, finding it worthwhile to be concerned, we have a hope of a better society by the end of the next decade.

[Þorgerður Einarisdóttir, Gender Studies Professor, Háskóli Íslands]

</2010>

Looking over what has been achieved in disabled people's fight for personal assistance and independent living in Iceland, the biggest step is most definitely the founding of NPA miðstöðin (a centre for independent living and personal assistance). The centre is a cooperative run and controlled by disabled people based on the principles of the United Nations convention on rights of people with disabilities and the Independent Living philosophy. The main goal of the centre is to provide personal assistance and support disabled people to become the leaders in their own lives.

<A new decade...>

In the next decade we want to see the United Nations convention on rights of people with disabilities become ratified as well as the basis for all development in the services for disabled people. We also want to see our cooperative work hard in advocating for independent living and supporting disabled people in being the leaders in their own lives. We also hope to see the next decade bring more consciousness about the human rights violation of disabled people in Iceland and that the government will place disabled people in the frontline where they will guide the way to inclusion, independence, full citizenship and human rights for disabled people, and of course everyone else.

[Freyja Haraldsdóttir, disability rights activist]

</2010>

Iceland saw three elections in 2010. Voters failed all of them. In March, we voted about a law that no one was fighting for, and was in fact never going to take effect. The President claimed he was defending democracy, and said that Britain lacked it. Iceland, however, had a deep-rooted tradition for democracy. Still, this was the first national referendum in the republic's 66-year history. Voters swallowed the bait, but their message was unclear. Aren't we paying? Do we want a better deal? A better government?

May brought municipal elections. A satire party won Reykjavík. The party's hitherto "jokes" have been better executed than many "real" politicians could muster. But what about the voters? They criticized the corruption, lack of direction and betrayed promises of the old parties. Instead of acting responsibly and offering up a real alternative they decided to gorge on the fast food and vote for the only party that promised to deliver corruption, lack of direction and betrayed promises.

In November, voters had a historical opportunity to choose members to a committee that will pen a new constitution. The majority decided to pass on that opportunity.

<A new decade...>

Iceland was like a microcosm of the globe in 2010. Both were characterised by a great unrest, negativity and imbalance. The reasons? Selfishness, inequality, injustice and an unsustainable way of life. Western countries complain about their debt burden. Poorer nations struggle with calamities caused by fighting over resources. Their residents flee the poverty and end up as third-rate citizens in richer countries, or they are refused entry by people who are largely responsible for their original situation. People are oppressed and killed in the name of freedom and justice, in wars that have the sole purpose of securing a standard of life for the upper classes. Frustration rises. Hatred amplifies. Those who point out the system's inherent hypocrisy, for instance by leaking classified government documents to the public, are thrown in jail. And all the while, mother Earth suffers. These are the problems that we face, and need to solve over the next decade. I have complete faith that we can do it, if only we can face ourselves and take responsibility.

[Hilmar Magnússon, International Communications Student]

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The First Decade Of The 21st Century In Retrospect | Jón Baldvin Hannibalsson

To Be Or Not To Be

A Republic At A Crossroads

Will October 6th, 2008 (the day Iceland's luckless PM Mr. Haarde, asked God to help his poor nation since he himself could not) live on in our collective memory as a "day of infamy"—a sort of Icelandic Pearl Harbour?

Pearl Harbour is today remembered by Americans because of Japan's aerial bombardment on the US naval station. And because it led to the Americans' involvement in the Second World War. Wars are inevitably both destabilising and devastating. People not only lose their property—but their lives.

In our case, Iceland's economic collapse ("hrunið") may yet claim a few lives, but in most cases the losses are less tangible. Many have lost their jobs, their property, their savings. Some have even lost their hope. Then there are those who have already voted with their feet—and emigrated.

Some say our greatest loss is our reputation as an honest and trustworthy people. Because in our case, we did not suffer an attack from an outside enemy. In our case the enemy came from within. That is what makes it all the more painful. And it explains, partly at least, why so many find it almost unbearable to face the truth: We have only ourselves to blame—and no one else.

'THE THREE WISE MEN'

The best thing that has happened to us after the crash is the truth-commission-report by 'the three wise men'. Nine volumes and almost three thousand pages, including appended documents on the web. The truth and nothing but the truth. They were asked to tell us the truth about the causes of the collapse and to find out who was responsible. And they did just that—fairly and squarely. They spelled it all out in painstaking detail.

The collapse was caused by a combination of fraudulent business schemes and irresponsible politicians. And by the way: the majority of Icelandic voters cannot be acquitted either. Time and again they voted for parties and politicians who did not deserve the trust put in them. Again and again. And the nouveaux riche buffoons—flaunting their ill-begotten wealth—were extolled as the nation's best sons. How many times did the President of Iceland, Mr. Grímsson—the hyper-active chef-de-protocol of the plutocrats—ceremoniously accord them the highest decorations of state, making it impossible for honest people to accept such commendations in the future? The critics' voices were simply drowned, and the warning signals—and there were plenty of them—were ignored.

No wonder how many are simply unable to face the truth: Out of 147 individuals in leading positions in government, political parties, the Central Bank, the civil service and banks and business corporations etc., questioned by the truth-commission, not a single one admitted any responsibility at all, not to mention expressing a sense of guilt or regret. "Not my department" was the standard refrain of those haughty elitists. This seems to be a nation where the blind lead the deaf.

But ours was not only the lethal cocktail of dishonest business and incompetent politics. Iceland was by design meant to become a shining example of the neo-conservative utopia; a tax haven for the super-rich with mini-

Words

Jón Baldvin Hannibalsson

Photography

Julia Staples

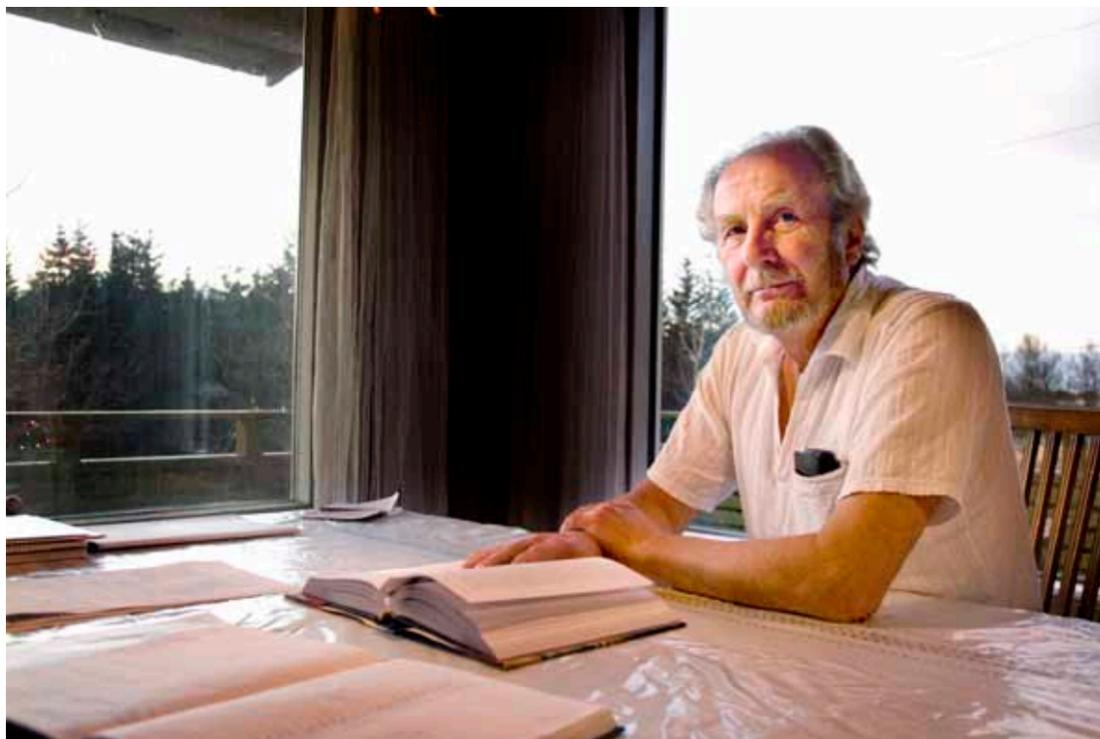
mum government interference in the free play of market forces. If something were to go astray, the market forces could be trusted to correct it by themselves—or so they believed. This was not only the professed ideology of the Independence Party leadership; it was the declared policy of the IP-led governments that steered us, slowly but surely, into the crash.

Iceland's fall in 2008 was the direct consequence of this pre-meditated policy. It was not the failure of capitalism as such. Capitalism cannot function at all without direction, legislation and constant supervision by the state. It was the US-style predatory type of capitalism, let loose without proper democratic control that failed here as elsewhere. The biggest lesson to be learned from this catastrophic experiment is simply this: never again. Never again should we let the selfish, greedy and short-sighted have a chance to play whimsically with our fortune. Now, my countrymen must find their way back to the Nordic family of nations, with their democratic and egalitarian way of life, or else face social disintegration.

THE NEO-CON UTOPIA

The 'three wise men', in their voluminous investigative report, amassed unassailable evidence for how the mistaken policies of the Independence Party-led governments after the 1999 elections gradually brought Iceland towards the brink of the abyss. It all began with the practice—contrary to the law of the land—to allow a selected group of ship-owners to sell or rent their fishing quotas (allowable catch), which had been allotted to them by the state—for free. Thus the most valuable natural resource of the nation, actually a national property under the law, was in practice privatised. It was handed out to politically favoured groups of ship-owners—for free. This was very much in the same way as Russia's rich resources of oil and gas were given to a favoured few, in return for political support. This sort of blatant abuse of power could never have been thinkable in a decent democratic state like Norway, for example, with its enormous oil wealth.

The privatisation of the state-owned banks to politically favoured groups of businessmen was pushed through in much the same way by the leaders of the Independence Party and their partners. In a few years time, those traditional commercial banks, which had tended to the needs of the local community, had been turned into international investment banks (some say more like aggressive hedge-funds), amassing mountains of foreign-currency denominated debt, through easy credit abroad. In four years (2003–2006) they had piled up debt to the tune of ten times Iceland's GDP. Behind it, for ultimate support if need be, were the meagre foreign currency reserves of the Icelandic Central Bank and ultimately Iceland's tax-payer base of 220 thousand individuals (less than a common small town anywhere in Europe). This was financial madness. In the end Iceland's nouveaux riche banksters proved the



"He who does not acknowledge his mistakes and blames everybody else for his own faults is not going to learn from those mistakes. He is doomed to repeat them. Sorry."

truth of William Black's dictum: "The best way to rob a bank is to own a bank." This ideologically conceived and utterly reckless experiment with the fate of a nation was doomed from the start.

Why didn't the government act in time to avert a foreseeable calamity? The simple answer is: In the thinking of the Independence Party leaders and their cohorts, this was not a mistake to be corrected. On the contrary this was declared policy to be promoted. As late of 2007 it was the official policy of the Independence Party/Alliance's coalition government to enhance the financial sector's position as Iceland's engine of growth.

According to the evidence presented in the investigative report, the IP-led governments (1999-2009) turned out to be amazingly incompetent. Instead of restraining the banks' expansion and lending capacity, they enhanced it, resulting in a classical real-estate bubble. Instead of applying the brakes, to rein in debt-based overspending, the government stepped on the accelerator, by drastic tax-cuts for the benefit of the rich. The Central Bank's monetary policy was, according to the report, both misconceived and ineffective. Because of Iceland's automatic indexing of long-term loans (with a fixed rate of interest) to the CPI (consumer price index); and because of the easy access to cheap credit abroad, steep rises in the rate of interest were not only ineffective but counter-productive.

It attracted speculative capital, seeking quick profits from interest-rate differentials, with disastrous consequences. It strengthened the króna, enhanced imports, pushed the trade deficit into world record figures and helped pile up unsustainable debt. Long before the fall, Iceland's economy had spiralled out of control and was heading helplessly for a harsh landing. The US-originated financial crisis was just the spark that ignited the flame. In the words of the renowned financial expert, Willem Buiter, Iceland's fall was "not a question of if – only when".

When ultimately Iceland met its fate, this once egalitarian Nordic nation had, by the impact of grisly ideology and shortsighted and irresponsible politics, been turned into a caricature of US-style casino capitalism. Thus Iceland, which was meant to be a shining example of the neo-con model's superiority, became the first victim of its ultimate global failure. The intellectual legacy of Reagan-Thatcher and their disciples has by now been relegated to the "dustbin of history". Unfortunately, that is also Iceland's place in the world—for the time being.

"The fall of 2008 has mercilessly disclosed the underlying weaknesses of the young Icelandic republic. Not only is it still today unable to defend itself against potential outside aggressors. But what about enemies from within?"

BROKEN TOOLS

Who is to come to the rescue? How are we to find our way back to normalcy (after this mad ride as the "sorcerer's apprentice")? That's the point. We are broke (as a nation) and by definition unable to help ourselves. We need outside help. And willingly or not, we have now been placed under the tutelage of the IMF—the first "developed" nation since the UK in 1976 to be given that treatment.

The IMF is the watchdog of Ameri-

can capitalism. It is there to ensure that the interests of international capital are duly taken into account when nation states threaten to default. Since we are broke and already over our head in debt, we don't have the option of pumping public money into the economy to stimulate economic activity. Therefore we have no choice but to accept the bitter pill of the imposed austerity program. We must cut our budgetary expenditure on welfare and raise taxes to save enough money to pay our debt. We must claw our way back out of the debt prison. Can we do it? That is the question.

To tell the truth, the prospects don't look too bright. He who is unable to admit his mistakes is by the same token unable to correct them. He is therefore doomed to repeat them. That seems to be the most likely outcome for the time being. When it comes to political solutions—learning from our mistakes—the only tools (the political parties) we have for the job, are broken. Three of the parties (The IP, the awkwardly named Alliance—for what?) and the so called Progressives, are all to a varying degree discredited by their past and compromised by their inability to admit their failure of leadership. Who can trust them? And if they cannot be trusted—who can replace them? Do we need another bout of the "pots and pans" revolution?

The Left-Greens, although clear of any responsibility for the crash and called upon to clean up the mess left there by the others, are caught unprepared for the task of charting any future course for the nation. Their misconceived antipathy for the European Union and general economic illiteracy—despite the heroic stamina of their chairman, turned Finance Minister—makes the party an awkward and unreliable coalition partner. So, the question remains unanswered: Who can ride in for the rescue and stake out the road to salvation?

Although 'the three wise men', in their investigative report, gave con-

vincing evidence for Alþingi to indict the leaders of the Independence Party and the Alliance for gross mistakes and neglect of public duty (along with the Central Bank directors and a few smaller fish). Alþingi spectacularly failed to follow the matter through to its logical conclusion. The haphazard outcome was that Alþingi only indicted the hapless former PM, Mr. Haarde. In doing so Alþingi forfeited what little trust there was left in that battered bastion. This calls to mind the Nobel laureate Laxness' famous adage from 'Iceland's Bell': "Cruel is their injustice, but worse still is their justice."

CULPRITS-IN-CHIEF

The evidence presented in the investigative report overwhelmingly shows that the Godfathers of Iceland's fall were in fact the leaders of the twin-parties, the Independence Party and their junior coalition partner, the so-called Progressives. The leaders of those parties, Mr. Davíð Oddsson and Mr. Halldór Ásgrímsson, were sitting jointly at the helm of coalition governments for three consecutive electoral terms, or twelve years, administering the policies that led up to the fall.

They were directly responsible for the corrupting influence of the quota system; also for the privatisation of the banks á la Russe; and they were directly responsible for the lack of coordinated macro-economic management of the Icelandic economy, which gave free rein to the fraudulent business practices that brought down the entire financial system of the country. In addition Mr. Oddsson, in his capacity as Central Bank Director (appointed by himself in 2005), is responsible for not only the fall of the banks but also the collapse of the national currency and the bankruptcy of the Central Bank to boot.

The least Alþingi should have done, apart from indicting Mr. Haarde and his accomplices, was to adopt a motion of censure condemning those culprits-in-chief of the economic ruin they left behind. That would have sufficed to permanently bar those individuals from public office. And it should have made it mandatory for their respective political parties to critically examine and reject their legacies. Only after doing so can those political parties ask to be given another opportunity to be trusted with public office. Trust cannot be taken for granted. It must be earned.

Instead the public has to suffer the indignity of hearing Mr. Oddsson, in his capacity as editor of the conservative daily, Morgunblaðið, holding up a ceaseless tirade, blaming everybody but himself for the misfortune he, more than anyone else, is responsible for having brought upon his people. Through his daily falsification of history, this de facto leader of the Independence Party is doing his nation an even greater disservice by scaring the rank and file of IP-loyalists from coming to grips with the party's disreputable past. He who does not acknowledge his mistakes and blames everybody else for his own faults is not going to learn from those mistakes. He is doomed to repeat them. Sorry.

THE ENEMIES WITHIN

In two new major works of historical scholarship, the authors—historians Guðni Th. Jóhannesson and Þór Whitehead—cast the searchlight on deeply rooted and longstanding weaknesses of the political institutions of Iceland, since it came into existence as a sovereign nation in 1918. In the case of Mr. Jóhannesson's masterful biography of Dr. Gunnar Thoroddsen (a former IP-leader and PM) he reveals new sources for the widespread, corrupt practices of the Independence Party (and its reflection within the other dominant party, the Progressives). Those two political parties, which between them lead coalition governments throughout most of the last century, were both under the thumb of special interests and systematically abused their position of power and on the boards of publicly owned banks and funds to grant subsidies and loans on favourable terms and hand

out privileged patronage (such as jobs, both in the public and private sectors) to their clientele—in return for financial support.

In the IP-case they systematically bought votes through direct bribes and used their longstanding control over City Hall in Reykjavík to build up a vast system of patronage to maintain the party's grip on power at all costs. Favouritism, nepotism, crony-capitalism—all those political vices that we normally associate with the mafia and undermine the basic foundations of the rule of law—were widespread and contaminating, long before the latter day banksters came to the fore and ruined the country.

In the case of Dr. Whitehead's book ("Soviet-Iceland: An Unfinished Revolution") the author emphasises the vulnerability and inherent weakness of the Icelandic state, in this case in the face of a possible communist insurgency during the troubled times of the great depression. With no army and an unarmed police force, the embryonic Icelandic state was in fact unable to defend itself against any well-organised and armed group determined to overthrow it.

The fall of 2008 has mercilessly disclosed the underlying weaknesses of the young Icelandic republic. Not only is it still today unable to defend itself against potential outside aggressors. But what about enemies from within? It is for instance highly doubtful that the (politically appointed) judiciary system is able to deal with cases of international fraud, such as those that have shaken the republic to its foundation, or to bring fraudulent businessmen and corrupt politicians to justice. Not a single one of the oligarchs who robbed the Icelandic banks from within have so far been brought to justice. Many of them still retain control of their companies. Many have even been granted generous debt-relief by the new banks (under state supervision) under the guise of financial restructuring.

The Icelandic state, heavily indebted and having lost its credit worthiness, is utterly dependent on outside help. We need such outside help in negotiating the terms for our debt repayment—also for rescheduling our debt and to secure access to financial markets on manageable terms. And we need help in restoring our national currency to a modicum of functionality after it has lost all credibility, domestically as well as abroad. And we need direct foreign investment to harness our valuable resources of clean and renewable energy to generate income to pay our debts and restore our economy back to health.

DO WE DARE?

Looking towards the future, the keyword in formulating any solution is cooperation – cooperation with friendly neighbours in order to get us out of the black hole into which we have fallen. We are not alone in this. Other nations, considerably more numerous than we are, also find themselves in such dire straits that they need temporary help to overcome their difficulties.

But in our case we have yet to answer the basic question: Do we, despite our setback, have the self-confidence not only to learn from our mistakes, but to enter into international cooperation as a fully fledged sovereign state, with both rights and obligations? Or are we going to continue blaming others for our misfortunes, looking inwards in sulking anger, cultivating a self-imposed martyrdom, suspicious of our neighbours and glorifying in our "heroic" standing alone against all comers? This is what I have called the "Serbia syndrome." Is that really the example we want to follow?

This is what the EU-issue—to join or not to join—is all about. It is primarily about us. Do we have full confidence in our ability to cooperate with our Nordic neighbours on an equal basis and within the structures of European democracy, where we belong? Or do we not dare? ☹

Lots Of News | Paul Nikolov

The Last Decade: What Happened?

The first decade of the millennium is over, and you know what that means - it's time for some retrospection.

2001

While this was a pretty big year for just about everyone in the world, things were relatively calm here in the land of fire and ice. Except that widening cracks at the bottom of the lake Kleifarvatn in the southwest began to literally drain the lake of its water, to the point where it reached only 20% of its volume (and it's over 90 metres deep in parts). Iceland also began its hydrogen energy program. Remember that? The hydrogen powered bus, the hydrogen filling station in the eastern part of town, Iceland poised on the brink of launching a revolution in how vehicles are run. Yeah. Heady times.



2002

When then Chinese president Jiang Zemin paid Iceland an official visit, the Icelandic government wanted to be sure he had a warm welcome. In keeping with that, they arrested Falun Gong protesters at Keflavik airport and kept them detained at a nearby school. They also had airports across the United States block Falun Gong members from boarding planes to Iceland, the New York Times reported at the time. Wrongful arrest and detention lawsuits were inevitably won, but the move set a tone about the government's attitude towards protests in Iceland, which would carry over many years later.



2003

In this year, cable television giant Nickelodeon agreed to produce Lazytown in Gardabær, Iceland, putting the country on the map as the producers of its first ever exported children's show, which would become an international hit. It was also the year President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson married Dorrit Moussaieff. The President marrying a foreigner rubbed a few people the wrong way, but Dorrit was soon beloved by most Icelandic people, and her love of Iceland is well-known. Stórasta land í heimi! Also in this year, the privatisation of Iceland's banks was completed, thereby assuring a strong and enduring economy.



2004

The President again stole the spotlight this year, for two reasons. First off, a media bill—backed by Davíð Oddsson and designed to limit how much control over the media a single company could have—was passed in parliament, but the president refused to sign it. Up until this point, Icelandic presidents had acted more or less like figureheads, greeting foreign VIPs but exercising little actual power. This was the first time a president had ever refused to sign a law. Subsequently, Ólafur was re-elected president.



2005

Iceland kicked off the year when the Movement for Active Democracy bought a full page of ad space in The New York Times to issue an apology to the Iraqi people, on behalf of Iceland, for the country taking part in the "coalition of the willing." And while the group continued to press for answers as to how we ended up on that list in the first place, this was soon drowned out by the noise that arose when chess legend Bobby

Fischer was rubber-stamped Icelandic citizenship and arrived in the country to much fanfare. Eighteen hours later, he held a press conference where he ranted about the global Jewish conspiracy, and then never spoke to the media again.

2006

These were the heydays of the Icelandic economy. Everyone had a flatscreen TV, at least two SUVs, a McMansion in Mosfellsbær and wallets bursting with 5.000 krónur notes. Conservatives smirked, liberals grumbled. Also, municipal elections were held, and the Progressive Party in Reykjavik was accused of having paid foreigners to vote for them. The Progressives denied the allegations, which were never proven. Oh, also, internationally celebrated deCODE genetics reported over 530 million USD in losses, and that they had in fact never turned a profit.



2007

Parliamentary elections this year saw the Conservatives and the Social Democrats join forces, in what was to be an ill-fated union that would end halfway through its term. At the same time, the majority coalition in Reykjavik city hall—the Conservatives and the Progressives—fell apart, marking the first time a sitting majority in city hall didn't finish out its term. I guess you could say 2007 was a portent of further deconstruction.



2008

I suppose it goes without saying that the economic collapse in the fall of this year was Iceland's single biggest story. The banks, which had swelled to many times the size of the country's GDP, fell apart. Iceland defaulted on Icesave deposits made by foreign clients. This time around, popular protests weren't being held by a few "fringe" activists, but by thousands of Icelanders, who stood in front of parliament and demanded that the government step down.



2009

The Independence Party/Social Democrat alliance conceded power, and emergency elections were held. This ushered in Iceland's first leftist government ever, comprised of the now-sitting Social Democrats and the Leftist-Greens. To foreign observers, the elections were more notable in that Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir not only became our first female prime minister, but was also the first openly gay head of state in modern times. Few Icelanders actually cared about that point, as we were too busy talking about Icesave.



2010

Does any one news story sum up 2010 better than the President's veto of the Icesave law and the subsequent referendum that buried it? It's doubtful. Just when we thought we'd be able to stop hearing about Icesave, the President trolls us. That's pretty much what this decade has been like—getting up, reaching for the prize, and stumbling again. That the people overwhelmingly voted to kill the law is a more positive testament to the country's resolve. Even with our economy in tatters, we could—no, had to—exercise some control over our fate. That struggle continues into the New Year. ☹



News | Paul Nikolov

The Stories That Made 2010

SEPTEMBER



While Magma Energy and the national church dominated the headlines, Jenis av Rana, chairman of the Christian Centrist Party of the Faeroe Islands, told Faeroese media that for Icelandic Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir

to come to the Faeroe Islands with her wife was "a defiance of the Bible." Legislators from both countries have harshly denounced the MP's remarks. The month finished off with parliament voting in favour of charging former Prime Minister Geir H. Haarde with neglect and mismanagement that helped contribute to the economic collapse. He will be tried in a national court in 2011.

OCTOBER



This month started with anti-government protests from different groups with different goals. While the first protest saw some thousands attend, subsequent protests featured far lower numbers, and would eventually peter out by the year's end. While the government decided that the investigative committee on Magma Energy's sale of HS Orka had given the green light for the sale, a panel comprised of former committee members and Björk Guðmundsdóttir contended that the government could still block the sale on the ground of imminent domain. every media source in the country except Grapevine ignored this news. A Reykjavik city council proposal that would ban church officials from proselytizing in play schools was strongly contested by the church, but would eventually pass.

NOVEMBER



Paul Ramses, arguably Iceland's most famous asylum seeker, announced that he was running for president of Iceland. It also came to light that the US embassy was engaging in surveillance of private citizens living in the neighbourhood around the building, with some reports that security firm Securitas had been hired at one point to root through the trash cans of people living on the same street as the embassy. The embassy denied that it was engaging in spying, saying that it was only looking for suspicious behaviour. Controversy arose when the Grapevine reported that the Blood Bank was turning away people who couldn't speak Icelandic. The strong response this story generated led to the Blood Bank re-considering this policy.

DECEMBER



Elections for the constitutional assembly concluded, with one of the lowest voter turnouts ever, and a general sense of cynicism and disappointment as it seemed well-known Icelandic figures all scored a seat, even if some of them didn't seem to have any platform at all. As WikiLeaks' infodump of thousands of diplomatic cables generated world attention, Iceland stepped up to assist the website, with private companies offering to serve as proxies for donations, and parliament again voicing its support for WikiLeaks. The year concluded as it began: with Icesave. A new deal was reached between Iceland, Britain and Holland with much fairer terms. The President hinted that he might again refuse to sign the deal into law. To which we can only say "oh god please no, not more Icesave". ☹

HAPPY NEW EARS

10" VINYL

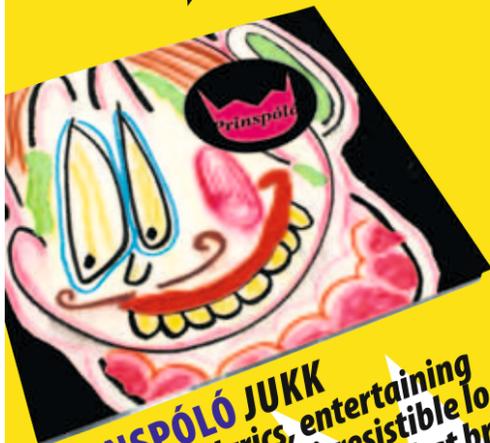
THE HEAVY EXPERIENCE
EARTH meets John Coltrane
in a dark alley



RETRO STEFSON KIMBABWE
FRÉTTATÍMINN



BENNI HEMM HEMM SKOT
FRÉTTABLAÐ



PRINSPÓLÓ JUKK
"Smashing lyrics, entertaining performance and irresistible lo-fi sound ... Excellent Jukk that brightens up the day." FRÉTTABLAÐ



MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN JANUARY

PRESCRIBING WITH LOVE
MUSIC FOR YOUR LIVE
EXPERIENCE

How to use the listings
Venues are listed alphabetically by day.
For complete listings and detailed information
on venues visit www.grapevine.is

7 FRI

B5
22:00 DJ Leifur
Bakkus
23:00 DJ Benson IS FANTASTIC!
Boston
22:00 DJ KGB
Den Danske Kro
19:00 Live music: Biggi and Valdi
Dubliner
22:00 Live music
English Pub
22:00 Live music
Esja
22:00 DJ Daddi and DJ Mastermix
Faktorý
22:00 We Made God release concert and Bloodgroup DJ set from midnight
Gerðuberg
12:15 Classical music for lunch
Háskólabíó
19:30 The Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Viennese favourites. 4400/4700ISK
Hressó
22:30 Troubadours Jogvan and Vignir followed by DJ Elli
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Alfons X
Nordic House
The Voice of a Nation: Karaoke Marathon
Prikið
21:00 Frískó & DJ Árni Kocoon
Sódóma
22:00 AMFJ and friends

8 SAT

B5
22:00 DJ Jonas
Bakkus
23:00 DJ Öfull
Boston
22:00 DJ Unnur Andrea
Den Danske Kro
19:00 Hjálmar
Dubliner
22:00 Live music
English Pub
22:00 Live music
Esja
22:00 DJ Daddi and DJ Mastermix
Faktorý
24:00 DJ Hunk of a Man
Háskólabíó
17:00 The Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Viennese favourites. 4400/4700ISK
Hressó
22:30 Penta followed by DJ Elli
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Sexy Lazer
Nordic House
The Voice of a Nation: Karaoke Marathon
Prikið
22:00 DJ Addi Intro
Sódóma
22:00 Who Knew, Sing for me Sandra and Nolo. 1000ISK

9 SUN

Bakkus
Whiskey Sunday: Wind down your weekend with discounts on whiskey and Guinness.
Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music: Raggi
Dubliner
22:00 Live music
English Pub
22:00 Live music
Gerðuberg
13:15 Classical music for lunch
Prikið
22:00 Hangover Movie Night: 'What's Eating Gilbert Grape.' Free popcorn

10 MON

Bakkus
21:00 Movie Night
Café Rosenberg
21:00 Blues Night: Gunni Þórðar and Þorsteinn Stanya Magnússon
Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music
Dubliner
22:00 Live music
English Pub

22:00 Live music
Prikið
21:00 The fortune teller. Red wine & cheese for 2 at 1000ISK
Trúnó
22:00 American heartbreak night: Love songs and sad songs

11 TUE

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music & beer bingo
Dubliner
22:00 Live music
English Pub
22:00 Live music
Trúnó
20:00 Queer themed pub quiz

12 WED

Bakkus
22:00 Steini & Frikki DJ set
Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music & pop-quiz
Dubliner
22:00 Live music
English Pub
22:00 Live music
Kaffitár, Bankastræti 8
20:00 Tango Milango. 500ISK
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Extreme Chill: Futuregrapher, Beatmakin Troopa, Krummi, DJ AnDre
Prikið
21:00 DJ Árni Kocoon
Trúnó
21:00 RuPaul drag race screening

13 THU

B5
22:00 Sjonni Brink and Vignir Snaer
Bakkus
22:00 DJ Benson IS FANTASTIC!
Boston
22:00 DJ Andrea
Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music. Scandinavian Night
Dubliner
22:00 Live music
English Pub
22:00 Live music
Esja
Loungy Thursday
Háskólabíó
19:30 The Iceland Symphony Orchestra presents: Young Soloists competition
Hressó
22:00 Böddi and Davíð
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Alfons X
Prikið
21:00 DJ Moonshine
Salurinn, Kópavogur
20:00 Guðrún Gunnarsdóttir's tribute to Elly Viljálms. 3500ISK
Thorvaldsen
22:00 Special guest DJ. Mojito Thursday
Trúnó
Sushi extravaganza. Table orders: djglimmer@gmail.com

14 FRI

B5
22:00 DJ Jonas
Bakkus
23:00 DJ Kári
Boston
22:00 Biggi Maus

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music & sing-along night
Dubliner
22:00 Live music
English Pub
22:00 Live music
Esja
22:00 DJ Daddi and DJ Mastermix
Faktorý
24:00 DJ KGB
Gerðuberg
12:15 Classical music for lunch
Hressó
23:30 Penta followed by DJ Fúsi
Prikið
21:00 Frískó & DJ Danni Deluxe

15 SAT

B5
22:00 DJ Leifur
Bakkus
23:00 DJ KGB
Broadway
21:00 Beatbox competition featuring Beardyman. 2000ISK
Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music & sing-along night
Dubliner
22:00 Live music
English Pub
22:00 Live music
Esja
22:00 DJ Daddi and DJ Mastermix
Faktorý
24:00 DJ Dans Hans
Hressó
22:30 Silfur followed by DJ Fúsi
Prikið
22:00 DJ Gísli Galdur
Salurinn, Kópavogur
17:00 New Year Concert: Salon Islandus. 2900ISK

16 SUN

Bakkus
Whiskey Sunday: Wind down your weekend with discounts on whiskey and Guinness.
Celtic Cross
22:00 Live music
Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music
Dubliner
22:00 Live music
English Pub
22:00 Live music
Gerðuberg
13:15 Classical music for lunch
Prikið
22:00 Hangover Movie Night: 'Kujo.' Free popcorn

17 MON

Bakkus
21:00 Movie Night
Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music
Dubliner
22:00 Live music
English Pub
22:00 Live music
Prikið
21:00 The Fortune Teller followed by house DJ. Red wine & cheese for 2 at 1000ISK

18 TUE

Bakkus
21:30 The Heavy Experience:

Music & Entertainment | Venue finder

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Amsterdam Hafnarstræti 5 D2 | Celtic Cross Hverfisgata 26 E4 | NASA Porvaldsenstræti 2 E3 |
| Apótek Austurstræti 16 E3 | Dillon Laugavegur 30 F5 | Nýlenduvörverzlun Hemma & Valda Laugavegur 21 E4 |
| Austur Austurstræti 7 E3 | Dubliner Hafnarstræti 4 D3 | Næsti Bar Ingólfstræti 1A E3 |
| B5 Bankastræti 5 E3 | English Pub Austurstræti 12 D2 | Óliver Laugavegur 20A F5 |
| Babalú Skólavörðustígur 22 G5 | Glaumbar Tryggvagata 20 D2 | Óistofan Vegamótastígur E4 |
| Bar 11 Laugavegur 11 E4 | Highlander Lækjargata 10 E3 | Prikið Bankastræti E3 |
| Barbara Laugavegur 22 F6 | Hressó Austurstræti 20 E3 | Rósenberg Klappargata 25 E4 |
| Bjarni Fel Austurstræti 20 E3 | Hverfisbarinn Hverfisgata 20 E4 | Sódóma Reykjavík Tryggvagata 22 D3 |
| Boston Laugavegur 28b F5 | Jacobsen Austurstræti 9 E3 | Sólón Bankastræti 7A E3 |
| Café Cultura Hverfisgata 18 E4 | Kaffi Zimsen Hafnarstræti 18 D3 | Thorvaldsen Austurstræti 8 D2 |
| Café Paris Austurstræti 14 E3 | Kaffibarinn Bergstraðstræti 1 E4 | Vegamót Vegamótastígur 4 E4 |
| Balthazar Hafnarstræti 1-3 D2 | Karamba Laugavegur 22 F4 | Venue Tryggvagata 22 D3 |



16 Jan

Something Wicked This Way Comes

Sirkús Sóley

Tjarnarbíó, Tjarnargata 12, 101 Reykjavík
14:00, Sunday, January 16

Sirkús Sóley is a wholesome show of slapstick acrobatics and impressive juggling that rears its jovial head every once in a while when the maniacally grinning lot of them feel like it. They have performed nationwide to rave reviews and drawn impressive crowds, and will convene for the first time this year on January 16 in Tjarnarbíó.

There's no telling what to expect from them this time, but the past has yielded juggling human towers, massive balloons swallowing performers whole, hoops tossed, swung, thrown, flipped, climbed through, rotated and any other verb you can think of, as well as all the feather tiaras you could ever want. This will be their last show this winter, meaning that if you miss it, it would not only be a shame, but kind of impractical as well.

SE



6-8 Jan

Fucking Karaoke, Motherfucker

'Voice Of The Nation' Karaoke Marathon

The Nordic House, Sturlugata 5, 101 Reykjavík

Thursday, January 6 - Saturday, January 8 15:00-00:00

Iceland warms up for Christmas with its thirteen yuletide lads coming to town day by day, and Christmas consequently lasts the thirteen days it takes the assholes to leave town. While Christmas Eve and Christmas Day became essentially Christian holidays, the end of Christmas, 'Prettándinn' (literally 'The Thirteenth') remains to this day a fairly pagan tradition, associated with fire, elves, nature and all that crap.

Singer/songwriter/elf Björk and her cohorts have subsequently selected this day and the two days following it to organize a mass drive to get a bunch of folks (that's 35.000 folks, in case you're wondering how many folks are in a bunch) to sign a petition that will pressure the government to restore the rights and ownership of Icelandic nature and natural resources to the Icelandic people. To get said people off their collective ass, Björk has thrown in the perfect lure, the one thing sure to attract attention-starved Icelanders by the droves: the ancient art of karaoke.

That's right: this weekend, you or any one of your deranged friends can mosey on down to the Nordic House, grab some soup, crack open a bear and holler any one of thousands of pop classics accompanied by a live band, a midi backing track or a programmable pipe organ. And the best part? If you have a ken-nitala, you get to sign the petition and stick it to the man in the process.

SE

CD release concert

Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live music & beer bingo

Dubliner

22:00 Live music

English Pub

22:00 Live music

Trúnó

Women's Night

19 WED

Bakkus

21:00 Lóa and Másól's game night: Broomdance, limbo, baloondance and other birthday games you played as a kid. Awards for every category.

Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live music and pop-quiz night

Dubliner

22:00 Live music

English Pub

22:00 Live music

Faktorý

20:00 Pub Quiz

Kaffibarinn

22:00 Hilmar & Hellert: Reggae Dub Session

Kaffítar, Bankastræti 8

20:00 Tango Milango. 500ISK

Prikið

21:00 DJ Benni B Ruff

Trúnó

21:00 RuPaul drag race screening

20 THU

B5

22:00 Sjonni Brink and Hreimur

Bakkus

22:00 Einar Sonic

Boston

22:00 Krummi

Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live music. Scandinavian night

Dubliner

22:00 Live music

English Pub

22:00 Live music

Esja

Loungy Thursday

Háskólabíó

19:30 The Iceland Symphony

Orchestra: Film Music

The Icelandic Opera

20:00 Ágúst Ólafsson and Gerrit

Schuil perform Schubert's Swan-song

Prikið

21:00 DJ Jón Atli

Sódóma

21:00 Jimi Hendrix Tribute

Thorvaldsen

22:00 Guest DJ. Mojito Thursday.

Trúnó

22:00 DJ Atli

21 FRI

B5

22:00 DJ Johann Valur

Bakkus

23:00 DJ Hunk of a Man

Boston

22:00 DJ Gísli Galdur

Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live music. Sing-along night

Dubliner

22:00 Live music

English Pub

17:00 Live music

Esja

22:00 DJ Daddi and DJ Mastermix

Faktorý

24:00 DJ Atli Kanilsnúður

Gerðuberg

12:15 Classical music for lunch

Hressó

23:30 Dalton followed by DJ Fúsi

Kaffibarinn

22:00 Alfons X

Prikið

22:00 DJ Krúsi & Þórður nikka

22 SAT

B5

22:00 DJ Jonas

Bakkus

23:00 DJ Árni Sveins

Boston

23:00 DJ Unnur Andrea

Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live music. Sing-along night

Dubliner

22:00 Live music

English Pub

22:00 Live music

Esja

22:00 DJ Daddi and DJ Mastermix

Faktorý

24:00 DJ Biggi Maus

Hressó

22:30 Troubadours Jogvan and Vignir

followed by DJ Fannar

Kaffibarinn

Daddy's weekend # 9: Gísli Galdur & Benni B Ruff

Prikið

22:00 DJ Danni Deluxe

23 SUN

Bakkus

Whiskey Sunday: Wind down your weekend with discounts on whiskey and Guinness.

Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live music

Dubliner

22:00 Live music

English Pub

22:00 Live music

Gerðuberg

13:15 Classical music for lunch

Prikið

22:00 Hangover Movie Night: 'What about Bob?' Free popcorn

24 MON

Bakkus

21:00 Movie Night

Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live music

Dubliner

22:00 Live music

English Pub

22:00 Live music

Prikið

21:00 The fortune teller followed by house DJ. Red wine & cheese for 2 at 1000ISK

Trúnó

Eva María hosts Italian night

25 TUE

Bakkus

21:00 Foosball Championships

Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live music and beer bingo

Dubliner

22:00 Live music

English Pub

22:00 Live music

26 WED

Bakkus

22:00 DJ Cool in the Pool

Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live music & pop-quiz

Dubliner

22:00 Live music

English Pub

22:00 Live music

Kaffibarinn

22:00 Extreme Chill: Introbeats, Plat,

Beatmakin Troopa, DJ AnDre

Kaffítar, Bankastræti 8

20:00 Tango Milango. 500ISK

Prikið

21:00 Rock hour with DJ Matti

Trúnó

21:00 RuPaul drag race screening

27 THU

B5

22:00 Sjonni Brink and Vignir Snær

Bakkus

22:00 Two Step Horror

Boston

22:00 DJ Andrea

Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live music. Scandinavian night

Dubliner

22:00 Live music

English Pub

22:00 Live music

Esja

Loungy Thursday

Háskólabíó

19:30 The Icelandic Symphony

Orchestra: Dark Music Days. 3900ISK

Hressó

22:00 Jogvan and Vignir Troubadours

Kaffibarinn

22:00 Alfons X

Prikið

21:00 Surprise Night! Don't miss out on the fun.

Thorvaldsen

22:00 Guest DJ. Mojito Thursday

Den Danske Kro

- Mondays •
Shot's night - all shots ISK 400.-
- Tuesdays •
Live music and Beer Bingo night
- Wednesdays •
POP-QUIZ night (special offer on drinks) & Live music
- Thursdays •
Live Music / Scandinavian nights
- Fridays •
Live music / Sing-along nights
- Saturdays •
Live music / Sing-along nights
- Sundays •
Hangover & Live music night Really good prices on drinks

Den Danske Kro
Kro Bodega Pub

Ingólfsstræti 3 · 101 · Reykjavík
www.danske.is

MUSIC BOOKS POSTERS WEBSTORE COFFEE CONCERTS ART GALLERY

ABSOLUT SPAR STARTS JAN 17TH

40%

Haha
haha
haha
varí

AUSTURSTRÆTI 6
HAVARI.IS

Sódóma

REYKJAVÍK

7. Jan **FALK concert: Manslaughter Krakkkslaughter Krakkbot AMFJ Oberdada von BRÚTAL Auxpan**
22:00 / Free
8. Jan **Who Knew**
22:00 / 1000 kr
14. Jan **Private function**
15. Jan **TBA**
20. Jan **Jimi Hendrix Tribute**
21:00
29. Jan **Brian Viglione (The Dresden Dolls) and Vika Yermolyeva**
22:00
- Feb 5 **Endless Dark Album release concert**
22:00

Sódóma Reykjavík Tryggvagata 22, 101 RVK
www.facebook.com/sodomareykjavik
www.twitter.com/sodomarvk

28 FRI

- B5**
22:00 DJ Simon
- Bakkus**
23:00 DJ KGB
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live music and sing-along night
- Dubliner**
22:00 Live music
- English Pub**
22:00 Live music
- Faktóry**
24:00 DJ Benson is Fantastic
- Esja**
22:00 DJ Daddi and DJ Mastermix
- Gerðuberg**
12:15 Classical music for lunch
- Hressó**
22:30 Silfur followed by DJ Elli
- Prikið**
21:00 DJ Addi Intro & Þórður nikka

29 SAT

- B5**
22:00 DJ Johann Valur
- Bakkus**
23:00 DJ Öfull
- Boston**
22:00 De La Rósa
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live music and sing-along night
- Dubliner**
22:00 Live music
- English Pub**
22:00 Live music
- Esja**
22:00 DJ Daddi and DJ Mastermix
- Hressó**
22:30 Mars followed by DJ Elli
- Kaffibarinn**
22:00 DJ KGB
- Prikið**
22:00 DJ Árni Kocoon
- Sódóma**
22:00 Brian Viglione (The Dresden Dolls) and Vika Yermolyeva

Trúnó

22:00 80's Night

30 SUN

- Bakkus**
Whiskey Sunday: Wind down your weekend with discounts on whiskey and Guinness.
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live music
- Dubliner**
22:00 Live music
- English Pub**
22:00 Live music
- Gerðuberg**
13:15 Classical music for lunch
- Hressó**
23:00 Dalton
- Prikið**
Hangover Movie Night: 'Judge Dredd.' Free popcorn

31 MON

- Bakkus**
21:00 Movie Night
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live music
- Dubliner**
22:00 Live music
- English Pub**
22:00 Live music
- Prikið**
21:00 The fortune teller followed by the house DJ. Redwine & cheese for 2 at 1000ISK

1 TUE

- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live music & beer bingo
- Dubliner**
22:00 Live music
- English Pub**
22:00 Live music

2 WED

Bakkus

- 22:00 Steini & Frikki DJ set
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live music and pop-quiz night
- Dubliner**
22:00 Live music
- English Pub**
22:00 Live music
- Faktóry**
20:00 Pub Quiz
- Kaffitár, Bankastræti 8**
20:00 Tango Milango. 500ISK

3 THU

- Bakkus**
22:00 DJ Einar Sonic
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live music. Scandinavian night
- Dubliner**
22:00 Live music
- English Pub**
22:00 Live music
- Faktóry**
21:00 Benny Crespo's Gang
- Háskólabíó**
19:30 The Iceland Symphony Orchestra: War and Peace
- Thorvaldsen**
22:00 Guest DJ. Mojito Thursday

ONGOING

- Restaurant Reykjavík**
20:00 Let's Talk Iceland: Comedy Show. 2200ISK. Everyday
- Iðnó**
Cellophane Comedy show
20:00 Sundays and Thursdays

An Appeal To Geekery

Leikjavík

Leikjavík is the "clever" name of a humble establishment tucked away between some apartments near the northern end of Barónsstígur. It actually shares the space with an Indian-themed hobby store whose window dressings completely obscure the place from the street, making it a bit hard to find, but in any case, go there, find it, and donate.

Leikjavík is, for lack of a better term, a board game parlour. They have plenty of their own games, including well-worn favourites (Scrabble, Chess, Pictionary) as well as newcomers that should and must be tried out (Blokus, Small World, Risk 2210 A.D.), but if that's not enough, you can always bring your own. They also have snacks and soft drinks on hand, or again, you could just bring your own. It's free, but you can donate as much as you want.

And why am I telling you this? First of all, the board game industry has become insanely creative and innovative of late, and bears notice from even the most casual observer; go there to sample it. Second, geekdom is pretty much the height of fashion these days, and it doesn't get any geekier than a



board game, so at least do it for the street cred. Third, if you're reading this, chances are you're foreign, and for some bizarre reason, foreigners tend to congregate there. I don't know why, but the ratio of foreigners-to-locals there always seems to be at about five to one.

Subsequently, Icelanders will be forced to speak English and you might actually get to know some of them. And lastly: if they don't get a shitload of business this month, they won't be there anymore next month, as the city will cut off their funding.

So at least try it. The worst that could happen? You get your ass handed to you at Catan by a scrawny 14-year-old in a bad shirt, but everyone needs that experience once in a while. DO IT.

SE
When: Tuesdays - Fridays from 19:00 to 23:00, Saturdays & Sundays from 15:00 to 23:00

Where: Barónsstígur 3, 101 Reykjavík

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1981-2011

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Tryggvagata 15, 101 Reykjavík
Opening hours:
12-19 mon-fri, 13-17 weekends
www.photomuseum.is

21-3
Jan - Feb

Je Suis Un Cerf Cardiaque
French Film Festival
Háskólabíó, Hagatorg, 107 Reykjavík
January 21-February 3

Háskólabíó's annual winter tradition of showing us the latest of France and (French-speaking) Canada's worthy contributions to cinema continues this month, with choice picks including a special showing of Godard's 'À bout de souffle' and 'Les aventures extraordinaires d'Adèle Blanc-Sec', Luc Besson's anticipated adaptation of Jacques Tardi's gorgeous gothic-noir comic books. Be sure to check out much-lauded culture clash flicks 'Welcome' and 'Ce Qu'il Faut Pour Vivre', as well as actor-turned-director Guillaume Canet's latest offering, 'Les Petits Mouchoirs'.
SE

ART

GALLERIES & MUSEUMS IN JANUARY

COCKTAIL PLEASURES AND VISUAL STIMULATION

How to use the listings: Venues are listed alphabetically by day. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit www.grapevine.is

OPENINGS

ASÍ Art Museum

January 15
Dual Opening:
Installation by **Ingibjörg Jónsdóttir**
Video art by Hildigunnur Birgisdóttir
Both run until February 6

Bíó Paradís

January 11, 21:00
Kinoklúbður film society presents:
Maya Deren on 16mm. 600 ISK

Hafnarborg

January 8
Dual opening:
Fragments Of Nature: Eiríkur Smith's
abstract paintings 1957-1963
Kjarvals: Stefán Jónsson's 3D
reworkings of Jóhannes Kjarval's
landscape paintings
Both run until February 6

January 9, 15:00
Guided tour of exhibition 'Kjarvals' by
artist Stefán Jónsson

January 23, 14:00

Children's art workshop

January 30, 15:00
Guided tour of exhibition 'Fragments Of
Nature' by Ólöf K. Sigurðardóttir

Garður, Sunnubraut 4, Reykjanes

January 7, 13:00
Fresh Winds International Art
Festival
Runs until January 23

Kling & Bang

January 15
Mundi-Morri-Ragnar Fjalar
MoMS Penetration Installation
Runs until February 13

The National Museum

January 9
The Mývatn Photographer (Main Gal-
lery & The Wall)
Early 20th century photography by
Bárður Sigurðsson (1872-1937)
January 15

Carved Coffers

(on the Third Floor).
From the collections of the National
Museum
Runs until August 31
January 29

Repaired

(in The Corner)
Repaired objects from the collections of
the National Museum
Runs until June 30

The Living Art Museum

January 7, 17:30
Ragnar Kjartansson and Ásmundur
Ásmundsson's annual Christmas elves-
happening
January 8

From the on-going audio/video series

'VIDEORHIZOME' by Marcellvs L.

Runs until February 6
January 15, 18:00

Marcus Steinweg talks: 'Obscurantism

Of Facts'
January 17, 18:00

Marcus Steinweg talks: 'On Philosophy

& Art'
January 20, 16:00

Marcus Steinweg talks: 'Between Form

& Formlessness'

ONGOING

Artótek

Exhibition of works by Hildur Mar-
grétardóttir
Runs until January 16

Gallery Kaolin

Óráð/Delirium
Ink drawings and prints by Þóroddur
Grímsson
Runs until January 17

Gerðuberg

Dægurvöl (Pastimes)
Ágúst Jónsson's abstract paintings on
display
Runs until January 9

Pað Vex Eitt Blóm Fyrir Vestan (A

Flower Grows In The West)
Watercolours and other paintings by
Svava Sigríður Gestsdóttir
Runs until January 16

Hávamál

Illustrations by Kristín Ragna Gunnars-
dóttir from Þórarinn Eldjárn's retelling of
Snorri Sturluson's book
Runs until January 16

Ormurinn Ógnarlangi (The Fearfully

Long Worm)
Tales From Norse Mythology by Kristín
Ragna Gunnarsdóttir
Runs until March 13

The National Gallery of Iceland

Karl Kvaran Retrospective

Runs until February 13

Núttímalist Galleria

Photography Exhibition by Valdís
Thor

Reykjavík Art Museum

Ásmundarsafn

"I choose blossoming women..."
Woman as Symbol in the Art of
Ásmundur Sveinsson

Sleep Light

Lighting installation by Ráðhildur Ing-
adóttir

Thoughts In Forms

Informative recreation of Ásmundur
Jónsson's art studio

Hafnarhús

D18

Exhibits by Bjarni Massi
Runs until January 9

Erró: Collage

Power has a Fragrance
Exhibitions by Gardar Eide Einarsson
Runs until January 9

Kjarvalstaðir

Kjarval: Key Works
Runs until January 16

Exhibit of paintings by Jóhannes S.

Kjarval
Runs until January 23

New Acquisitions 2005-2010

Exhibition of some of the 800 new art
acquisitions collected during the past
five years

Why Collect Artworks?

Open workshop
Runs until January 23

Reykjavík Museum Of Photography

Sjónarhorn (Angles)
Photographs by Wayne Gudmundson
Runs until January 9

SÍM Húsið

Paintings by Guðlaug Dröfn
Gunnarsdóttir
Runs until January 26

Spark Design Space

Gjöf / Gift
Runs until January 15



29
Jan

Headbanging Over A Piano

Vika Yermoleva & Brian Viglione Sódóma Reykjavík, Tryggvagata 22, 101 Reykjavík
January 29, 22:00

Viktoriya 'Vika' Yermoleva is a 32-year old classically educated pianist who hails from Ukraine. She plays, for the most part, piano versions of contemporary metal songs, and by contemporary, we mean the kind-of-cheesy, wish-you-couldn't-still-remember-all-the-words-to kind of teen anthems that were blasted out of car stereos everywhere in their time. We're talking Metallica here. And Queen. And Motörhead. And yeah, Nirvana. We're talking System Of A fucking Down. And Muse and Guns'N'Roses and Slayer. Oh boy, are we talking Slayer. To top it all off, she's accompanied by Dresden Dolls drummer Brian Viglione in all his hyperactive glory, so bring booze. And a towel.

SE

Art | Venue finder

ART67

Laugavegur 67 | **F6**
Mon - Fri 12 - 18 / Sat
12 - 16

Artótek

Tryggvagata 15 | **D2**
Mon 10-21, Tue-Thu 10-19, Fri 11-19, Sat and
Sun 13-17
www.sim.is/Index/Islenka/Artotek

ASÍ Art Museum

Freyugata 41 | **G4**
Tue-Sun 13-17

Árbæjarsafn

Kistuhylur 4

The Culture House

Hverfisgata 15 | **E4**
Open daily 11-17
www.thjodmenning.is

Dwarf Gallery

Grundarstígur 21 | **H6**
Opening Hours: Fri and Sat 18-20
www.this.is/birta/dwarfgallery/dwarfgallery1.html

The Einar Jónsson

Eiríksgrata | **G4**
Tue-Sun 14-17
www.skulptur.is

Gallery Ágúst

Baldursgata 12 | **F4**
Wed-Sat 12-17
www.galleriagust.is

Gallery Fold

Rauðarástígur 14-16 | **G7**
Mon-Fri 10-18 / Sat 11-16 / Sun 14-16
www.myndlist.is

Gallery Kaolin

Ingólfsstræti 8 | **E3**

Gallery Kling & Bang

Hverfisgata 42 | **E5**
Thurs-Sun from 14-18
this.is/klingogbang/

Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

Gerðuberg 3-5
Mon-Thu 11-17 / Wed 11-21 / Thu-Fri 11-17 /
Sat-Sun 13-16
www.gerduberg.is

Hitt Húsið

- **Gallery Tukt**
Pósthússtræti 3-5 | **E3**
www.hitthusid.is

i8 Gallery

Tryggvagata 16 | **D2**
Tue-Fri 11-17 / Sat 13-17 and by appointment.
www.i8.is

Living Art Museum

Skúlagata 28 | **F6**
Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17 / Thu 13-22. www.nylo.is

Hafnarborg

Strandgötu 34,
Hafnarfjörður

Mokka Kaffi

Skólavörðustíg 3A | **F4**

The National Gallery of Iceland

Frikkirkjuvegur 7 | **F3**
Tue-Sun 11-17
www listasafn.is

The National

Museum

Suðurgata 41 | **G1**

Open daily 10-17

natmus.is

The Nordic House

Sturlugata 5 | **H1**
Tue-Sun 12-17
www.nordice.is/

Núttímalist Galleria

Skólavörðustígur 3a | **F4**

Restaurant Reykjavík

Vesturgata 2 | **D2**

Reykjavík 871+/-2

Aðalstræti 17 | **D2**
Open daily 10-17

Reykjavík Art Gallery

Skúlagata 28 | **F6**
Tuesday through Sunday 14-18

Reykjavík Art Museum

Open daily 10-16
www listasafnreykjavikur.is

Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum

Sigtún

Hafnarhús

Tryggvagata 17 | **D2**

Kjarvalsstaðir

Flóakagata | **I7**

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Grandagarður 8 | **C3**

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Tryggvagata 16 | **D2**
Weekdays 12-19 / Sat-Sun 13-17 - www.ljos-myndasafnreykjavikur.is

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Laugamestangi 70

SÍM, The Association of Icelandic Artists

Mon-Fri 10-16
Hafnarstræti 16 | **D3**

Spark, Design Space

Klapparstíg 33 | **E4**
www.sparkdesignspace.com

HORNIÐ
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- Buy tourist merch that's less obviously touristy!

Yes, The Reykjavik Grapevine finally has a T-shirt all of its own. Pick up a copy of this sweet, limited edition item at **Havarí** on Austurstræti or **Dogma** on Laugavegur - 101 Reykjavik. And do it now. For the children.

MAP

Places We Like

1 C is for Cookie

Týsgata 8

This cosy new café owned by Polish couple Agnieszka and Stanislaw is the latest addition to the Reykjavik café scene and already looks set to become a favourite with the locals. Ideal for an early lunch or spending a lazy afternoon deciding which of Agnieszka's delicious home baked cakes you want to try next. I'd go with the cheesecake, its pretty fabulous. EF

2 Havarí

Austurstræti 8

Even before it opened, Havarí was everybody's favourite new music and design store. Headed by Svavar Pétur and Berglind of Skakkamanage, the shop shills the musical goods of Kimi Records, Borgin Hljómplötur, gogoyoko and Skakkapopp as well as posters, art, design products and clothing. CF

3 Trúnó

Laugavegur 22

Located just below Barbara, Trúnó is the most recent addition to Reykjavik's straight-friendly gay scene and swings between cosy café by day and lively bar by night. Generally relaxed atmosphere but given to hosting special events and spinning the drinks wheel. AK

4 Vitabar

Bergþórugata 21

Located on the corner of Vitastígur and Bergþórugata, Vitabar (Lighthouse bar) is the place to go when you're in the mood for a slightly soppy yet delicious burger served up with thick French fries and a little of that local pub feeling. In addition to their legendary Gleym-mér-ei (Forget-me-not) blue-cheese burger, they do steaks, egg burgers, beer and schnapps. Good service, fair prices. AK

5 Svarta Kaffi

Laugavegur 54

If you're looking for a hearty, warming lunch at good value then head down to this cosy café for a bowl of their yummy soup. Doing away with dishes and bowls, the soup comes served in a hollowed out loaf of wholewheat bread, and the best bit is that it's refillable if you're still hungry. Sweet! And, when you're done you can enjoy some people watching on Laugavegur below. EF

6 Habibi

Hafnarstræti 18

This small restaurant offers up a concise menu of delicious Arabic cuisine, from shawarma to kebabs and falafels. The staff is really friendly and accommodating of requests to kick up the spiciness or tone it down if the customer so desires. Habibi seriously hits the spot after hours of partying (or any other time of day) so it's convenient that the place is allegedly open until 6 a.m. Friday and Saturday (although their advertised opening hours are sometimes not adhered to). CF



7 Eymundsson

Skólavörðustígur 11,

Eymundsson is a chain with several outlets but the one on Skólavörðustígur is the best in town. Housed on the ground floor of what was once a Spron Credit Union, the building has a solid institutional feeling—cosy if that's your bag. The premises are equipped with a coffee shop, tables and sofas to lounge in and the all-glass exterior lets in a lot of light, which is good for reading real books, not facebooks. This Eymundsson also regularly hosts book readings, signings and other small events such as concerts and art exhibitions, organized in a pleasantly spontaneous and laid back way. AK

8 Boston

Laugavegur 28

Like an older sibling to the fabled (now deceased) Sirkús, Boston is a warm and mellow second-floor bar on Laugavegur that plays host to the arty party crowd. The baroque wall dressings and deep, rich coloured décor make this bar feel pretty swank, but the mood of the place can go from great to legendary within a heartbeat. CF

9 Hemmi & Valdi

Laugavegur 21

The "colonial store" Hemmi and Valdi was probably 2008's most surprising crowd pleaser. The cosy hangout advanced from being a toasty retreat, where you could get cheap beer and have a quiet chat, into being a chock-full concert venue and an all-night party place. And believe me, the new atmosphere is brilliant. SKK

Raggi from the band Árstíðir is the unstoppable...

HUMAN JUKEBOX

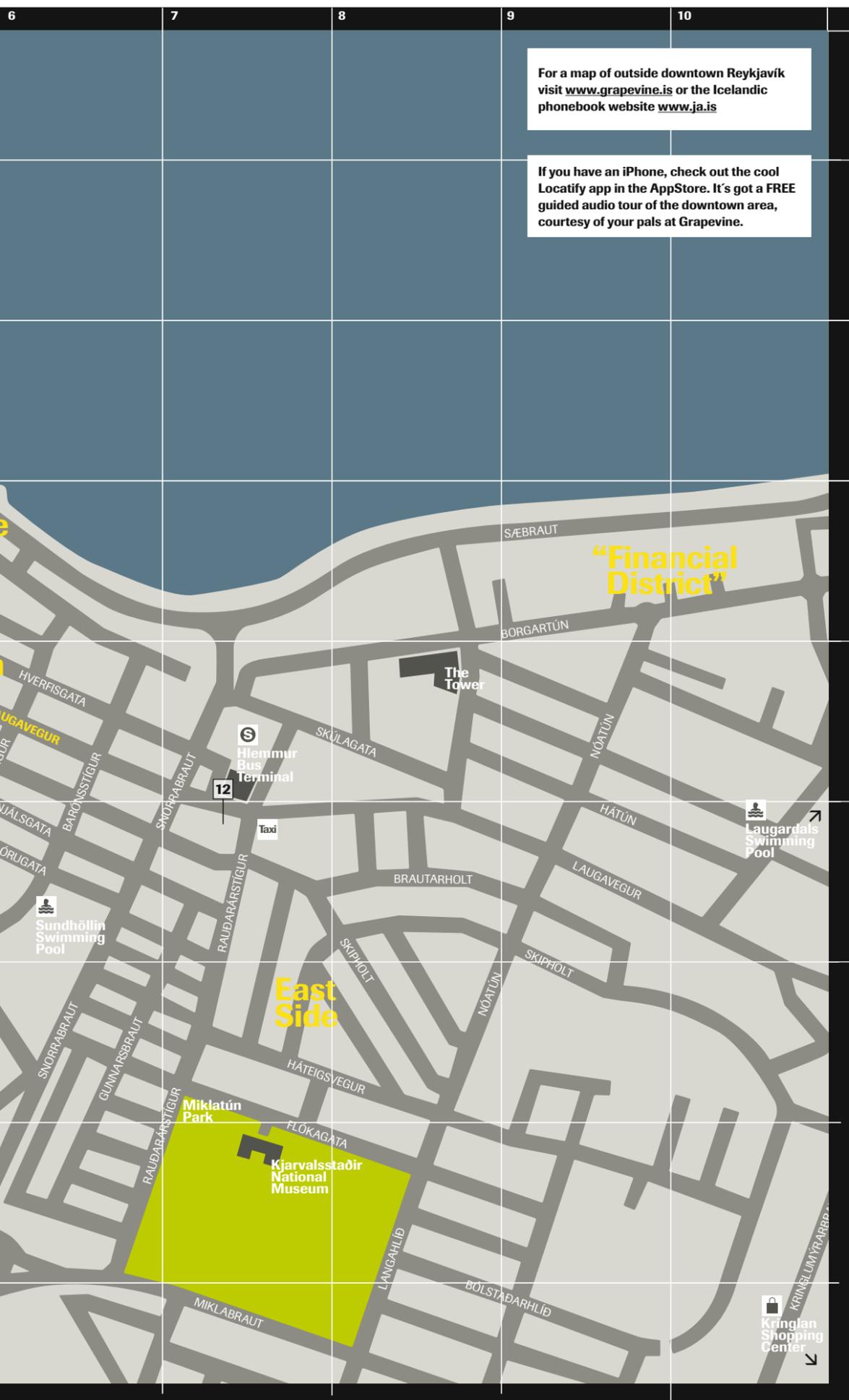
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Austurvöllur





For a map of outside downtown Reykjavik visit www.grapevine.is or the Icelandic phonebook website www.ja.is

If you have an iPhone, check out the cool **Locatify** app in the AppStore. It's got a **FREE** guided audio tour of the downtown area, courtesy of your pals at Grapevine.

10 Hressó

Austurstræti 20
You know, Hressó is basically the only place I go for coffee. Why? Their coffee is decent to excellent, but their forte is surely their wonderful patio, where you can enjoy the spring breeze in the sun, wrap yourself in a blanket beneath an electric heater in January and at all times: smoke. They boast of quite the prolific menu, but I'd reconsider the playlists to tell you the truth, too much of Nickelback really hurts. SKK

11 Bakkus

Tryggvagata 22 - Naustarmegin
Bakkus serves up reasonably priced beer, a really impressive selection of international vodkas and an atmosphere unlike any other in town. An eclectic mix of patrons, regular live music and movie nights keep this place interesting and always inviting. Expect dancing on tables and to-the-death foosball battles. CF

12 Mai Thai

Laugavegur 118
Located across from Hlemmur Bus Station, Mai Thai imports and sells all sorts of products from South East Asia, particularly Thailand and the Philippines. Depending on the day, you might find fresh coriander, mint, chilies, bean sprouts, exotic fruits such as Durian, Carambola or Coconut, as well as year round products such as frozen spring rolls, various kinds of rice sold in bulk bags, sauces and spices galore, egg and rice noodles, Asian snacks, clothes and other knick-knacks. In short, a wide array of what are still considered rare delicacies in Reykjavik. AK

13 Kaffismiðja Íslands

Kárástíg 1
Old fashioned charm is the style of Kaddismiðja, in everything from the decor to the coffee grinders. Off the beaten track, this popular coffee shop is a great spot to sit and read or have a chat with friends. The owners Ingbjörg and Sonja take great pride in the beans they use and the coffee is top notch. You can buy fresh grounds too, in case you just cant get enough. EF

14 Kolaportið

Tryggvagata 19
Reykjavik's massive flea market is a wonderful place to get lost for a few hours, rummaging through stall upon stall of potential treasures. There are heaps of used clothing, knitwear and other yard-sale type goods from decades of yore, and a large food section with fish, meats and baked goods. Check out the vintage post cards and prints at the table near the army surplus. CF

15 Sushibarinn

Laugavegur 2
Sushibarinn is reputedly the best bet for sushi in town since it opened in 2007. This little shop is the most authentic option for sushi in town, with the widest selection around. The price per piece ranges from around 140ISK to 600 ISK, and they also have good choice of trays and set menus options. If you can't get a set, you can also order from Kofi Tómasar next door and grab a seat there. EF

16 Grænn Kostur

Skólavörðustíg 8b
Serving healthy organic vegan and vegetarian food for well over a decade, Grænn Kostur is the perfect downtown choice for enjoying light, wholesome and inexpensive meals. Try any of their courses of the day, or go for the ever-pleasing spinach lasagne.

17 Kisan

Laugavegur 7
This store is incredibly cool. It's stocked with really unique and quirky clothes, outerwear, accessories and handbags, plus they have an adorable section of kids clothes, kitschy vintage toys and books and even interior design items. Wicked place; definitely worth a visit. CF

18 Café d'Haiti

Geirsgötu 7b / Verubúð 2
The first time I entered this exotic little joint, meaning to buy myself a take-away espresso, I ended up with two kilos of freshly roasted coffee beans due to some language complications and way too much politeness. Since then I have enjoyed probably way-too-many wonderful cups of Haitian coffee, but they're always as nice, so the two kilos were definitely worth it. SKK

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MoMS at Gallery Kling and Bang

Gallery Kling & Bang

January 15 (hopefully) Free

'Penetration/Innsetning/Installation' is the latest realization by MoMS, a group of four young male artists who have been working together since 2007 and have been incredibly prolific despite their young age. Comprised of local fashion design legend Mundi and his art school friends Frikki, Morri, Schuyler and the more recent addition Ragnar Fjalar, as well as often collaborating with other friends and artists, MoMS is known for its over the top installations and performances. These have included building a 6.000 litre fish tank in NASA, flying a giant balloon worm over the Venice Biennale, participating in the recreation of Sirkús at an art fair in London and being pissed on at a performance called 'cum and piss.'

'Penetration/Innsetning/Installation' will consist of various 'overkill' drawings and sculptures inspired by the five Platonic solids. MoMs will make use of all kinds of materials and techniques, such as collage, photography, photocopies, newspapers, colouring crayons, stickers and erasers. The show will surely engage in the excessiveness exuberance that distinguishes MoMS.

AK

Films | Haukur Viðar Alfreðsson

The Good, The Bad And The Disqualified:

The greatest Icelandic films of the decade

The decade has ended and it was a great one for Icelandic filmmaking. More people are making movies and becoming better at making them. Choosing the five best films of 2001-2011 was everything but easy. After days of painful brainstorming and internal debate, I chose five films that I consider the best of the decade. Of course, my top film was released in late 2000 (a discovery made three seconds before sending the article) and therefore automatically disqualified. I'm forced to add a new film to the Top five. I present to you:

5) 'Astrópiá' [2007]
Directed by Gunnar B. Guðmundsson

Gunnar Guðmundsson's directorial debut is a respectful ode to geeks and role-play. TV-personality/actress Ragnhildur Steinunn plays Hildur, a fun-loving girl whose boyfriend gets arrested. Hildur needs to find a job and starts working at a comic book store. This wonderful film shifts back and forth between mundane everyday life and spectacular fantasy-sequences where knights and elves fight witches and ogres.

4) 'Brim' [2010]
Directed by Árni Ásgeirsson

Vesturport is the LA Lakers of theatre groups. Their hit play 'Brim' (written by Jón Atli Jónasson) was made into a feature film that the critics loved. Brim is about a small group of people on board a semi-haunted fishing vessel. After a member of the crew kills himself, a young woman (Nína Dögg Filippusdóttir) takes his place and causes great

disturbance in The Force. Top-notch performances from a great cast, and director Árni Ásgeirsson is clearly destined for greatness.

3) 'Brúðguminn' [2008]
Directed by Baltasar Kormákur

Jón (Hilmir Snær Guðnason) is a middle-aged philosophy teacher who is just about to marry one of his students. His first wife was a mental patient and eventually committed suicide. 'Brúðguminn' tells two parallel stories about the same man, on the same remote island (where the wedding is to take place) but with two different women, his wife (past) and his wife-to-be (present). Some might see that as an overused storytelling gimmick, but Baltasar does this extremely well and Brúðguminn is arguably his best picture.

2) Reykjavík-Rotterdam [2008]
Directed by Óskar Jónasson

A solid entry in the thriller-genre and probably the only Icelandic film ever to accomplish that. 'Mýrin' was close, 'Köld slóð' was way off, but 'Reykjavík-Rotterdam' is right on the money. Baltasar Kormákur (the director of film number three on this list) gives one of his best performances as a former alcohol smuggler on parole who gets tempted by the "one last mission and then retire"-cliché and goes to Rotterdam to pick up some booze. All hell breaks loose (of course) and Iceland is officially a contender in the world of clever thrillers. Currently being remade in the States as 'Contraband', with Baltasar Kormákur at the helm and Marky Mark playing the smuggler.





QUALITY TIME IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

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Opening hours: 8.00 – 23.00



17-23
Jan

Fresh Winds in Garður

Sunnubraut 4, Garður, Reykjanes (Just west of Keflavik airport)

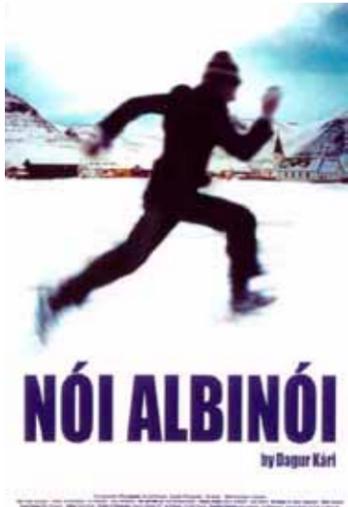
Exhibition opens Friday, January 7th, 13:00- 18:00, runs until January 23 / Free

What a coincidence! Last month, the Grapevine gave a few tips on how to catch sight of the Northern lights, and this month the nearby town of Garður is hosting an international art festival dedicated to the elusive green glow. Located on the north west tip of the Reykjanes peninsula, Garður is a small fishing village exposed to harsh winds and recognized as a prime spot for watching the Aurora Borealis. 'Fresh Winds' is a collaborative art project involving numerous local and foreign artists, many of whom have been in residence at Garður for the past eight weeks. The result of their residence will be exhibited in Garður beginning on January 6th in the form of exhibitions, installations, concerts, presentations and screenings. For a more detailed program of events, visit www.fresh-winds.com/

AK

1) Nói albinói [2003] Directed by Dagur Kári

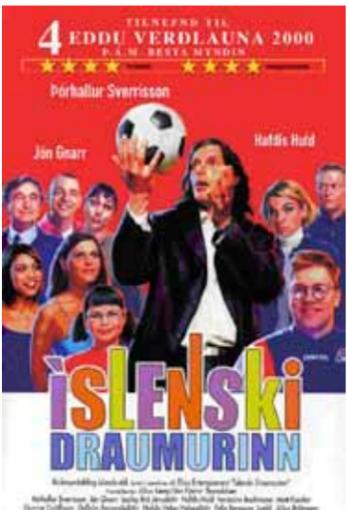
As much as I hate being predictable, 'Nói albinói' really is the greatest Icelandic film of the decade. It's a beautiful tale of a strange little dude trying to escape his dreadful hometown somewhere in the snowy fjords of Iceland in hope of a better life with a visiting city girl. I don't want to ruin what will be an enjoyable arthouse evening, but if you are at all interested in Icelandic cinema, this one is a must-see.



The disqualified:

'Íslenski draumurinn' [2000] Directed by Róbert I. Douglas

Yup, this is the one that had to go. From first prize to nothing. 'Íslenski draumurinn' is an exceptional piece. Shot in the "shaky home camera"-style and supposedly didn't cost much to make, but tells a story of a (stereotypical) man every Icelander knows all too well: "Braskarinn" (The wannabe-businessman). This gut-wrenching docu-dramedy is full of well-constructed characters, hilarious lines of dialogue and perfect performances from everybody. It's satirical, it's romantic, it's avant-garde, and it's almost the greatest Icelandic film of the decade. 🍷



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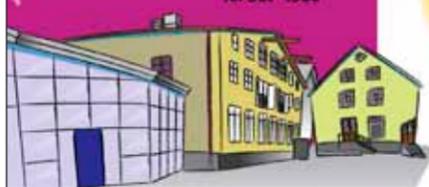


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Good Dish, Bad Dish

The year in food



I'm sitting here writing these words while simultaneously carrying on a conversation with my manfriend and some heavily tattooed French-Canadian drifter with a deplorable attitude who refuses to vacate my apartment. Despite the fact that I've been writing on these here food pages for a whole year now (where has the time gone?) the three of us are at a complete loss for what to eat for dinner.

The one certainty is that we are sure as hell not going to cook for ourselves.

Since I should, at this point, know a thing or two about where to get some decent nosh the responsibility looks to be falling on my shoulders.

Noodle Station started out my reviewer stint on a high-note, warming me up last February with that sweet, spicy and consistently awesome noodley goodness of theirs. The atmosphere in their small shop on Skólavörðustígur has changed somewhat but the goods have stayed the same. But we just ate there yesterday and crave variety. No dice.

The grub over at Grillið was even more spectacular than the view from the top of Hótel Saga, where it is situated—that buttery, melt in your mouth halibut and that enigmatic but delightful carrot flan still makes cameos in my dream—but we're no

troupe of travelling Trumps and we're feeling the post-holidays credit crunch like all the common folks, so shelling out for a fancy-pants five-course treat is out of the questions. Plus, we just ate there yesterday.

Brasilia closed down, Gló is too far (or we're too lazy), I downed Hressó's soup today at lunch (chicken and veg—yummy!) and I just had Icelandic Fish and Chips yesterday, though it's always a crowd-pleaser.

What's a retiring food reviewer to do?

The moral of this story may be that I need to cook for myself more often. Or it may be that I need to surround myself with people more capable of making decisions. Or it may be that Subway should have never closed their downtown location because then all of our lives in the 101 area would be significantly improved because, goddamnit, that was such a convenient place to have around in exactly this type of situation!

So, despite all the food, good and bad, that I've enjoyed and endured over the past year it looks like we're going for something I didn't review. Because the burgers at Prikið always hit the spot.

CATHARINE FULTON

EAT AND DRINK

3 X HERE AND GONE

1 SUBWAY

Subway: OK, so it's not like the entire Subway chain has vacated Iceland á la McDonalds, but the departure of the Austurstræti outpost has left a sandwich-shaped void in Reykjavík that won't soon be filled.

2 BRASILIA

Skólavörðustígur is a lot less colourful since Brasilia samba-ed out of business and the blindingly yellow and green façade of its former location was re-painted. Too bad. It had potential.

3 SUBWAY

It just hurts so bad.

3 X YOU'RE AWESOME

1 ICELANDIC FISH AND CHIPS

You're awesome, guys! Wolf fish, mango salad and garlic potatoes (with coriander and lime skyronnaise, of course) rocks my world. Tryggvagata 8

2 FISH COMPANY

You're pretty goddamn awesome! I'd go 'Around the World' with you any time - it's the most delicious way to travel. Vesturgata 2a

3 NOODLE STATION

You're awesome, too! It might be the MSG, but it might just be the awesome. Keep it up! Skólavörðustígur 21a

2 X YOU'RE ON NOTICE

1 GAMLA SMÍÐJAN

Look, I'm only writing this because I care, but I'mma have to put you on notice. I voted you best pizza in town and then you go making a few questionable pies and I have to start questioning my vote. I know you've still got it in ya, guys. Step it up, you're on notice! Lækjargata 8

2 TANDOORI

I'm not even sure I can put Tandoori on notice, but I will anyways. You see, I've never had the chance to eat there since reviewing. Not for lack of trying. When 90% of the menu is chicken and customers roll up and the place is empty and the restaurant is out of chicken that's just bad business. Tandoori, you're on notice! Skeifan 11



Food & Drink | Venue finder

| | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|
| 3 Frakkar Baldursgata 14 G4 | Balthazar Hafnarstræti 1-3 D2 | Geysir Bar/Bistro Aðalstræti 2 D2 | Icelandic Fish & Chips Tryggvagata 8 B2 | E4 | Sjárvakjallarrinn Aðalstræti 2 D2 |
| Aktu Taktu Skúlugata 15 E6 | Bæjarinn Tryggvagata D3 | Garðurinn Klappastígur 37 F4 | Indian Mango Frakkastígur 12 F5 | Nonnabiti Hafnarstræti 9 D3 | Sólón Bankastræti 7a E3 |
| Alibaba Veltusund 3b D2 | Brons Pósthússtræti 9 E3 | Glettan book café Laugavegur 19 F5 | Jómfrúin Lækjargata 4 E3 | O Sushi Lækjargata 2A E3 | Sushibarinn Laugavegur 2 E4 |
| American Style Tryggvagata 26 D2 | Café Cultura Hverfisgata 18 E4 | Grái Kötturinn Hverfisgata 16A E4 | Kaffi Hjómáland Laugavegur 21 E4 | Pisa Lækjargötu 6b E3 | Sushismiðjan Geirsgötu 3 B2 |
| Argentina Steakhouse Barónstígur F6 | Café d'Haiti Tryggvagata 12 D2 | Grillhúsið Tryggvagata 20 D2 | Kaffifélagið Skólavörðustígur 10 F5 | Pizza King Hafnarstræti 18 D3 | Svarta Kaffi Laugavegur 54 F5 |
| Austurlanda-hraðlestin Hverfisgata 64A F5 | Café Loki Lokastígur 28 G4 | Habibi Hafnarstræti 20 E3 | Kaffitár Bankastræti 8 E4 | Pizza Pronto Vallarstræti 4 E2 | Sægreifinn Verbúð 8, Geirsgata B2 |
| Á Næstu Grösom Laugavegur 20B E4 | Café Paris Austurstræti 14 E3 | Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar ("Bullan") Geirsgata 1 B2 | Kaffivagninn Grandagarður 10 A1 | Pizzaverksmiðjan Lækjargötu 8 E3 | Tapas Vesturgata 3B D2 |
| B5 Bankastræti 5 E3 | Café Roma Rauðarárstígur 8 G7 | Hillla Batar Ingólfstorg D2 | Kofi Tómasar Frænda Laugavegur 2 E4 | Prikið Bankastræti 12 E3 | Thorvaldsen Austurstræti 8 D2 |
| Bakkus Tryggvagata 22 D2 | Deli Bankastræti 14 E5 | Hótel Holt Bergstaðarstræti 37 G3 | Kornið Lækjargata 4 E3 | Ráðhúskaffi E2 Tjarnargata 11 | Tíu Dropar Laugavegur 27 E5 |
| Ban Thai Laugavegur 130 G7 | Domo Pínghóltsstræti 5 E3 | Humarhúsið Amtmannstígur 1 E3 | Krua Thai Tryggvagata 14 D2 | Santa María Laugavegur 22A F5 | Tivolí Laugavegur 3 E4 |
| Basil & Lime Klapparstíg 38 E4 | Einar Ben Veltusundi E2 | Hressó Austurstræti 20 E4 | La Primavera Austurstræti 9 D2 | Shalimar Austurstræti 4 D2 | Vegamót Vegamótastígur 4 E4 |
| Babalú Skólavörðustígur 22A G5 | Eldsmiðjan Bragagata 38A G4 | Fiskmarkaðurinn Aðalstræti 12 D2 | Lystin Laugavegur 73 F6 | Silfur Pósthússtræti 11 E3 | Við Tjörnina Templarasund 3 E2 |
| | | | Mokka Skólavörðustígur 3A | | Vítabar Bergþórugata 21 G5 |

Music | Top Lists

Jófríður Ákadóttir, Pascal Pinon

- Albums of 2010**
- 1 Ólöf Arnalds - Innundir skinni
 - 2 Amiina - Puzzle
 - 3 Prinspóló - Jukk
 - 4 Útidúr - This Mess We've Made
 - 5 Jónsi - Go

Albums of 2001-2010

- 1 Björk - Vespertine
- 2 Clangour - Sin Fang Bous
- 3 múm - Loksins erum við engin
- 4 Björk - Volta
- 5 Nolo - No-lo-fi

Curver Thoroddsen, Ghostigital

- Albums of 2010**
- 1 Skúli Sverrisson - Sería II
 - 2 Miri - Okkar
 - 3 Loji - Skyndiskyskur
 - 4 Apparat - Pólýfónía
 - 5 Jónas Sigurðsson og Ritvélur fram-tíðarinnar - Allt er eitthvað

Albums of 2001-2010

- 1 Ghostigital - In Cod We Trust (2006)
- 2 Minus - Halldór Laxness (2003)
- 3 Siggí Ármann - Í Listasafni Reykjavíkur (2004)
- 4 Sigur Rós - 0 (2002)
- 5 Kimono Arctic Death Ship (2005)

Top Five: Irritating crap from the last decade

- 1 Írafár
- 2 Í Svörtum Fötum
- 3 Á Móti Sól
- 4 Buttercup
- 5 Land og synir

Top Five: Bands that were prominent on MySpace then never did anything

- 1 Jezebel
- 2 Johnny Sexual
- 3 Donna Mess
- 4 (feel free to add to the list if you remember someone else)

Heiða Eiríksdóttir, Hellvar

- Albums of 2010**
- 1 Nolo - No-lo-fi
 - 1 Apparat Organ Quartett - Pólýfónía
 - 1 Prinspóló - Jukk
 - 1 Ég - Lúxus upplifun
 - 1 Swords of Chaos - The End Is As Near As Your Teeth

Albums of 2001-2010

- 1 I Adapt - Chainlike Burden
- 2 Ghostigital - In Cod We Trust
- 3 Skakkamanage - Lab of love
- 4 Morðingjarnir - Áfram Ísland
- 5 múm - go go smear the poison ivy

Sindri Freyr Steinsson, Bárújárn

- Albums of 2010**
- 1 Nolo - No-Lo-Fi
 - 2 Daniel Bjarnason - Processions
 - 3 Svartíðaúði - Temple of Deformation
 - 4 Momentum - Fixation, at rest
 - 5 Swords of Chaos - The end is as near as your teeth

Albums of 2001-2010

- 1 Forgotten Lores - Frá Heimsenda
- 2 Hr.Ingi.R - Hundadískó
- 3 Minus - Halldór Laxness
- 4 Ben Frost - By The Throat
- 5 Reykjavík! - Glacial Landscapes, Religion, Oppression & Alcohol

Tanya Pollock, Weirdcore

- Albums of 2010**
- 1 Quadruplos - Quadruplos
 - 2 Weirdcore 2 - compilation
 - 3 Ólöf Arnalds- Innundir skinni
 - 4 Jónsi - Go
 - 5 Agent Fresco- A Long Time Listening

Albums of 2001-2010

- 1 FM Belfast - How to make friends
- 2 Ruxpin - Where do we float from here
- 3 Emilína Torrini - Fishermans wife
- 4 Kimono - Mineur aggressive
- 5 Mammút - Karkari

Bóas Hallgrímsson, Reykjavíki

- Albums of 2010**
- 1 Loji - Skyndiskissur
 - 2 Prinspóló - Jukk
 - 3 Retro Stefson - Kimbabwe
 - 4 Agent Fresco - A Long Time Listening
 - 5 Jónsi - Go

Albums of 2001-2010

- 1 Mugison - Mugimama is this monkey music?
- 2 Minus - Jesus Christ Bobby
- 3 Ben Frost - Theory of Machines
- 4 Sin Fang Bous - Clangour
- 5 XXXR - XXX Rottweilerhundar

Runner up:
múm - Loksins erum við engin

Órvar Þóreyjarsón Smárasón, múm, FM Belfast

- Albums of 2010**
- 1 Páll Ívan Pálsson - Dægurlög
 - 1 Apparat Organ Quartett - Pólýfónía
 - 1 Seabear - We Built a Fire
 - 1 Retro Stefson - Kimbabwe
 - 1 Prins Póló - Jukk

(Benni Hemm Hemm, Ólöf Arnalds, Amiina, Sóley, Miri, Bárújárn, Nolo, Agent Fresco and lots more could have easily wound up on this list, I just couldn't cram more in there. The best year for Icelandic music in a long time).

Úlfur Eldjárn, Apparat Organ Quartet

Albums of 2010
I am not good at making these lists, and I don't really want to choose the 'albums of the year'. This is because I haven't man-

aged to listen properly to half of what was released, for instance striking hot albums from Retro Stefson, Agent Fresco, Útidúr, Jól Pálsson, Jónas Sigurðsson, Skálmöld, Prinspóló, Ellen Kristjáns, Amiina, etc. etc. etc. Regrettably, I just haven't had the time. In addition, such a list might contain albums from Daniel Bjarnason, Jónsi, Ólöf Arnalds, Seabear and Pascal Pinon... The year 2010 was overflowing with great albums, but my list will not consist of them. Rather, it is a list of four albums that I would like to recommend especially without necessarily saying they're better or worse than any of the others.

Skúli Sverrisson Sería II
Nolo - No Lo-Fi
Bloodgroup - Dry Land
Sóley - Theater Island

Decade | Bart Cameron

We Dream Bigger

I think I know where the confidence and swagger came from. Davíð Oddsson. Hard to explain how adored

he was, other than to say Davíð is to economic policy as Ronald Reagan is to nuclear policy. Where Reagan horrified the world in the 1980s with his nuclear gymnastics, Davíð astonished those with even the faintest interest in economics with his bear hug of free market capitalism.

Davíð's policies were barely examined daydreams set forward with the discipline and tact of a petulant child. And yet, they came true. In 2004, the first article I was assigned to write about Iceland was an explanation of Davíð Oddsson's amazing economic policies. I knew nothing about economics—when I reached out to a Harvard friend's economics professor, he replied: "It is a miracle. You don't need to know economic theory. If debt is three times GDP, the country's economy is doomed."

Reality didn't match the dream. I told my editor I was clueless, which she had already assumed. In the coming months, authorities ranging from The Economist to the Wall Street Journal backed Davíð as the wizard behind the Icelandic miracle.

It was another three years before everyone changed their minds.

But for me, Davíð Oddsson's personality was the key Icelandic trait of the aughties in Iceland. A generation



of artists, musicians, and even game designers, had within them this core quality.

In the arts, it worked. The Tate and then the Brooklyn Bridge were handed over to the Icelander-via-Denmark artist Ólafur Eliásson. Filmmakers Dagur Kári and Baltasar Kormákur drew international praise. Iceland Airways took flight.

The most impressive example, and the most positive, of the we dream big decade is what four guys from Mosfellsbær did. Sigur Rós invented a genre of music and an empire, operating entirely outside of the realities of the music business. It's not that their music is, at its core, superior to a number

of other bands' music. But Sigur Rós presented it with such fearlessness and imagination.

There are hundreds of points I can't cover here—not sure who'd read about the politics and business highs and lows, or the hundreds of musicians and artists who definitely did something worthwhile. My takeaway from a long time thinking about the country is just that Iceland approached the decade with no resources save personality, and they made a profound impact with only that. Now go listen to some kissing hot dogs. ♡

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Music | Dr. Gunni

Not Going Anywhere In Particular

The '00s fifty best albums

Dr. Gunni's Best Albums Of The Decade

2001

XXX Rottweiler hundar - XXX Rottweiler hundar
Trabant - Moment Of Truth
Björk - Vespertine
Úlpa - Mea Culpa
Funerals - Pathetic Me

2002

Sigur Rós - (-)
Apparat Organ Quartet - Apparat Organ Quartet
Móri - Móri
múm - loksins erum við engin
Búdrýgindi - Kúbakóla

2003

Mínus - Halldór Laxness
Skyttarnar - Illgresið
Maus - Musick
Botnleðja - Iceland National Park
Bang Gang - Something Wrong

2004

Mugison - Mugimama is this monkeymusic?
Singapore Sling - Life Is Killing My Rock 'N' Roll
Jan Mayen - Home Of The Free Indeed
Pornopop - And The Slow Songs About The Dead Calm In Your Hands
Quarashi - Guerilla Disco

2005

Emilfana Torrini - The Fisherman's woman
Trabant - Emotional
Ég - Plata Ársins
Sigur Rós - Takk
Siggi Ármann - Music For The Addicted

2006

Pönkbandið Fjölur - Sonur neylusamfélagsins var hér
Eberg - Voff voff
Reykjavík! - Glacial Landscapes, Religion, Oppression And Alcohol
Pétur Ben - Wine For My Weakness
Benni Hemm Hemm - Kajak

2007

Sprengjuhöllin - Tímarnir okkar
Megas - Frágangur / Hold er mold
Ólöf Arnalds - Við og við
Björk - Volta
Mugison - Mugiboogie

2008

FM Belfast - How to Make Friends
Morðingjarnir - Áfram Ísland!
Lay Low - Farewell Good Night's Sleep
Dr. Spock - Falcon Christ
Sigur Rós - Með suð í eyrum við spílum endalaust

2009

Hjaltalín - Terminal
Bloodgroup - Dry Land
Dikta - Get It Together
Kimono - Easy Music For Difficult People
Caterpillarmen - Adopt a monkey

2010

Retro Stefson - Kimbabwe
Jónsi - Go Orgelkvartettinn
Apparat Organ Quartet - Pólyfónía
BlazRoca - Kópacobana
Agent Fresco - A long time listening



In 2001 Icelandic hip hop exploded with the genre's first (and last?) super selling masterpiece, the XXX Rottweiler hundar's self-titled debut. Simple yet cool beats and impudent and fresh lyrics spewed out by what appeared to be a gang of street urchins had everyone take notice, even the masses, who favoured the mesmerising ballad 'Bent nálgast'. A bit of rap frenzy followed in Rottweiler's wake, with a great supply of Icelandic rap albums seeing release over the next few years. However, nothing in Icelandic hip hop has ever matched the impact of Rottweiler's debut album.



In 2002, Sigur Rós finally followed up 1999's 'Ágætis byrjun' with the grey and slow "brackets" album. In the interim Sigur Rós had become international indie superstars, playing to packed concert halls the world over. Expectations were naturally high and they were met, kind of, except that the impact of surprise was lost. This time Jónsi wasn't in the mood to write any lyrics, or even name the songs, so he sang English and Icelandic word-similitudes—memorably the Icelandic likeness of "I am a sea-lion" in the first song—giving birth to the "hopelandish" hogwash. Sigur Rós were onwards to more international acclaim and countless reviews likening their songs to "melting glaciers".



In 2003, rock quintet Mínus hit the artistic jackpot with their experimental hard rock masterpiece named after Iceland's beloved Nobel laureate Halldór Laxness. This was Mínus' third album and with noise magician Curver on their side, the band members—on a creative streak—just did whatever the hell they wanted. The album is the opposite of conservatism and normalcy, still as crisp and exciting today as it was seven years ago.



In 2004, electric troubadour Mugison became a smash hit with his second album, the sloppy but tight, very experimental and flip-pant 'Mugimama Is This Monkeymusic?' Mugison had already made a name for himself with his debut album, 'Lonely Mountain', released the year before, but now nobody had to second-guess his brilliance. Made in solitude in West fjord village of Suðavík, the album is adventurous and full of both fluffy and chunky bits.



In 2005, England based Emiliana Torrini hit a true chord with her 'Fisherman's Woman'. The singer/songwriter had tried a more complex pop with computerised dance-beats on her 'Love in the Time of Science' album in 1999 (her debut if you don't count her earlier cover-albums made in Iceland), but now she was all hushed down, sincere and minimalist, relying mostly on a trusty acoustic guitar for support. Dealing with emotions stemming from the death of a loved one, Emiliana made a heartfelt masterpiece.



In 2006 we were warming up to 2007, the year of total glut-tony. Everybody was apparently going along with the money

flow, except Pönkbandið Fjölur ("Fjölur, the Punkband") who came out of nowhere to make their sole masterpiece 'Sonur neylusamfélagsins var hér' (or: "The Consumer Society's Son Was Here"). Of course few took notice of the angry but smart punk rock and likewise angry and smart lyrics, so Fjölur vanished without a trace. Even now I don't know what people were in this band but listening to the album still makes me feel strangely joyous.



In 2007 Sprengjuhöllin ("The Bomb Palace") came forth with 'Tímarnir okkar' ("Our Times"), which, true to its title, tried and succeeded in speaking popwise to "the times". Sounding as clever as Jarvis Cocker of Pulp in his prime—or Studmenn and Spilverk þjóðanna in their prime—Sprengjuhöllin saved demanding listeners from the lyrical doldrums of almost everything else at the time. The music was fine indie pop and the band flew to the knoll of Icelandic popdom with the wistful breakup song 'Verum í sambandi'.



In 2008 FM Belfast were all about having fun on their super jolly 'How To Make Friends'. The music came out of Árne Rúnar Hlökkversson's computers with his girlfriend and friends singing and jumping around. "We come from a place where we count the days until nothing, nothing, nothing..." is an unlikely party-anthem, but such is the charm of FM Belfast.



2009 brought Hjaltalín with their second album, 'Terminal'. Showing great promise on their debut album two years earlier, Högni Egilsson and his gang now delivered a complex and ambitious album totally living up to expectations. Hjaltalín play melodic and finely crafted pop songs, often sounding grand and ornamented, like it should be a James Bond movie title track.



In 2010 Retro Stefson's second album 'Kimbabwe' showed a band busting at the seams with creative joie de vivre. Not shy of doing whatever they felt like, Retro Stefson's merry boys (and girl) mixed heavy metal with disco, indie pop with afro beats, and so on. The tightness of the band and the cleverness of how the band approaches the music is quite amazing as the members are (almost) still in their teens.

Reading the above one can infer that all types of music were going on in this decade of constantly evolving rock and pop music. Obviously, the evolution has slowed down though, almost to a halt. All the ingredients are in the pot—the stew is just constantly being stirred. The music made in 2010 could have been made in 2001, and vice versa. The music is not going anywhere particular, so you might as well sit back, relax and enjoy. Maybe this century's first decade will have some kind of collective "sound" in retrospect—just like "sixties-music" or "eighties-music"—but as of now, I just can't pin it down. Future generations might hear it though. ♪

Music | Birkir Fjalur Viðarsson

The Most Important Hard, Fast And Heavy Of 2001-10

No one wants to make a list like this. You like to get stoned (no pun) to death by disappointed band dorks? First I attempted a list of five. I agonised over it. Stretched it to ten. Tears still rolling. Exceeded ten but I still feel abused. Svar-tíðauði, Snafu, Myrk, Forgarður Helvíts, Innvortis, DMSS etc. I know! Talk to me in 2021.



Andlát - Mors Longa (2004)

Andlát won the Músíktilraunir 'battle of the bands' (and in doing so, helped make metal cool again). Wasted no time and recorded this head-stomping collection, securing a loyal fan base that followed the band's every riff and thudding beat. Both were in plenty! The record isn't spectacular, but its music, their epic win and loving fans yell "important!" at me.



Brain Police - Brain Police (2003)

Brain Police started crafting their mastery in '98. Undisputed pioneers of all things stoner and desert rock in Iceland. 'Jaccuzzi Suzy' and 'Rocket Fuel' are radio hits. Regular Joes are now aware of 'stoner rock', and stoner/desert bands keep popping up. Trailblazers in an Icelandic context. The crown is theirs.



Dys - Ísland brennur (2003)

Anthemic hc/punk with an odd metal undertone. Every song is a hit. The only punks singing in Icelandic about social awareness, responsibility, political resistance, direct action and kindness. Making sure that the hc/punk spectrum wouldn't become "entertainment only". Yes!



Gavin Portland - Views Of Distant Towns (2006)

Fighting Shit (band) predates this release. Still, sharing the same main-songwriter and singer/lyricist the two cannot be separated as GP brought the best elements of FS's last album, built on it and added a more emotive and refreshingly mysterious edge to it. The "indie" dashes found herein encouraged young bands to venture further.



Graveslime - Roughness And Toughness (2003)

Your head hurt, after banging it too hard and scratching it intensely trying to figure out the stop-and-goes. Heavy, organic, charming and playful, it was one of the most peculiar and best of the decade. Hear them in The Heavy Experience and Me, The Slumbering Napoleon alike.



I Adapt - Why Not Make Today Legendary? (2001)

WNMTL is important through the lasting effect it had through constantly playing DIY concerts, pushing these songs to introduce different styles of hardcore and going beyond what was expected, to engage listeners, as demonstrated in the lyrics + explanations, addressing issues and opinions rarely if ever on display at the time, influencing a different communal spirit. (Full disclosure: this list's author is a founding member of I Adapt. Everyone still agrees that this should make the list. Everyone that counts, anyway).



Klink - 666°N (2001)

Took all the nasty, gritty and unpleasant elements '90s metal-core (before the glossy magazines stole the moniker) and made a four-song homage to perversion, degradation, violence and drugs. And it's a banger! Holds up well still to this day and is a sketchy ass classic.



Mínus - Halldór Laxness (2003)

Gorgeous slap of aggressive, sweaty and dangerous stadium-ready rock, it gave a much needed kick in ass of young bands and even the ones that pre-dated Mínus. Due to the record's crossover potential and success at home and abroad, other acts, with stars in their eyes upped the ante, and as a result the quality of Icelandic rock and metal grew considerably. I still prefer 'Jesus Christ Bobby' to 'Halldór Laxness', but its impact was rare feat indeed and its album was felt for years after its release.



Momentum - Fixation, At Rest (2010)

They gave the words ambition and grandiose a new meaning. It's a breathtaking exploration of their own potential. Homage to artistic aspiration and autonomy, sprinkled with psychedelia. Raised the bar for Icelandic metal. Now you can shotgun beer and be artistically and thoughtful at the same time.



Potentiam - Orka í Myrkri (2004)

Moving beyond the conventional compounds atmo-scandi Black Metal. This material landed them a release on a respected international label, showing the rest of the well-hidden black metal hopefuls that their isolation could be undone. A feat not many BM bands before—or after—accomplished.



Severed Crotch - Soul Cremation (2007)

Internationally speaking, it's a bit hackneyed, but the band's debut release is so spirited and dedicated that it immediately became an "it had to happen" type of record. Brutal and technical death metal had a lot of fans here, yet there was not fully a functioning band to pull the wagon. Subsequently contemporary DM brethren wanted to improve. The Crotchsters brought more fun to metal shows.



Sólstafir - Masterpiece Of Bitterness (2005)

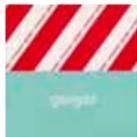
One of Iceland's oldest, certainly longest lasting, metal bands turned a new page in their career. There was change in style and approach. A new sound was being established. New ears were reached. The coordinates said world domination, a road was paved to 'Köld', their latest and best. Now their closer to being a full-time metal band than any Icelandic crew before them. The steady success that pushed Icelandic metal to new heights.

Music | Bob Cluness

Five Albums That Shaped Bob Cluness' Decade

 **Sigur Rós - Ó (2002)**
The world's most infuriatingly enigmatic band. But man when they get it right they fucking get it right! I chose 'Ó' over 'Takk' as nobody in the world seemed to be making this kind of music at the time. Not so much ethereal, more occupying a completely different place in space and time. Plus for some inexplicable reason, track 4 (or 'Njósnavélin') seems to make me cry every time I listen to it. Shut up!

 **Mínus - Jesus Christ Bobby (2000)**
An unyielding mass of spiteful noise that was the aural equivalent of firebombing your neighbour's house and killing everyone due to a dispute over hedge boundaries. The thing with JCB was that at times it was more noise than rock, thanks to their clever decision to have Curver produce the album. Still gives me nightmares involving trolls with dildos.

 **GusGus - Attention (2002)**
The first GusGus album I bought was 2007's 'Forever' and that is a great album.

But somehow I just found this did the same stuff, better, and five years earlier as well. Sometimes on a Saturday night if I'm alone and before I go out, I like to put this on while dancing naked with a jar of pickles to get me in the mood. Nothing wrong in that is there?

 **Singapore Sling - Life Is Killing My Rock 'N' Roll (2004)**
The group that is responsible for creating a whole brand of Icelandic death rock with numerous imitators but never bettered to be honest. Their whole sound can be perfectly encapsulated in the track, 'Guiding Light' a shimmering vehicle that blazes across the devils highway wearing shades. Allegedly.

 **Björk - Volta (2007)**
The obligatory Björk entry. I found this album was her most listenable she had produced in a long time.

There is something in there for everybody from tribal rhythms to avant garde song structures, melodic pop hooks to fervent politics. She even made Timabaland work as a producer for a change, so it can't be all bad! ♡

Bob Cluness's Favourite Albums Of 2010

1: Apparat Organ Quartet - 'Pólyfónía'.
After an eight year break these guys just came out of nowhere and completely eclipsed every other band in the country, just for the sport. I mean who else was going to touch them musically, Retro Stefson? Don't make me laugh!

2: Momentum - Fixation, At Rest:
Of all the metal albums I've heard this year, 'Fixation, At Rest' had the biggest musical scope, the most ambition, the most balls to run with it to the sky. It was the little things like the use of scratched violins on the riff on 'Metamorphose' that told you they knew what they're doing.

3: Various Artists - Hljóðaklettur 'Dress Up':
Most of you won't have heard this (as there were only 35 copies made!), but if there is

a is a better compilation that shows the rude health Icelandic electronic music finds itself in 2010, then I'm not really doing my job properly.

4: Agent Fresco - 'A Long Time Listening':
Agent Fresco managed to break free from the shackles that 'Eyes Of A Cloud Catcher' was in danger of constraining them with by making an album that was both VERY intelligent and at the same time rocked like the proverbial mother. I also found singer Arnór Dan's trousers strangely tight and alluring. No idea why...

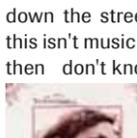
5: Nóra - 'Er einhver að hlusta?'
While most other pop bands just fuffed around with the idea of creating tunes (that were frankly as bland and off putting as week old slátur), Nóra produced music that was immediate, simple and powerful.

Music | Bergrún Anna Hallsteinsdóttir

Five Albums That Shaped Bergrún Anna Hallsteinsdóttir's Decade

 **Sigur Rós - Takk (2007)**
Takk received critical acclaim here, there and everywhere, went gold and made everyone sit up and take notice... again.

 **FM Belfast - How To Make Friends (2008)**
An album that has been known to cause people to actually run down the street in their underwear. If this isn't music with a positive influence then don't know what is.

 **Emiliana Torrini - Fisherman's Woman (2005)**
Fisherman's Woman made folk-lovers all over sit up and take notice and is just a really sweet album in general.

 **Agent Fresco - Lightbulb Universe (2008)**
Everyone knew the lyrics before the album

was even released. It goes without saying that this was one of the albums of the new millennium.

 **Mugison - Mugimama: Is This Monkey Music? (2004)**
The multi-talented Mugisson has influence near and far and his 2004 album permanently placed him on the music map. ♡

his 2004 album permanently placed him on the music map. ♡

Bergrún Anna Hallsteinsdóttir's Favourite Albums Of 2010

1. Orphic Oxta - Orphic Oxta
They brought the sound of the Balkans to Iceland and injected the music scene with a much-needed dose of difference.

2. Ólafur Arnalds - 'And they have escaped the weight of darkness'
Ólafur Arnalds wins at creating classical music that the kids can appreciate.

3. Retro Stefson - Kimbabwe
Kimbabwe brought some much needed positivity to these dark times.

4. Hjaltaín og Símfó - Alpanon
The symphony/band combo took Hjaltaín's sound to new places with Alpanon.

5. Samúel Jón Samúelsson Big Band - Helvítis foking fönk
They made the year that much funkier for Iceland as a whole.

Music | Sindri Eldon

"And Some Things That Should Not Have Been Forgotten Were Lost."

I don't really listen to music, so there weren't five, or ten, or indeed any Icelandic albums released this year that particularly caught my attention. The last decade has, however, yielded some important albums, if not for Iceland or the world, but for me, as this was the decade I had the sad misfortune to grow up in. This is also a kind of retrospective, I guess, as I didn't discover a few of these until long after they'd been released.

ENSÍMI - 'ENSÍMI' (2002) This bad boy pretty much set the standard, production-wise, for Icelandic rock in the... the whatever you call this decade. Oughties? Noughties? Something like that. Anyway, it blew all of its contemporaries out of the water, and also served as a kind of recap of the '90s, highlighting Icelandic music's attitudes in that far-off decade: it's vain, cheesy, cocky and cliché, but man, does it rock. Veering from sneering, balls-out guitar machismo to indulgent synths and drum patterns, and yet somehow managing to string it all together, it perfectly encapsulates a balance between near-obsessive micromanagement in its production and crisp, vigorous energy in its delivery.

BOTNLEDJA - 'ICELAND NATIONAL PARK' (2003) Unfortunately released the same summer that gave Iceland two of its most bombastic and self-indulgent rock albums, Maus's 'Musick' and Mínus's 'Halldór Laxness', Botnleðja's last shot at the big time was unassuming, simple and recorded in a garage for very little (if any) money. This, coupled with the unspeakably awful music video to 'Brains, Balls And Dolls' (Why the fuck did they let Bjaddni Hell make so many videos? Why, in God's name?), led to it quickly being forgotten and dismissed, and it is always noticeably absent from all "great Icelandic albums" lists, while all of Botnleðja's previous releases (except for the rehab album, but they always leave those out) usually manage to make their way to the top twenty. I find this brutally unfair, as 'Iceland National Park' is a crashing romp of an album that crackles with energy, enthusiasm and innovation, as brilliant as it is flippant and off-kilter. It is the last album by one of those rare bands where every member is not only excellent at what he does, but shines doing it on virtually every track. Never forget!

PORNOPOP - 'AND THE SLOW SONGS ABOUT THE DEAD CALM IN YOUR ARMS' (2006) Pornopop never quite managed to reach the heights of respect they so richly deserve, and although it is flippant and off-kilter. It is the last album by one of those rare bands where every member is not only excellent at what he does, but shines doing it on virtually every track. Never forget!

NÚMER NÚLL - 'LYKILL AÐ SKÍRLÍFS-BELTI' (2008) Gestur Guðnason, Númer Núll's front man, once told me that making this album so wiped them out that they didn't really have the energy or inclination to do much promotion for it. This does not change the fact that it is one of the best guitar-pop albums I've ever heard. Gestur is a music teacher, and you can hear it in his guitar playing: the album's lead guitar runs as a perfect satellite to its rhythm section, smoothly winding its way through clever, rambunctious scales without ever breaking into an outright solo. I bet that last sentence made the album sound boring, right? Well, the surprising thing is that the album also rocks in an awesomely fun way. The songs are simple, gutsy and inventive without being pretentious, and the sound is that perfect combination of lo-fi garage and hi-fi power. Will they ever make another album? Probably not, but that's fine: this one is all they'll ever need.

GUSGUS - 24/7 (2009) I didn't really get this album when it first came out last year. I mean, who makes a dance record with six tracks, all of them really long? And it's all depressing; you can't party to this. Then this summer, I drove to Mývatn (about 300 miles away) to pick up my girlfriend, and as she desperately wanted to get the fuck out of there, we drove back overnight. It was foggy and dark, I mean really, really dark. We put this album in the CD player, and then I got it. This is not a dance album. This shit is epic. It's the best thing they've ever put out. It soars delay-drenched into eternity with its synths and sultry, ethereal vocals, and even though two of the songs clip the ten-minute mark, they're still too short; you never want them to end. We listened to it about five or six times on that drive to Reykjavík. ♡



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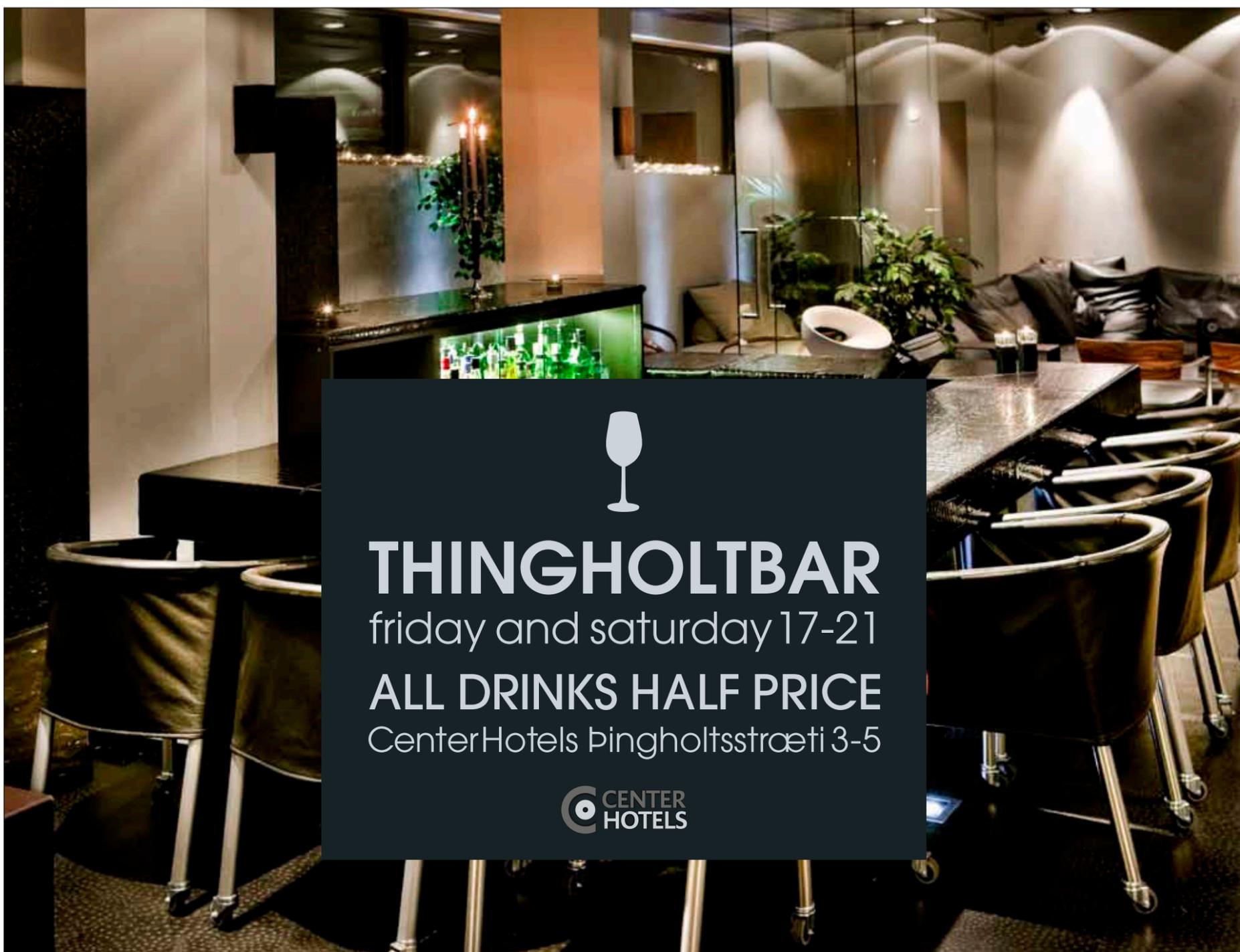
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FUTURE / PERFECT / TENSE

We contacted a bunch of our most beloved local authors and asked them to write short short stories for us with, on the theme 'Iceland and the next decade'. Their mission, should they accept it, was to consider: "what's in store for our island?" then examine their feelings about that imagined future and deliver them in prose form using no more than 1200 words.

We are stunned that so many of our favourites wound up participating, and doublestunned with the stories they turned in. While they are surprisingly (and disappointingly!) low on futuristic cyberpunk sci-fi scenarios and cyborgs, we believe that they offer a clear window into our collective hopes and fears at the moment; solemn meditations on a future that's very unclear (even unnerving). They are also all very entertaining and clever. Reserve some time, read on and enjoy!

Ten Short New Year's Speeches Into The Future:

Words and illustration by Kristín Eiríksdóttir

00.00 01.01. 2011

I'll probably be in the taxi once **The New Year arrives**, it never comes as was planned for. From **the edge** of the city **you** can hear the noise from **fireworks**, but you just see them vanish up into reddish clouds.

01.00 01.01 2012

The crystal **dissolves in the palm of the hand**. I can't decide which party to attend and **suddenly** everyone is gone. Hallgrímskirkja looks **like** a Japanese **ghost slowly** expanding its jaw. I **regret** having eaten **what** I ate.

02.00 01.01 2013

No matter how I drink I stay the same, made **from** spirits but might as well be sober. It's the holiday **season**. This evening **is** always supposed to be so great but **it sucks** as much each time. The bombs are the same. I should **have** bought **fireworks**. My **hands** are useless and it's dangerous.

03.00 01.01 2014

The sheets are clean. I haven't stayed up this late since 1993. The woman at the dinner spoke so much about the **lack of** vitamin-D. She wore a **beautiful** necklace and **the floors** were covered with **mottled** paper strings from **crackers** but I can't recall any **fireworks**. Rickets, depression, bowed limbs, fatigue and **skeletal** deformities.

04.00 01.01 2015

The **teenagers** know **nothing** of the last century. They breathe like lap dogs, with their **sleepy eyes** and **always** sincere; they **mean everything** they say. We'll take irony with us to the grave. **Forgotten** like some obsolete technology. They are just not **interested** in **objectivity**.

05.00 01.01 2016

Photo of Earth **projected** on the moon, no need for **mirrors** anymore, if you know what I mean. Where do they get all this **information**? Did anyone else notice a tiny shadow that ran across

there **just** now? Just **disappeared into** the soot, and there is **another** one. Once there was a pond right where you are standing **now**, lead-grey from pike and the bridge across collapsed.

06.00 01.01 2017

Children are the future, have **you** looked **into** a tub of herring? Some still wiggling in the **pile** but it's just **spasm**. Or movements **arriving** here from the next life. What do we know? The more the **less**, if you ask me. I **always** meditate **death** at midnight. Grab your **mouth** or you'll come out. So many **futures**, one per crown and you can barely catch a glint of pavement.

07.00 01.01 2018

I have never had so much fun as right now. **Now** is great, now can always stay, just now, this is great. Nothing **can** take my **attention** away from this, now, this is wonderful. Costumes? What a **mistake**. No one told me this was a costume party. Hopefully nobody is alone tonight, or **dying**. **Hopefully** everyone is just **being born**. **Now** is great.

08.00 01.01 2019

Birds can keep the Island. This thing that came from **under the glacier** can keep me. **Family trees** with small bird houses and **mutated** cats fill the fox holes. You get used to the changes **before** you notice them. **Like that** through the centuries, may they **keep on coming**. **Cheers** to the dinosaur. Faith in science is a clown.

09.00 01.01 2020

I can't believe I'm still up. Why do I always start the New Year in total chaos? Every time I'm afraid to miss something my life goes to the trash. **Eyes** filled with logs. Oxygen comes through the **tiny holes**, I'd ask for gills on my shoulder blades much rather than wings. I'm so wasted. Tomorrow I'll ask **forgiveness**. Tomorrow is **already here**. I'll never get to bed. **Now** was just then. **God, existence** can be so confusing. **Cheers**. 🍀



May Oral Gnarr Annualise?

By Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl

Illustration by Inga María Brynjarsdóttir

Municipal decree stardate 01012021-001 -- January 1st, 2021. State anarcho-surreo-separatist municipality of central Laugavegur and the united TGIFs of the greater eurafrican kingdom.

Citizens of love and the Tao! I beseech you! Hark, hark! Hear, here! Lo, lo! Whiff! Feel! Taste! Orgasm!

I write you now to say: Another decade gone *poof!* with all its wars, poverty and abundance in abundance – yay! Past rejoicing, you rejoicers-you, of holidays a'bountiful – we hope you've had meals worthy of the tallest tales and presents in glittery packaging, another winter, o ye of mostly fashionable clothing – it is, alas (we might add), now time for more serious business. As your incumbent mayoral dignitarious "Gnarr" (dee harr harr), I'm thoroughly emplesed to announce the latest in modern fads:

More rules! Better rules of greater precision!

First of all, less service (not really a rule – more a "rule of thumb", if you will), although this perhaps goes without saying: We must make sacrifices for the common good, and even more so, for the individual good. We must, that is to say, make sacrifices for the good, and not just some of the good (as in the past) but *all of the good, the absolute totality of the good*. This is not a joke. We do not make fun of the good. Unreproachable, we are, in no jest whatsoever.

Hah, got ya! (No, really, we're *totally* serious).

As a follow-up to the successful transaction of city concrete to the unlaughably retro-capitalistic suburbs (for which we received an abundance of extremely extreme nail-polish remover, traded with the Commonwealth of northeastern Buenos Aires for 250 grand frappucinos (including disposable stir-spoons)) it has been unanimously decided, within the municipal council, that the bicycle paths on upper Laugavegur (strictly speaking the property of our theocratical neighbour municipality, a

matter of some concern, I assure you) will be auctioned ... going once, twice ... sold! to the Pescal Harbour Duchy of Sæbraut (for two half-portions of delicious halibutt – two tails, in fact, fins intact, in tartar sauce with potatoes and broccoli, yummy!)

(My telephone seems to be ringing, but I'm not answering. I'm not! No, no, no. Busy, busy, busy. *Sigh* I wish I'd known politics was such a drudgery).

And then some: as this is a greater decree of glee than thus far we've permitted (the revolution must not stop at the local petting zoo), it is with some sternness and severity (ha ha!) that we now decree a "gleeful grump-hinder". The mosques of central Laugavegur (as well as the prayer booths at TGIFs worldwide) will now carry mandatory cartoon commentary on the prophet (and his terrorist followers), the at-laughing of which will be equally mandatory (three times during the cleaning rituals). Laughter may be rendered in the form of an slamic prayer-call, an adhan, but only if it is provably (beyond the slightest doubt) of a humourous quality.

No joke! (Funny, no?)

Nextly, I would like to start by apologizing for using the word "bitch" in a recent radio interview. As amends I've forbidden the word (unless pronounced with the utmost of lisps) and any mention of "the incident", private or public. To those concerned (I'm looking at you, sisters!) you have my sincerest "oops". I was speaking as an artist, a true surrealist, and meant nothing by it. Nothing at all. Your ideologies disgust me and I'd never sink to that level. I'm sorry already, get a life.

I probably need not re-mention that this is a tough job, I am under a lot of pressure. I am just a normal guy, I am no "tough cookie", and cannot be expected to be a Superman nor am I, as some of the most humourless fuddy-duddies amongst you have deigned to imply, a super-villain – and to tell you the truth I'm, like, totally tired of your Predator-jokes (your sense of humour, btw, is highly unprofessional – this is a *skill*, people, it needs to be *learned*) They are so ten years ago it's not funny. Not even



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in the so-not-funny-it's-funny way of funny.

[ANGRY DIATRIBE SELF-CENSORED]

I've had time to mull this over. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. From the bottom of my heart. The depths of my soul. I have now referred to the Bhagavad Gita and truly you are entitled to your criticism and your own sense of humour. I've already deleted the worst of it, as it was below me. I have just [insert appropriate verb] smoking again, and am a bit on the nervy side. I shall henceforth receive your scorn as the humble vessel that I remain, despite life-long adversities as punker, author, sugarcube, business executive, comedian, artist, celebrity and now mayoral entity.

I shall not let the slings and arrows of outrageousness hurt me!

True individuals of spiritual means must set themselves above the quotidian bicker of petty grievances. Oooooommmmm. Oooooommmmm. I still feel obliged to mention that the municipal council is not entirely in agreement on this subject, as apparently the surrealist manifesto has proven largely incompatible with the Bhagavad Gita, as well as the teachings of St. Paul, whose advice we seek on a weekly basis (not personally, of course, but in the "Bible"). But then Breton was a communist, like Stalin, whose

Gulags we despise.

Lastly, thusly: At a time like this, where years meet at the apex of increased communal blood pressures, while the burned sticks of yesteryear are still gliding on the nocturnal ashes of party-town – and the world smells like Beirut in heat – it is customary to reflect upon past passed actions and render judgment, or to paraphrase the jolliest of men (in a jovial sort of glee, and yet admittedly paranoia-inducing): we know if you've been good or bad, so be good for goodness' sake (and if not for goodness' sake, then for *the absolute totality of goodness' sake*). Mind you, that is also a rule. There'll be more to come, and I'll relay them all in good time.

Ah, the good times! Remember the good times? How we wish we all were young.

Hope&Pray, Hope&Pray, Hope&Pray, (and don't forget to thank God it's Friday, as approved by our sponsors). Yours truly (lol),

Herbert Friðbert Albertsson
Honourable Gnarr of the state anarcho-surreo-separatist municipality of central Laugavegur and the united TGIFs of the greater eurafrican kingdom. 🍀

The Falling Man

By Óttar Martín Norðfjörð
Illustration by Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir

William, a small man of great inner proportions, fell through the thin air. He had stopped screaming. He had stop trying to avoid the inevitable. The green ground beneath him grew ever bigger as window after window passed him with rapid speed. Soon he would crash and die. Soon his life would be over.

As William soared through the air like a broken bird, he tried to recall why he was here, falling midst in formless space. Suddenly the last years became clear, every single thing that had led to William's fall from Iceland's only skyscraper. This fall he was stuck in now, seeing the green ground and sidewalk beneath him moving closer and closer with every passing second.

Although his body fell with ever increasing speed, and the wind blew relentlessly, making his eyes water, his ears numb, he managed to recall the beginning of his troubles. It was all because of a small article, which described the events to come in detail, and written by a beautiful woman named Laura.

Laura. Her name was like a poisoned arrow that hit his heart.

William had first met Laura at a New Year's Eve party in 2010. He remembered the enthusiasm. Everyone was celebrating the end of the first decade, the beginning of the next one, with hopes of a better world finally achieved. Then disaster struck in the first weeks of 2011.

But no one noticed at first. Laura's article was short and seemed insignificant. If only people hadn't be too caught up in their own ways. If only people would have understood the puny article, which later on—years later—would read as an omen for the decade to come.

William was one of few who read the article, frightfully realising the horror around the corner. The only reason he read it was Laura. At the New Year's party she had mentioned the article to William, stating that it "would change everything".

How true, William thought while falling through the sky like a plane out of fuel. Although he started preaching

about the danger upon humanity, quoting the article, trying to convince others, only a handful listened. The few created a group with William as its front man. However, the general public saw them as eccentrics, calling them fanatics. They were truly a laughing-stock for the first years.

But no one was laughing now. Not that it mattered. It was too late. After the first event occurred everything changed dramatically. Initially people tried to rationalise the event, but no one could hide from the truth. The truth eventually caught up with people in 2016, more than five years after William had first met Laura and read her article. But by 2016 it was too late. By then everything that had happened was irreversible.

Also William's fall, which seemed never ending. He hadn't been pushed. He had jumped, but still it wasn't his decision. Laura could as easily have pushed him. It was their meeting and her article that had led him here.

But all things considered, William wasn't sad although his life would soon come to a full stop. He knew death was an escape. A cowardly move, some would perhaps say. He had decided to avoid the problem upon the world by jumping.

There hadn't been the slightest doubt in William's mind that this was the right decision. Not when he went out this morning, kissing his wife and two daughters in their sleep. Not when he walked calmly up each and every step up the skyscraper. Not when he stood at the top, viewing the city, the mountains, the sun coming up and the calm sea everyone around him. He had felt at ease for the first time in ten years.

The sidewalk was near, also the green grass, which William could now smell. He closed his eyes. Laura was there, behind his eyelids, waiting for him. He had no idea where she hid in the world, maybe she was dead, but her



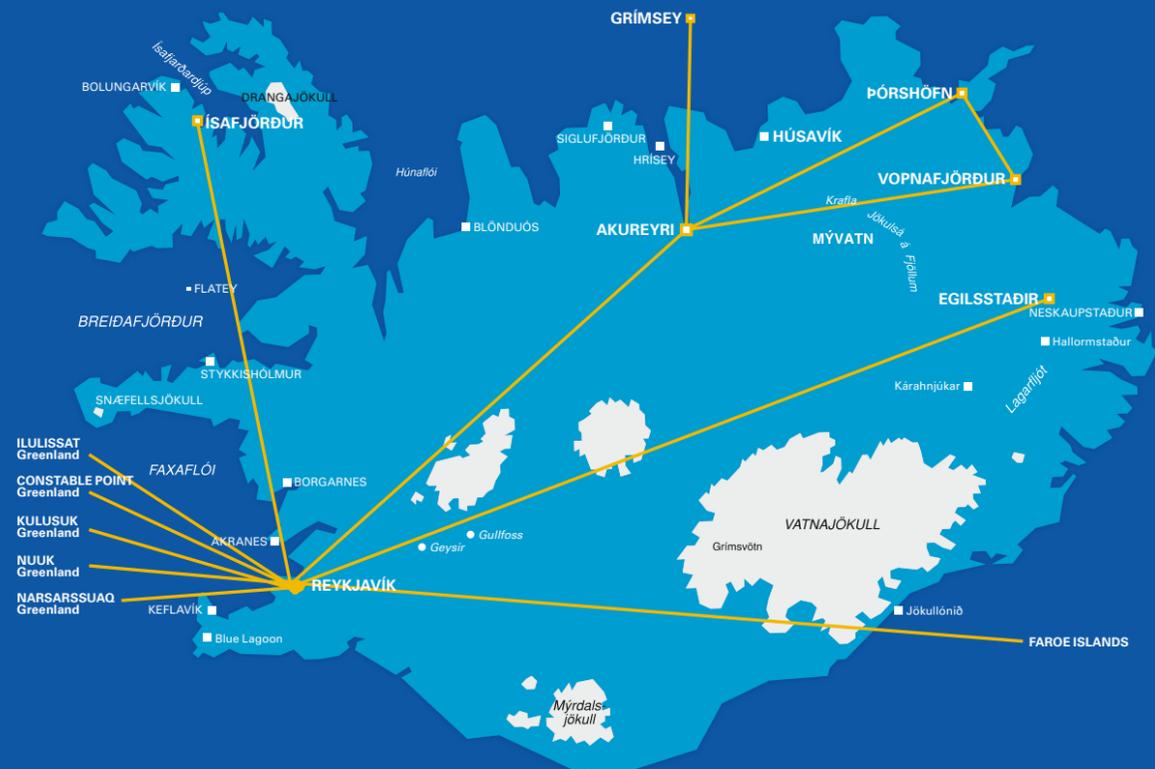
image stayed with William wherever he went. Even now, as he fell from the sky, soon hitting the ground, Laura was with him, torturing him the last seconds of his existence.

The year 2020 would soon come to an end. William wouldn't be here to witness it. His dead body would lie underneath the ground, in a wooden box. But William didn't need to see the decade end. He knew how it would end. Laura had described it in her article. Everything she had written had come true. William was sure the decade would end as Laura had predicted. That's why he had jumped. That's why he was now falling.

William opened his eyes. The concrete sidewalk was inches away. The green grass reminded him of past springs, of beautiful childhood memories. William opened his arms and hugged the earth. 🍀

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2031

By Guðrún Eva Mínervudóttir

Illustration by Inga María Brynjarsdóttir

The perfect gift was a personal one, Aldís believed, but not too personal. A gift that showed the giver knew something about the receiver's tastes while at the same time providing an unexpected addition; something that would expand his world. A luxury item, but in a price range that would not betray any ulterior motive.

Aldís strolled up Bankastræti and Laugavegur in the pleasant fall weather, treading by clothing racks, clearance sales and food stands. The colourful crowd of people was shaded in certain places by yellowing tree crowns, some of which towered over the houses.

Excuse me, she said as she bumped into a black-haired woman who pulled a cart of handmade candies. She paused and watched the cart as it delicately wobbled with the woman's every step and she considered how she usually wanted things that perished. Soaps, cheeses, coffee, candles, oils and spices. But that sort of gift was not suitable now. In this case, she did have an ulterior motive, something beyond that pure warmth of friendship which in her mind characterized the perfect gift. Aldís wanted to give something that would serve as a reminder of her own existence. She wanted to occupy a space in the recipient's mind.

The gift was intended for a man named Ben who worked with her in the sorting facility. Along with a few others, they oversaw an army of youngsters that sorted recyclable consumer plastics into seven different categories based on the small embossed markings they bore.

Ben was talkative and boisterous, short, portly, with big hands and a quick laugh. Aldís had been in love with him ever since he began working at the plant. He had a girlfriend at the time. He had broken up with her and

started seeing another, and now he was newly started on the third.

It was Ben's birthday next week. The new girlfriend would probably give him something well thought out and perfect. Aldís shook her head and tried to divert her thoughts by focusing on something neutral. The sidewalk. But the kerbstone indirectly reminded her of Ben. Because of a news story that he had read out loud for her on a coffee break, about how city officials had been criticised for leaving stacks of loose kerbstones beside a freshly laid sidewalk. They were said to be inviting danger by leaving 'potential blunt instruments' lying around for anyone to pick up and use, and what's more, so close to the city's watering holes, whence intoxicated crowds flowed after nights of heavy drinking.

Ben thought that mentioning this was an embarrassing affront to humanity's unspoken agreement to pretend civilization was more deeply rooted than it actually is.

Have they gone mad? he had laughingly exclaimed. You can't say that sort of thing out loud! We need to keep on pretending if we are to keep our faith in democracy!

Aldís couldn't speak, she was laughing so hard. Ben's news commentary always made her laugh. She even laughed now, as she remembered it. At the same time, she felt a familiar jab of nervous fear, something she had inherited from her conservative parents. The inheritance she was continually trying to exorcise away. She wanted to believe that all the exotic people who surrounded her were trustworthy, but she could never get rid of the feeling that people in general were merely a rabble, and even if they temporarily toed the line, that didn't mean everything was safe.

Still, she could never envision turning back the developments of the last twenty years or so. She shuddered at thought of how her life would be if three million "new" Icelanders

suddenly moved away and left her in the bland, inbred homogeneity. She remembered it as worse than boring. It was a watery soup of over-used genes and paranoid politics. It was not just dull and grey, but positively unhealthy. Nothing came out of it other than narrow-minded bullying disguised as "common sense".

Twenty years ago, her weekends had consisted of endless drives cruising down Laugavegur with her girlfriends. All of them sporting fresh driver's licenses, all of them referred to as "ham", because they were pink and they glistened. Laugavegur had long since been turned into a pedestrian-only street, and the ham-look had transformed into a fringe culture mostly connected with prostitution and drug abuse. Reykjavík's main shopping street, which used to be quiet except for special occasions, was now teeming with life every day of the week, and the merchandise on offer crowded the sidewalks and flowed into the side streets.

The thought of which made Aldís aware that she had been wandering around for half an hour without entering a single shop. She was mesmerised by the vibrant atmosphere. And the omnipresent smell of food, which nowadays brought to mind actual big cities. It made her feel almost happy. A little girl, holding her mother's hand, smiled at Aldís and Aldís smiled back.

A freestanding sign pointed to a lamp store on the second floor, above a small but popular falafel hut. She squeezed past a roomful of patrons waiting to be served and climbed up a narrow staircase in the back.

The shop was roomy, but the space appeared cramped because the selection of lamps was so overwhelming. There were lava lamps surrounded by crystal chandeliers. Antiques mixed with new items. Lampshades of silk, leather, vinyl and glass. At the back of the store a woman



sat behind a small counter.

Can I help you? she called out in French-accented English.

I don't know, Aldís shouted back. I'm just looking for the perfect gift, she added and gave out an embarrassed laugh.

Who for? asked the woman?

A friend, Aldís replied and approached the counter, where the woman sat with a cup of coffee and a tablet computer. The woman, who had appeared quite plain from afar, was wearing a tight, low-cut one piece and was heavily made up, as if she had just stepped off some stage. She wore fake, glittery eyelashes.

Aldís became unnerved. She pointed to a lamp at random and asked: How much?

7900 Euros, the woman replied.

That's too much, Aldís responded. The lamp was made of glass, shaped like a mushroom, the amber hat covered in coloured gemstones like cake sprinkles.

The stones are semi-precious, from China, the woman remarked as she nodded to Aldís. Carefully, as if she were worried about her eyelashes or lip-gloss. A lamp makes a beautiful gift for a friend. Symbolic.

Exactly, Aldís replied and feigned an interest in the lamps surrounding her as she made her way towards the exit.

This one is only 1500, the woman said and pointed to a lamp of white, sandblasted glass.

Aldís thought her voice sounded curt and angry, but maybe the woman had only raised her voice because Aldís was now further away.

She hurried down the stairs and was glad to be under the open sky again. She felt as if she had been exposed. She saw herself all too clearly now; a petit-bourgeois wannabe cosmopolitan. A pathetic and scared little person looking for the perfect birthday present for a man who was almost certainly at this very moment doting on his girlfriend—without ever considering that Aldís might have a life outside of the workplace. She went limp, she couldn't move or decide whether to soldier on and keep searching or give up and go home.

A Thai ladyboy gently grabbed her arm and to her abject horror offered his services. Hi sexy mama, he quietly said. Want a date? 🍷

The Gates

By Haukur Már Helgason

Illustration by Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir

– Clubs and bars in Iceland have always been run by members of the Progressive party.

– Dad!

– Listen, this is important. Your mother thinks you're too young, but it is important that I tell you about these things early enough. About management. You will not learn this at school. The Progressive party has always been concerned with the preservation of our nation. Like all regulation, this management is achieved by controlling what is open and what is closed. Open. Closed. Farmers once took care of these things. What have I told you about all things on earth?

– All things on earth make sense.

– That's it. There is always a reason why things are the way they are. No one profession realises the significance of leading a cow under a bull as naturally as farmers. What today is seen as chaotic outbursts of 'violence' in the city centre has never been in the least chaotic. That so-called 'violence' is a vital part of a delicate set of manoeuvres and interferences during negotiations of possible procreation. This history has not been written, and possibly it will only ever be passed on as oral heritage. So listen carefully—one day you will want to tell your children this story, and hopefully you will have your own chapter to add to it. Now, at the 20th century county balls, informal groups of attentive, unselfish guardians of integrity took care that no undesired goo would be mixed in our genetic pool. In a rare display of national solidarity, men

from all classes, all families, with all sorts of different background, kept the least fortunate bulls away from our most precious cows. This is our most valuable natural resource, the gene pool. When foreign elements tried to spoil it, men would take care of it. That goes for the lax, liberal periods. Different circumstances call for different measures. In the 19th century when hundreds of people gathered to form towns for the first time, this was met with an absolute, nationwide dance-verbot—which lasted for a hundred years. When that ban lifted, our sages banned alcohol. You see: open and close. If you want to keep a gate, you must first raise a wall—this is the only secret of effective management. A wall and a gate. Ban beer, sell moonshine. And now that alcohol and dancing are allowed, smoking is banned. You see the pattern, right? Now, I have told you about the Situation—tell daddy what the Situation was about.

– The Situation was when the British and American soldiers lured the weakest among Icelandic women...

– Weakest how?

– Psychologically and morally weakest, lured them into sin, by offering them chewing gum, nylon stockings and cigarettes.

– And what?

– And music.

– And?

– And... money.

– And the

fantasy of a

better life.

That's right

honey. What is that fantasy?

– Daddy, we've been through this so often.

– That's because it is important sweetie. What is the fantasy of a better life?

– The illusion that the world outside Iceland has better things to offer than life as it is, the illusion that happiness is somewhere else and that it can be achieved by giving in, through moral laxness.

– Correct. And what does that fantasy make of women?

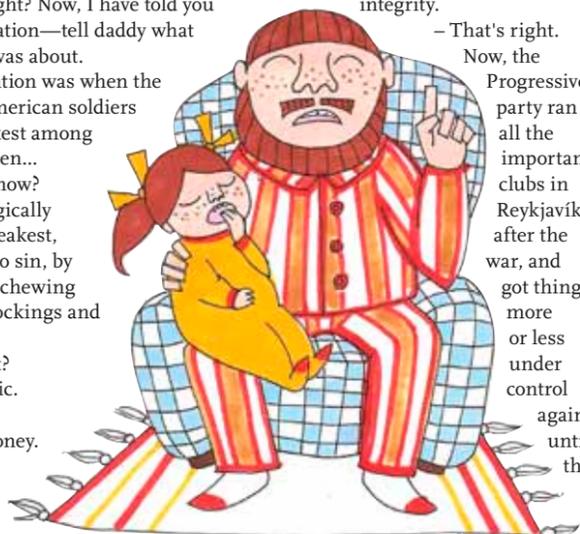
– The fantasy of happiness makes all women prostitutes.

– Perfect, sweetie. An A+. So now, then, we had the Situation. The government, of course, demanded that there would be no Negroes among the military personnel. That's not racism but what honey?

– That's not racism, but national integrity.

– That's right.

Now, the Progressive party ran all the important clubs in Reykjavík after the war, and got things more or less under control again, until the



early '70s. Boy, did things get out of hand! Not only the ideological invasion that we have spoken of so often—but at the same time the U.S. government gave in to pressure from its media and opened the gates, our gates, for their so-called 'mixed races' policy. Which is precisely not policy, but what? What's the opposite of order?

—Chaos, daddy.

—Chaos. And at the same time they re-baptized every ambition for control and order as 'violence'. All sorts of derogatory terms were invented for those of us who feel responsible for the good of others. Management escaped into the shadows. Spacious men's rooms became vital for the prolongation of our national existence. Now, darling, if this was an ideal world, I would not be telling you this. In an ideal world it is the privilege of women not to have to fill their pretty heads with everything that men do to protect them. In an ideal world it is woman's privilege to believe in happiness—and man's duty to play Santa Claus. Women do not want to know and they should not have to know about these things. However, this world of ours is less than ideal, I'm afraid. And I am less than certain that there will always be men around to keep you from harm's way. Daddy only wants what is best for you, you know that, right?

– Of course I do, daddy.

– Now, then, listen very carefully: when an intruder attempts to seduce an Icelandic woman, no matter how polite and gentle, no matter how humorous and respectful he may seem, or even genuinely attractive, such attempts are and always will be attempted rape. Sexual intercourse

between an Icelandic woman and a foreign man is rape, no matter how consensual it appears to both. Not merely in the sense that the man thereby exploits the female's lack of defence and judgement, but more seriously, on a deeper level, it is the rape of the nation itself. Such acts violently rip apart the very material we are woven of. Penetration, in such cases, is invasion. It not only resembles, but fundamentally is, a terrorist act.

Just imagine, if you had black skin, brown eyes, curly hair—if your parents spoke some ali-baba-language, if Iceland had fallen into the same pit as our sorry neighbouring countries and fed you shish kebab for breakfast—you would not be you. You would not be my dear little Ásdís. You would simply not exist. Likewise, had my own mother fallen during the Situation, I would not exist. So much is at stake, precious. And now, we have another Situation. The enemy is constantly by the gates. That is what they call globalization. What will then be our gate policy?

– Keep them closed, daddy.

– Keep your gates closed. That's it. The world's finest young men are all right here, born to the world's finest mothers, bred in the world's cleanest country. Daddy loves his little Icelandic angel so much. And one day you will love your children, too. You just, you have to take care, when the time comes, that your children will really be your children, and not some other children, alien to their own mother and her family. You understand? 🍷

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Decades | Magnús Sveinn Helgason

The Decade Of Failure

 While history—meaning: ‘the past’—does not change, history—meaning: ‘the narration of past events’—does in fact change. This is because we view history through the lens of the present. As events unfold, the meaning and significance of the past changes. And because our view of the past changes we constantly need to change our history textbooks.

So, it is pretty hard to predict how any event, let alone a whole decade, will be remembered. Because we do not know what the future holds, or what academic fads will reign among future historians, it is exceedingly difficult to say with any certainty how future historians will judge this first decade of the 21st century. Still, even if we lack the necessary hindsight of history, we can make some pretty good educated guesses.

A DECADE OF PROGRESS

The first decade of the 21st century in Iceland will most certainly be remembered as a decade of progress and achievement by those future historians who will emphasize social and cultural history. Important milestones were met in the history of human rights and equality, most recently with the 2010 law, which gives gay couples the right to marry. Another milestone was reached in 2009 when Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir became the first woman to serve as Prime Minister of Iceland and the first openly gay person to serve as a PM anywhere. An important step in world history.

Also, Iceland became a truly multicultural society as large numbers of foreigners, primarily Eastern Europeans, migrated to Iceland in search of work. And despite the occasional flaring up of xenophobia, Icelandic society

welcomed these immigrants. By the end of the decade, Reykjavík authorities had even acknowledged that people from other cultures had the right to construct their own houses of worship, finally granting the nation’s small Muslim community the right to build their own mosque.

The decade was also important in Icelandic cultural history. The arts flourished and Icelandic musicians enjoyed considerable success both in Europe and America.

All in all, Iceland in 2010 is far more cosmopolitan than it was in 2000.

A DECADE OF FAILURE

However important these developments are, I would argue that none of them is as important as the colossal, utter and inexcusable failure of the Icelandic economic miracle, which certainly is the defining event of the decade. The neoliberal experiment of creating prosperity by slashing taxes and regulations in order to turn Iceland into some sort of business friendly tax haven and global financial centre finally ended with the complete collapse of 2008.

The reason the public went along with this experiment in the first place was that Icelanders had been led to believe they lived in a country characterised by fair play, equality and—above all—honesty. Iceland was ranked as the least corrupt society in the world and Icelanders believed they were governed by honest politicians and that their businessmen were equally hard-working and honest.

The collapse and its aftermath showed Icelanders that this had been a mirage. The bankers, hailed as financial wunderkinder were actually looters. The politicians incompetent morons. Like the hapless Minister of Economic Affairs, caught like a deer

in the headlights, without a clue as to what to do when they were faced with tough choices. Others, bursting with arrogance and delusion, like former Minister for Foreign Affairs Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, declaring that those who dared protest the inaction and incompetence of politicians were “not the nation.” Davíð Oddsson refusing to step down from the chair of the Central Bank. The managers of Kaupthing contemptuously declaring that they had absolutely nothing to apologise for.

A DECADE OF SQUANDERED TRUST

Trust is obviously important for all societies. But too much trust, as well as undeserved trust, is dangerous, and I would argue that one of the greatest weaknesses of Icelandic society at the beginning of the decade was excess trust: excess trust in politicians, business leaders and the market ideology.

One of the main reasons for the protests that began in the fall of 2008 is the public’s realisation that the elites, both political and economic, had betrayed the trust that they had enjoyed.

In fact, this appears to be part of a global pattern: everywhere, trust in politicians and business leaders has collapsed. Everywhere the reason is the same. The economic failure and financial collapse, caused by reckless financiers and complacent politicians, are not the primary reason—the real reason is that people feel they were betrayed by their elites.

During the bubble, people tolerated growing income inequality because they were promised that the wealth would trickle down. It turned out the public was not allowed to share in the wealth, only the debts, because when the crash came, the public was forced to shoulder the cost of bailing out the speculators. To make matters worse,

the left wing government, which promised to protect the homes and families, has been unable to come up with a comprehensive plan to help the public, and no concrete steps have been taken to increase social justice.

LESSONS LEARNED

This is not all bad, of course. People have learned the hard way that it is impossible to build permanent prosperity for an entire society on speculation, market manipulation and corporate raiding.

Icelanders have also learned important modesty. But at a steep price. Historically, Icelanders have been plagued by a certain mix of insecurity and self-importance. During the boom years the insecurity was replaced by arrogance, creating a poisonous certainty and delusions of grandeur that fuelled the Icelandic financial bubble. As the bubble burst, people realised that Iceland was not the centre of the universe. To paraphrase the Borat-esque mangled Icelandic of the first lady: Iceland is certainly not “the most big country in the world” (stórasta land í heimi).

Finally, Icelanders have also learned that protest can be effective. It is not so long ago, that it was a commonly held belief that Icelanders were somehow genetically incapable of political protest. Groups like Saving Iceland were vilified and political activists were considered suspect. The financial collapse rekindled a spirit of political engagement that had all but died out during the bubble.

One can hope that this newfound political engagement and activism will lead to more democratic politics and more responsive politicians. ☺

</2010>

Business has been good this year. Of course, it has not been as good as it was a few years ago [before the crash], but it has still been good and I can’t complain. I don’t have any major problems, just the usual hassle of importing foreign food products, but it’s like this everywhere. [Regarding the last year], everything has been okay and business has been just fine...very fine.

<A new decade...>

I hope that everything will be alright in the next years. I hope. As long as things go well and I can work, I don’t think about much except for continuing to work. I am happy [with the present situation] and I am positive about the future.

Linda Lek Theiojanthuk, Proprietor, Mai Tai

Drama | Íris Erlingsdóttir

Total Drama Island

 Icelanders who lived through the first decade of the 21st century found it to be the most interesting, and the most infuriating, epoch in our history. We experienced the highest highs and the lowest lows. We imagined ourselves to be the richest people in the world, and then saw our illusory gains vanish in the span of a few days. We believed our leaders were supremely competent and just then discovered the depths of their incompetence and corruption.

I suspect that statistically, we are better off financially in 2010 than we were in 2000, but it doesn’t feel that way. Having tasted the good life, we feel impoverished by our sudden inability

to buy new cars every year, to indulge in shopping sprees abroad or to take tropical vacations every few months. After years during which there was essentially no unemployment and plenty of foreigners to perform shit jobs, we are traumatized by the permanent loss of high-paying jobs at the banks and long periods of scrambling to just get by.

People were seduced by government guarantees and low interest rates to purchase outrageously expensive homes, only to see their incomes plummet and the effective interest rates rise, essentially relegating them to the status of indentured servants.

Although it is obvious that our system of government has failed us, Ice-

landic voters showed little interest in the recent elections to the Constitutional Assembly. Although it was the policies of the Independence Party that opened the door to the massive abuses we witnessed, and its leaders who facilitated and participated in the financial fraud, the unrepentant IP remains Iceland’s single largest political party.

Will the next decade be any better? Although Iceland’s prosperity is largely dependent on that of the much larger economies in America and Europe, we retain the power to determine our own happiness. Numerous studies have shown that the level of a nation’s happiness, once its people’s basic needs have been assured, does not correlate strongly to its wealth. The four gener-

ally accepted pillars of societal happiness include: promotion of sustainable development, preservation and promotion of cultural values, conservation of the natural environment and establishment of good governance.

The first three of these pillars are largely dependent on the fourth pillar—good governance—and on this measure I am not optimistic. Bertrand de Jouvenel observed that “a society of sheep must in time beget a government of wolves.” Other than that brief, glorious moment in January 2008 when popular protests forced the resignations of Geir Haarde’s government, nothing that I’ve seen over the past couple of years indicates that we are willing to do anything meaningful to wrest con-

trol of our country from the wolves. No one has accepted responsibility for the abuses and crimes that culminated in the kreppa, and the courts have not held anyone liable for their blatant incompetence, negligence, and corruption. The thieves have kept their riches, and the rest of us are more subjugated than ever.

The ultimate problem is ourselves. We learned the price of everything, but the value of nothing. We learned much about ourselves, and then deliberately excoriated those lessons from our collective memory. Þetta reddast allt. Until our attitude changes, nothing else will. ☺



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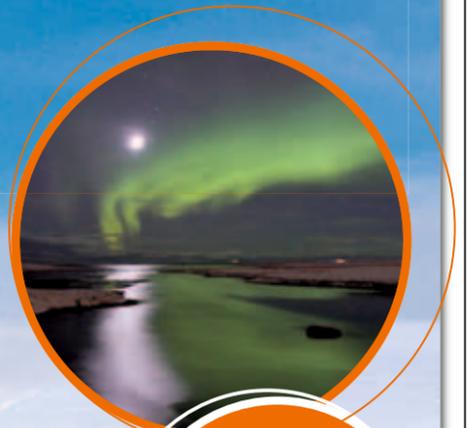
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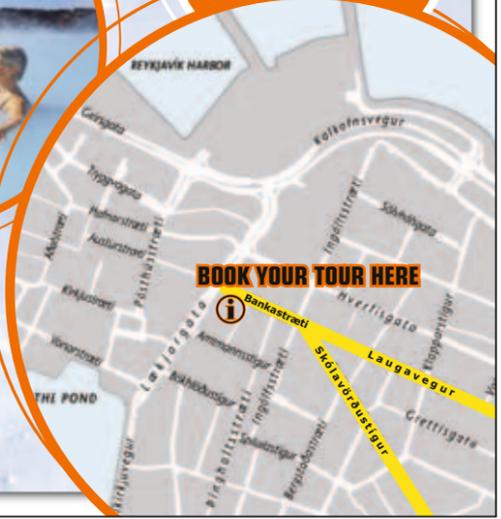
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PAGE 10

Some say our greatest loss is our reputation as an honest and trustworthy people. Because in our case, we did not suffer an attack from an outside enemy. In our case the enemy came from within.

Former Foreign Affairs Minister Jón Baldvin Hannibalsson knows his enemies

PAGE 6

Moral consciousness is a feeling, and the trust it creates is a feeling also. And if feelings live in the heart then our hearts are being torn out, along with our liver and lungs.

Elísabet Jökulsdóttir wonders about where we're at

PAGE 24

Thank God this nation has progressed in a linear fashion since day one, but not in a cyclic eternal spiral shape of the second and the third world. Therefore we can easily assume that the best of the decade did in fact take place in the year 2010.

Ásmundur Ásmundsson sums up Icelandic art in the last decade

PAGE 8

Iceland saw three elections in 2010. Voters failed all of them.

Student Hilmar Magnússon is not amused

PAGE 6

I think this will be the decade of less crap and more fun and creative thought.

Best Party CEO Heiða Kristín Helgadóttir kind of is

PAGE 21

I think I know where the confidence and swagger came from. Davíð Oddsson. Hard to explain how adored he was, other than to say Davíð is to economic policy as Ronald Reagan is to nuclear policy.

Bart Cameron considers Icelandic swagger, good and bad



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