



The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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Issue Nº 7 - June 5 - June 18 - 2009

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Reviews!

Comix!

A multitude of masked anarchists has been raising hell in Reykjavík since well before COLLAPSE-times, attending civil disobedience courses while the rest of us were busy refinancing our mortgages. Now, they're raising the bar for direct action. The group that's not a group tells Grapevine who they are, what they are and what they're not. **G** PG. 18.

Editorial

Haukur's 7th Editorial!

Early in the AM: Sun is rising over Reykjavík, Metallica's Orion blasting over the stereo, coffee's on the pot and a gentle haze covers the mind. This is truly one of those moments you appreciate. Well, I do.

There's a lot to appreciate out there, you know. Cats, books, tradition, obscurity, pizza, landscape, music, grandparents, grace, people in general. They're all pretty good, and there's lots more, too. I try and appreciate most things, and so should you. It makes for a pleasant life, full of... appreciation. Yeah.

But still. You can't go around appreciating stuff all the time without griping at shit too. And there's lots of shit to gripe at. You and me (and everyone we know), we're all masters of our own destiny, right? Our world, society and community are all made up of a bunch of folks that collectively decides what kind of world, society and community we inhabit (and if you choose not to decide, someone's always ready to do that for you). So if we only focus on appreciating how nice pizza and grandmothers and cats are while ignoring some fundamental stuff that's PLAIN WRONG... well, it's gonna stay that way.

In that spirit, here is a short list of stuff that bugs the fuck out of me at the moment:

» The prices at 10-11 in Austurstræt i: Goddamnit, a sandwich ain't supposed to cost that much. It just ain't.

» A lot of what the new government is doing (or isn't doing): Tell it like it is! Arrest some banksters already! Quit bickering! Do something – anything!

» How those bastards turned the ol' Staðarskáli rest-stop into just another wretched gas station: We wrote a eulogy for the old one in issue 14 of last year ("The inevitability of homogenisation"),

already knowing that the planned N1 gas-mall replacement was going to suck hard. We still failed to envision just how badly our memories of beloved Old Iceland were going to be stomped into the ground, how fitting a metaphor the transformation would prove for how we never once hesitate to abandon what's unique or meaningful for the sake of purported profit.

- » Easily preventable famine!
- » Forced 3rd world poverty!
- » Corporate slavery!
- » War-crimes!
- » War-profiteering
- » Torture!
- » Hypocrites & parasites!!
- » The death of empathy!

Phew. That felt good. Complaining usually does, even if it's about fairly insignificant stuff. Yet, griping doesn't seem to work all that well all of the time. Sometimes you need more than just loud complaining. The squeaky wheel gets the grease – the raging, yelling, rioting wheel gets a goddamn bunch of fuckin' lube. Time has told, time will tell.

This is where our activist friends - the ones you'll learn about in our feature story – come in. Regardless of whether or not you approve of their message and intent, you should acknowledge that their spirit, stamina and vigour are admirable. Here you have a group of young people hell-bent on challenging a system they see as inherently unfair; folks standing up for what they believe in and serving as active agents in their community. This is pretty cool and exemplary, unless they start resorting to violence or bombs or stuff.

Violence against your brothers and sisters is not cool, ever.

Lóa is one of the Grapevine comic artists. As well as doing our comix, she runs a prominent downtown hangout, **Karamba**.

Comic strips

– by Óttar Norðfjörð And Elo Vásquez



– by Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir



– by Hugleikur Dagsson



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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'.)



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Sour grapes and stuff

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04
Letters

THE ART OF FAILURE
A call for stories for a documentary about the Icelandic financial crisis

Dear Grapevine readers, currently I am planning a documentary about the financial crisis in Iceland and stories of hope connected to the crisis. The working title is THE ART OF FAILURE. I am looking for individuals who have lost a lot during the last months and have been forced to change their outlook on life.

Over decades many of us have been defining ourselves through success in our jobs and through our material acquisitions. Together with the financial crisis comes identity crisis. People are losing their jobs and their goods, are falling into debt, crashing down the career ladder and many dreams of wealth and material hope are shattered. What happens to our identities if they were built upon success and a sense of failure takes over our lives? How do individuals cope with failure?

This is a call for people to tell their story of loss and suffering and how they manage to endure. What has changed, what gives you hope? Friends, humor, family, love, art or just the simple things in life? What positive side effects did the crisis bring? Has the crisis changed your outlook on life or your sense for the meaning of life? Is it possible at all to think positive if you've lost everything from a material point of view? The stories don't have to be epic, they can also be simple, from funny to sad, everything is welcome. Maybe the crisis helped you lose a job you didn't really like in the first place. Or maybe it has helped some individuals strengthen their family ties or rediscover some old activities which don't cost money. The plan is to gather stories and then travel to Iceland during the course of the year to interview those willing to tell their story in front of a camera. Please mail your stories and opinions to b.bjarnason@gmx.net

Thank you very much in advance.
Benedikt Bjarnason, Cologne/ Germany

Dear Benedikt,

Thank you for your letter. Your project sounds real interesting – a different take on a subject that's already becoming kinda old. Now, readers: You heard the man. He's doing an interesting project! Go write him some letters. Now.

Hidey ho! I visited Iceland for the first time last week and loved it there! At the start of the week I came across your newspaper in the hotel lobby and found it REALLY helpful and it reminded me a lot of 'NOW Magazine' in Toronto, where I'm from. Just wanted to say thanks for putting out such an awesome free newspaper and give you a link to some of my pics and comments. You guys all seem to have a great sense of humor so I'm hoping you won't find any of my photos or comments offensive. :) Enjoy!

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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. Henceforth, 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



(light)

MOST AWESOME LETTER:

Since a while I live at Iceland. I enjoy life here and even so the delicacies you can buy here to eat. Lately I went to the supermarket and bought some "rullupylsur", thinking it is a sort of lamb meat. But then I read on the packing, it is made of "Dilka-meat". So I went to a nice Icelander and asked which animal a "Dilka" is. My Icelandic isn't so good yet. She said she didn't know it either. So we guessed along what a Dilka-animal is. She said it might mean a special way of production, while I thought it could mean mixed sorts of meat.

But we both couldn't definitely exclude that there is not a Dilka-animal here at Iceland. Are there Dilkas at Iceland and if so how do they look like. Please let me know. P.S.: I know you eat whale and shark and puffin here. But you wouldn't dare to eat up a whole animal species without the world even let to know it, would you?

Never mind the Dilkas, kveðja Katharina

Dear Katharina,

Sshhh... don't tell anyone about the mystical Dilka. If the save the whales folks find out about those super-cute and tasty li'l critters (and let's not forget about their awesome personalities), we'll have to stop senselessly slaughtering them, bathing in their cute and tasty blood and gobbling them like so much minke. So stay quiet.

PS – I would make this our most awesome letter, but I fear drawing attention to the Dilkas by doing so.

PPS – Aw, what the hell, no one reads this stuff anyway. Drop us a line for some free beers. They go well with Dilka

<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=95109&id=657846329&l=804fde9375>

CHRIS MCSPURREN

p.s. Your country is frikkin' amazing! Sooo beautiful - I'm still on a vacation high. The free walking tour by GoEcco was great too :)

Dear CHRIS MCSPURREN,

Thanks for the pics, letter and praise. You should write more often – we miss you already. The streets of Reykjavík are lined with grown men crying.

Here is a brief rundown of the photos, for those of you readers out there who cannot be bothered to type in the ridiculous FB URL (I'm not sure it's really worth it – typing in the LOLcat Cheezburger page address takes a lot less effort, and, frankly, they're cuter than CHRIS MCSPURREN).

You know what. On second thought, I'm not going to write a "witty" rundown of CHRIS'S photo album to try and be funny. I looked over it again; a lot of the pics are actually fine work. And CHRIS's "amusing comments" are actually sometimes kinda amusing and not really colonialist or anything. In fact, CHRIS comes off like real likeable guy. Heck, now I'm crying too. Come back, CHRIS.

We miss you.

Dear Grapevine,

In relation to this summer's festivities on the Westmann Islands, I just wondered if you could confirm the actual dates that the festival will be taing place upon this year. We wouldnt wish to arrive with our puffin nets in vain.

Thank you and bless,
The English Contingent

Dear The English Contingent,

would you please stop writing to us about that festival. We have work to do around here – look it up on the goddamn internet or something.

God in the 21st Century

Apparently Malraux was right when he propheticized that the 21st Century would either be religious or it would not be, faced with the modern godless future projected by Fukuyama. In his book "God is Back," The Economist editor J. Micklethwait considers the return of God to societies and politics and the global surge of religion based on real data such as: the increase in pilgrimages and adult catholic confirmations on the old continent; religious controversies in news media; or the bountiful creation of church-houses all over China alongside rising church attendance. It is true that God doesn't turn away from man, but rather consistently leans towards him to benefit him and show him the path to heaven for which he was created. It depends on man to accept God's invitation to become ever more divine by rejecting his baser instincts with the help of God's grace.

Eva N Ferraz

Dear Eva,

thank you for your letter. I want to ask, are you referring to a specific god, or just any god in general? My favourite god is probably Cthulhu, of the ancient ones. He has real cool tentacles. Too bad about that whole "evoking rage and terror and joyful mass murder and the abandonment of morals" when he finally rises from the ancient underwater city of R'lyeh. But he does have very cool tentacles. Do you think he's the god that's back, according to the book?

Cuz if he is, I'm pretty frightened.

Hressingarskálinn

Hressingarskálinn (Hressó) is a Classical Bistro, located in the heart of the city at Austurstræti 20.

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Icelandic Banks: Sold To Party Friends



Words
Irina Domurath

There has been a lot of talk lately about the privatization of the Icelandic banks at the dawn of the century. It is said that the buyers did not have any experience in the banking business, and that better offers from more experienced candidates were turned down.

This leads us to wonder: will there finally be a public investigation about the responsibility of politicians in the crash of the banking system, or will this scandal just be swept under the rug once more, as per usual?

In the years 2002 and 2003, under the PM reign of Davíð Oddsson, two Icelandic banks were privatized. The first was Landsbanki, the second Búnaðarbanki, a relatively small “farmer’s bank.” Since the government was especially interested in acquiring foreign capital, the banks were to be sold off to foreign investors with experience in the banking sector and in possession of foreign assets. Consequently, the amount of the purchase price was crucial. But it all ended quite differently: Icelandic investors with no experience in the banking sector bought the banks. Landsbanki was sold to a group of investors forming the Samson Holding ehf, which didn’t even bid the highest purchase price. But the leader of the group, Björgólfur Guðmundsson, was not only a member of the Independence Party, just like Davíð Oddsson and Geir Haarde, the latter being the Minister of Finance at that time, but obviously also had strong ties to the Party leadership. In contrast, Búnaðarbanki – being the “farmers’ bank” – was almost inevitably tied to the Progressive Party, which traditionally represents farmers’ interests and was hence sold to an assembly of Icelandic investors who were close to the party: the so-called S-Group.

An inexperienced and convicted buyer

In 2002, the government created a governmental privatization committee that had the task of finding potential foreign buyers. In June of that year, however, politicians became actively involved in the privatization process. Davíð Oddsson came together with then-Ministers Geir Haarde (Independence Party – Finance), Halldór Ásgrímsson (Progressive Party – Foreign Affairs) and Valgerður Sverrisdóttir (P – Business Affairs) in an ad-hoc meeting to discuss the privatization process without notifying the governmental privatization committee.

Subsequently, the bidding was only advertised in Iceland, and not in any foreign countries. Samson Holding ehf. put in a bid together with two other investor groups and bought Landsbanki. Their bid was not the highest offered, and they even received a nine million-Euro discount on the original sales-price. Moreover, the three owners of Samson Holding were neither foreign investors nor were they

experienced in the banking business. Björgólfur Guðmundsson founded the Samson Holding ehf. together with his son Björgólfur Björgólfsson – once one of the supposedly most handsome billionaires in the world – and a common business partner. The three investors made their fortune with the Bravo-brewery in Russia, which they sold for about 400 Million USD to Heineken in the Netherlands. Guðmundsson was also the owner of an Icelandic shipping company, which went bankrupt in the 1980s. He was charged with fraud and defalcation, amongst others, and sentenced to 12 months suspended sentence.

Former journalist Sigríður Dögg Auðunsdóttir, who worked on an extensive coverage on the privatization process for Iceland’s free newspaper Fréttablaðið some years back, learned from a source involved in the privatization process that Davíð Oddsson received a phone call from his party-colleague Guðmundsson just prior to the ad-hoc-meeting. In this call, Guðmundsson told Oddsson that he was very interested in buying a bank.

Consequently, says Auðunsdóttir, the original criteria for selling the banks was adjusted to the offer made by Samson, so that Samson could buy the bank. Instead of selling Landsbanki to experienced foreign investors, or the highest bidder, Davíð Oddsson praised Guðmundsson’s “vision” for the bank and pointed out that Samson Holding (at least) possessed foreign currency.

Búnaðarbanki and the Progressive Party

Búnaðarbanki was sold to the so-called S-group. This group of investors was close to the Progressive Party and consisted of several companies: Egla ehf., two insurance companies and one pension fund. Originally, Guðmundsson declared interest in buying Búnaðarbanki, but Oddsson and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ásgrímsson, had allegedly agreed that Landsbanki would be sold to businessmen close to the Independence Party and Búnaðarbanki to investors close to the Progressive Party. In Auðunsdóttir’s opinion, the S-group was meant to buy Búnaðarbanki from the start, whereas Samson Holding was chosen to get Landsbanki. She claims knowledge that all parties of the privatization were in constant talks throughout the process and that the ministers were directly involved with the parties bidding for both banks. Oddsson thus explained to Guðmundsson that he would not get to buy Búnaðarbanki, just Landsbanki. The bidders were convinced and the deals were closed. Like the owners of Samson Holding, the members of the S-group had no experience in the banking sector. Moreover, they received a 75 to 100 million Euro loan from Landsbanki just before the government sold the bank, which means that Búnaðarbanki

was actually bought with a governmental loan.

This of course means that any of us could have bought it, given we had some friends in the government. Seriously.

German private bank incognito for Kaupþing

Since the key to the purchase of Búnaðarbanki was foreign capital, the S-group went searching for a foreign investor. According to Auðunsdóttir, this – at that time secret – investor was won over only shortly before the deal was closed. After the purchase was sealed, the identity of the investor was revealed to be the German private bank Hauck & Aufhäuser. Interestingly, this small and traditional retail bank sold off its shares in Búnaðarbanki only 13 months after the acquirement. In contrast, the purchase agreement stated that no shares in Búnaðarbanki could be sold before 21 months after the date of the agreement. The buyer was Iceland’s youngest bank. Since Kaupþing operated solely as an investment bank at that time, it was highly interested to acquire Búnaðarbanki to expand the operations. But the Ministry of Business Affairs, under Sverrisdóttir, did not allow a merger because it would have led to a restraint in competition. Right after Búnaðarbanki was sold to the S-group close to Sverrisdóttir’s Progressive Party, the merger was approved.

Financial expert and lector at the University of Iceland, Vilhjálmur Bjarnason, examined the balance sheet of Hauck & Aufhäuser. He surmised that the German private bank never really acquired Búnaðarbanki and that the purchase was a pure undercover deal for Kaupþing. “Hauck & Aufhäuser is a very small bank, which was simply not able to handle the purchase of 30 Million Euro shares in Búnaðarbanki and to integrate the bank into its system,” he says, assuming that the merger of the two banks was already a closed deal before the actual privatization of Búnaðarbanki. Moreover, the merger did not appear on the balance sheet of Hauck & Aufhäuser in the year 2003. On inquiry, KPMG Germany simply announced “that in 2004 Hauck & Aufhäuser had the relevant assets in the accounts of the bank, not in the investment-portfolio,” says Bjarnason. “This statement was more than unclear. It also referred to the wrong year, which in my opinion means that it is not true.”

“Extraordinary practices”

After a dispute with the ministers over the criteria for the sale, Steingrímur Ari Arason resigned as a member of the governmental privatization committee. He stated that “prospective buyers were turned away in spite of their better offers,” and that he had never experienced such “extraordinary practices.” Arason

“No one in the governmental privatization committee was independent. Everyone was appointed by the Ministers they were supposed to watch over.”

was replaced with a member of the Independence Party. An investigation of his allegations did not take place. It became clear that the governmental privatization committee did not perform its task to survey the privatization process. Auðunsdóttir confirms that “no one in the governmental privatization committee was independent. Everyone was appointed by the Ministers they were supposed to watch over”, she says.

No investigation

When Auðunsdóttir’s article was published in 2005, rumours of corruption spread for the first time. Oddsson and Haarde were not available for comments at that time. Neither was Sverrisdóttir; she referred to a statement on her website. Ásgrímsson was faced with the allegation of a conflict of interests, since he was not only a member of the privatization committee but also the owner of a company with ties to the S-group. When the call for public investigation became louder, the Icelandic Accounting Office investigated the matter and concluded that there was no interest of conflict whatsoever. Ásgrímsson stated that his feelings were hurt by the allegations and, apart from Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, the former chair of the Alliance Party, not a single party expressed doubts regarding the General Accounting Office’s expertise in matters like these. No further investigations were undertaken. Again.

Oddsson in denial of mistakes

At the Independence Party’s party conference in March of this year, Haarde was the first of the politicians involved to acknowledge mistakes in the privatization process. He apologized for the u-turn in the government’s plans from selling the banks to many foreign investors to just a few, local ones. In contrast, Davíð Oddsson did not admit any mistakes, even though he was also responsible for the undeniably fatal interest policy in Iceland as the chairman of the Icelandic Central Bank. When Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, as this winter’s temporary minority government Prime Minister, asked him to resign from his post, he refused to do so and declined any responsibility or complicity in the privatization of the banks and collapse of the financial system. After the government passed a law that forced Oddsson out of office, he compared his dismissal to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Seriously.

1. Landsbankinn at Austurstræti. It actually took bank security over half an hour to get suspicious at our photographer and kick her out.

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Story | Bart Cameron

When You Open With Blasphemous Orgasms...

Mugison Visits Seattle



It goes like this: I get an email from “Mugi Mugison” saying that the Icelandic pop star is in Seattle, and that we need to meet for “bears.”

A couple hours later, I get the phone call. Mugison is performing at, of all places, the single gaudiest, least graceful structure ever fabricated: the Experience Music Project. He doesn't have a phone, but I should just call the Director of Icelandair and swing by the performance, which is part of the introduction of the Seattle to Keflavik direct flights.

And so I go to this hideous building. And I can't find an entrance and eventually, strangely, the Director of Icelandair answers his phone and greets me warmly, and walks me over, and there's Mugison.

We drink a couple beers. He smokes cigarettes. We look at a crowd of 300 influential people. There are a lot of short movies about Iceland being screened. There are speeches. There are women in traditional Icelandic garb.

“This is going to be a rough audience,” Mugi says. I nod. The bartender nods. And Mugi wanders up to the stage.

When he says “So I used to watch a lot of porn when I was 17,” half the wait staff runs over to me and says “Does your friend know who he's talking to?” I shrug. I'm pretty sure he does.

“And so because Jesus's mother never got to come, I figured when I was seventeen she put a curse on all women that when they came, you know, when they came during sex, they would say her son's name.”

That's the climax to Mugi's joke, or the point when my new friend the waitstaff of EMP declares “Holy shit, that was amazing.”

Through brilliant seating arrangements, one of the most influential DJs in town doesn't see the scowls. Kevin Cole of KEXP will later write in his blog “I nervously looked around at the audience of travel industry-types, but thankfully, they

were just as charmed by this handsome, polite Icelandic musician, and thought it was hilarious, too.”

From where I was standing, there was a lot more nervousness than laughter. There was some tisking. Fuck, Mugi pissed off 90 percent of a crowd of 300 extremely influential people in five sentences.

With that joke, though, Mugi hit the sweet spot. Not the sweet spot God apparently missed when he poked Mary, but the nerve that makes music feel genuine and transgressive at once. The moment where someone can step into the most banal of situations – a massive banquet in this case, I guess Elvis going on Ed Sullivan would be similar – and connect an honest and disarming note to those few who are willing to listen.

I've known Mugi a while – it's been five years since I featured him in an Icelandic magazine as the poster boy for awe shucks small town Icelandic brilliance. While I liked him, I felt his flaw was his interest in pleasing everyone.

Now, he's hit his stride. He's the dude that will walk into a building created by the elite of Seattle that resembles the stool you would pass if you ate chewing gum, barbed wire and silly putty for a week, and he drops the Hail Mary of Vagina Monologues in their laps.

There are two ends to the night. First, Mugi agrees to play another show for the people in the crowd really interested in music, and he takes them to the men's room and puts on a hell of an acoustic set – staring us down and throwing out tunes like a true bluesman. That blows the music fans away, as it should.

The second ending is that I take Mugi out for a drink; assorted friends meet up and ask him if he's ever met Björk or some such Iceland questions. Just as I'm about to introduce one friend who happens to have been a Christian missionary, he explains the Jesus joke one more time.

Later, she will tell me she was charmed.

Opinion | Valur Gunnarsson

Where Is The Icelandic Gandhi?



At first sight, Iceland and India have a lot in common. For one thing, they both start with the letter “I”. And while one may be the world's largest democracy and the other one of the smallest, neither really supports equal rights for its

citizens.

In India, the Congress Party has played a major part in the country's struggle for independence, and has since then been the dominant party in politics. It's almost as if people are afraid to vote for anyone else, as if that might bring the Brits back. The party itself has been dominated by the same Gandhi family, not actually descended from Mahatma Gandhi but which took his name in his honour. They are currently led by their forth Gandhi, a widow of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Much the same applied to the Independence Party here, which actually took its name from an older party that had rather more to do with Iceland's independence. Nevertheless, ever since full Independence in 1944, it has been the dominant party. It took an economic collapse and a peaceful revolution to finally get people to seriously consider other options.

For all of the flaws of India's democracy, its greatest structural problem is the Caste system. While opposed by Gandhi and the government of independent India, it still remains in place under the surface and ensures that many can never rise above the station they are born to.

How Icelandic of them

In Iceland, corruption is everywhere. This goes beyond the healthy corruption of hiring your own relatives to do jobs they are not qualified for to hiring the relatives of your friends to do jobs they are not qualified for. It even goes beyond to hiring the relatives of people you don't even know, the rationale being that if they have ancestors who practice a craft, then they themselves must have some talent in that field.

In Iceland, people always start from the supposition that ability is inherited. In any field, take writing for example, the first question you will always encounter is: “Are you the son of...” And if, as it turns out, you are nobody's son, then you have a long and difficult road ahead.

Corruption is everywhere. It is not only politicians who, say, appoint their offspring as Supreme Court judges or give them fat government contracts. The leading actors in the economic collapse were companies run by father and son, and this goes all the way down to the factory floors. University professors have been known to hire their children as assistant teachers, even if they are studying in a different department. The media plays along, trumpeting every new generation of artists who “have it in their blood,” while ignoring others.

Sons and daughters

In fact, it can be said that everyone benefits from this system in some way. Most Icelanders get their first summer job through their parents or uncles of friends thereof. Of course, what kind of job you get depends on their social standing, rather than your own ability. And so this rigid caste system remains in place. Not only is this system unfair to the individuals who are passed over in favour of young princes, but it also leads to society as a whole being less well run than it should be. We all know the consequences.

Great strides have been made in recent years regarding women's opportunity to seek employment. But a system where people hire their sons and daughters, rather than just their sons, is a marginal improvement at best.

One of the demands of the January revolution was that competent professionals be instated as ministers as a reflex against the old cronyism. Some were. If the same criteria were applied everywhere, there is little doubt we would have a far better functioning society. But perhaps we need a new revolution for that. Or at least an Icelandic Gandhi.

Opinion | Oddur Sturluson

Political Activism In Iceland

Hypocrisy Reaches New Heights



Depending on who you are, either a lot or practically nothing at all has changed in recent months. For the regular Joe who has little to no interest in politics, money is still hard to come by, work still sucks and

a government of people he feels no real attachment with manages to find ways to make his life even more unbearable. For politicians, reporters, people with an interest in politics and middle class kids with a huge sense of entitlement and a rudimentary knowledge of outdated political rhetoric, however, the earth has spun off its axis and Iceland is headed for either a fate of grey totalitarianism and violence or a sunny utopia where Everyone Will Get Along (but we'll still have a governing elite, of course).

It's exactly the kind of environment that spawns a class of political fanatics – lo and behold: political fanaticism has arrived. Self-described political activists have become more daring and aggressive than ever, spurred on by people's displeasure with the government. Demonstrations have involved hanging effigies of men in suits, throwing rocks, burning public property and splashing green skyr on people they disagree with. Although throwing skyr at somebody may not sound like a truly vicious act, it's the malice behind the act accompanied with the underlying message that makes it an effective weapon. “We could have thrown anything we wanted at you, and you wouldn't have been able to stop us. This time it was skyr, keep angering us and who knows what we might throw next time?”

Aftaka.org, one of a number of websites dedicated to the anarchist “movement” in Iceland, gives an interesting insight into what exactly it is that these activists are trying to achieve. Destroying capitalism, fighting “injustice” (i.e. what they perceive as injustice), and complimenting each other on their extreme intellectual and moral superiority seem to be the key factors and, really, the only things they can completely agree upon. Interestingly, those factors are also all things that Nazis, Soviets and Islamic Fundamentalists have in common – along with a hostile disregard for other people's opinions and safety that is. Aftaka's manifesto clearly states that they do not care about others' opinions, that they state what they want tillitslaust (e. inconsiderately) and umburðarlyndislaust (e. intolerantly), and that they reject the idea of neutrality. In other words: you are either with them or against them. An attitude made very clear on their comment boards, where a number of people who dared to ask questions or cast doubts on anything written by the authors have been threatened with violence.

All the above leads to the obvious question: How do you intend to fight tyranny by acting like a tyrant?

“We could have thrown anything we wanted at you, and you wouldn't have been able to stop us. This time it was skyr, keep angering us and who knows what we might throw next time?”

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Questioning Our Sexuality | "Is it really so strange?"

Five Guys to Turn a Straight Man Gay

Words
Valur Gunnarsson

Women, whether sitting on panels of beauty contests or destroying each others' fashion sense around the water cooler, have always been able to appreciate feminine beauty. This, of course, gives them a distinct competitive advantage when it comes to bending us to their wills.

It's high time we turned the tables and that grown men started discussing each other's looks in other than derogatory fashion. So here, in the interests of gender equality, are five men who would make even the most militant heterosexual question his beliefs.



1. Hugh Jackman in X-Men (2000)
There is something about watching a childhood icon like Wolverine come alive, especially in this hunky frame that starts something stirring you didn't even know was there. His pose when he has the blades on one guy's neck and turns around to cut through the shotgun is unforgettable. So is the black leather. Pity about the yellow spandex. Hugh shows more skin in this year's Wolverine, but this, before we knew he was a song and dance man, is his most charged moment.



2. Harrison Ford in Star Wars (1977)
Sure, Luke Skywalker is the guy all adolescents identify with. He is the guy we would like to be but Han Solo is the man we would want to have. In a movie rife with sexual confusion and genital metaphor, it's still Han's handsome smile that steals the show. It's not Leia who gets our lightsabers rattling, its...well, you get the point. The Greeks understood that all teenage boys secretly desire to be, uhm, Greeked by interesting older men, and the big brother figure of Han fits the bill perfectly.



3. Jake Gyllenhaal in Jarhead (2006)
Jake spends most of this movie prancing around the desert in varying states of undress, most memorably wearing nothing but a Santa Claus hat on his crotch. Ho, ho and, indeed, ho. In a military society inhabited only by males, it is guys like Jake who have to provide the festive spirit, and this he does admirably. At the end-of-the-war party, his commanding officer welcomes him with the words "a little overdressed, aren't you, soldier?" In other words, "get yer kit off, Jake."



4. Elvis Presley in King Creole (1958)
The proverbial "if I had to fuck a guy" guy. Elvis was gorgeous in Jailhouse Rock, but it is in the opening scene of this movie, singing Crawfish out on the balcony and combing that hair, that is his defining moment. Long before Bowie, the Pelvis was the first superstar to toy around with sexual identity. "Everyone who sees Elvis and does not want to be Elvis there must be something wrong with," quoth Bruce Springsteen. We all know what he really meant.

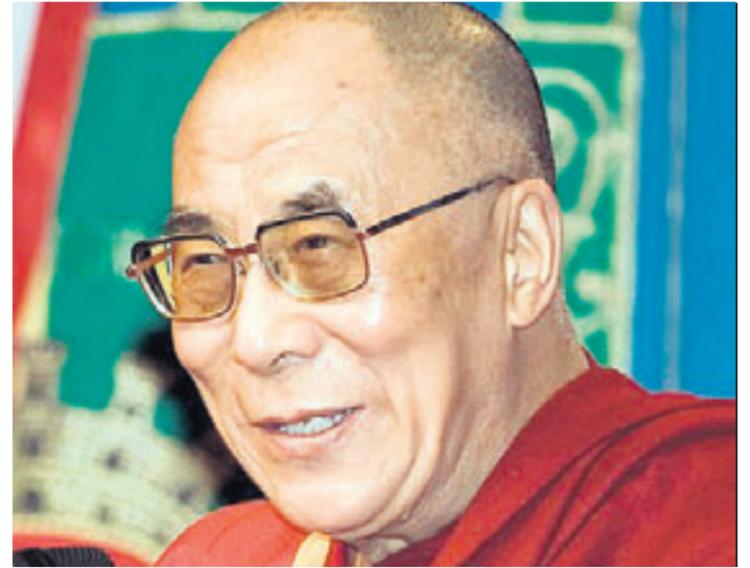


5. Macaulay Culkin in...well, let's just drop it here, shall we?

Spiritual Leader Visits | Irina Domurath

A Friendly Clash Of Cultures

The Dalai Lama Goes Iceland!



The Dalai Lama's visit to the University of Iceland on June 2 revealed to me how different the Western and Eastern cultures are, their approaches to politics and people...

The Dalai Lama was clearly confused. His translator whispered repeatedly: "University of Iceland, University of Iceland" as the Dalai Lama went up to the speaker's desk. The Buddhist monk lost patience, waved, said: "Anyway..." and welcomed the "people" in the room. He giggled like a child. He then expressed his admiration for all the educated people in the room, referring to himself as someone who only "learned from encounters with others."

Eventually becoming aware of the fact that he was in Iceland, he started the debate: "I think that Icelanders on their island are a little bit isolated, but... basically, we are all the same human beings." He giggled again. Dismaying. He sat down. The discussion with the Dean of the Faculty for Humanities, two Professors of philosophy and one for religion, centred on religion, politics, the economic crisis and the people's lost trust in politicians as well as the equality of men and women.

Uncomfortable academics

The questions and answers could have hardly been more opposing: the professors focused on complicated and broad subjects, such as war and corruption, whereas the Dalai Lama's answers were always exemplary individual cases. It was obvious that the Western scholars were not always happy with the answers they received. Comments like: "Well, that's all good in theory, but ..." were common.

The Buddhist monk continued talking in examples, creating microcosms to explain the big issues and solve the problems of the world. In the end, for him it all boils down to two parameters: morality, together with education, and self-discipline. One hour of discussion was clearly too short for the Dalai Lama, who was at his best when he indulged in long philosophical monologues only interrupted by short conversations with his translator and accompanied with laughter every once in a while. Being reminded of the time, he turned around to the dean later and asked - almost giggling again - if he was talking for too long and if this was a waste of time now. He also felt sorry for the dean, who was standing behind the speaker's desk the whole time and invited him to sit down and be more comfortable.

The dean did as he was told and the Dalai Lama gave him a friendly pat on his knee, which the dean was clearly uncomfortable with. In the end of the discussion, the Tibetan leader took his time to hand the traditional Buddhist white scarves to every participant in the discussion and thanked them individually. Everyone was smiling. The Dalai Lama was too frank, too happy to not reach everyone in the hall. I got the impression that we, the Western educated people, make everything more complicated than it actually is. In contrast, modest him sees everything clearly, just black or white. And maybe that's what things are: black and white - which is the easiest and at the same time hardest part in this philosophy for our educated Western brains, because it makes us realise how difficult it is to go the straight and obviously moral way.



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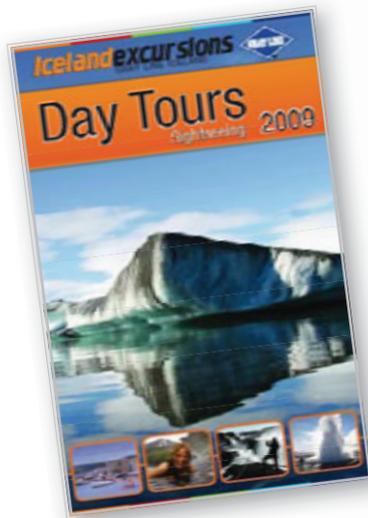
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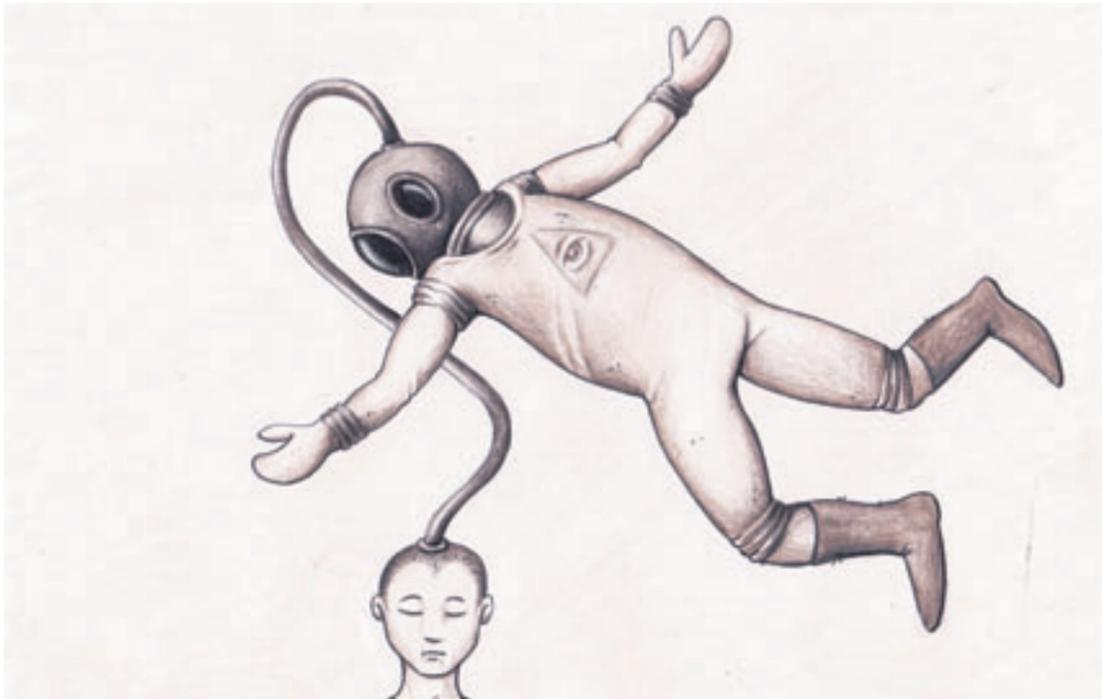


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Transcendental Iceland | Part 2: Almost Walking on Water

Radio to the other side.

In Search of the Real McCoy



Words
Marc Vincenz

Illustration
Inga María Brynjarsdóttir

Ever wondered what upside down coffee cups are doing cooking on the radiator? If you're Icelandic, you probably already know. If not, remember stories of gypsies reading tealeaves? Since most of us don't use tealeaves anymore, we reach for the next best thing—the dregs of filter coffee. Icelandic housewives will tell you it's just a bit of malarkey. But believe me, there's real methodology to it—apparently each dribble is just like a reading line on a palm. Once, not so long ago, there was no TV and no Internet; it comforted you through the long winter, and foretold the early arrival of a brighter, warmer spring.

Guðbjörg Sveinsdóttir explains to me that although she had seen spirits when she was a little girl, her mother put a quick stop to the nonsense, told her to pull her socks up and get on with a real life. It wasn't until she was thirty-seven that she truly came face-to-face with the other side.

'I was here in the room in the now, slumped in my chair, yet really not aware of myself in the present; meanwhile my conscious-self was somehow in the body of an old woman. I was scolding my nephew somewhere out in the country; it was forty years earlier. I told the boy: You're not allowed to go up the stairs today; you could fall, just like you did before. When I came back to my own body, into the present, the boy was once again a fifty-year-old man standing in front of me. His chin had dropped to his chest. The doctors had only just cut his cast off a few days before.'

This experience is what psychologists refer to as an OBE, or an out of body experience. They are, it appears, quite common, even among the run-of-the-mill while sleeping, in dreams. Quite often the affected will fly over the countryside and visit their friends or relatives, returning to their own body before dawn. Only normally, you don't enter the body of another, you don't go back in time, and it's not the middle of the day.

Guðbjörg refers to herself and her spirit guides (and there are many, but I will get to that) using the royal 'We'—much like Queen Victoria's infamous: 'We are not amused'.

It's as if They are entirely a part of her, and she a part of Them.

'As you will discover,' she says cryptically, sipping what looks like a normal cup of coffee, quite normally: 'We are all one.' (I assume she's talking about the human race.) 'But, first things first.'

To simply call Guðbjörg a trance-medium would be doing her a grave injustice; as she says herself, 'If your main purpose is to contact someone dearly departed, then we are clearly not your first choice. There are other mediums who do that very well. We are about providing answers: answers to questions, big questions about the nature of life, the universe, but also the mundane, everyday human things. We call ourselves Ásgeir. We are Information Power.'

'It's not easy being a human in the physical world we call Earth. Not easy at all. So, we help, we help people find answers to things that are troubling them; and yes, we do, on occasion, provide a channel for the deceased; but mainly, we help them come to grips with their time here on Earth in the now, so they are better prepared to face all its challenges, take in all its wonders.'

Guðbjörg looks very much like your typical mother of three. She doesn't gaze into any crystal balls, she doesn't need a dusty scarf from your grandmother or your uncle's old watch to find answers to any of your questions; all things are answered by her spirit guides, clearly, concisely and with the very best of intent. But these are only hints, suggestions. 'We provide information. Decisions are not ours to make, those are entirely up to you.'

Guðbjörg likens herself to a kind of astral psychiatrist; and right now, smack

dab in the middle of this kreppa, she is fully booked. You'd need one month's notice to get an appointment.

So who are They? Well, it's a very Jungian concept, and it slips in somewhere between the Hindu Upanishads and Tibetan Buddhism, only it approaches things from a modern perspective, referring to Them as departed human souls, rather than gods or bodhisattvas. 'We are a collective of spirits who once lived on Earth, but have reincarnated so many times that we have entered another phase of life, where life is pure energy. Ásgeir is everywhere in this cosmos, within you and me, these walls and out into the Beyond,' Guðbjörg says.

They are as one, but many; she is their host, their channel to the physical human body here in Iceland, and They have come to advise. During my research, I come across trance-mediums in the UK and the US, and find the concept of a collective consciousness guide quite popular—almost too popular. The British clairvoyant and self-professed 'renowned' spiritual author, Stephen O'Brien, calls Them part of The Great Spirit of Life.

Yet, it's not as if gods talking as one, Nirvana, or reincarnation are some things we haven't heard of before. Perhaps it is the familiarity of these concepts that makes them easy—easier to believe...and fall into love with.

Guðbjörg herself says 'Ásgeir is what we are called in Iceland, but in the US or the UK, other spirit collectives may be called Michael or Abraham.'

When she becomes Ásgeir, she simply snaps her fingers and transforms into another persona. Her face contorts, she sniffs as if she has a cold, or has been smoking too much (she gave up smoking recently) and speaks in the gritty, rumble of an old man—many lives led. Looking at her, you wouldn't think this was the same woman. Talk about hair standing on the back of the neck isn't even in it. I stumbled across one medium in Hawaii who maintains his own spirit guide is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: the very same who fell for the Cottingley Fairy hoax (see Transcendental Iceland Part 1). Lilian Bailey, also classified as a deep-trance medium, was known to work for the Queen Mother; she even received an OBE (this time I mean the one on Sir Elton John's mantelpiece) for channelling the spirit of King George IV. Others, such as the controversial American psychic Silvia Browne (convicted of investment fraud and grand theft in 1992), speak with single spirit guides. Browne maintains that Francine has led more than forty-two lives on Earth, one of them as an Aztec princess.

Guðbjörg says, 'Everything seems confusing, complicated, because were are always trying to intellectualise

things. Things are not like that. The universe is a simple thing. It's hard to put into words, because words could never describe what's out there. Try and describe a colour to a blind person, and you will see what we mean. God, life, the universe are not things you can find by scientific study. You need faith, perseverance and open-mindedness, but more than that: open-heartedness. Open your heart, embrace the spirits, the energy of the universe, and you shall receive; close your mind and trap down the road like a horse headed for the market, and all you see is a very, very long road.'

'Everything is energy,' she says. 'It all comes down to the same thing. From the very depth of your DNA strands, your individual cells, to the very nature of God and the Cosmos. Absolutely everything is energy. If you can start to understand that, then you can achieve almost anything.'

These are certainly inspirational words.

By chance, or perhaps by destiny, Guðbjörg's daughter, Helga María, walks in as we are talking about cosmic beings. She sits down across from us, her feet drawn up into the large armchair, and every once in a while a wry grin flashes across her face; it's mostly a sparkle in the eyes. Of course, she's heard this all before. Perhaps she's waiting to see if I can come up with something new that might faze her mother.

Guðbjörg explains that contacting her spirit guides is akin to tuning in a radio: 'The spirits are all energy, working, living on different vibrations. Imagine tuning in to a radio programme, turning the dial, moving from one clear passage of music to the next. In between is static, occasionally you pick up a few garbled words, but when you hit the right wavelength, you're there, and they're with you. The only difference, of course, is that the spirit radio is a two way radio.' I imagine late night American truckers talking to each other on their CBs.

'Yes, it's something like that,' she says, smiling. Then, I realise I haven't uttered a single word. 'If you like, I can show you,' she says. 'Next week I have a training session. Ásgeir and I help people to contact their spirit guides. Why don't you come?'

I consider this for a moment—actually for a long moment, but I can't really find any reasonable excuses to say no. 'OK. Why not?' I say.

'Be prepared to be amazed,' she says. 'After this, you will never be the same again.'

1. Exploring the mind's depths.

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The Ongoing Adventures Of Taxi Driver | Anon. cabbie tells all

Taxi Driver Drives On

Grapevine's Cabbie Pal Explores The Hidden Side Of Rvk Nightlife



What beauty the girl possessed but a minute ago – and I remember it being ample – has now been severely tarnished. Perhaps irreparably so in the eyes of her boyfriend who, hot-dog in one hand and coke in the other, follows me out the gas station doors at 4 in the morning.

As we round the black taxicab, I around the hood and he behind the trunk, we come upon a scene hilarious beyond sadness and too pitiful for words. The slender blonde who, just a single traffic light ago, was delivering obscenities in that sweet ramble of contempt that drunks deem articulate, all the while punching the back of my driver's seat, has hit the oncoming wall of karma. Presently her ass and lower extremities, left leg on the floor, right leg on the back seat, are still inside the car, while her upper body closely resembles a crime scene photo of a mob execution. Muttering bitter, incoherent, nothings she lays upon a freezing slab of concrete with a large pool of blood red vomit as halo, the trail of her indiscretion streaking a path from her mouth, down her torso, and with a short stop on the back seat, to its original colony atop her purse which lays befouled on the floor mat. Looking down I see her glazed blue eyes framed by a forehead bruised and blackened from colliding with the rubber siding off the car door frame, and specks of partially digested tomato skin randomly placed in the flood of bile tinged fluid.

The boyfriend – staring in utter disbelief, his hands engaged with food items, his furtive eyes darting between whether to lovingly assist, or to high-tail it into the woods – never to speak to her

again, only springs into action when the girl scornfully deflects my attempts at assistance. A hasty clean up later I'm back in the driver's seat, with Nile grinding a death-metal dirge at full blast in order to fade the guy's incessant apologies. The night has reached its zenith and the stench of the woman's transgression gives me a much wanted excuse to hit the town.

A slight rewind finds a guy of the "Hnalki" persuasion with a similar level of blood alcohol passed out besides me in the shotgun seat. Had Giapetto in his implicitly paedophile urges wished a Ken doll to life (instead of a child sized wooden string puppet), the object of his dreams could easily be this passenger: bejewelled and decked out in creased attire, late model cell phone in hand. Closing in on his native suburb I nudge the fool to ask for an address, but get no reply aside from his mass leaning even closer to me. Noticing his limp body swaying to and fro with each turn, I attempt to lull him out of his stupor by jerking the wheel with ever increasing force at every intersection – to no avail.

Bored and aimless, with the meter ticking in my favour, I cruise the city streets making increasingly hasty lane switches that bang the side of his bleached coiffure ever harder into the passenger window. His skull sounds a beat to my momentary amusement as I ponder my gainful predicament for a minute, until a particularly abrupt revolution of the steering wheel brings awareness back into the man's opaque mind. I soon rid me of his orange hued presence at an apartment block in the

seedier part of Breiðholt, but not before discovering that along with his consciousness he's also momentarily mislaid his wallet. Clinging to the last remnants of my temper I coach his gym tightened ass through a thorough search of every pocket available, only to come up empty handed. Not until he gets out of the vehicle is his pocket book discovered lying on the floor.

Valuable time wasted, I floor the gas pedal on my mission to herd further testers of patience, but minutes later catch a breath of fresh air and a moment's respite from a night going terribly awry.

A hobby rampant among modern teenagers is an achingly slow and mind numbingly repetitive drive down the Laugavegur high street late on weekend nights. Sadly this activity is yet to be outlawed. Yet, had my progress not now been halted by an infinite queue of these happy campers, a fetching blond woman in her upper twenties could not have tip-sily strolled up and rapped the knuckle of her index finger on my window. "Wanna dance with me?" is her initial proposition.

To which I respond, "Sorry, I'm working!"...upon which she leans forth and shoves a surprising, but pretty damn welcome, tongue down my throat; where it saunters for a while in manifold, arbitrary patterns until the woman breaks away and hopscoches round the corner with a gleeful giggle drifting in her perfumed wake. -"TRAVIS BICKLE"

Feeling All Lost And Stuff?

Já Might Be Your Answer...

So it turns out that even though Iceland is, like, really small in comparison with most borderline-functional nation states (we are still borderline-functional, right?), people still have problems getting around here to some extent. Finding restaurants, hospitals, advise, services. Hell, even home addresses for friends and loved ones.

We try our best to accommodate you "Lost in Iceland" types, but our space is limited and we pretty much stick to printing a map of 101 Reykjavik in our paper. And as the good lord knows, even though 101 can be pretty nice, you will want to venture elsewhere. This is where

the good people of Já.is [formerly: "The telephone directory"] come in handy.

See, they've apparently been hard at work programming a nifty tool to help us find our way around, thereby stepping far above and beyond their original role (you can still look up phone numbers, don't worry). While mapping our tiny island doesn't seem like such a feat, GoogleMaps and other web-based mapping services have shied away from the task (as we've reported), leaving us with mere paper maps for guidance. And those need to be folded and carried around and stuff. Enter Já.is. It's pretty impressive. You can look up people,

places, goods and/or services and they in turn show you their location on a map and can even give you pretty reliable directions, too.

Add the fact that the service is now fully integrated to work for you English-speakers, and you've got yourself a pretty sweet deal right there. It's also free, and blessedly unconnected to Google's information hegemony. And did we mention that they have an interactive distance calculator? 'Cause they do!

-HSM



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A Very Brief History of Icelandic Film Making

Icelandic Film Gets Its Very Own Exhibit

Words

Valur Gunnarsson

The history of film making in Iceland only has an unbroken history going back to 1977, and the somewhat underrated *Morðsaga*. The subsequent period is often referred to as the “spring of Icelandic film making,” and in the early 80’s a slew of directors such as Ágúst Guðmundsson, Hrafninn flýgur and Þráinn Bertelsson emerged who were to map out an Icelandic approach to movie making.

In its first decade, Icelandic film making had a very local slant. Films such as *Útlaginn* (The Outlaw) and *Hrafninn flýgur* (Korpen flyger) found inspiration in the sagas, whereas as popular comedies such *Nýtt líf* and *Með allt á hreinu* had an Icelandic brand of humour indecipherable to most other people. In retrospect, it is surprising how these first films emerged almost fully formed from the brow of the Lady of the Mountain, managing to capture something of the national character, and how little they owed to Hollywood.

Apart from Sweden, whose population has a strange and, it seems, lasting love affair with *Hrafninn flýgur*, Iceland’s international film breakthrough came in 1991 with Friðrik Þór Friðriksson’s *Börn náttúrunnar* (Children of Nature). That film was nominated for an Oscar, and Friðrik subsequently made the most expensive film in Icelandic history at the time, *Djöflaeyjan* (Devil’s Island). Its leading actor, Baltasar Kormákur, later went on to international film success with movies such as *101 Reykjavík* and *Mýrin* (Jar City).

While Icelandic films have become ever more international in scope and audience, they have arguably lost some of their “Icelandicness.” In the 90s, some comedies aimed mainly at the domestic market, such as *Sódóma Reykjavík* and *Íslenski draumurinn*, were still being made. Lately, it seems as if most films here have at least one major non-Icelandic character and some shots of nature coupled with scenes from the Reykjavík nightlife to appeal to the tourist market. Many of the bigger recent films were co-sponsored by the banks, so what effect the banking crisis will have on local film making remains to be seen. Some of the younger directors, such as Grímur Hákonarson, with his shorts about haunted *Morgunblaðið* editors and gay wrestlers, seem to mark a return to the more traditional Icelandic oddball humour.

For those who want to learn more about Icelandic movies, the current exhibition in *Þjóðmenningarhús* [Culture House] is a good place to start. Although spring came late to Icelandic



filmmaking as, indeed, it usually does here, it does have a history going back almost a century. In addition to the exhibit, many of the films can be viewed on screen with aids such as headphones and subtitles. The exhibit is arranged by a couple of Germans, Sabine Schirdewahn and Matthias Wagner K. But do they get Icelandic humour? Grapevine asked Sabine what her take is.

Take 1

How did you decide which movies to include in the exhibition?

The exhibition includes two levels: on the Film-Islands visitors are able to select from approximately 100 films in full length via touch screen from genres such as feature film, short film, documentaries and adaptations of novels. The other level visualizes the chronology of Icelandic film history through 10 screens, each showing 3-4 selected clippings (between 2-5 minuets) in a loop. The chronology enables – not only – to take a time journey through Icelandic film, but also to discover something about the development of the nation.

Regarding the chronology we decided on an exemplary selection of films, respectively on film clippings,

that appeared to us as non-Icelanders as characteristic for the distinctiveness of Icelandic film industry, the historical development of film in Iceland from 1904 until today, and catching the vibes and the content of films that can be viewed in full length – thus causing curiosity.

Take 2

In some ways Icelanders have a different opinion of their film heritage than the outsider does. Films such as Með allt á hreinu, Sódóma Reykjavík and Nýtt líf are cherished by Icelanders, but don't seem to translate too well. Others, such as Hrafninn flýgur and even Börn náttúrunnar, are held in high esteem abroad but haven't found their way as directly to Icelandic hearts. Do you have any opinion on this? Is Icelandic humour difficult to translate?

Humour that extends the line of slapstick is generally difficult to translate for it is based on collective knowledge and includes oral as well as visual codes oriented in the respective nation. The drama on the other hand has a universal coding/language. Everybody can imagine how horrible it is to lose a child or when the big love fails. The success of films



1. Icelandic movie posters (+Sódóma still)



like *Börn náttúrunnar* and *Hrafninn flýgur* abroad could maybe be explained in the way that they satisfy an existing image and myth of Iceland abroad and at the same time deduct a transfiguration with Hollywood. One is – and was – fascinated by a “realistic” picture of the history and a likewise “realistic” setting. In the same way, one is impressed by the Icelandic landscapes in the story told in *Börn náttúrunnar* – with outstanding actors – that has closeness to the myth of a melancholy Icelander. The Icelanders were probably also simply moved by other themes in the years 1980/90 when these films were produced: after years of poverty nobody wanted to look back on old times and perhaps loss the of traditions that came – and comes – along in the progress of new prosperity. The focus was more on the present and participation in an upcoming, modern Iceland.

Take 3

What are your next projects? Any chance of having a fulltime Icelandic Film Museum somewhere?

Matthias Wagner K. was appointed curator for the art and culture programme on the occasion of Iceland being guest

of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2011. Among other categories, the Icelandic film and consequently this exhibition will play a big role in that relation. I find it important to expand the exhibition and include a portrait of Icelandic film directors and actors. This exhibition would doubtless be adequate to constitute a separate film museum. But one could also imagine this exhibition as a permanent exhibition – as to say in the National Museum. For now the point of this exhibition is to awaken interest in Icelandic film industry abroad and maybe to contribute to an ideal and financial support among friends and sponsors of Icelandic film in the future – in Iceland and abroad. On the first steps of the exhibition – in Berlin and Copenhagen – the interest was gigantic and visitors were surprised, well, touched, by the depth and quality, and the splendence of Icelandic actors. Some visitors regretted the absence of a purchasable DVD – this will hopefully be mended in 2011.

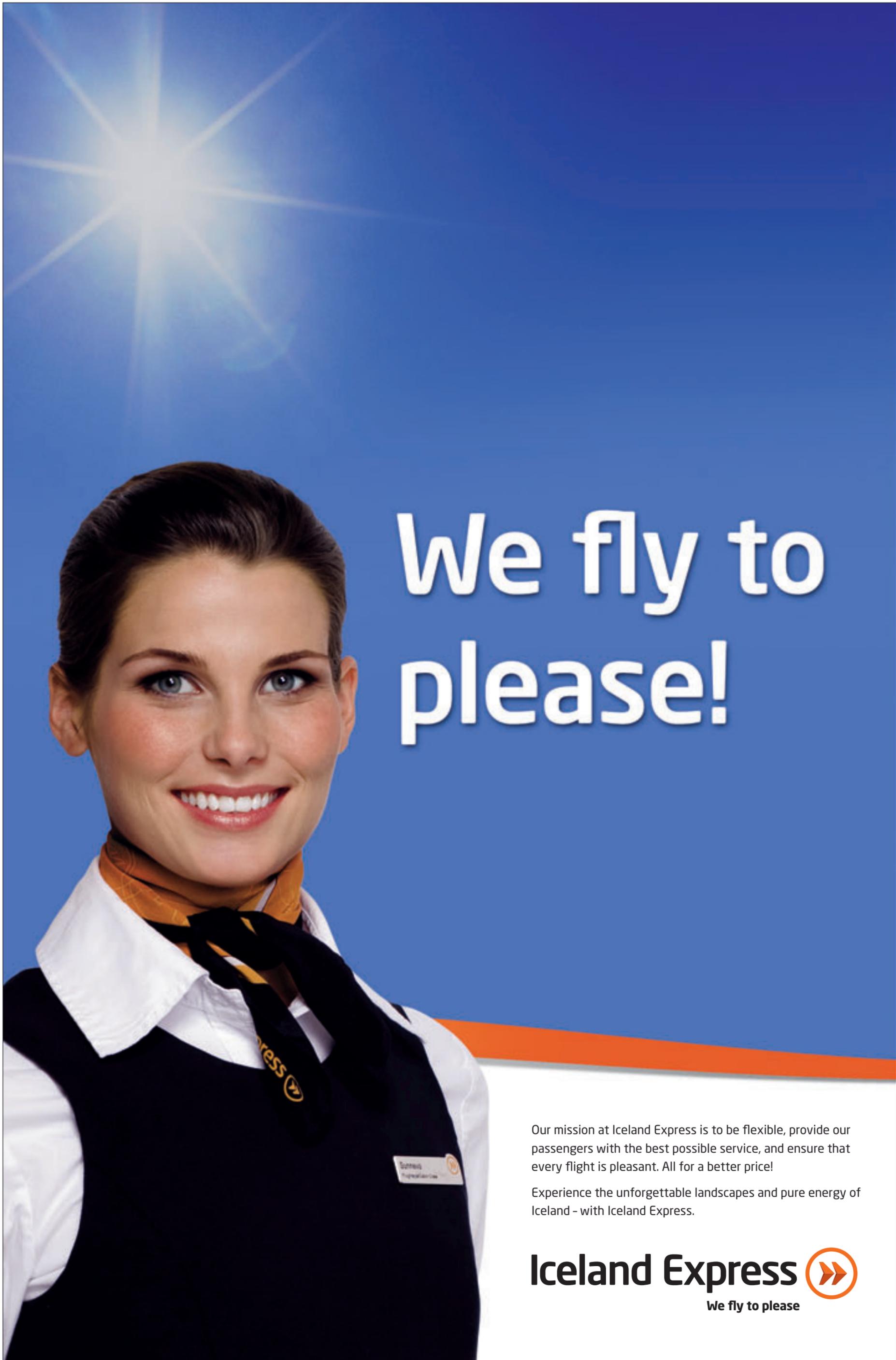
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A IS FOR ANARCHY

AN INTRODUCTION TO ANARCHISM IN REYKJAVÍK:
THE 'GROUP,' THE MOTIVE, THE GOAL

Text By: Catharine Fulton, Photos By: Páll Hilmarrsson

"I don't like being interviewed," said Njáll with a sceptical air about his furrowed brow.

Shit, I thought. This isn't going to be easy.

He let out a long, slow sigh, looking toward the group of young people who moments earlier had refused to speak with me, referring me instead to the young man who was himself now on the verge of refusal. "Fine. I have a few minutes."

Standing in Lækjartorg on a particularly windy Saturday, the tall young man, dressed in earth tones, with an unruly head of sandy hair and a kind smile – in stark contrast to his peers who had a clear penchant for piercings, studded leather and hair dye – watched as people idled up to the white plastic pails on the folding table he manned and help themselves to the vegan food therein. Njáll explained how Food Not Bombs came to be a weekend staple in Reykjavík just about a year ago, after an American friend implored him to help launch a program modelled after that which had been running in Boston since the 1980's. For the past year an ever-changing group of supporters amass in a private Reykjavík residence at 10 a.m. every Saturday to prepare vegan dishes from near-expired food that would otherwise be thrown away.

"We noticed for a long time there was a lot of over consumption in Iceland. The average Icelander is a very wasteful person and the companies are not making it any better," the young man espoused. "We thought it would be a great community project to give the stupid lifestyle consumer people here a big fuck-you and serve this 'unhygienic' food here on the street to show other people and ourselves that food is not supposed to be a luxury that only the privileged can afford."

Njáll is an anarchist; he said so himself.

What I heard in the windy square about Food

Not Bombs was expected. It's a well-known initiative and the anti-consumer sentiment that Njáll expressed was commonplace among some others of his kind that I had spoken with. But then the brow furrowed once more and through his lips passed words that I did not expect whatsoever.

"I wasn't very interested in the protests [of last autumn and winter] because I found them very shallow, only about money."

Did he just say that? He's not interested in the now infamous pots-and-pans revolution that brought down the corrupt Icelandic government? He thinks the movement that headlines the Iceland portion of the weekly "news and comments from the anarchists" distributed by Anarchy.no was shallow? What kind of anarchist is he?

"I feel that most people just wanted the profit to come pouring back in and they were protesting against the government for not bringing it to them," he explained. "But that's not something someone can bring to you."

But, Njáll is an anarchist! As such, he should be championing the great success of the protests. It was, after all, his fellow anarchists who were pivotal players in commencing the citizens' movement against the government. They had foreseen the grim future in every highly inflated currency trade made and in every square centimetre of highlands flooded. They taught the common folk how to resist, how to engage in civil disobedience – local anarchist Siggi Pönk's own book on direct action and civil disobedience appears a great success. Once the government had toppled, they persisted and squatted a house on Vatnsstígur to stick it to the capitalistic man that survived the regime change. In fact, they did that three times for posterity's sake.

If Njáll is a card-carrying member of this socially active group – he did openly call himself an anarchist, after all – he should subscribe to the same ideals, support the same initiatives and applaud the same means and ends without question. Or should he?

Let's start at the beginning, often a good place to start

Before you can understand Njáll and the people calling themselves 'anarchists' in and around Reykjavík you first must understand the basics of what anarchism is and where it comes from. Firstly, anarchism is political in nature and considers the state, the man, hierarchy, compulsory government, etc. to be a scourge on society, entirely unnecessary and harmful to the people within society. I got the feeling early on that journalists, however young and sympathetic to "the cause", seem to be grouped in among those not to be trusted – the analogy of a tree falling in the woods making or not making a sound if nobody is around was given to explain that grassroots initiatives will happen with or without journalists, so we're really not all that important. I'm expendable. Ouch.

"Community functions better when it has to take responsibility for itself, when we don't trust on the state institutions for earning things," clarifies Siggi Pönk. "To quote an old anarchist: 'freedom is the mother of order.' We have to be free, we have to organise, and if you look at anthropology you'll see this is a natural phenomenon in all societies or communities. There is a social order through sanctions. Through negative and positive actions we learn how to behave. So we innately know how to behave within community."

Historically, anarchist-like thought has been prevalent in the settlement of nations (primarily agricultural nations, like Iceland) and in Eastern

philosophical thought, like that of Lao Tse in his Daodejing. Modern anarchist philosophy has its roots in post-enlightenment thought and has been attributed to William Godwin, who repurposed the negative term to stand for progressive economical and political concepts that are still attached to anarchism today. This is not to say that there is one train of anarchist thought, as anarchist beliefs differ greatly from one subscriber to the next. Some anarchists purport individualism, while others champion collectivism; some

"If you want to change something don't just get somebody who is higher up than you to change it, get out on the fucking street and change it yourself in some way. Start working for your community rather than begging somebody else to work for your community."

adopt communist thought and still others have libertarian tendencies.

Siggi Pönk, for example, chooses to pick and choose theories from a wide range of anarchist thought to create a lifestyle that suits him best.

The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE iNFO

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Issue 7 2009

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19
June

Teach Us To Outgrow Our Madness

*"We like to sing and dance
Go into a trance
We like gore
We always want more..."*

Those lucky enough to witness fabled contemporary dancer Erna Ómarsdóttir's Transaquania performance at the Blue Lagoon last April (any show that features her for that matter) will attest that she is truly a force to be reckoned with, a true artist in her field. The primeval, yet refined, way in which she manages to convey epic

tales, fraught emotions – haphazard lust and eternal love alike – should put most performers to shame. Luckily for her native Iceland, the Brussels-based artist keeps bringing her performances back home again, performing around the country with team after team of world-class artists, dancers, choreographers and musicians.

And now she's back with a brand new show, and we're real excited. Quoth her press-release:

"Five Nordic women.

*A terrifying secret.
Five seemingly ageless creatures.
Possessed by a spirit that turns this at times so well
mannered quintet
into a Dionysian force."*

Teach Us to Outgrow Our Madness was created and conceived of by Erna along with Sissel Merete Bjorkli, Riina Huhtanen, Sigríður Soffía Nielsdóttir and Margrét Sara Guðjónsdóttir (with music by Valdimar Jóhannsson and Lieven Dousselaere). It has already been

performed in select European locations to rave reviews. Its sole Icelandic performance will be at the National Theatre's big stage on June 19 – a very fitting date for the feminocentric piece, since it is Icelandic Female Rights day (on that date in 1915, Danish King Christian X signed an Alþingi law that gave all Icelandic women over the age of 40 suffrage). It's performed in English, so English-speakers need not fret.

Go there.



ICELAND :: FILM – Berlin – Copenhagen – Reykjavík
Icelandic Filmmaking 1904-2008



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The Ancient Vellums on Display



A LOOK INTO NATURE
The Story of the Icelandic Museum of Natural History



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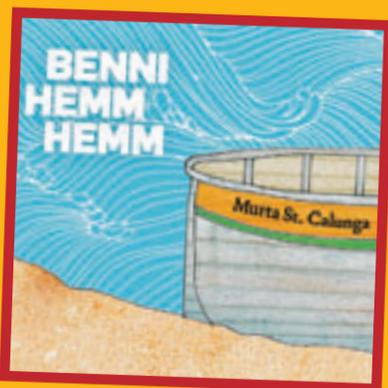
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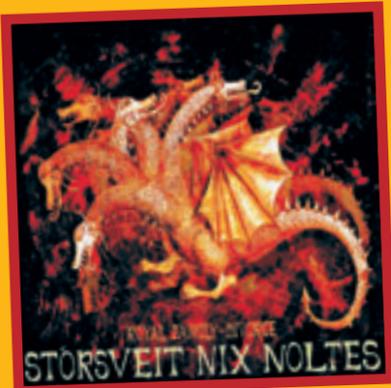
Retro Stefson | *Montaña*

★★★★★ / Fréttablaðið



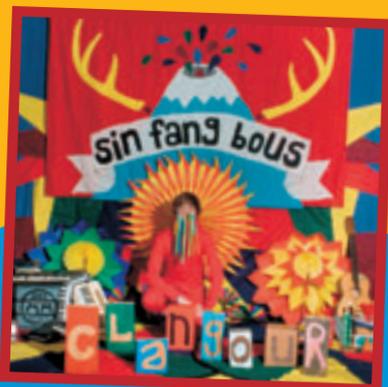
Benni Hemm Hemm | *Murta St. Calunga*

★★★★★ / Fréttablaðið



Stórsveit Nix Noltes | *Royal Family - Divorce*

8/10 - NME



Sin Fang Bous | *Clangour*

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5 FRI

Amsterdam
22:00 Icelandic Folk band **Hek** perform.

B5
23:00 DJ **Einar**.

Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music.

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.

English Pub
22:00 Live Music.

Grand Rokk
22:00 Culture Festival.

Hressó
22:00 Band **Dalton** in concert followed by
DJ **Elli**.

Kaffibarinn
23:45 DJ **Árni Sveinsson**.

London/Reykjavík
00:00 DJ **Aki Pain**.

Prikið
21:00 Happy Hour! DJ **Danni Deluxe**.

Q-Bar
23:00 DJ **Bobby Breiðholt**.

Rósenberg
21:00 **Snapsar**.

6 SAT

B5
23:00 DJ **Funky Fleivur**.

Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music.

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.

English Pub
22:00 Live Music.

Grand Rokk
22:00 Culture Festival.

Hemmi og Valdi
20:00 **Bird by Snow + Me, The Slumbering Napoleon and Pascal Pinon**.

Hressó
22:00 Acoustic performance **Gotti** and
Elsi followed by DJ **Elli**.

Kaffibarinn
23:00 DJ **Gísli Galdur**.

Kaffi Hjómáland
12:00 Ghetto Yoga.

Kaffi Zimsen
00:00 **Seth Sharp** performs live until 02:00,
then DJ **Shaft** takes over.

London/Reykjavík
00:00 **Paul Moritz**.

NASA
00:00 Techno DJ **Tom Craft**. Possible entry
fee.

Prikið
21:00 **Mr. Chicken Wings**, plus intro from
DJ **Addi**.

Q-Bar
23:00 DJ **Danni Deluxxe**.

Reykjavík Arts Muesum- Kjarvalsstaðir
20:00 **Trompe l'oreille**- Solo piece and
duo for flute and percussion as part of the
Frum Music Festival.

Rósenberg
21:00 **Megas and Senuþjófarnir**

7 SUN

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.

Grand Rokk
22:00 Culture Festival.

Gljúfrasteinn (Mosfellsdalur)
16:00 Cellist **Chrichan Larson** performs.
Entr: 500ISK.

Kaffi Hjómáland
16:00 Samba.

Prikið
22:00 Hangover Cinema- **Willy Wonka** and
the **Chocolate Factory**, plus free popcorn!

Q-Bar
23:00 Open decks.

Reykjavík Arts Muesum- Kjarvalsstaðir
20:00 Why was I born among mirrors?
Music by **George Crumb** as part of the
Frum Music Festival

Rósenberg
21:00 Live Music from **Eddi Lár**.

8 MON

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.

Hallgrímskirkja
20:00 Chamber choir from **Bremen University** perform, conducted by Professor
Friederike Woebcken. Entr: 2,000ISK.

Prikið
22:00 DJ **Gauti**.

Rósenberg
21:00 Artists TBC.

9 TUE

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.

Prikið
22:00 Beatnight.

Rósenberg
21:00 **Hrafnaspark**.

10 WED

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.

Kaffibarinn
23:45 DJ **Valdís Thor**.

Kaffi Hjómáland
18:00 Ghetto Yoga.

Prikið
22:00 Live Music.

Q-Bar
23:00 Pub quiz.

Rósenberg
21:00 **Rúðolf and Band**

Sóðóma Reykjavík
22:00 **Steintryggur, Kippi Kaninus,**
Borgar Maganason + DJ Magic.

11 THU

B5
21:00 Live performance from **Þrjár Raddir**.

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.

English Pub
22:00 Live Music.

Hressó
22:00 Acoustic **Jógvan and Vignir**.

Kaffibarinn
23:45 DJ **B-Ruff**.

Kaffi Hjómáland
17:30 Ghetto Yoga.

NASA

21:00 **Thule and Rás 2** present: **Ensími & Dikta**. Entr: 2,000ISK.

Prikið
22:00 DJ **Mótfó**.

Q-Bar
23:00 DJ **Krummi Mínus**.

Rósenberg
21:00 FTT & Grapevine present: **Bryndís Jakobsdóttir & Ragnhildur Gísladóttir**.
Entr: 1,000ISK.

12 FRI

B5
23:00 DJ **Einar**.

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 Gogoyoko presents: Grapevine
Grand Rock, **Feat Mads Mouritz, Dísa**
and **Bárujárn**. Entr: 1,000ISK.

Hressó
21:00 **Eypór and Andri** followed by DJ
Bjarni.

Kaffibarinn
23:45 **Alfons X**.

Kaffi Hjómáland
20:00 **Hjómáland Mood**

London/Reykjavík
00:00 **Tom Collins (DK) + Ghozt**.

Prikið
21:00 **Gísli, Danni and Maggi**.

Q-Bar
23:00 **Andrea Jóns**.

Sóðóma Reykjavík
22:00 **Singapore Slings**.

13 SAT

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 **Menn Ársins** in concert followed by
DJ **Bjarni**.

Kaffibarinn
23:45 **Már & Nielsen** - **Dansa Meira**.

London/Reykjavík
23:00 Ice Gigg Entertainment present DJ
Frigore, Kid Mistik, Dósi and M-Shield.
Entr: 1,000 ISK.

Prikið
23:00 **Danni Deluxxe**.

Q-Bar
23:00 Disco Party with **Gísli Galdur**.

Rósenberg
21:00 **Mannakorn**.

Sóðóma Reykjavík
22:00 **Megas and Senuþjófarnir**.



Rósenberg

Klapparstíg 25 ☺ 9pm

Playing Icelandic and Scandinavian music in a gypsy jazz style alongside jazz standards, Hrafnaspark's sound is charmingly fluid and sexy. The trio, featuring Jóhann Guðmundsson and Ólafur Haukur Arnason on guitar and Pétur Ingólfsson on the double bass, was established in Akureyri in 2001 and has been playing around Iceland regularly since, often collaborating with other musicians and singers. Their sound is sure to please patrons of Rósenberg this month.



Kaffi Rót

Hafnarstræti 17 ☺ 4pm

Och! Kaffi Rót in conjunction with the Scottish community celebrate the 250th birthday of poet Robert Burns Saturday June 6th. The aptly named Scottish Day will be host to an eclectic mix of bagpipes, Ceilidh dancing and readings to get involved in. Relax, grab a coffee and a tasty cake, indulge in some Scottish culture and if you're lucky, win a book of Robert Burns poetry. It's all free too. JB

Grapevine Top 9 Most Played during the making of this issue

1 Bon Iver
Stacks

2 Röyksop
The Girl and the Robot (Joakim remix)

3 Empire of the Sun
Half-Mast

4 Fleet Foxes
Mykonos

5 Japanther
Wolf and Swan

7 Japandroids
Young Hearts Spark Fire

8 Mission of Burma
That's How I Escaped My Certain Fate

9 Eminem
Medicine Ball

14 SUN

Dubliner

22:30 Live Music.

Gjúfrasteinn (Mosfellsdalur)

16:00 Acoustic performance from Kristján Kristjánsson. Entr: 500ISK.

Kaffi Hjómálind

16:00 Samba.

Prikið

22:00 Hangover Cinema- Faster Pussycat, plus free popcorn!

Q-Bar

23:00 Open Decks.

Rósenberg

21:00 Artists TBC.

15 MON

Dubliner

22:30 Live Music.

Rósenberg

21:00 Artists TBC.

Prikið

22:00 DJ Gauti.

16 TUE

Cultura

20:00 Salsa Night.

Dubliner

22:30 Live Music.

Hressó

22:00 Dalton perform in the garden followed by DJ Maggi.

Kaffibarinn

23:45 Kaffibarinn Compilation release party.

London/Rekjavík

00:00 Sean Danke.

Rósenberg

21:00 Blues Band Vax.

Prikið

23:00 DJ Danni Deluxe.

Sódóma Reykjavík

22:00 Dr. Spock.

17 WED

Dubliner

22:30 Live Music.

Hressó

22:00 Live music in the garden.

Kaffi Hjómálind

18:00 Ghetto Yoga.

Prikið

22:00 Live Music.

Rósenberg

21:00 Live Music.

Q-Bar

23:00 Pub quiz.

18 THU

B5

21:00 Live performance from Þrjár Raddir.

Dubliner

22:30 Live Music.

English Pub

22:00 Live Music.

Hressó

22:00 Acoustic performance from Böddi and Dabbi.

Kaffi Hjómálind

17:30 Ghetto Yoga.

Prikið

22:00 House DJ.

Q-Bar

23:00 Sirkus Kvöld.

Rósenberg

21:00 South River Band.

OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK

Keflavík

Paddy's

June 6 Grammið

12am - 04.30am
Free admission

June 12 Hobbítarnir

12am - 04.30am
Free Admission

June 13 Hobbítarnir

12am - 04.30am
Free Admission

June 16 Live Music TBA

June 18 Live Music TBA

June 20 Cirkus

12am - 04.30
Free Admission

Ísafjörður

Kaffi Edinborg

6.june - Trúbatrixur

9pm-01am
Free admission

11.june - Benni

10pm - 01am
Free admission

16. June Buff

Á Móti Sól

11pm - 03am
2000 ISK

18. June Birgir Olgeirsson

10
June

Strum und Klang!

By Borgar Magnason and Sigtryggur Baldursson

Sódóma Reykjavík

Smiðjustíg 6 ☺ 10pm

On Wednesday June 10, Steintryggur, Kippi Kaninus and Borgar Magnason will be making their special noise at club Sódóma. Steintryggur is the brainchild of former Sugarcubes drummer Sigtryggur Baldursson and his tabla-playing compatriot Steingrímur Guðmundsson. They play a percussive mix sampling sounds and voices from around the world and collaborate with electro wiz Kippi Kaninus who, by the way, also works with bassist Borgar Magnason. Borgar has been using his signature double bass sounds both in the classical world and the avant-garde, with notable collaborations as diverse as Elliott Carter, Ben Frost and Howie B.

The Grapevine got Sigtryggur and Borgar to ask each other a few questions to shed some light on their upcoming show. Expect some serious drumming and deep sound speculations that one could even shake a foot to, should one so wish...

Sigtryggur asked Borgar:

What are you doing with Kippi Kaninus?

We're working on new stuff with me on double bass and him with his computer.

Can you give us an idea what to expect at the show?

Not really, I feel it as being somewhere between sex and prayer, but I suppose that doesn't give anyone a clear picture.

What are you trying to achieve with the music you are doing now?

Getting this stuff that I have been developing & carrying around with me just right. I'm working on my first solo album but the cogs have to mesh, as they say.

When did you move back to Iceland and what were you doing before that?

I moved back about two years ago. Before that, I was living in Brussels and New York for just over a decade, mostly playing double bass.

Do you have any animals?

I have a cat.

Have you given your bass a name?

I have not, but a young friend of mine asked if she could name him Róbert the other day. I thought it was good, and then she sang me a song about him right there and then. It's a good name, Róbert.

What is the future of music?

It's good. It's all good

Do you believe in god?

Yes I do. You'll hear that right away in my music.

Borgar shot back...

How long have Steintryggur been around?

Since 2002, when we started in the shed in Holland.

Do you believe in God?

I am not a big fan of organised religion that claims it has the answer, but I do think there is something big at work in the universe that we don't quite understand. I certainly do not claim to know "God's will."

What is your aim with the music of Steintryggur?

To devise a cultural and rhythmic mix that I enjoy creating, playing and listening to.

Is there a spiritual side to it?

Everything done from the heart has a spiritual side.

I've always thought of your drumming as a bit wicked, do you feel there is an evil element in your music?

You have been doing too much classical work... come over to the dark side young Skywalker...

How do you like working with Kippi?

It is a pleasure like no other. He is a very unique man, and very multi-talented. Oh, and he harbours a great sense of humour... very important.

For musical references, see www.steintryggur.com, kippikaninus.com and www.myspace.com/borgarm.

ICELANDIC TATTOO FESTIVAL
Í Sódóma Reykjavík

Artistar:
Svanur Fjölur
Buri Begga Sofia
Scott Ellis
Jason June
Jen Beirala
Chip Baskin
Jason Thomson
Ezera Haidet
Richard Lajoie
Erin Lambert
Thomas Asher

Opið
Fös 14 · 23
Lau 12 · 23
Sun 12 · 20
Kl 22:00

Verðlaunaáhræðing
í Sódóma
Sunnudag
kl 22:00

Tónleikar Sódóma
Föstudagur (kl 24)
Esa
Langi Seli og Skuggarnir

Laugardagur (kl 24)
Stíans Tribute

2009
5-6-7 Júní

Sódóma Reykjavík

JACK DANIEL'S PRICK

Live Music

SATURDAY 23 MAY
» Fræbbblamir

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

Grand Rokk
Reykjavík

Grand Rokk » Smiðjustígur 6 » IOI Reykjavík

Numismatic Museum



The Central Bank and National Museum of Iceland jointly operate a numismatic collection that consists of Icelandic notes and coins, foreign money from earlier times, especially if mentioned in Icelandic sources, and more recent currency from Iceland's main trading partner countries. A selection from the numismatic collection is on display in showcases on the ground floor of the Central Bank's main building.

Situated in the Central Bank's main building in Kalkofnsvegur 1, Reykjavík. Open Mon.-Fri. 13:30-15:30. Free admittance.



The country's largest museum of cultural history featuring a permanent exhibition on Iceland's extraordinary history from settlement to present day.

National Museum of Iceland

OPENING HOURS:

Summer

(May 1st – September 15th)
Daily 10–17

Winter

(September 16th – April 30th)
Daily except Mondays 11–17



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MUSIC JUNE

– continued –

10pm – 01am
Free admission

Akureyri

Græni Hatturinn

June 5 **Hvanndalsbræður**

09pm – 12pm
Admission 2000 ISK

June 6 **Hvanndalsbræður**

09pm – 12pm
Admission 2000 ISK

June 10 **Dísa**

Mads Mouritz

09pm – 12pm
Admission 1500 ISJ

June 12 **Dr. Spock**

9pm–12pm
Admission TBA

June 16 **Esja**

9pm–12am
Admission 1500 ISK

June 18 **KK Band**

9pm–12am
Admission 2000 ISK

June 20 **200.000 Naglbítar**

09pm–12am
Admission TBA

Húsavík

Gamli Baukur

June 5 **Record Launch Party:**

Ljótu Hálfvitarnir

12am – 03am
Free Admission

June 13 **Dr. Spock**

11pm – 03am
Admission: TBA

Egilsstaðir

Skjálfti

June 13 – **DJ Elli My**

11pm – 03am
Free admission

June 20 – **Party**

11pm – 03am

Valaskjálfi

June 6 – **Ný Dönsk**

11pm – 03am
Admission 2500

June 16 – **June 16th dance**

11pm – 03am
Admission 2500

Selfoss

800 Bar

June 5 **DJ Ramirez**

10pm – 03am
Admission 500 ISK

June 6 **The House Mafia**

11pm – 03am
Admission 1000 ISK

June 11 **Gegndrepa**

10pm – 01am
Admission 500 ISK

June 12 **Foam Party for age 16 and older**

With DJ Óli Geir

11pm – 02am
Admission 2500 ISK

June 13 **Techno.is**

11pm – 03am
Admission 1500 ISK

June 18 **DJ 800**

10pm – 01am
Free admission

June 19 **Diesel**

11pm – 03am
Admission 1500 ISK

June 20 **The Sixties**

11pm – 03am
Admission 1500 ISK

Grapevine events June

11 Nasa

🕒 9 pm

Thule and Rás 2 present:
Ensími & Dikta
2000ISK

11 Rósenberg

🕒 9 pm

FTT & Grapevine present:
Bryndís Jakobsdóttir &
Ragnhildur Gísladóttir
1000ISK

12 Grand Rokk

🕒 10 pm

gogoyoko presents:
Grapevine Grand Rock
Mads Mouritz, Dísa,
Bárujárn
1000ISK



Bird by Snow

Hemma og Valda

Laugavegur 21 🕒 8pm

Northern Californian lo-fi folk soloist Bird by Snow will be swooping by at the intimate Hemma og Valda on June 6 at 20:00 in support of his third record, "Songbread/Another Ocean." Claiming to be his third set of performances in Reykjavík since 2007, expect a minimalist rendition of studio compositions and worldly poetic forcefulness. Support is provided by the sharp Me, The Slumbering Napoleon and the ultra cool-all girl-Pascal Pinon. –**JB**

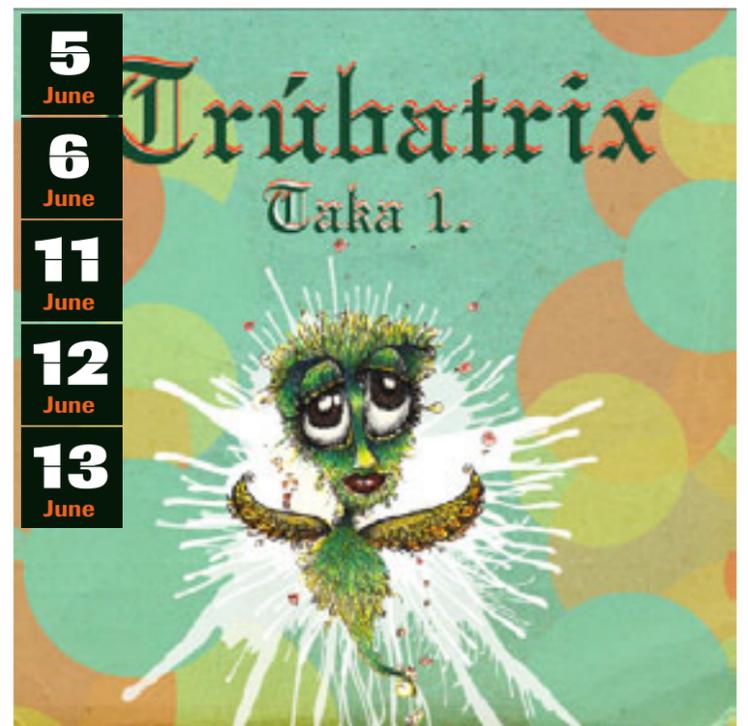


Singapore Sling

Sódóma Reykjavík

Tryggvagata 22 🕒 8pm

Sometimes you just need to get drunk, like, really drunk, and move around in unintelligible moves with your eyes closed like a completely fried hippie from the time of flowers and LSD. Singapore Sling will take you on that wild ride through your mind as they perform in their hometown of Reykjavík, where it all began at the Iceland Airwaves festival. So knock back a few, tell everyone to fuck off, and dance/move to the killer beats you're hearing. In your head, or otherwise. –**JG**



Calling All Girls (And Dudes, Too)!

Kaffi Sæli 🕒 8pm. Tálknafirði

Edinborg 🕒 8 pm. Ísafjörður

Draugasetrið 🕒 8 pm. Stokkseyri

Pakkhúsið 🕒 8 pm. Höfn í Hornafirði

Hótel Aldan 🕒 8 pm. Seyðisfjörður

In promotion of the all new, all female Trúbatrix compilation album released June 2nd, the Trúbatrix group will be celebrating by a partying across the island. The album itself features well-known singers like Fabula, Elíza Newman and Þórunn Antonía and up and coming artists Miss Mount, Elín Ey, Mysterious Marta and excellent new girl group Pascal Pinon. Catch them reppin' at one of the below dates, before they take over the globe. **JB**



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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

OPENING

JUNE

5 ☹️ 2pm-11pm

Sódoma

The Icelandic Tattoo Festival
Entrance: 600 ISK.

5 ☹️ 7pm

i8 Gallery

The End
Ragnar Kjartansson's exhibition and performance, followed by the official welcome and vernissage at 8 p.m. and opening party from 9 p.m. to 12 a.m.

6 ☹️ 11am

The Culture House

Exhibit of nordic bookbinding projects.

6 ☹️ 12pm-11pm

Sódoma

The Icelandic Tattoo Festival
Entrance: 600 ISK.

6 ☹️ 2pm

The gallery of Icelandic

Printmakers' Association
Exhibition of handmade gum bichromate prints by photographer Laura Valentino.

6 ☹️ 2pm

Reykjavík Art Museum

Lecture about Frederico Garcia Lorca's poetry by Hólmfríður Garðarsdóttir.
Part of the *frum contemporary music festival*.

6 ☹️ 4pm

Cafe Rót

Scottish Day
Celebrate the 250th birthday of Robert Burns, the Scottish National Poet. There will be poems, food, and bagpipes.
4pm: A Taste of Scotland
6pm: Ceilidh Dancing

7 ☹️ 12pm-8pm

Sódoma

The Icelandic Tattoo Festival
Entrance: 600 ISK.

8 ☹️ 6:15pm

Gallery Fold

Art Auction
Art from both old masters and contemporary artists. A preview of the works will be from June 5- June 8.

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 30- June 21
Lighttime-Aðalheiður Valgeirsdóttir exhibits oil paintings in Ásmundarsalur. Installation by Karl Ómarsson in Gryfjan.
Paintings by Jóhannes S. Kjarvalin in Arinistofan.

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

The Library Room.

Current exhibitions:
Genesis
The exhibition traces the emergence and evolution of the island Surtsey until the 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 better known for his writing but also proved to be a good 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**

Gerðarsafn Art Museum (Kópavogur)

May 9- June 21
Myths and Legends
Featuring works from local Kópavogur artist Baltasar.

Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

Boginn Gallery: The Land in Colour
Popular artist Guðrður Jóhannesson exhibition of landscape paintings.

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 shifting Icelandic nature.

Wight Works- Jónína Guðnadóttir

In this exhibition she wrestles with supernatural beings and forces of nature.

Ongoing

Check This Out!

Kjarvalsstaðir

Flókagata

105 Reykjavík

Kjarvalsstaðir by Miklatún is a pretty awesome museum all things considered, in fact they're one of Iceland's must-sees (as proclaimed and verified by last issue's cover subject, artist Ragnar Kjartansson). And they're offering free tours every Thursday this summer - in English!

The museum is named in honour of Iceland's most beloved painter, Jóhannes S. Kjarval. They feature a permanent exhibition of his paintings - and those totally justify a visit at any time, guidance or not - as well as temporary exhibits that are usually pretty well curated. Their cafeteria is also nice, as is the location.

Kjarvalsstaðir Museum is open daily 10:00 -17:00 - free admittance Free, guided tours in English every Thursday at 11:00

Ongoing

White Silence

Galleri Verðandi, downstairs at Skuld bookshop

Laugavegur 51

☹️ open weekdays 12-18, Saturdays 12-16

The Barcelona-based photographer Guðný Hilmarsdóttir is currently exhibiting her beautiful black and whites in the Galleri Verðandi, hidden downstairs at the business bookstore Skuld on Laugavegur.

When it comes to Icelandic nature photography, it is ice and water, vast skies and barren landscapes that dominate. Guðný chose a topic a little off the beaten track. "I like trees and we have all these beautiful details around" she explains. "Everybody says there are no trees in Iceland. I didn't have to go out of Reykjavík to take these photos."



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VÍKIN

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Summer (June 1st - September 14th)
Daily from 11am to 5pm

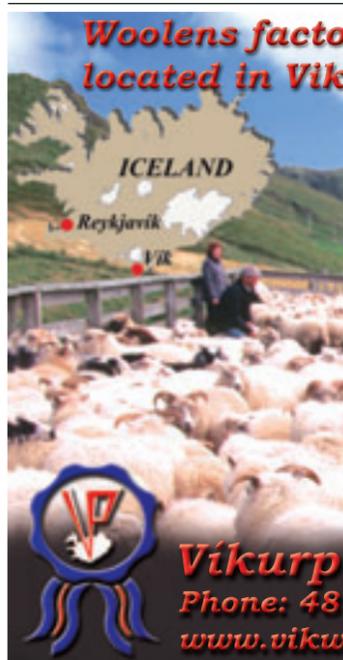
Winter (September 15th - May 31st)
Tuesdays - Sundays from 1pm to 5pm

VÍKIN

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MAP

Places We Like

1 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

[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 Grái Kötturinn

Hverfisgata 16a

Super relaxed and cozy diner/café below street level. This place makes the best hangover breakfast ever (the truck!) and any-other-day breakfast as well. It's a nice and relaxing place to eat and increase your caffeine intake and chill with friends or with some reading material. CF

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

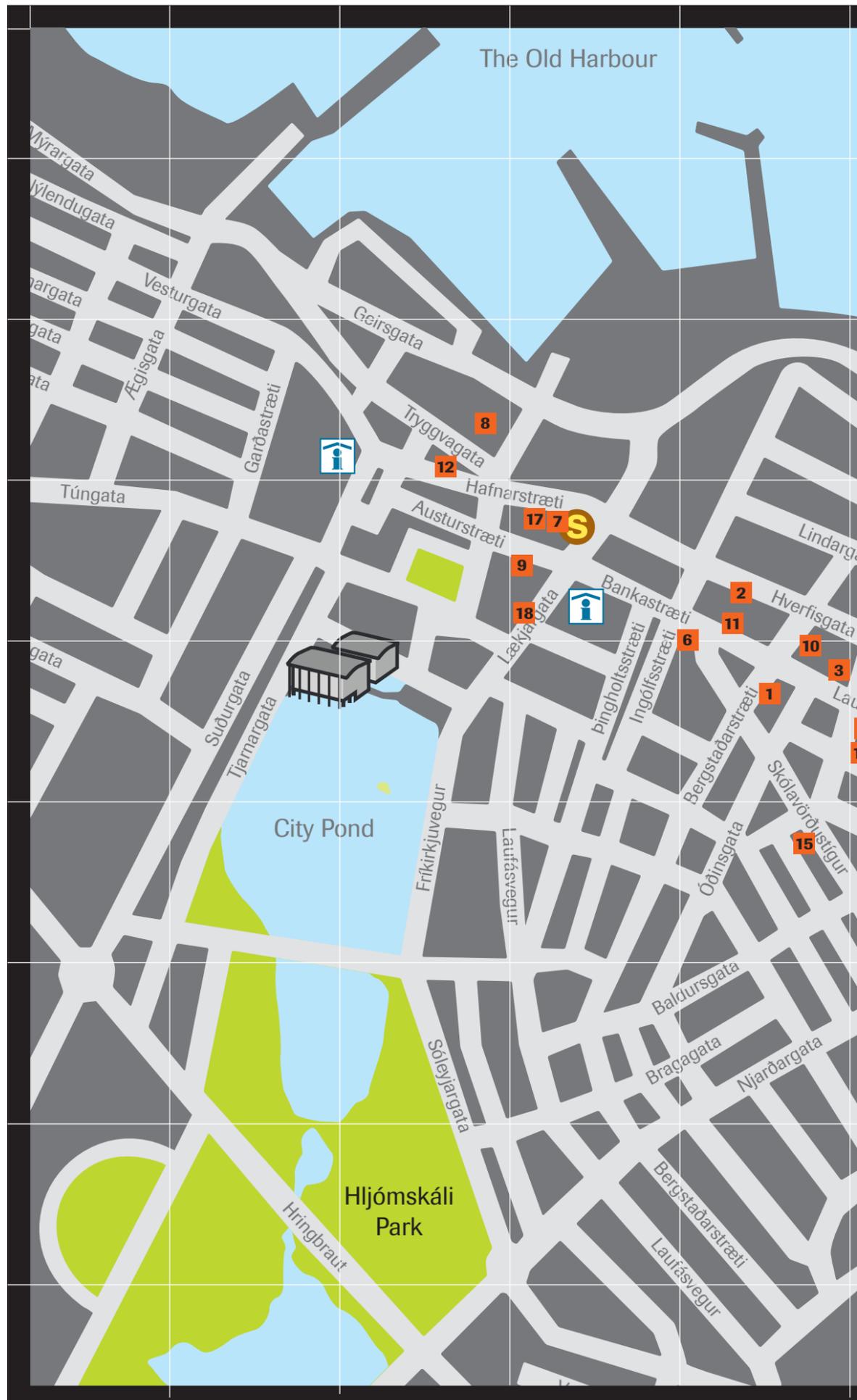
Laugavegi 27

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 Prikíð

Bankastræti 12

Prikíð 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 Kolaportið

Tryggvagata 19

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

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



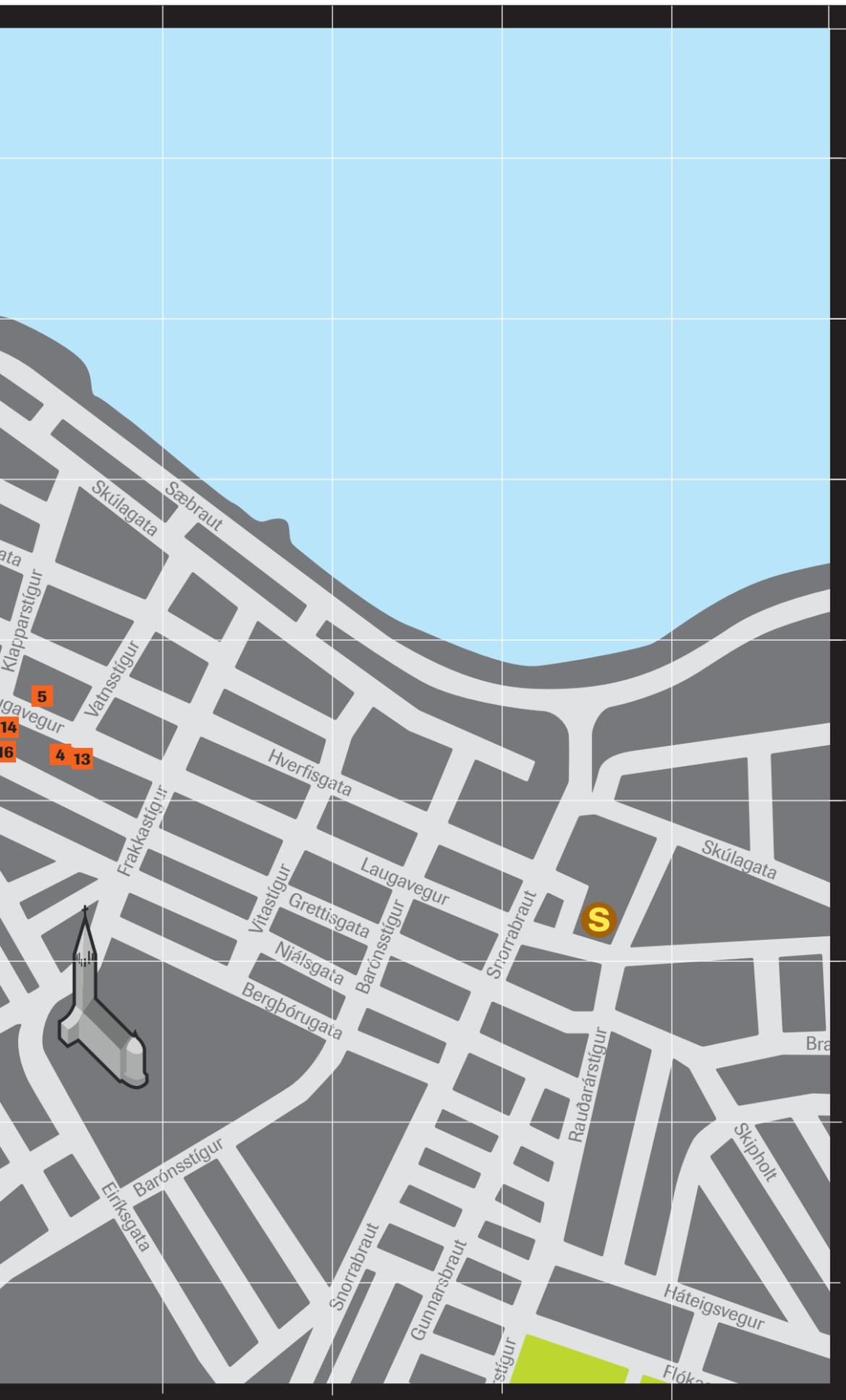
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POLAR BEER POLAR BEER POLAR BEER

THE ENGLISH PUB

at Austurstræti 12





13 Boston

Laugavegi 28b

Like an older sibling to the fabled (now deceased) Sirkús, Boston is a warm and mellow second-floor bar on Laugavegur that plays host to the arty party crowd. The baroque wall dressings and deep, rich coloured décor make this bar feel pretty swank, but Boston also serves up some reasonably priced food earlier in the evening, so it's not too swank. CF

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 Pizzaverksmiðjan

Lækjargata 8

Best. Pizza. Ever. Seriously, this pizza is ridiculously delicious, and the chilli and garlic oils that accompany it are to die for. Added bonuses of this joint are the super-friendly owner, Óli, and the cool and casual atmosphere in which to stuff your mouth with slice after slice of cheesy, crusty goodness. CF

10 Grand Rokk

Smiðjustíg 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 Kisan

Laugavegi 7

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

12 Nonnabiti

Hafnarstræti 9

Delicious and relatively cheap considering how massive and filling their sandwiches are. The Luxury Sub, with salty pork, veggies, sauce and pineapple is a brilliant combination of flavours for late-night munchies. It's just as satisfying and filling during more civilized hours as well. And the service is fast if you're in a rush. CF



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ART GALLERIES

– continued –

i8 Gallery

May 16- June 14

The Road To You Is On My Mind
Shoplifter a.k.a Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir
exhibits her new works made out of
human hair.

Kling and Bang Gallery

May 16-June 21

Within Reach - Innan Seilingar
A unified installation piece by a team
of artists from Norway and Iceland.

Living Art Museum

Throughout May-Exhibitions from
Runo Lagomarsino, Yiva Westerlund
and Olivia Plender.

Lost Horse Gallery

A Wild Night. Come back to
an era when jazz raged and 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 Ham-
merstein 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 is
intended to provide 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
Millenium Fund). Finds from some of
these excavations are on display in an
exhibition suitable for the whole family.

The Numismatic Museum

Permanent exhibition:

The Central Bank of Iceland and the
National Museum of Iceland jointly
operate a numismatic collection con-
sisting 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 Corpo-
ration and Unnar Örn exhibits their
works in lighthouses around Iceland.
See artfest.is for more info.

Reykjavík Art Museum

Asmundarsafn

May 2- April 30 2010

**Rhyme - Works by Ásmundur
Sveinsson and contemporary art-
ists**

This exhibition showcases contempo-

rary 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-

A deication to Erró.

Reykjavík Art Museum

Kjarvalsstaðir

May 15- August 30

The House of Una And West 8th Street

The life of Icelandic artists Louisa
Matthiasdóttir and Nína 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, architec-
ture 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 Photog- raphy

Current Exhibitions:

**Life is not just a game- it's a bed of
roses...**

Show curated by Gudmundur Oddur
Magnússon and Guðfinna Mjöll Mag-
núsdóttir.

Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture

Museum

Permanent Exhibition:

The Shape of Line.

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

May 01- April 30 2010

RHYTHM- Ásmundur and Our Age

This exhibition showcases contempo-
rary artists that tackle similar issues
as Ásmundur did in his time, but in a
context of a new age.

**OUTSIDE
REYKJAVÍK**

Keflavík

Suðsuðvestur Gallery

May 16 - June 14

Exhibitor by Klaas Kloosterboer

Hafnarfjörður

Hafnarborg

May 16 - June 20

Exhibition "Vættir" by Jónína Guðadóttir

Exhibition "Madame Lemonique &
Madame Lemonborough" by Guðný
Guðmundsdóttir

Art | Venue finder

101 Gallery

Hverfisgata 18A | **F6**
Thu-Sat 14-17 and by appoint-
ment
www.101hotel.
is/101hotel/101gallery/

Artótek

Tryggvagata 15 | **D5**
Mon 10-21, Tue-Thu 10-19, Fri
11-19, Sat and Sun 13-17
www.sim.is/Index/Islenka/
Artotek

ASÍ Art Museum

Freygata 41 | **G10**
Tue-Sun 13-17

Árbæjarsafn

Kistuhylur 4

The Culture House

Hverfisgata 15 | **F6**
Open daily 11-17
www.thjodmenning.is

Dwarf Gallery

Grundarstígur 21 | **H8**
Opening Hours: Fri and Sat
18-20
www.this.is/birta

The Einar Jónsson Museum

Eiriksgata | **G9**
Tue-Sun 14-17
www.skulptur.is

Fótógrafi

Skólavörðustígur 4a | **F7**
www.fotografi.is

Gallery 100°

Bæjarháls 1
www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/
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08:30-16:00

Gallery Auga fyrir Auga

Hverfisgata 35 | **G7**

Gallery StartArt

Laugavegur 12B | **G7**
Tue-Sat 1-17
www.startart.is

Gallery Ágúst

Baldursgata 12 | **F9**
Wed-Sat 12-17
www.galleriagust.is

Gallery Fold

Rauðarástígur 14-16 | **J9**
Mon-Fri 10-18 / Sat 11-16 /
Sun 14-16
www.myndlist.is

Gallery Kling & Bang

Hverfisgata 42 | **G7**
Thurs-Sun from 14-18
this.is/klingogbang/

Gallery Turpentine

Ingólfstræti 5 | **F7**
Tue-Fri 12-18 / Sat 11-16
www.turpentine.is

Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

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

Hitt Húsið

- Gallery Tukt
Pósthússtræti 3-5 | **E6**
www.hithusid.is

i8 Gallery

Klapparstígur 33 | **G7**
Tue-Fri 11-17 / Sat 13-17 and
by appointment. www.i8.is

Living Art Museum

Vatnsstígur 3 - **G7**
Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17 / Thu
13-22. www.nylo.is

Lost Horse Gallery

Skólastræti 1 | **F6**
Weekends from 13-19 and by
appointment on weekdays.

Hafnarborg

Strandgötu 34,
Hafnarfjörður

The National Gallery of

Iceland
Frikirkjuvegur 7 | **E8**

Tue-Sun 11-17

www.listsafn.is

The National

Museum

Suðurgata 41 | **C9**
Open daily 10-17
natmus.is/

The Nordic House

Sturlugata 5 | **C11**
Tue-Sun 12-17
www.nordice.is/

The Numismatic Museum

Einholt 4 | **K9**
Open Mon-Fri 13:30-15:30.

Reykjavík 871 +/-2

Aðalstræti 17 | **D6**
Open daily 10-17

Reykjavík Art Gallery

Skúlagata 28 | **H6**
Tuesday through Sunday 14-18

Reykjavík Art Museum

Open daily 10-16

www.listsafnreykjavikur.is

Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture

Museum Sigtún

Hafnarhús

Tryggvagata 17 | **E5**
Kjarvalsstaðir

Flókagata | **K11**

Reykjavík City Theatre

Listabraut 3

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Grandagarður 8 | **C3**

Reykjavík Museum of Photo-

graphy

Tryggvagata 16 | **D5**
Weekdays 12-19 / Sat-Sun
13-17

www.ljosmyndasafnreykjaviku-
kur.is

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Laugarnestangi 70

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 Káráson

Stykkishólmur

Library of Water
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

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.

Keflavík

Suðsuðvestur, www.sudsudvestur.is, Hafnargata 22, 230 Reykjanesbær, 421-2225

Hafnarfjörður

Hafnarborg, www.hafnarborg.is
Strandgata 34, 220 Hafnarfjörður, 585-5790

Borgarnes

The Icelandic Settlement Centre
www.landnam.is, Brákarbraut 13-15
310 Borgarnes, 437-1600

Stykkishólmur,

Vatnasafnið / Library of Water

Akureyri

Populus Tremula, poprem.blogspot.com/
Kaupvangsstræti 12, 600 Akureyri
Kunstraum Wohnraum, Ásabyggð 2, 600 Akureyri

Mývatn

Mývatnsstofa, Egilsstaðir, Sláturhúsið

Seyðisfjörður

Skaftfell, www.skaftfell.is,
Austurvegur 42, 710 Seyðisfjörður, 472-1632

Hveragerði

LÁ Art, www listasafnarnesingia.is, Austur-
mörk 21, 210 Hveragerði, 483-1727



Sticks and The Stones May Break My Bones But Ink Will Never Hurt Me

Sódoma Reykjavík

Tryggvagata 22

Friday June 5th- 14:00- 23:00

Saturday June 6th- 12:00- 3:00

Sunday June 7th- 12:00- 20:00

Loved by many and hated by mothers all across the world, tattoos are an ever-growing fashion accessory in popular modern society. But for some, tattoos are more than an accessory – they're a way of life, so why not celebrate this? The Icelandic Tattoo Festival does just that. This year, Sódoma plays host to the festival that goes on THIS VERY WEEKEND (unless you're reading this too late).

Started back in 2006, event founder Þróstur Hafþórsson, his wife and friends established a convention to widen the interest as well as discovery of body art and tats across Iceland. Now in its fourth year, the Icelandic Tattoo Festival has gained sponsorship from internationally renowned tattoo magazine Prick. Bringing with it respected artists Sofia, Jason June, Scott Ellis, Ezra Haidet, Thomas Asher, Jen Beirola, Erin Lambert, Chip Baskin, and Rich Lajoie who will all exhibit and perform live for your pleasure.

Friday plays host to an evening of dark melancholy country rock and rockabilly courtesy of Esja and Langi Seli og Skuggarnir. And what could accompany tattoos on a Sunday better than Iceland's very own Rolling Stones tribute band? Well nothing.

Opening times are 14:00 till 23:00 on Friday, 12:00 till 23:00 on Saturday and finishes slightly earlier on Sunday as some of us have work the following morning, 12:00 till 20:00 to be exact. Admission is the modest some of 600ISK per day. **JB**

Ongoing



Vanity Disorder

i8 Gallery

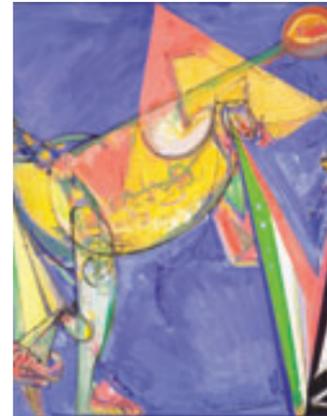
Klapparstígur 33

Artist, Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir a.k.a Shoplifter, exhibits her new collection Vanity Disorder at i8 Gallery located on Klapparstígur. The Reykjavík born, Big Apple resident constructs murals made from real human hair (living donors) that are normally produced and died for hairdressing extensions. Who would have thought it hey? Apparently she became fascinated with braiding hair whilst she was working in an antique shop. Where Hrafnhildur came across flowers made of hair, as you do. All of which proved to be a hair-raising influence. **JB**

Listasafn Reykjavíkur
Reykjavík Art Museum



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



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



Nína 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 Amaringer & Yohe Fine Art.

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Icelandic Design 2009
Kjarval – Key Works

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13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00		
		17:00	17:00	17:00			



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F O O D

FOR YOUR MIND, BODY AND SOUL

REVIEWS



Balkanika

Vitastigur 10
Open 11-23
Flavour: Bulgarian fast food
Ambiance: Authentic meets Ikea; exceptionally tidy
Service: Quick and friendly

What we think:

A cheap, good alternative to the usual pizza, burger and pylsa.



Fast Bulgarian

The first Bulgarian restaurant in town, fast food joint Balkanika, opened just over a month ago to the joy of the 150 or so Bulgarians living in Reykjavík.

After 2 years away from my previous country of residence, Montenegro, and with golden memories of cevapi booths in Sarajevo and bureks from the pekaras of Dubrovnik, I figured Bulgaria was close enough on the culinary map and eagerly headed to Vitastigur.

It is all very straight-forward in Balkanika: tidy and brand new, with a couple of daily specials for around 1000 ISK on the black board, a set menu including portions for vegetarians and children and a take-away service.

I tried the classic Balkan shopska salad (510 ISK), usually an appetizer or side dish, but large enough on its own to serve as a light lunch for those people who, like me, have the appetite of a bird. There is true magic to the combination of diced tomato, cucumber, onion and pepper covered

with sirene, brine cheese similar to feta. It makes for a brilliant flavour and never fails. "Just rakija missing now" smiled owner Stefán Birgir Guðfinnsson, whose Bulgarian wife Rositsa takes care of the cooking at Balkanika.

My date chose the kebabcheta, a Bulgarian minced pork, and well, phallic shaped offering from the grill, served with fries and tomato salad (1090 ISK). The food was fast, cheap and satisfyingly meaty.

To be honest the Balkan kitchen, with its basic flavour palette, isn't any culinary rollercoaster, especially the fast food variety, and neither is Balkanika. But it is an authentic and cheap alternative to the holy trinity of quick pizza, burger and pylsa. Not a bad thing in this eating-ot obsessed town. — **SARI PELTONEN**

Food & Drink | Venue finder

3 Frakkar Baldursgata 14 F9	Brons Pósthússtræti 9 E6	Grillhúsið Tryggvagata 20 E5/E6	Kaffitár Bankastræti 8 F6	Pizza King Hafnarstræti 18 E6	Sushibarinn Laugavegur 2 F7
Aktu Taktu Skúlugata 15 K8	Café Cultura Hverfisgata 18 G6	Habibi Hafnarstræti 20 D5	Kaffivagninn Grandagarður 10 D1	Pizza Pronto Vallarstræti 4 D6	Svarta Kaffi Laugavegur 54 H8
American Style Tryggvagata 26 E5	Café Loki Lokastígur 28 G9	Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar ("Bullán") Geirsgata 1 D5	Kebabhúsið Austurstræti 2 E6	Pizzaverksmiðjan Lækjargötu 8 E6	Sægreifinn Verbuð 8, Geirsgata D5
Argentina Steakhouse Barónstígur I8	Café Paris Austurstræti 14 E6	Hilolla Batar Ingólfstorg D6	Kofi Tómasar Frænda Laugavegur 2 F7	Prikið Bankastræti 12 F6	Tapas Vesturgata 3B D5
Austurlandahraðlestin Hverfisgata 64A H7	Café Roma Rauðarárstígur 8 J9	Hornið Hafnarstræti 15 E6	Krua Thai Tryggvagata 14 D5	Ráðhúskaffi Tjarnargata 11 D7	Thorvaldsen Austurstræti 8 E6
Á Næstu Grösom Laugavegur 20B G7	Domo Bingholtstræti 5 F7	Hótel Holt Bergstaðarstræti 37 F7	La Primavera Lækjargata 9 E6	Santa Maria Laugavegur 22A, F7	Tíu Dropar Laugavegur 27 G7
B5 Bankastræti 5 F6	Einar Ben Veltusundi E6	Humarshúsið Ammtmanstígur 1 E7	Lystin Laugavegur 73 H7	Segafredo Lækjartorg E6	Tívoli Laugavegur 3 F7
Basil & Lime Klapparstíg 38 G7	Eldsmiðjan Bragagata 38A G9	Hressó Austurstræti 20 E6	Mokka Skólavörðustígur 3A F7	Serrano Hringbraut 12 I3	Vegamót Vegamótastígur 4 G7
Babalú Skólavörðustígur 22A G8	Fiskmarkaðurinn Aðalstræti 12 D6	Icelandic Fish & Chips Tryggvagata 8 E5	Nonnabiti Hafnarstræti 9 E6	Shalimar Austurstræti 4 E6	Við Tjörnina Templarsund 3 E7
Balthazar Hafnarstræti 1-3 D6/E6	Geysir Bar/Bistro Aðalstræti 2 D6	Jómfrúin Lækjargata 4 E6	O Sushi Lækjargata 2A E6	Sjávarkjallarinn Aðalstræti 2 D6	Vítabar Bergþórugata 21 H9
Bæjarins Beztu Tryggvagata E6	Garðurinn Klappastígur 37 G7	Kaffi Hjómáland Laugavegur 21 G7	Pisa Lækjargötu 6b E6	Sólón Bankastræti 7a F6	



“Anything can happen, it’s a long way to Delhi”*

Austur-India Félagið

Hverfisgata 56
www.austurindia.is

Flavour: Indian

Ambiance: Relaxed, up-scale

Service: Pleasant and friendly

What we think:

Austur-India Félagið is like Harrison Ford: reliably charming, easygoing with a dash of style, but just a bit too big of a name to come cheap.



The star sapphire amongst Reykjavík’s ethnic eateries, Austur-India Félagið, is a place often cited as a favourite by the local glitterati and at which Indiana Jones (the dude who plays him anyway) dines when adventuring in Iceland.

With its unpretentious minimalism, Austur-India Félagið is a relaxed version of the usual upmarket affair, but still not quite your corner take-out curry shop. The restaurant’s following is strong: at 8 pm on a weeknight the place was full, so reserve ahead.

For a starter, my date chose the signature salad with tiger prawns grilled in coriander, cumin, chilli and masala (1.995 ISK). Sadly four prawns on a limp looking canteen style salad bed was a bit of a let-down. Thank goodness for my pappadums (1.295 ISK) with raisin, tomato and coriander chutney and a big bottle of cold Cobra.

I drowned the rest of my signature salad sorrows in a delicious mango lhasie (400 ISK).

For the main course, I had Kori Gasi, chicken breast in coconut, turmeric and ginger (3.295 ISK). Medium-spicy and tender—a safe bet. Companion’s filet of lamb in almond, cinnamon, cloves and cumin (4.195

ISK) came from the tandoori oven on a bed of sizzling onions, meat softly crumbled at the edges and blending into the delicious seasoning, though not quite capturing the exquisite tenderness you would hope for from lamb filet.

As an accompaniment we had gorgeous Pulao (895 ISK), basmati rice with cinnamon, cardamom and cloves; garlic naan bread (390 ISK) and cucumber-yogurt rajita (695 ISK), which my date, having announced cucumber to be his arch enemy, ate if not in ecstasy, at least in honest approval.

For desert, we drained a mango soup with coconut cream with such enthusiasm that the table next to us ordered whatever we were having.

Most things from food to service to setting were in good order on our visit to Austur-India Félagið, but for this one must pay. Our dinner for two (sharing beer, accompaniments and dessert) gathered a 13.000 ISK bill – which borders on being too much, even after careful considerations on the general cost of eating out in Reykjavik and kreppa.

— SARI PELTONEN

* *Indiana Jones in the ‘Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom’ 1984*

Lunch

1 Grái Kötturinn

Hverfisgata 16a

Nothing quite beats a good brunch at Grái Kötturinn. Their hearty servings of gourmet breakfast foods and intimate, personal atmosphere will ensure repeat visits. Especially recommended for those in need of hangover resuscitation.

2 Tíu dropar

Laugavegur 27

We really, really like Tíu dropar for coffee and pancakes, succulent soups and a glimpse of old Reykjavík. Really, this is an excellent place to spend ones Saturday afternoons. Very kid-friendly too.

3 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 (more on that in our next issue).

Fancy Schmancy

1 Gallery Restaurant at Hótel Holt,

Bergstaðastræti 37

If you can afford to go there, go there. Simple as that. Atmospheric, old-school decorations and prominently displayed paintings by some of Iceland’s most revered masters lend the place an air of sophistication, but the real draw is the sheer quality of their food and service.

2 Tapas Bar

Vesturgata 3b

Tapas Bar actually borders between fancy and casual, but it sure ain’t no budget food-hole. Any of their variety menus, along with some nice red wine and a couple of cocktails are a sure-fire way to kickstart a night on the town with friends, the tasty food and relaxed, carefree environment are sure to get you started. However, do expect to fork over a nice sum at the end of your meal. Added quality: they probably serve food later than every other sit down restaurant in Iceland (23:30 on weekdays, 1 AM on weekends).

3 Fiskmarkaðurinn

Aðalstræti 12

Master chef Hrefna Sætran conjures up some truly exhilarating courses from Iceland’s best and freshest seafood. Usually has foreigners frothing at the mouth with excitement, and us locals like it fine, too.

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.

3 Drekkinn

Njálsgata 23

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.

For full restaurant and food listings and venue finder visit www.grapevine.is for detailed information.



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"[I look to the] anthropologists pointing out that this really is what is going on – anarchism is the normal state of human communities – and then the theorists who are theorizing about anarchy as politics and then the romantic anarchists who are just 'ahh, fuck everything, just have fun, that's the natural way. Live your life!' I mix all these together."

The group that's not a group at all but still kinda thinks like a group and looks like a group even though they're totally not a group

"All of us are individuals. I think that is important to understand to start with," began Swedish transplant Freyja in the community space of Kaffi Hljómalind. "We don't have an organisation of five guys who run everything. We're friends. We do things together. Some things I want to be a part of, some things I don't."

"People come and go; they're not always the same. They do what interests them. It's the meaning behind the actions that are common," added Fotini, another foreigner taking an active role in Reykjavík's anarchy scene.

"Of course we're a group right now but we won't be a group in ten minutes, we'll be individuals," contributed Vermundur. Reacting to the look of slight confusion on my face – people who work together to achieve common ends after being brought together through shared ideologies are just about as textbook 'group' as it gets in my experience, and such anarchist organisations as Aftaka and Öskra do exist... and they're definitely groups – the Icelander joked "this is going to take a while, we had better start thinking about dinner!"

I'm not going to lie, the whole non-group/organisation concept is an issue for me. I, personally, had a hard time grasping their claim of not being organised. I get that they're not members of some anarchists union in which I could be Anarchism Member No. 426902 if I keep up with my monthly dues, but they have a system that must have taken some organisation. Sitting in Hljómalind, these young people had a series of hand signals worked out to keep track of the order in which they wanted to speak (I was quickly told that it was not my responsibility to keep track when I felt like a teacher who had to point to students with raised hands); they have a private mailing list to circulate information amongst anarchists online; they (on an international level) send out a weekly mass e-mail to anarchists and other interested parties throughout Europe, the Grapevine included. That's pretty damn organised, no?

Still, the anti-group concept the young activists are pitching is valid and any misunderstanding on my part was, admittedly, based solely upon semantics. Anarchists are not a group, at least not in an official sense. They are individuals with ideologies that are generally anti-hierarchical and anti-capitalistic in nature. Of course, not all anarchists will even agree on that and it has been noted that those calling themselves anarchists share little more than a vague family resemblance in most cases.

This lack of universality of thought among those calling themselves 'anarchists' is the very motive for asserting the non-group characteristic. Members of a group must be personally responsible, to some extent, for the actions of the group as a whole or members thereof acting on behalf of the group. Since the ideologies of anarchists sometimes overlap but can also find themselves at far ends of the social spectrum, it is in the interest of anarchistic individuals to remain as such and take responsibility for their actions alone.

"People who don't understand the structure will see that the anarchists squatted a house and it was published on this website and then the next article on that same website is that someone shat on a ballot. And people will ask, 'are you really involved with these people?' This is a very common discussion that I encounter," says Vermundur. "Like 'oh, there is a photo on that website where you are stealing a house and I read about it and there are some good

"This is what happens when people are used to being served. Someone to take care of the garbage for you; someone to take care of your protest for you."

points being made. But then you're hanging out with the same people that shit on a ballot!? Something is seriously wrong with you!' But, knowing the people does not mean that I approve of their actions. This is not a group. A group will always be judged on their actions as a group, but these are just individuals that share ideas some of the time, not all of it."

Sitting in that same community space, adjacent to the anarchism library that he established and maintains, Siggí Pönk shed some light on the non-group of local anarchists. *"They don't have organised meetings, they don't have a name. It's a movement. Iceland functions like a village so you don't need to have a phone network or e-mail network to get the people together and get things organised. The anarchist movement is the same way. We have e-mails where we exchange ideas of what to do next. If somebody has an idea and says, 'hey, I want to do this, who wants to join me? Come meet me here.'"*

Anarchism flourishing in the 'village' of Iceland is not surprising in modern times. Especially considering that anthropologists have cited ancient Iceland as an anarchist settlement. Harold Barclay, a noted anarchist and anthropologist and author of *People without Government: An Anthropology of Anarchy*, writes of Iceland's chief system, in which leaders (Goðorðsmenn) were not granted a set period of time to rule based upon elections, rather they could remain in power so long as they held the favour of the people. This was done through fair and ethical rule and not making a show of the power they held.

Today, the anarchists believe, power is easier to achieve by those least deserving of it, and it is dangerously wielded. Siggí Pönk explains: *"People who do police work or have more power than the public, they are not in any way more trustworthy than any one of us. And the people in government, they're as stupid as me, they make the same mistakes as me but I don't have power. My mistakes in life don't affect the rest of the world."*

Got a problem? Don't just sit there, do something about it!

The minor mistakes of an individual may not have widespread consequences, but that is not to say that the actions of individuals are equally narrow in scope. Group or no group, anybody observing anarchists within Reykjavík or elsewhere in the world is sure to note that they are more motivated by their ideologies than the average citizen. Many people see something wrong within their community and they complain within their group

of friends or to their families, making critical statements but doing nothing more to affect change and remedy what they see as a dysfunction in their society.

Anarchists see a problem, meet other people concerned with the same problem and then they try and do something about it. These young people I spent time with, trying to understand their motivations and beliefs and goals, impressed me to no end and made me feel terribly inactive on the social scene – I'm prone to bitching about communal issues that rub me the wrong way, not getting out on the streets and acting on my sentiments in hopes of changing the system.

As Freyja eloquently puts it: *"If you want to change something don't just get somebody who is higher up than you to change it, get out on the fucking street and change it yourself in some way. Start working for your community rather than begging somebody else to work for your community."*

Siggí Pönk matches this sentiment in the context of the protests that rocked Iceland in the past year and the input he received from those less active within the community.

"All these people who are telling people how to do things better, why don't they do it themselves? With the actions after the crash but before the big protests happened people were always giving us points on what to do next. 'Oh, you should protest over there, you activist guys.' But we're tired, too. This is what happens when people are used to being served. Someone to take care of the garbage for you; someone to take care of your protest for you. They want people to take care of their anger for them so they don't have to do it themselves. It pisses a lot of us anarchists off sometimes. 'I'm not doing it myself, but you should keep on doing it.'"

It's probably easy for most to relate to the inactive commoner, bogged down by the feeling of being a David taking on a Goliath. Each of us is just one person, what can one person do? This mentality, Siggí Pönk believes, is what drains the passion from a lot of anarchists and activists prematurely.

"I don't believe in a revolution as something happening next week, I believe it's about learning new ways of going around each other. That's why I'm sowing the seeds. When I started publishing books I thought this was going to have an affect some fifty years after I'm dead. If you're an activist you're just going to burn out if you think your activism is going to save the world next week. So I just look at myself as part of a movement that has been going on since the beginning of humanity."

Happily ever after

Anarchism is a heavy subject. One can diligently read through every book on the subject in Siggí's extensive library and still not have exhausted all the theories and considered all the sides to the concept. Anarchism, as it is being widely practiced in such a small place as Reykjavík, is a testament to how massive and elusive the philosophy is: individuals, sometimes coming together in pseudo-groups, sometimes sharing ideologies, sometimes with opposing opinions. Anarchism within a community, it seems, is like a living thing, growing and evolving and changing to suit equally amorphous ideals and goals. With this fluidity of meaning in mind and the realisation that anarchists, as individuals, have the free will to pick and choose their battles. I suppose Njáll fits the bill after all, regardless of being unimpressed with what is possibly Iceland's most significant social-movement in recent history.

Njáll is an anarchist.

Meet Your Friendly Neighbourhood Anarchists!



Siggí Pönk is a 41-year old heavy hitter in Reykjavík's anarchy scene. Starting off as a young punk rocker, breaking windows at McDonalds and causing a general ruckus around town, Siggí has progressed in his ideologies and now maintains the anarchist library out of Kaffi Hljómalind. He has always been known to have a Jesus-complex, striving to save the world as best he can. Though he grew up on a farm, his vegetarianism and empathy toward animals prohibited him from continuing in the family business and, instead, is an ER nurse in Reykjavík.



'Freja' is a Swedish girl in her early twenties. She moved to Reykjavík to study and has since found herself active in the anarchist movement. She was drawn to anarchism out of an urge to affect positive change within her society. "I want to live with people where we create a better society, where I don't ask somebody else to do something for me. I don't do things to fuck the police, why would I want to fuck with the police? I do it out of pure love for my society. It's a dream of society where we show solidarity that brought me to activism. I want to be empowered to affect my society, not just vote every four years."



'Njáll' is an Icelander in his early twenties who has been actively involved with Food Not Bombs since its inception just over a year ago. He is not a student, he has no job, he collects no social benefits, and he spends the bulk of his time on his music and developing social projects. He was drawn to anarchism "because I see that in my relations to people that how I treat other people and how I am treated are not separated, they are the same thing."



'Berglind' is an Icelandic woman in her late twenties, with children and a high-maintenance cat that demands to be walked outdoors on a leash. She has always been anarchy-minded, opting to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle at the age of five and questioning the morality of women wearing fur around the same time. She forayed into active anarchy while living in Australia, when she was presented with the opportunity to participate in a protest in support of refugees. She was so touched by the dedication of strangers to making a change for struggling refugees that she continued to be involved in anarchist actions upon returning to Reykjavík. She calls herself a "green anarchal-communist with nihilistic tendencies."

Pics unrelated. Except the top one. That really is Siggí Pönk.

The History of Icelandic Rock music: Part 4

Hljómar-mania



Having been the island's pop superstars for a whole year, Hljómar set out to conquer the rest of the world in the summer of 1965. This was the first, but definitely not the last, case of Icelandic pop musicians trying to "make it" abroad.

Reynir Oddsson, a young film director, offered to make a feature film about the band's antics, concentrating on the Icelandic "country dance" phenomenon. The band was convinced to foot half of the movie's bill. Shooting started in July 1965 and lasted for three months. All in all, 27 hours of Hljómar playing at various places out in the country were captured on film, with all the hippest dudes and chicks of the times doing the go-go on the side. The movie was called Umbarumbamba, which presumably means some kind of "South African love declaration."

At the same time a world-wise American from the Keflavik naval base, Dan Stevens, stepped in as the band's manager. Now plans for world domination were put to full effect. An audition was set up with Parlophone Records in London: The Beatles' label, no less. Hljómar – now calling themselves Thor's Hammer – played stressfully for a bunch of stern British "suits" in a studio where they afterwards recorded a bunch of original songs written by Gunnar Þórðarson. The audition proved successful and Thor's Hammer scored a record deal.

Hljómar/Thor's Hammer's music had changed a lot since the early innocent beat pop. Guitarist Gunnar had gotten himself a fuzzbox, one of the first fuzz boxes to enter the market in 1965, and he used it a lot. The jazzy drummer took cues from Keith Moon and the band had changed to English lyrics. As they boasted: "We're mostly

concentrating on foreign markets now" – an explanation often heard from Icelandic musicians ever since.

Hljómar had spent lots of money to finance the film, as they thought of it as a safe vehicle towards international fame and fortune. Finally in the spring of 1966, the movie came to Iceland and was premiered in the band's hometown of Keflavík. Umbarumbamba the film had been constantly hyped in the Icelandic media so everybody was expecting a lot when the lights finally dimmed.

The movie turned out to be only 15 minutes long and the storyline did not make any sense whatsoever. The band was in shock and thought the film was "extremely corny." Naturally, the band wanted their money back – or some of it, at least – and bitter feuds between the band and the director ensued. The movie was only shown for two days in Keflavík and hasn't been seen since. Ever. The director presumably has it somewhere in his possession, so there's still some hope that Icelandic pop enthusiasts will eventually see this holy grail of major fuck-up.

The music from the film was no fuck-up though. The Umbarumbamba soundtrack, 6 tracks ambitiously packaged on two 7" EPs in a gatefold-sleeve, came out several weeks after the movie had vanished. As can be envisioned nobody had much interest and the record vanished quickly as well.

It took several decades for the world to discover the great music that Thor's Hammer had committed to vinyl. The tracks – great, raw garage rock, drenched in fuzz and manic drumming – are some of the best Icelandic music of the sixties, and definitely the most original and powerful. The EP is famous amongst collectors and sells for thousands of dollars whenever a copy surfaces. The music has been released on CD and you should definitely check it out.

The lack of world domination – the constant struggle and disappointment – was weary and tiring. The band had lost most of its Icelandic fan base due to their "difficult" music style and their tendencies to "jam" the songs for up to twenty minutes at dances. The band had lived on music for two years but now everybody was broke and feeling down. The old kings were losing out miserably to more dedicated beat groups such as Óðmenn, Toxic, and especially Dátar, the new and rising princes of pop. Something had to change. More of that next time.

– DR. GUNNI

By Dr. Gunni, based on his 2000 book *Eru ekki allir í stuði?* (Rock in Iceland). A revisited update of the book is forthcoming in 2010.

1. Hljómar – or is it Thor's Hammer? First generation of wannabe superstars in foreign territories: Erlingur, Gunnar, Rúnar and Pétur (sitting down).

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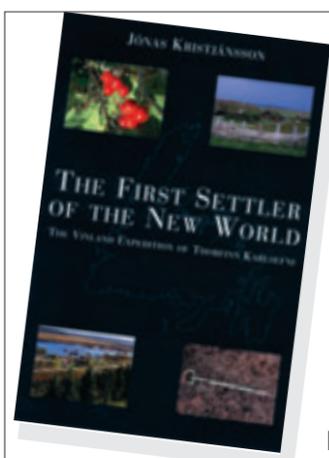
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THE FIRST SETTLER OF THE NEW WORLD

JÓNAS KRISTJÁNSSON

A study of the expedition made by Karlsefni to Vinland the Good in circa 1010 AD which planned to settle there, but was forced to leave due to the hostility of the natives after 3 years. Based on a new appraisal of older sources, in particular the Saga of Eirik the Red, - probably most detailed and most trustworthy source concerning the voyages the North-America.



GAELIC INFLUENCE IN ICELAND

GÍSLI SIGURÐSSON

Why were the Icelanders the only Nordic nation in the Middle Ages to produce secular heroic prose narratives in the vernacular? Is it possible that the first Icelanders were under enough cultural influence from the Gaelic world to establish an entirely different tradition of story telling and poetic talent from that of their Scandinavian homelands?





FESTIVAL OF THE SEA PROGRAMME

SATURDAY JUNE 6, 2009

10:00 Hátíð hafsins trumpeted in by trawlers.

10:00-16:00 Funny Fish. The Marine Research Institute has collected funny and weird fish that will be on display today. See a spine-back, sea-demon, blackgum and other strange animals.

8:00-18:00 Elding Whale Watching Centre by the Old Harbour

Free admittance to the Whale Watching Centre, where you can learn all about the ocean's life forms. Grab some free coffee or juice for the kids. Performance by the Hamrahlíð choir at 16:00. Mini-artshow. Photo-contest all weekend. Guests take pictures of the harbour area, the Elding boats, passersby and everything else to do with the ocean. Get your flickr.com code at the Whale Centre coffee shop and send in your pics to win fun prizes.

9:30, 15:00 Puffin watching. An hour long sailing expedition to Lundey or Akurey to see puffin.
*Adults pay 3.000 ISK;
7-15 year-olds pay 1.500 ISK.*

11:00 Foghorn concerto. Students from the Art Academy of Iceland's composition department play harbouring ships foghorns along with the Reykjavík brass band.
*Conducted by Lárus Grímsson.
Grandagarður.*

11:00 Sea angling ecstasy. Three hour sea angling trip to Faxi. *Adults pay 6.500 ISK; 7-15 year-olds pay 3.500 ISK.*

11:00, 12:00, 13:00, 14:00 Seaman's sailing trip. Sail from the Old harbour (Ægisgarður) to Viðey, then over to Grandi and then back to the harbour. Guests can disembark at Viðey and ferry back home every hour, embark on Grandi and take the next ferry or participate in the seaman's sailing trip, which takes an hour.
*Adults pay 500 ISK;
7-18 year-olds pay 300 ISK.*

11:00-19:15 Seaman's party in Viðey Ferry to Viðey from Skarfabakki:
11:15 - 12:15 - 13:15 - 14:15 - 15:15 - 16:15 - 17:15 - 19:15.

Seaman's sailing trip at 11:00, 12:00, 13:00 and 14:00.
*Price: 500 ISK for adults,
300 ISK for 7-18 year-olds.
Seaman's offer in Viðeyjarstofa.*

13:00 Bottled-message factory. Send a message in a bottle to the world. Sæbjörg sails out the bay at 16:00 and sends the messages off.
Grandagarður.

13:30 An exciting football match and tug-o-war between the crews from our fleet's most successful ships.
Grandinn.

14:00 Speed-rowing. Members from the Reykjavík Kayak club compete.
West harbour.

14:00 Brokey Sailing competition. A race by the islands set off with a cannon. Set off and finished by Ingólfsgarður.
Sæbraut, by the Sólfar sculpture.

14:00-16:00 Ever pet a crab? Living sea-creatures that you can look at and touch under the guidance of the staff of the marine museum at the Fjölskyldu-og húsdýragarður.
Grandagarður.

15:15 and 15:45 Rimmugýgur shows cool fighting stunts and presents the Hafnarfjörður Viking festival.
Grandagarður.

16:00 Bottled-message sailing. Sæbjörg sails to the ocean and throws bottle-messages overboard.
Bótar-harbour at Grandi.

Sunday June 7, 2009

08:00 Festive flags decorate the harbour's vessels.

8:00-18:00 Elding Whale Watching Centre by the Old Harbour
Free admittance to the Whale Watching Centre, where you can learn all about

the ocean's life forms. Grab some free coffee or juice for the kids. Performance by the Hamrahlíð choir at 16:00. Mini-artshow. Photo-contest all weekend. Guests take pictures of the harbour area, the Elding boats, passersby and everything else to do with the ocean. Get your flickr.com code at the Whale Centre coffee shop and send in your pics to win fun prizes.

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Seaman's offer in Viðeyjarstofa.*

10:00-16:00 Funny Fish. The Marine Research Institute has collected funny and weird fish that will be on display today. See a spine-back, sea-demon, blackgum and other strange animals.
Grandi.

10:00-17:00 Members of the Reykjavík Accordion Club perform sweet music.

12:00-17:00 Lively fun at Miðbakki. Foam party, kids' singing contest, bouncy castle, climbey-castle and lots

of other fun machines.
Miðbakki.

13:00, 14:00, 15:00 Fun family sailing. The class ship of Landsbjörg rescue squad, Sæbjörg, will sail the open seas. A great chance for visitors to see Reykjavík. View the city from a completely different angle than usual. Refreshments sold on board. Free admittance.
Miðbakki.

13:00-16:00 Ever pet a crab? Living sea-creatures that you can look at and touch under the guidance of the staff of the marine museum at the Fjölskyldu-og húsdýragarður.
Grandagarður.

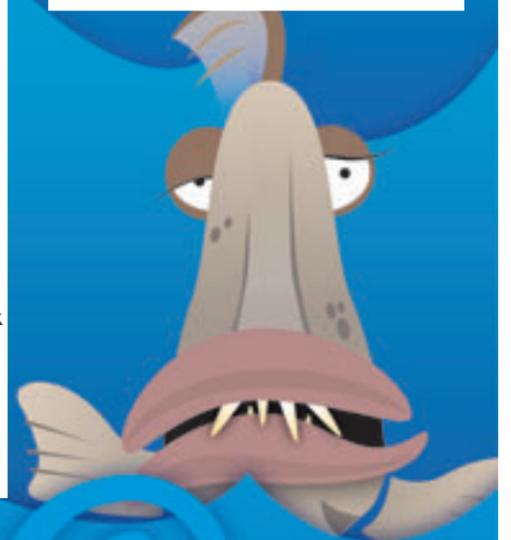
13:00-16:00 Bottled-message factory. Send a message in a bottle to the world. Sæbjörg sails out the bay at 16:00 and sends the messages off.
The Sæbjörg

14:00 Speed-rowing. Members from the Reykjavík Kayak club compete.
West harbour.

15:00 Race-rowing in the inner harbour. Skilled teams of oarsmen compete.
Miðbakki.

15:00 Aerobatic airplane stunts over Reykjavík harbour.

16:00 Ocean-rescue. The Icelandic Coast Guard demonstrates rescue tactics. *Miðbakki.*



Seaman's Day

Ever wanted to party like a seaman? If the answer is YES then now's your chance! As part of the Seamen's Day festival (now modernised to The Festival of the Sea) you are invited to join the ferry crew to party on down in the delightful tiny island of Viðey, located just off the north east coast of Reykjavík. Departing from Skarfabakki on both Saturday 6 June and Sunday 7 June, running at quarter past

the hour, every hour between 11:15 and 19:15. Get merry and celebrate Iceland's rich maritime heritage for the small sum of 500 ISK for adults and 300 ISK for the little nippers.

What: Seaman's party in Viðey

Where: Skarfabakki harbour

When: Saturday 6 June and Sunday 7 June, 11:15- 12:15- 13:15- 14:15- 15:15- 16:15- 17:15- 18:15- 19:15



"They put on such a beautiful meal for us. We had the most amazing freshest fish I've ever had in my life. It was all so perfectly cooked too...Beautiful!"
Jamie Oliver's Diary



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Music

Músíktílaunir

The Great Incubator of Icelandic Music

Words

Þórir Georg Jónsson

Pictures from MT finals:

Sigurður Ástgeirsson

Read this:

Þórir visited Músíktílaunir - one of Iceland's most significant cultural events. Period.



It has been the breeding ground of some of Iceland's most loved outfits, with bands and artists from every genre gaining success and recognition through the competition



in MT this year. **Melkorka** were as epic as ever with their prog-pop rock and sounded good. The night's last band, **We Went To Space**, didn't seem to hit their stride. Their set was messy and their songs got lost in the room's echo.

To no one's surprise **Bróðir Svartúlfs** won the first prize, with **Ljósvaki** getting the second and **The Vintage** scoring third.

One of the biggest changes I have noticed in the last few years is the lowering of the average age of bands. While a few years ago, most bands would contain members over the age of 18; this year saw only a handful older than that. But that does not make the competition any worse. It just means younger kids are getting interested, and I'm sure this competition is an influence on that. And hopefully it will remain an inspiration for kids all over the country to pick up instruments and write some songs for many years to come.

It was that time of the year again; the time when youngsters emerge from their garages with stars in their eyes, hoping to follow in the footsteps of their heroes. It was Músíktílaunir time! And Grapevine was there, every step of the way!

Every year since 1982 (apart from '84, when the contest was dropped due to a teachers' strike) this has been one of Iceland's most interesting and entertaining musical events. But this competition isn't only a chance for young talents to shine. It has been the breeding ground of some of Iceland's most loved outfits, with bands and artists from every genre gaining success and recognition through the competition. Whether it be the carefree pop of Greifarnir (1986), the crushing death metal of Sororicide (1991, then named Infusoria), Maus's alternative radio friendly rock (1994), the hip hop sensation XXX Rottweiler (2000) and, more recently, the indie-rock stylings of Jakóbinarína and Mammút to name a few.

Today one might think that with self-promotional tools such as Myspace and Facebook – and the Internet in general – bands would see less appeal in a contest like Músíktílaunir. Today, promoting your band and getting some attention has become so easy that the need for an event like this is often questioned. While it used to be one of the very few chances young up and coming bands had to get their names out there, today most of the participants have music available for all to hear, before they even decide to partake.

This year, like the last few, the final night was held in Listasafn Reykjavíkur. A big venue, mostly just used for the Iceland Airwaves festival (or once in a while for a well known international act such as Iggy Pop). There has been a custom for the previous year's winners to open the final night of the competition, and we thus got to witness **Agent Fresco** perform. The band has gained so much popularity since they won Músíktílaunir that it's hard to believe it's only been a year. They did a good job and played with confidence and professionalism that belied their short time together as a band.

The first band of the competition, however, was **Artika**. They played emotionally charged and somewhat epic alternative rock. Next up, **Captain Fufanu** offered some danceable electronica. They mixed in some live keyboards and trumpet playing, which made their show more than just a staid laptop performance. **The Vintage** blasted out some 70s style stadium rock and did a surprisingly convincing job being only 15 years of age. **Ljósvaki** added some comedic anecdotes to his retro electro pop that unfortunately didn't seem to amuse that many. **Flawless Error** brought back the grunge, Nirvana t-shirts and all. Their drummer, only 12, was probably the youngest performer of the competition and was quite impressive. **Blanco** jumped around howling like wolves, playing guitar solos and beaming with joy. However, they lacked a bit in the playing department and their songs were messy and difficult to follow.

After a short break the first band on were **Bróðir Svartúlfs**. And, had anyone harboured doubts, they assuredly convinced the entire crowd they were indeed this year's winners-to-be. The group played even better than the week before, and their singer/rapper was on fire, spitting out his lyrics with passion and attitude. Next on stage was **Discord**. Maybe it was the venue, but their proggy deathmetal just seemed to lack a little power. They did play well, and there was nothing really to complain about. The same problem also seemed to plague **Spelgur**. In a smaller, more intimate space, their cutesy folk songs had a lot of charm and hooks, but here they just passed you by without you hardly noticing them, which is a shame because they were a band that would have had a decent chance

This year there were four semi final nights with two or three bands making it to the finals from each night. Here are some highlights from the first four nights.

Friday March 27:

There were a couple of nice surprises on the first night of MT, the first and biggest being the affectionately named **Miss Piss**. They played some catchy, simple tunes that stuck in my head for days to come. The other thing that stuck out was **Knights Templar's** singer, who had probably the best voice of the whole competition.

Saturday March 28:

Saturday did not have many stand out points, apart from **Earendel's** metallic assault. They played old school power metal with the required guitar solos, head bangs and vocal exercises.

Sunday March 29:

The biggest highlight of Sunday night was of course **Bróðir Svartúlfs**, who were excellent. Another good band that night was **Wistaria**, whose metal was a little more modern sounding than previous night's Earendel, but just as entertaining. The biggest surprise of the night however was the vocalist for **Spiral Groove**. He sounded remarkably like Iceland's pop legend Stefán Hilmarrson in his early days.

Monday March 30:

The biggest surprise of the whole competition was **Pascal Pinon** not making it to the finals. They were probably my favourite band of the whole event. They played nice acoustic indie-pop with a little touch of twee. Their vocals were very good and their songwriting skills even better. Monday night also brought us the only real hip-hop acts of the event. **Egill Orðljóður** and **Lonogdon** were a nice change of pace, but even though Lonogdon might have been slightly better in the beat department, both groups lacked in vocal delivery. Another moment of interest and slight comedic value was **The Vintage's** first song. You can't help but be a little amused by a 14 year-old singing a song called Let's get it on.

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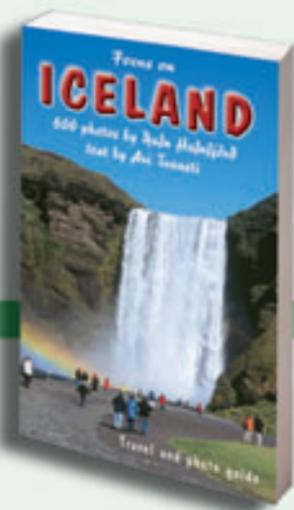
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We Want You!

Foolsgold exhibition launched at Lost Horse Gallery

www.losthorse.is

Diligent readers of the Reykjavik Grapevine, as well as Reykjavik art enthusiasts, must have witnessed the get-up-and-go attitude at the Lost Horse Gallery over the last two years. Its operator, Alexander Zaklynsky, has been hard-hitting in establishing lively collaborations as well as hosting unorthodox exhibitions, instalments, etc. But what is it that's so charming about these old stables morphed into art haven?



Pay checks absent, free alcohol present

Alexander sums up last two year's experience in these words: "We've basically been having a lots of fun; throwing shows and giving away free alcohol. Most of the stuff we've done has been really interesting, but we've collaborated with a lot of different artists and we've gotten to know a bunch of fascinating people".

When you walk into the gallery, you notice right away that the feel isn't what you'd expect from most white wine serving galleries. You'd rather expect fellow artists clinking their moonshine glasses together and cheering in a blunt manner, rather than the first lady chit-chatting about her diamonds while gently polishing off her Dom Perignon.

"Maybe we're more engaging in cultural traditions, given the fact it's situated in an ancient horse stable and we're kind of glorifying that aspect of the phenomenon," Alexander explains as he tries to put his finger on what it is exactly what's sets his gallery apart from other similar

Reykjavik establishments, "we're diving into a historic culture and maybe making more meaning of things. It's more than just a dull exhibition space, more rough and meaningful. Something like that."

Besides the uniqueness in terms of atmosphere there's one fact that can't be overlooked and is maybe a crucial factor in the big picture: the truancy of money. But then again, if people were living up to the 50 Cent maxim "Get rich or die trying" at The Lost Horse, would it make any difference? "Money really wouldn't change the atmosphere at all in my opinion," he explains and then elaborates, "we wouldn't be doing any yuppie stuff, but people might be more constructive with a little financial backup."

The Financial Crisis: The Lost Horse's Catcher in the Rye

As all things that have a beginning, The Lost Horse also has an ending, but its ending was probably more anticipated than in most cases: the house was due for demolition two years after opening, or right about now. When I asked the



operator whether this was in fact still the plan he seemed a bit amazed that time had passed so quickly, but got his head straight in a moment and explained the current situation: "It's possibly gonna be ripped down two years from now, but because of the whole financial situation things aren't exactly in motion. So you might even say we've benefited a bit from the crisis."

Giving Alexander's stature as a patron of some sort, it seemed wise to ask him about how the current financial crunch has influenced the local art scene. "The scene in whole hasn't lost its edge, on the contrary. People have maybe become more intrusive and the galaxy of available spaces have given people a lot of new opportunities." The impact on society, though, hasn't only been positive, because the cash flow has definitely decreased: "In terms of art buying – we've definitely suffered," he explains.

Foolsgold and A.S.E.A Recruitment

This June 17, Lost Horse will premier its next exhibition, which is quite an interesting one. Bearing the name "Foolsgold," you might suspect that it refers to the blown up skeleton economy prevailing in Iceland in the pre-crisis era, but it's actually a replica of a similar exhibit shown in New York this March that ran for some time with substantial success. "The model for the exhibition is the pres-

ervation of nature, endangered species and so forth," Alex explains, but the exhibition is a collaboration between various artists and the organization A.S.E.A (Artists Supporting Environmental Awareness).

In these artists' mind, visual art is a great medium to convey environmental ideals and arouse awareness: "People definitely look at art, and we're using a different method to address these environmental issues. We let the visual images speak for us. We're also defying the bureaucratic aspects of environmental campaigns in a way, where 90% of the funding goes into operational costs." Here in Iceland the main issue that the A.S.E.A. is tackling is the whaling massacre and other sea-related affairs, but they make it clear that although that's the current focus point, in the midst of the present political chaos, those issues aren't exclusive at all.

Before the actual opening, they will be hosting a sort-of open office in the next couple of weeks, where artists can come and contribute if they like, but the A.S.E.A. is always recruiting artists out there who have similar ideals and want to be a part of it. Power always lies in numbers, especially in regards to funding. "We're hoping to throw many events as well as doing interesting collaboration projects in the future – and we encourage everybody to pop by."

— SIGURDUR KJARTAN KRISTINSSON

1. Proprietor Alexander Zaklynsky (left) with Lost Horse owner Agnar Agnarsson.
2. Lost Horse
3. More Horse

nitjanda.

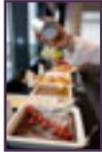
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What a lovely day to be out, the sun shining for once with a crisp sea breeze. Perfect conditions to clamber aboard a boat and spot some sea mammals. Note: not the perfect way to nurse a hangover.

Elding tours located in the old harbour of Reykjavik claim a staggering 95% sighting guarantee. If you're one of the unfortunate 5% then you're generously offered another tour for free. Lucky for me, and a few dozen others, we saw a whole lot of blubber – both on board and in the ocean of course.

We set off punctually at 9:00 aboard SS Elding I, complete with 3 viewing platforms, a bar (serving special Whale Punch – a coffee and rum concoction) and numerous children kitted out with luminous orange light jackets and packed lunches. Strangely reminiscent of a school trip, the journey was both restless and nauseating.

First stop was the tiny landmass of Akurey, otherwise known as Puffin Island. An accurate description as it is solely inhabited by puffins; by this I mean a shit load of puffins! Be sure to catch these vibrant birds when they're there (between the months of May and August).

Our voyage to the unsheltered Faxaflói bay was pleasantly interrupted by not only Harbour Porpoises but also three White-beaked dolphins showing off for the numerous cameras. It proved to be a rather moving experience, or that could have just been the seasickness.

Everyone rushed to the front of the deck, crammed like seamen in the proverbial nut sack, at the first mention of a Minke Whale from our very pleasant and informative tour guide. Apparently a juvenile surfaced just less than 5 meters away from us, but I couldn't see from the masses of people and their lenses. However, the absolutely frenzied look on those folk's faces was in and of itself well worth the trip.

– JONATHAN BAKER ESQ

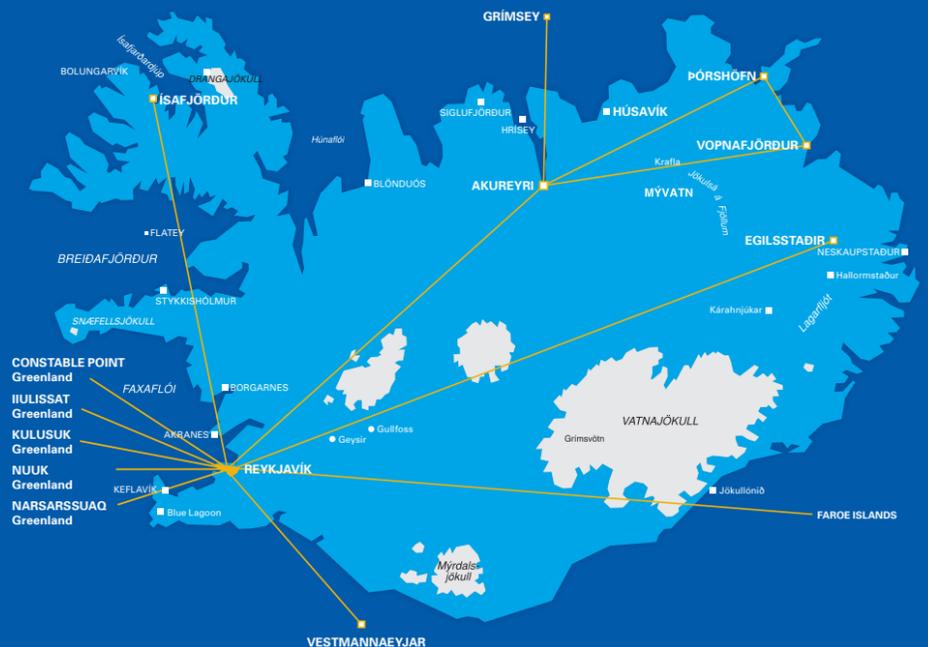


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Climb Every Mountain

Puffing And Panting Up The Esja



The handsome, looming monstrosity of Mount Esja emerges from the sea, and sits, keeping watch over Reykjavík. It is a very good mountain to admire from afar, like a secret crush whose house you just “happen” to drive by. Then comes the actual first experience, in person (yes, in person!) of talking to the crush: the sweaty palms, the avoidance of eye contact, the dry mouth, all the usual signs of studied familiarity, yet unknowing expectancy.

Luckily, I had a guide from Mountain Climbing to initiate communication and ease me into really getting to know the mountain. She picked my fellow intern and me up at 9:30 in the morning. Not so bright and early – it was a dismal, rainy day, not exactly what I had pegged as the weather I would have on my “perfect” hike. Luckily, she had thought ahead and provided us with some more

suitable pants which ended up being very necessary. We drove about 30 minutes to reach the base of the mountain. My confidence waned a little as I saw the mountain grow in front of my eyes; it was much larger than I had anticipated – 914 meters of volcanic rock to be exact.

“Hell, I could have been smoking a cigarette”

After a look at the map, we started on our way. The beginning twenty minutes of the walk were easy enough, as we walked on a slowly inclining gravel path. Hell, I could have been doing it smoking a cigarette. Then the stairs began. And the rocks. And the inclines. I was left puffing hard behind my colleague and guide. I kept looking down at my feet in slight defeat and embarrassment as I walked

along; I was pretty convinced this mountain and I weren’t clicking so well.

My guide knew exactly what to do. We stopped a few times as she told us about the landscape below, and the plants and trees in the area. She regaled us with stories of the early settlers in the area, of the hidden people, and many other tidbits that made the hike amusing, and helped me acclimate to the unfamiliar surroundings. The obvious respect my guide had for the history of Iceland and, specifically, the mountain, pushed me onward. A little shot of positive outlook was what I needed.

Like fucking Rocky!

As the hike continued, we stopped a few more times to take in the views. The immensity of black rock swelling up around us was overwhelming. But

my view was on the upper final destination. The path faded as we reached part of the summit, and there were large and loose rocks between us and the destination. We trekked up this area as quickly as possible, and the ending rock was in sight. When we finally reached it, after a short incline, I felt like throwing my arms up like fucking Rocky. Instead, I looked around. The views were impossibly pristine, and seeing the land I had just traversed was pretty insane. We took a long breather, heard a few, longer traditional stories about Esja, and signed our names in a guestbook located next to the end rock (another tradition).

In the time we took at the top, the skies had opened up in the unpredictable, lovely Icelandic way. The hike down seemed like a cinch; any previous nervousness gave way to full-on, carefree hiking. Smooth sailing, if you

will. Once we reached the bottom, our guide treated us to a snack of flat bread, or flatbrauð, and cheese. It was delicious, especially after the three-hour trip up and back. On the drive back, it was clear that the mountain and I had established something past far-off, unknowing glances, with the intercession of my guide, of course. I was glad I got to know the backdrop of the city up close, and it was (relatively) painless in the end. If there was any doubt of my new relations with the land, I received my certificate within the week, stating: “By participating in the Esja tour of Mountain Climbing, you have made this dream yours and you have made it come true. Congratulations!”

Why, thank you.
– JOYCE GUZOWSKI

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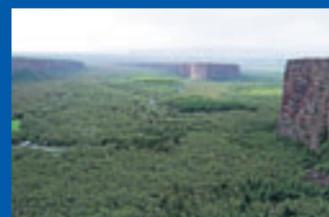
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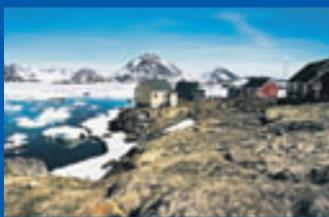
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Travel | Bus or foot-friendly places **Next issue** 'Borrow someone's car and you're set for fun.'

"Within Your Reach"

Five destinations that don't take a lot of trouble or any huge cars to get to

Ah, mellow old Icelandic summer is once again upon us. We all know what that means. Midnight sun insomnia interspersed with heavy bouts of wind and horizontal rain. And a lot of nice travel, of course. One of the great things about staying in the greater-Reykjavík area – all of Iceland for that matter – is that cool, serene, epic nature is right around the corner; and getting away from it all rarely takes more than 25 minutes (give or take). For as great as Reykjavík is, getting out of there every once in a while is key to not going totally insane.

The following is a wholly un-thorough and random run-down of some of Reykjavík's easy-to-reach destinations – advice that can turn your week around with little to no effort. These are the trips to take if your budget or schedule doesn't allow for weeklong jeep-trips in the highlands - **HAUKUR S MAGNÚSSON**

Note: all bus directions are from the Hlemmur central bus station

1 ÖSKJUHLÍÐ

19

Stuff to do

- » Spot rabbits
- » Get momentarily lost in the forest
- » LARP
- » Go gay cruising (if that's your thing)
- » Enjoy a picnic or BBQ
- » Tan on the fake beach
- » Swim in the heated ocean
- » Get annoyed at the University of Reykjavík



Marked by hills, trees, WW2 ruins and the lumbering presence of revolving restaurant Perlan, Öskjuhlíð is a Reykjavík haven, as locals have known for decades. Despite Reykjavík University's recent attempts to ruin it, it's still nice and well worth a visit.

Öskjuhlíð is essentially a part of downtown Reykjavík, but the lay of the land provides ample opportunities to forget all about the heavy traffic, gas stations and subpar bistro bars found past the hill. A comfortable fifteen-minute walking distance from downtown makes it accessible and as such a great location for spur-of-the-moment picnics and shorter expeditions. Then there's the added attraction of close-by Nauthólsvík and its fake beach of yellow sand. It's there, and it's fun. Be on the lookout for friendly rabbits and gay men snogging (it's a reputed cruising spot); pick up your trash when you leave.

2 HIKE ESJA

5 - 15 - 57 (in that order)

Stuff to do

- » Hike up there
- » Look down on everyone
- » Have a drink of water
- » Bask in nature
- » Hike down again



A mere 40 -minute bus-ride away from downtown (give or take), Esja is that big mountain across the ocean that has served as Reykjavík's staple landmark a millennia before it was even built. The mountain is 914 metres high and is an eternally popular destination for hikers and outdoorsy types. And understandably so, as it is well

fit for sneakered amateurs, yet fun for more experienced types. Plan a date, dress according to weather (plus one) and read more about it elsewhere in this issue.

3 BIKE AROUND THE CITY

Pack a lunch + wear a helmet
 = safe, fun times for all.



Biking the outlines of Reykjavík-town is a surprisingly easy and pleasant experience if the conditions are right. For instance, you can start off in Öskjuhlíð (see above) or Seltjarnarnes and let the bike paths lead you full circle around the city while taking in interesting sights and new scenarios. Rent a bike if you

don't own one (or have access to a friend's) – your hotel, hostel or place of residence is sure to have the full info.

4 GO TO MOSFELLSBÆR

15

Stuff to do

- » Stalk Sigur Rós
- » Eat at the bakery
- » Visit the Laxness Museum
- » Go to a farmer's market
- » Go swimming in their excellent pool



Situated 17 KM north of Reykjavík, Mosfellsbær is generally counted as part of the greater-Reykjavík area. It does take around 20 minutes by bus or car, and is greatly different from the rest of everything around in atmosphere and scenery. This makes it an ideal location to get away from town, without any actual getting away.

For starters, Mosfellsbær has plenty of nice little neighbourhoods you can have an excellent time exploring. Mostly free of Reykjavík's sprawl and ugly apartment buildings, Mosó gives off the 'friendly small town' vibe without really being small (or necessarily friendly, even). A hike around the town, especially close to its edges, will give you plenty to gaze at and even more to ponder; you will see suburbia somehow nicely juxtaposed with beautiful nature stuff, like waterfalls and rivers.

Mosfellsbær packs a great bakery (Mosfellsbakari) worth visiting for lunch (or better yet, to pack a picnic basket for your sojourn around town). This is on top of their excellent pool facilities, occasional farmers' markets and lots of nice museums and galleries, including the excellent Halldór Laxness museum at Gljúfrasteinn.

You can also attempt to stalk the hard men of Sigur Rós at their studio, but they'll probably kick your ass if you try.

A day in Mosfellsbær definitely comes recommended. If you don't have a car or aren't up for taking the bus, you can always ride a bike there. It's not too far, but the road conditions (alongside raging traffic) are kind of shitty.

5 AN AFTERNOON IN HAFNARFJÖRÐUR

1

Stuff to do

- » Play Viking at Fjörukráin
- » Take in local culture
- » Go swimming
- » Watch longshoremen do actual work for a living



We couldn't really recommend Mosfellsbær while neglecting Reykjavík's other brother, Hafnarfjörður. Ten kilometres south of Reykjavík, Hafnarfjörður is very much a town of its own, sporting some excellent local culture (their music scene has always been top-notch, and a lot of Iceland's most favourite acts hail from there), fine restaurants and some excellent scenery to walk around in. Think of it as a kinda mini-city break, if you have an incessant need to categorise everything.

If you flew into Iceland, you will have driven through Hafnarfjörður, but this third most populous city in Iceland deserves a lot more of your time than a short drive-through.

On a sunny day in Hafnarfjörður, you might traverse through town, starting down at the harbour and slowly easing your way up the hill the centre. Make sure to stop over at Hafnarfjörður's very own Viking pub (Fjörukráin) for some mead – they've got all sorts of engrossing Viking memorabilia and both its premises and staff are in true Viking fashion, if that sort of stuff floats your boat.

Try and catch a local show at one of the clubs in town, go swimming in their pool, take in the culture and watch the longshoremen do their jobs and act all thankful you don't have to lug around boxes of frozen fish for a living (I've done it, and you should be).

Stunning, Powerful, Arousing.



Humanimal

I'm not entirely sure what I just witnessed, but I am sure that it was incredible, beautiful, powerful. Set against a backdrop of miscellaneous articles of clothing, arranged along the colour spectrum – blue, green, yellow, cream, beige, brown, purple – six masses of lycra, cotton and knit wool began to move. Fluidly, they expanded and condensed, rose up on human legs and sunk back down to the black stage, morphed and grew limbs, united, fornicated and separated. This continued, the movement and growth, until six performers in white shirts stood before the audience, wide-eyed like children thrust into the epicentre of a strange new world.

One of the two male performers broke the silence, stuttering at first as he found his voice and came into his own. Judging by the audience's reaction it was an entertaining and amusing monologue – as was the rest of the spoken dialogue throughout the performance – but neither myself nor my companion understand a word of Icelandic so we were left to appreciate the visuals, the movement, the paralinguistic story being told. Linguistic comprehension would surely have augmented our appreciation of the scenes playing out before us, but the sheer enjoyment we gleaned from the physicality of the performance is a testament to the calibre of theatrics we were privy to.

Humanimal transcended language barriers through a depiction of raw, animalistic emotional concepts that oft find themselves stifled in daily human interaction: animal aggression, lust; romantic, orgasmic and violently uninhibited; greed and hoarding, perhaps a commentary on our unfortunate penchant for exorbitant consumerism. The performers acted on their every primal urge and did so with such strength and conviction that the heart beat both faster and slower, palms grew moist and breathing became irregular.

The stunning visual display was complemented to perfection by the music of Gísli Galdur Þorgeirsson, who recorded, mixed and layered sounds on the spot and dominated his drum-set, both while audience members took their seats and throughout the whole of the performance. Gísli and the performers, Saga Sigurðardóttir, Friðgeir Einarsson, Margrét Bjarnadóttir, Álfrún Helga Örnólfsdóttir, Jörundur Ragnarsson and Dóra Jóhannsdóttir, were more than deserving of the prolonged standing ovation their collective performance commanded. Photo by: BIG

- CATHARINE FULTON

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Music Festival

What Lurks By The Deep?

The 7th Annual Við Djúpið Festival Launched



Words

Sigurður Kjartan Kristinsson

Photography

Ágúst Atlason - www.gusti.is

Portraits

Ernir Eyjólfsson

Ísafjörður annually hosts the classical music festival Við Djúpið – an unfailing, classical sibling of the celebrated carnival Aldrei fór ég suður – but Við Djúpið is just as prestigious and fun a festival. This one is also equally musically adventurous, no mean feat in the classical world.

The action commences on June 18 and lasts till June 23. Sharp-witted observers can vividly see that these five days are the last ones before Summer Solstice night, so the sun will be shining through the whole fête as it lingers at the point where it never quite sets. This ever-lasting sunshine surely causes the atmosphere to be immensely energetic, but you should consider bringing your sleeping goggles though – that is, if you plan on recharging your energy between the generous portions of mind-blowing music.

The usual: change, of course

Festival director Greipur Gíslason described this year's schedule as a unique one that differs from previous incarnations in many ways, which is in keeping with the fest's unwritten tradition to take a new approach every year. One of the cornerstones of the festival is its 'master classes', where youngsters as well as experienced enthusiasts can collectively further their knowledge and abilities in music. This year's principle mentor is the guitarist Pétur Jónsson, and unyielding by his side will be the famed pianist Vovka Stefán Ashkenazy. The fascinating duo also works in collaboration with the Danish composer Bent Sørensen, who is really this festival's secret weapon. He hosts his own 'master class' but that isn't the whole of his role; he is the honorary judge in the "new composer" competition hosted in collaboration with Ísafold Chamber Orchestra and Rás 2.

New, novice and noted composers

Earlier this year, up and coming composers were given the chance to submit applications to participate in this classical adventure. After a strenuous process the committee of judges chose the three composers who, in their opinion, boasted the most potential. The lucky three are given the unique opportunity of writing an abridged piece for the Ísafold Chamber Orchestra to perform. Their work isn't finished there, for they get to work closely with the orchestra during the preliminary stages. This is surely an intense experience for those talented youths involved, but once you discover their identities you see that it might not be as laborious as you might've thought. The fact is, two of the three chosen ones are members of the ever-so-popular chamber pop outfit Hjaltalín, which has slowly been earning a spot as the U2 of Iceland. U2 with strings.

So why not visit this secluded area in the Westfjords and witness some top-notch classical music in between taking it easy and enjoying the view? You can enrol to one of the seminars up for grabs at www.viddjupid.is and if you decide to go west, remember to roll around naked in the grass on midnight of the 23rd, Midsummer Night, 'cause if the myth is true you're in for a treat. Plus, you might even witness the creation of 2009 summer hit by Hjaltalín.

Deep Winners:



Viktor Orri Árnason has dipped his toes in various musical buckets despite his young age. His violin has been dear to him since he was an infant, and he is currently studying to be a violinist in the Academy of the Arts in Iceland. He has performed with various prolific bands such as the Icelandic National Symphony Orchestra, but he is also a member of high-flying pop outfit Hjaltalín. He hasn't composed anything of this scale previously, so you might say his cherry will be popped in Ísafjörður.



Högni Egilsson has a face that probably every Icelander recognises nowadays, which can be blamed on the fact that he is the front man of aforementioned Hjaltalín. His role in Hjaltalín is to lead the composition and provide their songs with vocals, so he is kind of a shark in the composition field, but composition is also what he's studying at the Academy of the Arts.



Gunnar Karel Mátsson differs from the other contestants by not being a Hjaltalín member (fancy that!), but who knows what might happen after a week together; maybe they'll hook up? He does study composition in the Academy of the Arts, so they're all schoolmates. Gunnar Karel isn't exactly a novice in the field for he has composed scores for a few stage performances in the academy and this summer he is also contributing his works to similar festivals in Germany and Sweden.

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*From the Hávamál, 1300 AD



Magic Lore

Legends That Just Won't Die



A full moon glimmers across snow-laden fields. Somewhere in the distance a wolf howls. Noiselessly, through a strange mist, a shadow emerges, looming in the dark of our bedroom. The last thing we see is the flash of two swollen white canines. Sound familiar? Why does the vampire legend so absorb us? Stories of vampires, like all folk legends, tell us something innate about ourselves: where we have been and where we might go from here.

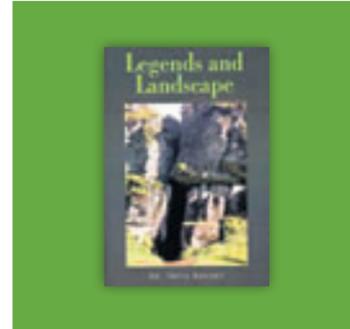
Terry Gunnell, lecturer in Folkloristics at the University of Iceland, introduces this broad selection of twelve scholarly articles based on the plenary papers of the 5th Celtic-Nordic-Baltic Folklore Symposium that took place in Reykjavik in 2005. Appropriately, Gunnell sets the stage with a quote from the Grimm brothers:

The fairy tale is more poetic, the legend more historical...The legend...adheres always to that which we are conscious of and know well, such as a locale or a name that has been secured through history.

Cinderella, Snow White and Sleeping Beauty, old friends first immortalised by the Brothers Grimm, are fairy stories. For children, young and old, they conjure up images from the past: the knight on the white steed, the grumpy old dragon, witches mumbling over a bubbling cauldron. Legends, on the other hand, are cultural footholds, provide theories for the sometime inexplicable actions of our ancestors, and instil social and moral values.

This fifth symposium, following the last in Dublin in 1996, reads like a who's who of Folkloristic scholars. The papers, penned by some of the foremost authorities from Ireland, Great Britain, Scandinavia, Estonia and the United States, furnish deep insight into the research methodology, history and the possible intention behind folk legends. The authors cover cross-cultural narration; the social function and local celebration of performance; the psyche and development of legend within close-knit communities; the influence of genre, form, interpretation and philology on and within the metier; and how, above all, folk stories forge bridges between divergent cultures, in effect, shaping identity (landscape) within evolving societies.

Jacqueline Simpson's essay, A Ghostly View of England's Past, strolls us along the cobbled alleys of the ghost walks of Scotland and England, and illustrates how, over generations, a legend may become distorted to suit present needs. Legends of the Impaled Dead in Sweden, by Bengt af Klintberg, shows that Bram Stoker's Dracula was stabbed through the heart by countless generations—as early as the Mesopotamians, in fact—later than other, less fortunate Swedish, Icelandic and German undead. Bo Almqvist demonstrates the unique position that Iceland maintains in keeping folklore traditions alive. His paper, Midwife to the Faeries in Icelandic Tradition, based on over one hundred referenced examples compiled from throughout the country and listed as an appendix, is



Legends and Landscape

Ed. Terry Gunnell

2009

University of Iceland Press,
pp., 352

staggering, and only the tip of the proverbial midwife iceberg. From the earliest settlers through the 70s, numerous Icelandic midwives attested that they had been initiated by faeries. Apparently, the legend still retains a certain hold on rural Iceland. As late as the 1990s, Almqvist was hearing new variations retold from Icelanders, including the artist Johanna Bogadottir. Legends and Landscape is a celebration of the collective minds of those dedicated folklorists attending the Symposium and demonstrates a breadth of knowledge that is quietly burgeoning. The development of the new Sagnarunnar database initiated by Terry Gunnell at the University of Iceland (the inception of which coincided with the symposium) already maintains over 10,000 Icelandic folk legends and is a clear testament to this fact.

Although this book may not be for the faint-hearted, it is ideally suited to the scholar, student or folklore aficionado. Be prepared to wrangle with a little academic prose and you will be well rewarded; in fact, you may even take up the cause yourself.

To this very day folk legends inspire, educate and, at times, confuse. A case in point: in 2007, a Serbian national, Miroslav Milosevic, thrust a stake through the heart of former dictator Slobodan Milosevic who was just lying quietly in his grave, just to be sure that the bloody dictator would not make a vampire's comeback.

Some legends, it seems, never die—that is, unless you have a silver bullet.

— MARK VINCENZ

Two Thousand Krónur's Worth Of Freedom



Your language is somebody else's property. Not only does it get dealt with in grammar books, by officials making official rules for how things can and cannot be – but everytime anybody gets a good idea for a phrasing, a metaphor, a pun or a pickup line sooner than later someone is going to use that piece of (your?) language to sell you something – deodorant, cars, bras, müsli, politics, sneakers.

In the early seventies, Gil Scott-Heron told us that the revolution would not be televised – meaning that it will belong to the masses and not the mass media. It will not be watched, you can't subscribe to it – everyone will participate. In the nineties, hip-hop artist and self-proclaimed radical KRS One rephrased it for Nike – The revolution is basketball, and basketball is the truth and thus the revolution was televised.

In Iceland the name for cellphone credit is "frelsi". Freedom. You literally enter a store and ask for "Two thousand krónur's worth of freedom". This is the fruit of a successful marketing campaign. In the UK, people 'hoover' their carpets – Hoover being a manufacturer of the machines that suck carpets. All over the world people 'xerox' documents – Xerox being a manufacturer of those document-copier thingies.

Of course people buying cellphone credit know they are not getting actual freedom for their money. For one thing the people have long ago been told they already are free, and they do not believe themselves to be encaged. And yet they keep saying it, sneaking it past the gates of their subconscious – two thousand krónur's worth of freedom – repeating the advertisement to themselves, to the clerks, to the people behind them, to their friends and family until everybody's saying it. And you realise you're running out of freedom and need to go get some more.

Language is not where we perform our thought. Language is merely the tool we use to categorise it and "control" it. Gaining control over language is the closest anyone can come to actually controlling thought. Think of prayer. Think of slogans. Think repetitive pop lyrics (If you seek Amy). Think of all the banal sentences you hear and say every day for all of your life – meaning close to nothing. Think of your predetermined route through grammatical structures – the paths you take to form your thought.

This is where poetry comes in. If it has any role in the world, any function that I'd allow myself to describe as holy, it's to regain language, to strike down banal structures with furious anger, to reveal the thievery that's taken place – to steal back what I feel belongs to me (or, in your case, you). To not gain control over language, but to relinquish control and liberate language. Sometimes that means making it weird. Making it difficult. Making it damn near illegible.

The point is simply to squirm and dance, kick and struggle, hug and cuddle – the more righter it feels the more gooder it is.

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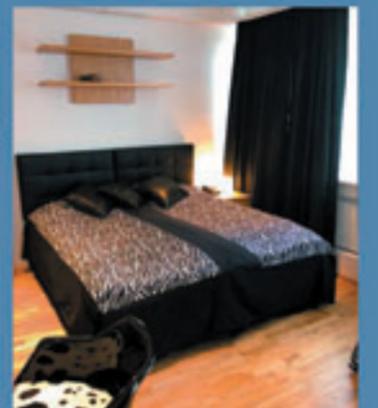


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MUSIC & NIGHT LIFE



TRACK OF THE ISSUE

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Rökkurró

Endalok (demo)

rokkurro

Download the free track of the issue **ENDALOK** at www.grapevine.is

Rökkurró performed splendidly at our Grand Rock concert series last month. Folks are still talking about the awesome times they had listening to their soothing melodies, and how much the band has grown in its relatively short lifespan. For

those of you that didn't make it to the show (shame on you!), we've got an awesome compensation lined up! The kids are currently spending time in a countryside cottage, writing material for their upcoming sophomore effort (title TBA, expect it in stores by the end of the year), and they've graciously agreed to share a sneak peek of the shape of Rökkurró to come. Entitled Endalok ("Ending"), this demo version displays a newfound confidence, and just why people all over Europe are falling flat for 'em.



Although they have retreated slightly into the inferior pop shallowness of debut *Breathe*, *We Are Shadows* at times beautifully retains and expands upon the richness, depth and assertiveness of sophomore effort *The Angela Test*, especially on tracks like *The Harbor* and *Planets*. The rhythm section perfectly retains its ability to ground the heady surrealism of the songwriting, somehow bracing and soothing at the same time. As always with *Leaves*, however, things start getting a bit iffy on the upbeat numbers, and the wisdom of abandoning the inquisitive, desperate yearning of *The Angela Test* for the contented dreaminess of *We Are Shadows* is questionable. I mean, if that's what they want to do, fine, but the thing about writing effeminate alt-rock pop croons is that if you aren't Jeff Buckley, it'll just sound gay. **-SINDRI ELDON**

Dr. Zühlke and Mr. Eldon

Two men.
One album.
Lots of dissent.



Leaves

We are Shadows (2009)

leavesmusicSPACE

» Not dark enough.

Indie rock for the masses. «

+ This Icelandic quartet got quite some international recognition in 2002 for their first album, *Breathe*. The debut was characterised by the sort of music from indie rock bands like *Doves*. This is where *We Are Shadows* continues what *Breathe* began. While sounding most of the time like *Coldplay*, the band still manages not to become a facsimile of them, rather adding an experimental and atmospheric note to their sound that brings *Radiohead* to mind. The instrumental *Motion* or the sometimes quite extravagant vocals contribute to this.

After all, despite it not being very outstanding compared to the big shots of their genre, it is solid work and will definitely find an audience **-FLORIAN ZÜHLKE**

Concert Reviews

The Dark Night

An evening of feverish shoegaze

Me, The Slumbering Napoleon

Rökkurró

Kimono

Friday May 29th

slumberingnapoleon

rokkurro

kimono



Getting soaked in the rain is always the best start to an evening. So much for the summer! I walked into Grand Rökk like a drowned rabbit; the mixed smell of alcohol and damp precipitation was enough to put a grown-ish man right off. But in the name of indie-rock, and more importantly journalism, I braved the senses and ventured upstairs.

The venue was almost empty, with the exception of the staff, other bands and us at the Grapevine for the first band, *Me, The Slumbering Napoleon*. Lead vocalist Binni, resembling a modern day Jack The Ripper minus the murders, captivated the audience with a sense of urgency through vocal techniques, both screamed and spoken, complimenting the rest of the band's angular chops and frantic math driven rhythms. Imagine *Steve Albini* doing *Slint* covers, but with 'cooler' hair.

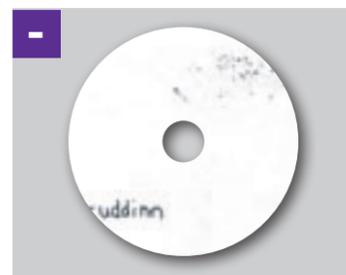
Thankfully, as the weather turned

vastly pleasant, the gracious Rökkurró followed in procession. The multi-instrumental five piece followed eloquently through their set, combining romantic shoegaze, shimmering guitar tweaks and sensual femella vocals. Contrasting dramatic strings and intelligent drum patterns kept the crowd in awe.

By now Grand Rökk was flooded with anticipation for the gloomy post-punk trio *Kimono*. Some might say that the band's apparent popularity hails them as *The Cure* for the Cheap Monday generation. You can see

why though. Baritone guitars and surrealistic vocals, complimented the drab environment and metrological conditions.

Highlights of the evening included *Kimono* front man *Alex MacNeil's* uncanny resemblance to *Robert Smith*, as well as the rollercoaster of emotions experienced by Grand Rökk's on-lookers from the varied acts of the night. **-JONATHAN BAKER ESQ.**



Ruddinn

2 (2009)

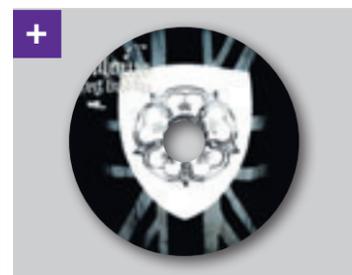
ruddinn

Bland neo-wave

Shortly after the *Joy Division-80s-wave-revival-hype*, *Ruddinn* releases his second album, which tries to take the same line. *2* has the monotonous, pumping beats and somehow depressing morbid melodies as its English frontrunners had a quarter century ago. Maybe there is more electronic gadgetry, which is due to the fact that *Ruddinn* is a one-man show - just a boy, his guitar and some electronics.

Although this sound in general hasn't gotten outdated at all, as the success of bands like *The Editors* or *White Lies* shows, *Ruddinn's* record cannot keep up to these. The arrangements are way too similar, which makes *2* sound quite boring after the first half. You will spend the latter thinking about the interesting development *Depeche Mode* made in the last years culminating in their new record, *Sounds of the Universe*.

-FLORIAN ZÜHLKE



Gallows

Grey Britain (2009)

gallows

Nasty, nihilistic hardcore-punk.

This hardcore-punk band already had a huge impact with their first album, *Orchestra of Wolves*, three years ago - an album that brought together startling ugliness, immense power and brutality in 12 songs and 35 minutes. Rendering vocalist *Frank Carter's* statement that the band would be dead by 2009 a total lie, *Gallows* have gone and released a new album, *Grey Britain*. It still is an epitaph: *Grey Britain* is burning down. The queen is dead and so is the crown, *Carter* shouts and sets course for a sinister cruise through despair in an England shattered by economic crisis and moral decay. Musically, *Grey Britain* is mostly kept in midtempo and that way is more based on atmosphere than pure aggression, which is underlined by some instrumental interludes. However don't get me wrong: *Gallows* are still up for the pub brawl! They've just dimmed the light a bit.

-FLORIAN ZÜHLKE

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PAGE 8

Destroying capitalism, fighting “injustice” (i.e. what they perceive as injustice), and complimenting each other on their extreme intellectual and moral superiority seem to be the key factors and, really, the only things they can completely agree upon.

Oddur Sturluson vents his frustrations.

PAGE 18

Did he just say that? He’s not interested in the now infamous pots-and-pans revolution that brought down the corrupt Icelandic government?

Catharine Fulton is flabbergasted by her anarchist interlocutor.

PAGE 8

“And so because Jesus’s mother never got to come, I figured when I was seventeen she put a curse on all women that when they came, you know, when they came during sex, they would say her son’s name.”

Mugison reveals some ancient wisdom in Seattle.

PAGE 10

Hugh shows more skin in this year’s Wolverine, but this, before we knew he was a song and dance man, is his most charged moment.

Valur Gunnarsson believes Hugh’s charisma can turn him gay.

PAGE 39

The beginning twenty minutes of the walk were easy enough, as we walked on a slowly inclining gravel path. Hell, I could have been doing it smoking a cigarette.

Joyce Guzowski climbed the Esja in style

PAGE 14

His skull sounds a beat to my momentary amusement as I ponder my gainful predicament for a minute, until a particularly abrupt revolution of the steering wheel brings awareness back into the man’s opaque mind.

Our cabbie pal is one bad mofo

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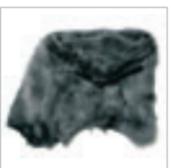
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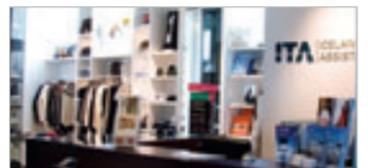
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