



# The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

Issue Nº 8 – June 19 – July 2 – 2009

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ICESAVE:

## Taking The Plunge

*Iceland and the offer  
it can't refuse*

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Are We Running Out Of **Puffin & Cod?**

**A Letter From Iceland, Part 1** ▶ *A short story*

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**Opinions!**

**Reviews!**

**Comix!**

After months of negotiations, Icelandic authorities have finally reached an agreement with the British and Dutch over the Icesave fiasco that soured foreign relations with the rest of Europe, ruined the country's financial credibility, and brought about the downfall of a government. Finally, a deal has been made that will make it all better. **So why is no one happy?** 🏰 PG. 18.

## Haukur's 8th Editorial!

### Happy Icelandic Independence Day!

Probably an awfully fitting metaphor for something. Cliché, even.



So we closed this issue on early in the AM of June 18, just a couple of hours after Iceland's Independence Day celebrations died down. Since we were making a paper all day, we didn't get to do a lot of celebrating of our own, but then again some folks claim there isn't a whole lot to celebrate these days so maybe that's just as well.

Still, on some level we did get to enjoy and experience a lot of what June 17th has to offer. We watched the carnival rides work their magic from afar. Some kids that probably lost their balloons stood crying (screaming) outside our office for a while. The evil combined smell of pylsa and candyfloss permeated the air. We suffered the marching band, the rock concert and the screaming drunken teenagers through our open windows.

We read our officials' Independence Day speeches on-line. They went on to say that, yeah, things look tough right now. Yes, Iceland as a nation is again

struggling for its independence, which is or might be at risk. Right now, we need to make some tough decisions, to undergo a painful transition. We still should celebrate the day; eat pylsur and candyfloss, go on a ride, buy balloons, watch the bands and get wasted. For if we don't, the terrorists have won. And we are not terrorists, Mr. Brown. Or something.

When we left the office on the morning of June 18th, we were greeted by Reykjavík-in-rubbles. The accompanying photo depicts some of what we saw. Deflated balloons, candy wrappers, pylsapaper, beercans and vomit. Barf. Puke. Spew. A party was clearly over – one we didn't get to participate in. The place had been trashed and now it was time for some heavy cleanup.

Some poor sucker would have to sacrifice his morning picking up trash, scrubbing the vomit-stains off our streets.

Remind you of something? ☹

More comix! Yes, there's more comix in this issue! Check out page 32 for another instalment of **Nicelanders**.

## Comic strips

– by Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir



– by Hugleikur Dagsson



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# Sour grapes and stuff

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

## 4 Letters

Dear editor of The Reykjavík Grapevine, I read the article about the Dalai Lama's visit to the University of Iceland, and was truly appalled by Ms. Domurath's attitude towards His So-Called Holiness. Since when is looking at things as 'black-and-white' a good thing? Nothing in this world is 'black-and-white'. This 'black-and-white' attitude leads to stupid conclusions and hypocrisy. Think about Europe's attitude to Israel: many people there think Israel is some big ol' meanie Nazi-esque conqueror, though few know anything about the conflict, while their own countries do much worse atrocities in Iraq and Afghanistan. Or think about the Japanese education system: they teach their children that violence, regardless of circumstance (this includes self-defence), is wrong, while they send some troops of their own to Iraq and Afghanistan, with no qualms involved (and not to mention the fact they've never acknowledged the atrocities they committed during WWII, which makes Germany look like Cuba).

This is absurd. Why in the world must we Western people go on with this 'excuse-me-for-being-Western-our-knowledge-is-nothing-compared-to-your-oh-so-fascinating-Islám/Buddhism/Judaism/whatever' attitude. This whole idiotic Political Correctness is what gives Europe over to radical Islám and makes the Germans, a nation that has brought so much cultural and scientific progress to the world, ashamed of their own country. (And another thing: if the Dalai Lama says he's just a person who's learned 'from encounters with others', why does he get to lecture? Why should anyone waste time on listening to ignorant answers which work only in his weird microcosmoses?)

It's about time Europe woke up. This is not what Prometheus stole the sun for. An Cat Dubh – <http://israblog.co.il/573275>

Dear Mr. Dubh,

Yes, well. I agree that the whole bipolar, dualistic, black and white division of the world into good and evil, right and wrong, is usually a fucking horrible idea that can lead to some pretty fucking horrible conclusions.

So it's good you think that. Nevertheless, dude, your letter smacks of the sort of fascist bile you seem to want to be against. Your attitude astounds me. I visited your blog, I trudged through your so-called manifesto. I still have not a clue what you're on about. Defending liberal culture by imposing all sorts of stringent rules upon it? Man, the whole point of being a pluralist – of a society of enlightenment and tolerance – is to respect the variety of cultures, and of viewpoints that are around. The opposite of liberalism is fundamentalism, yet you strive to be some sort of liberal fundamentalist? A liberascist? Makes no sense at all.

## Sour grape of the month

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Give us your worst: [letters@grapevine.is](mailto:letters@grapevine.is)



(light)

## MOST AWESOME LETTER:

Dear Sir,

I picked up a copy of your newspaper at the domestic airport in Reykjavik. No doubt it is aimed at the young and trendy and that is just fine; I do not fall into that category.

However, that being so or not, I do take issue with you on the form of the English language that you use in the Editorial of Issue 6. I imagine that you did not learn English in England, but I find it difficult to know where you did learn it. I really do not want Icelanders to believe that this is the correct way to write, or even speak the English language.

To begin with, one never abbreviates words when writing. e.g., I'm, what's, isn't, I'll, 'em, etc. All these SHOULD be written in full. And as for gonna and didya and ain't, there are NO SUCH WORDS in the English language and I do not even know what y'all means. This is simply the written phonetic sounds of the badly spoken English. The expression hatting off does not exist.

Please do your best to enhance life and not muddy it. You Icelanders guard the purity of your language and are proud to do so and I heartily agree with that sentiment. Please help me to do the same with the English language to the extent that it is possible.

Yours sincerely,  
Hazel Oberst

Greetings Ms. Oberst,

thank you for a fun letter!

I assure you, I'm well aware that abbreviating words, using non-standard words or just plain making words up for fun isn't proper. I do appreciate your general sentiment of preservation, while I do not adhere to your rigid tenets.

I believe that language is fluid and alive. I believe it should be appreciated and used in a playful, lively manner once one has mastered its basic rules and grammar. You might say our differences are philosophical. Or that I like to have fun with my editorials, and that I allow myself and my writers a certain freedom in regards to how they approach any language so long as they can speak it properly too.

Knaahmean?

We have much respect for our readers, and plenty of faith in their abilities to discern when we are playing, and when we are not. And since y'all asked, I mostly learned English in my hometown of Ísafjörður (in the Westfjords).

Hi, I am a New Yorker who is coming to Reykjavik on June 18th for twelve days. I have been following your website for the past month, and have noticed the increased attention to riots. In your opinion, is it safe to come to Reykjavik right now?

Thanks,  
Gabe

Dear Gabe,  
Since you're already here, I can only say: I hope you brought your gun. It's totally not safe here. Tonight, as I was picking up a friend from the airport, I was pestered by a group of drunken teenagers. And yesterday this girl almost ran me over with her bike. In fact, I hear a lot of bikes get stolen around here on a regular basis. Maybe the girl had stolen the bike she was on, I have no idea. So take heed: Iceland is not safe for you.

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,  
The life of people living in Island and other northern territories of the Northern hemisphere is in danger of inundation. You have to inform people how they can avoid the danger. The sign that will be shown in the sky will predict the tragedy. Then, you will have 30 days to move to the highlands. Please inform the readers of your newspaper about it, because all the North will be under water. Everyone have to leave the place. I adjoint more information below [redacted].  
Wanda Stanska-Proszynska, Warsaw, Poland  
[apocalipsistestamentum.blogspot.com](http://apocalipsistestamentum.blogspot.com)

DDear Wanda,

Fuck. Inundation? That sounds serious. We'll keep our eyes on the sky from now on.

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# Fishy Tales

Is Icelandic cod on the brink? And why are the powers that be not listening?



## Words

Marc Vincenz

According to genetic scientist Einar Árnason at the University of Reykjavík, unless there are significant changes in Icelandic fishing practices, cod stocks could plummet within ten years. Yet, despite a paper published in May in the scientific journal PLoS ONE, and Árnason's recent open letter to the Marine Research Institute (MRI) and the Ministry of Fisheries, his findings have fallen on deaf ears. This seems rather strange considering much of Árnason's research was funded by the MRI itself.

This news hits Icelandic authorities only a few months after the nation is pinning its hopes on a fishing industry that accounted for more than one third of Iceland's exports last year. Nearly a month since Árnason's findings were published there has been little debate with the government and virtually no mention in the Icelandic media. Speaking to Árnason in his office, he tells me he is stunned by the silence.

'Believe it or not, you're the first journalist in Iceland to contact me. This is not something to just brush under the carpet.'

Scientists predicting the collapse of local cod stocks in the 1980s also met with little reaction from the Canadian government until 1992; and by then, it was too late.

History in the making: The end of  
canadian cod

Five hundred years after Leif Eriksson

discovered Newfoundland, the explorer John Cabot reported cod so thick that you could practically catch them with your bare hands. Cod became a food resource that would fund the first maritime colonial power, Britain. Newfoundland's shores were rife: giant oysters lined the beaches; streams were bursting with salmon and sturgeon. Today, another five hundred years later, the Newfoundland seas and rivers lie empty.

By the 1950s cod fishing had taken on an entirely new meaning; the first commercial fish factories emerged: the factory-freezer-trawler. This new breed of fishing vessel could haul up to 200 tons an hour, work seven days a week, and process fish on board ready for consumption. By the late 60s, cod catch reached over 800,000 tons. In 1977, following Iceland's lead, Canada extended its territorial waters to 200 miles offshore and foreign factory trawlers, including the British, were no longer permitted access.

All was smooth sailing until 1988 when stock surveys revealed that cod was collapsing and that fishermen had been netting over 60 percent of the adult cod for many years. In the early 1990s only around 60 percent of quotas were being filled. By July 1992, the Canadian government finally closed the fishing banks in an attempt to allow the stock to recover. It never has. Over 40,000 Canadians lost their jobs. It was one of the worst economic catastrophes to hit the Canadian nation. Today there are signs that other species further down the fish food chain are also on the decline.

Now there is scientific evidence to show precisely how this may have happened in Canada, and how it could well be happening here in Iceland right under our noses.

## An Emerging Pattern: First Canada, Now Iceland?

In a 2004 paper published in Nature, Canadian and Norwegian biologists expressed that fisheries-induced evolution lead the populations of North Atlantic cod to mature at far earlier ages and smaller sizes than previously known. They suggested that genetic variation required for age resides within populations, and that the collapse of cod in Canada was due to early maturing in late maturing genotypes. In other words, over-fishing forced fish to mature earlier in order to be able to spawn—with lower sustainable cod yields. Fishing methods were effecting the genetic composition of the cod stock, dramatically reducing its fitness.

Árnason took the direction of this research one step further into the genotypes, and applied it to the fisheries in Iceland. His findings appear dramatic.

Some years ago, using data trackers attached to the fish, MRI researchers discovered that there are two major cod genotypes. These two genotypes carry a distinct variation of the gene, or allele, pantophysin I: AA, the shallow-water cod; and BB, the deep-water cod who only rise to the shallows to spawn. Árnason maintains it is AA that is rapidly evolving due to Icelandic shallow fishing methods. Currently cod is decreasing in

size on average one centimetre a year. There is now only a 50% possibility of them becoming mature at all. According to Árnason's extensive research—with over 8000 specimens—evolutionary mutations in the genes of fish appear to be directly related to inadvertent habitat-specific fishing practices.

## Is there a sustainable future for Icelandic Cod?

Iceland has often been cited as a model for sustainable fishing practices, setting quotas based on a scientific basis, and one of the few countries that meet British supermarket chains' sustainability criteria. Why then, does Árnason's science not meet with immediate concern?

Currently fish prices are down by 40%, demand from traditional markets such as Spain has been severely effected, the Icelandic fishing industry is deeply in debt (estimated at 400-500 billion krónur), and the new government is suggesting an entire overhaul of the quota process: quotas would no longer be assigned, but rented. This, and Iceland's fast-track membership into the EU, has fishermen deeply concerned. Right now, no one needs to hear anything about rapid depletion of cod stocks. Recent EC figures indicate that 90% of Europe's fish species are being pulled out at an unsustainable rate. Árnason's research seems to indicate that the same could well apply to Icelandic cod.

Árnason has proposed large ocean reserves as a solution to the immediate threat, yet neither the Ministry of Fisheries nor the MRI feels any need for worry.

In a last-minute interview, Jóhann Sigurjónsson, Director General of the MRI said, 'Although we consider all studies pertinent, our preliminary examination of Árnason's findings is that they provide no evidence that the cod fishery is in danger of collapse. Árnason bases his conclusions on genetic methodology and questionable interpretation of fisheries data. Presently there is another group of researchers looking into this more carefully, and naturally we are contacting Mr. Árnason to start a dialogue; but essentially we see this as a non-starter.'

Here's a wild hypothesis: Could it be that suggested lack of central controls that effected Iceland's crippled banking sector may also be evident elsewhere? So many have so much to lose. For the moment, at any rate, it appears cod mutation, evolution, and genetics are issues that are not on anyone's mind except one university professor. ♥

# Aids in Iceland

So, we discovered a couple of issues back that Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, and the like are hilarious little STI's – especially if you generally enjoy burning sensations when you pee and open, oozing sores all over your most delicate of anatomical regions. Oh wait, that's not hilarious at all and it's decidedly disturbing if you enjoy such symptoms. Seriously.

What is even less hilarious, however, are two related big name viruses not touched upon last time: the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and its offspring, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). HIV and AIDS are serious acronyms, people. No joking matter.

HIV is a nasty virus that executes a full-on assault on some key cells that are meant to keep you healthy and fend off other viruses and diseases – namely your helper T cells (a type of white blood cell), macrophages (another type of white blood cell) and dendritic cells (a key cell in your immune system). But how does the HIV gain access to these cells, you ask? Blood, semen, pre-cum, vaginal fluid and breast milk. Of course, the bump and grind is one way to swap said fluids with an infected partner, but sharing needles and consuming breast milk will get the job done too. Mothers can also pass along the virus to their foetus, and to their baby during childbirth or when nursing.

When HIV has attacked enough cells, encouraging them to regenerate the virus within the body, an infected person can no longer fight off infections that an otherwise healthy person would generally have no problem combating. This is when HIV becomes AIDS, typically 5-15 years after the virus is contracted. Since antiretroviral drugs have been developed to stave off the serious infections that lead to full on AIDS, infected people can remain in the HIV stages for longer periods of time. Once AIDS takes over, however, the immune system deteriorates to the point of not being able to fight off any virus, causing tumours, rampant infection and leading to death.

And this shit's in Iceland? Yes. At the start of 2009, there were 218 diagnosed HIV positive people living in Iceland – 162 men and 56 women. Of these, 60 have been diagnosed with AIDS, 37 of whom have died from the disease. Apparently, there is insufficient HIV and AIDS treatment available in Iceland so nearly a third of those diagnosed move abroad to seek out better care.

## Don't be a fool, wrap your tool!

This is serious, people. Sex is awesome, I know, but it's even better when you're not wondering what nasty viruses you're picking up. Use condoms and get tested. As always, the Dermatology and Venerology Outpatient Ward has got your back and will happily take some of your blood and give you some peace of mind in return. Why not call them at 543-6050? If you're out of credit on your phone, just stop by Þverholt 18. You'll be happy you did! ♥

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## On the Poverty of Colonial Politics



Anarchist thought and practice has always been concerned with the critique of politics, as the separation of one realm of human activity from all others and a separation which helps create an expert political class and professional politicians or militants.

Politics in Iceland is a very poor phenomenon. Political maturity is rare and maybe only found among those who are intelligent enough to stay away from the game. Like all other former colonies, the cultural group that inhabits the island inherited a political system from its colonists. That included a democratic system based on party politics. The alienation of politics has increased fast in the last few years since all political work is based around party politics and those who are not part of that feel like politics is something that does not concern them or has anything to do with how people live their lives at all.

Every opinion voiced is found a place within the party politics. Young people "with interest in politics" look for their opinions within party manifestos or adapt their opinions to them. Careers within politics begin at college. A "career politician" is an even more distasteful phenomenon than a celebrity career based on drunken paparazzi sex because the career of the political celebrity leads to power and influence. Another sad aspect of this is that the public's interest in politics has been stolen from them, versus public interest in celebrity culture.

The beauty of the protests that began last fall lies in the fact that the protests were not connected to any political parties, but rather as an opposition to what party politics stand for, and that they were not lead by anyone. Protest organisers are only those activists who have taken on the task of organising. Most of the influences within the protests were anonymous. The critics, who were finger-pointing leaders within the movement, have probably learned from the media who are also unable to discuss anything political without naming a front (party leader).

The protests were very anarchistic in nature and the natural anarchy of

the protesters (no dear reader, I am not calling everyone who took part in the protest against the power and stupidity of state and banks an anarchist; I am just pointing out the fact of anarchy being organising without authority) becomes visible in the distrust towards the fronts of the local parties. The democratic state is rotten and all of us can smell it; the stink makes the public angry (or bored if you live life without imagination) and makes the career politicians desperate.

Until January 20, Helgi Hóseon was the only person who had ever come to the parliament with honest intentions. When the democracy is shaken, the hierarchies are disturbed and the public realise their hopeless status within their own politics. When those that have taken over the distribution of food and goods go bankrupt and the banks run the homes, we realise our hopeless situation within the economy.

Everyone knows that the new elections will not change a thing. It simply is the only thing the political poverty of the colony has to offer. You can say that grassroots politics does not have any answers but that is because grassroots politics does not think like a political party. The grassroots are more busy finding ways to enjoy life and to save our lives from self-proclaimed leaders than sending out press releases. For those of us who visualise lifelong down payments, rebuilding trust within the financial world is not a urgent problem. Drumming the suits to hell and banging their institutions is a natural defence mechanism of a community which wants to reclaim its politics, its independence and its freedom and at the same time reclaim the meaning of those words. So be ready for drumming against the politics of the European Union. 🍷

## Summer Loving and I'm too Fucking Tired

*Light + Night + No Sleep = Not Cool*



Danny and Sandy (of Grease, of course) had a really awesome summer. So awesome that they told their friends about all

the phenomenally romantic things they experienced through song. It's a long song so they obviously did a lot of stuff together during their summer vacation and expended a lot of energy doing said stuff – not that strolling and drinking lemonade is particularly strenuous, but I digress.

I would venture to guess that had Danny and Sandy been North American transplants living in Reykjavík while the days grew longer before their eyes and the nights were so bright that the light penetrated both their complimentary Icelandair sleeping masks and their god-given eye-lids, keeping them awake or sleeping very lightly for several consecutive nights, their days would have been exponentially less romantic and Grease would not have enjoyed the same box office success. A song about not having the energy to drag yourself out of bed and then spending your days with bags under your eyes, drinking infinite amounts of black coffee and fighting cravings for cigarettes to calm shot, sleep-deprived nerves doesn't ooze the same commercial appeal.

### Long Story Short

I can't fucking sleep.

Now, this isn't my first time at the daylight rodeo. Prior to arriving in Iceland I spent a fair amount of time in a town in central Finland only two latitudinal degrees south of Reykjavík. I have experienced the waxing and waning of daylight and I have come to the conclusion that I prefer the latter. Darkness I can handle. I can force myself to wake up when the sun is still down, I can relish in those minimal hours of light and I can easily drift off to sleep in the pitch-black of the evening. I love my sleep and if darkness is conducive to doing something I love then, damn it, I love darkness.

I recall this time last year being more bearable in Finland. Probably on account of the imposing wall of trees in every direction that worked to fend off the sunlight for a few moments longer each morning. I have no trees outside my window here. And my window faces East. This is a bad combination and, while I would still choose living in Iceland over living in Finland any day of the week (my sincere apologies to any Finns reading this), it diminishes my

overall enjoyment of life in Reykjavík. The long days make for beautiful green landscapes and greater possibilities for getting outside and experiencing nature, but if I can't sleep at night to regenerate my body and mind it's all kind of pointless, no?

### To sleep, perchance to dream... but I'd take just the sleep, thanks.

I'm not a negative person, I swear. I'm just admittedly ridiculously vain and I like looking well rested while having maximal energy to start my day. Plus, I slept awkwardly on my shoulder last night and my neck is stiff and I could really use a massage right now. Seriously, if a masseuse were to walk into the Grapevine offices right now I'd be so happy that I might even muster the energy to sing about it. Then I'd have a nap. And it would be awesome.

Oh, and if you're wondering what Grease has to do with me not being able to sleep... well nothing much, actually. But the film's soundtrack was inexplicable and painfully lodged in my brain between precisely 4:19 and god-knows-when this morning and it made sense to me at the time. 🍷

*Darkness I can handle.  
I can force myself to  
wake up when the sun is  
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of light and I can  
easily drift off to sleep  
in the pitch-black of the  
evening.*

## The View From Afar



It has been six months since I upped and left. Six months since I said: "Hell no! I won't be a part of this," and packed my bags to start over somewhere else.

Call me a quitter. I don't really care. I just couldn't stomach the thought of being a part of a system where a few thoroughbreds were allowed to run a whole country bankrupt under the guidance and protection of a government that I never wanted or voted for. It is not in me to first say I told you so and then clean up your mess.

For now, I've made my home in Sweden. In many ways, this country is everything that Iceland aspired to be. At the same time, it is everything that Iceland prided itself for not being. Allow me to explain. Sweden has been the model for the social democratic political economy that Iceland always aimed for: a place where the standard of living was assessed by the quality of life for the worst off. In Iceland, we always liked to brag that no one was poor.

At the same time, it is home to unbridled bureaucracy, safe bets and boring restrictions. Far from the ideal of the free-spirited daredevil of an international businessman – the modern day Berserker – who had become synonymous with the Icelanders' own portrayal of themselves.

Safe, boring, or just within the reaches of sanity; it doesn't matter. So far, Sweden has been good to me. I get by and I don't have to worry that the nation as a whole might be deemed insolvent at any given moment. Plus, it is warmer. What more can a man ask for, really?

The other day, I was watching an investigative journalism program on TV. Swedish reporters were running down the trail of a shady business mogul who had bankrupted a large company through dubious investments, and cost some poor Swede his life savings. Obviously, the trail ran through Iceland.

As the journalists drove through the rain in Reykjavík on a grey winter day to meet an Icelandic investor, or a banker, or another shady business mogul, the camera panned over Austurstræti, past my beloved Café Hressó, where I used to sit down for a cup of coffee in the company of friends ever day. My wife looked at me and said: "Do you feel remotely homesick now?"

I wish I could have said yes. 🍷

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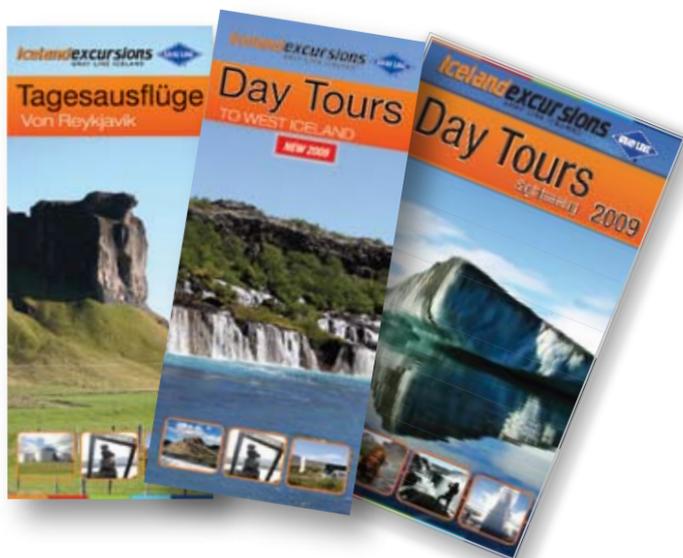


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Tour Code	Tour Name	Rack Rate	Special Offer	ISK Rate
AH 10	Greater Area Reykjavik Sightseeing	39 €	30 €	4.500 kr
AH 11	Gullfoss & Geysir Express	69 €	50 €	7.600 kr
AH 12	The Golden Circle Classic	79 €	60 €	9.200 kr
AH 13	Golden Circle Evening Tour	79 €	60 €	9.200 kr
AH 15	Iceland from Below	79 €	60 €	9.200 kr
AH 18	The Blue Lagoon Direct to Keflavik airport	33 €	20 €	3.400 kr
AH 19	The Reykjanes Peninsula	59 €	45 €	7.000 kr
AH 21	Iceland from Below & Blue Lagoon direct	100 €	80 €	12.500 kr
AH 22	Reykjanes Peninsula and Gullfoss & Geysir	129 €	95 €	15.000 kr
AH 23	City sightseeing and Gullfoss & Geysir	99 €	70 €	11.000 kr
AH 24	The Blue Lagoon and Gullfoss & Geysir	99 €	70 €	11.000 kr
AH 25	City sightseeing & Blue Lagoon	69 €	40 €	6.500 kr
AH 27	The Viking Horse Riding tour and Gullfoss & Geysir	119 €	85 €	13.500 kr
AH 28	The Blue Lagoon Direct from Keflavik airport	33 €	20 €	3.400 kr
AH 29	The Blue Lagoon Direct	33 €	20 €	3.400 kr
AH 30	Thorsmörk and South Coast	129 €	90 €	14.200 kr
AH 31	The Viking Horse Riding Tour & Blue Lagoon Direct	89 €	60 €	9.500 kr
AH 32	Landmannalaugar by bus	139 €	95 €	15.300 kr
AH 35	South Coast & Jökulsárlón - available from May 17	189 €	140 €	22.400 kr
AH 38	Snæfellsnes National Park	149 €	105 €	17.000 kr
AH 39	Cruise at Breiðafjörður Bay	189 €	140 €	22.400 kr
AH 70	DPV Scooter Diving	260 €	220 €	35.000 kr
AH 71	Magnificent fissure diving	230 €	210 €	33.000 kr
AH 72	Magnificent fissure snorkelling	140 €	120 €	19.400 kr
AH 74	Whale Watching and Gullfoss & Geysir	118 €	100 €	15.500 kr
AH 75	Whale Watching	49 €	45 €	7.500 kr
AH 78	Whale Watching & The Blue Lagoon to Keflavik Airport	82 €	65 €	10.300 kr
AH 79	Whale Watching & The Blue Lagoon Direct	82 €	65 €	10.300 kr
AH 88	ATV Blue Lagoon Direct to Keflavik Airport	125 €	85 €	13.500 kr
AH 89	ATV Blue Lagoon Direct	125 €	85 €	13.500 kr
AH 140	Golden Circle Super Jeep Tour	249 €	220 €	35.000 kr
AH 142	4X4 Iceland Adventure	149 €	130 €	21.000 kr

New Day Tours 2009				
Tour Code	Tour Name	Rack Rate	Special Offer	ISK Rate
AH 61	The Saga Trail	80 €	75 €	12.000 kr
AH 62	The Highland Road - Glaciers, waterfalls and hot springs	95 €	90 €	14.400 kr
AH 63	The Silver Circle	140 €	125 €	20.000 kr
AH 64	The Highland Route & Golden Circle Evening Tour	130 €	115 €	18.400 kr
AH 65	The Platinum Circle - Three in one!	175 €	160 €	25.600 kr

Tours guided in German 2009				
Tour Code	Tour Name	Rack Rate	Special Offer	ISK Rate
AH 217	Besuch eines isländischen bauernhofs / Visit to an Icelandic farm	79 €	60 €	9.200 kr
AH 35	Südküste und Jökulsárlón Gletscher Lagune / South Coast and Jökulsárlón	189 €	140 €	22.400 kr
AH 10	Stadtrundfahrt / Greater Area Reykjavik Sightseeing	39 €	30 €	4.500 kr
AH 225	Stadtrundfahrt und Blaue Lagune / City Sightseeing and The Blue Lagoon Direct	69 €	40 €	6.500 kr
AH 61	Die Saga Route / The Saga Trail	80 €	75 €	12.000 kr
AH 62	Die Hochland Route - Gletscher, Wasserfälle und heiße Quellen / The Highland Road Glaciers, waterfalls and hot springs	95 €	90 €	14.400 kr
AH 63	Der Silberne Kreis / The Silver Circle	140 €	125 €	20.000 kr
AH 75	Walbeobachtung / Whale Watching	49 €	45 €	7.500 kr
AH 234	Perlen der Südküste / South Coast & Waterfalls	129 €	90 €	14.200 kr
AH 212	Der Goldene Kreis / The Golden Circle Classic	79 €	60 €	9.200 kr
AH 30	Südküste und Thorsmörk / Thorsmörk and The South Coast	129 €	90 €	14.200 kr

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\*According to the Dear Visitor study done by Tourism Research and Consulting in the summer of 2008, Iceland Excursions had a significant lead compared to competitors in satisfaction and quality.

# 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.



“Are They God?” I ask clairvoyant Guðbjörg Sveinsdóttir, referring to Ásgeir, the collective consciousness spirit who speaks through her - also known as Them.

Ask a stupid question get a cryptic answer: “Everything is God.”

And for God's sake, don't go asking Them who or what God is. You'll get precisely the same answer.

At times, I almost feel like I am talking to an old priest or pastor, only one that has lived many lifetimes. Somehow though, Ásgeir never lets you get quite too close, never lets you catch Them out. It appears, at least on the surface, They know precisely what They are talking about. And yet, there is part of me that just doesn't want to believe all this - I hate to say it - New Age poppycock.

I have the opportunity to ask Guðbjörg all manner of questions since she is driving back with me to Reykjavík from the north of Iceland where she has just given a two day course on how to contact your spirit guide. I've been trying to think of something that will truly rock the boat.

**How does Ásgeir react when people ask when they are going to die?**

She smiles, a kind of Marilyn Monroe twinkle, then says: “Normally They just laugh and then say something like: “Why do you want to know that?” Of course, most people want to hear they are going

to live a long and happy life. But Ásgeir are not going to give you anything on a silver platter. They'll challenge you, prod you. Believe me, They're not for the faint-hearted.”

Two days earlier I arrived at Ragna's home around nine thirty in the morning on a Saturday. The houses are tightly knit almost like in some suburban enclave somewhere in the American Midwest; it reminds me of Desperate Housewives, only without the Mexican gardeners, and it's deadly quiet. I listen for birds, seagulls, sounds of the sea: nothing.

There's a strange vibe in the air. Maybe it's just me.

An entirely ordinary looking housewife greets me at the door, says, “Oh, you must be Marc. We don't all speak English here, but we'll do our best.” There are twenty people in the living room, all sitting in a circle, bundled up, blankets tucked around their knees, sipping coffee and munching celery sticks. To me, this looks almost like a wedding shower. Most are women between the ages of 16 and 70, but hidden in a corner I notice one man; somehow he almost blends into the furniture.

Later I ask Guðbjörg what kinds of people go to see her.

“All kinds,” she says. “Taxi drivers, politicians, housewives, businessmen, sailors...even writers.”

“What exactly are these people looking for?”

“Happiness, of course.” Many visit Guðbjörg when they are having some sort of a personal crisis; and yes, probably more women than men. One way or another, Ásgeir helps them develop, move on. Some have even been known to go on to become mediums in their own right.

“And why more women?”

“Well you know what they say about women being more in touch with their... emotions.”

At first, Guðbjörg herself guides us through meditation; later, as things progress into trance - and by now a few are breaking down into tears - the gravelly voice of Ásgeir's collective consciousness takes over. We are told to envision a light that runs through the centre of our bodies - a kind of celestial thread - finally rushing out from our heads, connecting us out into the Cosmos.

In a séance that I attended just a week earlier, another medium, Hildur Clausen, channelled the deceased spirit of Ólafur Trygvasson. Ólafur's spirit was barraged with all sorts of metaphysical questions, but one bit of arcane knowledge that surfaced struck me as much the same: all souls appear to be connected by some kind of spiritual light-cord whether alive, dead, or somewhere, well, in between. This is one of the theories that appears to be a staple of New Age astral transcendentalism; this, and that the

universe is a conscious, thinking entity.

Origins of this silver umbilical cord train-of-thought can be found in the teachings of Indian mystics, but also in the ritual and myth of other indigenous cultures: Native Americans, Inuit, and the Australian Aborigines. Life force appears almost universally to be represented by light, even in the most conservative Christian traditions.

Much of the time, an animated Guðbjörg jumps around the room, strides along the circle from person to person encouraging, cracking jokes, whistling and singing slightly out of tune - and I can't quite make out the words. At times I see her as a kind of native medicine woman; the only thing missing is a great drum. Perhaps this is truly what Guðbjörg is: a modern shaman.

When we slip into meditative trance, she asks us to imagine that we are in a room, our very own private domain. In another session, we exit our room and come upon a forest down by a lake. Here a wizened old man waits to introduce us to our individual spirit guides. There is not a single person when later questioned who has not met theirs. Some are famous spiritual leaders, numerous claim to have encountered Jesus, Joseph of Nazareth; others unknown individuals: a woman in a red cape, a man named Jon. I myself meet three guides, one of whom - believe it or not - is a Native American by the name of Big Owl. Each of us receive some sort of metaphorical gift: a key to unlock secrets, a candle to guide the way through the dark, a knot to unravel.

I start to wonder if what I have just experienced is so way out on a limb? I try to equate these otherworldly visions with other experiences: being regressed by a psychoanalyst, an artist's inspiration, last night's dreams.

Is this just vivid imagination working overtime? Then again, what in God's name is imagination anyway?

Perhaps there truly is some force, some omniscient spirit - call it what you will - trying to reach each and every one of us through this cord of light.

There is no way Guðbjörg could have planted all these images into our heads through mass hypnosis, is there?

When I finally get home, I look up ‘Big Owl’ on the internet, and to my astonishment find that a Cherokee Chief of the Appalachian Mountains sometime during the mid 1800s had precisely the same name. He was taken down by a US cavalry bullet before his time.

For the moment, I'm simply struck speechless. 🍷

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RE-17 - 08:00  
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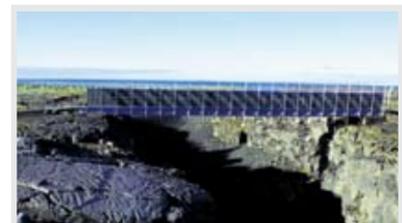
RE-08 - 09:00  
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SAT

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## Fancy a Beer?

Your guide to buying alcohol in Iceland



Welcome to Iceland, folks! Did you enjoy some tasty Skyr and watch FRIENDS re-runs on the plane? God, that Joey's a funny cat. Anyway, you must be gagging for a drink by now. Thus, we have dedicated this space to explaining the ins, outs and upside downs of the madness that is purchasing alcoholic beverages in Iceland.

First off, the cheapest booze can be found at Keflavik's spacious duty free wonderland. Expect a six-pack of Viking for the modest sum of 1.079 ISK and a big bottle of the hard stuff from 2-3.000 ISK. Note that, according to Icelandic law, you are allowed to bring in the following combinations: 1 bottle of booze + 2 six-packs OR 2 bottles of wine + 2 six-packs OR 4 bottles of wine. Use it wisely, and use it all.

It's all down hill from there.

### The Vínbúð

According to PSN Communications, 62% of Icelanders are still opposed to selling hard alcohol in grocery stores. Who are these people? Trolls? Of course, there is the argument that easy availability will increase health problems and serious crimes. Naturally the powers that be are more concerned with statistics as opposed to having a blast.

With that in mind, Iceland's sole vendor of alcohol is the state run Vínbúðin (indeed, "the wine shop"), boasting forty-five locations, conveniently dotted around the whole of Iceland for your drinking pleasure.

Each Vínbúð is aesthetically magnificent and spacious, resembling a certain Scandinavian design warehouse. It makes a change from the typically grimy establishments you find in, say,

the UK. Apart from its elegance, they seem incredibly interested in making your purchasing experience as painful and inconvenient as possible.

### Planning ahead

Always be sure to plan your boozing in a timely fashion, as most Vínbúð are only open from 11:00 to 18:00 Mondays through Thursdays and Saturdays, 11:00 to 19:00 on Friday and it is completely shut on a Sunday. Stores located at Skeifan and Skútuvogur are open until 20:00 on weekdays. A complete list and opening hours is available at [www.vinbudin.is](http://www.vinbudin.is)

Vínbúð's lack of in store coolers at Austurstræti mean that on a blistering summer's day (sometimes it happens) your beer will be warmer than your arm pits. Apparently this is a remnant of city officials' unsuccessful attempts to cut down on street drinking. We'll let you judge the results.

Extremely high taxes on alcohol provide a knock on effect to the in-store prices. Did you know that these tax rates are not relevant to the price but more to the percentage of alcohol content? Well now you know kids. This also means that fine wine is often less expensive here than in neighbouring countries.

The prices, the prices.  
Oh my Thor.

For those of you adventurous types, chug some Brennivín after sampling some putrefied shark meat. Also known as 'Black Death', Brennivín is the country's signature alcoholic beverage, made from fermented potato pulp and flavoured with caraway seeds. At 2.715 ISK per 500 ml, it makes for one hell of a night!

If you're after something slightly stronger, guzzle down some Reyka, stating to be the first green vodka to be bottled in Iceland. Using glacial water and distilled using clean sustainable energy from geothermal heat, it claims to be one of the cleanest vodkas in the world. 4.560 ISK for a surprisingly spicy taste with undertones of warm citrus, apparently. It gets you fucked up, anyway.

Beer sold in convenience stores is known as Pilsner or light beer. Sporting a low, low 2.25% alcohol level, it is strictly for those of you who don't fancy getting drunk. You're surely out there. Strong beer, like all booze, can be found at Vínbúð with a varied selection of mainly European brands. Popular Icelandic beers, Viking, Egils and Thule are found sold in single cans, six-packs or ten-packs. Single cans are normally priced at around 230 ISK and a ten-pack averages for 2.100 ISK.

### Keep in mind...

Just a few suggestions, tips and a heads-up. The drinking age in Iceland is pegged at twenty. So if you're 18 and expect to get sozzled, then you're fucked over here – unless you can find some character of ill repute to do your shopping. Mind you, that's illegal.

Planning a mad one? Always buy alcohol early before you go out. It works out way cheaper and no one goes out before midnight anyway, giving you plenty of liver debauchery time. Sometimes certain hotels won't allow you to leave the premises with beer in hand however. That's just the way it goes.

☞ -JONATHAN BAKER ESQ.

## Tales from the Cab Side



Now, Miklabraut is an eight lane thoroughfare cloven in twain by a wide divider adorned with a six foot grid iron fence, hence going the wrong way is either a feat of insanity or the by-product of a British driver's license. Under the oppressive dome of a starless deep winter's night, I am suddenly reminded why head lights and break lights differ in colour, as the yellow beams emanating from the S.U.V ahead of me rapidly increase their intensity to the tune of our combined 200 kph. Terror strikes for a fleeting fearful second but before instinct kicks in the accidental game of chicken is cut short when the nut-job, or perhaps limey, turns an on-ramp into an off-ramp and a particular hazard to merely a general one.

On an early late spring morning speeding down Sæbraut there's some inordinate swerving going down just ahead. There's no overtaking to be done as the perpetrator defiles both lanes equally in between brief, intermittent forays up the curb and onto the adjacent lawn. His pace is however a meandering one and as I finally spot an opening and poach a passing, a caved in hood alerts me to the probability that his may not simply be a drunken excursion but a full-blown Odyssey of inebrication.

And the goddamn hits keep coming. Along the off-ramp leading to Pizza Hut Sprengisandur, a teenaged three piece collectively crawls out of an upturned hatchback and proceeds in a wailing stumble towards a presumably dead windscreen ejectee.

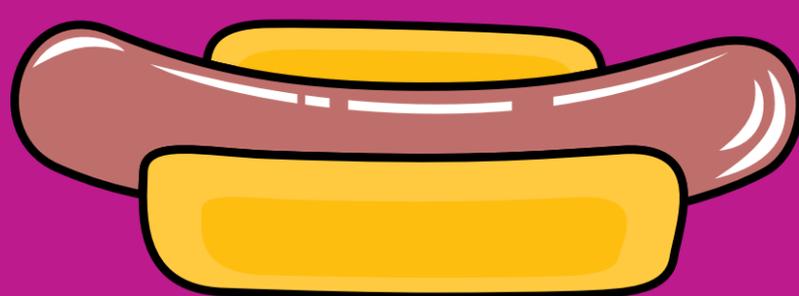
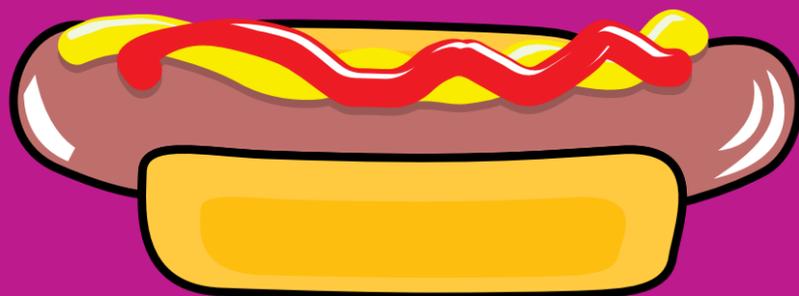
Along Kalkofnsvegur there is a hairpin turn shielded by a railing and culminating in a stoplight. Between the railing and the stoplight lies a mediocre burger joint in the shape of a teardrop. Presumably the railing serves the dual purpose of protecting pedestrians from careening traffic and careening traffic from the concrete wedge constituting the business end of the teardrop. Turns out the sheer 80 kph (as per police estimates) momentum of stray vehicles bent on wanton collateral damage is far greater than the halting force of safety

measures secured by a handful of approx. 20 kg concrete slabs grounded in a mere foot of gravel. Your average household concrete wall will however effectively truncate anything less than a semi truck within the shadow of a heartbeat. The result is a convergence of the three pronged forces of 112 (or 911, where applicable); paramedics, Morphine laced syringe in one hand and defibrillating pads in the other, 5-0 securing the premises and firemen wielding the jaws-of-life.

For a perhaps anticlimactic finale, there is the aesthetically pleasing spectacle at the surprisingly accident prone intersection of Sundlaugarvegur and Kringlumýrarbraut, laid out like a piece of performance art frozen in time at its apex: a traffic light pole is bent at 33 degree angle (in my experience, for the umpteenth time) and for the time being directs traffic in the skies; a grey Subaru Legacy reclines, engine stubbornly idling, against the cater corner traffic light post, nursing a left headlight bashed so far down the engine block the incessant idling puzzles one to wonder as to how an engine ever needs work done. The pièce de résistance, however, is a red Yaris somehow supporting the tail end of a sedan barely teetering on its front wheels, positioned in such a way that the Yaris' driver, stumped for entertainment during emergency response time, needs only gaze out his windscreen in order to fully appreciate the Volkswagen's undercarriage design. There being no one hurt despite the vast vehicular carnage, not taking into account the bitter post scriptum, I am leaving you on a high note.

All in all, this is the kinda shit that makes me curb the road rage at the raving idiots begging for a rapidly honking spell of tailgating for the comparative misdemeanour of respecting the speed limit while in the left hand lane, or the joint idiot venture of keeping perpendicular pace on a double wide stretch so as to continuously clog a whole fucking artery of infrastructure.

☞ -"TRAVIS BICKLE"



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## Too Cute To Eat?

Westman Islands could run out of puffin

Working at a seafood restaurant in Reykjavík has taught me one thing: a lot of tourists (and, for some reason, especially American ones) shudder at the thought of eating puffin. The reason? Puffins are cute, and should therefore not be eaten. Upon hearing such remarks, we Icelanders usually shake our heads and mumble something about our ancestors not surviving on this barren rock for a thousand years by limiting their diet to ugly animals. In the first place, there really aren't that many animals in Iceland. And secondly, is cuteness really a reason for not eating something? Lambs are cute. Newly hatched chickens: also cute. The cuteness argument resonates with the arguments that folks use against whaling. Whales are supposedly highly intelligent beings and should therefore not be eaten. But research suggests that pigs are also quite clever. Smarter than most dogs, in fact. And piglets are certainly cute. Anyone seen Babe: The Movie? And you still eat bacon?

So, brushing off indignant remarks, Icelanders have continued "hunting" the charming puffin without reserve or shame (note that I put hunting in quotation marks here, for it is not a very macho affair, involving nets instead of guns. Perhaps catching would be a more appropriate term?). Of course there are also tourists who have no reservations about ordering a plate of puffin. And they are quite tasty. The meat is dark and the flavour has been described as "a fishier, gamier version of chicken".

### Ate them all?

However, our Puffin binge may be coming to a close. A recent report shows an alarming 25% decrease in the Westman Islands' puffin population over the last four years. And with the islands being the puffins' single largest breeding colony in the world, this is some potentially grave news. The Westman Islands puffin even qualifies as an endangered species now; experts are suggesting a ban on puffin hunting for some years.

The Westman Islanders' response: No.

Mind you, it's not because of the fishy, gamy taste. Elliði Vignisson, mayor of Westman Islands, is quoted as saying that although no one makes a living out of puffin catching, and it is not about the money, they still want to keep the tradition alive, claiming it to a cultural thing. The local hunters have convened and graciously offered to cut the hunting days down to only ten a year, which the mayor claims to be responsible, and bordering on self-sustaining. Stopping altogether seems not to be an option in the average islander's view.

### The Great Auk, anyone?

Greenlanders have used the cultural card to justify their whale, polar bear and seal hunting. But for them, harvesting the aforementioned animals happens to be among the pillars on which their society is based. And not to mention also making up a significant portion of their diet.

Cultures change. People evolve. The Great Auk, a penguin like bird about 80 cm tall, was formerly a traditional food of Iceland. Right up until it was hunted to extinction. As far as we know, the remaining two birds were killed on Eldey, an island south of Iceland in 1843.

It basically breaks down to this: stop killing the puffins for a few years until the population gets back on its orange feet. And then we can happily "hunt" them for as long as we like to the horror of every sissy American tourist.

It worked with the grouse, whose population is now reportedly booming after a couple of years hunting ban! 🍷

Lots more to be announced. Check [www.icelandairwaves.com](http://www.icelandairwaves.com) for updates.

## Music

## Iceland Airwaves XI Great news everyone: It's happening!



Despite raging uncertainty, rampant rumours and lots of mixed messages from all over, it finally seems clear that, yes, Iceland Airwaves will happen again this October and, yes, it will as per usual feature lots of cool musicians, a bunch of mediocre ones and a whole lot of good old-fashioned drunken debauchery. This is of course great news: the Iceland Airwaves festival has provided us with some truly amazing times over the last decade, and the awesome music scene now raging all over the country truly deserves a festival in its honour.

Initial statements from Mr. Destiny, the company behind Iceland Airwaves, indicate that this year's bash will cut back a bit in the total number of bands featured (they were getting too many, anyway) and focus more extensively on local acts while maintaining a high standard for the international ones that make it over. It'll take place on October 14-18, so save the dates and book a flight already.

The following acts had been confirmed for Iceland Airwaves 2009 at the time of print:

### International:

Micachu And The Shapes, Metronomy, James Yuill, Thecocknbulldid, Casio Kids, Golden Filter, Nina Kinerd & Golden Silvers

### Icelandic:

Agent Fresco, Mammút, FM Belfast, Jeff Who?, Reykjavík!would, Retro Stefson, Vicky, Cliff Clavin, Sudden Weather Change, Hjaltalín, Gus Gus, Eberg, Dikta, Oculus, Benni Crespo's Gang, Esja, Ólafur Arnalds, Æla, Bárújárn, Sykur, Me, The Slumbering Napoleon, Miri, Swords of Chaos, Leaves, Dynamo Fog, Langi Seli & Skuggarnir

Locals should note that tickets to Iceland Airwaves 2009 will be priced in Euros, unless you buy them real soon, in which case you'll get 'em at last year's price.

🍷 **HAUKUR S MAGNÚSSON**



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## A letter from Iceland

by HERMANN STEFÁNSSON

Reykjavík, April 18, 2009

**Subject:** Grant Request  
**To:** The Royal Literature Fund of Great Britain  
**From:** Skallagrímur Daðason, writer, Iceland

Dear Sir/Madam

Although this letter might, admittedly, seem a bit strange to you when you commence reading, I assure you that its content will become crystal clear on completion, and I am absolutely certain that you and your institute will understand my point of view when everything is taken into account: politics, history, metaphysics and the essence of literature.

Let me say that this letter is not written on a whim; I place each finger carefully on the keyboard and consider every word like it was made of precious jewels. I am hopeful that you will see fit to more than seriously consider the following request, and which I must add is truly a humble one under the circumstances, although I have taken a certain initiative in writing this letter. Given the fact that it is among the duties of your institute to support literature, writers and their work, albeit be it normally in Britain and not the island from which I am writing (Iceland, recently labelled a terrorist state by your country), it is my belief that the very nature of the work of which I speak addresses your institute and indeed your very culture in such a direct fashion that even the most escapist and flighty reader would not be able to divert his or her eyes from it.

Let me digress. Not just for my mere affection for digression but to show what is and what is not, so to speak.

In discussing the function of literature and its connection with the politics of our nations, I refer you to the case of the Viking poet Egill Skallagrímsson and his poem "Head Ransom", written in the ancient kingdom of York in Great Britain in celebration of the cruel king, Eric Bloodaxe. Eric had sentenced Skallagrímsson to death. To save his life Skallagrímsson composed a poem in praise of Eric, thereby reversing his fate. Eric pardoned Skallagrímsson when he recited the poem to him on the very day he was supposed to be executed. You will see that words have been quite powerful in the relations between our nations and regardless of whether the poet writes of his own initiative or not, he has been historically well rewarded, even with life itself.



At this stage you might be thinking that my literary work (and I hesitate still at this point to give exact information on the nature of my work) cannot be in every way comparable with the poem the Viking poet wrote to save his life. You might even be thinking that many a times modern man can, when comparing himself to ancient historical characters, seem less important or even trivial in some way. To paraphrase: that modern man's dictions, in contrast to those of a man writing to save his head, can appear to be mere "whining" – the complaints of a "spoilt brat". But what is life and when can one be considered to be saving it? Is our present state of living less vital in any way and have the words lost any of their essential meaning? If on the night he composed his poem, Skallagrímsson can be thought to have spent his time extremely well, when can modern man be thought to be spending his time well and when is he just wasting it? I, for one, consider myself to be using my time well; each time I press a finger on a letter on the keyboard it is with passion and conviction. Each letter is worth something, albeit be it not my entire life, each word has at least a part of my soul in it.

This brings us to the subject of time.

"Time is like water", reads a famous line from an Icelandic poem. What a ridiculous notion! Time is nothing at all like water! There are no evident similarities whatsoever between the two. For instance, time is not wet and water cannot be measured by a clock. And water is not relative as Albert Einstein claimed time was. There is no theory on the relativity of water. Does that not show how poetry can at times be void of logic? However, more than the theories of Einstein, I tend to agree when people say: "Time is money". This is more in accordance with the logic of poetry, given that water is money as well, i.e. if you sell water to someone in a bottle, you get money for it. And whatever you do for a living, be it selling water or writing literature, you are selling your time for money.

This is how the logic of poetry works, on a deeper level, drawing similarities between seemingly remote objects by various methods:

A chattering rose spread its wings and flew.

A full moon came peeking from behind a cloud like the vacant eye of a lost political god, gazing upon the lovers as

they strode, watched, down the street.

A speck of snow falling on my nose is like a whisper from the lips of angels.

All these metaphors, which I have invented for the sake of argument (as well as merely to include some metaphors, if you will) are worth money, however vulgar this may seem at first glance. In fact they might well form a part of the work of art to which I refer, to say no more. Even Shakespeare wrote for money.

Of course time – as well as similes and metaphors – is often wasted, spent in vain. Think of other noble notions on par with literature, such as love, religion or metaphysics. I am in fact of the opinion that every work of literature should include love, religion, metaphors, aesthetics, metaphysics, and politics. This is a decisive list and I do not make exceptions in my own literary work that consists exclusively of short stories that pertain to a subgenre of my own invention. I have taken a Borgesian line, lending my stories an aura of something else than straight fiction, at risk of somewhat narrowing my number of readers, even extensively so. Now, love is often a waste of time. People fall

hopelessly in love, think compulsively of their love object and love it even more if they cannot have it. Surely in this way they are spending money, as time is money. The metaphysics of whining are a source of endless thought. The complaints and whining of a lover can in some cases seem somewhat similar to those of writers and their writing; I mean that both include a certain degree of desire and when considering the metaphysics of complaining (and I must insist that I would never complain or try to force my will upon anyone) they seem to be somehow compatible. Religion is obviously time-consuming for those who practice it and it also costs money: the time people spend going to church makes up for lost work hours, they perhaps take the bus and drop their change in the collection plate. So you see that when everything is taken into consideration, all dignified things, be it love, religion, literature or time, are connected to money. Money does not make even the most noble notions any less respectable – least of all literature.

And money is perhaps, metaphysically speaking, closest to the core of this letter, if you will. Let us now pause to think about the thing closest to money: politics. As you may or may not be aware, your country, Britain, has made use of its laws on terrorism against my country, Iceland. The politicians responsible for this being Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling. The Icesave accounts have gained a somewhat notorious reputation. Icesave was an Icelandic bank in England that went bankrupt, leaving enormous debts owed to individuals, local councils and charities in Britain. Gordon Brown used the terrorist law against the tiny nation of Iceland to freeze the assets of all Icelandic banks in Britain. The results? Some say it has led to the nationalization and fall of all the banks and most recently the fall of Baugur Group. Personally I am not so sure about that, but certainly we, the Icelandic public, and our children now owe an exorbitant sum of money to the British state, the former debts of about 30 Icelandic bank tycoons and millionaires. Our bank system, now collapsed, was so much bigger than the state that there is no chance of the public ever paying this back, even if we were to become slaves (here we call it Iceslave) for about twenty years.

I will add that as a writer who writes in the tradition of Egill Skallagrímsson I am not in the least worried about this. Worrying is another form of wasting

**THE STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 34**

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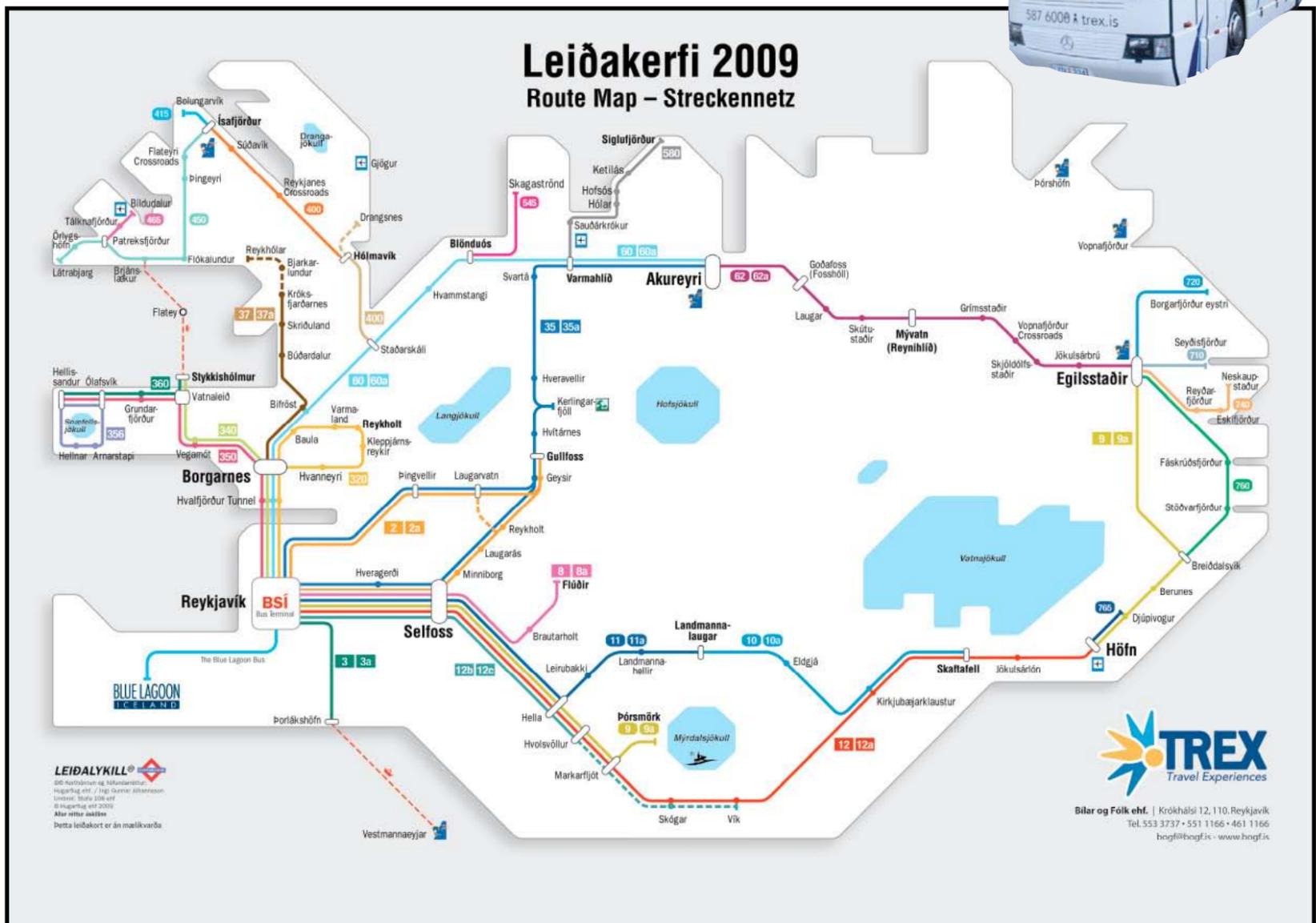
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# Broke, Busted, Disgusted

*How ICESAVE fell apart, and why the current deal with the British and Dutch will never work.*

PAUL NIKOLOV

With reporting by Irina Domurath

In front of the Icelandic parliament, protesters bang on drums, blow whistles, chant and yell while police stand by, watching. Inside, Minister of Finance Steingrímur J. Sigfússon is addressing his colleagues. It's a historic day. After months of negotiations, Icelandic authorities have finally reached an agreement with the British and Dutch authorities over Icesave, the internet banking company that collapsed last autumn, soured foreign relations between Iceland the rest of Europe, ruined the country's financial credibility, and brought about the downfall of a government under the pressure of protests from thousands of Icelanders. Finally, a deal has been made that will make it all better.

But few people in parliament look happy. No one outside of parliament looks happy. As the finance minister begins to speak, a clattering sound, like hail on sheet metal, echoes through the hall. The protesters are throwing coins at the windows.

Iceland used to be regarded as a libertarian success story. Its businessmen were compared to Vikings, moving swiftly across Europe, opening companies, and raking in cash. It didn't matter that financial experts such as Standard and Poors were telling the Grapevine in 2005 that Iceland's economy was "overheating" and that "now is the time for the Icelandic government to step in and do something." Conservatives scoffed at the very idea. Why should we fix something that isn't broken? Peoples' wallets were bursting with cash, the country enjoyed one of the highest standards of living in the world, and our capitalist ventures abroad were booming.

"The whole Icelandic financial world outgrew its proper place in society," historian and author of the best-selling book *Hrunið* ("The Collapse") Guðni Th. Jóhannesson told the Grapevine. "It's not that the people in the Financial Services Authority (FME) were stupid or weak; they just didn't have the resources to make it work. One person from the FME described it to me this way: she'd go into a meeting with these financial giants, and it'd be her at one side of the table. On the other side of the table, there'd be a team of financial lawyers, aided by experts from abroad with years of experience, who specialized in what she'd just graduated in a few months ago. This image, I think, summarizes the fight between the financial world and the authorities in Iceland."

In such an environment, Icelandic businessmen had free range to do more or less as they pleased. One such venture was Icesave, a privately-insured internet banking company founded in 2006 that promised higher returns on deposits. Icesave was effectively a branch of Landsbanki; a person in the UK or Holland logging onto their Icesave account was entering a Landsbanki account. It became wildly popular. By some estimates, as many as 300,000 Brits deposited 4 billion pounds into Icesave. Business was good. But September 2008 would herald a series of events that would drive Iceland to the brink of bankruptcy, and make "Icesave" synonymous with financial ruin.

## How fear snowballed into panic

Certainly, there was economic trouble elsewhere in the world. On September 15th, Lehman Brothers declared bankruptcy and, among other things, moved their assets out of the UK. This move would end up having consequences for Icesave down the road. Here in Iceland, we were also starting to feel the pinch. Banks and other financial institutions that had invested so heavily abroad were on shaky ground. The ISK had devalued by 35% over the course of the year. At the time, it was estimated that Iceland's banking system had grown to 13 times the size of the country's GDP. Financial opinion pieces running in the BBC, the Times and the Telegraph began to openly question the solvency of these institutions, and whether peoples' money was safe in them. Like everything else in the financial world, the solvency of the Icelandic banks was based largely in the confidence of others. And that confidence was faltering fast.

Then, on September 29th, the Icelandic government announced it was taking over 75% of the Icelandic bank Glitnir. Some, such as Glitnir

*"We are not currently processing any deposits or any withdrawal requests through our Icesave internet accounts. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause our customers. We hope to provide you with more information shortly." - Banner message on the Icesave website, October 6th, 2008.*

CEO Bank Lárus Welding, complained that the move shook the confidence of investors, saying that it "had a negative impact on current shareholders." The chairman of Kaupthing Bank, Sigurður Einarsson, told Icelandic news show *Kastljósið* that the takeover was "ill-advised". The following week, on October 5th, the FME announced that trading was suspended in all Icelandic financial companies – Glitnir Bank, Kaupthing Bank, Landsbanki Bank, Straumur-Burdarás Investment Bank, SPRON and Exista. The following day, parliament passed a law that essentially nationalized the Icelandic banking system.

This did not go unnoticed in the UK, especially as Icesave depositors awoke on the morning of October 6th to see the following message on the Icesave homepage:

"We are not currently processing any deposits or any withdrawal requests through our Icesave internet accounts. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause our customers. We hope to provide you with more information shortly."

Panic ensued. The world turned to Iceland, demanding answers. Then Icelandic Central Bank chairman Davíð Oddsson, appearing on *Kastljósið*, had one for them: "We [the Icelandic state] do not intend to pay the debts of the banks that have been a little heedless," and said that foreign creditors could

expect to only get about 5% to 15% of their claims.

## And that's when things got ugly

Despite assurances from numerous Icelandic authorities that the banks were stable, British authorities were not so certain. They'd been badly burned when Lehman Brothers pulled up their stakes and left. And they were not going to let that happen again. On October 8th, the British government evoked the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act of 2001 against Landsbanki, the Central Bank of Iceland and the Government of Iceland in the United Kingdom, freezing all assets of Landsbanki in the UK.

"The City of London is full of foreign-owned banks," political scientist Eiríkur Bergmann Einarsson explained to the Grapevine. "The Icelandic banks comprised only a small amount of all the operations that have been taking place there. London had become this big financial hub. And they were afraid, that if Landsbanki closed their accounts and just left the country, it could set a precedent for other banks to flee out of the UK with their assets, leaving their

debts in London. So I think they were making an example of Iceland and Landsbanki."

British Chancellor of the Exchequer Alistair Darling reiterated that sentiment when he told the British press that, in a conversation he'd had with then Icelandic Finance Minister Árni Matthiesen, he'd been informed that Iceland would not be guaranteeing deposits made into Landsbanki by people outside of the UK. A transcript of their phone conversation, published by the Times, does indeed show that to be the case. In part:

**Darling:** Do I understand that you guarantee the deposits of Icelandic depositors?

**Mathiesen:** Yes, we guarantee the deposits in the banks and branches here in Iceland.

**Darling:** But not the branches outside Iceland?

**Mathiesen:** No, not outside of what was already in the letter that we sent.

**Darling:** But is that not in breach of the EEA Treaty?

**Mathiesen:** No, we don't think so and think this is actually in line with what other countries have been doing over recent days."

Reaction in Iceland was not exactly positive. PM Geir H. Haarde railed against the "absolutely unacceptable" behaviour of the British government.

Darling's citing of the EEA Treaty is also interesting, as Einarsson believes the invocation of the anti-terrorist law was in itself a violation of the treaty: "It's not only illegal, but also politically very hostile. I think that the Icelandic authorities made a devastating mistake in these early days. When the UK authorities used these illegal means to seize the property of Landsbanki, the Icelandic authorities should have said, that the UK government by that also overtook the bank's obligations. Therefore, it would be the obligation of the UK government to pay out of the Icesave accounts and to liquidate the assets of the bank. Not the other way around, like it is now."

Daniel Gros, Director of the Centre for European Policy Studies, told the Grapevine that the Icelandic government was indeed under no legal obligation to pay back the Icesave accounts. "These were privately insured deposits. They could have just said, 'Sorry, you should have known what you were getting into.' It is, however, unfortunate that they decided to let Icelandic depositors withdraw their money, but not those abroad." Jóhannesson agrees, calling the move "discrimination", adding, "either you pay back all the money to everybody, or you don't pay it back to anyone. It doesn't matter what country a bank branch is in. Icelandic authorities said they had to rescue the financial situation here, but that they were in no position to do it abroad. But every legal expert that the British, Dutch and EU consulted was of the same opinion – that this distinction was not allowed. There is no distinction allowed based on geography or nationality."

In the wake of Britain's move, a protest group called InDefense was founded. Setting up a website bearing the slogan "Icelanders are NOT terrorists", the group gained fame through a project whereby people were encouraged to take photos of themselves holding a message for Brown and Darling. 80,000 people signed a petition objecting to the use of the anti-terrorism law. The group also travelled to the UK and met with British parliamentarians. Ólafur Eliásson, one of the group's founders, told Grapevine, "The British reaction was very heavy-handed. The terrorism law was used to protect British interests. I had British officials tell me, 'How could we look our voters in the eye if we let another bank move its assets out of the country?'"

Ironically, many in the British government wound up agreeing with the Icelandic take on the invocation of the anti-terrorist law - the financial committee of the House of Commons in the UK published a report recently saying that there was no legal ground for this action.

Of course, Britain was not alone in its Icesave frustrations. Dutch authorities also got involved, as depositors in their country found themselves unable to make withdrawals. The Dutch assured their citizens that every Icesave account would be ensured by their central bank for up to 100,000 Euros, but naturally, this wouldn't mean Iceland was off the hook. On October 10th, Dutch Minister of Finance Wouter Bos stated that the Icelandic state would be taken to court if it did not honour its obligations towards

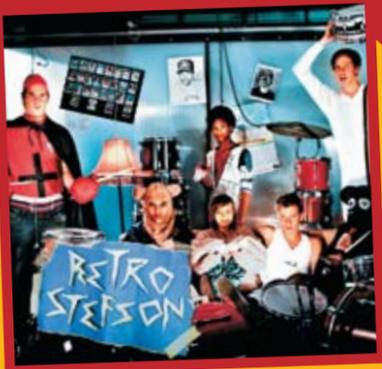
## Icesave timeline

1886	1998	2002	2006	2008	September 15	Sept 22	Sept 29	October 5	Oct 6	Oct 7	Oct 8	Oct 9	Oct 10
Landsbankinn founded on July 1.	Landsbankinn changed to a common stock company, steps taken towards privatisation. January 1.	Landsbankinn privatised on October 19. Buyers are Björgólfur Guðmundsson and his son, Björgólfur Thor, for 12.3 billion ISK. Half the money is borrowed from Búnaðarbankinn (now Kaupthing).	Icesave opens for business in the UK, October 2006.	Icesave in the Netherlands opens for business in April.	Lehman Brothers declare bankruptcy.	Glitnir and BYR announce they will merge.	Icelandic government takes over 75% of Glitnir. Glitnir officials complain they wanted a loan, not to be taken over.	The FME announces that trading is suspended in all Icelandic financial companies (i.e., Glitnir Bank, Kaupthing Bank, Landsbanki Bank, Straumur-Burdarás Investment Bank, SPRON and Exista). Panic abroad begins to form.	The "Act providing for special powers in exceptional financial Market circumstances" is passed in the Alþingi, the Icelandic Parliament. One of the primary amendments to the Act on Depositors' and Investors' Guarantee Fund is to the effect that deposits will "be given priority in the event of insolvency proceedings." Morgunblaðið announces that British depositors cannot withdraw from Icesave accounts. Panic ensues.	The Financial Supervisory Authority (FME) takes over Landsbanki.	Then Prime Minister Geir H. Haarde announces that "there is a good chance bank's assets will cover a large part of Icesave's deposits." At the same time Finance Minister Alistair Darling says that Iceland told him that they would posit left by British depositors, only Icelandic ones. Haarde tries to assure Icelandic and British authorities are talking it over. Then Icelandic Finance G. Sigurðsson tells people not to panic. Later that day, the British government Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act of 2001 against Landsbanki, the Central Bank of Iceland and the Government of Iceland in the United Kingdom. Dutch authorities demand that Iceland get information on their own deposits, as they're not able to withdraw from Icesave accounts.	Dutch Finance Minister Wouter Bos tells the public that the Dutch government will cover the Icesave deposits, with each depositor guaranteed up to 100,000 Euros. At the time it is estimated that 1.6 billion Euros had been deposited by Dutch investors into Icesave. It will later turn out to be 59 million Euros.	The Dutch bank Fortis expresses an interest in taking over the Dutch branches of Icesave. Dutch authorities demand the Icelandic government cover up to 20,000 euro per each Dutch Icesave account.



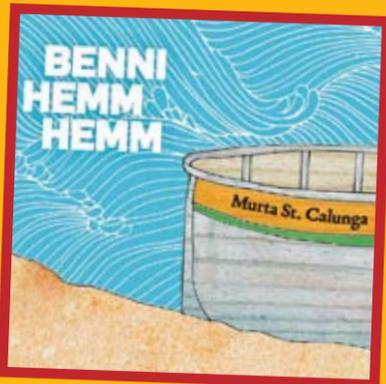
# Summer albums

Cool music for great price!



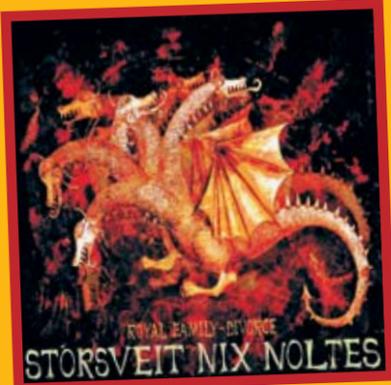
Retro Stefson | *Montaña*

★★★★★ / Fréttablaðið



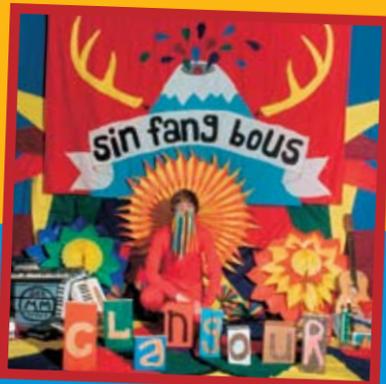
Benni Hemm Hemm | *Murta St. Calunga*

★★★★★ / Fréttablaðið



Stórsveit Nix Noltes | *Royal Family - Divorce*

8/10 - NME



Sin Fang Bous | *Clangour*

★★★★★ / Morgunblaðið



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# MUSIC

## CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

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

### 19 FRI

**B5**  
23:00 DJ Einar.  
**Celtic Cross**  
01:00 Live Music.  
**Cultura**  
20:00 House DJs.  
**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live Music.  
**Hemmi og Valdi**  
23:00 DJ Gauti.  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Eypór and Arnar perform, followed by DJ Maggi.  
**Jacobsen**  
00:00 Gullfoss and Geysir, followed by Damien EIE.  
**Kaffibarinn**  
23:45 Alfons X.  
**Kaffi Zimsen**  
22:00 Acoustic Skivar followed by DJ EI - NINO.  
**London/Reykjavik**  
00:00 Ghozt.  
**NASA**  
23:00 Júpitersball. Entrance: 2000ISK.  
**Prikið**  
21:00 Happy Hour! With DJ Danni Deluxe.  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 DJ Anna Brown.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 Jóhann Sig and Hjósveit. Entrance: 1000ISK.

### 20 SAT

**B5**  
23:00 DJ Jay Oh!  
**Celtic Cross**  
01:00 Live Music.  
**Cultura**  
22:00 House DJs.  
**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live Music.  
**Hemmi og Valdi**  
23:00 House DJ.  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Napóleon live followed by DJ Maggi.  
**Jacobsen**  
00:00 Partyzone '95.  
**Kaffibarinn**  
23:45 DJ KGB.  
**Kaffi Hjómáland**  
12:00 Ghetto yoga.  
**Kaffi Zimsen**  
23:00 DJ EI - NINO.  
**London/Reykjavik**  
00:00 London Underground presents ARNAR.  
**NASA**  
00:00. Egó and Papar.  
**Prikið**  
22:30 Shake Your Ass Like The Good Ol' Days with Erna and Ellen.  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 DJ Funky Fleivur.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 Jóhann Sig and Hjósveit. Entrance: 1000ISK.  
**Sódóma**  
23:00 90's Party. Entrance: 1000ISK.

### 21 SUN

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**Kaffi Hjómáland**  
16:00. SAMBA.  
**Prikið**  
22:00 Hangover Cinema- Akira with FREE POPCORN!  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 Open Decks.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 Retro Stefson, Sprengjuhöllin, Hraun, Ólöf Arnalds. Free.

### 22 MON

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**Kaffi Zimsen**  
20:00 2 for 1 beer.  
**Prikið**  
22:00 House DJ.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 Danni Pollock and Hjósveit.

### 23 TUE

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**Prikið**  
22:00 Beat Evening!  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 Varsjárbandalagið c/o Jón Torfi.

### 24 WED

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**Jacobsen**  
00:00 Late Hours with House DJ.  
**Kaffi Hjómáland**  
18:00 Ghetto yoga.  
**Prikið**  
22:00 Live Music.  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 Pub quiz.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 Ferlegheit blús. Entrance: 1000ISK.  
**Sódóma Reykjavík**  
21:00 DYS and Sagtmóðigur. Free Entry.

### 25 THU

**B5**  
21:00 Live performance from Þrjár Raddir.  
**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**Cultura**  
22:30 Live DJs.  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live Music.  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live Music.  
**Græna Hattinum (Akureyri)**  
20:00 JJ Soul Band. Entrance: 1500ISK.  
**Grand Rokk**  
22:00 Brain Police.  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Acoustic performance by Jogvan and Vigni.  
**Jacobsen**  
00:00 Weircore Night.  
**Prikið**  
22:00 Either Kári, Árni or Krúsi. It's a surprise!  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 Circus Evening with Unnur Andrea.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 Ferlegheit blús. Entrance: 1000ISK.  
**Sódóma Reykjavík**  
22:00 Muse Tribute Band.

### 26 FRI

**B5**  
23:00 DJ Funky Fleivur.  
**Café Paris**  
22:00 Cocktail Night.  
**Celtic Cross**  
01:00 Live Music.  
**Cultura**  
22:00 Live DJs.  
**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live music.  
**Græna Hattinum (Akureyri)**  
21:00 Hjósveitin. Entrance: 1500ISK.  
**Hemmi og Valdi**  
21:00 Live Electro Band, followed by DJ.  
**Hressó**  
21:00 Tenta perform, followed by DJ Elli.  
**Jacobsen**  
00:00 Thule and Beatport release party.  
**Kaffi Zimsen**  
20:00 Acoustic Sebastian followed by DJ Dramatic.  
**London/Reykjavik**  
00:00 DJ Aki Pain.  
**Prikið**  
21:00 DJ Addi.  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 DJ Manny.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 Mogadon. Entrance: 500ISK.  
**Sódóma Reykjavík**  
22:00 Heavy Metal Night.

### 27 SAT

**B5**  
23:00 DJ Simon GorillaFunk.  
**Celtic Cross**  
01:00 Live Music.  
**Cultura**  
22:00 Live DJs.  
**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live Music.  
**Græna Hattinum (Akureyri)**  
21:00 Foreign Monkeys. Entrance: 1500.  
**Grand Rokk**  
21:00 SKE, JeffWho?, LangisalHjöræar  
**Hemmi og Valdi**  
23:00 House DJ.  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Dalton perform in the garden, followed by DJ Elli.  
**Jacobsen**  
00:00 DJ Battle Feat, Alfons X, Orang Volante, Asli and Oculus.  
**Kaffibarinn**  
23:45 DJ Maggi Lego.



That's So Nineties!  
*Sódóma Reykjavík*  
*Tryggvagötu 22*

Now that they're finally over, everyone can look back on their memories of the nineties with fondness. In the crazy days of the Long Island Lolita and Lorena Bobbitt, we had some pretty jammin' tunes, apparently. The nineties party at Sódóma will play the best of the best dance songs around, from the likes of Dee-lite, Haddaway, Prodigy, and more. And even that one song from the end of Trainspotting, whatever that was called (what a good movie; what a good song!) So bust out the wide leg pants, grab some glowsticks, and maybe a pacifier necklace. Don't forget to feed your Tamagotchi before you leave. -JG



Pop Stained Indie  
at Rósenberg  
*Kaffi Rósenberg*  
*Klapparstígur 25 ☺ 21pm*

The quaint Kaffi Rósenberg plays host to an evening of pop stained indie via an abundance of Iceland's youngest risers - well I say abundance, it's more like four, but will be gleefully enjoyable nonetheless. Kiddiewinks Retro Stefson will get you on your feet, dancing to the sounds of their unique pop. They will be joined on the night by the catchy, radio-friendly Sprengjuhöllin, the eclectic Hraun - apparently know to swing their audiences from melancholy to downright madness in the span of a few minutes- and the alluring alt-folk princess Ólöf Arnalds. All on one twee stage? Sweet Jesus. -JB

*Grapevine Top 10 Most Played during the making of this issue*

1 Burial Archangel

2 Lucky Dragons Negative School

3 The Slits Typical Girls

4 Woodhands Dancer

5 Bárújárn Þögn

7 Hüsker Dü Dead Set On Destruction

8 7berg Reykjavík

9 Celestine Witness (the)

10 Peaches Serpentine

**Kaffi Hjómáland**  
12:00 SAMBA.  
**Kaffi Zimsen**  
23:00 DJ Dramatic.  
**London/Reykjavík**  
00:00 The House Mafia.  
**The Nordic House**  
17:00 Japanese-Icelandic Music Collaboration.  
**Prikið**  
23:00 DJ Danni Deluxe.  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 Erna Bergmann.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 Mogadon. Entrance: 500ISK.

## 28 SUN

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**Kaffi Hjómáland**  
16:00 SAMBA.  
**Prikið**  
22:00 Hangover Cinema-Scarface, plus FREE POPCORN!  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 Open Decks.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 JJ Soul Band.

## 29 MON

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**Kaffi Zimsen**  
20:00 2 for 1 beer.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 South River Band.

## 30 TUE

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 Anna Maria.

## 1 WED

**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**Hressó**  
22:00 DJ Elli.  
**Kaffi Hjómáland**  
18:00 Ghetto yoga.  
**The Nordic House**  
17:00 Shugo Tokumaru and guest performance by Amiina.  
**Prikið**  
22:00 Beat Evening!  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 Grapevine Tónleikar, Olóf Arnalds and Megas.  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 Pub Quiz.

## 2 THU

**B5**  
21:00 Live performance from Þrjár Raddir.  
**Dubliner**  
22:30 Live Music.  
**Cultura**  
22:00 House DJs.  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live Music.  
**Græna Mattinum (Akureyri)**  
20:00 KK and Maggi Eiríks. Entrance: 1500 ISK.  
**Hallgrímskirkja**  
12:15 Midday concert with organist Tómas Guðni Eggertsson and violinist Sif Tulinius. Entrance 1000ISK (concessions 500ISK).  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Live Acoustic.  
**Kaffi Hjómáland**  
17:30 Ghetto yoga with Siggy.  
**Prikið**  
22:00 DJ Kári.  
**Q-Bar**  
23:00 House DJ.  
**Rósenberg**  
21:00 Joe Pug c/o Jón Trausti. Entrance: 1000ISK.



## 101 Tokyo: A Crash Course

By Sigurður Kjartan Kristinsson

### Nordic House

Sturlugötu 5

Tokyo101.is

When you reach the ultimate peak of your creativity and come up with an idea so absurd and original that you're certain it's unprecedented, hold on before you run out to obtain a patent; it's inevitable that someone in Tokyo already signed up for it. This is nearly always the case, whether the idea entails a hospital theme bar, up-side-down umbrellas or hotels offering only beds tucked away in cupboard drawers. Japan rules. And, much to the Grapevine's liking, the Nordic House launched an elaborate festival earlier this week, aimed at giving us a chance to catch a glimpse of the innovative and spectacular world hidden on an island far, far away in the East.

### Finnish-Japanese architecture and cuisine workshops

Eloquently titled 101 Tokyo, the festival kicks off the first Japanese foray of its kind into Icelandic cultural life, and the assortments are both whopping and educational. To roughly depict the infrastructure of the festival you could say it's divided into three major sections: exhibitions, workshops and movie-screenings. There are also a few minor ones. There are exhibitions that vary from prestigious installments from art companies such as Theatre Products to youngster collaborations. Theatre Products has over the years become established for its cultural infused works in Japan, combining tradition with modern values. The textile group NUNO – whom many renowned artists and architects claim introduce a groundbreaking element into the textile works – will also exhibit their products.

One of the cornerstones of the festivals is the Alvar Aalto showroom, where the Japanese impact on the Finnish architect is emphasised. This known fact to architectural enthusiasts is made blatantly evident to us amateurs once Aalto's work is examined in that context.

But hey, don't sweat it bro; if this sounds too intimidating and you're not into 20th century architecture (and its connection to other nations' cultural backgrounds, uhummm), or trendy art companies, you'll still find something that rocks your boat. A popular choice would be the several workshops up for grabs. Who hasn't wanted to throw a sushi party where you change your kitchen into a real Japanese delicatessen, or show off by garnishing gift cards with calligraphy? Well, here's your chance. Famed professionals are offering all of us common folk to study the ancient arts, so it's definitely worth skipping one afternoon at the bar.

### High-class Anime and highbrow musicians

The good people at the Nordic House sure have some contacts, 'cause the infamous Icelandic anime boutique Nexus sent out a in-house invitation where they explained how they've plugged two lectures by Japanese pros for the Nordic House – not just your run of the mill pros though: the crème de la crème of the sector. Those in question are the prominent Nobuhiro Suwa, a FIPRESCI award winner at Cannes and a current professor at Zokei University in Tokyo, who will demonstrate the works of young Japanese filmmakers as well as covering the Japanese film scene as a whole. Masaaki Mori will be accompanying him; he is an eminent anime-buff, so if you want to learn something, check it out. You might even have an artistic epiphany.

Workshops and lectures might be too aggressive for some, but to underline the festival's extreme variety, it has a treat for those who merely want to chill out. The basic thing to do is to frequent their Sunday evening film screenings where you can witness some genuine Japanese masterpieces such as Always: Sunset on Third Street, The Burmese Harp or Kikujiro, grab a bucket of popcorn and pour down a cold cola to finalise the weekend's burlesque. On the other hand, the famed Shugo Tokumaru will be playing his music along with our very own Amiina (a precious sibling of superstars Sigur Rós) on Wednesday July 1. You've no excuse for not showing up.

## Music & Entertainment | Venue finder

<b>Amsterdam</b> Hafnarstræti 5   D3	<b>Dubliner</b> Hafnarstræti 4   D3	<b>Nýlenduvörverzlun Hemma &amp; Valda</b> Laugavegur 21   F5
<b>Apótek</b> Austurstræti 16   E3	<b>English Pub</b> Austurstræti 12   E3	<b>Næsti Bar</b> Ingólfstræti 1A   E5
<b>B5</b> Bankastræti 5   E4	<b>Glaumar</b> Tryggvagata 20   D3	<b>Óliver</b> Laugavegur 20A   F5
<b>Babalú</b> Skólavörðustígur 22   F5	<b>Grand Rokk</b> Smiðjustígur   E5	<b>Ólstofan</b> Vegamótastígur   F5
<b>Batteri</b> Hafnarstræti 1-3   D3	<b>Highlander</b> Lækjargata 10   F3	<b>Prikið</b> Bankastræti   F5
<b>Bar 11</b> Laugavegur 11   E5	<b>Hressó</b> Austurstræti 20   E4	<b>Q-Bar</b> Ingólfstræti 3   F4
<b>Barbara</b> Laugavegur 22   F6	<b>Hverfisbarinn</b> Hverfisgata 20   E5	<b>Rósenberg</b> Klapparstígur 25   F6
<b>Bjarni Fel</b> Austurstræti 20   E4	<b>Jacobsen</b> Austurstræti 9   E3	<b>Sódóma Reykjavík</b> Tryggvagata 22   D3
<b>Boston</b> Laugavegur 28b   F6	<b>Kaffi Hjómáland</b> Laugavegur 23   F6	<b>Sólón</b> Bankastræti 7A   E4
<b>Café Cultura</b> Hverfisgata 18   E5	<b>Kaffi Zimsen</b> Hafnarstræti 18   E4	<b>Thorvaldsen</b> Austurstræti 8   E3
<b>Café Paris</b> Austurstræti 14   E3	<b>Kaffibarinn</b> Bergstráðastræti 1   F5	<b>Vegamót</b> Vegamótastígur 4   F5
<b>Balthazar</b> Hafnarstræti 1-3   D3	<b>Karamba</b> Laugavegur 22   F6	
<b>Celtic Cross</b> Hverfisgata 26   E5	<b>London/Reykjavík</b> Tryggvagata 22   D3	
<b>Dillon</b> Laugavegur 30   F6	<b>NASA</b> Porvaldsenstræti 2   E3	

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## 5 RESTAURANTS IN AND AROUND REYKJAVÍK

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# Live Music

THURSDAY 25 JUNE  
» Brain Police

SATURDAY 27 JUNE  
» Ske  
» Jeff Who  
» Langi Seli  
» Hjörvar

FRIDAY 10 JULY  
» Grapevine Concert

Grand Rokk Reykjavík

Grand Rokk » Smiðjustígur 6 » 101 Reykjavík

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JUNE - JULY

- continued -

**OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK**

**Ísafjörður**

**Kaffi Edinborg**

- June 27 - Ego, Papar**  
10pm-03am  
Admission: 2500 ISK
- July 2 - FM 957's Birthday Festival Supergrúppan w/ Magni and Co**  
9pm - 01am  
Admission: 1500 ISK
- July 3 - FM 957's Birthday Festival Supergrúppan w/ Magni and Co**  
9pm - 01am  
Admission: 2000 ISK

**Edinborgarhús**

- June 19 - Við Djúpið - Music festival**  
12.10pm - 4pm
- June 22 - Við Djúpið - Music festival**  
12.10pm - 4pm
- June 23 - Við Djúpið - Music festival**  
12.10pm - 4pm

**Akureyri**

**Græni Hatturinn**

- June 19 - Mannakorn**  
9pm - 12am  
Admission: TBA
- June 20 - 200.000 Naglbítar**  
9pm - 12am  
Admission: TBA
- June 25 - JJ Soul Band**  
08pm - 12pm  
Admission 1500 ISK
- June 26 - Umsvif (60's Tribute)**  
09pm - 12pm  
Admission 1500 ISK
- June 27 - Foreign Monkeys**  
Cliff Clavin  
09pm - 12pm  
Admission TBA
- July 2 - KK & Maggi Eiríks**  
9pm-12pm  
Admission TBA
- July 3 - Ljótu Hálfvitarnir**  
9pm-12am  
Admission TBA
- July 4 - Ljótu Hálfvitarnir**  
9pm-12am  
Admission TBA

**Egilsstaðir**

**Skjálfti**

- June 20 - Party**  
11pm - 03am  
Free admission
- June 27 - Party**  
11pm - 03am
- July 4 - Diesel**  
11pm - 03am

**Valaskjálft**

- June 24 - Jazz festival**  
**June 25 - Jazz festival**  
**June 26 - Jazz festival**

**24 June**

**Dys is Hardcore!**

**Sódoma Reykjavík**

Tryggvagötu 22 ☺ 21pm

Hardcore Punk band DYS 'frash out at Downtown's Sódoma June 24 dudes! Not to be confused with the Boston straight edge band from the eighties, this is Reykjavík's very own DYS, prominent front-runners within the Icelandic hardcore scene. Envision lots of crew cuts and sewn on patches, complimenting the raw D-Beat harshness of DYS's sound - or something like that. Support comes from Sagtmóðigur. You see PUNK IS NOT DEAD...it's always smelled like that. -JB

**25 June**

**Brain Police**

**Grand Rokk**

Smíðjustígur 6 ☺ 22pm

Legendary Icelandic stoner rock outfit Brain Police get high at the grimy Grand Rokk on Thursday June 25. The band formed eleven years ago and will be playing their skinned up back catalogue to whoever wants to reminisce or rejoice. Brain Police remain one of Iceland's more popular rock bands due to their notorious hit Jacuzzi Suzy, and their three renowned albums from the early noughties. Fight through the smoke and trip out to the manly psychedelics of the Brain Police. -JB

**26 June**

**Grapevine Grassroots**

**Hemmi & Valdi**

Laugavegur 21 ☺ 21pm

Let's hear it for the girls! We are stoked to announce that the forthcoming edition Grapevine Grassroots will feature an all-girl line-up. Singer/songwriter Lydíja Grétarsdóttir confesses on singing her heart out and will certainly do so at Hemmi & Valdi, Friday 26th June. She will also be joined on the night by the wonderful songstress Adda and blues rock missy Elin Ey. Iceland's 'next biggest thing' Pascal Pinon will also be busting out some tunes for you gals (and guys). The über-cool and super-cute four piece will put a smile on your face with their charismatic brand of super pop. Lot's of fun, and it's free! -JB

**1 July**

**Something Old, Something New**

**Rósenberg**

Klapparstíg 25 ☺ 21pm

Icelandic rock and roll pioneer Megas and Icelandic-cute (i.e. "krútt") sweetheart Ólöf Arnalds will be sharing the stage at Rósenberg July 1st. Megas has been rocking the island and shaking things up since the early 1970's and, at 64-years old, continues to entertain the masses with his prolific and sometimes controversial music. Ólöf Arnalds - a rising international talent and powerful composer -practically defines 'cute' with her sugary sweet voice set against folksy melodies on the guitar and violin. Plus, she tours with mím, and it doesn't get much cuter than that. Do you think they'll kick out a duet of Orfeus og Evidis? Because that would be awesome. The show kicks off at 21:00 and, since it's a Grapevine gig, it's pretty much guaranteed to be a good time for all. -CF

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**National Museum of Iceland**

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**Summer**  
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Daily 10-17

**Winter**  
(September 16th - April 30th)  
Daily except Mondays 11-17

Suðurgata 41 · 101 Reykjavík · Tel. +354 530-2200 · www.natmus.is

**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.

**ISEY**

Laugavegur 23  
Tel: 5526970

**Grapevine events June - July**

**26 Nýlenduvörverzlun Hemma & Valda**

☺ 9 pm  
gogoyoko Presents:  
Grapevine Grassroots  
Adda  
Elín Ey  
Pascal Pinon  
FREE SHOW

**1 Rósenberg**

☺ 9 pm  
FTT & Grapevine present:  
Megas  
Ólöf Arnalds  
1000ISK

**Art | Venue finder**

- 101 Gallery**  
Hverfisgata 18A | **F6**  
Thu-Sat 14-17 and by appointment  
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/  
Open weekdays from 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 listasafn.is
- The National Museum**  
Suðurgata 41 | **C9**  
Open daily 10-17  
natmus.is/
- The Nordic House**  
Sturlugata 5 | **C11**  
Tue-Sun 12-17  
www.nordic.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 listasafnreykjavikur.is
- Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum**  
Sigtún Hafnarhúss  
Tryggvagata 17 | **E5**  
Kjarvalsstaðir  
Flókagata | **K11**
- Reykjavík City Theatre**  
Listabraut 3
- Reykjavík Maritime Museum**  
Grandagarður 8 | **C3**
- Reykjavík Museum of Photography**  
Tryggvagata 16 | **D5**  
Weekdays 12-19 / Sat-Sun 13-17  
www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is
- Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**  
Laugarnestangi 70

# ART

## GALLERIES & MUSEUMS

### COCKTAIL PLEASURES AND VISUAL STIMULATION

#### How to use the listings

Venues are listed alphabetically by day. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)

## OPENING

### JUNE

19 ☺ 5pm

#### i8 Gallery

**Anthony McCall and Finnbogi Pétursson**

The artists will be presenting their installation works.

24 ☺ 5pm

#### Hafnarborg Centre of Culture and Fine Art (Hafnarfjörður) Collectors Collections

An exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of Dr. Sveirrir Magnússon, founder of Hafnarborg. On this occasion selected art works from the original collection at the Centre will be displayed along side the art of other leading collectors.

26 ☺ 12pm

#### All Over Downtown

##### Fantastic Friday

A variety of events including theater, story-telling, poetry and music from the Creative Summer Groups of Hitt Húsið.

27 ☺ 1pm

#### ASÍ Art Museum

##### Summer Exhibition

Chosen paintings from Jón Stefánsson, Jóhannes Sveinsson Kjarval, and Svavar Guðnason.

## 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. Kjarval in Arinastofan.

#### 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:

June 05- August 07

##### Nordic Book Binding

This exhibition features 89 hand-crafted bindings by 91 bookbinders, as two are made in collaboration. All participants bound the book 'Northern Wind,' with poems by 18 contemporary Nordic poets and graphic drawings by Icelandic artists.

##### 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:

##### Wight Works- Jónína Guðnadóttir

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

#### 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 June - Exhibitions from Runo Lagomarsino, Yiva Westerlund and Oliivia Plender.

#### Lost Horse Gallery

##### FoolsGold Iceland.

An exhibition featuring works from artists Shanan Campanaro, Lana Crooks, Maria Kozak, Meg McGreevy and Alexander Zaklynsky in collaboration with A.S.E.A. (Artists Supporting Environmental Awareness).

#### 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



**Making Fridays Fantastic**

#### Fantastic Friday

All Over Town

☺ 12 pm-2 pm, every Friday

Creative Summer Groups of Hitt Húsið

There's nothing better at the end of a workday than knowing that weekend is FINALLY HERE. To make Fridays even better, the Creative Summer Groups of Hitt Húsið will be all over town bringing their talents to anyone who would like to participate, a part of their Fantastic Fridays. Events include Agent Fresco rearranging songs, free rickshaw rides from Crymoguide, and The Street Theater livening up the streets. Sounds like an awesome way to ring in the weekend. More information can be found at [www.hitthusid.is](http://www.hitthusid.is) **JG**



**Summertime at the ASÍ**

If you're a fan of Icelandic painters - namely Jón Stefánsson, Jóhannes S. Kjarval and Svavar Guðnason - the ASÍ Art Museum has just the exhibit for you. Beginning on June 27th the museum will feature the major works of the trio considered to be Iceland's most prominent painters of the 20th century. Jón Stefánsson and Jóhannes S. Kjarval depict Icelandic landscapes in a beautiful and realistic way, though Kjarval drifted his focus toward the mythical late in his career, and Svavar Guðnason implores much colour and imagination in his more abstract pieces. Check out the exhibit any day (except Monday) between 13 and 17 until August 23rd. It's free, so if you don't like what you see you haven't lost anything but your time. You'll probably like it, however. **CF**



Life isn't  
just a game

— it's also a bed of roses...

16. May - 29. August 2009



LJÓSMYNDASAFN  
REYKJAVÍKUR  
Reykjavik Museum of Photography

Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor · 101 Reykjavík ·  
Tel: 411 6390 · [www.photomuseum.is](http://www.photomuseum.is)  
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13-17 Weekends · ADMISSION FREE



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

VÍKIN

MUSEUM BY THE SEA

MARITIME MUSEUM | GRANDAGARÐI 8 | REYKJAVÍK  
[WWW.SJOMINJASAFN.IS](http://WWW.SJOMINJASAFN.IS)

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**Thu** 09:00-22:00  
**Fri** 09:00-18:00  
**Weekends** 12:00-17:00

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**Sundays 16:00-22:00**



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**THE ENGLISH PUB**

at Austurstræti 12



# MAP

## Places We Like

### 1 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

f kaffibarinn

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

### 2 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 Jacobsen

Austurstræti 9

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



### 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



**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 Santa Maria**

Laugavegi 22a  
On Laugavegur, Santa Maria offers a fairly extensive menu of Mexican dishes and drinks at a really reasonable price - possibly some of the best in the city. The décor is colourful and welcoming, the portions are generous and the service is fast and friendly. Recommended. 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

**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 Sushismiðjan**

Geirsgötu 3  
This is a seriously great place to grab a quick and quality sushi lunch. Pre-prepared boxes of maki and nigiri are reasonable priced and really well made, amply filled with deliciously fresh ingredients. The indoor seating area is limited to some stools and outward-facing wall-mounted tabletops but there are a couple of tables and chairs set up outside the front door for those wanting to watch the ships and tourists in the harbour while they eat. 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**

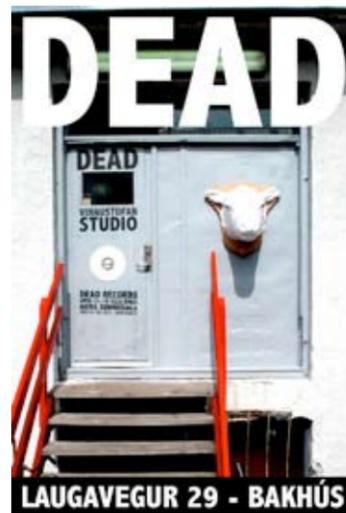
Hafnarstræti 18  
This small restaurant offers up a concise menu of delicious Arabic cuisine, from shawarma to kebabs and falafels. The staff is really friendly and accommodating of requests to kick up the spiciness or tone it down if the customer so desires. Habibi seriously hits the spot after hours 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 Q-Bar**

Ingólfsstræti 3  
Situated on Ingólfsstræti, Q-Bar provides a warm welcome to you with rainbow colours and open arms. A roomy venue with more than enough to swing a cat around or to swing yourself whilst boogeying the night away to some of the finest DJs in Iceland. We especially enjoy large beers for the merry price of 350ISK every Sunday. JB



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## ART GALLERIES

– continued –

Settlement to the present day.

Jan 31 - Nov 30.

### Encounters.

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

### The Numismatic Museum

#### Permanent exhibition:

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

### The Nordic House

June 13-July 13

#### 101 Tokyo

June 21: **Workshop: Sushi** 3pm

June 22: **Workshop: Sushi** 5pm

June 25: **Lecture 1: Architecture**

8pm

June 27: **Concert: Gedai** 5pm

June 28: **Sunday Cinema: The Burmese Harp** 4pm

July 1: **Concert: Shugo Tokumaru with Amiina** 8pm

July 2: **Ink brush workshop** 2pm

**Lecture 2: Architecture** 8pm

### Reykjavík 871 +/- 2

Permanent exhibition:

The Settlement Exhibition

### Reykjavík Arts Festival

May 16- August 02

#### Stray Beacons

Ásdís Sif Gunnarsdóttir, Curver Thoroddsen, Icelandic Love Corporation and Unnar Örn exhibits their works in lighthouses around Iceland. See [artfest.is](http://artfest.is) for more info.

### Reykjavík Art Museum

#### Asmundarsafn

May 2- April 30 2010

#### Rhyme - Works by Ásmundur Sveinsson and contemporary artists

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

### Reykjavík Art Museum

#### Hafnarhúsið

May 28- August 23.

#### Possibilities

Works by 10 Guðmunda Kristinsdóttir Art Prize winners.

May 28- August 29 2010

#### Erró - Portrett

A dedication to Erró.

### Reykjavík Art Museum

#### Kjarvalsstaðir

May 15- August 30

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

The life of Icelandic artists Louisa Matthíasdóttir 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, architecture and product design.

### Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Current Exhibitions:

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

### The Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Current Exhibitions:

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

roses...

Show curated by Guðmundur Oddur Magnússon and Guðfinna Mjöll Magnúsdóttir.

### 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 contemporary artists that tackle similar issues as Ásmundur did in his time, but in a context of a new age.

## OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK

### Hafnarfjörður

Hafnarborg

May 16 - June 20

Exhibition "Vættir" by Jónína Guðadóttir

Exhibition "Madame Lemonique & Madame Lemonborough" by Guðný Guðmundsdóttir

June 24 - August 3

Exhibition "Collectors" works by various artists

### Borgarnes

The Icelandic Settlement Centre

Permanent exhibitions:

The Settlement of Iceland; The Saga of Egill Skalla-Grimsson.

Current theatre productions:

Brák - a monologue by Brynhildur Guðjónsdóttir

Mr. Skallagrímsson - a monologue by Benedikt Erlingsson

Storms and Wars - a monologue by Einar Kárason

### Stykkishólmur

Library of 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

June 20 - August 31

Exhibition by Kristján Steingrímur Jónsson

June 21 - August 31

An exhibition by Kristján Steingrímur Jónsson

### Hveragerði

LÁ Art

May 2 - June 28

"Flashes in the moment of Danger"

An exhibition of works by 8 artists.

# Breakfast 890isk Hemmi&Valdi

"Where else can you work on your laptop at 10 p.m. beside people casually drinking a glass of wine, sipping a cappuccino or strumming a guitar while the kids are using crayons to sketch?

This is a cosy bar — though I use the term loosely"



### Double The Fun, Double The Art

**Finnboogi Pétursson and Anthony McCall**

Opening of their exhibitions

🕒 5 pm, June 19th

i8 Gallery, Klapparstígur 33, 101 Reykjavík

If installations are your interest, Anthony McCall and Finnboogi Pétursson supply you with plenty to obsess over in their double show at i8 gallery. McCall's show features Doubling Back, a large light piece. At the gallery, he will also present some of his early works from the 1970s, which are in a variety of mediums. Finnboogi Pétursson presents some of his installations in the lower gallery, some which have allusions to Icelandic landscape. Furthermore, both artists examine the concept of time through their art. An interesting, thought provoking show for sure. The opening will be held at on Friday, June 19th, at 5 p.m. **JG**



### Swingin' Sixties

*"Life isn't just a game – it's also a bed of roses"*

🕒 12 pm – 7 pm, May 16- August 30.

Museum open weekdays

Curated by Guðmundur Oddur Magnússon and Guðfinna Mjöll Magnúsdóttir

Some of the best photographic art around is both aesthetically pleasing and conveys a rich message, idea or thought. While not exactly rare, successful exhibits of such work are to be celebrated and frequented whenever they pop up over here. A recent example is the Reykjavík Photography Museum's exhibit, "Life isn't just a game – it's also a bed of roses," which explores life and times of 1960s Iceland. Take a look back at the seemingly perfect atmospheres in a time of opulence, with a focus on the material goods in life. The featured photos will either bring you back, or help you envision yourself in those times of optimism and transition. They also look real good. Recommended. **JG**

### Foolsgold

**Foolsgold Exhibition**

June 17 – July 5

The Lost Horse Gallery, Skolastræti 1, 101 Reykjavík

Shanan Campanaro, Lana Crooks, Maria Kozak, Meg McGreevy, and Alexander Zaklynsky in collaboration with A.S.E.A.

The effects of global warming on the environment are a hot debate nowadays. The new exhibition at The Lost Horse Gallery, Foolsgold, intends to address a broad range of related subjects, such as the preservation of nature and endangered species. The show is a product of collaboration between artists and A.S.E.A. (Artists Supporting Environmental Awareness). In Iceland, it aims to call attention to the issues concerning whaling. The purpose of the exhibit is simply to raise awareness, and artists who are interested are encouraged to join in with the efforts. If you are a fan of the natural world (and/or art, for that matter), Foolsgold unique interpretation is well worth checking out. **JG**

### Outside Reykjavik | Venue finder

**Akureyri**  
Populus Tremula  
poprem.blogspot.com/  
Kaupvangsstræti 12

Græni Hatturinn  
myspace.com/graenihattur  
Hafnarstræti 96  
461 4646

Kunstraum Wohnraum  
Ásabyggð 2

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

**Egilsstaðir**  
Sláturhúsið  
Lyngási 5  
470 0692

Valaskjálfi  
valaskjalf.is  
Skógarlöndum  
470 9700

**Hafnarfjörður**  
Hafnarborg  
www.hafnarborg.is  
Strandgata 34  
585-5790

**Hveragerði**  
LÁ Art  
www.listsafnamesinga.is  
Austurmörk 21  
483-1727

**Keflavík**  
Suðsúðvestur  
www.sudsudvestur.is  
Hafnargata 22  
421-2225

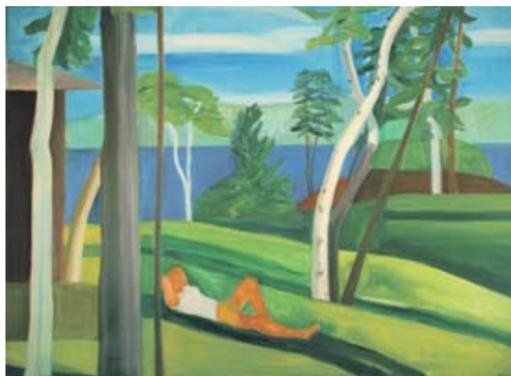
**Ísafjörður**  
Kaffi Edinborg  
kaffiedinborg.is/  
Aðalstræti 7  
456 4400

**Stykkishólmur**  
Vatnasafnið / Library of Water  
libraryofwater.is  
Bóklíðustígur 17

**Myvatn**  
Myvatnsstofa  
visitmyvatn.is  
Hraunvegi 8  
464 4390

**Seyðisfjörður**  
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Listasafn Reykjavíkur  
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**Kjarvalsstaðir**  
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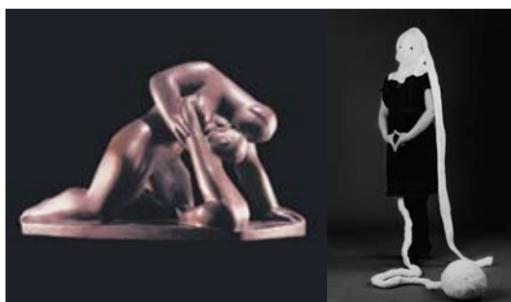
Free guided tours in English every Thursday at 11 a.m.

**Hafnarhús**  
Erró – Portraits  
28 May 2009 – 13 August 2010

**Hafnarhús**  
Tryggvagata, open daily 10–17  
Thursdays 10–22



Erró.



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## REVIEWS



### Saffran

Álfheimum 74 (Glæsibær)  
http://saffran.is/

**What we think:**  
Wowohmygawdthatwasf'ing incredible



## Go to Saffran – NOW!

*Wowohmygawdthatwasf'ing incredible!*

My initial thought after dining at freshman healthy food joint Saffran was to write that single unintelligible line and leave it at that. The food was so superbly prepared and shockingly delicious that I feared my words would not do it justice.

Saffran was packed to the rafters when my lunch date and I arrived. The friendly chatter of happy diners floated up to the high ceilings, filling the bright and airy space with an ambiance of welcoming akin to that found at a large, noisy family gathering where everybody is happy to see each other and to be feasting on the spoils of grandma's most prized secret recipes. You can tell a lot about a place based on how happy its patrons sound whilst eating and these were some satisfied customers. Despite the high demand, the counter staff was pleasant and polite, taking orders in a smooth and efficient manner.

This being my virgin voyage to Saffran, I opted for the cornerstone of the menu – the Saffran chicken and red onion on a spear (1.430 ISK) from the Tandoori menu, described as “the star and the reason why this place was born.” My dining companion chose the Arabian naanwich (750 ISK), stuffed with shawarma chicken, yogurt-garlic sauce, mixed salad and shiraz salad (diced tomatoes, cucumber and red onion). We also ordered the naan with coconut, raisins and walnuts (170 ISK) to share.

Our orders were brought out rather quickly and were nicely presented. The chicken tandoori was served atop brown rice and accompanied by a sizeable spread of fresh, crisp greens topped with shiraz salad, and a dish of cool, fresh yogurt sauce. One bite of this exquisitely moist, perfectly spiced chicken, set off by the refreshingly tangy yogurt, lead me to exclaim (inwardly, since I had a mouthful of food and my manners

are top-notch) “this is the best chicken I’ve ever tasted!” – a sentiment echoed verbally by my date, whose help I implored to finish the ample serving. Seriously, it was so complexly rich and flavourful that one would be a fool to simply say, “it tastes like chicken.”

The naanwich was halved on the diagonal, exposing its fillings, and was sided by fresh yogurt sauce and a tomato-chili sembal. It was the perfect serving size for lunch and was delicious. The naan wrap was soft and fresh and the flavours of the shawarma melded beautifully with the fresh veggies. It tasted crisp and healthy but was anything but boring.

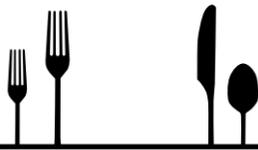
Then there’s the naan with coconut, raisins and walnuts. When we were presented with a small side-plate framing a solitary and minuscule circle of naan, glistening with an unknown sauce, my date and I were admittedly disappointed – coconuts, raisins and walnuts are a flavour combination that we were eager to try and what was presented to us was a visual let-down. However, after one bite I was ashamed for my momentary doubt and almost felt as though I owed the naan my most sincere of apologies. The coconut flavour was sublimely subtle, the raisins and walnuts complimented it deliciously and the sticky syrup that bathed the naan was sweet but not sickeningly so.

I really cannot write enough about this dining experience. I implore everybody to get themselves to Saffran post haste and taste their offerings firsthand. It is my intention to sample more of this promising menu, which opts-out of such nutritional red flags as white-wheat and sugar, very soon. With everything reasonably priced between 700 and 1500 ISK (less for naan) it will definitely be my pleasure!

✪ -CATHARINE FULTON

## Food & Drink | Venue finder

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



## Savoury Food and Sweet Views

*An upscale buffet worth visiting, multiple times*

### Nítjanda

Smáratorg 3

**Flavour:** Smart, subtle Asian fusion

**Ambiance:** Sleek, modern upscale

**Service:** Formal but friendly

#### What we think:

Smart, subtle, sublime food.



In Kópavogur, high up on the nineteenth floor of the Deloitte building, is Nítjanda, the baby of swank chef Sigurður Gíslason. It feels like an event, walking through the automatic turning doors, riding the elevator to the top of the building, and emerging into calm and sleek surroundings, where a well-suited host greets you with much formal circumstance.

My lunch guest and I were seated quickly, and briefly took in the view over the rolling hills and suburbs of Kópavogur before approaching the buffet, which changes themes and offerings on a daily basis. We were presented with a spread of maki rolls, beef, chicken and fish-based dishes, buttery-soft sweet potatoes and pasta. There was also a salad bar featuring two different potato salads, beef chow mein, a tangy tomato chutney, and cream of broccoli soup.

We sampled every dish. Some more than once. Every bite was satisfying and flavoured and seasoned so well that I presume almost all tastes would be met. Stand-outs were the sushi, the rice therein was nicely vinegared, the maki was tightly and neatly rolled and beautifully presented in a thick layer of black sesame seeds; the chicken in honey-garlic sauce, which was surprisingly moist and succulent in a sauce that was neither too sweet nor too garlicky; and the broccoli soup that was creamy and comforting. What's more, the flavours of all the buffet components worked

well alongside one another, nothing competed with or overpowered anything else on the plate – in the case of the fish, which was slightly bland, some competition would have been welcome. Still, it was clear that much thought and planning went into preparing the day's menu so that everything was complimentary.

Though satisfied with the trips made to the buffet, my companion and I decided it would be unwise to leave Nítjanda without also partaking of the dessert table, which tempted with a fruit platter, spiced apple cake with whipped cream, and a fruity meringue cake. It was all every bit as enjoyable as the savoury offerings had been, but the star of the dessert table was unanimously decided to be the spiced apple cake, the crisp golden top of which contrasted magnificently with the über-moist and delicate centre. We had seconds... but in our defence it was necessary to confirm that the cake would compliment coffee splendidly. And it does.

The food at Nítjanda was intelligent and satisfying and the atmosphere was upscale, but not pretentiously so. This would be a fine venue for dining on special occasions, especially since such impressive views are difficult to come by in the Reykjavík area.

✍️ -CATHARINE FULTON

## Pizza

### 1 Eldsmiðjan

Bragagata 38a

When it comes to Reykjavík Pizza, Eldsmiðjan is in a league of its own (even though their recent expansion has seen them cut back in quality), which leads us to proclaim: if you're only going to have a single pizza in Reykjavík, make sure it's from Eldsmiðjan. Something about their fire-baked pie makes them really stand out. Even though it comes with a rather hefty price tag. We recommend the Reykjavík Special or the Hekla. Or chef's choice. It's all good.

### 2 Devitos Pizza

Laugavegur 126

Devitos Pizza have built their business on selling the masses tasty, oily, affordable pizza at most hours of the day. Given that they serve you a fresh slice, and that you douse it in their excellent garlic oil (and top it off with a bunch of cayenne pepper, if thus inclined), you will surely become as fascinated with Devitos as the rest of us are.

### 3 Hornið

Hafnarstræti 15

Italian restaurant Hornið serves up classic, thin-crust Italian pizza in a charming environment that begs for extended lounging about. One of the oldest operating restaurants in Reykjavík, Hornið has been selling consistently excellent pizza since they opened way back in 1979. Try the Pizza Roma, or pretty much anything else off the menu.

## Cheap Eats

### 1 Núðluhúsið

Laugavegi 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 Balkanika

Vitastígur 10

This Bulgarian restaurant is probably the cheapest sit-down restaurant in Reykjavík at the time of writing. In fact, it's ludicrously cheap, with most of the specials going for around or under 1,000 ISK. And the Bulgarian take on fast food is definitely worth exploring. Carnivores should get something off their BBQ menu, while the Balkan shopska salad is well fit for vegetarians.

### 3 Saffran

Álfheimum 74 (Glæsibær)

People can't stop raving about recently opened "cheap and healthy" fast food joint Saffran. So we checked it out, and now we can't stop raving either. What a find! We've been going there for a month and have tried most of their menu. Everything's good. The pizza, the tandoori, the 'naanwich', the burgers. It's all good, as in, excellent. The price is right, too, ranging from 700-1,400 ISK per course. And it also feels super-healthy. Highly recommended.

## Coffee

### 1 Café Haiti

Tryggvagata 16

The coffee is plain excellent, the atmosphere enticing and the price is right. These are some of the reasons why Café Haiti is one of Grapevine's favourite downtown cafés. Café Haiti inhabits a tiny space next to Thai haven Krua Thai on Tryggvagata. It's almost hidden. So if you haven't tried their coffee yet, we do recommend you take a walk down to the harbour and taste a cup.

### 2 Kaffifélagið

Skólavörðustígur 10

Kaffifélagið is an extremely likable little coffeeshop at a very convenient downtown location. They make their coffee according to the Italian Espresso Council's standards, their interior decorations are black, and their staff (when you're lucky) is usually very knowledgeable about the product they sell. Try their double latté for a morning kick.

For full restaurant and food listings and venue finder visit [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is) for detailed information.

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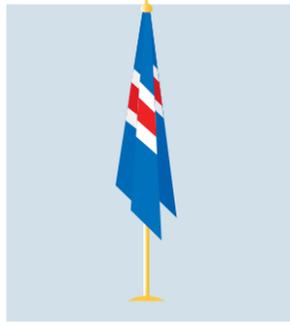
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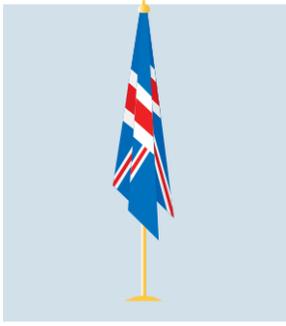
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## Icesave key players - by Jón Trausti Sigurðarson



### Iceland

» An island in the Atlantic, home to some 300,000 souls. Its capital is Reykjavík. Settled in the late 800s. An independent nation from settlement until 1262, when it became a subject of Norway. Independent again in 1944. Had until 2003 never been a part of military action. Employed one troop in Iraq before withdrawing last year. Hit hard by the financial fiasco of 2008. Proud home to Björk, Skyr and schizophrenic weather. Also not-so-proud home of Landsbanki, whose Icesave accounts are a popular subject right now.



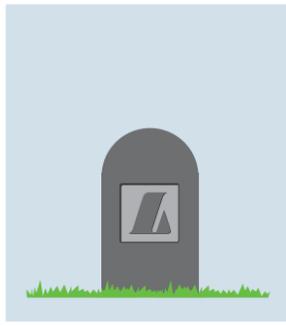
### United Kingdom

» Actually consists of four countries: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Home to some 61 million folks, give or take. Capital is London. Known for colonizing smaller nations (if they don't have flags). At the height of its power, the UK ruled a quarter of the globe's land surface. Its empire has since been reduced. Pissed off at Iceland for Icesave. Froze all Landsbanki assets in the UK, invoking a 2001 terrorist attack legislation.



### Netherlands

» Been around since the 16th century. Currently home to some 16.5 million people. Its capital is Amsterdam. Are known for their very tall inhabitants, relaxed marijuana legislation and windmills. Also for founding New York City. In the 17th century, the Netherlands became the first capitalist state in history. This led them to experience the first known asset-inflation bubble: the Tulip Mania of 1636. Thus, they should be understanding of Iceland's current situation.



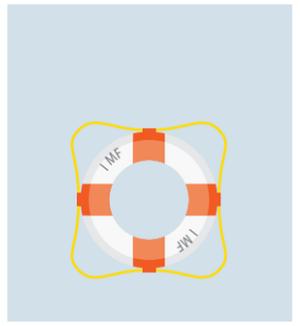
### Landsbanki

(b.1886, d. 2008)  
» The now bankrupt bank that opened the Icesave accounts in the UK and Netherlands. Bought by reformed convict Björgólfur Guðmundsson and his son Björgólfur Thor in 2002. The sale marked the beginning of the father and son's massive (now failed) business adventure. At the adventure's height, Guðmundsson, amongst other things, acquired an English football team. Landsbanki's bankruptcy and nationalization has left the Icelandic government burdened with debt.



### Lehman Brothers

(b. 1850, d. 2008)  
» Lehman Brothers was a financial service firm, an investment bank that declared bankruptcy on September 15, 2008. The bankruptcy is the largest one in the history of the U.S. Lehman Bros. operated out of New York, with regional headquarters in London and Tokyo. They took heavy losses in the subprime mortgage crisis in 2008 which, among other things, resulted in the bank's fall. Upon declaring bankruptcy, the bank moved a large part of its assets from the regional headquarters, causing escalating panic in London and Tokyo.



### IMF

» The International Monetary Fund was created in 1944 to "to stabilize exchange rates and assist the reconstruction of the world's international payment system" after WWII. Currently 185 nations are members of the IMF. Iceland is the first country in Western Europe to receive an IMF loan, since the UK in 1976. The IMF's offices are in Washington DC. Current head of the IMF is French born Dominique Strauss-Kahn.

*"We're used to breaking treaties with Britain. Breaking treaties is nothing new to us. If we break this treaty with Britain, it wouldn't be the first time, and that's just the plain, honest truth."*

—Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson

the roughly 120,000 Dutch Icesave accounts. Landsbanki would end up paying 600 million Euros to the Dutch Icesave branches, but this wouldn't be enough – in January, it would come to light that the Icesave debacle had cost the Dutch government 230 million Euros, 212 million of which was used to pay back Dutch depositors.

#### The walls close in around Iceland

Even with pressure from Britain and Holland, Icelandic authorities remained non-committal to their responsibility in the Icesave crisis. What would ultimately change their minds was the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Jóhannesson explains: "After the collapse of the banks, the Icelandic government reached the conclusion that assistance from the IMF was necessary. Not only for the money itself, but also because there was a repeated message from other capitals that 'We're not going to give you the money that you need until you have the IMF to control you'. In other words; 'We don't trust you.' But it became clear that IMF assistance wasn't being offered until the Icesave issue had been solved. And so the Icelandic government felt it was more or less forced to accept responsibility for the Icesave matter. Even though there has been a change in government, this is still the view of the government. When the Leftist-Greens were in the opposition, they were saying

the IMF deal is bad, the Icesave deal is bad. Now that they're in the driver's seat, they've either realised that there is no other option, or changed their minds for some other reason."

In the end, PM Geir H. Haarde and then Foreign Minister Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir had to face the fact that no one was accepting their arguments eschewing legal responsibility for the Icesave matter. Newspaper DV reported on the eve of November 13 that Haarde and Gísladóttir had agreed to accept responsibility. The agreement would be submitted to parliament the next day.

Clearly, some sort of agreement needed to be reached between all parties involved. One that would ensure that every single Icesave depositor would have their assets covered completely, while seeing to it that Iceland wouldn't be bled dry in the process. And so the negotiations began. Weeks became months. In the intervening time, repeated protests of thousands of Icelanders would drive the Conservative/Social Democrat government out of power, resulting in the formation of an emergency government consisting of Social Democrats and Leftist-Greens, a coalition that would hold after elections in April. In February, former minister of business and current ambassador to Denmark Svavar Gestsson was appointed as chair of the Icesave negotiations committee. The following month, celebrated magistrate and corruption-hunter Eva Joly was

appointed as a special investigator by the Icelandic government. Everything seemed to be clicking along towards a pleasant resolution. So much so that when Foreign Minister Össur Skarphéðinsson and British Foreign Minister David Miliband met at the end of March, both men expressed confidence that a deal on Icesave would be reached that would satisfy all parties involved.

#### The deal is struck – and people get angrier

Earlier this month, it was announced that a deal was reached. In essence, the British government will be repaid 2.3 billion pounds over the next 15 years with an interest rate of 5.5%, and the first seven years of payments will be interest-only. The British were happy – a UK treasury spokesperson said of the news to the AFP, "The government welcomes Iceland's commitment to recognise its obligations under the EC Deposit Guarantee Scheme to repay depositors in Icesave." The reaction was markedly different elsewhere.

Daniel Gros told reporters, "I think that these interest rates create a real danger for Iceland and I don't think it's a good deal for the country. I don't see any country in the world with as high a foreign debt as Iceland after this." Speaking with the Grapevine, Gros added, "I believe this was essentially the British and the Dutch saying, 'If

you want to join the EU, you're going to agree to this deal.' I realise that there are no morals in politics, so I don't like to use morally-charged words such as 'extortion' to describe the arrangement, but at the very least, the interests rates asked of Iceland should be the same that the British and the Dutch pay on their foreign debts."

The sentiment was very much the same here in Iceland, as politicians, lawyers, economists, and what seems like practically everyone else with an opinion on the matter agreeing, especially with regards to the interest rate.

"The responsibility will all be on our shoulders," Einarsson told the Grapevine. "And especially because of that, I think that the interest rate of 5.5% is far too high. I think the interest rate of the Bank of England is now 0.5% and the UK government can borrow money abroad with 4% interest rates. It should definitely not be more than what the UK government is able to borrow on itself. So they put a premium on it, which they get."

Einarsson did, however, emphasize that he found it unlikely the Icelandic taxpayer would pay for all of the debt – by his estimates, the taxpayer will probably not be covering more than 25% of the Icesave repayment. It's a figure that's been repeated by, among others, former Landsbanki director Sigurjón Þ. Arnason, who told RÚV earlier this month that he believes that the banks assets alone should cover the Icesave debt, and therefore the Icelandic people shouldn't have to shoulder any of the debt themselves. But neither Arnason's nor Einarsson's nor anyone's estimates can either be confirmed nor denied. Some even speculate worse scenarios. "This will effectively strangle the

nation," says Eliasson, "Wars have been fought for less than this. I don't think Icelandic politicians understand the consequences of their actions."

Daniel Gros agreed with much of Eliasson's assessment, underlining that the deal will result in Iceland using "most if not all of its GDP just to pay down Icesave."

For their part, Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir and Finance Minister Steingrímur J. Sigfússon have tried their best to convince the public of the task before them. "Our opponents understand that this has to be manageable," Sigfússon told reporters at a press conference shortly after the agreement was announced. Sigurðardóttir emphasized that she believes the assumption is there that the deal will be reviewed in case the state's debt capacity is questioned.

Even some of the parties who stand to gain from the agreement are unhappy with it. Gerard van Vliet, a Dutch national who plans on suing the Icelandic government into paying the full amount owed by Icesave, told the Grapevine that the deal "stinks", and added, "The Icelandic Parliament should be aware that behind this first agreement there are more obligations to fulfil. Iceland needs creativity to get to those solutions, without a paralyzing financial burden. Solutions that involve the future development of Iceland as well as help in getting over the present problems."

So why would we agree to this? Maybe because, Iceland really doesn't have a choice.

**CONTINUES ON PAGE 34**

Oct 15	Oct 20	November 4	Nov 6	Nov 12	Nov 13	Nov 14	December 23	Dec 29	2009 January 9	Jan 23	February 24	March 31	June 8
Landsbanki pays 600 million Euros to the Dutch Icesave branches. 13 Dutch municipalities have a total of 59 million Euros deposited into Icesave, among them the Hague, which had deposited 10 million Euros.		British depositors receive e-mails informing them that they can retrieve their deposits the following week. On the 21st, withdrawals open up again.		About 100,000 Dutch Icesave depositors plea with their central bank to cover their deposits. At that time, the Dutch central bank was able to cover up to 100,000 Euros on each account.			Just before Christmas break, Icelandic parliament votes to raise taxes, although the Prime Minister tells reporters that no deal has yet been reached with regards to paying off the Icesave accounts. Then Foreign Minister Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir tells reporters that talks with the British and Dutch will continue in January. Unrest within Iceland grows.		The investment and real estate company Newcastle Building Society lays off 150 people in the UK due to losses incurred in the Icesave crash.		Svavar Gestson is appointed chairman of the Icesave agreement committee.	Foreign Minister Össur Skarphéðinsson and British Foreign Minister David Miliband engage in talks over Icesave, both expressing confidence that a deal will be reached. Talks continue over the coming weeks between Icelandic, British and Dutch authorities, with all sides characteristically tight-lipped but optimistic.	
	In response to Britain's use of an anti-terrorism law to seize Landsbanki's assets, the organisation InDefence is launched within Iceland, protesting the decision, famously employing the catch-phrase, "We are not terrorists".		The British government announces it will lend 800 million pounds to cover British Icesave deposits. At the time it is estimated that 300,000 Brits had a total of 4 billion pounds deposited into Icesave.		Icelandic authorities begin talks with France, as the EU head, about Icesave and possible solutions.			Dutch authorities block the sale of Icesave's Holland branches, which at the time are worth between 5 to 10 million Euros. A total of 1.6 billion Euros had been deposited into the accounts. Ten banks had shown interest in buying the branches. The following day, it would be reported that 118,000 of the 144,000 Dutch with Icesave accounts had gotten their money back.			Geir H. Haarde resigns as Prime Minister of Iceland. Talks for an emergency government begin.		Deal reached with British and Dutch over Icesave. The British government will be repaid 2.3 billion pounds over the next 15 years with an interest rate of 5.5%. The agreement effectively makes the money a loan to Iceland. A UK treasury spokesman said of the news to the AFP, "The government welcomes Iceland's commitment to recognise its obligations under the EC Deposit Guarantee Scheme to repay depositors in Icesave."

The History of Icelandic Rock music: Part 5

# Dátar – Iceland's most tragic band



The Beatles had completely changed the landscape of the pop scene and therefore, by 1965, every Icelandic garage was full of young boys (and way too few girls) belting out Beatle covers and other hits du jour. The Swinging Blue Jeans, The Searchers and Brian Poole and the Tremeloes – all second division beat groups from Britain – had already visited Iceland when The Kinks came in September 1965. By now The Kinks were highly popular thanks to their megahit, You Really Got Me. The band wasted no time and started their set with that song, making the crowd of 800 in Austurbæjarbíó cinema break out in a frenzy. Kinks played four nights in a row, eight shows total, and Ray Davies allegedly wrote his semi-hit "I'm on an Island" while holed up somewhere in Reykjavík. Footage made by a Swedish TV crew from one of the shows can currently be found on YouTube.

The Beatle-craze took Iceland by storm. After Kinks came Hollies and Herman's Hermits, and The Beatles film A Hard Days Nights was a smash hit. Minor league beat-groups Tempo and Bravo from Akureyri had supported The Kinks. They never crossed to the major division by releasing a record. Other minor league beat-groups of the sixties had names like Tónar, Fánar, Ómar and Sómar, all echoing the main band's name, Hljómar.

While Hljómar were busy getting their wild fuzz beat rock heard abroad (as Thor's Hammer), other Icelandic acts grasped at the beat pop crown. Öðmenn, Toxic, Sólo and Tónar blossomed in Hljómar's absence, but Dátar (The Soldiers) soon became the ruling beat band. Decades later, the tragic fate of all the members but one has wrapped the band in cryptic aura.

Immediately after forming, Dátar began playing a lot and soon gained popularity with their trustworthy covers of the newest hits by groups such as The Who and The Kinks. Their first EP was released in February of 1966. It had three songs by the band's mentor and organist Þórir Baldursson, plus one cover song. During the summer of 1966, Dátar ruled the ball scene. Their singer Rúnar Gunnarsson, then only 18 years old, started to write songs and on the second EP that came out in 1967, all the songs were written by him. Of those, Gvendur á eyrinni – a song about a lonely old sailor – was a huge hit. It has lived on to this day as an Icelandic pop classic.

The original guitarist and the band's founder Hilmar Karlsson left in 1966, and was replaced by a guitarist called Magnús Magnússon. Dátar were very popular during the summer of 1967. The

band toured fiercely and by all accounts there was a lot of drinking and partying involved. Karl Sighvatsson – a legendary musician that later played with bands such as Trúbrot and Þursaflokkurinn – had joined, and the band was the island's tightest beat combo.

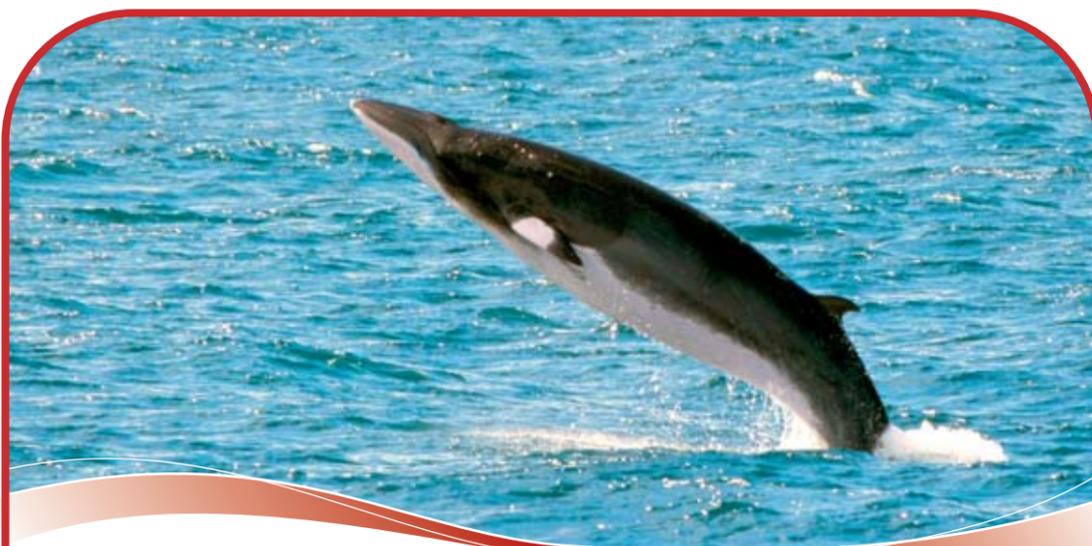
In the autumn of 1967 Hljómar returned. They wanted their throne back and news spread that the band was working on an album. Dátar had no other option but to make an album too. That was not to happen, unfortunately. "The guitarist Magnús had never been a part of the band," says Þorsteinn Eggertsson, the band's lyricist and friend. "He never came to parties and always vanished quickly after gigs. He seemed almost like an alien to me. He was the first of those guys to commit suicide. There never was another guitarist in Dátar."

Magnús' suicide in 1967 was a blow to the band, and when Karl left to form Flowers, Dátar were over. Rúnar joined Sextett Ólafs Gauks, a very popular but not very hip "oldies style" pop combo. He wrote few songs with the band but left in 1969 to form Tilvera, a band he stayed with for a short time. Rúnar's trip to the top of Icelandic pop scene had been quick, but his way down was slow and drawn out. He grappled with mental and drinking problems and lost the battle late in 1972, when he committed suicide. This was only few months after he had released two new original songs on a solo single. Rúnar Gunnarsson was only 24 years old. The original guitarist Hilmar clocked off in 1978, Karl Sighvatsson died in a car accident in 1991 and Stefán the drummer died of cancer one year later. This left bassist Jón Pétur the only surviving member of Dátar, Iceland's most tragic band.

✂ - DR. GUNNI

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

1. Life is a tug-o-war  
The record sleeve for Dátar's first EP: Stefán, Hilmar, Rúnar, Jón Pétur.



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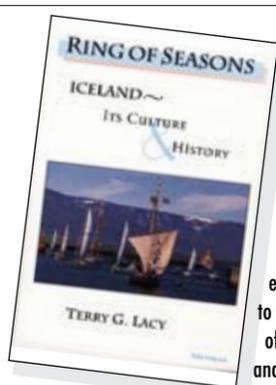
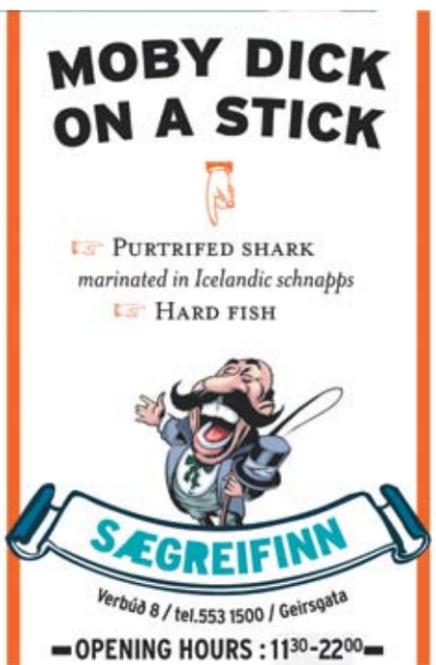
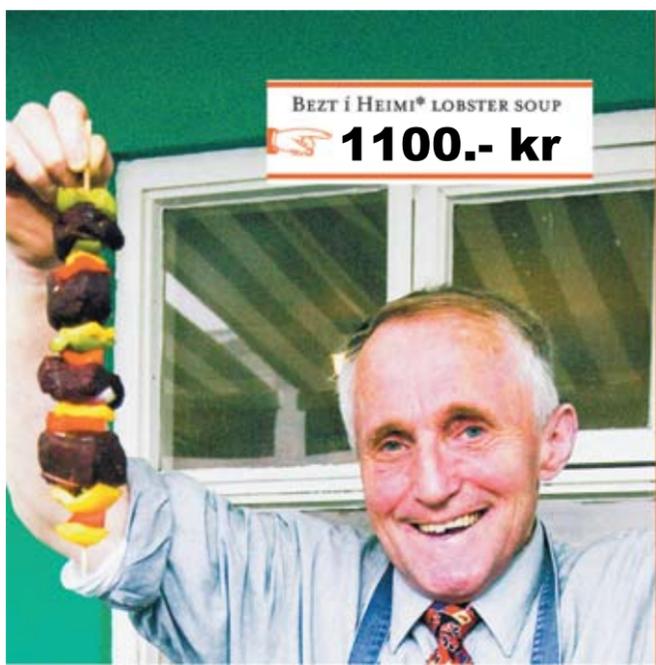


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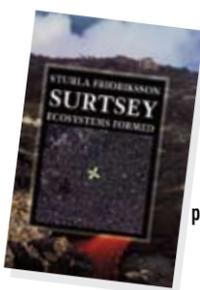
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### RING OF SEASONS. ICELAND - ITS CULTURE AND HISTORY

Terry G. Lacy brings both the perspective of an outsider and the familiar eye of a long-term resident to this delightful exploration of all facets of Iceland, past and present. She conveys her story with a skillful interlacing of history, religion, politics, and culture to paint a vivid picture of the way Icelanders live today.

„This fascinating book is a must for anyone who is interested in Iceland.“ - Dick Ringler



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### THE MANUSCRIPTS OF ICELAND

In this collection of articles scholars present the story of Icelandic manuscripts, their medieval origins, the literature they contain and its influence up to the present day. This book is a tribute to the central role that medieval Icelandic literature played in forging national identities in N-Europe.



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*Jamie Oliver's Diary*



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Read this:

June 19th is an important date in the history of Icelandic women's struggle for gender equality. Esquire explains why.

# Girls Just Wanna Have RIGHTS

The history, struggle and importance of Icelandic women.



\*During the 1970 trade union May Day parade in Iceland, a gigantic female effigy brandishing the words: 'A Human Being – Not a Commodity,' caused a sensation amongst the parade attendees. It turned out to be the work of the Rauðsokkur ("the Red Stocking movement"), otherwise known as the Icelandic Women's Liberation. The movement called for an open debate on the oppression of women and discussion of the issues concerning equality. Red Stockings also campaigned against beauty pageants, drawing attention to the issue of women as a marketing commodity.

\*October 24, 1975, 90% of Icelandic women commenced a large-scale strike – raising the question on unsatisfactory pay and bigoted prejudice inside and outside the work place. The men of Iceland were not amused. Shutting down schools, factories, markets and even, shock horror, having to cook their own dinner!

\*In 1976, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security published the 'Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men', aiming to establish and maintain equal status and equal opportunities for both women and men, promoting gender equality in modern society, and developing personal enterprises and skills irrespective of gender. However, statistics reveal that Icelandic women still earn on average only 64.15% of men's overall wages.

\*Vigdís Finnbogadóttir was elected president of Iceland in 1980, making her the world's first female democratically elected president. The single mother received 33.6 percent of the national vote, beating three other male opponents. Vigdís gracefully retired in 1996 as a popular promoter and cultural ambassador of Iceland.

\*December 2008, Audur Capital founders Halla Tómasdóttir and Kristin Petursdóttir collaborated with singer Björk to set up an ecologically sound investment fund to help recover the fallen economy, bringing female values into a male dominated realm of wealth and private equity. Halla quite rightly stated that women have a big role to play which goes back to our Viking era – while men were out there pillaging, the women were back at home running the show.

\*Sunday, February 1st 2009, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir was appointed as Iceland's current Prime Minister. She is noted as being the world's first openly gay head of state. Her victory is seen as not only a return to left-wing policies but also a sign that women are taking a stronger role in running the country. Time online claimed that more women than ever returned to parliament, and that Iceland's ancient assembly was now fourth in the world in terms of female participation. Ladies we applaud you.

✂ - JONATHAN BAKER ESQ



June 19, 1915. Icelandic women had struggled for years, pleading their case for suffrage, pleading their case for some semblance of equality. Two years after the bill was put forth by Alþingi it was finally ratified by the Danish King. Women in Iceland had the right to vote – well kind of. Widowed and married women had been allowed to vote since the early 1900s, mainly due to the fact that a lack of a man in the cases of landowning women made them sort of 'social men' in terms of their role.

### From Saga to Suffrage

Frigg – Old Norse Goddess and wife of Óðinn – is often considered by historians to be a divine and noble woman, an upholder of peace and high moral code; a strong female character and role model for young Icelandic women to look up to. Then the powers that be went and deemed her the patron of marriage and childbirth. These are, of course, two important facets of any civilization – couples must shack up and babies must be made – but you'd think such a strong woman could be made patron of something considerably less gender-specific.

Despite the big man's first lady being a representation of roles that would see women barefoot and pregnant (or maybe because of it), the women of Iceland wanted more for themselves - change, rights, and of course a leader.

Approached by the International Woman Suffrage Alliance in 1904, Bríet Bjarnhéðinsdóttir was declared the perfect candidate for such a role. Being a widow, she was financially independent, her own woman, a cracking speaker - fluent in English and Danish - and, rather importantly, the owner of popular woman's mag

Kvennablaðið – picture the credentials of an early twentieth century Oprah Winfrey, if you will. She had the power to speak out, and the advantage of reaching women all across the island, proclaiming that the cornerstone for all women's rights stems from their eligibility in politics.

After spearheading the collection of over 11,000 women's signatures – nearly the same amount of legal male voters – the national press still expressed their distrust in women's suffrage. Newspaper Þjóðólfur labelled Icelandic women as being 'outstandingly ignorant and apathetic about all public affairs;' declaring that 'if a woman takes a strong interest in politics, it is practically always the case that a man closely related to her, husband, father, brother or sweetheart, has passed on his view to her.'

Up against a barrage of scepticism, the women of Iceland persisted in pushing for their right of suffrage within the Alþingi, finally succeeding on June 15, 1915, when the Danish King Christian X signed the bill allowing Icelandic women 40 years and older the vote. This was only the beginning.

We've come a long way, sister!

Women's issues are not just for women and equality of the sexes is a necessary component of a strong and successful society. A lot has happened over the course of the last 94 years – the voyage from suffrage to the election of Europe's first openly lesbian prime minister was by no means a short one. The following are some important milestones in Icelandic women's struggle for gender equality:

1. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir
2. Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir
3. Bríet Bjarnhéðinsdóttir

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1. What's so super about these jeeps anyway?
2. The trip invites for some serene moments
3. These waterfalls are pretty impressive
4. Remember that movie, The Descent? Surtshellir isn't nearly as scary as Descent's cave

The guide from Iceland Rovers picked me up at 8:30 on a Wednesday morning. I heard him coming from far away – the sound of grinding tires against the pavement fooled me into thinking that the garbage was being picked up. Nope. Just the jeep, outfitted with massive wheels, towering over the surrounding cars on my tiny sidestreet. We lumbered off into the city, picking up the other passengers on our way. The trip became slightly less bad-ass upon the arrival of a visiting tourist from the United States, eager to talk and point out all the blatantly obvious differences between cultures, including the languages. I started panicking – I was strapped into that jeep for nine hours and there was no way in hell that I could handle that kind of persistently annoying talk. Why hadn't I brought my iPod?

» **Standing on a glacier**  
Our first stop was at Þingvellir National Park, where our group of six meandered

around the rocks and took pictures, along with a million other tourists armed with fanny packs. Thankfully, our guide told us that we were going to get out of there quickly so we had time to see some other things. We drove through a stretch of land, where we were the only vehicle for miles. The mountainous scenery kept the drive interesting, but it didn't deter me from the dreaded thought that we could break down at any moment and I would be stranded with the talky tourist. I got a little motion sick just thinking about it.

As the terrain got a little rougher, the guide informed us that we were nearing the Langjökull glacier. A small peak of white soon started to spread into a bright expanse, making it difficult to distinguish sky from land. This is when the trip got decidedly bad-ass. The guide drove the jeep onto the glacier, which was slightly softer than usual. Everyone held on to the back of the seats, concerned

that we were going to have to push the jeep back down to the road. Even tourist lady stopped jabbering. When we finally stopped, everyone emerged and threw snowballs at each other jovially, celebrating the invigorating feeling of power the bitchin' super-jeep had allowed us.

» **Like Seagal's Ponytail**

After we ate lunch at a nearby waterfall, we headed to Surtshellir, a lava cave. Equipped with the ever stylish helmets with lights, we journeyed into the mouth of the cave. Not as cool as the glacier, but still pretty sweet. Next we saw the Hraunfossar and Barnafoss waterfalls, which happened to be another amazing area. The group walked to the scenic overlooks of the falls going into the bright blue pools below. I stood on the bridge connecting the two sides of land, staring in to the aqua waters. It was quite a strange colour to behold (expectations

of dirty rushing falls were instantly surpassed). Hraunfossar consisted of multiple flat rocks connecting together to create various, smaller falls. Barnafoss waterfall ("The Children's Waterfall") was a single, larger fall, emerging from a hole created by a slight bridge of rock formations. Picture-taking ensued, of course, but one couldn't exactly replicate the real thing.

On the ride home, through the Hvalfjörður fjord, everyone took some time to look out the window at the passing coast. I soon realised that former annoyances had been silenced. Or maybe, I had just stopped noticing; the glacier drive had officially solidified the entire trip as being bad-ass. Riding in the awesomeness of the super-jeep, the day had flown by, just like Seagal's ponytail on a windy day. 🇮🇸

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# Nuuk by Sea

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The sun shone, and the water was calm and shimmering. Of the handful of days I spent in Nuuk, this was by far the most pristine. It was on this gorgeously perfect Greenlandic morning that Piitaaraq and Theresa, of Nuuk Tourism, took us out sailing on the Spar 5, captained by Michael and unofficially co-captained by Maria, a young Greenlandic artist.

The six of us departed from Nuuk's Atlantic harbour, excited to be on a boat – if only T-Pain were there. From the deck we took in sweeping views of Nuuk's peninsula. Blocks of apartments and colourful wooden homes staggered over the rocky seashore, shrinking to specks and then to nothing as we sailed away from civilization, deeper into fjords. Soon we were surrounded by capped mountains, their grandeur putting into perspective just how small we are and how vast the world. The sun continued to shine as our ship and packs of playful seals created the only waves on the glassy surface.

## » Showing off the goods

After sailing for little over an hour we dropped anchor and, three at a time, clamoured onto the floor of a small row-boat to go ashore. One of the many exciting tourist packages that Nuuk Tourism offers is Fly-fishing Camp, a week-long excursion for avid fly-fishers to a pair of cabins set on the shore of an inlet, a short walking distance from three prime fishing rivers. This package, and the alternative that ferries fishers back to a Nuuk hotel each night, is geared toward those with their own equipment and experience fly-fishing. I would spring for my own equipment if it meant enjoying a week at such a serene and pristine natural haven. Piitaaraq said it best when, walking between the cabin and river, he sighed "time stands still here." This piece of land – remote, secluded, and expansive – was like heaven.

Here's a fun little anecdote: the execs of the now bankrupt Glintr bank enjoyed a week of fly-fishing with Nuuk Tourism in the summer of 2008. However, unlike other fly-fishing enthusiasts and run of



the mill tourists, these guys solicited the company to pimp their fishing trip with a swank helicopter to shuttle them and their buddies around at will. You know, because money is no object.

## » Fishing and Village Life

Back on the boat, we sailed mere minutes from the site of the cabins, dropped anchor again and set about fishing in the 60+ metre deep waters. Within seconds of dropping my line I felt a bite. I gave the rod a tug and started to reel the line in. After what seemed like hours of reeling and pulling back, watching the long rod bend and curve from the weight of

whatever was on the end of the line, I peered down below the surface of the water. Two large orange fish - ocean perch, I later learned - snared on the hooks of my fishing line struggled as I reeled in the remainder of the line and hoisted them above the surface. The speed at which we were catching fish over the next hour was almost comical, prompting the Grapevine photographer to joke that our hosts had hired divers to put fish on our hooks so that we tourists would be impressed with the experience. In any case, we were.

Before heading back to Nuuk we visited the small village of Kapisillit.

This tiny collection of colourful wooden homes climbing the steep hill away from the seashore was surprisingly lively for a population of only 70. Children ran and laughed and screamed, young mothers pushed their babies around in prams with puppies bouncing along behind them, soaked from a swim in the chilly water. It was idyllic, really, and to stay in the small town's hostel or hotel (because they run one of each) would surely be a worthy and pure experience.

## » Nuuk Tourism will show you a good time

So, this superb day I have described here

isn't actually a tour that you, an enthusiastic tourist in Greenland, can take part in (unless you can convince some locals to take you for a ride). It was set up by Piitaaraq and Theresa so that my companion and I could see the goods in the (sadly) limited time we had at our disposal. That being said, the good people of Nuuk Tourism do offer a range of seemingly wicked activities that you can participate in, from hours-long city tours to weeklong camping and fly-fishing packages mentioned earlier, whale-watching safaris and sea-angling excursions.

CATHARINE FULTON  
 JULIA STAPLES



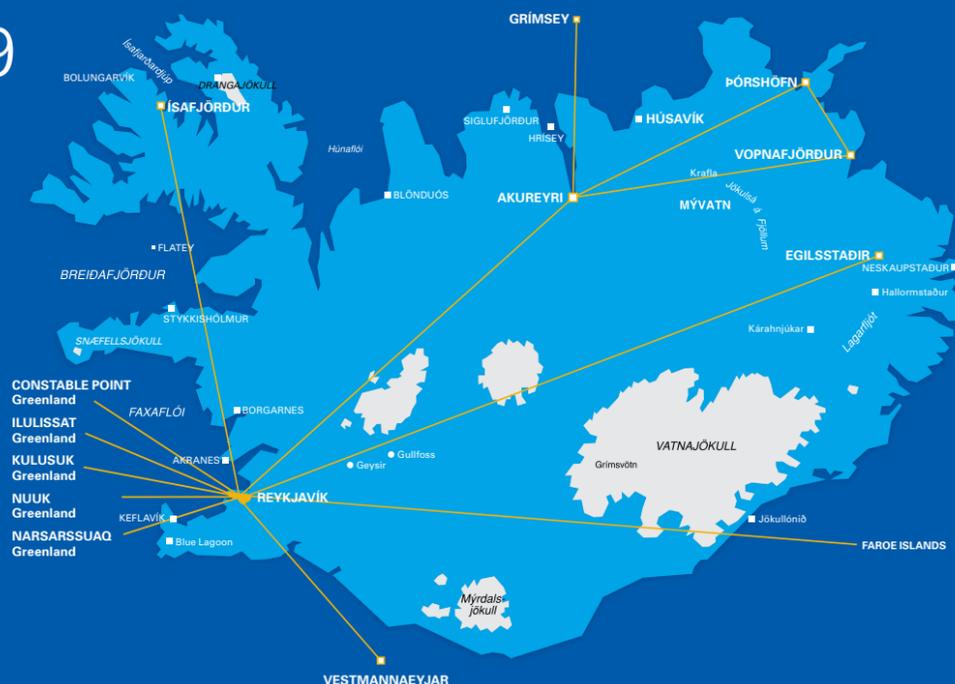
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# Go to Nuuk, Do Things

...because why would you go to Nuuk and not do things?



Nuuk is, admittedly, not the most aesthetically pleasing of towns. Whatever impression of charm is instilled by the quaint and colourful wooden homes dotting the rocky coast is partially negated the instant the colossal blocks of run-down apartments come into view. But that is Nuuk. Its infrastructure reflects its politics and history, and can even prove to be a point of interest for culturally or historically minded tourists to the area. But, if exploring the ghettos of Nuuk isn't your cup of tea, rest assured that there are many other activities at your disposal while in town.

✍ CATHARINE FULTON  
📷 JULIA STAPLES

## » CHECK OUT SOME ART, CULTURE AND STUFF «

At the Greenlandic National Museum in the Colonial Harbour (Hans Egedevej 8) you can check out a range of traditional Greenlandic costumes, some set-ups of how traditional Greenlandic and Danish homes (in Greenland) looked back in the day, and the Qilakitsoq mummies.

The Nuuk Kunstmuseum (Kissarneqqortuunnguq 5) holds a collection of Greenlandic art that is reflective of the country's culture and history. If you're not a fan of historical art, this museum also exhibits the work of up and coming Greenlandic artists.

Katuaq – The Culture House (Imaneq 21) – is easily distinguishable in the city for its impressive architectural design, mimicking the wave of the northern lights. The impressive building houses the country's only Greenlandic cinema, Greenland Art School, the Nordic Institute (NAPA), and a large auditorium for concerts, lectures and plays. Katuaq also has a café where you can chow down on a musk ox burger, if you're so inclined.

## » CLIMB A MOUNTAIN «

Not far from the city centre, and conveniently accessible by bus number 3, is Quassussuaq (Lille Malene), with a peak of 443 m. In the winter months Quassussuaq is a ski hill, so it's easy to spot the most reasonable hiking terrain based on where the ski-lift poles are located. The view from the top is exquisite, offering a panorama of the city and harbour to your left and Nuuk's landmark mountain, Sermitsiaq, to your right, which stands an imposing 1210 m.

### Nuuk Facts:

- » AKA: Godthåb
- » Location: 64°10 N 51°45 W
- » Population: 17,834
- » Settled: 2000 B.C.
- » (claimed by the Danes in 1728)

## » NIGHTLIFE «

Everybody we spoke to sung the praises of Manhattan nightclub, so check that out (hopefully it will be busier than the Thursday night we stopped by). Other hot spots that the locals favour are Bryghuset, Daddy's and Skyline at the Hotel Hans Egede. Expect to pay 62 to 92 Danish kronas for a beer. You may want to consider staying on the wagon for the duration of your trip.



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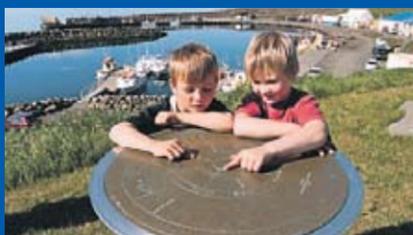
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## To The Death!



As I may have mentioned before, poetry was (in Iceland) once considered a gift from God, the misuse of which could result in the loss of said gift. Thus 17th century poet Æri-Tobbi had his gift taken away for giving false directions (in verse) to a group of tourists (all of whom died as a result). But there's a heathen tone to the culture of poetry as well: it was seen as partly (if not wholly) magical & witchcraft. A decent poet could 'poetry' the evil out of things – poetry as exorcism, if you will – or s/he could 'poetry' a pretty girl/guy into bed (evidently, this part of the gift was later bequeathed to rock'n'roll). Poetry was utterly sorcerous.

Poets would also duel with their poetry – one throwing forth a 'first-part' (first two lines) of a quatrain while the other would do the 'bottom' (last two lines) with correct rhyme, rhythm and alliteration. You won when your opponent could not do a bottom you yourself could do. But if your opponent gave up, and you could not do it either – you lost. Thus it was mostly a game of finding hard rhymes that you could deal with – but your opponent could not.

The most famous duel of all times was that between Kolbeinn Jöklaskáld (another 17th century poet) and the Devil himself. Kolbeinn poetried the devil back to hell by rhyming the word 'tungl' (moon) – our 'orange' (unrhymable word) – with 'ungl' or 'úln': a variation on the word for 'wrist' – this is all highly dubious, not really words and not even really rhymes, but the devil always being one to promote the avant-garde, readily agreed and cleared off to hell.

Hallgrímur Pétursson, yet another 17th century poet and priest, was adept at getting into trouble with his poetry. Having been thrown out of school for poetrying all sorts of nasty things about

his headmaster, he headed off to Denmark to continue his studies. In Copenhagen he met an older Icelandic woman, Guðríður Símonardóttir, who'd just escaped slavery in Algeria. Hallgrímur (undoubtedly) used his gift to poetry the woman – and subsequently had to leave the school and return to Iceland on account of their fornication (which lead to pregnancy and marriage).

Back in Iceland, Hallgrímur eventually got ordained as a priest, but his mischievous nature did not subside. He was soon having trouble with a nasty fox who kept killing his sheep. One day, while in the pulpit, his eye caught a glimpse of his furry nemesis and he immediately proceeded to poetry it away with all his might. Hallgrímur was a modest man and did not realise his own poetry's strength – and the fox literally sank into the ground and was never seen again (I'm not making this up!).

God, being fed up with Hallgrímur's antics, and quite frankly enraged at him for poetrying for secular matters from the pulpit, dried up all the poet's poetry. Hallgrímur did not get the gift back until he started his 25 thousand word anti-Semitic rant, The Psalms of Passion (1656-1659), which counts among Icelandic Christianity's literary classics, having been published over 80 times (in a country currently of 320 thousand people) – more often than any other book.

For having written the Psalms of Passion, Hallgrímur Pétursson counts as one of the most respected poets in the history of Icelandic literature – he's up there with Snorri Sturluson and Jónas Hallgrímsson.

He eventually caught leprosy and died.



## “Xenophobe’s guide to the Icelanders”



### Legends and Landscape

By Richard Sale

Oval Books

Buy it at Mál og Menning - while you still can.



Here's a book about the Icelander and his or her true self – told from the foreigner's point of view. The author, Richard Sale from the UK, mocks Icelanders in every respect. Nothing that foreigners consider odd, special or different about Icelanders remains untouched. Sale makes fun of their belief in hidden people, trolls and elves, their infatuation with family trees, their nutty interest in weather. Their pride of old literature and the Sagas, which even teenagers can quote, and their craziness about cars – big cars, the bigger, the better. There is of course a small chapter on Þorrablót, that time of the year when Icelanders eat traditional and literally old food like sheep heads and rotten shark, and also one about Bun Day, on which kids spank their parents.

Once the reader stumbles across the fact that it's not possible to study architecture in Iceland (or wasn't at the books time of writing), a lot of the architectural faux pas all over the country seem more understandable. Apart from some of the obvious Icelandic tics, the foreign reader will also discover new things about the nation that he or she is so fond of. Even if they might sound quite unbelievable, there is always truth in them. For example, the supposed Icelandic fear of toilet paper, since its ownership might imply that the owner is less than perfect (the reason makes sense though!) and therefore, in the old days, toilet paper was always carried around in anonymous brown paper bags when it was bought in the store. Interesting is also the fact that in the old days fishermen threw away the lobster in the catch, because it was too ugly to eat. The reader will also get to know why the Icelandic word for "intercontinental ballistic missile" literally means "long distance fiery flying thing."

This little book is hilarious, highly entertaining and filled with wonderful details. Every reader – having lived in Iceland for a while or just over for a short visit – will discover that he already found himself wondering about exactly this or that peculiarity on rather more than fewer occasions. Yes, Icelanders are notoriously unpunctual. Yes, they have annoying breaks in movie theatres in the middle of the show. And yes, they don't know moderate drinking – at all. Whilst indulging in xenophobic, shallow and superficially appearing, yet "so true" facts about Icelanders, it becomes clear that Icelanders are charming folk, who the author loves just as much as the reader will. - IRINA DOMURATH

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## Sonically Speaking: Kafbátamúsík

It's been eleven years since Ensími's remarkable debut was released, and as a commentary on their commemorative concert on June 11th, it seems an analysis of some sort is in order.

Kafbátamúsík emerged from the Icelandic rock scene as not only something hip and in pace with its time, but also something rather novel: an Icelandic album willing to take great pleasure in its own production and sound. Rather than striving to sound vintage or cutting edge, it seemed to carve its own sonic landscape; indeed, an early description of Ensími by the members themselves said that they played "music that combined elements of the past, present and future." Never afraid to indulge in wholesome clichés, Ensími's songwriting never shied from hitting that one note, coming in with that one drum break, or tweaking that one synth. They loved what they did and seem to know what we loved, too.

### Track 1 – Flotkví

Kafbátamúsík begins with Flotkví, a simple, urgent piece of stop-start shoegaze interlaced with biting synths and Hrafn Thoroddsen's signature vocals. Not quite breathy enough to be a croon, but softly insistent and with a hint of awkward, unchannelled sexuality about them, they quickly become a relatable human guide to the alien warmth of Kafbátamúsík's esoteric guitars and synths, Virgil guiding us through the fascinating instrumental underworld.

This exemplary introduction to Ensími's modus operandi is accompanied by a free-floating saxophone, the complex and obviously well-educated playing easily justifying what could have been a gimmicky, avant-garde choice. The fierce apocalyptic vitriol of the bridge also showcases something that remains curiously rare in Ensími's songs: a dramatic mood change. The dreamy, pink-hued verses are Ensími's heady, enticing side, and the bridge is their unforbearing, unapologetic energy.

### Track 2 – Arpeggiator/Gulur

Arpeggiator/Gulur reportedly began life as a guitar-based number; the switch to the jaw-droppingly wet synthetics, emotionally bare and so automatic, is another excellent choice. The predictable, often-heard chord progression is the perfect canvas for the dark, rich colours of the overlapping synth lines. Like a voluptuous woman covered in chocolate, it offers you pleasures so universal and timeless that, while stereotypical, you just can't resist them anyway.

### Track 3 – Kælibox

Kælibox offers decisive proof of at least two things. First, whoever's naming these songs seems to have a queer fascination with quirky-sounding Icelandic composite words, and that guitarist Franz Gunnarsson has listened to Jeff Buckley a lot. The sweeping, arcing guitar arpeggios, never ending quite where you think they will, form the basis of an effortlessly catchy and distinctly Icelandic rock song. Buckley's influence is particularly evident on the laconically plucked guitars of the bridge, and the entire song balances welcome familiarity with singular freshness.



### Ensími

#### Kafbátamúsík (1998)

ensimi

### Tracks 4 & 5 – Drefflík, Conga

Drefflík and Conga are two sides of the same coin, variations on a theme. Building on the same experimental, innocent-sounding themes and emerging into the same level of stunning directness in their endings, Drefflík driven by vocals and Conga by keyboards, they may lack the more listenable arrangements of the rest of the album, but they show how interesting the difference is between building on production and using it. The beginnings of both songs are very loosely defined, letting the sound textures do all the work and wafting lazily through shallow chord progressions, while the verses/endings are pure chord work, pure pop songcraft in the truest sense of the word, as if Weezer were writing the endings of My Bloody Valentine songs.

### Track 6 – Gaur

If Drefflík and Conga are brief glimpses at Ensími's pop sensibilities, Gaur is a long, hard stare at them, blindingly reckless in its defiance of what has gone before. It eschews the gentle strokes that have defined the rest of the album so far, opting instead for rambunctious energy. Ensími's seemingly nonsensical lyrics, almost abstract, relish in belting out common, almost sloppily pedestrian phrases and turning them into mantras. Of all their work, this is perhaps most true of the informal, incomplete questions of Gaur's chorus, so endearing in their honesty and familiarity, a hallmark of Icelandic-language rock in the nineties.

### Track 7 – Hrúgald

Hrúgald is another beefed-up nod to Jeff Buckley's quizzical, upbeat guitar hooks, the swerving intro paving the way for Kafbátamúsík's most abjectly euphoric track, and it is weird hearing such euphoria projected so assertively and charismatically. The song is a nice little stopover between the more distinctive Gaur and Atari, and has been a personal favourite since I first heard the album.

### Track 8 – Atari

One of Ensími's more interesting accomplishments is their comfortable seating between art rock and mainstream Icelandic rock. Their concerts and albums are enjoyed both by preppy, well-groomed radio-rock fans, and the notoriously finicky indie and art crowd. While the inviting synth stylings of Arpeggiator/Gulur are by and large responsible for this crossover, Atari's stripped-down guitar licks and almost-singalongs do hold some of the responsibility. The stuttering, bursting lead guitar, ever-exuberant lead synth and warm, knowing vocals made it an instant classic when it hit Icelandic radio. It is so deep and enticing that it is impossible not to fall in love with, like a quirky personality with a nice smile.

It is also, to my mind, the only song on Kafbátamúsík to truly suffer from its rich, mid-heavy equalization, and I feel a more focused, minimal production could have brought it out much stronger. But that is perhaps what makes Atari so remarkable for a hit song: instead of an arresting, well-defined mix like the one typically heard in radio-friendly rock, it is awash in spindly guitars and barely supported by a soft, quiet bassline. The drums click and clack with unorthodox percussion and ring out with a heavy reverb, and the vocals are kept low in the mix. No one I know is quite sure exactly what Hrafn is singing, but you can't help but sing along anyway. In a way, it's daring to mix such an obvious hit in this way, and makes the fact that it is one of the most recognizable Icelandic rock songs ever written even more of an accomplishment.

### Track 9 – Naglabassi

As if to apologise for Atari's softness, Naglabassi's verses are as evil, insidious and biting as Kafbátamúsík gets, a prophecy of sorts for the toxic sneer often prevalent on Ensími's eponymous third album. The chorus remains lofty and warm, the synths and vocal harmonising giving Kafbátamúsík yet another infectious hook.

### Track 10 – Permanent

Permanent is the perfect ending to Ensími's debut. It is remarkable in its banality, in a way; Ensími have already pulled all their neat tricks on you and let Permanent saunter through without making much of an impact, but the clever thing about the track is part of what make Ensími so special. It's that it is such a typical Ensími song. Already, at the end of only their first album, Ensími have created their own identifiable hallmarks. You could not mistake Permanent for a song by any other band.

The ability to create their own specific character up to the extent that there is such a thing as 'a typical Ensími song' is not a skill to be taken lightly, and they belong in a group of select bands who have accomplished this. Although Kafbátamúsík's general atmosphere could hardly be called definitive or decisive (Ensími do not really achieve this until four years later), it is particular to itself and not similar to many other albums. It is content to throw ingredients into its sonic soup without stirring them to the top, leaving them in as subtle flavourings to enhance its richness.

Special thanks to Nick Bernard.

SINDRI ELDON  
BJARNI GRÍMS

Concert Review

# Of Course I Remember You

*Ensími perform Kafbátamúsík in its entirety*



## Ensími

Nasa, Thursday June 11th

ensími

There's not much to be said about the show itself. Apart from there being some sound difficulties, it was nearly flawless for what it was. They played the songs perfectly and confidently and seemed to genuinely have fun doing so.

ÞÓRIR GEORG JÓNSSON  
HÖSKULDUR HÖSKULDSSON

Manstu ekki eftir mér ("Don't you remember me?") is a new concert series that – not unlike ATP's 'Don't look back' series – aims to bring back classic albums for people to experience in a live setting. The first band to partake were Ensími, who performed their classic album Kafbátamúsík.

Given the difficult task of being the opening act for this much hyped show were alternative rockers Dikta. They seemed fully aware of the situation and ran quickly through a few hits that pleased the crowd and got off the stage quickly for people to get what they wanted.

Ensími's Kafbátamúsík is eleven years old this year, released in '98. The year Sigur Rós released their eyebrow raising remix album, Vonbrigði, and Botnleðja released their seminal third album Magnyl. The latter being in my opinion the best Icelandic album of the nineties (if not of all time). But Kafbátamúsík is almost, if not just as, remarkable. And both albums to me appear pretty significant in Iceland's



rock history. As perfectly as Magnyl expressed excitement and maybe relief of the arriving end of the 90s, Kafbátamúsík is its sad, vulnerable and uncertain counterpart. Maybe I have a bit of a biased view of those albums, seeing as I was 14 years old when they were released and they both left chronic marks on my love for and interest in music. But I do believe that besides those points, the three final years of the nineties made a big change for Icelandic rock music. It became more serious, ambitious and daring.

In the past eleven years, Ensími have gone through many changes, line-up and otherwise. They've released two more albums and gone into hibernation for the last few years. The line up now consists basically of local funk-rock-metal band Dr. Spock (whose guitarist Franz Gunnarsson is an original member of Ensími) backing singer Hrafn Thorodsson. To be honest, that doesn't make much of

a difference as they are all more than competent players and seemed to know the material like the back of their hands. Original keyboard player (and current politician) Oddný Sturludóttir even made an appearance for a few of the songs.

There's not much to be said about the show itself. Apart from there being some sound difficulties, it was nearly flawless for what it was. They played the songs perfectly and confidently and seemed to genuinely have fun doing so. The venue was packed and people loved it, the crowd's singing along to every single chorus just showed how much love people have for the album.

I really hope this concert series will last at least a few more shows and bring back some more gems from Iceland's music history for us to enjoy live for one more time. All I have left to say is get Botnleðja to do Magnyl next. Please. ♡

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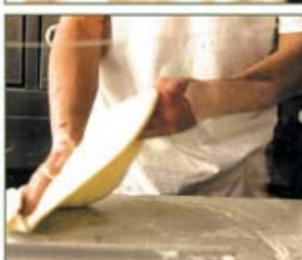


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## Playing Around In The Bed Of Roses

Reykjavik Museum of Photography explores the swingin' sixties



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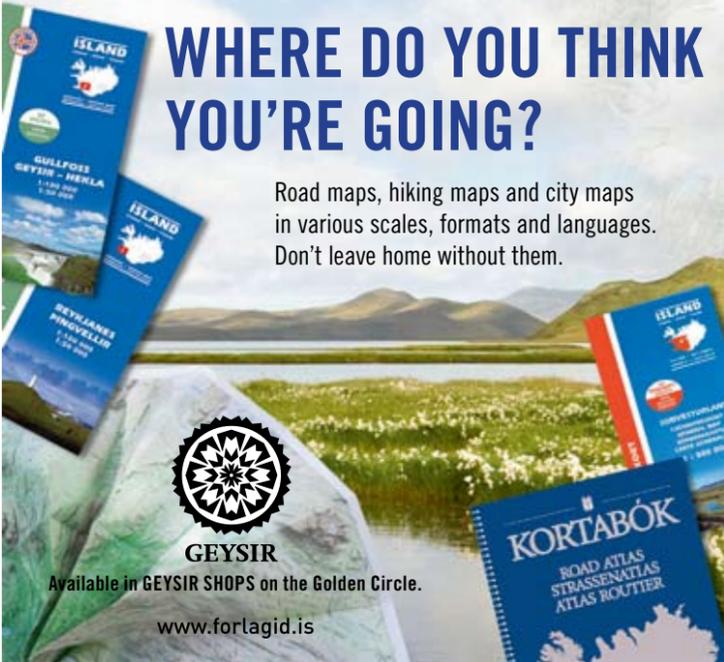
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"Life isn't just a game- it's also a bed of roses..." is an odd title for an exhibition, although when you think of the 1960s it begins to explain the blissful bed of roses imagery. It does appear in one's mind as a much dreamier time, fond of its simple aspirations and lethargic dreams. The Reykjavik Museum of Photography is currently showing a collection of photos depicting the optimistic 60s in Iceland. A revolutionary period in the nation's history, when the population grew within the cities as locals moved from the countryside to work in industries and gain better salaries. As the manufacturing industry boomed, it subsequently brought about more demand for designing new products, thus bringing more work to the city and birthing the word "Hönnun" – design in Icelandic. Several examples of products designed and manufactured during these times are on display within the exhibition.

### Miss Iceland

In the 1960s photographs on display, everything seems simple. You either worked hard or looked beautiful. The contrast between Miss Iceland 1959 Sirrý Geirs pictures adjacent to the staff at Linda's bakery in Akureyri,

where Sirrý poses in her lingerie whilst the workers gathered in the cafeteria, look decidedly less glamorous in their American style pinafores and hair nets. Miss Iceland, who moved to America to pursue her career after winning the award, had a series of photographs taken of herself at her Icelandic home in 1965 by photographer Pétur Þorsteinsson. The photos depicted the model turned actress with her small dog as they lay on a big, fluffy, white shag, reading and relaxing in her home, contributing to the public's rising fascination with celebrity lifestyles and fame. In those days, life appeared more clear-cut. Men worked fixing industrial machinery or sat behind a desk whilst a secretary timidly filed papers in the background. Women lounged along winter hides in pinewood summerhouses or smiled ecstatically in the kitchen (even when completely alone) anticipating their husband's arrival back home. The capitalist heyday, when people were happy to buy and willing to work.

### Capitalism

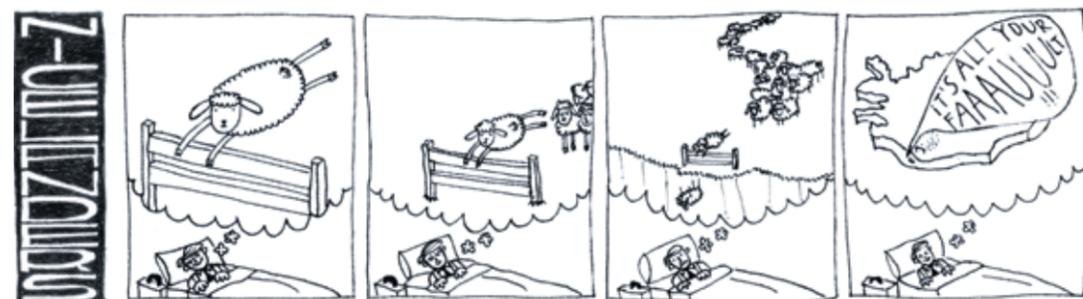
The exhibition reflects the era when capitalism formed in Iceland, from the marketing influence of the U.S. and its advertisements. The idea that images of women sell household goods, men sell machinery, couples sell clothes and a pretty face can sell just about anything, was embraced the world over. Photographer Óli Páll Kristjánsson, a featured artist of the exhibition, relates this well within several of his

pictures, particularly with the sofa bed advertisement wherein a woman proudly grasps a giant cut-out of a 1000 ISK note. Óli Páll Kristjánsson was infamous for his catalogue photography, capturing the essence of the 60s catalogue pose – which appears cliché in today's marketing but was new and exciting back then. On display is a series he produced for Hagkaup clothing, with models looking into the distance for a friend, perhaps a ship, shading themselves from the sun with their hand: a classic catalogue pose if there was one. To the viewer, it is clear that there is no sun in the studio or friends passing by. Yet, we believe in this holiday illusion. The odd twist to the work is that although it undoubtedly has American influences, there is still something distinctly Icelandic in the atmosphere. The curators of the exhibition, Guðmundur Oddur Magnússon and Guðfinna Mjöll Magnúsdóttir, both give lectures at the Icelandic Academy of the Arts. Where initially researching the archives, intending to create a 60s inspired design project for their students, they got so engrossed in the euphoric vibes of the photography archive that they felt the need to dedicate a show of what they saw, to contrast the optimistic past with a pessimistic today.

"Life isn't just a game- it's also a bed of roses..." will be on display until August 29.

✉ - RICHARD P FOLEY

– by Óttar Norðfjörð And Elo Vásquez





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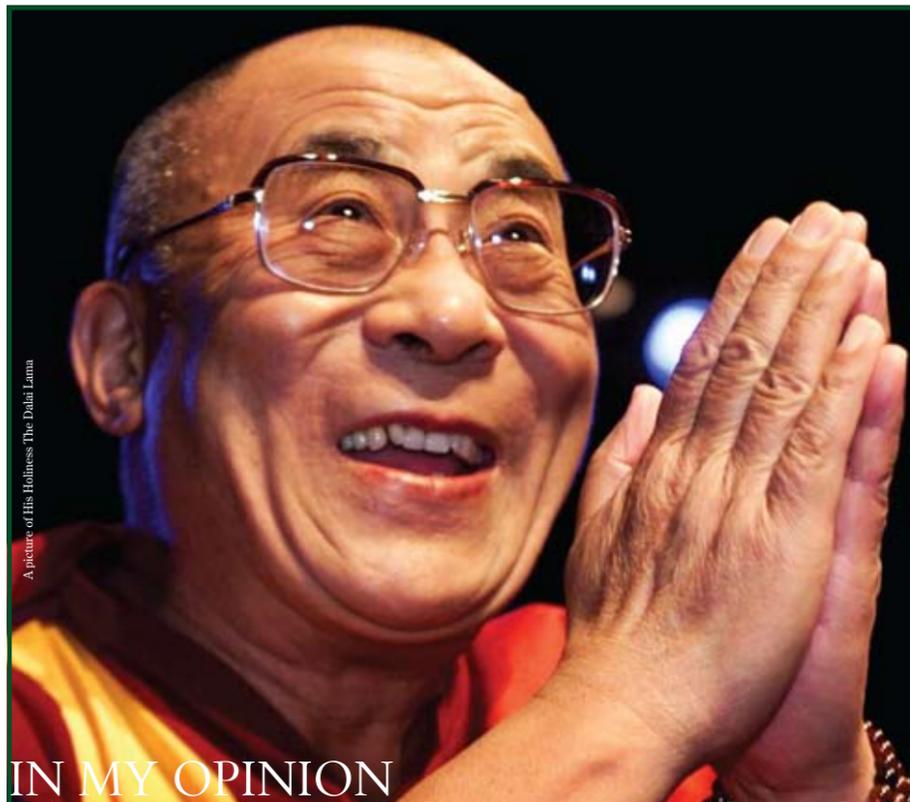
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# HISTORICAL REYKJAVÍK



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Árbær Museum is an open-air museum, established in 1957. The aim of the museum is to give an idea of Icelandic architecture and the lifestyle of the past.

The exhibition Reykjavík 871±2 is based on the archaeological excavation of the ruin of one of the first houses in Iceland and findings from other excavations in the Reykjavík city centre.

Árbær Museum and The Settlement Exhibition Reykjavík 871±2 are parts of Reykjavík City Museum. Both are open daily in June, July and August from 10am to 17pm. Detailed information at our website at [www.reykjavikmuseum.is](http://www.reykjavikmuseum.is)

  
ÁRBÆR MUSEUM

Reykjavík  
**871±2**

Landnámssýningin  
The Settlement  
Exhibition

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

## A letter from Iceland

one's time and a waste of time (or water, for that matter) must never, ever be directly associated with literature. However, all my sympathy lies with British charity organisations as well as the Icelandic public. If I were to write to save my life, metaphorically speaking, in the eyes of an English king or, rather, the British public, I would point out that I have at least gone out to the streets along with thousands of other Icelanders and protested against both the government, financial institutes, and business tycoons. The demonstrations here are called "The Kitchen Revolution" and consisted of grouping in front of public buildings and making an enormous racket with pots and pans whilst chanting slogans. Professional percussionists joined in and this made for wonderful music, to which I myself have played my part with a casserole dish. The music is working, the government has fallen and the millionaires are intimidated; I address the subject of music and discuss it in detail in a letter to another institute, but suffice it to say, by way of an apology to the ill treated British citizens, that at least many of us here are protesting, which is more than can be said of the British public, as far as I know; that is to say, until the G20 demonstrations. Should a poet or a human being not be rewarded for his or her efforts and life at least spared?

I considered to send an application to an Icelandic institution but then came Icesave – and not only Icesave, also it seems that the now nationalized bank Kaupthing owes her majesty the Queen of England in person a huge sum of money for rent; it seems she owns some buildings in the West End of London which she rented to Singer & Friedlander, a company owned by the idiots and criminals at Kaupthing. So it seems that I, a common man, must pay her majesty her salary! Fuck! Pardon the expression. Should you suspect that I am making some sort of morbid joke in this letter, let me assure you; it could never be as ridiculous as this! We are not amused. I immediately cancelled my letter (actually part of a series) to the Icelandic institute as it now seems much more logical to me that as long as I am paying for Icesave and her majesty, a royal literature fund in England, such as the one you represent, should pay my allowance or reward me in some way.

Thinking back to the times of Eric Bloodaxe, it is a matter of opinion who really has the axe in hand now. I do hope that your respected institute is not in the habit of chopping anything off Icelandic writers, directly or indirectly – symbolically or literally.

Read the stunning conclusion to Hermann Stefánsson's 'A Letter From Iceland' next issue!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

## Broke, Busted, Disgusted

"The alternative is unthinkable," said Einarsson. "It would be closing off the country. The EEA Agreement could be canceled by the EU and as I understand, this has been threatened. Since the emergency laws in October, Iceland has not fulfilled its obligations in the EEA. There is no free-flow of capital now. The cancellation would have a devastating effect on the country. Iceland needs good relations with its neighbors. The loans that have been promised to Iceland by governments of the neighboring states through the IMF would also be in danger. The IMF has said that Iceland only receives these payments after reaching an agreement with the UK. So, the UK is in a very strong position, also because we have made horrible mistakes in the process of the negotiations. We are in a very difficult position. I'm glad that I'm not in the Icelandic

government. I wouldn't know what to do, I wouldn't know if I should accept this agreement or not."

Eliásson, for his part, isn't entirely convinced that Iceland has no other options, stating that Icelanders need to better explain their position to the world prior to negotiating a deal. "We haven't been explaining their position very well up until now, because our government, which is so keen to get into the EU, doesn't seem to want to protect our interests first."

Jóhannesson, however, doesn't think the EU is as strong an underlining influence as the threat of economic isolation.

"It goes without saying that the Social Democrats are determined to join the EU," he told us. "I don't think there's some secret EU link there, but obviously, if Iceland were going to say, we're not going to accept this, that would pretty much make us as isolated as countries as North Korea or Myanmar. This isn't just about EU membership.

*"We might not like the Icesave deal, but the alternative is much worse, and maybe this is the best we or anyone else could get. Take it or leave it, that's the message we got." Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson*

If we were to say we're not going to pay for Icesave, we could lose access to foreign loans, the EEA agreement could be in upheaval, and there's also trade with European markets. They say our economy is mostly based on fishing. Well, we have to sell the fish to someone. If we walked away from this deal and these other countries put an embargo on us, we'd be hard-pressed to find someone else to trade with. We might not like the Icesave deal, but the alternative is much worse, and maybe this is the best we or anyone else could get. Take it or leave it, that's the message we got. I think anyone criticizing the negotiations team for being weak are ignoring, wilfully or not, the incredibly difficult position the Icelandic authorities find themselves in."

### Where do we go from here?

Jóhannesson sees in Iceland's future both hard times ahead, but also hope.

"I try not to be too pessimistic, but I foresee cuts in the welfare system. I think a lot depends on whether there will be a thorough investigation, and that those who were guilty of wrongdoings will be sentenced. Unless that happens there is no hope here. If it turns out that Iceland is struggling under the weight of this agreement, then it should be in the interests of Britain, Holland, and our partners in the European Union to renegotiate. Also, we're used to breaking treaties with Britain," citing the 1961 fishing waters agreement that Iceland signed with Britain and subsequently violated ten years later. "Breaking treaties is nothing new to us. If we break this treaty with Britain, it wouldn't be the first time, and that's just the plain, honest truth. But the sad bottom line is that there needs to be an agreement. Whether this one is the best one that could have been reached, I can't say."

Einarsson agrees, adding that the real culprits of the banking crisis need to be brought to justice, saying "Well there is the special prosecutor's office with limited number of people and the

*"I'm glad that I'm not in the Icelandic government. I wouldn't know what to do, I wouldn't know if I should accept this agreement or not." Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson*

advisory role of Eva Joly, which is meant to investigate all these things, also the responsibility of individuals. The problem is that the authorities weren't ready to go after these people right away, when everything happened. It took a long time to set up the mechanism to do that."

"Who broke the law?" asks Jóhannesson. "That I'm not able or willing to answer. But I think that bank managers, politicians and officials should be the subject of investigation, and they should welcome an investigation. It would clear the innocent of any wrongdoing, and bring the guilty parties to justice."

Einarsson is also philosophical about Iceland's future. "Of course, some of the main players, which have behaved outside of the law, will hopefully be prosecuted. Some of them might even

solution. It's always like that here in Iceland. And after ten years, we will stop worrying about it. That's how it goes. These people used to be the heroes here. They walked down the streets like they owned the place. Now they are all personae non grata. In this society, this is the biggest punishment anyone can receive, humiliation and shame. Many of these people are my personal friends. Everywhere they go, what has happened taints their lives. They hide in their big houses with their fancy cars in front of them, but they can't enjoy them."

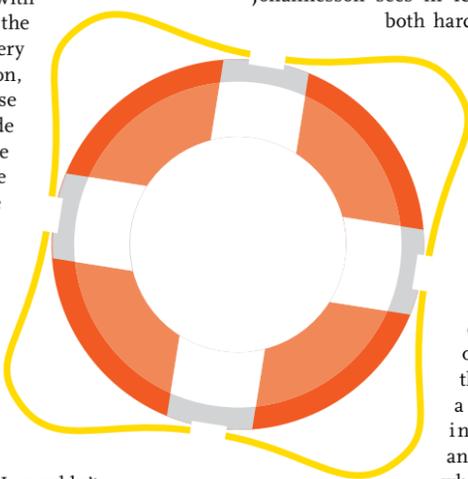
At the time of this writing, the Icesave agreement is being hotly debated in parliament. What will be entailed in the full agreement, and whether or not Iceland will go back to the negotiations tables remains to be seen, but Jóhannesson, for his part, believes at least one important

*"[The evocation of the anti-terrorist law] not only illegal, but also politically very hostile. I think that the Icelandic authorities made a devastating mistake in these early days. When the UK authorities used these illegal means to seize the property of Landsbanki, the Icelandic authorities should have said, that the UK government by that also overtook the obligations of the bank." - Einar Bergmann Einarsson*

see some time behind bars. But that complete systematic investigation leading up to a final justice where everything is clear, that's not going to happen. It's going to be a halfway

lesson will be learned from the Icesave debacle:

"The dream of making Iceland a financial powerhouse will never appear again. At least I hope not."



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### PROGRAM:

Thursday 18th 20–22

#### **Zokei Animations:**

Professor Masaaki Mori from Tokyo Zokei University will give a lecture on Japanese animation focusing on student works.

Saturday 20th 18–20

#### **“Japanese style” and product design:**

Design Consultant and Cultural Engineer, Professor Tadanori Nagasawa from Musashino Art University, will give a lecture on contemporary Japanese design.

Thursday 25th 20–22



#### **Thursday lecture 1:**

Architects Sami Rintala, Dagur Eggertsson and Ryo Yamada show recent architecture projects and a work in progress which highlights Japanese and Nordic building traditions and bathing culture.

Friday 26th  
**Ceremony TOPOS**

Saturday 27th 17–19

#### **Japanese-Icelandic Music Collaboration:**

Musicians and composers from Tokyo University of the Arts (Geidai) and the Icelandic Academy for the Arts will perform a new classical/ultra-modern joint composition at the Nordic House.

Sunday 28th 16–18

**Sunday cinema:** The Burmese Harp

Wednesday 1st 20–22



#### **Shugo Tokumaru with Amiina:**

The young and multi-talented Shugo Tokumaru and his band visit Reykjavik before performing at the famous Roskilde Festival in Denmark. Icelandic Amiina will join as guest-performers on selected songs.

Thursday 2nd 20–22

#### **Thursday lecture 2:**

Guja Dögg Hauksdóttir, architect, head of arch.dep. at Reykjavik Art Museum, reflects on the influence of landscape and culture on contemporary architecture in Japan and Iceland.

Sunday 4th 16–18

**Sunday cinema:** Kikujiro

Thursday 9th 20–22

#### **Thursday lecture 3:**

Leif Høgfjeld Hansen, architect and lector at the Aarhus School of Architecture in Denmark, lectures on the influence of traditional Japanese architecture on Alvar Aalto's work.

Friday 10th 17–19

Saturday 11th 14–16

Sunday 12th 14–16

#### **Tea ceremony:**

Kanako Hatanaka, master of Japanese tea ceremonies (Ura sengei school) and 11 assistants from Japan will introduce Chado – the way of tea.

Sunday 12th 16–18

**Sunday cinema:** Always: Sunset on Third Street



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MYRTA HUSID/ISA 09-0391

**PAGE 18**

We might not like the Icesave deal, but the alternative is much worse, and maybe this is the best we or anyone else could get. Take it or leave it, that's the message we got.

Historian Guðni Th. Jóhannesson on the potentially awful Icesave deal.

**PAGE 6**

Oh wait, that's not hilarious at all and it's decidedly disturbing if you enjoy such symptoms.

Seriously.

Grapevine's Catharine Fulton realized how grim STDs really are.

**PAGE 12**

Planning a mad one? Always buy alcohol early before you go out. It works out way cheaper and no one goes out before midnight anyway, giving you plenty of liver debauchery time.

Check out our guide to buying alcohol in Iceland.

**PAGE 12**

Terror strikes for a fleeting fearful second but before instinct kicks in the accidental game of chicken is cut short when the nut-job, or perhaps limey, turns an on-ramp into an off-ramp and a particular hazard to merely a general one.

More still on the seamy life of a taxi driver.

**PAGE 16**

Furthermore, I am determined to take the following and more poetic steps: I will chop off my fingers one by one with an axe and mail them to you in an envelope.

Writer Skallagrímur Daðason has a devious plan.

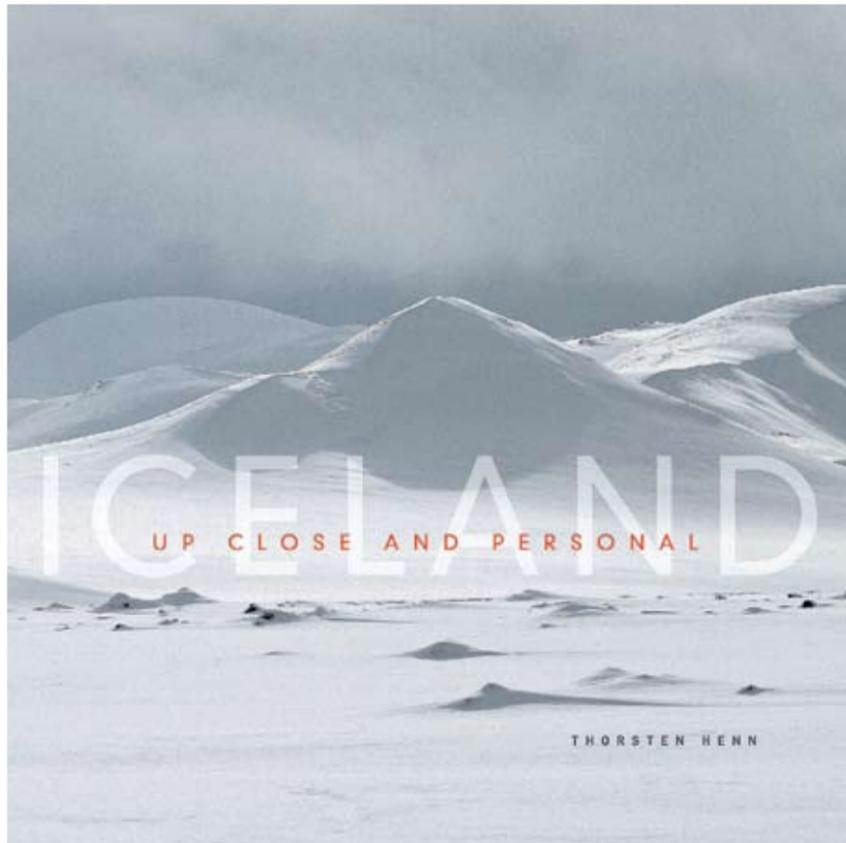
**PAGE 14**

Our Puffin binge may be coming to a close. A recent report shows an alarming 25% decrease in the Westman Island's puffin population over the last four years. And with the islands being the puffins' single largest breeding colony in the world, this is some potentially grave news.

Will our beloved Puffin go the way of the Great Auk?

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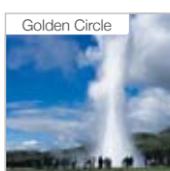
German photographer THORSTEN HENN has lived in Iceland since 1998 after having first been enchanted by its beauty during a visit in 1985. He runs a photo studio in Reykjavík and his work has been printed in numerous well-known magazines in Iceland and abroad.

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