



# *The* REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

Issue Nº 6 – May 22 – June 4 – 2009

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+ COMPLETE CITY LISTINGS – INSIDE!

+ **Asylum Seekers:** Guilty Until Proven Innocent?

Iceland's **Transcendental** Underground!

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The Artist Would Like  
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## **The End** *of* **Ragnar** **Kjartansson**

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**Reviews!**

**And now... even more advertising**

**Ragnar Kjartansson's** exhibition for Venice, entitled *The End*, will feature a tableau vivant of the artist and his model that will last for the entire six-months of the Biennale, along with a monumental video and music installation. 🍷 PG. 10.

Editorial

Haukur’s 6th Editorial!

I’m not gonna lie to you, I’m real nervous when it comes to the Grapevine. I feel we have a big responsibility to a lot of folks out there, and I constantly worry about letting them down. Here are some groups of people that come to mind:

First and foremost, there’s our readers: we should try and keep them informed of what’s going on (events wise, in the news, in culture, etc.), amuse them while they wait for take-away pizza and provide them with a mass of high-quality paper for arts and crafts projects (speaking of which, didya notice last issue’s delightfully decadent 60 gram paper? The printers were saving the thin stuff for the local newspapers).

Our writers and photographers: to provide them with the space they deserve, to not mess up their contributions and maybe try and lay them out nice, so people will want to check them out. We pay as much as we can for articles and pictures, and it ain’t a whole lot to be honest. So you know that our contributors are turning in their pieces out of a sheer and admirable dedication that demands our utmost respect.

There’s also events promoters, bands, galleries, artists and pretty much anyone who’s offering up some form of entertainment or happening that deserves our attention. There are a lot of good people doing a lot of great things in town – in the whole of Iceland for that matter – and as we are very interested in promoting and supporting our local culture, we aim to publicize and give space to as many of them as possible.

Which isn’t always easy when you’ve

got only 32 or 40 pages to work with. Fitting in the articles, the interviews, the schedules and quotes. So we try and we scramble to cram it all in. Try is key here, which is unfortunate, and often leads to heated phone calls or angry letters from previous friends and well-wishers who all of the sudden want to see our bodies impaled on sticks, Cannibal Holocaust-style.

Anyway. Isn’t this here valuable space that could be used to cover some theatre group or something? I guess this is my attempt to explain to friends and family – and my cats – why I stay up all night four days in a row prior to publication and don’t see them for weeks on end. And I’m not the only one; Grapevine is lucky enough to have an army of dedicated and talented folks working at all hours of the day to ensure we make it to print on time, that we deliver some interesting content and that we’ve got ads to pay our salaries and printing costs. Hats off to all you people.

Since I’m hatting off, I might hat off some more. So I’ll off my hat to all of y’all that write or phone (or pester our staff at bars) with helpful suggestions for improving our paper. Keep ‘em coming. I would also like to hat Yohanna Guðrún for almost winning Eurovision, our new MPs for keeping their priorities straight (ehrm...) and those drunk kids that kept yelling outside our office window last night.

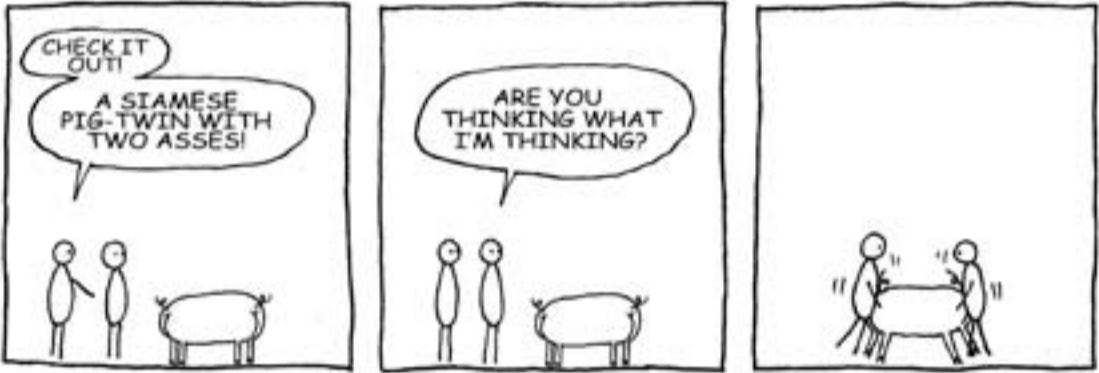
Hats, y’all!

Comic strips

– by Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir



– by Hugleikur Dagsson



**On Cover:**  
Ragnar Kjartansson

**Photo by:**  
Rafael Pinho

**Thanks alot:**  
Börkur Arnarsson

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Published by Fröken ehf.

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Printed by Landsprent ehf. in 25.000 copies.

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The Reykjavík Grapevine is published 18 times a year by Fröken Ltd. Monthly from November through April, and fortnightly from May til October. Nothing in this magazine may be reproduced in whole or in part without the written permission of the publishers. The Reykjavík Grapevine is distributed around Reykjavík, Akureyri, Egilsstaðir, Selfoss, Keflavík, Ísafjörður and at key locations along road #1, and all major tourist attractions and tourist information centres in the country.

You may not like it, but at least it's not sponsored. (No articles in the Reykjavík Grapevine are pay-for articles. The opinions expressed are the writers' own, not the advertisers').

The turtleneck is knitted out of Plötulopi, which is both sturdy and soft.



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# Sour grapes and stuff

Say your piece, voice your opinion, send your letters to [letters@grapevine.is](mailto:letters@grapevine.is)

04

Letters

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to Icelandic Reykjavik Grapevine Newspaper. I discovered your fine publication through a article in the major broadsheet newspapers (enclosed overleaf thank you encircled in article by pen) My reason for writing is this: A) I wonder if you could be so kind to forward a back copy of Reykjavik Grapevine please. If so I will send you the fee required for one issue. B) I find as a humble chap British born but having Icelandic culture to a point, experiencing Icelanders in everyday life, like a lot of visitors do not I got a considerable amount of respect for Icelanders who became over the years became friends as the original descendants of the Norse Vikings, but only as (nationalities mean little to me now) as individuals Brits, Irish, Swedes, etc. got on with me) I feel 'vexed' by the suffering of a small proud land. Due the world money 'created' crisis. For Icelandic working folks. And authorities in different lands knew the risks putting cash £ \$ € Islenski banks as with any bank of any country. C) But I know Icelanders have the iron determination never to give if (ha!) now and in future times. I also know Icelanders have a sense of humour enclosure (writer)

I write as a hobbyist to semi-pro at best enclose I had some very minor association with The Legend of the Death The Sea Horse Film

I seek no money for it and if used fine if not fine

D) It has been sometime since I had communicated with Icelanders since a couple of Icelandic people where promoted to glory (died) seeking Icelandic penpal age 21-65

Thank for taking time to read my letter. Bless.

Mr Sherman Wilson F-O-R-G-O-T-C-H  
13 Cedar Road, Dorchester, Dorset.  
DT1 2PX, England

Dear Mr Sherman,

Thank you so much for your letter. It uhm... yeah. Getting an actual letter like that, in the mail and all, that was actually kind of cool. Even though I'm not sure what you mean by all of it. We'll at least send you that back issue, no worries. Your minor association with The Legend of the Death The Sea Horse Film also sounds intriguing. You should write us more on the subject. Keep those letters coming! Takk!

Hello Haukur,  
You have a new friend request from [redacted] on Affluence.org. Affluence is an exclusive community of affluent people dedicated to making life better for both themselves and others.

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Sour grape of the month

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Now, since we're real pleasant and giving folks here at the Grapevine, we thought we'd share some of that wonderful **POLAR BEER** with you, our readers. From this issue and henceforth in every issue, until the end of days (or our Polar Beer-sponsorship program, whichever comes first), we will reward one **MOST EXCELLENT LETTER** with a case of the Polar Beer. You read right. A full case of beer. At your disposal. **Give us your worst: [letters@grapevine.is](mailto:letters@grapevine.is)**



(light)

## THE MOST EXCELLENT LETTER

My broken Icelandic dream - A review of two years of unfairness in Iceland

When I decided to move to Iceland I imagined a country with a fair society and without discrimination. My first job experience was in [redacted]. I didn't want to ask what my salary would be before moving, because I was scared to sound too greedy, [...] I found out that the hostel was supposed to pay 90.000 ISK more than what they had paid me. I don't know if it was a mistake, but most of the employees at the hostel are foreigners that are working in Iceland for a couple of months. [...] My trouble with the police was after a demonstration where I was arrested. [...] So they closed me in a cell for 19 hours. During that time they gave me just an apple for dinner; the next meal I got was the next day [...] the police kept my passport and told me that they would send it to the Keflavik airport when I would leave the country. By then I didn't have a kenitala so I was fucked [...].

All this taught me that my image of Iceland was crap. What I just learnt is that the society is the same everywhere, it's not better in Iceland than in Italy. I still want to live here, but I also want to speak up when I get treated unfairly.

Antonio Rilievo

Dear Antonio,

We're sorry, but we couldn't find a way to fit your entire letter anywhere in the paper. It's real long. Interested readers can find it on our web-site.

It really sucks that you've had to endure injustice over here. Hopefully, you can cheer up with some excellent "Awesome letter" beer. Just e-mail us back to get it.

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Best Regards,  
Affluence Administration  
[support@affluence.org](mailto:support@affluence.org)

Dear Administration,  
Haha. Hahahahaha. Hahahahahahaha. Hah! Haha! Hahaha!

Ps – Bwahahahahahaha!

Nice cover last issue! Articles were fun too. David Lynch is so cool, and the story of Grylla was... interesting. I love the Icelandic monster bit and look for it every issue. Can you give me a sneak preview of what's to expect?

Johann Eskil, Bergen

Hey Johann,

Funny you should ask... actually, Huggleikur and us have decided to put the

'Monsters and Mythical Beings' series on an indefinite break, at least for the summer. We're trying to cook up something awesome to embark upon this fall, until then you can enjoy some exclusive comic strips, courtesy of Huggleikur.

Dear Grapevine,

I have been an avid reader of your paper ever since I visited Reykjavik in January and follow you on-line every day. I have been meaning to drop you a line to thank you for doing such a good job keeping the world updated on what's going on over there. The politics bits are interesting, but I also really like reading about the music and daily life aspects especially since I'm planning to move to Reykjavik as soon as I get the chance. I have a question though, how much does it subscribe to the print version from overseas and who do I call to do that?

And thank you so much for your last issue, I think it's the best one yet. I especially liked the article on STDs and the one on Dreamland. Do you know when it's showing in the US?

Thank you for your time and your hard work,  
Erica, Portland OR

Dear Erica,  
Thank you so much for your kind letter. It is nice to know you appreciate the paper, and the town we take a name from. We're not sure when Dreamland will make it to the US, but the directors assured us that it would be promoted internationally, so it ought to make its way your way soon. As for subscription enquiries, you should e-mail [subscribe@grapevine.is](mailto:subscribe@grapevine.is).

# Hressingarskálinn

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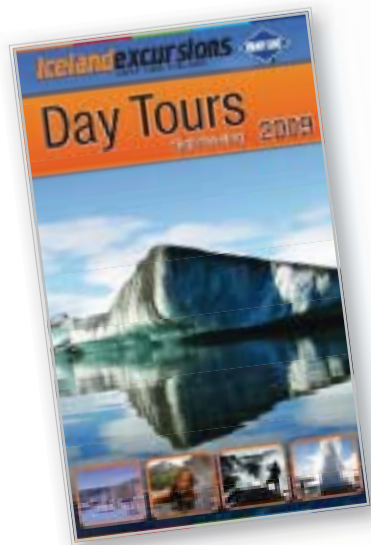
AH35

The tour takes us along the beautiful south shore of Iceland to the glacial lagoon, Jökulsárlón. On the way we visit the waterfalls Seljalandsfoss and Skogarfoss and see Iceland's biggest volcano, Öraefajökull glacier, which also has the highest peak of the island.

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AH 18	The Blue Lagoon Direct to Keflavik airport	33 €	25 €	3.400 kr
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AH 21	Iceland from Below & Blue Lagoon direct	100 €	90 €	12.500 kr
AH 22	Reykjanes Peninsula and Gullfoss & Geysir - from May 15	129 €	110 €	14.400 kr
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\*According to the Dear Visitor study done by Tourism Research and Consulting in the summer of 2008, Iceland Excursions had a significant lead compared to competitors in satisfaction and quality.



# Guilty Until Proven Innocent



Words  
Kolfinna Baldvinsdóttir

Photography  
Julia Staples

*“It is better that I kill myself than to be killed when sent back,”* says Medhi, a 50 year-old refugee from Iran. He has now been waiting for answers from Icelandic authorities about whether he will be granted the status of a refugee for more than four years. Giving up on waiting, he went on a hunger strike. It was not until the 28th day that the authorities gave in and granted him a six-month work permit. What happens after that, he doesn’t know, but he is happy: finally providing for himself and the family he left behind. *“It can drive you crazy waiting like this, year after year – sleeping, eating, sleeping – not knowing what they’re going to do with you.”*

1. 19 Year-old Baghdad native Nour Al-din is one of the refugees currently waiting for resolution at the FIT hostel. Nour is a veritable rapper, and occasionally performs in Reykjavík. Go see him if you have the chance.

Five other refugees have gone on hunger strikes since last summer. One of them committed suicide; he had been rejected and was about to be deported. Another two dozen are still there, waiting. Some have been waiting for months, others for many years, getting increasingly desperate. “Do we all have to go on hunger strike to get the authorities’ attention?” they ask themselves, fear in their eyes. Lately, they’ve been watching yet another of their mates, Mansri Hichem from Algeria, deteriorating day by day. On the 25th day he gave in, when promised a positive outcome in his case that is now finally on the table of the Minister of Justice herself.

## FIT HOSTEL – The Guesthouse

Hidden away in the lava of the south-west corner of Iceland, close to where the NATO base used to be (until 2006), the refugees are housed in the Fit Hostel. “An attractive hostel with various facilities. The hostel/guesthouse is situated in Njarðvík and offers good and affordable accommodation for everyone,” it says in the ad – along with refugees from places such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Mauritania, Sudan, Algeria, Russia etc. Backpackers from Europe who share toilets with the refugees often surprised when confronting them in the hallway. They were even more surprised when, on September 11 of 2008, a special force of 60 police officers rushed into Fit hostel, breaking open all of its doors in the early morning, “searching for criminal activities,” as they later stated.

“We could all expect raids on our houses at any time,” the director of the Directorate of Immigration, Haukur

Guðmundsson, said when explaining this unexpected event that shocked the general public. These words indicate that the standard “innocent until proven guilty” only applies to banksters and “New-Vikings” in Iceland; at least those haven’t had their houses raided, though “guilty beyond reasonable doubt” in the minds of many Icelanders. “The burden of proof is on us, but we are not criminals,” said Katarina, a 30 year-old from Russia, shaking with anger when explaining the peculiar day, “we are simply people like you. Why do you keep us here for so long?”

## “The primary problem of the 21st century”

Provided with food and a 2,500 ISK per week stipend, the refugees-in-waiting are free to move, but as one of them puts it: “This is worse than prison. When in prison, you at least know when they’ll let you out.” Most of them have been stranded on the shores of Iceland while on their way to the Promised Land in the west. Caught with forged passports, they are taken to Fit hostel where they are kept while their cases are being investigated. If the refugee has applied for asylum in another country of the Schengen area prior to landing in Iceland, he or she will be sent back to that country within three months, or so says the rule. If the individual has not, an investigation will start.

It should not take the authorities longer than six months to determine whether the home country of the refugee is “secure” for him or her, according to regulations, but, as Guðmundsson explains, only two full time employees are tasked with processing these cases. He

admits that because of a lack of financial means and lack of political policies when it comes to this “primary problem of the 21st century,” the cases can drag on for a longer time, sometimes without ever reaching a conclusion. Even though some of them have been rejected, the authorities are not allowed to send them back to their home countries, if the situation there is determined insecure by the United Nations or other humanitarian organisations.

## Only one got through

Iceland is a signatory to the Dublin Regulation, which was set in 2001 in order to “share” the burden of the Mediterranean countries, where most refugees initially arrive. Overloaded with desperate people, Greece, Italy and other countries in the south of Europe have been reprimanded for their treatment of asylum seekers, where they receive neither food nor shelter, and can only turn to the streets. Iceland has been reprimanded as well, but for different reasons. Since 1990, Icelandic authorities have only granted one person refugee status, out of 600 who were stranded here. This is the lowest percentage (0.26%) to be found among our neighbouring countries. There are exceptions; the number went up 400% last year, when a family of four from Sri Lanka was granted refugee status. The father of the family had been the driver of an Icelandic commission on assignment in Sri Lanka.

Explaining this low number is the obvious fact that Iceland is never the first country where the refugees arrive, so Icelandic authorities have the “right” to send them back to the country of their initial arrival. Iceland can, however, grant the refugee a permit to stay on humanitarian grounds. Around fifty people have been that lucky since 1990. But this permit is not handed on a silver plate, often many years pass before authorities simply give up on trying to find plausible reasons to send the refugee back.

## Hunger strikes the only tool?

“I can’t take this anymore, I have been waiting for two years and they don’t give me any information,” said the aforementioned Hichem on the 22nd day of his hunger strike. Upon learning of his hunger strike through the media, the authorities presented him with a statement to sign, saying: “I undersigned hereby confirm that when unconscious because of my hunger strike, I will deny all medical assistance.” “Standard procedure,” said Guðmundsson. “If people intend to starve themselves to death, it is better to know it.” Amnesty International does not agree: “Not even in Guantanamo do they leave them to die, quite the contrary, they feed them with force.”

Guðmundsson admitted in an interview that the case of the Algerian had

*“I undersigned hereby confirm that when unconscious because of my hunger strike, I will deny all medical assistance.” “Standard procedure,” said Guðmundsson. “If people intend to starve themselves to death, it is better to know it.”*

been “forgotten” for a whole year before his case was opened. Only Guðmundsson himself knows how many other such cases presently lurk within the system. Hunger strikes seem to have become the only tool these landless people have. No papers, no identity, no rights. “We didn’t come here for the food. We have only one thing in common here in this house: to be allowed to live a normal life” says Hassan, a 23 year-old from Afghanistan.

“The passport is more important than our lives,” he adds. He has been on the road for six years, seeking for this “ticket to life.” Last month, the Directorate of Immigration decided to send him, along with four others, back to Greece, despite reports from the UN, classifying Greece as an unfit receiving country. “I wouldn’t even send my dog there,” Guðmundsson said while meeting up with the refugees last month. The Ministry of Justice overruled this decision at the last moment. Only 2% of refugees in Greece get their cases investigated. They are usually sent to prison before being deported back home.

## Protests another tool?

For some weeks now, the asylum seekers at Fit have been pressuring Icelandic authorities to change their harsh policies towards refugees – that are among the most strict in Europe – with various protests. They have been demonstrating in front of the Parliament, meeting various politicians, who have all sympathised with their cause and promised a just and fair procedure. They even met with the Minister of Justice in person, who greeted them warmly at her home. “I’m not in the habit of giving any promises,” she said, but still promised to apply a fair and just procedure to their cases. How a new government will greet them remains to be seen. What will be the fate of these individuals who reside at Fit hostel? Will they all go on a hunger strike, like they recently threatened to do, to receive their fair and just treatment? Will Iceland stand up to its image and treat these people with the “basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled?” Or will they be treated as “guilty until proven innocent?”

## List & Ast & List

<http://daysofartandlove.dk/listogastoglist>

## HESS IS MORE

FREE ENTRANCE



Thursday May 21st 2009

15.00 Grand Opening v.“Nyhil”(IS)

17.00 “Extension trio”  
Lau Strandby Nielsen poems,  
Jakob Riis laptop,  
Mette Stig Nielsen piano (DK)

18.00 Steingrímur Eyfórd (IS)

pause

20.00 Johanna Gustafsson Fürst(SE)

21.00 Ólóf Arnalds,  
Asdis Sif Gunnarsdóttir (IS)

Friday May 22nd 2009

17.00  
Bárd Ask (N)

18.00  
Sara Riel (IS)

pause

20.00  
Jörgen Svensson  
(SE)

21.00  
Andrea Hördur  
Hardarsson,  
Einar Már  
Guðmundsson  
(IS)

Saturday May 23rd 2009

15.00 Katerina Mistal (SE)

16.00 Egill Sæbjörnsson,  
Magnús Jensson (IS)

17.00 Petri Ala-Maunus (FI)

18.00 Anna Helga Henning (N)

pause

21.00 Hess is more (DK)

Sunday May 24th 2009

15.00 Björg Viggosdóttir (IS)

16.00 Hulda Hákon (IS)

17.00 Jógvan Sværason Biskopstø (FO)

18.00 Vebjörg Hagene Thoe (N)

Finale

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RE-04 - 09:00

## The Golden Circle

All Year

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

Don't miss out on the fascinating experience the Icelandic Golden Circle gives you. On this tour we take you to the geysers, the famous Gullfoss waterfall along with a visit to Þingvellir national park. This tour is a must to make your visit to Iceland complete.

Price **9800 ISK**

Book now on [www.re.is](http://www.re.is)



Special Internet Offer\*  
Online discount code: **GV0509**

RE-80 - 09:00

## Glacier Adventure

All Year

SUN MON WED FRI SAT

Take a ride to the top of the world on a snowmobile and see the amazing Sólheimajökull from above the larger Mýrdalsjökull glacier and be pleasantly surprised by the magnificent views.

This tour is not recommended for children

Price **21500 ISK**  
-Price- 26700 ISK

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All Year

## Relax at the Blue Lagoon

For our very flexible schedule please refer to our brochure.

There is no better way to start or end your Iceland adventure than by bathing in the famous Blue Lagoon. You can either board the bus at BSÍ Bus Terminal in Reykjavík or at Keflavík Airport.

Return bus fare **2800 ISK**

Return bus fare and admission **5400 ISK**

Book now on [www.re.is](http://www.re.is)



RE-05 - 11:00 until 31 May / 13:00 from 1 June

## Reykjavík Grand Excursion

All Year

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

Get to know the capital with an expert by your side. We take you around Reykjavík with a guide and show you the highlights of the city. The tour ends at the National Museum of Iceland where you can see Icelandic culture at its best.

Price **4900 ISK**

Book now on [www.re.is](http://www.re.is)



RE-81 - 09:00

## Take a Walk on the Ice Side

All Year

SUN MON WED FRI SAT

Want to see and feel something completely different? Why not take a walk on a glacier and experience a surface that you have never been able to walk on before! Take a tour with us and try something new - a once in a lifetime experience for most.

Price **17900 ISK**

Book now on [www.re.is](http://www.re.is)



RE-24 - 12:30

## Gullfoss - Geysir Direct

All Year

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

If you want to spend your afternoon in the countryside join this tour with us and we will show you two of Iceland's most famous attractions - the queen of Iceland's waterfalls, Gullfoss and the world famous hot spring Geysir. Don't miss out on this one.

Price **8600 ISK**

Book now on [www.re.is](http://www.re.is)



RE-08 - 09:00

## Saga Circle

All Year

SAT

This tour is perfect for all Saga enthusiasts. On this tour we take you around the area where one of the Icelandic Sagas took place - along with enjoying spectacular landscape. Come and follow in the footsteps of the Vikings with us.

Price **14000 ISK**  
-Price- 17500 ISK

Book now on [www.re.is](http://www.re.is)



RE-15 - 09:00

## South Shore Adventure

All Year

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

Iceland's South coast is ideal for nature lovers of all kind. Striking waterfalls, stunning views of glaciers, black lava sand coastline, charming villages and impressive rock formations.

Price **15400 ISK**

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\* In order to activate the special internet offer you need to enter the online discount code when booking on [www.re.is](http://www.re.is)

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Bloodgroup



Jón Ólafsson

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Melakvartettinn



Ólöf Arnalds



Retro Stefson, FM Belfast and MC Plútó



Reykjavík!



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Weirdcore

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



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REYKJAVÍK  
ARTS FESTIVAL

LISTAHÁTIÐ Í REYKJAVÍK

Fire is needed by the newcomer  
Whose knees are frozen numb;  
Meat and clean linen a man needs  
Who has fared across the fells.\*

The Icelandic Sheep,  
Keeping the people alive since 874 AD.



\*From the Hávamál, 1300 AD



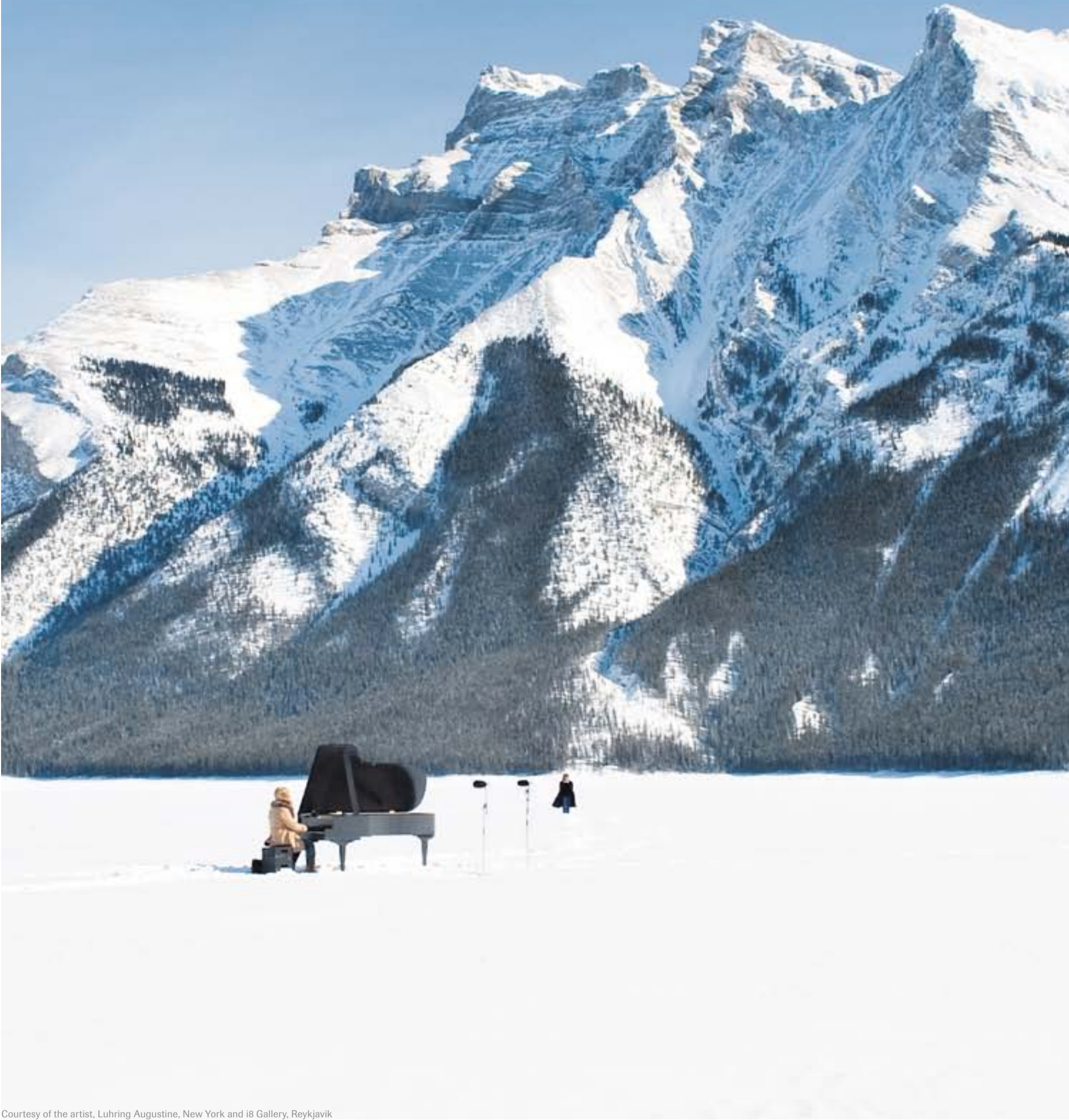
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THE AWESOME ABSURDITY OF  
BEING

—*by* HAUKUR S MAGNÚSSON

SO, WE GOT THIS PRESS  
REAL OFFICIAL LOOKIN

A CONVERSATION  
WITH RAGNAR  
KJARTANSSON



Courtesy of the artist, Luhring Augustine, New York and i8 Gallery, Reykjavik

# S RELEASE THE OTHER DAY. NG.

“Reykjavík, Iceland, March 13, 2009: The official Icelandic representation at the 53rd International Art Exhibition – *La Biennale di Venezia* will feature RAGNAR KJARTANSSON, a self-described incurable romantic, whose multifaceted artistic practice is rooted in a tradition of acting and performance with an existential and absurdist sensibility that can be linked to artists ranging from Caspar David Friedrich to Gilbert and George. Kjartansson’s exhibition for Venice, entitled *The End*, will feature a tableau vivant of the artist and his model that will last for the entire six-months of the Biennale, along with a monumental video and music installation. It will be presented in the Palazzo Michiel dal Brusà, a 14th-century palazzo on the Grand Canal near the Rialto, which has served as the Icelandic Pavilion since 2007.”

YOU WHAT NOW? RAGNAR KJARTANSSON? THAT SINGER FROM TRABANT? HIM WHO SANG NASTY BOY? YOU MEAN THE ONE WHO’S ALWAYS HALF NAKED, FLAPPING HIS MAN-TITS ALL OVER THE PLACE, GNAWING ON A BURNING ROMAN CANDLE? THE SELF-DEPRECATING, OVERTLY SEXUAL, UN-SEXY (UNLESS YOU’RE REAL DRUNK) POP STAR? WE HAD NO IDEA HE WAS LINKED TO ARTISTS RANGING FROM CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH TO GILBERG AND GEORGE. OR THAT HE HAD AN EXISTENTIAL AND ABSURDIST SENSIBILITY.

## ARE YOU SURE THAT’S HIM?



“Ragnar Kjartansson (b. 1976, Reykjavík, Iceland) conjures up emotions in his work that he can pass on to his viewers, with a keen eye for the tragicomic spectacle of human experience where sorrow collides with happiness, horror with beauty, and drama with humor. In his versatile artistic career, he has focused on video, painting, and drawing, with performance at the heart of his practice. Both of Kjartansson’s parents are actors, and acting, repetition, and identity are ever-recurring themes in his work. He has taken on countless roles in his performances, combining his own personality with personas from cultural history. His work incorporates a mélange of show business icons and nostalgic imagery from bygone eras of theater, television, music, and art, allowing him to blur the border between life and art, reality and fiction, and to create bold statements that strike chords with his audiences. In addition to his work in the visual arts, Kjartansson has had a career in music, releasing several albums with his bands and performing throughout the world.”

Yeah. It sure sounds like the guy. Performing throughout the world, releasing several albums with his bands, striking a chord with his audiences. That’s our man right there: Ragnar Kjartansson, sometimes known as Rassi Prump [“Assy Fartson”]. Great guy. We’ve been following his performances about town a lot, but they must have been too fun for us to figure out they were supposed to blur the line between life and art.... And what’s that whole “mélange of show business icons” bit about? What’s a mélange anyway?

So we googled mélange (“a mixture, a medley”). And we called up Ragnar to ask what all this mélange, existentialist, Caspar David Friedrich, La Biennale di Venezia bit is all about. Little did we know...

**So you’re an artist, eh?**  
Well, yeah. I like to think of myself as such. And it’s my job, so yeah. I’m an artist.

**How’d that happen?**  
I’ve always been involved with the arts in some form. You could say I started out on the stage; as a child, I acted in some 200 showings of *Lands míns föður* [a popular local play – as noted in the above bio, Ragnar is the son of respected actor/director Kjartan Ragnarsson]. When I was a teenager, I participated a lot in the theatre, and started an “art collective” of sorts – Mambo Publishing House – with my friends from Hagaskóli [a West Reykjavík junior high]. The collective, we hung out in my garage and played “artist” to an extreme. We made paintings while Úlfur Eldjárn [of Apparat Organ Quartet] played the saxophone. We wrote plays for our school festivals, formed bands, fucked around. The artform didn’t matter: we were a teenage cross-disciplinary arts collective. And that mode of thinking’s sort of stuck with me – that it doesn’t matter what you’re doing, as long as you’re doing something, creating something. I ultimately decided to pursue the visual arts. I’ve always thought it was the coolest form of art. You’re your own boss, you get to do what you like. It’s also the most “anything goes” artform; in music, you’ve got to make a certain amount of sense, also in the theatre. You release an album and you sort of have to succeed to an extent. Whereas in visual arts you can get away with making stuff that really sucks and just tagging it with some sort of concept. It’s like a shield – you’re protected within the field. When I was doing music, I was a lot more insecure. Because it’s so much more... direct. You either feel it or you don’t. There are a lot of grey areas in the visual arts. But it’s all jazz, man

**So how come you’re representing Iceland at this there Biennale thing??**  
Some experts decided. Haha. I’ve slept with so many people that they just had to let me. Hah. No, not really, just... some committee decided to invite me, and I serenely accepted.

**And what exactly is the Biennale?**  
It’s a major contemporary art exhibit that’s held bi-annually. The world’s nations send their representatives to display. It started in 1895 and was initially just for the European superpowers, but us old colonies have been slowly getting on the bill little by little. Iceland first joined in 1960, when Ásmundur

Sveinsson and Kjarval went, we’ve sent people there regularly since 1982. In 2007, some 150 countries had representatives. It’s quite an event.

**So it’s sorta like the Eurovision Song Contest of contemporary art?**  
Well you know, this is a bit more respectable. And it’s not a contest. It forms a common ground for what’s notable in modern art at each time, so to speak. Even though it can be hard to tell what that is, exactly. You can’t really liken it to anything. It’s a special event. And of course it’s an honour to get to go there. A great one.

**What have you got planned?**  
I’ll be showing a video piece that I made in the Canadian Rockies with Davíð Þór Jónsson [versatile, masterful musician, plays with Flís, Mugison, pretty much everyone]. It’s a country music opus consisting of five videos that all play at the same time and sync. That’ll be in one room. This place, the Rockies, it’s the end of the world, the western part of it at least, an incredible place. It was spectacular to be there, and to record in the stinging frost. And then there’s a piece I collaborate on with Páll Haukur Björnsson, a six month long performance that consists of me painting paintings of him standing around in a custom-made bathing suit, drinking a beer and smoking a cigarette. It’s a plateaux that the guests will walk in on, I’ll keep making paintings – one each day for six months. I’ll be doing this throughout the year, every day. It’s a terrific situation; a grudging Groundhog Day for half a year. Him smoking and drinking, me painting, five hours a day. The piece will grow each day and build up emotional charge as the paintings, beer bottles and cigarettes pile up. It’ll grow more and more unsavoury, I imagine it’ll be quite an installation by the end.

**And what’s it about?**  
It’s about a lot of things. About the painting, about the music, friendship. It’s about the moment, it’s about time, man, it’s just like *Tíminn og vatnið* [“Time and water,” legendary Icelandic modernist poem by Steinn Steinarr]. In fact, it’s about the water too. It’s called *The End*. It marks the end of something.

**A lot of what you’ve done seems to be about assuming a character, whether it be with the rock bands or in your visual and performance art endeavours. And a lot of what you’ve stood for occupies the realm of the ironic. Are you ever honest or sincere? Are you... are you making fun of life itself?**  
We all live in some direction. When people make the decision to become artists, then they’re being active agents in their own existence, making their life into some sort of art – amplifying their existence. It’s so incredible, imagine, it’s the most egocentric, so-lipsistic decision you can make, saying you’re an artist. “What I have to say matters.” Amplifying oneself, exaggerating.

And sincerity and irony are such connected concepts. People might harbour some sort of notion that irony isn’t sincere – that’s a big misunderstanding. All the romantics were really ironic. If you take this... this abyss that surrounds us, if you take it too seriously, then you won’t survive. All human interaction is about joking playfulness and ... it’s so based on irony. If I am indeed making ironic statements, then I am making them in full sincerity. I think it was the French 18th century philosopher Montesquieu that said that seriousness was the shield of stupidity. That’s kind of good. When they say joy is stupid, well, that’s just not true. Making light of things is the smartest thing you can do in this horrible world. To put it dramatically.

**Speaking of Drama, lot of critical discussion arose in the wake of our ever-looming economic collapse, and the local artworld was not exempt. Accusations were flung at the artistic community; that it had been complacent to the bankers, jumping on to their bandwagon and leaving necessary commentary aside, neglecting hard questions...**  
I’ve thought a lot about it, and I think it’s a really amusing and funny claim that artists are supposed to be some sort of moral harbingers or apostles. The artist can never represent a pure cause, no true artist can represent neo-liberalism or communism, for instance. It’s great if artists can feel like they’re representing something other than themselves, so they can fight the system or something. But I have always perceived my own role as an audience to life, an observant to it. I think the best works are always almost inadvertently political, they become more interesting that way. It’s politics of the subconscious.

That way, I’ve made a bunch of work that is somehow revealing, and have later turned out to be political commentary. These are pieces that age well, because everything went to hell, so to speak. But never with an intent. My place is within the whirlpool, reacting to it, reflecting upon it. Not judging it from above.

**So you think the criticism was unwarranted?**  
You know, I think it’s all good and well that artists get criticized, but I also think it’s really important that artists not turn into social realistic preachers. This is especially in wake of all the post-collapse arguing, it was like a kind of “Danish resistance” that suddenly came to being.

I don’t know if it’s a myth - it might just be classic Icelandic Dane-prejudice – but the story goes that during the German occupation in World War II, the Danish resistance wasn’t very active – until the Germans started losing the war. Then they got real busy. After the occupation ended, that’s when the resistance gained momentum. Anyway, in the aftermath of crisis, a lot of people that had been basically inactive started being awfully pleased with themselves. “I didn’t do anything.” People that had remained silent and immobile were all of the sudden righteously raging at folks like Kling & Bang - that have been doing

incredibly unselfish volunteer work for a long time – procuring grants for a lot of artists, so they could pursue their work. Maintaining an arts scene in this country is a lot of work; running a gallery, running around trying to score funding or grants. There’s nothing wrong with that. There can’t be. A certain discourse became prevalent. Suddenly you were some sort of culprit for not having focused on society and its problems directly. I never thought about that. I like thinking about poetry and the human condition, but the social realistic condition...? I did a lot of navel-gazing, to try and figure if I had done anything wrong or somehow gone off track. And I reached the conclusion that I did not. And furthermore that as soon as someone starts talking about “the role of the artist” and “the artists’ duties and responsibilities,” they’re talking like Adolf fucking Hitler. A really fun thing happened, I was protesting at full force in the kitchenware revolution. I was leaving for home after the protest one night, and got hailed into [restaurant] Við Tjörnina, where the baroness [a famed patron of Icelandic artists, including Ragnar] was hosting an midnight champagne party. “Come on in darling,” she said, and I thought it’d be brilliant, drinking champagne in the midst of a revolution. Epic. Then I was on the balcony, having my drink, when the teargas bombs went off. That was real decadent [sinister laugh]. The, a day over, there was a “revealing article” in *Fréttablaðið* [free newspaper] about the artists that had dared to partake in the champagne, I thought that was really funny. People getting all self-righteous and angry about a bunch of poor artists accepting a drink from a middle-aged woman. This exemplifies the beautiful absurdity of it all. **Now, you’re representing Iceland at the contemporary art Eurovision. Is there an Icelandic angle to visual arts? As a musician that’s performed abroad, you’ve surely experienced the Björk and Sigur Rós, elves and waterfalls comparisons. Are there similar paradigms in your current field?** As for an Icelandic angle, my view of that is adopted from my mentor, Birgir Andrésson. He always spoke of Iceland as an island of stories. If something’s Icelandic, the story conveyed is maybe more important than the object itself. Because we have nothing. Just a couple of hills, maybe, but it’s the story of those hill that makes all the difference. Telling a story, over nature. If there’s an Icelandic angle, I think that’s it. As for a Björk-like paradigm, we’re blessedly free of such expectations, although Ólafur Eliasson is maybe starting to verge on that, as he gets bigger. I did a show in New York last year along with some fellow Icelanders, and one of the critics wrote that Icelanders didn’t really have anything to talk about, that Icelandic art was best when it focused on nature, like he perceived Ólafur to do, because Icelanders “only ever have nature to talk about.” Nothing else. And then the blessed collapse came. Now we have plenty to discuss.

# Summer albums

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Retro Stefson } **Montaña**  
★★★★★ / Fréttablaðið



Benni Hemm Hemm } **Murta St. Calunga**  
★★★★★ / Fréttablaðið



Stórsveit Nix Noltes } **Royal Family - Divorce**  
8/10 - NME



Sin Fang Bous } **Clangour**  
★★★★★ / Morgunblaðið



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Venues are listed alphabetically by day.  
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### 22 FRI

**B5**  
23:00 **DJ Simon Gorilla Funk.**  
**Celtic Cross**  
01:00 Live Music.  
**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live Music.  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Band **Dalton** in concert followed by **DJ Maggi** .  
**Living Room Concerts**  
16:00 **Residential Music Industry.** Heiðargerði 1B, 108 Reykjavík.  
17:00 Singer **Ólaf Arnalds.** Ingólfsstræti, 101 Reykjavík.  
18:00 Rock band **Vicky.** Holtsgata 3a. 101 Reykjavík.  
19:00 Electro-pop **Bloodgroup.** Hólmaslóð 2, 101 Reykjavík.  
20:00 Techno-pop group **FM Belfast, Retro Stefson** and rapper **MC Pluto.** Ingólfsstræti 21a, 101 Reykjavík.  
21:00 Electronic group **Weirdcore.** Hólmaslóð 2, 101 Reykjavík.  
22:00 Rock band **Reykjavík!.** Smiðjustígur 4a, 101 Reykjavík.  
**London/Reykjavik**  
00:00 **Hannes Smith**  
**NASA**  
24:00 **Kronik** followed by **Promoe** from **Looptroop.**  
**Prikið**  
22:00 **Kokteilibandið** followed by **DJ Gísli Galdur.**  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 New Years Theme Party with **DJ Sexual Chocolate.**  
**Sódóma Reykjavík**  
22:00 Band **Tenderfoot.**

### 23 SAT

**B5**  
23:00 **DJ Funky Fleivur.**  
**Celtic Cross**  
01:00 Live Music.  
**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live Music.  
**Hressó**  
22:00 **Tepokinn** in concert followed by **DJ Maggi.**  
**Kaffibarinn**  
23:45 **Maggi Lego.**  
**Kaffi Hjómalið**  
19:00 **The DeathMetal SuperSquad.**  
**Living Room Concerts**  
13:00 **Four Centuries and Three Continents.** Túngata 44, 101 Reykjavík. Folk/classic music.  
14:00 Singer **Benóný Ægisson.** Skólavörðustígur 4, 101 Reykjavík.  
15:00 **Gershwin in the Marsh.** Kjartansgata, 105 Reykjavík.  
16:00 Icelandic folk music and hymns. Dómkirkjan Church,101 Reykjavík.  
17:00 **Ásgerður Júníusdóttir-THE MEDIUM.** Solo opera performance. Melgagi 2, 101 Reykjavík.  
18:00 Salon music from **Melchior.** Bugðulækur 17, 105 Reykjavík.  
19:00 Singer **Jón Ólafsson.** Hagamelur 33, 107 Reykjavík.  
20:00 Instrumental music from **Ren-dezvous.** Vesturbrún 4, 104 Reykjavík.  
21:00 Chamber music by **amiina.** Grundarstígur 10, 101 Reykjavík.

**London/Reykjavik**  
00:00 **DJ Áki Pain.**  
**NASA**  
21:00 **Lhasa de Sala.** Entrance: 3.500 ISK  
**Prikið**  
21:00 Happy Hour! **DJ Danni Deluxe.**  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 **Anna Brá.**

### 24 SUN

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.

# MUSIC

## CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

**Living Room Concerts**  
12:00 String quartet **The Mela Quartet.** Þórsgata 18, 101 Reykjavík.  
13:00 **Dvorák's Group.** Hávallagata 18, 107 Reykjavík.  
14:00 **And yet, spring returns.** Icelandic music and poetry. Urðarstekkur 3, 109 Reykjavík.  
15:00 **Felix Bergsson** sings children's songs and tells stories. Starhagi 5, 107 Reykjavík.  
16:00 Cabaret and operetta songs. Grettisgata 29, 101 Reykjavík.  
17:00 **Baroque in Thingholt.** Bragata 27, 107 Reykjavík.  
18:00 **Where is the moon?** Poetry and jazz. Vesturberg 137, 111 Reykjavík.  
19:00 **Deep Pit- Tómas R.** Reynimelur 24 107 Reykjavík.  
20:00 Violinists **Duo Landon.** Lauganestangi 70, 105 Reykjavík.

**Prikið**  
22:00 Hangover Cinema - Wild Style will be showing. Free Popcorn!  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 Open decks.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 **Árstíðir**

### 25 MON

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 **Olema** and band.

### 26 TUE

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**Prikið**  
22:00 . **Introbeats** and **RVK beat drop.**  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 **Svavar Knútur.**

### 27 WED

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**Grand Rokk**  
18:00 The Champions League Final live.  
**Kaffi Zimsen**  
20:00 **Friday Night Idols**  
**Prikið**  
20:00 **DJ Moonshine.**  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 Pub quiz.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 **B Sig.**  
**Sódóma Reykjavík**  
18:00 **Foreign Monkeys** release concert. All ages until 22:00. New album for 1.500 ISK. Entrance: 500 ISK.  
**The Icelandic Opera**  
21:00 **Hjaltalín/Daniel Bjarnason.** Entrance: 2.500 ISK.

### 28 THU

**B5**  
21:00 Resident DJs.  
**Cultura**  
21:00 **Andleg Skelfing.**  
**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live Music.  
**Græni Hatturinn**  
21:00 **Hjálmar** and **Retro Stefson.** Entrance: 2.500 ISK.  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Acoustic **Jógvan** and **Vignir.**  
**Prikið**  
17:00 Standup.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 **Trío Björhs Thor.**  
**Sódóma Reykjavík**  
22:00 **Kimi Records Night.**

### 29 FRI

**B5**  
23:00 **DJ Funky Fleivur.**  
**Café Paris**  
22:00 Cocktail Night.  
**Celtic Cross**  
01:00 Live Music.  
**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live music.  
**Grand Rokk**  
22:00 **Gogo Yoko presents the Grapevine Grand Rokk Concert,** fea-



**NASA**  
**Þorvaldsenstræti 2** ⌚ 12am

Swedish Hip-Hop emcee Promoe will be getting you B-Boys and B-Girls crunk TONIGHT at the ever-popular NASA, as part of his 2009 European tour. The dread-head, who is a formidable member of underground hip-hop super crew Looptroop Rockers, is on a mission of his own promoting new album Kráksängen. Anticipate contentious lyrics, limited edition Nike Dunks and the smell of green in the air. Blast on over to NASA, enjoy the smoke and get spaced. **-JB**



**NASA**  
**Þorvaldsenstræti 2** ⌚ 11pm

Dance collective Reyk Week intend to 'Save your life' on the night of May 30th at NASA. DJs and producers Kárius + Baktus (named after two evil toothfares), youngster Orang Volante, ASLI, Oculus and finally Siggí Kalli from the Westman Islands will be spinning an eclectic mix of House, Minimal Techno, Disco and Dub into the early hours. Make sure you drown yourself in Vodka and energy drinks (not literally) to keep yourself awake boogying. It's only 500ISK on the door too! **-JB**

## Grapevine Top 6 Most Played during the making of this issue

- 1 Grizzly Bear**  
Two weeks
- 2 Seawolf**  
Leaves in the River
- 3 Prins Póló**  
Ástin Ein
- 4 Sonic Youth**  
Anti Orgasm
- 5 Bat For Lashes**  
Daniel
- 6 Slayer**  
Criminally Insane

turing Kimono, Rökkúrro and Me, the Slumbering Napoleon.

**Græni Hatturinn**  
21:00 **The Akureyri Big Band** and AIM music challenge winner.  
Entrance: 2.500 ISK.

**Hressó**  
21:00 **Jógvan and Vignir** followed by **DJ Bjarni**.

**Kaffi Hljómalind**  
20:00 **Ramming Speed**.

**London/Reykjavík**  
00:00 **DJ Kristján**.

**Opera House**  
21:00 **Tiger Lillies cabaret performance**. Entrance: 3.500 ISK.

**Prikið**  
21:00 **Taggparty**.

**Rósenberg**  
21:00 **B. Sig.**

**Sódóma Reykjavík**  
22:00 **Changer, Beneath, and Gone Postal**.

30 SAT

**B5**  
23:00 Resident DJs.

**Celtic Cross**  
01:00 Live Music.

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.

**English Pub**  
22:00 Live Music.

**Grand Rokk**  
22:00 **Ramming Speed**

**Græni Hatturinn**  
21:00 **Megas and Senupjófarnir**. Entrance: 2.500 ISK.

**Hressó**  
22:00 Band **Ímynd** in concert followed by **DJ Bjarni**.

**Kaffibarinn**  
23:45 **Terrordisco**.

**NASA**  
23:00 **Reyk Veek**. Dance collective DJs all night!

**Prikið**  
23:00 **Girls Night!**

**Rósenberg**  
21:00 **Langi Seli and Skuggarnir** Release Concert.

31 SUN

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.

**Háskólabíó, Concert Hall**  
20:00 **Deborah Voight**. Entrance: 6.900/6.400 ISK

**Hressó**  
23:00 **Silfur** followed by **DJ Elli**.

**Ketillhúsið**  
17:00 **The Reykjavík Big Band with Bob Mintzer**. Entrance: 2.500 ISK.

**Prikið**  
22:00 **DJ Danni Deluxe**.

**Q-Bar**  
23:00 Boys Only Dance.

**Rósenberg**  
22:00 **Graduation Concert, CVI Diploma**.

1 MON

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.

**Rósenberg**  
21:00 **Blúsfélagið** with **Dóri Braga**.

2 TUE

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.

**Rósenberg**  
21:00 **Trúbatrix** female troubadour sessions.

The Adventures of Taxi Driver | "Travis Bickle"

The Continuing Adventures of “Taxi Driver”



GRAPEVINE’s Cabbie Pal Explores the Hidden Side of Reykjavík

☹️ **23:43**  
A hysterical shriek of abject terror pierces the still moonlit night. A girl comes running round the corner perhaps fleeing what she has wrought, perhaps running for help.  
Curious, I put down my book and get out of the cab. There is a road by the sea where, as elsewhere, pedestrians have the right of way. Rounding the corner I discover the screaming girl thought different, as under her idling Yaris lies a heavyset chick concealed up to her waist by the car. The panicking driver draws a slew of bystanders who stand frozen in observance of the blood seeping onto the asphalt. Someone finally snaps out of their trance and calls an ambulance as I and two other men hoist the vehicle of off the fractured lady. A good start to the shift.

☹️ **1:23**  
–“Dude, you saw how I got all of ‘em right. Not a fucking mark on me!”, exclaims crew cut bleach blond number one.  
–“Yeah, I got a punch in on that big guy too before the bouncers showed up”, replies his pumped up fugly companion.  
–“I’m telling you, maybe not tomorrow, maybe not the next day, but we’ll get those cunts. You get some guys you can trust, I’ll get my friends and we’ll find those guys. All seven of them. And fuck them the fuck up!”, says perp number one.  
–“Yeah, the bouncers probably know who they are. We’ll ask ‘em....Dude, I need another hit of that shi...”, starts fugly guy. “Sssshhhhh, not in front of the cabbie”, bleach blonde cuts him off.  
–“What you talking ‘bout. Just offer him some. He’s cool, right?”, asks fugly, turning to me. “He’s probably nose deep in it tryin’ to stay up these night shifts”, he carries on as he scoops out a key’s worth from a portion sized bag and extends it my way.  
–“Naw, I’m good”, I reply. “Strictly chronic for me. You go ahead though”.

☹️ **3:13**  
There are two seventeen year old girls strapped for cash trying to pay the fare with a pair of used panties. One of them is shit hot and she is slipping down her underwear from under her skirt. The

perv thing to do would be to accept. Maybe when I’m older and more sexually starved. Had she offered a BJ, as the fat chicks often will, it’d been a done deal.

☹️ **4:52**  
Outside Bar II, I pick up a hag of a woman on the verge of middle age who wants to be chauffeured to the ghetto highrises of Breiðholt. She asks what the hell kinda shit music I’m listening to, and will I turn it the fuck off? That’s strike one. I will not have people deriding Mastodon in my taxi. Then she starts commenting on my tics. She says she’s been in my cab before and it’s the same shit. I must be on drugs ‘cuz I’m showing all the physical signs. Amidst explaining to her the particulars of my ailment, I ask her if this expert knowledge of hers doesn’t reflect more on her than me, since I do in fact have a condition but she ain’t got no excuse for knowing what she knows. The woman will not be told though. She insists that I’m lit up on amphetamines. Deciding that there are no strike threes in my vehicle, I eject her ass at the next lights.

☹️ **6:13**  
–“Flókagata first”, the woman stresses.  
–“No, Ægisíða”, the guy urges.  
–“Hey, the cabbie knows it’s always ladies first, don’t you”.  
I am non-responsive.  
–“Dude, it’s Ægisíða”, he argues..  
–“No, I ain’t going to your place. Drive to Flókagata”.  
This goes on for a while until I put my foot down.  
–“Look lady, the guy hailed me. You’re merely hitching a ride”.  
–“Ok, Fine”, she replies.  
At Ægisíða, it’s the same old spiel.  
–“Come in for one drink. Just one drink”.  
–“No, I ain’t coming inside”.  
This goes on, with variations, ad infinitum, until the woman finally goes:  
–“Ask me one more time”.  
–“Why, what are ya gonna say?”.  
–“Come on, try it. Just ask me”.  
–“Ok, why don’t you come in for a drink”.  
–“No. Got it?”, she replies, and the douche finally exits.  
–“What a goddamn bore”, and more to that effect, she informs me all the way home to Flókagata.



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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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**SATURDAY 23 MAY**  
» Fræbbblarnir

**FRIDAY 29 MAY**  
» Grapevine Concert

**SATURDAY 30 MAY**  
» Ramming Speed  
Trashmetal band from USA

**JUNE 4 to 7**  
» Grand Rokk Culture Festival

**FRIDAY 12 JUNE**  
» Grapevine Concert

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# MUSIC

## MAY – JUNE

– continued –

3

WED

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.

**Kaffi Zimsen**  
23:00 Open stage concert with **Eliney and Myrra**.

**Rósenberg**  
21:00 Grapevine concert. Artists TBC.

4

THU

**B5**  
21:00 Three Voices.

**Church of Akureyri**  
20:00 Akureyri composer **Jón Hlöðver’s** premieres choir piece *Passion Hymns*.

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.

**English Pub**  
22:00 Live Music.

**Rósenberg**  
21:00 **Stéfam Örn** Concert.

OUTSIDE

REYKJAVÍK

### Keflavík

**Paddy's**  
**May 22**  
**Megabite** 12am - 04.30am  
Free admission

**May 23**  
**Megabite** 12am - 04.30am  
Free Admission

**May 28**  
**Live Music: TBA** 10pm - 01am  
Free Admission

**May 29**  
**DJ Mixed Emotions** 12am - 04.30am  
Free Admission

**May 30**  
**DJ Mixed Emotions** 12am - 04.30am  
Free Admission

**June 4**  
**Classart**  
**Lifun** 10pm - 01am

**June 5**  
**Grammið** 12am - 04.30am  
Free admission

**June 6**  
**Grammið** 12am - 04.30am  
Free admission

**June 7**  
**Paddy's Poker Night**

### Ísafjörður

**Kaffi Edinborg**  
**May 23**  
**Virtual Motion** 10pm - 01am  
Admission: 500ISK

**May 28**  
**Drekktu Betur - Pub Quiz**  
09pm - 11pm

**May 30**  
**Hjónabandið** 12am - 03am  
Admission 1000ISK

**June 4**  
**Drekktu Betur - Pub Quiz**  
09pm - 11pm

**June 5**  
**Eypór From Bubbis Band**  
10pm - 01am. Admission 500 ISK

**Edinborgarhús**  
**May 22**  
**Virtual Motion**  
10pm - 01am. Admission 15000 ISK

### Akureyri

**Græni Hatturinn**  
**May 22**  
**Dúndurfréttir (a Pink Floyd tribute band)** 10pm - 12pm.  
Admission 2000 ISK

**May 23**  
**CC Reykjavík** 10pm - 12pm  
Admission 2000 ISK

**May 28**  
**Aim festival: Retro Stefson**  
**Hjálmar**  
9pm-12pm. Admission 2000 ISK

**May 29**  
**Aim festival: Akureyri Big Band**  
9pm-12am. Admission 1500 ISK

**May 30**  
**Aim festival: Megas & Senupjófarnir**  
9pm-12am. Admission 2000 ISK

**June 4**  
**Trúbatrix: Elísa, Elín Ey, Myrra Rós**  
9pm-12am. Admission 1000 ISK

**June 5**  
**Hvanndalsbræður**  
9.30pm-12.30am. admission 1500 ISK

**June 6**  
**Hvanndalsbræður**  
9.30pm-12.30am. admission 1500 ISK

**Sjallinn**  
**May 29**  
**TFA Party Zone.** 12am - 03am

**May 30**  
**Ný Dönsk** 12am - 03am

**May 31**  
**Á Móti Sól, Buff**  
12am - 03am

**Ketilhúsið**  
**May 31** Reykjavík Big Band feat. **Bob Mintzer**  
5pm - ?

**Church of Akureyri**  
**June 4** Choir of Hallgrímskirkja  
8pm - ?

### Húsavík

**Gamli Baukur**  
**May 23**  
**Rokksveitin Sigríður**  
12am - 3am

**May 31**  
**Reykjavík! Sudden Weather Change**  
9pm - 01am. Admission: TBA

**June 5**  
**Record Launch Party: Ljótu Hálfvitarnir** 12am - 03am  
Free Admission

### Egilsstaðir

**Skjálfti**  
**May 22**  
**Discoteque** 11pm - 03am  
Free Admission

**May 23**

**Silfur** 11pm - 03am  
Admission 1500 ISK

**May 29**  
**Discoteque** 11pm - 03am  
Free Admission

**May 30**  
**Live Music: TBA** 11pm - 03am  
Free Admission

**Valaskjálfi**  
**June 6**  
**Ný Dönsk** 11pm -03am  
Admission 2500

### Selfoss

**800 Bar**  
**May 22**  
**Klaufar (country music band)**  
11pm - 03am  
Admission 1500 ISK

**May 23**  
**Ingó & Veðurguðirnir**  
01am - 03am. Admission 1500 ISK

**May 28**  
**DJ 800** 10pm - 01am  
Free Admission

**May 29**  
**Live Music: TBA** 10pm - 03am

**May 30**  
**1st Anniversary of 800 Bar: Jet Black Joe** 11pm - 03am  
Admission 2000 ISK

**June 4** **Live Music: TBA**  
10pm - 01am  
Free Admission

**June 5** **Live Music: TBA**  
10pm - 01am  
Admission: TBA

**June 6**  
**Live Music: Land & Synir**  
11pm - 03am  
Admission 2000 ISK

28

May

31

May



### Akureyri International Music Festival

### All over Akureyri

### 600 Akureyri

**Bringing more music to the North**  
The fourth annual Akureyri International Music festival (AIM for short) is held this year between May 28th and May 31st, with a special concert on June 4th. For those of you who are new to Iceland (or failed your geography exams horribly), Akureyri is the second largest urban area after greater Reykjavik and is generally referred to as the ‘Capital of North Iceland.’  
Aim’s um, aim is to not focus on any particular music genre, but to bring exciting music to the picturesque town. Sadly, due to the increasing cost of importing music, this year’s festival is not so international. Organisers have instead focused on good Icelandic music drawing attention towards the festival.  
Originally started as an idea over coffee, two very different musicians, Pálmi Gunnarsson (singer and bassist for Mannakorn) and Jón Hlöðver Áskelsson (classical composer), moaned about the lack of concerts in their scenic village and took matters into their own hands. Viva La Revolution baby! They eventually decided on organising a blues festival to get things going. It worked out well. The festival changed its shape the following year giving more genres a chance. Over the phone, organiser Baldvin Esra Einarsson stresses that “It will develop in the future, and grow”  
Running a festival of this magnitude isn’t plain sailing. In fact, the organisation behind it almost went broke in 2007 because the profit in ticket sales unfortunately didn’t cover the overall costs. Generous financial support from local companies helped getting it back on track and things have cooled down since.  
Pálmi and Jón’s main goal is not to have a huge festival like overseas, just a quality festival that brings invigorating acts to Iceland every year. “Overall, the introduction of Akureyri to the world is our greatest ambition. We also want to utilise our new music hall when it is ready. It’s being built right now and should be ready in 2010. Then we can invite bigger and better acts in to a professional music hall with proper sound and lights,” says Baldvin  
Headlining acts this year are the **Reykjavík Big Band** with **Bob Mintzer**; the newly founded **Akureyri Big Band**; Reykjavík’s very own **Hjálmar** and **Retro Stefson**; the legendary **Megas & Senupjófarnir**; and **Mótettukór Hallgrímskirkju**. The festival will mostly be held at the local hotspot Græni Hatturinn but also in the multifunctional art room Ketilhúsið. Stay for a special premier of choral piece, Passion Hymns, by Akureyri composer **Jón Hlöðver Áskelsson** on June 4th. —**JONATHAN BAKER ESQ.**

# ART

## GALLERIES & MUSEUMS

### 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](http://www.grapevine.is)

### OPENING MAY

**22** ☹️ 10am  
**National Museum of Iceland Tasselled Caps**  
*A collection of traditional Icelandic costumes along with modern designs of tasselled caps.*

**22** ☹️ 8pm  
**The National Theatre of Iceland The Madman's Garden**  
*A Faroese opera, part of the Reykjavik Arts Festival.*

**23** ☹️ 1pm  
**START ART**  
**The Washerwomen's Walk**  
**Installation art piece beginning as a walk that starts at Lækjartorg Square and goes up Laugavegur towards the old Washing Springs of Reykjavik. Walkers are asked to bring an item of clothing or bedding to participate in this installation piece.**

**23** ☹️ 8pm  
**The Icelandic Opera Hel**  
*A new Icelandic Opera by Sigurður Sævarsson. 3.900 ISK.*

### ONGOING

**Akureyri Art Museum (Akureyri)**  
Current exhibitions:  
*May 06- July 05*  
**Hulda Hákon-** Two Men, One Woman and a Monster From The Sea.

**ASÍ Art Museum**  
Current exhibitions:  
*May 02- May 24*  
Þóra Sigurðardóttir and Sólrún Sumarliðadóttir- Mixed-media collaboration exhibition.

**The Culture House**  
Permanent exhibitions:  
Medieval Manuscripts  
*March 28- Jan 10 2010*

**ICELAND::FILM**  
This exhibition traces for the first time the development of Icelandic filmmaking from its origins around 1904 to the year 2008  
*May 16- May 26:*  
**Orbis Terrae- ORA**  
Performance on the culture of war lead by Margrét Vilhjálmsdóttir and accompanied by 70 artists.  
The Library Room.  
Current exhibitions:  
**Genesis**

The exhibition traces the emergence and evolution of the island Surtsey from creation through to present day and predicts its geographical and ecological development over the next 120 years.

**The Late View – Halldór Laxness' Photographs**  
Nobel Laureate and cosmopolitan Halldór Laxness was well known for his writing but he was also a talented photographer. This is an exhibition of his works.

**Exhibition Series:**  
Weird and Wonderful Beasts from Icelandic Folklore by Jón Baldur Hlíðberg is an exhibition of illustrations from his book on the magical creatures of Icelandic folklore.

**The Einar Jónsson Museum**  
Permanent exhibition: **The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson.**

**Gallery Ágúst**  
*May 16- June 27*  
**Hughrif/Impressions**  
Guðrún Gunnarsdóttir displays her works, made out of metal-wire.

**Gallery Turpentine**  
*May 08- May 31*  
**You Are More Beautiful than A Butterfly-** 9 artists from Iceland, England and France exhibit their work.

**Gerðarsafn Art Museum (Kópavogur)**  
*May 9- June 21*  
**Myths and Legends**  
Featuring works from local Kópavogur artist Baltasar.

**Gerðuberg Cultural Centre**  
*March 21 - May 24*  
**The Dark Truth**  
A photo exhibition of the reportage "The Dark Truth: Coal Miners of China" exposes the deplorable working conditions in the worlds largest coal industry.

**Gljúfrasteinn Laxness Museum**  
Gljúfrasteinn was the home and workplace of Halldór Laxness (winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955) and his family for more than half a century. It has now been opened to the public as a museum, unchanged from when Laxness lived there.

**Hafnarborg Centre of Culture and Fine Art (Hafnarfjörður)**

Current Exhibitions:  
**Veðurskrift (Weather Writing)** - Guðrún Kristján.  
Guðrún is known for her powerful works that interpret Icelandic nature in an original way. This exhibition will be displaying paintings, photographs, videos and massive installations dealing with the ever changing Icelandic nature.

**Wight Works- Jónína Guðnadóttir**  
In this exhibition she wrestles with supernatural beings and forces of nature.

**is Gallery**  
*May 16- June 14*  
**Vanity Disorder**  
Shoplifter a.k.a Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir exhibits her new works made of human hair.

**Living Art Museum**  
Throughout May- Exhibitions from Runo Lagomarsino, Ylva Westerlund and Olivia Plender.

**Lost Horse Gallery**  
**A Wild Night.** Come back to an era



**Kópasker Lighthouse by Öxarfjörð, Bjargtangar Lighthouse in the Westfjords, Garðskagi Lighthouse in the Reykjanes Peninsula and Dalatangi Lighthouse in the East Fjords**

☹️ 1pm - 6 pm

As part of the Reykjavik Arts Festival, Stray Beacons is an unconventional group of installations by four different artists, displayed in four different lighthouses spread out across the island. Jesus, that's a mouthful. Readers are encouraged to travel from one lighthouse to another over the summer period to visit these fascinating constructions, of which would normally be dormant during times of perpetual light. Exhibits are by Ásdis Sif Gunnarsdóttir, Curver Thoroddsen, The Icelandic Love Corporation and Unnar Örn. **-JB**



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# MAP

## Places We Like

### 1 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

[f](#) kaffibarinn

Weekends are somewhat overrated at Kaffibarinn if you ask me. Don't get me wrong, they can be brilliant if you're completely pissed, the DJ is fresh and the crowd is full-blooded, still the weekdays are better. It doesn't matter when you pop in, you're always treated like a pal rather than a customer, and you should always expect get caught in some shenanigan, whether it's a crazy Monday bender or a wacko Tuesday... well... bender. SKK

### 2 Jacobsen

Austurstræti 9

A fairly new venue in town, Jacobsen is owned by some nouveau riche Swedes, and has been providing a non-stop party over the last few months. Besides its importing foreign big-shot DJs and other niceties, it is probably most appreciated for its loooong hours; it doesn't matter if you stop partying at 2AM or way-too-much AM, Jacobsen is always forking out shots and cocktails. SKK

### 3 Hemmi og Valdi

Laugavegi 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

### 4 Segurmo

Laugavegi 28b

This place was something we all needed, a cheap and scrumptious bistro, right inside one of our favourite bars: Boston. The cuisine really is Icelandic, because of their cornerstones: the meat soup and the fish stew, but the rest varies between weeks, so their menu could even pass as international. So, if you don't like the current meat dish, you might in a week. SKK

### 5 Tíu Dropar

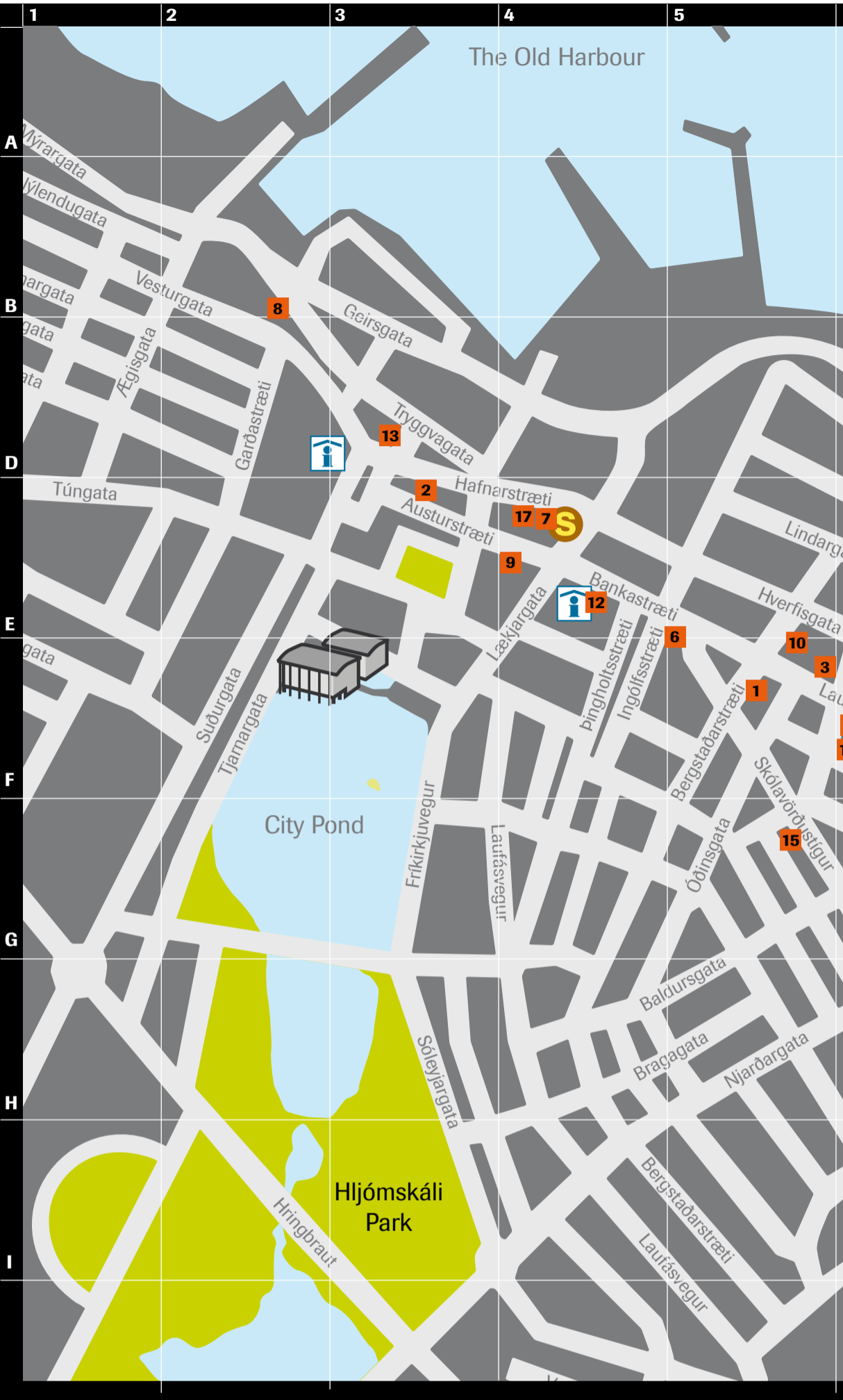
Laugavegi 27

If you're sick of all the arty cafés, filled with Sigur Rós wannabes and their Macs, browsing Facebook– go to Tíu Dropar. It's a back-to-basics Icelandic café that hasn't changed their interior since the 60s. Really proves the saying 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it.' Plus, the coffee's great. SKK

### 6 Prikið

Bankastræti 12

Prikið is one of those places that shape-shifts. It's a warm café with photographs of their senior frequenters on weekday mornings, a hung-over hangout on weekend afternoons, and during nights it's filled to the brim with what remains of Iceland's hip hop scene. Go there in daytime for the cheap burgers; enter at night for some OTT hip-hop debauchery, old skool and the latest bangers alike. SKK



### 7 Pizza King

Hafnarstræti 18

To be honest, this isn't the best pizza up for grabs, but it's cheap, not pre-heated (like at various other pizza places downtown), and the guys are rather cool. Their pizzas are always bulletproof, and they offer various great offers on top of it, which you should definitely check out. SKK

### 8 Café d'Haiti

Tryggvagata 16

The first time I entered this exotic little joint, meaning to buy myself a take-away espresso, I ended up with two kilos of fresh and 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

### 9 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



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**10 Grand Rokk**

Smíðjustíg 6  
The only 'real' bar in town, no doubt. In downtown Reykjavik it's hard to rumble into a pub not crowded by musicians or artsy folks, but this one is an exception. Whether it's 4AM on a Friday or 5PM on a Monday you'll see the same flock of John Does, taking a break from their daily routines, enjoying a shot 'n' a brew. If you want to witness an earnest Icelandic 'Cheers' or a 'Moe's' – this is the place. Oh, and on weekends, they play host to some awesome concerts, too. SKK

**11 Glætan - Bókakaffi**

Laugavegi 19  
Glætan - Bókakaffi is a great café with a domestic feel. It's somehow always a convenient choice for whatever you're doing when you come across it. I am always happy to step into this comfort zone and simmer down with an excellent cup of espresso and one of the books in their selection. Glætan, roughly translated, means a tiny ray of light, something this nice little café definitely is. -AJ

**12 Kaffitár**

Bankastræti 8  
Kaffitár on Bankastræti is a comfortable little café with a great selection of coffee, tea and baked goods on offer. Since Kaffitár is also a big-name Icelandic roasterie the caffeinated beverages on the menu are quality. The wi-fi makes this a nice place to sit and chill with your laptop as well. CF

**13 Sódóma Reykjavík**

Tryggvagata 22  
Newly opened Sódóma on Tryggvagötu is already a hit with party crowds and gig-goers alike. An extensive venue, filled with reasonably priced beverages and reasonably good looking people. Some of Iceland's finest musical ventures have played in recent months, and their schedule looks promising too. Also, make sure to visit their men's room for a glance at the "Pissoir of Absolution". JB

**14 Karamba**

Laugavegi 22  
New hotspot in town Karamba is a colourful and eclectic bar on Laugavegur with a comfortable atmosphere, typically great music and a chill crowd. This is a good place to relax or to do some serious drinking or to relax. Plus, their decors are done strictly by Grapevine-friendly artists, such as Lóa (who does our comics), Hugleikur Dagsson (who illustrates the monster column) and Bobby Breiðholt (who's done a lot of nice illustrations for us); they are truly a sight to behold. CF

**15 Babalú**

Skólavörðustíg 22  
Located on the second-floor of a quirky little building on Skólavörðustígur, Babalú is an inviting, quaint and cosy café serving up a selection of tea, coffee and hot chocolate along with delicious baked goods and light meals. Food and drink aside, Babalú boasts colourfully decorated and super-comfortable surroundings and a genuinely friendly and likeable staff. CF

**16 Barbara**

Laugavegi 22  
At Laugavegur 22, above Karamba, Barbara serves up a lively atmosphere for Reykjavík's gay community and anybody else who just wants to dance and have a good time. The first level is made for dancing and is often packed with sweaty bodies, while the second level of the bar offers a place to sit, drink and chat and another in which to smoke. CF

**17 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 open until 6 a.m. Friday and Saturday. CF

**18 Kaffi Hljómalind**

Laugavegi 23  
The only true activist-friendly, community servicing co-op in town, Kaffi Hljómalind lends a breath of fresh air and a welcome alternative to Reykjavík's beer-stained, decadent cafés. Offering up a fare of vegetarian-to vegan friendly courses, some pretty good coffee and an awesome selection of tea. As well as a free, anarchist library. What else do you need?

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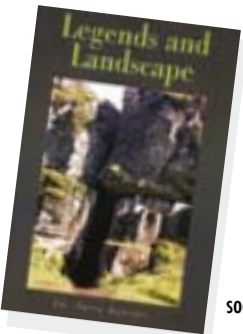
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**LEGENDS AND LANDSCAPE**

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**ART GALLERIES**

– continued –

when jazz raged, gin flowed (illegally) and Charleston crazy flappers danced the night away behind locked doors. Have a seat at our candlelit tables and enjoy popular standards of the 1920's by Irving Bell, Hoagy Carmichael, Fats Waller, The Gershwins, Rodgers & Hart and Hammerstein and Kern.

**The National Gallery of Iceland**

May 15- June 28

**The work of Hrafnkell Sigurðsson and Kristján Guðmundsson.**

In conjunction with Reykjavík Arts Festival 2009.

**The National Museum**

Permanent exhibition:

**The Making of a Nation**

Heritage and History in Iceland provides insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the settlement to the present day.

Jan 31 – Nov 30.

**Encounters**

Archaeological excavations at many locations around Iceland have been funded by Kristnihátíðarsjóður (The Millennium Fund). Finds from some of these excavations are on display in an exhibition suitable for the whole family.

**The Nordic House**

May 21- May 24

18 various artists, actors and musicians from Iceland, Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway perform.

May 21- May 24

**ART&LOVE&ART**

Installations based on the formation of dialogue.

**The Numismatic Museum**

Permanent exhibition:

The Central Bank of Iceland and the National Museum of Iceland jointly operate a numismatic collection consisting of Icelandic notes and coins.

**Reykjavík 871 +/- 2**

Permanent exhibition:

The Settlement Exhibition.

**Reykjavík Arts Festival**

May 16- August 02

**Stray Beacons**

Ásdís Sif Gunnarsdóttir, Curver Thoroddsen, Icelandic Love Corporation and Unnar Örn exhibit their works in light-houses around Iceland. See artfest.is for more info.

**Reykjavík Art Museum**

**Asmundarsafn**

May 2- April 30 2010

**Rhyme - Works by Ásmundur**

**Sveinsson and other contemporary artists**

This exhibition showcases contemporary artists that tackle similar issues

as Ásmundur did in his time, but in a context of a new age.

**Reykjavík Art Museum  
Hafnarhús**

May 28- August 23.

**Possibilities**

Works by 10 Guðmunda Kristinsdóttir Art Prize winners.

May 28- August 29 2010

**Erró- Portrett**

Well-known Icelandic contemporary artist Erró donated 150 pieces of his work for this exhibit, which will run through 2010.

**Reykjavík Art Museum  
Kjarvalsstaðir**

May 15- August 30

**The House of Una And West 8th Street**

Examining the life of Icelandic artists Louisa Matthíasdóttir and Nina Tryggvadóttir and their connection with artists from Iceland and New York.

May 09- August 30

**Kjarval and Animals**

An exhibition focusing on Kjarval's depictions of animals.

May 15- August 30

Icelandic design, furniture, architecture and product design.

**Reykjavík Maritime Museum**

Current Exhibitions:

Living Museum by the Sea; Arterial for Country and City; From Poverty to Abundance; The Shark – Light and Life Energy; Hidden Craftsman.

**The Reykjavík Museum of Photography**

May 16- August 30.

**Life isn't just a game-it's also a bed of roses...**

A collaborative project curated by Guðmundur Oddur Magnússon and Guðfinna Mjöll Magnúsdóttir.

**Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum**

Permanent Exhibition:

**The Shape of Line**

A retrospective of works by Ásmundur Sveinsson. The exhibition focuses on abstract works from 1945 onwards.

**OUTSIDE  
REYKJAVÍK**

**Keflavík**

Suðsuðvestur Gallery

May 16 – June 14

Exhibition by Klaas Kloosterboer

**Hafnarfjörður**

Hafnarborg

May 16 – June 20

Exhibition "Vættir" by Jónína Guðadóttir

Exhibition "Madame Lemonique & Madame Lemonborough" by Guðný Guðmundsdóttir

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**Borgarnes**  
The Icelandic Settlement Centre  
Permanent exhibitions:  
The Settlement of Iceland; The Saga of Egill Skalla-Grímsson.  
Current theatre productions:  
Brák – a monologue by Brynhildur Guðjónsdóttir  
Mr. Skallagrímsson – a monologue by Benedikt Erlingsson  
Storms and Wars – a monologue by Einar Kárason

**Stykkishólmur**  
Library of Water11  
Permanent Exhibition:  
Roni Horn installation. The artist has replaced stacks of books with glass columns containing water gathered from Iceland's glaciers and glacial rivers.

**Akureyri**  
Akureyri Art Museum  
Gallery Box  
Gallery Dalí  
Akureyrarstofa  
Populus Tremula  
May 9 – May 10  
Exhibition by Kjartan Sigtryggsson  
Kunstraum Wohnraum  
April 4 – June 21  
Exhibition by Huginn Þór Arason

**Seyðisfjörður**  
Skaftfell  
April 11 – June 7  
“The Thirteenth Day”  
An exhibition by Ben Kinsley & Jessica Langley

**Hveragerði**  
LÁ Art  
May 2 – June 28  
“Flashes in the moment of Danger”  
An exhibition of works by 8 artists.



## The Culture House

Hverfisgata 15

Until Jan 10 2010 ⌚ 11 am

Curated by Berlin artists Sabine Schirdewahn and Matthias Wagner, ICELAND::FILM explores the progress and development of Icelandic film making from it's genesis of 1904 to the year 2008. Over approximately 100 films can be selected and viewed on one of four specially designed ‘film islands’, one island for each genre; documentary, short film, feature film and literature adaptation. The show can be recommended, and provides a somewhat comprehensive overview of Icelandic social and cultural heritage over the past 100 years.

—JB

Listasafn Reykjavíkur  
Reykjavik Art Museum



Louisa Matthíasdóttir.  
Maine Landscape with  
Figure, 1976. Courtesy  
Tibor de Nagy Gallery.



Hans Hofmann.  
Perpetuita, 1951.  
Courtesy of Amaringer  
& Yohe Fine Arts.



Nina Tryggvadóttir.  
Self Portrait,  
1939-1940.  
Courtesy Una Dóra Copley.



Robert De Niro, Sr., Seated Nude  
in Studio Interior with Table  
Still Life, 1970. The Estate  
of Robert De Niro, Sr. Courtesy  
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## Art | Venue finder

**Artótek**  
Tryggvagata 15 | **D3**  
Mon 10–21, Tue–Thu 10–19, Fri  
11–19, Sat and Sun 13–17  
www.sim.is/Index/Islandska/  
Artotek

**ASÍ Art Museum**  
Freygata 41 | **I6**  
Tue–Sun 13–17

**Árbæjarsafn**  
Kistuhylur 4

**The Culture House**  
Hverfisgata 15 | **E5**  
Open daily 11–17  
www.thjodmenning.is

**Dwarf Gallery**  
Grundarstígur 21 | **G4**  
Opening Hours: Fri and Sat  
18–20  
www.this.is/birta

**The Einar Jónsson Museum**  
Eiríksgata | **H6**  
Tue–Sun 14–17  
www.skulptur.is

**Fótógrafi**  
Skólavörðustígur 4a | **F5**  
www.fotografi.is

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www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/  
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**Gallery Auga fyrir Auga**  
Hverfisgata 35 | **F6**

**Gallery StartArt**  
Laugavegur 12B | **F5**  
Tue–Sat 1–17  
www.startart.is

**Gallery Ágúst**  
Baldursgata 12 | **H4**  
Wed–Sat 12–17  
www.galleriagust.is

**Gallery Fold**  
Rauðarástígur 14–16 | **H9**

Mon–Fri 10–18 / Sat 11–16 /  
Sun 14–16  
www.myndlist.is

**Gallery Kling & Bang**  
Hverfisgata 42 | **F6**  
Thurs–Sun from 14–18  
this.is/klingogbang/

**Gallery Turpentine**  
Ingólfstræti 5 | **F4**  
Tue–Fri 12–18 / Sat 11–16  
www.turpentine.is

**Gerðuberg Cultural Centre**  
Gerðuberg 3–5  
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Thu–Fri 11–17 / Sat–Sun 13–16  
www.gerduberg.is

**Hitt Húsið**  
– Gallery Tukt  
Pósthússtræti 3–5 | **E3**  
www.hitthusid.is

**i8 Gallery**  
Klapparstígur 33 | **F6**  
Tue–Fri 11–17 / Sat 13–17 and  
by appointment. www.i8.is

**Living Art Museum**  
Vatnssígur 3 – **F6**  
Wed, Fri–Sun 13–17 / Thu  
13–22. www.nylo.is

**Lost Horse Gallery**  
Skólastræti 1 | **E4**  
Weekends from 13–19 and  
by appointment on weekdays.

**Hafnarborg**  
Strandgötu 34,  
Hafnarfjörður

**The National Gallery of  
Iceland**  
Fríkirkjuvegur 7 | **G3**  
Tue–Sun 11–17  
www listasafn.is

**The National  
Museum**  
Suðurgata 41 | **H1**  
Open daily 10–17  
natmus.is/

**The Nordic House**

Sturlugata 5 | **I1**  
Tue–Sun 12–17  
www.nordice.is/

**The Numismatic Museum**  
Einholt 4 | **I10**  
Open Mon–Fri 13:30–15:30.

**Reykjavík 871+/-2**  
Aðalstræti 17 | **E2**  
Open daily 10–17

**Reykjavík Art Gallery**  
Skúlagata 28 | **F8**  
Tuesday through Sunday 14–18

**Reykjavík Art Museum**  
Tryggvagata 17 | **D3**  
Open daily 10–16  
www listasafnreykjavikur.is

**Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculp-  
ture Museum** Sigtún

**Kjarvalsstaðir**  
Flókagata

**Reykjavík City Theatre**  
Listabraut 3

**Reykjavík Maritime Museum**  
Grandagarður 8 | **A1**

**Reykjavík Museum of Pho-  
tography**  
Tryggvagata 16 | **D3**  
Weekdays 12–19 / Sat–Sun  
13–17  
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**Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**  
Laugarnestangi 70

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			17:00	17:00	17:00		





## Dine Over Design

### Silfur

Pósthússtræti 11  
[www.silfur.is](http://www.silfur.is)

#### What we think:

Fine Icelandic dining in a pre-financial crisis setting

#### 3,5 out of 5 stars

Opened in 2006 at the art deco Hótel Borg, restaurant Silfur initially served French cuisine, but has recently updated its menu to offer modern Icelandic fare in the spirit of the current local food trend and the financial situation.

Bankers may have vaporised, but Silfur’s over-the-top modern luxurious décor sadly remains, a fossil from a time when you didn’t need style so long as you had enough money to swim in.

While design is not a strength, Silfur has made a name for serving some of the best food in town under the guidance of Chef Hafþór Sveinsson (who should also be spared from the style judgements – the portions looked good throughout our meal).

My date chose “Country” (6700 ISK) from the “Flavors” set menu selection. I freestyled, starting with Icelandic langoustine ‘three ways’ (2900 ISK): a traditional fried tail, an excellent bake with almonds and a mini burger with chorizo and grape tomato jam.

His hangikjöt carpaccio arrived with an upturned glass of smoke and disappeared just as fast. The fine slices provided a surprisingly delicate experience of the smoked meat, complimented by the beetroot salad. Minke-whale sashimi was refreshingly light on the gaminess that often blights the controversial meat.

For a main, I chose smoked duck with mango, oranges and a bed of wild mushrooms, onions and fresh radish (4900 ISK). Stodgy sweet potato croquettes were an unnecessary addition, otherwise the range of flavours well accented the endless pile of meat sufficient for three women my size—not all fine dining means small portions. My date’s lamb fillet, lamb rib and beef tenderloin were good, juicy and moist, though an overly generous dollop of buttery lobster hollandaise drowned the beef and there could have been more of the lovely Icelandic potatoes.

For desert, my date’s set menu included skyr mousse with blueberry ice cream, while I tried the signature desert (1500 ISK) with chocolate cake, vanilla and raspberry sorbet, chocolate parfait and fresh raspberries: all excellent.

Service was professional and pleasant and through the course of the meal we were surprised with extra offerings: first, with lovely battered scallop “cigars” and horseradish sauce; and before dessert, with layered shot glasses of mango mousse and passion fruit soup. I wish all shots in this town were as good.

—SARI PELTONEN



## Score Coffee at Litla Kaffistofan

### Litla Kaffistofan

Road 1 between Reykjavík and Hveragerði

#### Recommended:

Coffee and a pancake 420 ISK

#### 4 out of 5 stars

Reykjavík may be famous for its café culture, but out of town, coffee is in a league of its own. Usually tanked at gas stations, pit stops for tired and thirsty drivers and their cars, truck-driving coffee is the real fuel for travelling around the island.

Amongst the legion of boring, modern service stations, there are a handful that have served for decades as more homey breaks on long drives. Right outside Reykjavík, along the southbound ring road and surrounded by lava, you can find the oldest.

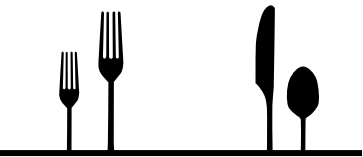
Double-roofed Kaffistofan, painted in the [now defunct] Olís station brand colours a little too long ago, marks the end of Reykjavík and your entryway to the countryside.

Inside you’ll find a small, cosy roadside café with a quaint sense of time standing still – coffee and kleinur have surely been the corner stones of the menu since the swingin’ 60s – and the incredible collection of football memorabilia that must have been in the making since then as well.

"It's my father, he is a big fan," says the girl by the service desk with a smile, explaining the accumulation of football relics. Indeed, the place is lined with team portraits, football shirts, banderols, scarves, newspaper clips and pretty much anything else you might stick a football team’s logo on.

The strong cup of black Rúbin is the epitome of gas station coffee, and at the back room of Litla Kaffistofan you get to gulp it down whilst counting the individually framed football players who adorn the wooden panelled walls in neat rows.

I got to 164.  
—SARI PELTONEN



### Burgers

#### 1 Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar

Geirsgata 1

Grapevine pretty much subscribes to the Búlla burgers for sustenance while creating the paper you are now reading. Not only is it an extremely tasty, meaty and succulent burger, it comes for a very fair price, too. And the staff-members are all super friendly. This is the place to go for burgers downtown, unless you want a blue-cheese special, in which case you should visit...

#### 2 Vitabar

Bergþórugata 21

A steady local favourite for many, many years, Vitabar is bursting with character and a quaint charm that makes it a destination in and of itself, regardless of their awesome burgers. And since their burgers are, well, awesome, you ought to wonder why you aren’t there RIGHT NOW. Go for the Forget-me-not Bleu cheese burger, some fries and a large beer. Now. Why are you still reading this anyway?

#### 3 Drekkinn

Njálsgata 23

Well, since you’re apparently not interested in Vitabar, we might as well tell you that nothing beats Drekkinn for cheap eats in 101 Reykjavík. Nothing. Their burgers are ludicrously inexpensive, and surprisingly tasty. And they have that awesome chilli-ketchup that makes anything worth eating.

### Coffee

#### 1 Babalú

Skólavörðustígur 22a

We quite enjoy the kitschy and cosy atmosphere of Babalú for chilling with a caffeinated beverage and a tasty baked goods. The folks that work there are genuinely welcoming and friendly too, so it’s a comfortable place to spend numerous hours with friends or your laptop. They even have live music from time to time, which is an added treat.

#### 2 Hressingarskálinn (Hressó)

Austurstræti 20

Hressó is a fave for one really big reason: the patio. The covered patio area is wicked for drinking, smoking and being merry in lousy weather and the spacious outdoor patio is a gorgeous retreat on sunny days. The coffee is hot and potent (black coffee comes in a thermos of multiple servings so there’s no need to wait on refills) and the staff is friendly as well.

#### 3 Kaffi Hljómalind

Laugavegur 23

There are many reasons to like this place. For starters, the international staff is super laid back and friendly and seem to attract a similarly disposed clientele. Also, the coffee is good, refills are free and there are lots of comfy places to sit and drink. The fresh vegan baked goods compliment the caffeine nicely.

### Cheap Eats

#### 1 Núðluhúsið

Laugavegur 59

Núðluhúsið offers up a mean plate of Pad Thai, big enough to comfortably serve two and just right in the taste department. We’d surely recommend some of their other dishes, but frankly we’re too tempted to just get the Pad Thai every time we go there. As an added bonus, the place is as close to dirt-cheap as you get in Reykjavík.

#### 2 Santa María

Laugavegur 22a

This place was a revelation to the good people of Reykjavík when it opened its doors just over a year ago, and it’s pretty much been filled to the rafters ever since. With a solid and admirable price policy of “nothing over 1.000 ISK” (which might actually have gone up a couple hundred krónur when you read this), Santa María’s low prices are only beat by their nice service and tasty take on authentic Mexican food.

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List of licenced Tour Operators and Travel Agencies on:  
[visiticeland.com](http://visiticeland.com)

## Laying Off Iceland?

*Take a breather and look at the various excuses to extend your stay in Iceland.*



Oodles of our well-appreciated expats are finding themselves in a god-awful situation these days. As our economy plunges farther and farther down the drain by the day, their jobs (if any) are continually yielding humbler paychecks and if they'd been so lucky to have established a home or anything of the sort, mortgage payments have reached an absurd height. To tell you the truth, I'd contemplate escaping this devil's island if I were in that position, but that resort can also be troublesome – the price of tickets outta here has increased in direct correlation with the decline of the Króna – so you could really be stuck in an evil limbo.

But don't get too pessimistic, there are options up for grabs – and some of them are pretty solid. The thing is that Iceland's selection of universities and colleges is pretty grand, and most of them (if not all) offer various studies taught in English. Plus, the bulk of them are really cheap, in an international sense at least, and some are even free-of-charge. Thus, the Grapevine decided to give you a small reading tour to lay down your bets.

### The Oldest University, Small State Studies and International Education

This here big school, the University of Iceland, hosts over 13,000 students annually. It is the oldest and most established college in Iceland and offers versatile studies in their numerous departments. It also happens to be the only one that passes as a university – in the American sense at least. Most of the courses in their graduate departments are in English, e.g. International Business, Marketing etc. It is a bit more strenuous to find a bachelor's program completely in English, but there are still several around.

To begin with, the "Icelandic for Foreigners" program is rather basic and

then of course plain English language studies, but there are also two considerably new courses available to international students I'd like to point out. The first one is the graduate diploma that the Faculty of Political Science and the Centre for Small States offer for the first time this fall. The diploma offers a detailed study of small state theories based on the literature on the state and the international system. It also emphasises the opportunities and constraints facing small states in Europe, i.e. how they are affected by and have responded to the process of European integration, new security threats, globalisation and other domestic and international challenges. This might be just the thing for those of you that have sunk into the EU debate.

Another interesting course in the University is the International Education Bachelor and Masters Degree, which is currently being established. The aim of the degree is to emphasise education in the widest sense of the word and students are expected to be fluent in three languages upon graduation.

### Arts, arts and business

If you wish to try your luck in the dangerous perimeters of the arts, we have a few resources. The biggest institution is the Icelandic Academy of the Arts. The recent outburst in artistic excellence in Iceland can partly be blamed on this fine institution, which has practically raised the bulk of Icelandic artists. It's a bit odd that the school doesn't advertise how easy it is for international students to fit in, but about 80% of the courses are taught in English, due to international teachers etc. Then again, their admission process is rather strict and only about 10% of the applicants are eventually admitted into the school, so they really don't have to advertise anything. Their design, architecture, music and theatre departments are all outstanding according to those in the know.

If you'd like to establish your artistic posture a bit beforehand, there are a few

### Further info on Universities, admission and tuition

- » **University of Iceland**  
www.hi.is
- » **Iceland Academy of the Arts**  
www.lhi.is
- » **Reykjavik University**  
www.ru.is
- » **University of Bifröst**  
www.bifrost.is
- » **University of Akureyri**  
www.unak.is
- » **The Cultural House**  
www.ahus.is
- » **The Reykjavik School of Visual Arts**  
www.myndlistaskolinn.is
- » **Tækniskólinn**  
www.taekniskolinn.is

ways to go. The Reykjavik School of Visual Arts offers preparation diplomas for further art studies, and so do several junior colleges such as FB, Borgarholtsskóli and Tækniskólinn.

If you're more into business-oriented education in the private sector, the newly founded business academy next to Reykjavik's beloved private Commerce High School might rouse your attention. Bearing the palatial name Reykjavik University, the institution offers various courses in all areas of business, but their international sector is mostly interwoven with the graduate courses. Another business academy located near Borgarnes in the West of Iceland, Bifröst, boasts also of various studies in English, one diploma combines for examples political science, philosophy and law.

After having recapped all these options, the financial limbo seems to be caving in against all these educational opportunities, so you might want to stick around a tad longer and witness not only the crash but also, if you're lucky, the resurrection – with a degree to your name, no less.



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Art Reviews

# Fiction Conflicting With Reality

## Artifacts

Curated by: Ingunn Fjóla Ingbórsdóttir and Þórdís Jóhannesdóttir.

**Kópavogur Museum of Natural History**  
[www.natkop.is](http://www.natkop.is)

I spent the day at the Kópavogur Museum of Natural History with artist Sigurrós Svava Ólafsdóttir as she explained the ideas and concepts behind the recent Artifacts exhibition, curated by Ingunn Fjóla Ingbórsdóttir and Þórdís Jóhannesdóttir.

The Museum is situated at the bottom of the Kópavogur library. Although small in size, it compacts in this space a substantial amount of native wild birds and sea life specimens. The participants of this group exhibition were an interesting mix between upcoming and more renowned artists concerned with humans' effect on the environment. There was an exciting contrast between young artists such as Harpa Dögg Kjartansdóttir, whose Milli Heima installation revamped the algae tank and mimicked the plant life growing through an intricate collage of glossy magazine clippings. Close-up, the exotic looking collage was comprised of clocks, fruit, jewelry etc., giving the tank a new vibrancy and the artwork fanciful dimensions.

This contrast was complimented by hosting more established artists, such as Hildur Bjarnadóttir, renowned for her textile art and contributions to the environmental art scene. Her Endurgjöf work, made specifically for the exhibition, consisted of dyed wool samples produced from the trees and plants around her mother's home, which were then knitted into a pair of gloves engraved with her mother's favourite native pattern. Each dyed wool sample reflected the colour of the leaves or bark that had been growing on her families' land for years, capturing aspects of their memories and surrounding landscape.

### The walk through

As we wandered around the collection, artworks could be seen hidden behind, in front of and around the artifacts. The art was intertwined with the collection, blurring facts and fiction. The exhibit seemed to question the museum's role of categorising and conserving history, suggesting whether society doesn't emphasise enough on preserving natural artifacts outside historical institutions. Peter Thomsen demonstrated this well with his work Sandkassi. Consisting of sand he dug from the Háslón dam site in Kárahnjúkar, just before it was built, he creates a miniature square sculpture that looks perfectly natural but is in fact unnaturally constructed. The piece was displayed alongside crystals that are found in land across Iceland, emphasising the importance of keeping natural heritage. Peter's work was one of the first we saw before entering the collection of taxidermal birds and emerging artist Unnar Örn's work Wardian-Garth – a small hut made from glass and wood panels illuminated by neon pink lights. The little shed was filled with postcards Unnar has been sending himself whilst on his travels. What's fascinating about the piece is the contrast between the migrating birds that he displays next to, suggesting himself as one of these birds in flight.

### Seeing Sea creatures

Artist Harpa Árnadóttir's collection of limestone and coral were appropriately placed in the shellfish section with practically no interference to their appearance apart from the arrangement. These particular lime algae are exported from Iceland to be produced into food supplement pills or to aid in the preparation of mortar and cement, but what effect will their overproduction have on their habitat? As artist Sigurrós Svava Ólafsdóttir said whilst explaining the work: "It's amazing, the amount of things that are happening to our environment that we just don't know anything about."

Sigurrós was situated directly next to Harpa and for the exhibition had created a series of detailed drawings, juxtaposing the man-made and the natural. Although appearing random at first, most of the drawings were intended to have some narrative. For instance, the popcorn bag filled with dyed sheep's wool was an anecdotal reference to her childhood growing up as a farmer's daughter. The drawing conveyed the conjured scents of salty popcorn and freshly bound wool reminiscent of her youth.

### Nearing the exit

Anna Lindal is known for her practice of collecting and displaying household objects. Her installation evoked a conflicting parallel between the shells we collect and display for studying and the abundance of decorative ways we encounter these shells in our everyday lives. Part of the intrigue of the work is the relationship we have with the seashell and how we have formed an admiration for its beauty. Interestingly Anna is collaborating with two other contributors of the exhibition, Hildigunnur Birgisdóttir and Bjarki Bragason, on an ongoing project since 2007 named "The Branch Collective" in close co-operation with Safnasafn, the museum for outsider art in Svalbarðsströnd, northern Iceland.

Exhibition runs until August 31. For more information on the exhibit, visit [www.natkop.is](http://www.natkop.is). For the outsider art museum, see [www.safnasafnid.is](http://www.safnasafnid.is). **—RICHARD P FOLEY**

**Another must see:**  
Impressions at Gallery Ágúst  
Guðrún Gunnarsdóttir

# The City is Alive

## A first glimpse of the Reykjavík Arts Festival

Engaging exhibitions are gracing the Reykjavík galleries and museums. Coinciding with the Reykjavík Arts Festival, a few spaces have opened up new shows that stimulate the senses. And the best part, there is still more to come.

### A few highlights thus far:

Hrafnkell Sigurðsson and Kristján Guðmundsson at the National Gallery of Iceland



Both artists present challenging and thought provoking work in this exhibition.

One of Hrafnkell Sigurðsson's works in the exhibition is a video installation, "7 x 7". The piece is immersive, seductive and touches upon the divide between humanity and nature. The beguiling colour and imagery draws the viewer in immediately. The larger than body scale and use of reflective surfaces make the installation even more immersive. Most importantly, there is strong infrastructure in his work where this striking visual goes deeper beyond its surface, exposing interesting ideas about perception and culture/nature. The footage is taken at Kárahnjúkar of men in orange outfits swaying back and forth in an icy landscape. The subject matter of Kárahnjúkar demonstrates the struggle between man and nature, being that this is the location where one of the big controversial dams was built in Iceland. Similar to Sigurðsson's other work, this juxtaposition of humanity and nature is clear in the video, and at moments the two fields are distinctively separated and thereby implying an irrelevance to one another. There are other times where the body and nature resemble each other and fuse together in a hypnotic manner alongside the non-jarring and subtle sound, allowing the familiarity to dissolve. The work is captivating on different levels, including its relevance to present day Iceland and how it relates to painting with its tactility and depth.

### Within Reach at Kling and Bang Gallery

Kling and Bang Gallery has a group show with Carle Lange, Dóra Ísleifsdóttir, Kristján Björn Þórðarson, Páll Einarsson, Reinert Mithassel, Tinna Lúðvíksdóttir, Úlfur Eldjárn & Þorvaldur Þorsteinsson.

Almost like a haunted house, you are led through a maze/obstacle course where at times you are walking in the dark and other times encountering an intimate moment with artwork. Throughout the exhibition, as you are manoeuvring around the dark obscure path, you are frequently separated from the "art", where you have to see or peer at it voyeuristically through openings, holes and windows. You soon realise that the whole experience becomes the art and the interior passageways are fascinating within themselves. The artists at Kling and Bang Gallery have created another world where the installation becomes unconsciousness – nightmarish, bizarre, nostalgic and ethereal at times, and full of surprising and disorienting discoveries. It is almost like you have been transported into a David Lynch film.

### Vanity Disorder at i8

Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir aka Shoplifter



Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir aka Shoplifter is showing her signature work of human and fake hair installations, bas-reliefs, drawings and photographs. One of the strongest works is on the left side of the gallery, which looks like a flag/rainbow/banner of hair freely installed on the wall. This contrasts with some of the other pieces on the walls, whose traditional frames are a bit distracting and detract from the experience with the art.

**—LANA VOGESTAD**

Courtesy of the artist and i8 Gallery, Reykjavík





Where is it?  
Approximately 200 km along the south-bound road number 1 from Reykjavík. Buses on the route Reykjavik-Höfn stop at the petrol station daily at 8.30 and 17 from Reykjavík.

Travel | Destination: Vík í Mýrdal

# Watch Your Back

Don't let the serene atmosphere of the southern village of Vík fool you.

In Vík, the little white-and-red church stands alone, overlooking the sleepy village. Birds nest in the vertical Reynisfjall cliffs and waves crash against sea carved stone columns by the black beach.

Vík (Icelandic for 'bay') or Vík í Mýrdal (in full: 'bay in the marsh-lands') is the southernmost village in Iceland, the wettest place in the country and, with an impressive 300 inhabitants, one of the largest settlements in the area. I have several reasons to believe that Vík is also the epitome of all things creepy.

### 1# GRUMPY GODS

I recently watched the film "Wrath of Gods", which documents the making of the potentially epic adventure film "Beowulf & Grendel," shot in the Vík area in 2004. Things went so badly wrong that the crew, desperate for some explanation for their troubles, came to the conclusion that the Norse Gods were sabotaging the film. On our trip, the car windshield cracked, the coffee was consistently bad, I lost a contact lens and the iPod shuffle played only 90s hard rock. What had we ever done to them?

### 2# SLEEPING LADY

One of the most notorious volcanoes in Iceland, Katla, is located just above Vík, slumbering under the thick icy blanket of Mýrdalsjökull. Katla's crater is 10 km in diameter, and it is connected with Eldgjá ('fire canyon') – the world's largest volcanic canyon – and Laki crater in Skaftafell National Park. Together they make for one of the most powerful volcanic systems in the world.

Katla is still active. Since the Settlement, it has erupted 17 times, every 70 years or so. The last eruption was in 1918, so the next one is long overdue. In 2002, the seismic activity in the area rose dramatically, but the volcano ap-



pears to have calmed down again and the University of Iceland monitoring station has found no further alarming activity – beyond the everyday earth-quaking. You can see for yourself; the web cam at www.ruv.is/katla may not be action packed, but I am sure Pierce Brosnan would understand my concerns. I'm surprised he's not running around calling town meetings at this very moment.

Whilst a 750-metre thick ice cube on top cooling off the lava cocktail seems like the perfect solution to me, the residents of Vík, scholars of these matters, hardly agree.

Katla's eruption will cause jökulhlaup: glacial outburst floods. The amount of water coming from the melted ice could reach 200,000 cubic metres per second – four times the combined average discharge of the Mississippi, Nile and Yangtze rivers. The village of Vík would be wiped out completely.

Plans are ready in case of disaster and the inhabitants of the village regularly practice running up to the church, the only building high enough to offer hope of salvation.

They gotta love that place.

### 3# TROOPS OF TROLLS

While my fearful gaze is drawn toward the slumbering horror under the glacier, Vík has become a famous post card model on account of the geological sights in the other direction – the strange basalt formations of Dyrhólaey and Reynisdrangar by the sea. Then again, according to local folklore, these twisted shapes are in fact trolls turned to stone by the sunrise while dragging their boats to shore. So maybe I should keep an eye out to sea as well. Great.

As a little Vík style bonus: the Reynisfjara cliffs are known for waves powerful enough to drag foolhardy tourists to

their death. What is it with this town?

### 4# SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

Vík was originally founded in the 9th century by Hjörleifur Hróðmarsson, but it stayed – for good reason, it seems to me – uninhabited until roughly a century ago, when the local fishing co-operative was established in 1906. Today, the harbour is no longer in use due to silting and on a normal weekday afternoon Vík is eerily quiet. "Is it some kind of a public holiday today?" my travelling mate asks, and indeed, there is not a living soul to be seen. Empty parking lots. No pedestrians on the main street. Have they all gone up to the church? Is Katla erupting? Are the Vikings attacking? Did I mention spooky?

– JR

### What to do in Vík:

#### Watch rocks and sail on a car (yes, sail on a car!)

Dyrhólaey and Reynisdrangar rock formations offer beautiful views. For the best ones, go to the beaches around Vík, to Reynisfjall or Reynisfjara hills or take the marked road to Dyrhólaey, which turns right from road number one before Vík (coming from Reykjavík) Dyrhólaeyjarferðir takes tourists on its car-boat-combo to see the rock formations. www.dyrholaey.com. Tel. 8936800.

#### Watch birds

Reynisfjall hill above Vík has several walking paths, lots of birds including the cute and clumsy puffins. The area is a preserve during nesting season.

#### Buy wool

Vík wool's woollen products are a bit cheaper here than in the fancy-pant tourist shops of the capital, and the selection is good. As a bonus, you get to see how the goods are produced. Austurvegur 20, www.vikwool.is

#### Swim

Like any self-respecting town in Iceland, Vík has an open-air thermal pool.

#### Walk on the beach

Black sand, massive waves – what is there not to love? Just – please – watch out for the waves!

#### Walk on the lava

After Vík, the lava fields of Mýrdalssandur take over the landscape. Hjörleifshöfði (231m) is a good walking destination from Vík with nice views over to the Westman Islands.

### Where to eat:

**Puffin Hotel's restaurant** is the place to see and be seen in Vík.

**Halldórskaffi** attached to tourist information office in Brydebuð serves the best burgers in town.

**Grill** at Esso Petrol Station is your saviour when everything else is closed – on road number 1

### Where to sleep:

#### Hótel Puffin

The family-owned Hotel Puffin is the main hotel in town. Also sleeping bag accommodation. Vikurbraut 26, www.hotelpuffin.is

#### Hótel Höfðabrekka

A large, reportedly haunted, country hotel 5 km east of Vík with 60 rooms and a big restaurant. www.hofdabrekka.is

**Vík camp site** is located beyond Edda Hotel on the eastern side of the village

**Norður-Vík Youth Hostel**  
On the hill behind the village, the massive international hostelling logo on the wall makes this impossible to miss. www.hostel.is

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# The Commies Are A-Coming

Radical academics will soon be storming Iceland with some serious outside-the-box thinking about politics



**Words**  
Viðar Thorsteinsson  
and Magnús Þór Snæbjörnsson

This month and the next, some of the world’s most radical thinkers will be giving talks in Iceland. They could well turn out to be the inspiration needed to continue the kitchenware revolution of this winter.

Iceland’s problems are not the result of inefficiency. Nor are they result of unethical behaviour. They cannot be traced back to the instability of the króna, to Davíð Oddsson’s erratic behaviour, or to Geir Haarde’s mishandling of telephone conversations with Alistair Darling. The Icelandic problems – yes, all of them – are failures that result from the system that governs the world: capitalism.

Bust-and-boom cycles are part and parcel of capitalist development, not some rarely heard of anomaly. This has been well known for almost two centuries, so why is everyone so surprised? This is perhaps because when public opinion turned against Soviet communism in the late 20th century, it accidentally (or intentionally, depending on your viewpoint) also dumped the insightful theories of one of the greatest economists of all times: Karl Marx.

“The Communist Manifesto of the 21st Century”

Marxism in the humanities, however, has been a flourishing discipline for decades and regularly breeds innovative ideas. Iceland will now have the chance to benefit from the teachings of four distinguished Marxists: Antonio

Negri, Michael Hardt, Chantal Mouffe, and Peter Hallward. They will give open lectures in Reykjavík this month and the next, and are likely to have something to say about Iceland’s current debacle. The lecture series is brought to you by Nýhil, a collective of young entrepreneurs, until now most famous for its avant-garde poetry publications and annual international poetry festival.

Antonio Negri is probably the best-known of the four visitors, having acquired martyrdom in the late eighties when he was wrongly convicted by Italian authorities of bearing responsibility for the kidnap and murder of Aldo Moro, Italy’s prime minister. Negri was then already a well known figure in Italy’s colourful Left, having founded the Autonomista movement in the early sixties.

In 2000, Negri rose to stardom again with his academic blockbuster Empire, co-written by his younger colleague, Michael Hardt. Empire has been hailed by the alter-globalisation movement, and was called “the Communist Manifesto of the 21st century” by The New York Times. Hardt and Negri have since published the follow-up Multitude, and continue to develop their ideas in close proximity with protest movements on the Left.

The authors of this article are the organisers of the lecture series in question, so you should definitely read the above with that in mind.

Left strategy: defence or offense?  
Definitely the latter

Chantal Mouffe has since the early nineties been a leading voice in Marxist self-criticism, not least with the publication of her seminal work Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Mouffe and her colleague, Ernesto Laclau, have urged the Left to disband a fixation with class in favour of the inclusion of gay and lesbian activists, environmentalists, feminists and other groups that rose to prominence during the years of the ‘New Left’.

Mouffe has since turned her critical attention to the political theories of mainstream liberalism, severely criticising them for their homogenising and moralistic vision of society. Democracy, Mouffe argues, is all about conflict and incongruence, not consensus and ‘shared values’. As a keen political analyst, Mouffe has tried to describe the Left’s strategical opportunities. From being on the offensive during the sixties and seventies, the Left was forced into a defensive position following neo-liberalism’s victory march in the 90s.

Power to the people!

Peter Hallward is the youngest of the radical scholars visiting Iceland, but has already made a name for himself as a highly original and sharp thinker. While translating and introducing contemporary French theory to his British countrymen, Hallward has himself written a celebrated book about modern day French and American neo-colonialism in Haiti, a critique of postcolonial theory and literature, and is currently conducting research on political and popular will.

While these thinkers have much in common, they also have their differences. In her lecture, Chantal Mouffe will contrast her own ideas with those of Negri, and Hallward has also been a vocal critic of some of the philosophical tenets behind Hardt and Negri’s theory. Hallward is in many ways a highly unusual thinker compared with others

**The Program:**  
**Tuesday May 26** @ 8PM / Hall 102 at Háskólatorg (University Square, University of Iceland Campus)  
» **Michael Hardt:**  
*The Common in Communism*  
» **Antonio Negri:** *Some Reflections on the Concept and Practice of Communism*  
**Thursday June 11** @ 17PM / Hall 101 at Oddi (University of Iceland Campus)  
» **Peter Hallward:**  
*What is Political Will?*  
**Saturday June 13** @ 14PM / Hall 102 at Háskólatorg (University Square, University of Iceland Campus)  
» **Chantal Mouffe:**  
*Radical Politics Today*

The lecture series is organised by Nýhil with the support of the European ‘Youth in Action’ Program, the Humanities Division and the Philosophical Institute of the University of Iceland, The Philosophical Society and the Iceland Academy of The Arts.

on the Left. The notion of political and popular will has not been prominent on the agenda of radical movements, while according to Hallward the reworking of notions – perhaps best expressed with the slogan ‘Power to the People!’ – are crucial to the viability of a future radical left.

We are broke on ideas, let’s admit it

Academia has sometimes been a breeding ground for progressive, democratic and egalitarian ideas, but for many decades it has hardly brought us anything other than sheepish economists, charlatan gurus of ‘management’, cultural studies cynics. Marxism, with its idea of the unity of theory and praxis, has always been about joining scientific research and social consciousness.

This winter’s popular uprising has now entered a hiatus, waiting to see how far the current Left-wing government can take us. But truly revolutionary politics are never the product of politicians; it needs the active participation of ordinary people. In order to continue the revolution, Icelandic revolutionaries are going to need more than political perseverance. We are not “only broke on money”. We need revolutionary ideas!



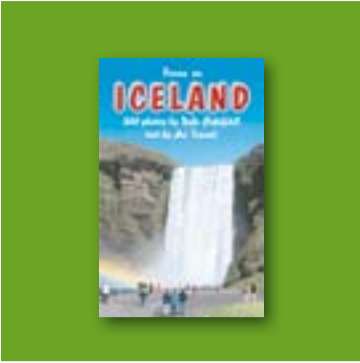
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Focus on Iceland

Rafn Hafnfjörð and Ari Trausti

2009

Salka

This travel book from 2008 is built around 600 photographs by Rafn Hafnfjörð, a well-established Icelandic photographer known for his photographs of Icelandic landscape and sceneries. The text is supplied by Ari Trausti, a poet and geophysicist, whose works concern geology and volcanology, as well as environmental science. Therefore, he is certainly an eligible co-author for a travel book about Iceland. The book is composed in a very simple way. The pictures – organised three to four to a page – follow a route from just outside Reykjavík, north up the ring highway heading to the Westfjords and on to Akureyri, and, from there, due east to Egilsstaðir, finally returning to Reykjavík. Each picture is accompanied with a three to five sentence explanation, providing background information on the origin of names and significance of the places. On the back cover of the book the reader can find a map of Iceland, marked with page numbers corresponding to the images preceding it. On the front cover is a small road map of Iceland.

The guide starts with an introduction to Þingvellir. No chapter numbers, headlines or table of contents are provided, making it seem unorganised at first glance. Considering that this is a photographic travel book, the images are slightly too small to really convey the beauty of the places therein. Some of them don't even show anything special. This could have been circumvented by placing just one or two photos on each page, thereby giving them more ample space and, in the process, possibly providing even more impressive ideas of the locations.

The information alongside the pictures is clear and brief, but after having read the short explanations the reader is sometimes left longing for more. For a deeper understanding of the natural wonders and further insight into Iceland as a country of geological amazement, another book would be required reading. Moreover, a slightly larger map on the back cover would be helpful in order to get a better idea of the vicinity of the sights to the main highway. Still, “Focus on Iceland” is a solid, easy to use guide for tourists seeking ideas of when and where to stop during their circuit of the island. 🍷 – IRINA DOMURATH

Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl writes our regular poetry column. He is an awesome writer/poet in his own right.

Poetry | Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl

Warning: You don't need poetry

Anyone that gets a rudimentary education in the Western world, or at least in the places I know anything about, is taught that poetry is like vitamins – it's good for you. It'll enlighten your mind, make you more aware of your emotions, your sensibilities, the entire scope of your inner life. It is the “highest of art forms” – so sublime that it can hardly be viewed with human eyes, read with human brains. It's extremely difficult to understand and just to grasp the littlest bits of it requires a life-long commitment.

While none of this is necessarily untrue, the same argument could as easily be applied to rock'n'roll, to movies – to the whole boatload of “popular culture” that we (as a society) simultaneously love and loathe. Many of the so-called simple songs of the Eurovision Song Contest are in fact complex constructions that meld super-produced pop-genres with ethnic music, the history of which reaches thousands of years into the past of participating countries. And yet you'll never hear anyone say they didn't quite “understand” the Armenian song – that its use of musical intricacies simply left you baffled. Very few people ask of pop-music that it should be simpler, or that movies should not have so many jump-cuts, should not be shot from weird angles or with unnatural camera movements. Quite the contrary, we've completely embraced all of popular-culture's complexities, so much so that they've become utterly mundane – we don't even notice them without a conscious effort to do so.

And yet, when it comes to literature in general, and poetry in particular, most people's first reaction is to not “understand” it – giving up before you've tried is the name of the game – no matter how often poets and writers try to emphasise that you are in fact not meant to “understand” it. This is one of the problems of making art with and through language, a medium we first and foremost see as a vehicle for information – it's what we use to communicate our thoughts. It's how I tell you that I'm hungry, how you give me directions, and so forth. But poetry doesn't work like that. Ludwig Witt-

genstein (a practitioner of that other “difficult” art: philosophy) once said: “Do not forget that a poem, although it is composed in the language of information, is not used in the language-game of giving information.”

This misunderstanding is also why so many poems of poets that don't read much poetry have more to do with anecdote or lineated prose, than they have to do with poetry – *I feel like this [insert metaphor-cliché] and then I feel like that [insert metaphor-cliché]* – and even more experienced poets often don't seem able (or willing) to ever stray from the realm of the metaphor, the most basic of poetic tools (metaphor is to poetry, as 4/4 is to rock'n'roll).

In this manner, a lot of the poetry that people find “difficult” can seem to be very simple ditties to anyone who spends time reading it. The juxtaposition of one pretty image with the next, jumping between the lilies of the ponds – it's not rocket science, and it's not cross-word puzzles (i.e. you're NOT supposed to “solve” it – it doesn't “mean”, it is “mean”). It's Layla, A Hard Day's Night – but it's also Das Wohltemperierte Clavier, Atari Teenage Riot, African tribal music and Mack the Knife. You can have your pick of the litter.

Imagine for a minute that your experience of poetry was the same as your experience with music, that it was *everywhere* – that there was no way of escaping it. Literacy of poetry, like literacy of pop-music, movies etc. is an acquired skill and “complex” is a very relative term. It's of note that the more anyone listens to music, the more complex their taste becomes; the less anyone listens to music, the more mainstream their taste. The same goes for poetry.

The bottom-line is this: poetry is not vitamins, and you're not going to shrivel up and die if you don't get regular doses of it. It's not (necessarily) any more difficult than pop-music. And you don't need it. You can, I'm sure, live a very decent life without it. I've seen it done. And although you'll miss out on the fun, and that never killed anyone.

Article | Continued from pg. 6

Radio to the other side.

In Search of the Real McCoy

I start with the University of Iceland's semi-retired Professor Emeritus of Psychology with a penchant for the supernatural, Dr. Erlendur Haraldsson. We meet in Perlan during the middle of the week, as the sun shoots clear bright light across the bluest sky on Earth; well, at least it seems so on that day.

Was that a fairy that just whooshed by? Dr. Haraldsson has led an unusual life to say the least. In the 1960s he camped out with Iraqi Kurdistan rebels. Later, he travelled to Andhra Pradesh to witness the extraordinary Sai Baba. Haraldsson's book, Miracles are my Visiting Cards, documents many of the impossible feats attributed to this controversial mystic, and many failed attempts to disprove them. Sai Baba is described as a godworker and a prophet, and the numerous manifestations that he creates out of thin air continue to stupefy. According to official figures, his adherents across the globe now number well over six million. Sai Baba is considered a risk to the state by the Indian government, and is kept under a vigilant, watchful eye.

Haraldsson has travelled to Sri Lanka and Lebanon to investigate children who remember past lives. He has extensively researched psychics, ghostly visitations, the paranormal and near death experiences. In short, he is quite a guy in the scheme of the ethereal, and possibly the only Icelander who has made any serious attempt to explain these phenomena from a scientific perspective. What I really wanted to find out from Haraldsson was if Icelanders have some unique trait that makes them more prone to visitations, and if somehow they are more in tune with things that go bump in the night than the rest of us.

In 2007, Haraldsson conducted a survey with Terry Gunnell of the University's Folkloristics Department. Completed with three hundred and twenty-five subjects from all walks of life, findings indicate that an average of 30% of Icelanders have at one time or another visited a medium or attended a séance, 25% are convinced that elves probably exist, and 26% believe that contact with the dead could be established through the channelling talents of clairvoyants. Magnús Skarphéðinsson, President of Sálarrannsóknafélag Reykjavík (the Reykjavik Paranormal Investigation Society) and Dean of the Icelandic Elf School, maintains that over 54% of Icelanders believe in elves and, depending on whom you call a medium, there are around 25 practicing in Iceland today.

Possibly the very first internationally renowned Icelandic psychic was the country lad Indriði Indriðason. At the time, Spiritualism was all the rage. In the 1890's, Madame Helena Blavatsky channelled new visions from her bohemian pad in the British Raj where she formed a new spiritual movement: Theosophy. Her book, The Secret Doctrine, became an instantaneous cult bestseller. Many of the great thinkers of the day adopted this new spiritualism. W.B. Yeats, Aldous Huxley, T.S. Elliot and Wallace Stevens were all avid Theosophists.

Soon enough, miracle workers, mystics, magicians and séance parlours were creeping up all over Europe and the US. Crowds flocked to Drury Lane in London and Niblo's Garden in New York to witness spectacles like the marvellous Chung Ling Soo, the magnificent Harry Houdini, and the savage Nana Sahib. Sceptics and occult detectives also started oozing out of the woodwork, doing their utmost to debunk Spiritualist charlatans. One of these was Dr. Guðmundur Hannesson, a well-respected medical professional, scientist and founder of the Icelandic Scientific Society. He arrived expecting to catch Indriði red-handed, but came away gaping incredulously himself.

In one session, Indriði levitated all the way up to the ceiling like a helium filled balloon, despite the doctor trying his damndest to hold him down. In another session, he literally vanished into thin air, only to re-materialise on the other side of the

building minutes later. No one ever succeeded in debunking Indriði's ghostly manifestations.

When I ask Haraldsson why Icelanders are particularly fond of the mystical side of life, he says: ‘Iceland is by no means the most spiritualist country in the world. According to our research we are below the United States, on a par with Italy, but certainly among the highest in Europe.’

This dampens my spirits. Naturally, I was hoping Iceland would be at the very top of the list. I was always sure ghosts, contact with the dead and mediums was something that everyone in Iceland takes on board like going to shop at Bónus and eating skata once a year. It was part of the national heritage like Þorrabót and Megas.

Before the doctor and I part company, I ask him: ‘Iceland and elves? What's with the elves?’ He smiles, sips his hot chocolate almost scientifically, and says, ‘Well, other countries believe in flying angels, bodhisattvas, ancestor spirits; elves have been in the Icelandic imagination since before the sagas. They came over with the first settlers when they arrived from Norway.’

In 1923, the British theosophist Edward Gardner received two photos anonymously in the post. They were grainy celluloids of two little girls and five sugarplum fairies. Enthusiastic, Gardner rushed off to the printing presses. The Cottingley Fairy Photos had all London raving. Even Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of the guileless Sherlock Holmes, was convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt. Sir Arthur emblazoned his convictions in his first work of non-fiction, The Coming of the Fairies. The girls, Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths, had played a prank at the expense of Spiritualist-mad London; Sir Arthur became the laughingstock of the establishment and, to his dismay, discovered that he had written fiction again after all. Faeries quickly became relegated to children's books shelves. As a cohort to Neverland's Peter Pan, Tinkerbell was never quite taken seriously—at least not by us adults. As far as J.M. Barrie was concerned, that was pretty much the point: you can only see the truly magical through the eyes of a child.

I hear from another Icelander that aside from elves and the hidden people (huldufólk), that there are fairies in Iceland too (blómálfar). My friend tells me that her grandmother has some in her conservatory. They prefer swirling around the begonias, which her Amma has been nursing faithfully for years.

Terry Gunnell is more forthright about supernatural Iceland: ‘Imagine what it was like to the early settlers arriving here just off the cramped boats; you're exhausted, you've battled torrential waters for the past weeks. There's not a soul in sight, no human habitation, and yet whispers of steam are rising from the land; in the right light, even now you could mistake them for spirits. Remember, they were pagans, bound to the nature, worshipped Óðinn, Þór, Freya.

‘Of course there were mythical creatures living in this wild, icy place. What else could they be? To top it all off, you had cloud formations unlike any ever seen, you had the northern lights, hot water bubbling from the earth. This was a land unlike any other, a land of Gods.’

Perhaps the fairies and elves were just along for the ride?

Scattered here and there throughout the Icelandic countryside, if you are looking carefully, you will see little houses painted on the sides of rocks—possibly the fancies of children. If you consider Gunnell's explanation that fanciful landscape and weather married with pagan myth leads to fanciful imaginings, some things start to make sense.

Then tell me, why do I still have goosebumps?

Next time: I interview a deep-trance medium and come in contact with a collective unconscious life-form. Seriously!

Marc Vincenz was born in Hong Kong. His book, Animal Soul, a wild adventure based on indigenous mythologies, will be forthcoming in China later this year by Shanghai Wen Hui. He is presently working on a non-fiction book on modern mysticism, and a collection of poetry, A Pocketful of Crickets. He has been coming to Iceland for near to fifteen years, and travels frequently between Reykjavik, Zurich, Barcelona and Hong Kong. He speaks many languages, but still hasn't quite mastered the enigma that is Icelandic. 🍷

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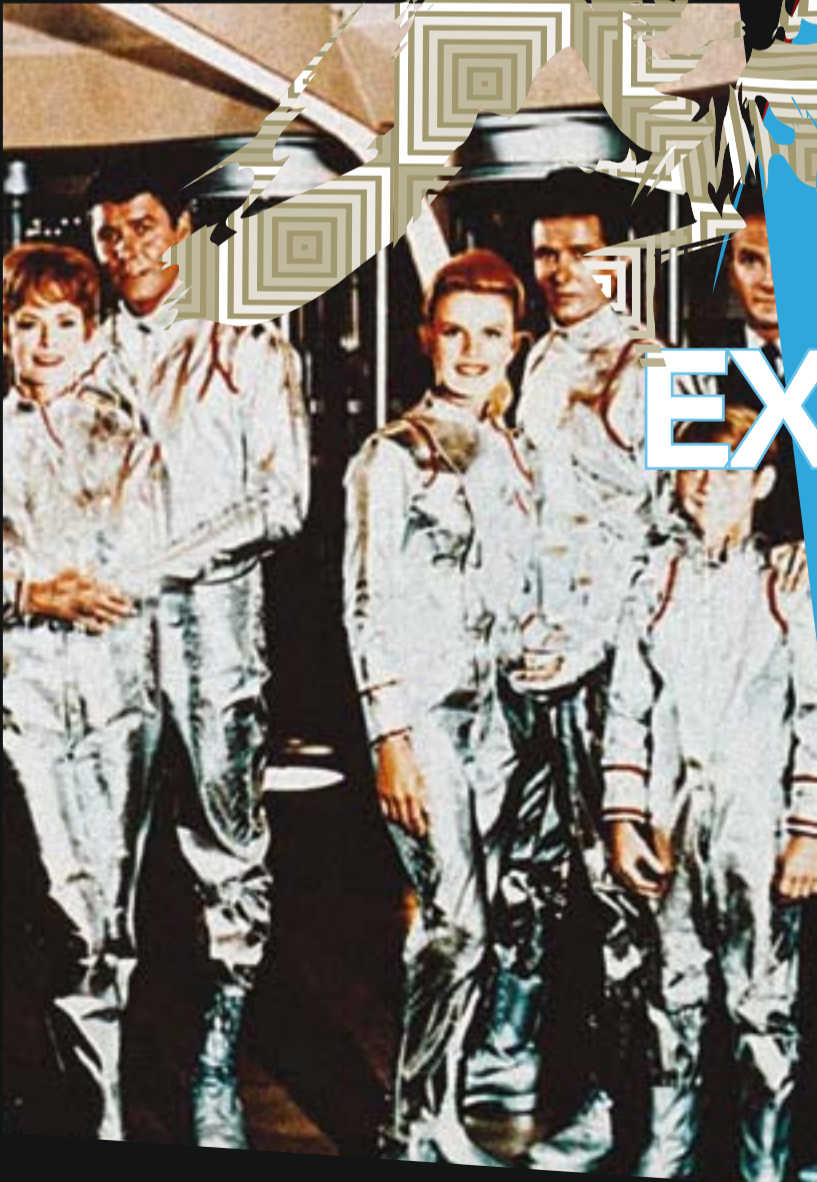
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a splendid Valgeir Sigurðsson piece  
last issue, we knew we had to score  
you guys something extra special to

keep up standard. Good thing for all  
of us that the good men of Sudden  
Weather Change agreed to lavish their  
sensuous ode to teenage boredom –  
Beatlemania – upon this ish. Brimming  
with the odd mix of exuberance  
and ennui that's been winning over  
local crowds for two years now (and  
ensured a tightly packed release gig at  
Grand Rokk last week), the track is a  
prime cut off their prime début, Stop!  
in the name of handgrenade whatever  
and ever amen, man...

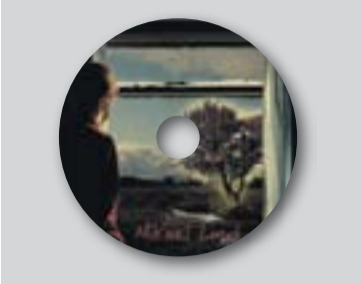


Carving a smooth line from the  
cutesy, sweet-toothed openers  
into darker territory towards  
the end, Alltihip's eventual slide  
into depression is so welcome that it  
practically renders the first two-thirds  
of the album irrelevant. The first six  
tracks are so perfectly circular and  
go-nowhere that after a while it feels  
like your brain is turning sideways.  
Tiny cute bells and you-had-to-be-  
there samples abound, and the distinct  
feeling you've heard this many, many  
times before is unavoidable. Although  
they are technically the same standard  
exercises in synth programming  
accompanied by those fucking skittish,  
pitter-patter drum beats that just won't  
go out of fashion, the album closers  
have genuine emotional strength –  
something sadly absent for the rest  
of the ride – and frankly, they aren't  
interesting enough to make it worth it.

–SINDRI ELDON

Dr. Zühlke  
and Mr. Eldon

Two men.  
One album.  
Lots of dissent.



Mikael Lind

Alltihip (2009)

mikaellind

» Boring

Nice electronic tunes arranged «  
with too little fantasy

Mikael Lind's second album  
is eleven pieces of very laid-  
back and relaxing electronic  
music. Quite shy and discreet,  
"Alltihip" develops its qualities quite  
subtly: Lind has a very good sense  
for melody and maybe even more,  
he is a good composer as he piles  
up layer upon layer of different and  
beautiful synth parts. However, at  
a certain point this also reveals the  
biggest shortcoming of the album: the  
amount of Lind's great ideas does not  
meet with the lifeless instrumental  
conversion – just synthesizer and a  
computer – at all. Mostly in more quiet  
parts as in "An Army Of Puppets," the  
album is thin and somehow incomplete  
without a broader arrangement of  
instruments and can enfold neither  
emotion nor dynamics in the end.  
That is why "Alltihip" seems more a  
blueprint of a record.

–FLORIAN ZÜHLKE

Concert Reviews

Nordic Sludge At  
Its Best

The Psyke Project  
Celestine  
Momentum

Saturday, May 16th

thepsykeproject

Brutal!!!



I had to weave past the drunks spewed at  
the bar and the drunks gambling their  
last króna on fruit machines to reach the  
stairs of Grand Rokk – kinda like Har-  
rison Ford in Indiana Jones – only to be  
told that the show started an hour after  
the time listed on the flyer. Naturally I oc-  
cupied my time by drowning my sorrows  
with a fine Icelandic beer and watching  
the copious amounts of folk celebrating  
Iceland's runner up award in the Eurovi-  
sion song contest.

Eventually all this tedious hanging  
around was rewarded when Momen-  
tum vocalist/bassist Hörður took the  
stand – firm, like a proud Viking war-  
rior, in front of those glaring orange  
lights and equipped to the teeth with a  
beard and hair longer than Odin's pu-  
bes. Momentum's crushing mixture of  
post-metal, epic psychedelia and techni-  
cal math caused a domino effect of head

bangs across the room.

Dominant figures in the Icelandic  
metal scene, Celestine brought the mosh.  
A cocktail of emotive Converge punk rock  
and doom-ridden brutality mixed with a  
floor punch or two equals a fucking good  
time. It also featured some of the greatest  
breakdowns known to Satan.

Headliners The Psyke Project, one of  
Denmark's foremost exports alongside  
Ecco shoes and Carlsberg, started their  
late-o'clock set with 'technical difficul-  
ties'. I personally believe it was either the  
work of huldufólk or that The Psyke Proj-  
ect used up all Grand Rokk's electricity  
charging their über-sludge batteries. Jok-

ing aside, Psyke Project's slaying guitar  
screeches, chug filled bass lines, crash-  
ing drums and guttural vocals compli-  
mented for one hell of a show.

Highlights of the night include the  
small girl in the grey jeans slam dancing  
with the best of 'em and Psyke Project  
bassist Jeppe's showman antics. All of  
which kicked Eurovision's ass.

– JONATHAN BAKER ESQ.



Helgi Hrafn Jónsson

For the Rest of My Childhood  
(2009)

helgijonsson

It's quite nice.

Although perhaps not the most  
inspired 43 minutes ever committed  
to CD, For The Rest Of My Childhood  
nevertheless accomplishes very  
nicely what it sets out to do. Helgi  
Hrafn's beautiful voice, strained and  
desperate, yet somehow also formal  
and wooden, carves its way through  
seven predictable post-punk numbers  
with amiable charm. Oddly enough, it  
seems to become more defined at the  
end: the last three tracks are by far  
the most honest and vulnerable on the  
album.

The stakes are never raised  
quite high enough to make an impact,  
however, and charm alone cannot  
sustain the album's energy. The  
pedestrian production isn't quite  
decisive enough to provide much of  
an atmosphere either, making for a  
frustrating listen; it's too punctuated  
and forceful to drift away to, and yet  
too laconic to get excited about. on the  
album. –SINDRI ELDON



Plastic Gods

Quadriplegiac (2009)

plasticgods

Excellent metal ambience,  
though regrettably rife with the  
unmistakable scent of cock.

After leading us on with thirteen  
minutes of magnificent drone,  
Quadriplegiac's opening track devolves  
into a stoned, floppy masturbation  
session, as happy to adopt rock and  
metal's biggest clichés as it is to ignore  
their ground rules. This sets the tone  
nicely for the two other epic-length  
tracks on the album, which both shift  
carefully between abject, angst-ridden  
doom and massive power riffs barely  
visible through the cloud of bong smoke  
around them. And as if the 'stoner-rock'  
(what a stupid term) posturing wasn't  
bad enough, it also seems haphazardly  
thrown in, as if an afterthought. The  
tough-guy blues riffs have been done  
to death, and frankly the album doesn't  
need them. It functions perfectly well  
as an exhibit of glorious, unforgiving  
sludge, as entrancing as it is satanic.

–SINDRI ELDON



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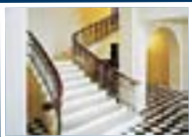
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**PAGE 10**

“Come on in darling,” she said, and I thought it’d be brilliant, drinking champagne in the midst of a revolution. Epic. Then I was on the balcony, having my drink, when the teargas bombs went off. That was real decadent.

Artist Ragnar Kjartansson says artists should never refuse champagne.

**PAGE 6**

“It can drive you crazy waiting like this, year after year – sleeping, eating, sleeping – not knowing what they’re going to do with you.”

Being an asylum seeker in Iceland is no picnic.

**PAGE 8**

An average of 30% of Icelanders have at one time or another visited a medium or attended a séance, 25% are convinced that elves probably exist, and 26% believe that contact with the dead could be established though the channelling talents of clairvoyants.

Marc Vincenz explores the transcendental Icelandic underground.

**PAGE 26**

Vík (Icelandic for ‘bay’) or Vík í Mýrdal is the southernmost village in Iceland, the wettest place in the country and, with an impressive 300 inhabitants, one of the largest settlements in the area. I have several reasons to believe that Vík is also the epitome of all things creepy.

Sari Peltonen was freaked by Vík.



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