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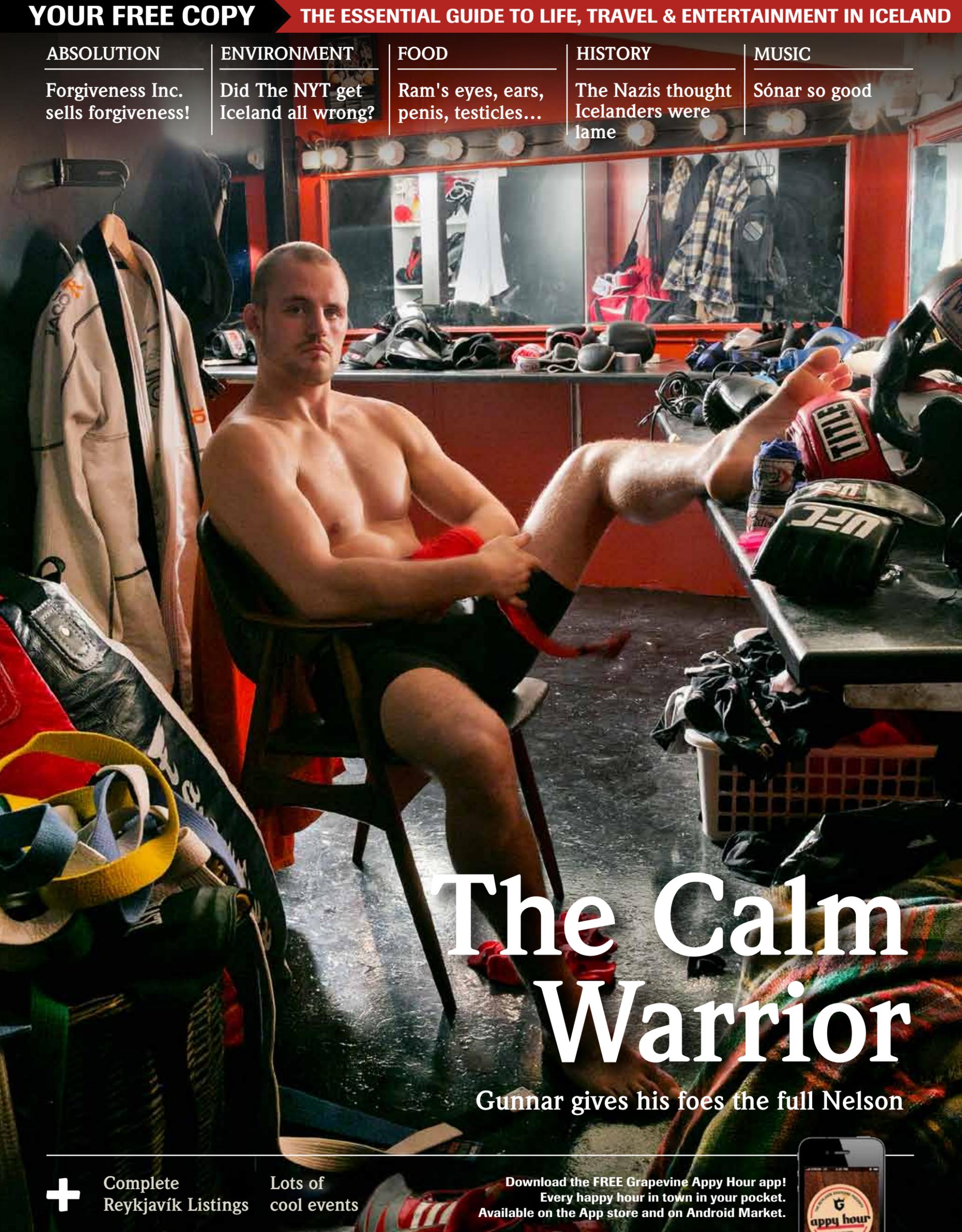
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Editorial | Anna Andersen

RE: GRAPEVINE'S GHASTLY GENDER GAP

Anna's Super Long 37th Editorial



A few days after our last issue came out, we received a letter about something that I had been feeling rather uncomfortable about for some time now. I knew it was coming. After printing an article featuring last year's covers, with all 18 of them displayed neatly on a single page, somebody was bound to pick up on it and send us a letter. It was just a matter of time:

"Dear Grapevine, I'd like to initiate this letter by giving you a compliment. Your magazine is my favorite one in Reykjavík; it's weird that a local appreciates an English speaking tourist magazine most of all the newspapers and magazines in Iceland but you still always manage to have me counting down to the next issue. Each publishing Friday I sit down with a cup of carefully brewed coffee and bury my nose into the only radically environmentalist, hippy, culture-appreciating voice in Reykjavík," the letter writer began nicely, before delivering her blow.

"However, I was greatly saddened when I saw a compilation of your covers in the issues of 2013. I have the (sometimes annoying) habit of counting genders in magazines, photos, front pages of web sites and so on. After taking a very swift look at your covers it was evident that there was a clear gender gap in the people you chose to front your paper, a paper that sits face up in every café around town. Out of 18 issues, 10 feature a man as the main subject (11 if you count Siggi Odd's

illustration that might, or might not be a man with mustache). Two covers prominently feature women. One issue has one of each gender and two issues feature a bunch of people; 15 men and 8 women."

The writer continues: **"Now I ask, dear Grapevine, do you feel that men achieve more important things than women and rather deserve the front page? Or is it a subconscious societal thing? You might find my obsession with counting people a bit extreme. You might feel that the gender of the main subject on the cover is coincidental and it's only important that it appeals to the reader and encourages people to pick up the paper. I think, that until we live in a world, closer to perfection than this one in regard to gender gaps and equality, we have to fight and be annoying and count faces and push quotas. If not, women will continue to grow up with the notion that men deserve higher salaries, better positions and more attention..."**

So somebody picked up on it, the fact that men overwhelmingly dominated the Reykjavík Grapevine's covers in 2013. Although we had good reason for featuring all of them (and you can read those reasons on page 6 of last issue), I'm certain we would have also had good reason for featuring a greater number of amazing women. For some reason though, it didn't pan out that way.

The truth is that I have been aware of this for some time now and meant to draw attention to it six or seven issues ago, when we featured Emíliana Torrini. If you don't count the New Year's issue, which featured a stand-in model for a woman who went missing and whose name we never knew, Emíliana was the first female to grace a cover last year and we were thirteen issues deep at that point. However, I didn't end up drawing attention to this back then, at least in this space, because I didn't want to risk trivializing her appearance on our cover by making our decision seem to be more about meeting gender quotas than about celebrating her art.

Furthermore, after discussing the issue with others involved, I became convinced that our covers couldn't be deconstructed this way: that is, they are mostly not about featuring a man or a woman. Of the 18 issues published last year, only four were profiles of the people on the cover. Three men and one woman: Hafþór Björnsson (Issue 08), Emíliana Torrini (Issue 13), Ragnar Axelsson (Issue 14) and Björgvin Halldórsson (Issue 18). The others fell into place because we decided to feature something rather than somebody, such as Eurovision (Issue 5).

That said, the letter brings up an important matter. For the last five years, Iceland has been sitting pretty at the top of the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, boasting world records like the first democratically elected female head of state and the first openly lesbian head of government. Yet, culling from stories that Grapevine reported on last year, you'll see that it's far from perfect over here.

The fact is, when it comes to full-time state and municipal jobs, females average 27% lower salaries than their male counterparts. In other governmental blunders, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe had to suspend Iceland's voting rights because our all-male delegation couldn't figure out how to meet the mandate for gender equality by including a single female. In the private sector, females made up only 23.1% of company board members, as of December. In the film industry, females have directed only 17 of the 133 feature films made in Iceland at last year's count, and a record low number of females, 16 compared to 43 males, were nominated for an Edda Academy Award at last year's ceremony. Even in female-dominated fields, such as teaching and nursing, males still hold the leadership positions.

Dear letter writer, I'd like to thank you for bringing this up. It's important to point out gender inequality, as it's a problem that's not likely to go away if we don't do anything about it. Although I'm not convinced that gender quotas should be applied to everything from committees to faces on magazine covers, I pledge to do what I can to ad-

dress this in 2014. Although our editorial team was and is well staffed by females and I'm certain that the articles you've been reading have been by and about at least as many women as men, if not more, I'm also sure we can do better.

Now, turn to page 16 to read this issue's feature interview with a human who inconveniently for the purposes of my editorial this issue happens to be called Gunnar Nelson. He's great though, and the story of how he rose to MMA fame out of a country where it is illegal to compete in sports like professional boxing, is an interesting one. Finally, if anybody wants to write us a letter about this or anything else, remember: letters@grapevine.is.

TRACK OF THE ISSUE



Tilbury: "Hollow"

Download NOW at www.grapevine.is

Few songs capture the chill of an early winter morning in Reykjavík and at the same time make for a good soundtrack to your dreary walk to work, a quality that "Hollow" really hits on the head. The mellow ground-up feeling built by the bass riff on this song from Tilbury's new album 'Northern Comfort' isn't too rough on your groggy head, yet the vibrant synth and lively drums still get you pumped up to take on whatever the rest of your day has to throw at you. Download this free track to get a taste for 'Northern Comfort,' which gets a glowing review on page 39.



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



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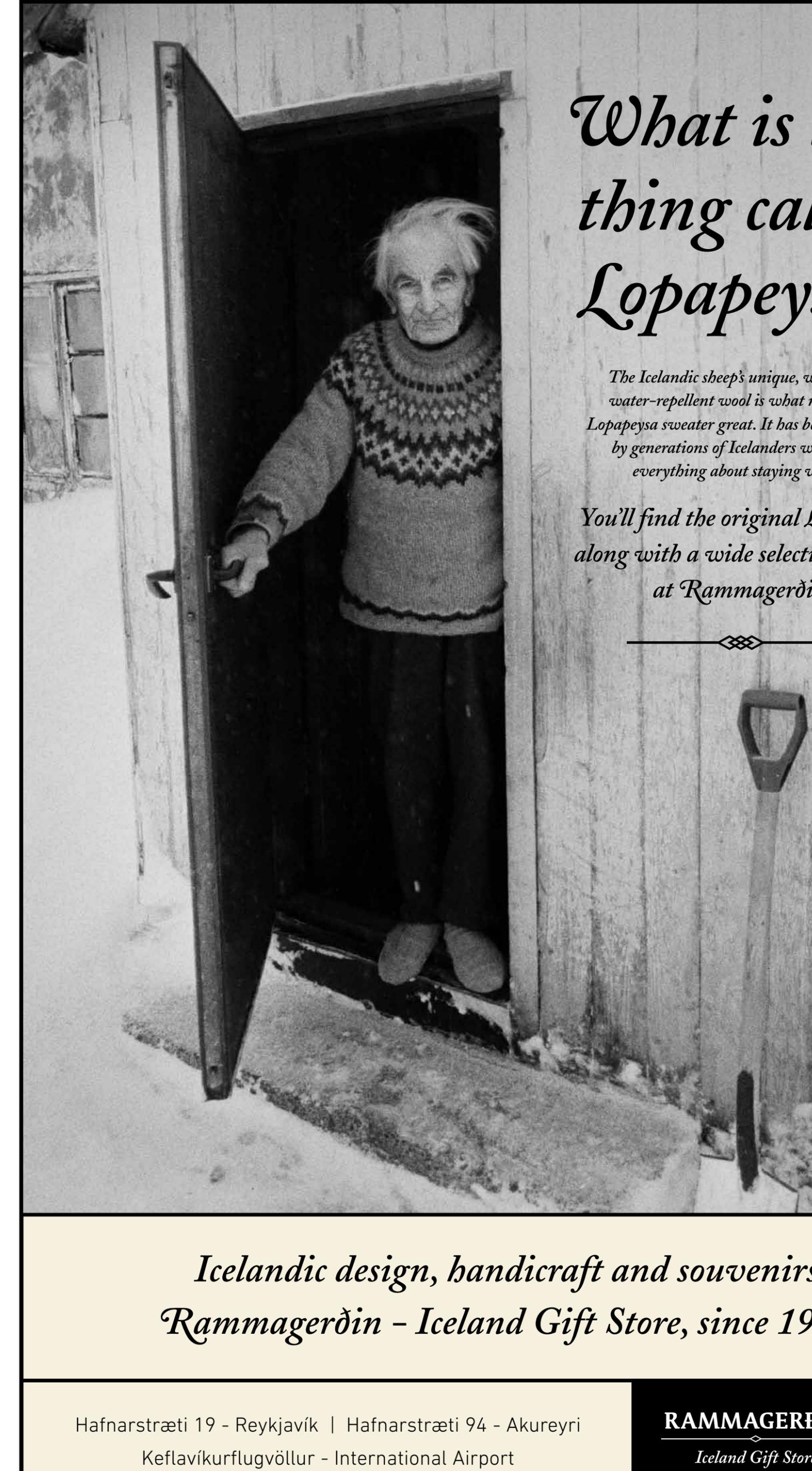
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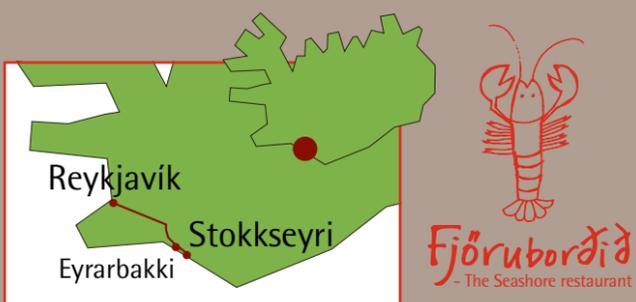
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MOST AWESOME LETTER

Dear John gnarr,

(Great photo!) I enjoyed your address in 'the grapevine' on the life of Jesus and agree with some of your humorous comments, but far from being silent, 3 of his disciples did write about their day-to-day lives with him; Matthew, Mark and John, in 3 of the 4 gospels!

Yours Sincerely,

S. McDermott,

Shropshire, England

Sent from my iPhone

--

Dear S.

You must be talking about this passage here:

"Jesus's birth occurred in a rather unusual manner; unknown stars twinkled in the sky and angels floated between houses and talked to people. Respected wise men showed up in town and announced that a great man was born. One would assume that any child born under such circumstances would have its youth documented by its parents, relatives and even the authorities. But it was not. There are no records of Jesus's youth. We know nothing of his first words or when he started walking. None of his childhood drawings have been preserved. We have no knowledge of how he matured or how he fared in school or in his day-to-day interactions. Nada. He just disappeared and wasn't heard from in thirty years."

You make a good point. Mark, at least, claims to have been there for his baptism. Oh wait, he was in his thirties when he was baptized. Matthew once invited him to dinner. Oh, he must have been older at that point. And John sat next to him at Pass-over that one time. Was that the same dinner? Hmm... Sorry if we got any of that wrong, we're mostly a bunch of heathens over here at the office. We'll have to ask the mayor about this the next time we catch him grocery shopping or something.

Best,
Grapevine

Dear Sir/Madam,

Let me introduce myself briefly. My name is Oleg Ananyev. I am a journalist. Once I graduated from the University of Wales with an MTh degree. At present I live in Volgograd (former Stalingrad, "the capital of the Second World War"), Russia.

The reason why I am addressing you is that I am very interested in the Scandinavian culture. Thus, I can read in Swedish fluently. But it is my old dream to read in Icelandic the famous Icelandic books, namely The Poetic Edda, The Prosaic Edda, and, of course, The Sagas. I already have an Icelandic textbook and a dictionary.

Having asked the Icelandic Embassy in Moscow, I got the answer that they did not have these books. In the Nordic School in Moscow there was no this kind of books either. It was no use to ask for such books in bookshops having books in foreign languages, as they had not even English translations of the books of my dreams. It seemed these books were not available in Russia at all. I was totally in despair.

Next I contacted some cultural foundations in Iceland by e-post asking them to send me, if possible, these books. All in vain. Very unfortunately, I got only two negative answers or four-no-answers-at-all. I was in the depths of despair again.

Later it came to my mind to ask you, my colleagues, to help me. So my bold question is: could you please publish in your newspaper my announcement with my address asking your kind-hearted readers to send me The Poetic Edda, The Prosaic Edda, and The Sagas in Icelandic as present? The copies may be new or second-hand; it does not matter. I am really

ashamed about the fact, but I am not in a position to pay for that announcement. May it be free of charge for me?

I believe this even would be a theme for an article for someone in your newspaper: Let us call it "journalistic experiment". What may be the public reaction to such an unusual question concerning your classical old culture from a very, very remote city in Russia? Will I be sent 50 copies of Eddas and Sagas, or 126 or 208 or 82 – or no no no copies at all? May it be a bookmaker case in your editorial-stuff to stake on? Well, a little Russian joke. Quite seriously, in my part, I would be happy to be in touch with a creative-minded Icelandic colleague.

Please let me know your decision. Thank you very much.

My address is:
Oleg Ananyev
ul. Simonova 32-186
400137 Volgograd-137
Russia
Yours sincerely,
Oleg Ananyev, MTh

Dear Olga,

Here's hoping some of our kind-hearted readers buy into your "journalistic experiment" and help you escape the "depths of despair!"

Good luck!

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Did The New York Times get it wrong?

— Larissa Kyzer



Tourism, it need hardly be pointed out, is big business in Iceland, an industry which in the years following the crash has ballooned, with more than double the country's population visiting last year. But while making it into the New York Times would normally be good news for Iceland's economy, a recent entry about Iceland's highlands on the publication's "52 Places to Visit in 2014" list was less than ideal from a publicity standpoint.

The paragraph-long blurb did mention the area's unique landscape, but its key takeaway was that the "famously raw natural beauty" of the highlands—and more specifically, the Þjórsárver wetlands located in the interior—may not be enjoyable by anyone, let alone tourists, for much longer. As reads the article's subtitle: "Natural wonders are in danger. Go see them before it's too late."

The suggested threat facing the integrity of Þjórsárver? Not impending volcanic eruptions or natural deterioration. Rather, the article stated that the Icelandic government recently "announced plans to revoke those protections" which had been safeguarding the wetlands, and additionally, that "a law intending to further repeal conservation efforts has been put forward."

The "52 Places" article was widely quoted within the Icelandic media. Within days of its publication, the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources issued a brief statement in Icelandic bearing the title "Incorrect Reporting by the New York Times." It claimed that the New York Times article was "full of misrepresentations" and was "paradoxical and wrong." The author of the article, contributing travel writer Danielle Pergament, was not contacted in regard to any "misrepresentations," and neither was the New York Times—although the latter was invited to send a reporter to an open Environment and Communications Committee meeting on Þjórsárver a few days after the article's publication.

So what exactly caused all the kerfuffle? Did The New York Times get it all wrong?

A Contentious History

Before we address the "incorrect reporting" alleged by the Ministry of the Environment, it will be useful to step back and explain a little of the context surrounding the Þjórsárver Wetlands and the battles which have been waged over this area since the 1960s.

Located in Iceland's interior, the Þjórsárver wetlands stretch 120 square kilometres from the Hofsjökull glacier in

the northern highlands to surrounding volcanic deserts and are characterized by remarkable biodiversity. A description on the World Wildlife Fund website points not only to the variance of the landscape itself—"tundra meadows intersected with numerous glacial and spring-fed streams, a large number of pools, ponds, lakes and marshes, and rare permafrost mounds"—but also to the area's unique plant and birdlife, including one of the largest breeding colonies of Pink-footed Geese in the world.

Þjórsárver is fed by Iceland's longest river, Þjórsá, which also sources much of the country's electricity. Since the early 1960s, Landsvirkjun, the National Power Company of Iceland, has proposed several plans for creating a reservoir on Þjórsá that would facilitate increased energy production and enlarge energy reserves. Such reserves would not only be useful for existing industries, such as aluminium smelting, but—following the proposed creation of a submarine cable to Europe—could also be sold as part of foreign energy contracts as early as 2020.

Through the years, Landsvirkjun's proposals have been met with frequent opposition, which in 1981 led to a nature preserve being created in the Þjórsárver wetlands. However, a provision was made within these protections, allowing Landsvirkjun to create a future reservoir, provided that the company could prove that the wetlands would not be irrevocably harmed, and that the Environment Agency of Iceland approved the reservoir plans.

By the late '90s, there was another flurry of activity: in 1997, the Iceland Nature Conservation Association (INCA) was founded with the "primary objective" of "establish[ing] a national park in the highlands." Two years later, the government began work on an extensive "Master Plan for Hydro and Geothermal Energy Resources." Divided into two phases that spanned from 1999-2010, the Master Plan was intended to evaluate close to 60 hydro and geothermal development options, assessing them for environmental impact, employment and regional development possibilities, efficiency, and profitability.

Over the course of the Master Plan's

two phases, it was decided that the nature preserve established in the Þjórsárver Wetlands was to be expanded and designated as a "protected area." The new boundaries were to be signed into regulation based on the Nature Conservation Act in June 2013 (the resolution was passed by parliament that year according to the Master Plan), until the Minister of the Environment, Sigurður Ingi Jóhannsson, elected to postpone making them official in order to consider a new reservoir proposal from Landsvirkjun.

Based on this new proposal, Sigurður Ingi has drawn up new boundaries for the protected area, which would expand the original nature reservoir, but cover less area than the original boundaries created by the Environment Agency of Iceland. The new suggested boundaries do not extend as far down the Þjórsá river, and therefore would allow Landsvirkjun to build their Norðlingalda Reservoir. Conservationists who oppose this point out that the three-tiered Dynkur waterfall will be destroyed if Landsvirkjun's reservoir plans go through.

Parsing Facts

This brings us back the alleged "misrepresentations" in the New York Times write-up. Best to go through the Ministry of the Environment's statement and address their qualms one by one:

"The article in question is full of misrepresentations about Þjórsárver preserve and the government's intentions regarding its protection and utilisation. For instance, it states that Þjórsárver covers 40% of Iceland, while in fact, it only covers .5% of the country today."

The first version of the article, since corrected, read as though the Þjórsárver wetlands constituted 40% of Iceland. In reality, it is the highlands that constitute 40% of Iceland's landmass, and Þjórsárver is only part of this area. Following a call from Árni Finnsson, the chair of INCA who was quoted in the piece, this error was corrected.

"There are no plans to lift the protections currently in place. On the contrary, the Environment and Natural Resources Minister

aims to expand the protected area and if that plan goes through, it'll be an expansion of about 1,500 square kilometers, or about 1.5 % of the total area of Iceland."

It is true that Minister of the Environment Sigurður Ingi Jóhannsson has not suggested that the current protections—namely, the preserve that was established in the '80s—be altered. Nevertheless, it is also misleading to suggest that he personally "aims to expand the protected area," as the expansion plans were basically mandated by the findings of the Master Plan. Moreover, he elected not to approve the Environment Agency's expanded boundaries, but rather to propose new boundaries which would create a smaller protected area than was intended.

So no, Sigurður Ingi is not cutting back on "current protections," but that's only because he refused to approve the protections that were supposed to be in place already.

"Therefore, it is clear that there will be a substantial expansion of the protected area under discussion. The New York Times asserting that protections on Þjórsárver will be lifted in order to enable hydroelectric power development is both paradoxical and wrong."

What we're seeing the Ministry of the Environment do here is a neat little bit of semantic parsing. The NYT article states that after spending decades protecting the wetlands, "the government announced plans to revoke protections, allowing for the construction of hydropower plants." This is a carefully qualified statement, and might accurately refer to any of several ministerial initiatives, from Sigurður Ingi's redrawing of the Þjórsárver protected area boundaries, to his recent proposal to repeal the law on nature conservation (60/2013). This law was approved by Alþingi and was set to go into effect on April 1, 2014. It included specific protections for natural phenomena, such as lava formations and wetlands. In November, Sigurður Ingi introduced a bill to repeal the nature conservation law, although this has yet to be voted on by parliament.

So, no, the New York Times article was not "paradoxical and wrong." It was, unfortunately, quite correct.

A Land Beyond

Although debates over Þjórsárver and development proposals in the Icelandic highlands have been well covered and discussed in detail by the Icelandic media, conservation issues around this area have not, thus far, made many headlines internationally. So it is noteworthy that an outlet such as The New York Times chose to highlight these issues on a more promi-

nent stage, especially given that Iceland's breathtaking landscapes are often a driving force supporting its tourism industry. As Árni Finnsson wonders, "Who goes to Iceland to see power plants and power lines?"

"Who goes to Iceland to see power plants and power lines?"

While an over-saturation of tourists in fragile natural environments can pose its own, very real, threat to nature reserves and natural sites like Þjórsárver, tourism can still have a positive influence on conservation issues, such as, Árni recalls, when a greater interest in whale watching led to more effective challenges to Icelandic whaling. "It takes many millions to recover a loss of reputation," says Árni Finnsson, speaking about Iceland's image as a country whose nature is its biggest selling point. "It's a huge resource, but it is so easy to destroy it."

It was, in fact, specifically the threat of development that made this particular site stand out to Danielle Pergament. "I think people—over here [in the US] anyway—are well aware of the natural beauty in Iceland. But not many people know that the wetlands are under threat, that there is a chance that the famous landscape may be developed. I was shocked to learn about it myself. That is why I wanted to write about it."

The question remains, however, if the attention drawn to Þjórsárver's tenuous position will actually generate much new support. After all, in declining to publicly "correct" the New York Times, the Ministry effectively contained the debate to an Icelandic-speaking audience here in Iceland. And anyway, even if thousands of tourists become suddenly impassioned by the cause of the Icelandic wetlands, the area may remain inaccessible to many of them. "The Þjórsárver wetlands are like an El Dorado, a land beyond," says Árni Finnsson. "They aren't really suitable for tourism, or not for many tourists, at least. Maybe a few very keen, very well-trained hikers."

At the end of the day, then, if the choice is made to protect Þjórsárver, it will have to be for less tangible reasons than the possible dollars generated by tourists, or international pressure. It has to come from within.

But first, let's get the facts straight.



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Iceland | For Dummies

So Who's This Tony Omos I Keep Hearing About?

— by Kári Tulinius | Illustration by Megan Herbert

He is a Nigerian who applied for asylum in Iceland two years ago. Late last year he was escorted out of the country by police and separated from the mother of his child, Evelyn Glory Joseph, a fellow asylum seeker. Mr. Omos is now staying with an acquaintance after having been deported to Switzerland, where authorities consider that Mr. Omos' asylum status should be handled by Icelandic authorities since he was in Iceland for 22 months.

Nooooo! Not Switzerland! It is a dangerous place where unwary outsiders will be pushed into chocolate lakes by hooligan cows.

Before deportation he found himself smeared on the front page of the most widely read newspaper in Iceland as a suspect in a human trafficking case and for having forced Ms. Joseph to pretend that the child she was carrying was his. Both allegations were quickly proven to be untrue. This smear campaign has shocked people in Iceland, which is saying something as people seeking asylum in Iceland have generally been treated quite badly in the last century or so.

Last century? Oh, please tell me that Iceland didn't... you know... not help people fleeing Nazi persecution.

Perhaps the most awful case was when an Icelandic humanitarian organisation had secured places for 8-10 Jewish children in local homes in 1938. The only thing missing was permission from the government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Hermann Jónasson. They refused these children entry. When paediatrician Katrín Thoroddsen, one of the prospective foster parents, wrote an article criticising the government's decision, a newspaper funded by the prime minister's party said the humanitarians were bullying the prime minister and suggested these families were taking in these Jewish children to advertise their kindness.

Yes, saving children from persecution is all well and good, but a government's first duty is to stop vanity.

Sadly and infuriatingly enough the Icelandic government refused entry to many Jews trying to flee the Nazis before and during World War II, even in cases where they were on their way to other countries and merely needed to stop here for a short while. You would think that something as outrageously wrong as impeding people trying to flee genocide would teach the Icelandic government an important lesson in not being monstrous shitwits, but you would be wrong.

Thanks for clarifying that, I was just about to ask if the Icelandic government still behaved like monstrous shitwits.

It has not actively been keeping people from saving children from Nazis. I guess that is an improvement. In the specific case of Mr. Omos, shitwittery has been the order of the day. An Interior Ministry memo was leaked to the two most widely read newspapers in Iceland, Fréttablaðið and Morgunblaðið, with the above-mentioned allegations. A third newspaper, DV, has pursued the case, trying to find out who wrote the memo and who sent it to journalists. When asked about the source of the leak, Minister of the Interior Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir and her staff suggested it might have come from another institution or organisation altogether, like the Directorate of Immigration or the Red Cross.



The Red Cross! That dastardly supervillain strikes again! Oh wait, I'm thinking of the Red Skull.

All these organisations and institutions deny having been given the memo and nothing has appeared to link anyone outside of the Interior Ministry with the leak. The minister and her staff have now stopped answering media inquiries, and have cast themselves in the role of victims of a media witch hunt.

I guess they're being bullied like that poor prime minister who didn't want to let Jewish children escape from Nazi persecution.

Following accusations that DV was making threats, the editor has revealed that the minister and her staff have called the newspaper repeatedly to pressure them into not reporting on the matter. Now members of parliament have begun to pursue the matter. With admirable consistency, she said that those asking her questions were attacking the honour and integrity of those work-

ing in her ministry.

Not to take the focus off the important matter of getting people to treat politicians like they wish to be treated, but what of the child of Mr. Omos and Ms. Joseph?

As of this writing, the child is still unborn. Given the haste in which Mr. Omos was escorted out of the country, it is not impossible to imagine immigration authorities waiting in the delivery room with a basket to whisk the infant straight onto a plane, any plane, out of Iceland. And equally easy to imagine next day's newspapers reporting that according to an Interior Ministry memo, that child was actually the reincarnation of Genghis Khan, Jack the Ripper and Charles Manson, even though that last one is not technically dead yet.

FEBRUARY

NEWS IN BRIEF

by Larissa Kyzer



With the month-long winter holiday of Þorri arriving at the end of January, many food producers sought to mix up their traditional Þorramatur (Þorri food) provisions, which Icelanders are expected to eat 200 tonnes of this year. While creative, it remains to be seen if the newly-marketed **pickled ram's penis** will be as successful as the staple of pickled ram's testicles. Another daring, if ill-advised, Þorri experiment was briefly shut down before the Ministry for the Environment gave its stamp of approval: the Icelandic brewery Steðji has teamed up with whaling company Hvalur to produce a **new Þorri "Whale Beer,"** which contains trace amounts of whalebone meal.



But it's not all balls and pickled penises up here. In fact, Oxfam's new Global Food Table showed, to our great surprise, **that Icelanders have the most nutritionally diverse diets in the world.** If we take this to be true, **it probably explains why the number of overweight Icelanders is not increasing,** rather than the average BMI of adult Icelanders has been in stasis since 2007. As Stefán Hrafn Jónsson, a sociologist at the Directorate of Health delicately put it, "Yes, Icelanders have stopped getting fatter."

Whatever the rest of us have been eating this month, sports announcer Björn Bragi Arnarson was content to eat his foot. While providing RÚV's colour commentary on the Iceland-

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Forgiveness For Sale!

Pórdís Elva premieres Forgiveness Inc.

— By Árni Arnason



Still from 'Forgiveness Inc.' ad

In a TV ad that did the rounds on the usual social networking sites in early January, Forgiveness Inc. promised its would-be clients a clean conscience and a bright future. The ad sparked heated debates about the company's authenticity and the services it provided, but perhaps more to the liking of playwright and author Pórdís Elva Þorvaldsdóttir—one of the people behind said ad—it initiated interesting conversations about forgiveness and the morality of selling it.

"It's got a perilous yet interesting moral angle, but the truth is we started mass-producing and selling emotions such as remorse, forgiveness and sincerity a long time ago," she says. "Public relations gurus are hired to handle the pleas of forgiveness for people in the public eye. The client is advised on what to wear, what to say and what tone of voice to take and so on. Just look at examples such as Tiger Woods publicly asking his wife to forgive him for his string of affairs. It was public! It created work for thousands of people all over the world."

I Call Hoax!

Perhaps close to reality, but apparently not there yet, Forgiveness Inc.'s terribly cheesy American-cable-TV-in-the-'90s-inspired ad did in fact turn out to be a PR stunt for a play Pórdís wrote and directs, which is premiering at Tjarnarbíó on the 14th of February.

Since the cat came out of the bag, the "company's" Facebook page has been regularly updated with tongue-in-cheek news about their work. For instance, they have posted about providing private therapy for musician Mugison, who felt snubbed by the State-run 'Listamanalaun' ("artist pay") committee. They have also offered politicians a discount on their services, as Forgiveness Inc. considers them high-risk individuals in constant need of reconciliation.

"We wanted to keep the conversation going, partly for fun but also to try and start a debate about whether or not forgiveness can be bought and sold, and if so, how?" Pórdís says. "I've never been interested in writing anything, be it books or plays, without trying to start some sort of a conversation with my contemporaries and that obviously doesn't

take place solely within the walls of the theatre. We therefore built a play around the play to get people to explore the concept of forgiveness and what value it has in their lives. Besides, it's so easy to poke fun at human interaction when it goes wrong. We're clumsy when we're vulnerable and we're certainly vulnerable when asking for forgiveness."

Angry Icelanders!

Pórdís says the goal is also to provide some social criticism, as Icelanders have never been a particularly placable nation. The Sagas, she points out, have taught us that the Icelandic settlers frequently chose to go on killing each other rather than turning the other cheek, and despite vengeful murder rampages having mostly disappeared from our shores, she thinks Icelanders still struggle with forgiveness.

"In fact, I think it's a characteristic of ours, particularly when it comes to people in positions of power. Politicians and other people of prominence repeatedly try to avoid taking responsibility for their mistakes and blunders," she says. "The discourse is fascinating. It's full of uncertainty and indecisive words such as 'if: 'If I have done something wrong... 'If I have let anyone down... then I apologise. It's very rare to hear anybody actually admit to any wrongdoing. This doesn't seem to be the case in the countries around us, where it's not uncommon that when someone makes even the most miniscule of blunders, his or her three closest superiors resign."

How, What, Who, When?

Pórdís got the idea for the play after the financial crash in 2008. "The society was wrought with anger and nobody seemed to be able to take responsibility or apologise," she says. "I was also writing my book 'Á Mannamáli' ("In Layman's Terms") at the time, and in my interviews with victims of sexual violence and the professionals that work with them, forgiveness was often mentioned as the only way out. Therefore, it felt to me that forgiveness, or the lack of it, was all around. I couldn't help exploring the concept a bit further."

Besides, it's so easy to poke fun at human interaction when it goes wrong. We're clumsy when we're vulnerable and we're certainly vulnerable when asking for forgiveness."

The research that Pórdís and actors Víðir Guðmundsson, Árni Pétur Guðjónsson, Ragnheiður Steindórsdóttir and Aðalbjörg Árnadóttir (later replaced by Þóra Karítas Árnadóttir) conducted, which would eventually become Forgiveness Inc., mostly took place over a month in the winter of 2011.

"I had done a lot of groundwork as the idea had been brewing for a couple of years, but when it came to working on the material with the group we did so in a very structured and methodological manner," she explains. "We divided our time into exploring four different aspects of forgiveness we had identified. We explored how people forgive, what they forgive, who they forgive, and lastly

when they forgive. We conducted over 70 interviews with people from all walks of life, grandparents and parents, children and teenagers, priests and addicts and so on."

Self-gratification Or Self-Sacrifice?

One of the major eye-openers the group encountered came from an interview with an 84-year-old woman who told them that people only forgive if they absolutely have to. "The comment struck us, as it was so far removed from our rose-tinted ideas about the Good Samaritan. We all had some very romantic ideas about forgiveness when we started the process, but as we delved further into the research we started to realise that forgiveness is actually a very practical process and we often forgive in self-interest," she elaborates.

"It's like Mandela famously said, 'Resentment is like drinking poison and hoping it will kill your enemies'. I'm not saying this is the universal truth but forgiveness seems to be less about self-sacrifice and more about self-interests. It's basically the opposite of what we had led ourselves to believe."

This new theory was given further weight by a 4-year-old interviewee. "When we asked her if she knew what forgiveness was she said 'yes, it's here' and pointed at her chest. When asked to elaborate she said 'your heart gets so warm when you forgive.'"

Whether interviewees agreed on the self-gratification of forgiveness or not, there was another matter that proved even more contentious. Exploring the possibility of something being unforgivable or not caused all sorts of problems for interviewees. "Basically, most people were certain that some actions are unforgivable, but when asked to elaborate on their answers they became considerably vaguer," she says.

"My understanding is that people are more willing to consider actions unforgivable when they're not direct victims. Let's say your friend got sexually assaulted. It can be absolutely unforgivable to you, but if you're the victim, your view totally changes, as you're the one who ultimately loses. If you think of something as absolutely unforgivable it denies you the possibility of ever letting go. Essentially, the right to forgive or not lies with the person who's been betrayed or violated."

Let's Reconcile

Pórdís leaves me with a direct quote from what I had assumed was a completely satirical ad campaign. "Forgiveness is the glue in human relations," she says. "Without it we must become stagnant and isolated." It turns out that despite the people behind the ad campaign having their tongue firmly stuck to the inside of their cheek, there is actually a lot of believable aspects to their otherwise ridiculous ad.

"I find the idea of Catholic indulgence not only interesting but also relevant these days," she says. "Indulgence is back in full force. What we see in public apologies is nothing but modern indulgence. It's neither sincere nor personal." Perhaps we're closer to something like Forgiveness Inc. than we care to admit.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Continued...

Austria match during the European handball championships, **Björn remarked that the Icelandic team, then up 17-9, was "like the German Nazis in 1938. We're slaughtering the Austrians."** Shortly after his shockingly insensitive blunder, **Björn and RÚV both issued apologies** to the incensed Austrian Handball Association, the latter of which later issued a joint statement with the European and Icelandic Handball Federation denouncing the comments. The chastised **Björn kept his job**, providing the commentary for the Iceland-Macedonia game shortly after.



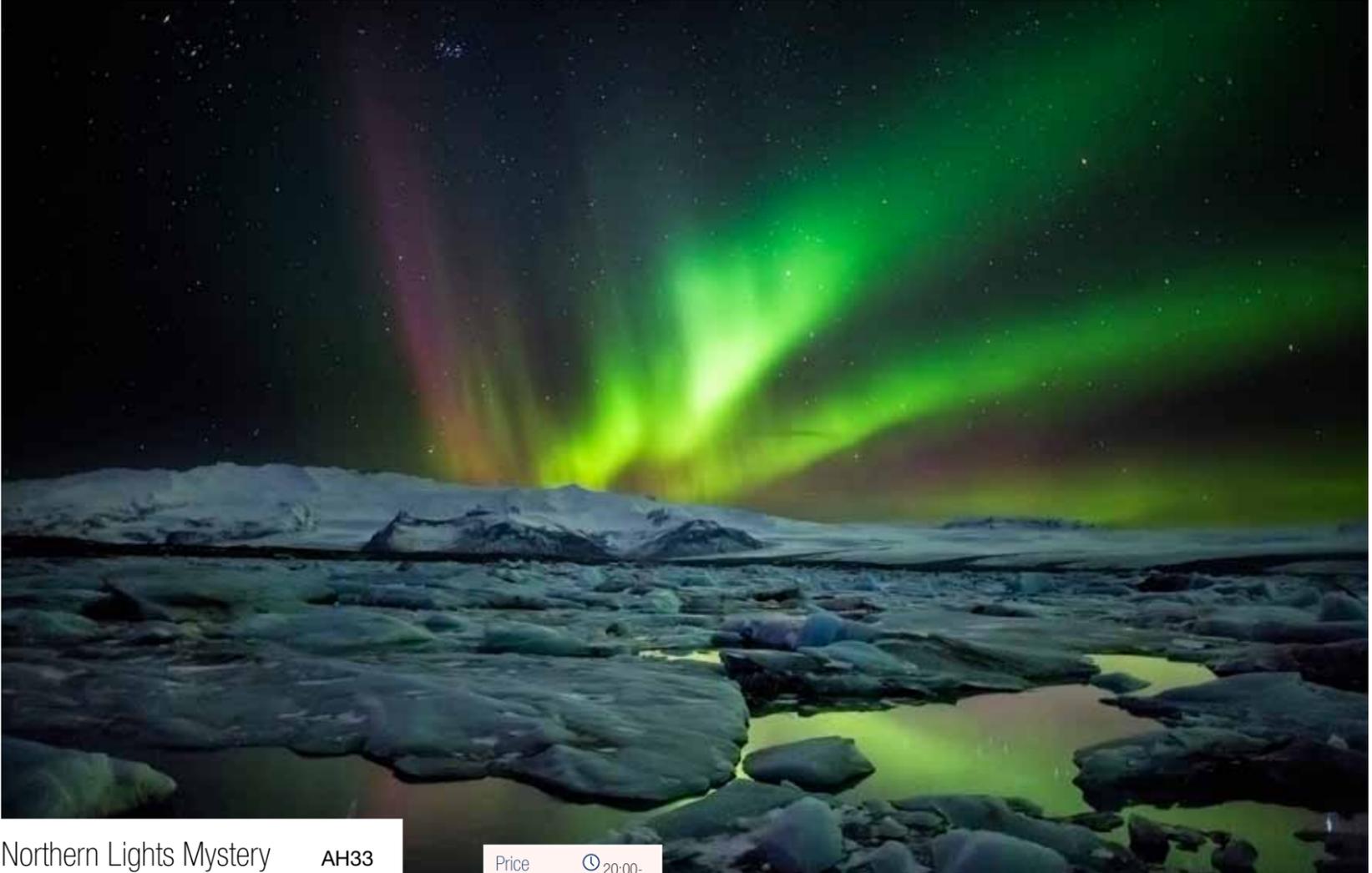
While Minister of the Interior Hanna Birna remains under fire for her role in the Tony Omos case (see page 8), **Minister of Foreign Affairs Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson was called on by pro-EU group Já Ísland to apologise** for his comment which echoed a statement made by the UK's Daily Mail last year—namely that "the European Union puts more money into promotion than Coca-Cola." This controversy comes as a new poll shows that **nearly a third of Icelanders (32.3%) now favour accession into the European Union**. Nevertheless, **it remains unclear if Iceland will continue EU negotiation talks**, as a Parliamentary referendum on the issue seems to have stalled again.



In the coming months, tourists can expect their visit to be a little pricier. Not only have the **landowners of the popular tourist site Geysir decided to start charging entrance fees this summer, but individual ticket prices to Reykjavík's swimming pools went up by 9% in the New Year**, bringing the cost of a single adult ticket to 600 ISK. Both fees will apply to Icelanders and tourists alike—"Footsteps are just as heavy, whether they are an Icelander's or a German's" spokesperson Garðar Eiríksson remarked, explaining the need for better site maintenance at Geysir—but the increase at the pools has been dubbed a "tourist's fee," since it is expected that locals purchase multi-ticket passes to the pools instead of single tickets.



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Raising Awareness In The Raw

The Naked Handstander explains...

— Larissa Kyzer



Courtesy of the "Naked Handstander"

Well-travelled, principled, and none-too-shy about dropping trou, the anonymous maverick known only as The Naked Handstander has bared his goods around the globe, from Preikestolen to Amsterdam, London, New York City and The Great Wall of China. Since starting his topsy-turvy exploits in Vík, Iceland, in 2009, The Naked Handstander has returned to our shores twice, most recently this year when he put on his best (birthday) suit and inaugurated the New Year with a handstand on the Reykjavík Pond.

Although The Naked Handstander does admit to enjoying “the world in all its glory and wonder in the raw,” his handstands are not simply the denuded demonstrations of a worldly exhibitionist. Rather, with each handstand, he intends to raise awareness about Planned Obsolescence, “the deliberate shortening of a products useful life in order to force the consumer to buy or ‘upgrade’ over and over and over again.”

We had a quick e-chat with The Naked Handstander to learn more about his passion for turning around our throw-away culture, the best conditions under which to handstand, and the pleasures of life lived in the buff.

What is the connection between naked handstands and the concept of planned obsolescence?

It's a realisation I came to about our current consumerist ways. If we continue this way, we will one day end up in an exhausted world. As a result we will be left naked, wondering what happened and where we went wrong.

Why is this cause particularly important to you?

I think the current throw away culture we live in needs to be highlighted and given a shake up. We consume things too often on a use and discard basis, rather than a use/re-use, re-cycle, or better still, up-cycle basis. Planned obsolescence is one of the main culprits in this use / discard paradigm.

If people were more aware of its damaging effect on the planet, and as a result, ourselves, I think Earth and its inhabitants would be far better off. Making things so that they have a fixed lifespan, so they break and need to be bought again for the sake of profit, is simply ridiculous. We are sacrificing this magnificent world we live in for a paper profit. What would we prefer, a world littered with waste and useless crap or a world where we created things in harmony with the environment?

People don't consider that the way they treat the planet will affect them. Rather, they think they are totally separate from it. We are all here on this tiny speck of dust together and the sooner we realise that, the sooner our consumerist habits will change positively. I hope I can raise awareness, get people

thinking and help change this throw away culture we currently live in.

Why naked handstands? Why not naked cartwheels, for instance?

Well, I have to be honest and say I haven't tried a naked cartwheel or any other fancy naked acrobatics... yet. I'm not as bendy as I'd like!

According to your website, your project started in Vík in 2009. What about a cold black beach in Iceland made you want to strip down for a cause?

I can't really say, it just happened! It was summer 2009, I was with a particularly cool girl and felt the urge to get nude...Vík is a spectacular place and I think it's best experienced naked, as some of life's many pleasures are!

We see you've been back to our country several times since 2009. Is there a reason for the repeat visits?

Do you feel Iceland is a particularly good place to make your case for more responsible consumption and material production?

Iceland has to be one of the most beautiful countries on Earth! The people are grand and the nature is sublime, so those are the main reasons I keep returning. The natural beauty there is a fitting showcase of the amazing world we live in, so I feel it is a good place to highlight the need for responsible consumption and production. When you visit Iceland you feel this sense of responsibility to ensure we take good care of nature there and for that matter everywhere.

Do you travel specifically for the purpose of naked handstanding, or do you simply incorporate these into your normal travels?

I travel to experience the world and toss in as many naked handstands as possible. It makes sense to incorporate these into travels rather than travelling specifically for handstanding. Usually the locations I visit lend themselves naturally to handstands. I'm planning the naked handstanders world tour next year, though.

Who is your photographer?

That depends—usually a good friend or travelling amigo. Occasionally the camera, tripod and timer, which takes a few goes!

What are the ideal conditions for a naked handstand?

A scenic background, little or no people around, blue skies, sunshine and good company.

Are there any [weather, social...] conditions under which you will not naked handstand?

Yes, I prefer not to do it in the presence of large groups of people, the police or people who are likely to be offended or upset. Weather-wise, blue skies and sunshine are always preferable, but as long as it's not too slippery, I'll have a craic!

You must have gotten some mixed reactions from people when you do these in public—care to share any of these, particularly any reactions from Icelanders? (We noticed that there were people on the pond when you did your handstand on the pond...)

Well, there have been two occasions where some officials have not entirely enjoyed the idea. The first occasion was in Amsterdam, which resulted in me having a stern talking-to by the friendly local policeman and sent on my way. The second occasion was somewhere in Italy. They didn't find it as humorous, so we had a ride in the back of a blue and white striped car. I don't think I should say much more than that at the moment...

Surprisingly, in Iceland on New Year's Day, few people actually noticed me. I think that was due to the fact they were probably as hungover as I! Those who did notice had either a smirk or a chuckle, so it was good to see they took it in the way it was intended. Icelandic people are awesome.



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Ram's Balls, And Sheep's Heads, And Smoked Horse, Oh My!

Getting a taste for Icelandic traditions at an Ásatrú Þorrablót

— Larissa Kyzer



At the end of January, mere weeks after most Icelanders have packed away their Christmas decorations and returned to the daily grind, the midwinter festival of Þorri arrives to bolster spirits and brace stomachs.

A celebration of bygone traditions and an opportunity to indulge in some of the country's more challenging culinary history, the food served at a Þorri feast, or Þorrablót, is the stuff of many foreigners' most elaborate fears and suspicions about Icelandic cuisine. And basically, that's part of the fun. Over the course of the month-long Þorri season, Icelanders are expected to eat 200 tons of Þorri food, but you'd be hard pressed to find many residents bolting down sour sausages and pickled ram's testicles during the rest of the year.

BYOB: Bring Your Own Bravery

Every year, Iceland's Ásatrú Association, an officially recognised religious group whose members practice a modern form of Norse paganism steeped in Icelandic traditions and mythology, hold their own Þorrablót on Bónadagur, or Husband's/ Farmer's Day, the first day of Þorri. They invited us to join their celebration and experience a real Þorrablót first-hand.

I'd just gotten off the bus and was walking to the banquet venue when I got a text message from one of my dining companions. "Uh oh," it read. "Looks like it's BYOB." (A good rule of thumb in Iceland: always bring your own.) While maintaining a clear head is never a bad idea while "on assignment," the knowledge that all of the night's delicacies would have to be sampled without anaesthetic gave me a moment's pause. I'm no fan of

Brennivín—Iceland's caraway-flavoured schnapps which has, as far as I'm concerned, fully earned its "Black Death" honorific—but I'd been warned that the caustic burning of a Brennivín shot is key to surviving some of Þorri's more potent dishes. Alas.

The ammoniac odour of hákarl, that "putrefied shark," preceded us upstairs to the hall, as did the more inviting scent of smoked lamb. My companion and I were then greeted at the door by a young man wearing a long green wool tunic and brown wool breeches tucked into soft leather boots, overlain by a real chain mail shirt and a decorative collar. Jóhanna Harðardóttir, the Ásatrú Association's Deputy High Priestess—herself in a simple but festive red linen dress with bell sleeves—then invited us to take a seat.

There were ten tables set on either side of the room, with somewhere around 70 guests in attendance. The crowd was distinctly mixed—a few family groups with several generations sitting together, smaller groups of friends, probably in their thirties and forties, a few children.

Although certainly in the minority, a handful of the other guests were also wearing period clothing. As Jóhanna explained, although Icelanders do have an official national costume—it was actually designed in the mid-19th century as part of the campaign for Icelandic independence—many Ásatrú members think that more traditional medieval clothes, made

from natural materials such as linen and wool, are a better representation of Iceland's cultural history. Plus, she laughed, "they are really comfortable."

We planted ourselves across from two long-time members of Ásatrú, who generously accepted my laboured, grammatically-tragic Icelandic and would, throughout the night, provide a general commentary on the evening's proceedings. On our other side was a group of friends and new Ásatrú members in their early twenties—bearded and multi-pierced with runic tattoos and a jovial, if slightly irreverent, approach to the evening.

The Meat Rainbow

Guests settled in as Hilmar Örn Hilmarsón, Ásatrú's high priest, came forward with Jóhanna and Eyvindur Pétur Eiríksson, the Ásatrú goði, or chief, representing the Westfjords. Raising an 'oath ring' and drinking from a sacred horn, the trio sanctified the gathering with a toast to both the Norse god Þór (who serves as a sort of patron of the feast) and Mother Earth.

Following this short ceremony, two members, a man and a woman, were invited to stand and deliver humorous speeches, each about the opposite gender. "This is traditional," Jóhanna said. "A man talks about women, and vice versa. They are always funny and sarcastic, but they end happily." The speeches are also accompanied by songs. First, the men

stand and sing for the women, and later in the evening, the women return the favour. Song pamphlets were laid out on the tables, although everyone—including the new recruits at my table—seemed to know the words by heart.

After the singing, we were invited to help ourselves to the buffet-style feast. Making my way around the table, I was given many little bits of advice. Make sure to get plenty of hákarl—it's good for digestion. Spread lots of butter on the harðfiskur ("dried fish"). The eye is the best part of the svið ("sheep's head").

Filling my plate, I ended up with a veritable rainbow of sausages and pressed meats: pink, red, brown, grey, and a queasy marbled white. Not wanting to look greedy—and honestly, a little unsure that I would make it through the full plate—I skipped the svið the first time out. By accident, I also missed the slices of pressed ram's testicles. (Full disclosure: I did end up trying the former—it's...chewy—but skipped the latter. No regrets there.)

Back at the table, my dinner companion gustily carved into her sheep head and explained to me the best method of eating ear cartilage. I took her word for it and tried to show my sympathy when she dis-

Filling my plate, I ended up with was a veritable rainbow of sausages and pressed meats: pink, red, brown, grey, and a queasy marbled white

covered that her svið was, in fact, missing its most delicious eye. We swapped various unidentified meats. Feeling appropriately decadent, I made a return circuit of the buffet, filling up again on some of my familiar favourites—smoked lamb, salted lamb, and a dark red sausage of a jerky-like consistency. If the woman on my right had not caught me mid-bite and summarily informed me, while daintily cutting up her headcheese, that she did not eat horse "on principal," I'd have never known the difference.

Try The Sour Whale

All at once, the party began to both pick up and simmer down. At one end of my own table, a woman accidentally doused her date in red wine and dissolved into giggles while her friends gathered the various bones and discarded sausage

shreds into a small pyramid next to their empty beer cans. On the other side of the room, conversation muted to a low hum while the mid-feast entertainment began: Eyvindur Pétur Eiríksson performed a long, rhythmic oral poem accompanied by drumming on the body of a handy banjo. Accompanied by three friends, a young man performed an a cappella version of the folksong "Krummavisur" ("Raven Rhymes") while playing his chain mail with a spoon, like a washboard.

It was at that point that my taste buds suffered their only real shock of the evening, in the form of one of the many sour dishes. "The trick [with sour Þorri food]," writes Icelandic food blogger and translator Jóhanna G., "is to get it sour enough to tell where it's been, but not so sour that you can't tell what it is." This bit of wisdom had been buzzing around in my head as I sampled the various dishes, finding, happily, that most were decently satisfying.

"Here," my companion said, putting a disk of something cold, soft, and whiteish on my plate. "Try the sour whale." Word to the wise: if you come to Iceland in search of this one, experimental bite stuck with me, reasserting itself unexpectedly for over 48 hours, three teeth-brushings, several cups of coffee, and a beer. Give me a sheep's face any day, just oh god, please no more sour whale.

Something Old, Something New

As the feasting portion of the evening came to a close, we leaned back, refilling our water glasses. The evening's main entertainment—a musical comedy duo called "Hundur í óskilum" who specialise in wholesome, but frankly pretty hilarious novelty songs about Icelandic history and saga heroes, as well as all manner of absurdist music-making—flutes made out of orthopaedic walkers, recorders played with belly-buttons and noses—quickly had the whole room in stitches.

Meanwhile, my tablemates had one last coup de grâce to finish off the meal: a shot of tequila accompanied by a slice of orange sprinkled with cinnamon. Somehow, I could wrap my head around whey-pickled meat, but not tequila without salt and lime. Seeing the skepticism on my face, one of the men poured me a small shot and handed over the affronting accompaniment. "Here," he said. "Here's something new you can try now in Iceland."

The Modern Day Origins Of A Medieval Feast



"In the old days," Ásatrú's Jóhanna Harðardóttir says, "Þorri was celebrated because it fell in the very middle of winter, with the same amount of time between winter solstice and the equinox." With spring on its way, people didn't have to keep up their winter food stores and so they had a feast with their leftovers (a sort of day after Thanksgiving, Viking-style). As time passed and the Icelandic diet became less dependent on preserved foods, however, the Þorri traditions abated somewhat. "Maybe people still ate this food in their homes," Jóhanna said, "but not as part of a big feast."

In fact, the Þorrablót feasts of today

are a twentieth century phenomenon, as cookbook author and food historian Nanna Rögnvaldardóttir explains in 'Icelandic Food and Cookery.' "Even though Þorri feasts were held at mid-winter in pagan times," she writes, "there is really nothing that connects them to the present day feasts of the same name."

The large catered Þorrablót banquets of today owe their resurgence and popularity to Naustið ("Boathouse"), a restaurant that was located on Vesturgata in downtown Reykjavík from 1954 until the early 2000s and is widely credited with offering the first Þorri menu in 1958. Following traditional serving

methods and encouraging patrons to dig in with their bare hands, "the food was served in long wooden trays alongside sharp knives and hand basins," writes ethnologist Árni Björnsson.

"The food served at Naustið included, among other things, sour svið (sheep's heads), lundabaggar (pressed sour lamb sausage), hangikjöt (smoked lamb), hrútsþungar (ram's testicles) pickled in sour whey, hákarl (fermented shark), bringukollur (fatty breast of lamb, served on the bone with pickling brine), flatbread, and rye bread. Following this, the consumption of traditional Icelandic food products at Þorri greatly increased."

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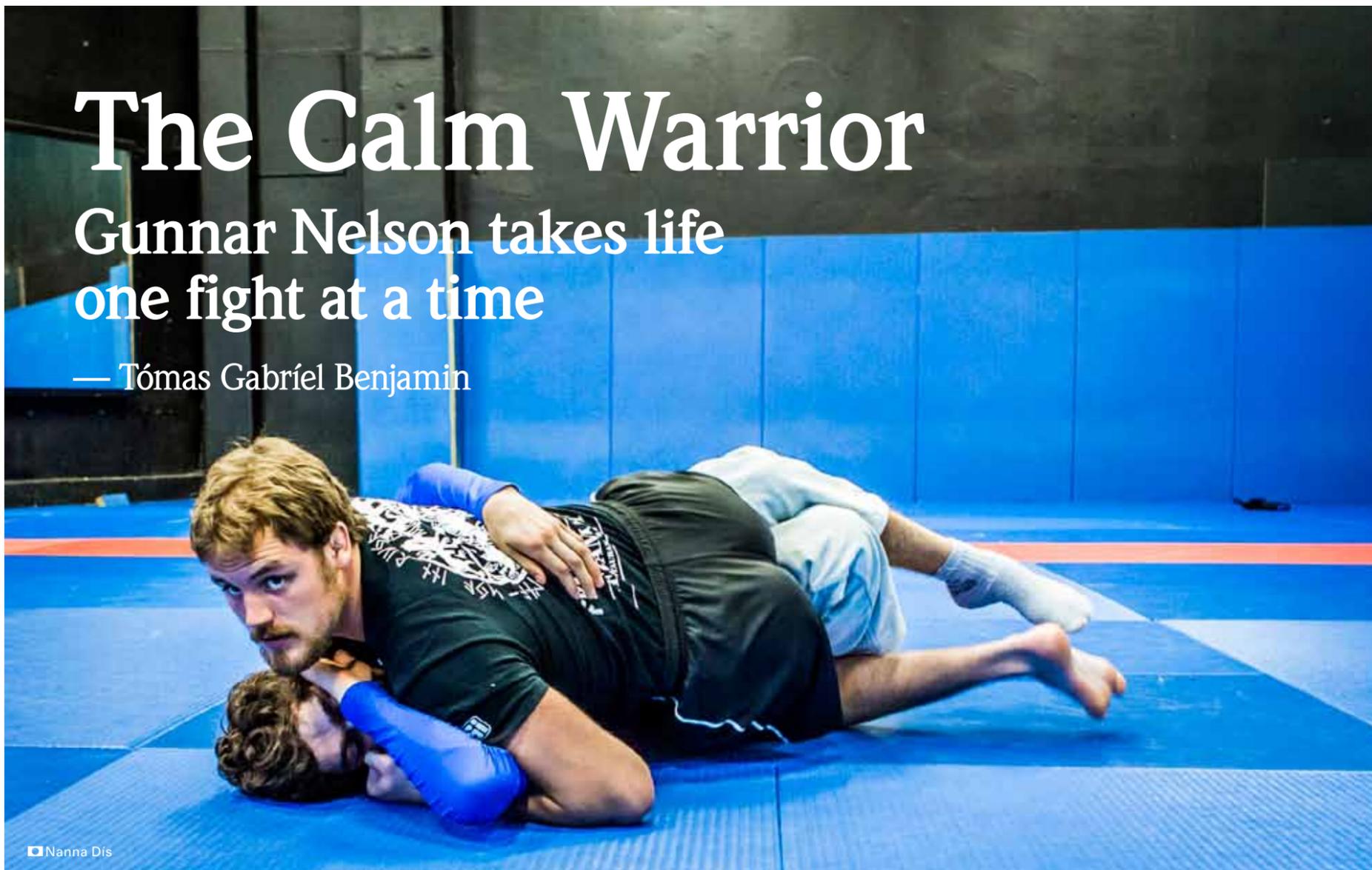


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Feature | Gunnar Nelson



The Calm Warrior

Gunnar Nelson takes life one fight at a time

— Tómas Gabríel Benjamin

Bouncing back and forth inside the octagon-shaped cage in Nottingham, England, Icelandic fighter Gunnar Nelson lands a kick to DaMarques Johnson’s head, evades a flurry of blows, and then pulls his opponent down to the canvas. Avoiding a shoulder lock, he then secures a hold of his opponent’s back and slowly but surely slips his right forearm under DaMarques’s chin, finishing him with a “rear-naked choke.” DaMarques taps out, forfeiting within the first four minutes, securing Gunnar his first win in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), Mixed Martial Arts’ (MMA) premier league.

Joining the league two years ago, Gunnar is Iceland’s only fighter signed on to the UFC. He is part of the new generation of MMA fighters who grew up watching UFC fights and has trained in multiple martial arts from a young age. The 180 cm tall welterweight (77 kg) has a record of eleven victories and one draw against competitors from around the world in a sport that was unheard of in Iceland just ten years ago and remains illegal to compete in; boxing has been banned since 1956, although an exception was made for Olympic boxing in 2002.

MMA is a full contact sport in which fighters test their mettle against one another, drawing from a toolbox of different fighting styles. When the UFC started airing tournament-style competitions in the early ‘90s, it brought masters from different disciplines together to duke it out until an opponent was knocked unconscious or submitted. In the first UFC event, a kickboxer fought a Sumo wrestler, a Brazilian jiu jitsu fighter clashed with a boxer and a Greco-Roman wrestler took on a Karate fighter.

It became apparent after a few years that no one martial art was superior to others, as an MMA fighter had to be proficient at fighting both standing and on the ground. To that end, the marriage of Thai kickboxing and Brazilian jiu jitsu was particularly fortuitous, with the former combining punches, kicks, elbows and knees for a diverse striking arsenal on the feet, and the latter offering holds, joint locks and chokes for a plethora of ground and grappling submissions. Other martial arts also found a home inside the cage, including Japanese Karate and Judo, Russian Sambo and western wrestling and boxing.

As the sport grew in the late ‘90s, so too did the rules of the game, ensuring the safety of competitors inside and outside of the ring. Tournament-style competitions were abandoned within the UFC and replaced by nine weight divisions. Events now include several matches, each consisting of three five-minute rounds in which fighters compete to progress through the rankings of their weight class until they can challenge the champion of

their division. These changes toward a more professional game have catapulted the UFC to the forefront of the MMA world.

A Young Fighter

In anticipation of his next fight in March, Gunnar invites me to meet him at his parents’ house after a family lunch. Sitting down with Gunnar, it is apparent that he embodies the antithesis to the testosterone-fueled alpha male. He is humble, relaxed and non-confrontational.

Outside of the ring, he describes himself as “just a typical guy” who likes to hang out with his friends, go swimming at the various pools of Reykjavík and sit down over a cup of coffee. He is a frequenter of art galleries and during the warmer parts of the year he can be spotted riding his motorcycle through downtown Reykjavík. Sitting at the top echelons of the worldwide MMA ladder and competing in its biggest fight circuit, Gunnar treasures the opportunity to escape the city and spend time with

his grandparents on their farm in Ólafsfjörður.

As a kid growing up in North Iceland, he tells me he was fascinated by the action film star Bruce Lee and the video game Mortal Kombat. When he moved to Reykjavík, he quickly became immersed in Karate, winning the Icelandic Juvenile Championship titles in 2003, 2004 and 2005. He was selected as Iceland’s most promising up-and-coming Karate talent of 2005, and joined the national team before losing interest in the stagnant sport.

That year, his friend and current director of Mjöllnir, Jón Viðar Arnþórsson, invited Gunnar to join a programme consisting of techniques from grappling and Brazilian jiu jitsu. “It’s such an incredibly technical sport,” he says, “unlike anything else I had ever done.” After getting a taste of grappling, Gunnar left Karate behind and focused on mastering Brazilian jiu jitsu and MMA.

Instead of being dissuaded by the brutal reputation of MMA fights, Gunnar was drawn to their unfettered displays of competition. “Competitors

come out of these fights with bruises and black eyes, but they rarely get seriously injured,” he says. “Even if the sport looks rough to some, there are many crueller and uglier things in life. That’s just how it is.”

In 2007, he dropped out of upper

“The more relaxed you are, the easier it is to come up with a strategy, but you can’t get stuck thinking about it—you perform on instinct, not on thought.”

secondary school to become a full-time MMA fighter, working a series of menial jobs to finance his passion before getting a sponsor. That year he went on to improve his fighting skills in Dublin and Manchester before making his MMA debut in Denmark. Gunnar has since travelled far and wide, going to New York to earn his black belt in Brazilian jiu jitsu from



2007

May 5 - Competes in his first MMA fight at the Adrenaline Sports tournament in Copenhagen against Danish John Olesen. The fight was pro-

nounced a draw by the Danish judges.

September 29 - Defeats Frenchman Driss El Bakara by a first round armbar submission (3:46) at Cage Rage Contenders: Dynamite in Dublin, Ireland.

October 6 - Defeats Polish Adam Slawinski with a first round technical knockout (2:30) at UFR 10 - Tribal Warfare in Galway, Ireland.



November 24 - Defeats Dutch Niek Tromp with a first round technical knockout (1:50) at Cage of Truth: Battle on the Bay in Dublin, Ireland.

December 9 - Defeats English Barry Mairs with a first round knockout (3:38) at Angrrr Management: Get ready for WAR in Weston Super Mare, England.



2008

September 6 - Defeats Brazilian Iran Mascarenhas with a second round knockout (3:22) at the Adrenaline 3: Evolution in Copenhagen, Denmark.



Renzo Gracie in 2009, but his base of operations has always been Iceland.

A Full-Time Job

Today, Gunnar's record reflects this strength in grappling, with seven of his eleven victories coming from grappling submissions, primarily the rear-naked choke, a sleeper hold which can knock people out in a matter of seconds without causing any lasting damage. Gunnar, however, cannot depend on his prodigious ground skills alone and focuses on being a well-rounded fighter.

"It's satisfying to master certain moves, and maintain them through practice, but it is equally important to get a good feeling for areas that need improvement," he says. "You constantly have to work on the weaker parts of your fight game, it's about being a complete fighter."

Fight commentators have remarked since his start that he looks less fluid standing on his feet, but he silenced his critics in his last fight with Jorge Santiago by showing that he could stand confidently and trade blows. Following this fight, US sports network ESPN picked him as one of three breakout UFC candidates for 2014.

Having recovered from a torn meniscus knee surgery last spring, he is back to training every day of the working week, once or twice a day for at least three hours in order to be in shape and ready at all times for the next fight in case the UFC promoters offer him a match with short notice.

Gunnar gets paid per fight in addition to his sponsorship deals with JACO Clothing sports brand and Iceland's CCP Games. For his two UFC

fight, he was paid \$5,000 for each with a \$5,000 win bonus, according to the UFC, which releases the salary of its fighters after each fight. As fighters climb up in the rankings, their salaries increase, with champions of each weight division being paid up to \$400,000 just

"It's not good to put your mind into the cage before you step into it. You obviously know what's about to come, what everyone is waiting for, and it is scary. But it's important not to be afraid of being afraid."

for stepping into the ring.

Additionally, Gunnar teaches a few classes at the rapidly growing local gym Mjöllnir. When Gunnar joined Jón Viðar's grappling programme in 2004, there were no more than ten people training. Without any Icelandic phenoms to guide them, students relied on fight tapes and instructional DVDs. "We were just roughhousing," Gunnar says, "browsing the internet to pick up new techniques." Initially the students were rolling around on the scratchy Karate gym mats, but over time the programme became more serious and merged with another grappling club, becoming Mjöllnir.

"Now we have a massive club, one of the biggest and best in Europe, and we have many high calibre athletes," he says. "It's now a great club to train

in." The gym's membership has gone from ten to 1,200, offering boxing, grappling, MMA and combat conditioning classes. "Some come to the gym wearing suits, and others painter's overalls," Gunnar says.

The coaches at Mjöllnir aren't too worried about a police crackdown for training fighters in a sport that's illegal to compete in domestically. "It's all done in a protected environment under proper supervision," he says, "and besides, we have practically all of the police force training here."

Several members compete in international grappling tournaments and professional MMA fights, although they haven't garnered as much attention as Gunnar, as his winning streak continues. The Icelandic state media has shown Gunnar considerable interest, inviting him to talk shows and interviews, but Gunnar doesn't let it go to his head. "You may have less privacy with fame," he says, "but you can harness that attention and transform it into extra energy for when the going gets tough."

Staying Calm In The Cage

Last year, when Gunnar stepped into the UFC ring for the first time, a goal most MMA fighters yearn to reach, he didn't appear animated, excited or nervous. He simply stepped in calmly, stretched, and waited for the fight to start, as if he were going for a workout on any given Friday afternoon.

That's not to say he doesn't get nervous or scared before a fight like everyone else. "When you are at your hotel with the other fighters nearby and journalists everywhere, it's easy to lose yourself and get nervous, but I just try

to hang out with my friends and relax," Gunnar says. "It's not good to put your mind into the cage before you step into it. You obviously know what's about to come, what everyone is waiting for, and it is scary, but it's important not to be afraid of being afraid."

"Then when you get into the cage," he says, "you feel like you are where you need to be, and it's all finally happening." Even in describing this rush of emotions, Gunnar looks calm, almost serene. "That's when the fun begins." In post-fight interviews, many fighters talk about fight plans, complicated thought processes during a critical moment in the match, and what they expected from their opponents. Gunnar, in contrast, says he doesn't think about anything, or follow any premeditated plan. He says—much like the 17th century warrior-philosopher Miyamoto Musashi did in his magnum opus 'The Book Of Five Rings'—that thought was slow compared to instincts and reflexes.

"Occasionally, I'll have a tactical thought, but it's about instinct," he says. "You react a lot quicker when you don't think about what you are doing, so I'll try to think as little as possible, instead focusing on what is happening and acting on instinct. The more relaxed you are, the easier it is to come up with a strategy, but you can't get stuck thinking about it—you perform on instinct, not on thought."

The Road Ahead

Gunnar says his ultimate goal is to challenge the UFC champion for the title. "I can easily see that happening in the next couple of years," he says, without batting an eye.

His next scheduled fight is with Russian Omari Akhmedov on March 8, at London's O2 Arena. Omari has earned a name for himself as a finisher of fights, knocking out his last opponent after a spectacular scrap in his UFC debut. Omari has won 12 of his 13 matches, finishing five in the first of three rounds, two of which he ended in the first two minutes. With a record of such early wins, one of Gunnar's keys to victory may lie in surviving Omari's early onslaught and not engaging in a rough brawl.

Omari has a strong background in the Russian Sambo martial art, which Gunnar describes as often being wild and reckless. "They aren't as technical as us Brazilian jiu jitsu practitioners when it comes to grappling on the ground," he says, "but they are capable of everything." Gunnar believes Omari's extensive experience will make him a very tough opponent, but he believes that will also be Omari's weakness. "He might overreach and leave himself exposed as he charges forward."

Gunnar's performance at this coming fight may very well dictate his place in the UFC's welterweight division and how quickly he can be counted amongst the top ten contenders, or make a run at the title. Not surprisingly, Gunnar doesn't want to count his chickens before they hatch. "I'm just focused on myself and what's in front of me," he says, displaying that uncanny calm demeanor that you see from him in the cage.



2010

February 13 - Defeats English Sam Elsdon with a first round rear-naked choke submission (2:30) at BAMMA 2 in London, England.

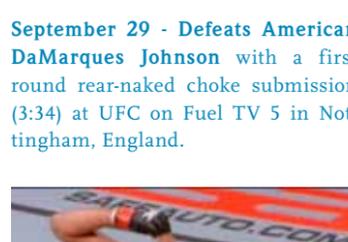
August 28 - Defeats English Danny Mitchell with a first round rear-naked choke submission (2:51) at Cage Contender VI - Nelson vs. Mitchell in Manchester, England.

September 25 - Defeats English Eugene Fadiora with a first round standing rear-naked choke submission (3:51) at Bamma 4 in Birmingham, England.



2012

February 25 - Defeats Ukrainian Alexander Butenko with a first round armbar submission (4:21) at Cage Contender 12 in Dublin, Ireland.



September 29 - Defeats American DaMarques Johnson with a first round rear-naked choke submission (3:34) at UFC on Fuel TV 5 in Nottingham, England.



2013

February 16 - Defeats Brazilian Jorge Santiago by unanimous decision after three full five minute rounds at UFC on Fuel TV 7 in London, England.

The Festival Season Is Upon Us



Words
By Davíð Roach and Óli Dóri

The first couple of months of the year are usually pretty uneventful music-wise, but the upcoming Sónar festival later this month is something to look forward to. The festival was born in Barcelona in 1994, and has since been held there every summer in addition to travelling to a number of other cities. This year marks the second Reykjavík edition and, having attended last year, we can attest that it is a sensory experience on all fronts.

This year we're psyched to see international acts like bombastic dance-hall project **Major Lazer**, Danish techno wunderkind **Trentemøller**, the progged out electronica of **James Holden** and ambient techno maestro **Jon Hopkins**, whose set at Iceland Airwaves astounded us. On the domestic front, we're also looking forward to seeing some bands that don't play very often like **GusGus**, **Einóma** and **Mind in Motion**, a pioneer band of the Icelandic rave scene in the early '90s that will be reuniting for the occasion.

While Sónar is underway, other festivals are in the planning stages. A new festival called Secret Solstice was announced for June with **Massive Attack** as the main act. ATP also announced the first artists booked for the July festival at Ásbrú. Legendary Bristol trip hop group **Portishead** and New York rockers **Interpol** will be headlining on Friday and Saturday. **Kurt Vile** will play on Thursday. His latest album, 'Walking On A Pretty Daze,' scored high on our list of best albums of last year. Other notable international acts are the electronic noise terrorists **Fuck Buttons**, experimental rock group **Swans**, who were supposed to perform at Iceland Airwaves in 2012, but

were stopped by hurricane Sandy, and **Neil Young** who will play a gig at Laugardalshöll in an extended programme dubbed the ATP Takeover Series.

Iceland Airwaves, which takes place November 5-9 this year, just announced the first 17 artists who will perform. The festival will close with the legendary American indie band **The Flaming Lips**, which actually played Airwaves in 2000 when the festival took place for the second time. That was our first Airwaves and one of our finest festival memories. We can't wait to have Wayne and the gang back!

Other artists announced are **East India Youth**, **Jungle** and **Blaenavon** from the UK, **La Femme** from France, **Jaakko Eino Kalevi** from Finland, **Tiny Ruins** from New Zealand and **John Wizards** from South Africa. The Icelandic artists **Muck**, **Snorri Helgason**, **Tonik**, **Samaris**, **Mammút**, **Grísalappalísa**, **Vök**, **Just Another Snake Cult** and **Highlands** are also playing.

Not only are the Flaming Lips returning to Iceland this year, but also the acclaimed alternative band Pixies, who played two shows in Hafnarfjörður back in 2004. They are slated to play a show at Laugardalshöll in June.

We have a lot to look forward to...

Straumur has been active since last summer, with writers Óli Dóri and Davíð Roach documenting the local music scene and helping people discover new music at straum.is. It is associated with the radio show Straumur on X977, which airs every Monday evening at 23:00.

Harpa Hypnotised By Philip Glass



Words
John Rogers

Philip Glass Études

January 28

Harpa Eldborg hall.

Words
John Rogers

This presentation of the Philip Glass and humble, onto the stage. and bringing with her a bright, exuberant energy that saw her literally bouncing from the stool at times. An Étude, taken from the French for "study," is a short, often highly challenging piece designed to expand the playing technique of a musician. This often involves an intentionally difficult mixture of techniques, sometimes including sharp swings in mood or tempo or mind-bending, finger-tangling time signatures. Over the years, many notable composers have written them, with the resulting works sometimes judged to have merit enough to be performed in repertoire.

études was the first time I'd heard of the form, but the idea of a great composer writing short pieces with a non-standard aim is an interesting proposition. For a start, music designed to stretch a performer will likely involve an entertaining display of technique, allowing an accomplished pianist to show an audience exactly "what they can do"—like a license to showboat. Then, the idea of pushing the possibilities of playing, without the pressure of declaring the composition a completed work, might yield interesting results—like a playground for ideas.

Glass has written twenty études over the last two decades, collected together here, and performed by Víkingur Heiðar Ólafsson, Maki Namekawa and Glass himself. Counted amongst the most popular living composers, his music is distinctive and unconventional whilst appealing to a large audience outside of the traditional classical crowd. As such, there it felt like the people in Harpa's Eldborg hall collectively leaned forward and craned their necks to get a good look at the great man as he shuffled, stooped

Addressing the piano casually, with shoulders back, and moving little throughout, the opening piece hit a sombre note, employing some of his trademark flurries of notes, tumbling forth in tight patterns held within an atmospheric progression. The structure felt like something of an inquiry—a mapping out of territory within a predetermined framework, with small but noticeable variations showing how a melody might develop or deteriorate through imperfect repetition, not unlike a precise musical description of xerography.

"The opening piece hit a sombre note, employing some of his trademark flurries of notes, tumbling forth in tight patterns held within an atmospheric progression."

The differing styles of the three pianists lay in stark contrast. Namekawa arrived with a charming flourish, striking the keys emphatically

berant energy that saw her literally bouncing from the stool at times. When the rapid, swirling central motif of the piece slowed in the final moments, it was like the phrase became comprehensible in a new way; her face broke into a smile, like a magician happy to reveal her trick.

Víkingur Ólafsson took the stage with a scholarly air, and a welcome sense of theatre—he paused and looked into the audience for five solid seconds before suddenly starting to play, with one hand still resting in his lap. His finger work was sharp and technical, and he leaned into the keys, peering down like a surgeon into the rippling, eddying cascade of the piece. The crowd's response upon the sudden, unexpected cut off point was thunderous.

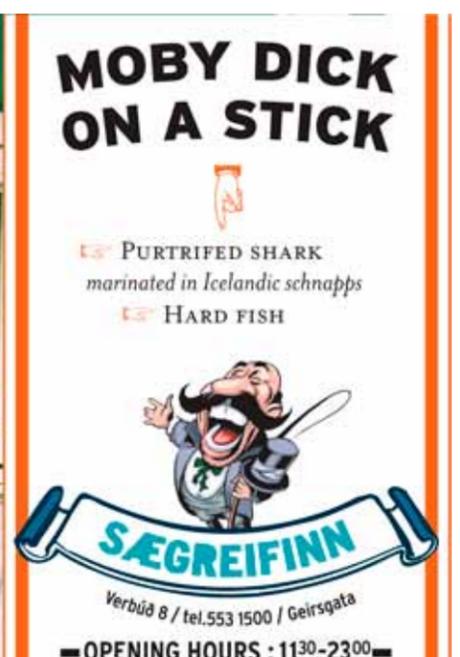
The Phillip Glass études feel more like a masterclass than an exercise, offering a fascinating and at times dizzying range of tone, structure and dynamic variation, and the audience drifted out into the night beaming from the musical feast.

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Album Reviews

Tilbury

Northern Comfort
2013

A subtle and quietly remarkable set of songs that ask questions of the listener.



Words

John Rogers

It seems fair to say that most forms of entertainment value a certain sense of drama. From Shakespeare to Wuthering Heights to Citizen Kane to Arcade Fire, situations and stories are often presented through a certain lens and with a story arc designed to accentuate the dramatic tension in the subject matter.

This is, perhaps, what makes for gripping entertainment—escapism, or a break from the norm. Because, for many, large parts of daily life are noticeably undramatic, made up of quotidian tasks like shopping, cooking, commuting, working, bill-paying, etc. So it could equally be said that continuous portrayals of high drama create a distance and dissonance between the contents of art and life.

When Lars Von Trier and the Dogme 95 film movement arrived and attempted to tell stories without the trappings of dramatic narrative, such as background music and special effects, it was considered an avant-garde approach. And something about Tilbury's music brings the Dogme movement to mind. The melodies on their second album, 'Northern Comfort,' are sparingly arranged, tightly played, perfectly formed, without much adornment. Band mainstay Þormóður Dagsson's vocals are delivered plainly and plaintively, without overt emotion. There is a sense of purposeful reserve that runs through all aspects of the album.

In this respect, Tilbury's music presents a marked contrast to the rehearsed, quasi-emotional content of much contemporary pop or rock 'n' roll. On the LP's title track, the lyrics

are almost whispered, with such a flat delivery that it seems Þormóður would almost rather not be heard at all. His sense of abiding stoicism is Tilbury's defining characteristic, and it's played out in the band's lyrics. "Turbulence," a masterful standout track, presents in-flight buffeting as an allegory for life events that intrude into inner calm—in this case, the emotions associated with falling in love. The chorus of the track blossoms beautifully, with the line "I'm smiling on the inside" knowingly tipping the lyricist's hand.

It's one of the few moments on 'Northern Comfort' to get the listener's pulse racing, but there's something compelling about the approach shown here. Perhaps it's that this reservedness comes from an understandable desire to avoid social conflict, as spelled out in the lyrics of "Cool Confrontation," or, perhaps, from an internal battle with the difficulty of sharing oneself, as described on "Shook Up." Both will be easy to relate to for many, and aren't the easiest of topics to pin down in a pop song.

Musically, there's much to admire in 'Northern Comfort.' There's craftsmanship in both the songwriting and the playing, and the airy production is warm and clear throughout. "Frozen" offers a magical, twinkling melody, and the choruses on tracks like "Animals" are catchy and likeable. Overall, the album leaves a light footprint, somehow. It's an enjoyable listen, and whether 'Northern Comfort's' particularly subtle and unassuming brand of perfection will continue to resonate over the long term is something only time can tell.

Sveinn Guðmundsson

Fyrir Herra Spock, MacGyver Og Mig
2013

Weedy as wank, must try harder.



Words

Bob Cluness

Sveinn Guðmundsson's debut album is pretty much your standard issue bread and butter lo-fi Icelandic folk twiddle. A deferential mix of gently strummed guitars, soft chewy bass notes, comfy melodica wheezes, and trombone (the Comic Sans of instruments) played across the board.

Initially, it all adds up to a seemingly competent, well-produced album. Yet the feeling you get from listening to 'Fyrir Herra Spock...' is one of superficiality. Beneath the spindly notes and smiles, the listlessness of music that has been done over so many times before is palpable. Music of this style needs to raise some kind of special evocation from the minimal production, but here there are no divergences from the template and the atmosphere generated is dull and nondescript.

On top of this, the lyrical themes/

content leaves a lot to be desired. Peppering the album with retro pop culture references (see the album title) already sends off red flags, but for an album of self-referential writing, it's full of witless, inane stuff such as happy little wolves ("Úlfar"), being all warm and cosy at home ("Heima") and 'finding yourself' in a game of hide and seek ("Feluleikur"). A Song like "Skuggar og Sár" ("Shadows and wounds") consists of nothing but lines such as "My shadow/Your shadow/My wounds/Your wounds" ad infinitum. Barf!

There are a couple of moments that rise about the insipidness. The second half of "Fjöruferð" builds up a pretty rousing group handclap/foot stomp, while "MacGyver Og Ég" sees him crank up the guitar and start singing like he gives a damn. But these are lone spots in what is an underperforming record.

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Tackling Gravity

Animation Director Daði Einarsson talks about the film's technical challenges



Words
Óskar Bragi Stefánsson

When it comes to animation, Iceland's Daði Einarsson is a real veteran. After spending several years working at London-based Framestore, Daði moved back to Iceland in 2008 to open an Icelandic branch of the renowned visual effects house.

The founder and creative director of RVX has since worked on a number of films here, including 'Contraband' (2012), Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 (2011) and 'Clash of the Titans' (2010). Despite being plenty busy in Reykjavík, Daði was briefly lured back to London's Framestore in 2010 to work on 'Gravity,' a disaster-flick starring Sandra Bullock and George Clooney as a couple of astronauts struggling for survival in the wake of an accident, adrift and alone in space, trying to get back home.

'Gravity' proved to be a box office smash worldwide, closing in on 700 million dollars in ticket sales. Furthermore, it has been nominated for Academy Awards in ten categories, including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Visual Effects. We spoke to Daði about his work with the film's director Alfonso Cuarón ('Children of Men') and what it was like to create this reality in outer space.

Tell us, how did you get involved in the making of 'gravity'?

When Framestore in London asked me to be its animation director, the film was still in its early stages. I was in Iceland running the company here, and all of my family is here, so it was going to be a bit tricky, but I thought 'Gravity' sounded like a very interesting project. A lot of the storytelling, camera-work and animation were done prior to any kind of shoot, so there was a big pre-production period where we needed to animate the movie with Alfonso Cuarón. Framestore talked me into coming back and I started flying out on Mondays and back on Fridays, and did that for like half a year.

How is 'gravity' different from other films that you've worked on?

What we were doing was strictly, you could call it, pre-vis' [pre-visualization, the process of visualizing scenes before they are filmed through storyboarding using rough sketches or animated computer generated imagery]. Usually when you do pre-vis' it's to flesh-out ideas and then you shoot something and it comes back, kind of, in the ballpark of what you were aiming for, and then most of the creative work happens after the shoot.

With 'Gravity,' however, everything that was shot on set with actors was

determined by the animation that we did beforehand. So the cameras, and actors and lights were all attached to computer-controlled motion-rigs that we derived from our animation. So basically we had to lock-down the movie before we ever went on set.

How did Alfonso describe the film to you?

Alfonso is an intense and passionate storyteller. He was very visual and precise about how he wanted the camera to relate to the environment. That was clear though from his other films, such as 'Children of Men,' which features these really long single-take shots [single-take shots, otherwise known as a 'long take' is an uninterrupted shot in a film which lasts longer than conventional editing pace would normally dictate]. He likes to plan and think out what his camera is going to do.

We were with him for six months, and every day he would describe to us why he wanted to do something a certain way and what he was thinking. It was an amazing time to have access to his thoughts and his process in such a way. He works with "Chivo" [nickname of Gravity's director of photography and Alfonso's longtime collaborator, Emmanuel Lubezki] in developing that style. Finding out how to achieve Alfonso's vision of what the camera-work should be meant a lot of collaboration between different departments. Whether you're doing fifteen-minute single-take shots or three-minute single-take shots, you have to make sure you're doing it in a very elegant and subtle way.

Alfonso was also very, very precise in his desire for things not to look like they were reacting to gravity, as the story takes place in zero-gravity. As an animator, pretty much your entire background is based on understanding gravity: how to make things look heavy or light. "Heavy" or "light" doesn't have any significance in zero-gravity.

Was There A Need For Technical Innovation, In Terms Of The Visual Effects Needed For The Film?

There certainly was from our end, as we had never really worked this way. Traditionally you would attach the actors to wires and move them

around on a set, with a green-screen background. Then after filming you would remove the wires and add in a computer generated background. The level of complexity to achieve the camera movements—the distance travelled and multiple orbits that the camera would take around the actor, or the actor around a light-source—called for some serious innovation.

Tim Webber [the visual effects supervisor], "Chivo" and the core Framestore team developed something called the Light Box, which is a cube of LED panels. The animation they received from us was then reverse-engineered and split across three main robots, which controlled travel and orientation of lights on robot arms, of the camera and of the actor being spun around or moved by a robotic arm.

So rather than having conventional lights as you would on a regular movie-set, most of the lighting on the actors' faces was from LED panels, which can spin around in any direction you want them, at any speed you need them to. That would have been impossible, without innovation and inventing that technique.

So what are you working on now? What's next?

Right now I'm on set in the Italian Alps shooting 'Everest' with Baltasar Kormákur. It stars Jason Clarke, Jake Gyllenhaal and Josh Brolin and is based on the true story of an expedition that ended in disaster in 1996. We're working in extremely harsh weather conditions in hard-to-get-to locations, but it's looking fantastic already. Our job will be to make the non-Nepal locations and studio sets look like they're shot on and around Mount Everest. We'll be adding CG environments, snow and clouds amongst other things, so it's quite a big job. It will be released in February 2015 in stereo ['stereoscope', i.e. 3D], so that should keep us off the streets for a while.



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What Did I just Watch? Ben Stiller's 'The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty'



Words
Sindri Eldon

This film is odd. I can't decide what it's supposed to be.

Is it some sort of ad for Life Magazine? Because there's certainly enough unabashed celebration of the already very self-important publication in 'The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty,' and ads certainly feel longer and more obnoxious every time I go to a theatre. I wouldn't put it past Life to just fish out blindly to have Hollywood spew out a two-hour promo video and have it shown across the world. I was half-expecting a title card to come up after the end of the film saying "And now, since we're done with all the advertising, it's time for our feature!"

And oh boy, is there ever advertising in 'Secret Life.' Not just for Life, but for Papa John's, eHarmony, Cinnabon, Air Greenland, McDonalds and countless others. And they aren't just product placements; statements about the quality of the products are shamelessly worked into the script. A major plot point of the film revolves around Papa John's, and Patton Oswalt actually compares a Cinnabon to heroin. They're just that fucking good. I guess if the film is supposed to contain some sort of statement about how corporations completely saturate our society, then that's cool. I suppose. God knows no one's ever made a film about that before.

Maybe in that way, 'The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty' could be a ballad for

"I'm pretty sure 'The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty' exists solely because Ben Stiller wanted to go to Iceland."

the unsung heroes of Generation X, toiling as they do in near-anonymity while their dreams are whittled away into nothing, or bottled and sold as products to be consumed by insufferable, idiotic Millennials such as myself. My generation is represented in the film by the laughable-for-all-the-wrong-reasons Adam Scott, who seems to be trying his damndest to ensure absolutely everybody in the world will loathe that stuttering, post-modernist improv banter that's already been done to death by Seth Rogen and Will Ferrell in every movie they're ever in, and Kathryn Hahn, who struggles valiantly to turn her clichéd artsy free-loading goofball into a believable (or at least entertaining) character, but to no avail. Both Scott and Hahn's roles are

such ineptly sketched-out straw men that I'm inclined to believe they're supposed to be some sort of meta-joke.

At its simplest, 'Secret Life' is a travel movie, showcasing with competent, tasteful but ultimately unimaginative cinematography the colour-coded layers of modern New York and the primal, rustic backwoods of Iceland, but once again, the comically caricatured natives Ben Stiller's titular photo editor encounters in both locales leads one to believe that the film is less paean and more parody, with about as much basis in reality as Mitty's delusional episodes (which are by the way insanely obnoxious and masturbatory). We're pretty much asked to believe Adrian Martinez's character is a living, thinking human being because he owns a fern and hugs people, while Ólafur Darri Ólafsson explains his entire character with one non-sequitur about infidelity (and while I'm sure he thinks his American accent will get him work in the States, it's just confusing to most people. What would a drunk American helicopter pilot be doing singing karaoke in Greenland? I don't know. Do you?)

Normally, I wouldn't fault a movie for whimsy and unbelievability, but 'Secret Life' seems to be trying so hard to be earthy and real. The dialogue is relatively honest and adequate in a cutesy-wutesy-widdle kind of way, and the characters all have several outrageously unsubtle details and idiosyncrasies that seem to indicate a desire for realism.

But realistic for whom? Which leads me to my next question: who is 'Secret Life' supposed to be for? The young children who might be the only age group entertained by its wafer-thin story and asinine characters? The aforementioned Gen-Xers who are still looking for a reason to live? They won't fucking find it here, that's for sure. People who really want to go to Iceland, but don't have the money? There are other films shot in Iceland that are far more nature porn than this is, and some of them even have a decent plot.

No, I'm pretty sure 'The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty' exists solely because Ben Stiller wanted to go to Iceland. I'm sorry, I know it's an easy shot, and probably the one I'm expected to make, but I seriously can't come to any other conclusion. Because any attempt to rationalise this shallow, narcissistic septic tank of a film by daring to claim it has any artistic merit at all would be a crime against man, nature and the universe. Never, ever watch this film, ever.



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It's Time To Give A Puck About Women's Hockey

Iceland has more to offer than football and handball, an activity that actually makes use of, you know, ice



Alex Baumhardt

Words

Alex Baumhardt

On the shortest day of the year, the women's hockey team from the Reykjavík suburb of Grafarvogur are on a long journey north. They go by the name Björninn ("The Bear") and they're driving 386 kilometres to play the Akureyri women's team, one of two teams they can compete with in the entire country.

Björninn formed in 1998 at Laugardalur, Reykjavík's sole ice rink. A few women, two of whom had been playing on the Reykjavík men's team, scouted open skate nights for women that could complete a team. "If they could skate, we invited them to try ice hockey," says Flosrún Jóhannesdóttir, who has been with the team since the beginning.

Chicks With Sticks

While another women's team, SR Reykjavík, formed to compete against Björninn, rink space wasn't growing as fast as the demand to use it and practices were becoming more limited. For Ingibjörg Hjartardóttir, who started with Björninn in 1999 at 15, practicing late was tough with school the next morning. "Sometimes we wouldn't be able to practice until 11:00 [p.m.]," she says, "but you did it because you loved it."

When the Egilshöll ice rink was built in Grafarvogur, Björninn left Reykjavík behind and moved the team out there, fifteen minutes from Laugardalur.

"Moving Björninn to Egilshöll meant better ice times," Flosrún says. It also meant becoming a better team than SR Reykjavík. Björninn started practicing three to four times per week and in 2005, when the Women's National Team (The Iceland Falcons) was formed, several of Björninn's players were recruited to it.

Today, eight women from Björninn also play for the National team, including Flosrún who has played in two world championships for the Denmark Women's National Ice Hockey Team.

Despite experienced players like Flosrún and Ingibjörg, many of the Björninn women have only been playing for the last three to five years, as hockey has gotten little—but growing—expo-

sure. One of the players from Björninn found the team when she heard it mentioned on the radio a few years ago.

The full Björninn roster is twenty-or-so women who range in age from 17-years-old to their mid-30s. Not all of them make it to the games in Akureyri, which can occur several times in one week during the playoff season, but there are always enough on the ice to avoid forfeiting games.

Taking On Akureyri

The Akureyri team, which was first to get started, is the best one. It had the great fortune of getting Canadian Sarah Smiley, who came to Akureyri eight years ago to coach and play for the Iceland Women's National team.

Smiley's arrival can be traced to the influx of women in northern Iceland on skates with hockey sticks in hand. To-

day, she is also the director of Women's Hockey Development in Iceland, and as of 2011, there were 71 registered female ice hockey players in Iceland.

Today, Björninn are a fierce contender for Akureyri's spot at the top, and the mixture of pre-game excitement

"Björninn plays like a team that drove six hours to beat the best team in Iceland."

and nerves speaks to the weight of this game in particular. Beating Akureyri on their rink isn't common and it means that for the next game, Akureyri will have to play in Reykjavík.

At the Akureyri Ice Arena, the men's team plays first, ending in overtime and a shootout in which a player from Grafarvogur nixed the team's efforts by skating speedily towards the goalie, stopping abruptly and illegally spraying him with ice.

The women play shortly after and, quite shamelessly, the Arena charges entry to the men's games but not the women's. In an ideal world, this would supposedly make the women's games more inclusive. Regardless, the men's game only has about ten more patrons than the women's fifteen or so.

The game does not build-up slowly,

but explodes and within the first five minutes, both teams have scored goals. The Akureyri players are fast and skilful, setting up well-orchestrated passes and calculated strikes on the net.

But Björninn plays like a team that drove six hours to beat the best team in Iceland. They're bold, taking risks and skating wildly at the net, shooting at every opportunity without reservation. Björninn wins four to three, but Akureyri put up a fight. By the end of the game, Björninn goalie Guðlaug Ingibjörg Þorsteinsdóttir has defended 35-shots-on-goal.

The Future

Small crowds and the small number of teams are likely to change as local media slowly pull their collective heads out of the narrow ass of football and handball coverage.

Hockey, women's in particular, is likely to receive far more mention over the next year, starting April 24–30, when Reykjavík hosts the qualifying games for the Division II International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) Women's World Championship.

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- 1. Waking the Statues** by Kristján Kristjánsson, Örvar Halldórsson, Hafþís Bjarnadóttir, Arnar Leifsson and Sveinn S. Benediktsson
The Einar Jónsson Museum, Eiríksgrata, 101 Reykjavík
- 2. Lys*arp** by Ulf Pedersen
Hljómskálagarður, 101 Reykjavík
- 3. On the bridge** by Tine Bech and Tarim
Reykjavík City Hall, 101 Reykjavík
- 4. Glómosi** by Rafkaup
Reykjavík City Hall, 101 Reykjavík
- 5. Circle 6** by Inuk Silis Hægh, Arild M. Kalseth and Amelie Deschamps Fógetagarður by Aðalstræti, 101 Reykjavík
- 6. Jellyfish** by Kitty Von Sometime
Vallarstræti, 101 Reykjavík
- 7. Shine a light!**
Hitt Húsið, Austurstræti, 101 Reykjavík
- 8. The Customs House** by Dario Nunez Salazar
Tollhúsið, Tryggvagata 19, 101 Reykjavík
- 9. Holding hands with Reykjavík** by Ólafur Elíasson
Harpa, Austurbakki 2, 101 Reykjavík
- 10. Winter Night** by students at the Technical College Reykjavík
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Know Thy Selfie

The 'Behind' photography exhibition with Elo Vazquez



Courtesy of Elo Vasquez

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Words

Ben Smick

When Elo Vazquez first began displaying her photography on the internet in 2002, the web was a great meeting place for photographers to share and discuss their art. “There was a really nice community of photographers from all over the world,” she says, “but that’s completely over now.”

Now we live in the era of Facebook and Instagram, where our social media profile has become our second self with our profile picture becoming our second face. It’s become a world where to know thyself is to ‘know thy selfie.’

Elo’s exhibition entitled ‘Behind’ on display at the Reykjavík Museum of Photography is partly in response to this ‘Great Selfie Era.’ As she walks me through it, Elo says what scares her about this development is the fact that it is so “unnatural,” yet social media has made it commonplace for people to constantly take pictures of themselves.

Behind The Frame

Although she had known for two years that she would have an exhibition with the Reykjavík Museum of Photography, Elo was still unsure exactly which pieces to display or how to organise them until the week before the exhibition was supposed to open. It was then, as she went through her archives of old photographs, that Elo discovered a theme of ‘behindness’ in her work.

A number of the pictures in Elo’s collection show individuals posing in different situations with their faces covered by objects, such as a fir branch or a doorframe. Elo points to a photograph of someone sitting in a car with their face covered by a bouquet of flowers, which she took at a wedding in a small town in the Czech Republic.

She says that part of her desire for this style of photography comes from her own shyness. She admits she’s not a very outgoing person and never enjoyed being the centre of attention or

having her picture taken. “I feel it’s very violent,” she explains. So it was just a small step from hiding from the camera to hiding behind one.

Iceland Unphotoshopped

None of Elo’s photography is digital. She proudly holds up her Canon analogue camera, which is an old clunky point and shoot that looks like a black plastic brick. She demonstrates how she has to cover the flash with her finger because the camera was found broken by her boyfriend while he was going through a pile of junk from his teenage years.

“I don’t feel that they show the Iceland that everyone knows, and that’s something that I really like.”

Despite being somewhat archaic—this camera no more belongs to the “Selfie Era” than bellbottoms or lava lamps—Elo loves how taking photos with the analogue camera keeps everything spontaneous and in the moment. She feels that digital photography is “almost like cheating,” because you can take the same picture over and over again until you get it just right, whereas with analogue photography you only have a single chance to capture a single instant.

Because of her refusal to use digital photography, Elo sees her exhibition portraying a side of Iceland that’s been more than a bit overlooked and tells the story of what’s been left be-

hind by ‘serious’ photography.’ She prefers to show that Iceland is more than massive landscape-photos of glaciers, waterfalls and the Northern Lights, all taken with expensive filters and photoshopped to look technically perfect. In a sense, Elo’s exhibition portrays the real Iceland, an Iceland unphotoshopped.

Face, Meet Branch

Even though Elo’s exhibit makes a statement about modern photography, she believes that photography doesn’t have to be so serious and is proud of the playful element in her photos.

Pointing to a photograph of several small dogs rolling around on a lawn and sceptically glancing at the camera, Elo explains that there are several pieces in her exhibition that are downright goofy, and that suits her just fine.

And when it comes right down to it, Elo’s desire for a light-hearted exhibit outweighs her distaste for digital photography. “Digital photography is opening a whole new world that I would like to explore somehow,” she says. The transition just isn’t easy and is definitely going to take some time.

In fact, she encourages visitors to take digital photos of themselves at her exhibit. Not a selfie, of course, but a photo where their faces are masked. A plaque on the wall reads “There is a branch there. Get behind it. Take a picture. Share it somewhere. #behind-behind,” goading visitors to spread the anti-selfie movement onto their Facebook pages.



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Video artist / group of the month starts at the National Gallery of Iceland, opening on the 6th of February and runs till autumn 2014.

Sigga Björg Sigurðardóttir is the first artist exhibiting with “The story of Creation”



“The story of Creation”



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Words
Alex Baumhardt

At 20:00 on the first Wednesday of each month, Café Haiti is abuzz with clinking Skrafl (Scrabble) tiles. Tips of tongues stick out from the corners of mouths, hands waver hesitantly over boards as players see the letter puzzles in their minds come together as words in front of them. The 20 or so players in their late-teens to their upper sixties are eating cake, drinking coffee and beer and participating in one-on-one matches until the café closes.

At one table, Dean of the Reykjavik Cathedral Hjálmar Jónsson plays ad man Guðmundur Rúnar Svansson. Hjálmar starts with the word DÁL (“coma”) and Guðmundur adds ALUR to the D, making DALUR (“valley”). Several moves in and Guðmundur breaks all taboos of playing a man of the cloth by laying down the verb SKÍTA (“to shit”).

The two of them are scoring points higher than I’ve ever seen in the first moves of English-language Scrabble, with words longer and more complex than I’m used to seeing so early in the game.

Fifteen Different Ways To Say Moose

“I have a theory about this,” says Jóhannes Benediktsson, who co-founded Skraffélag Íslands (the Icelandic Scrabble Association) with his cousin Sigurður (Siggí) Arent in February 2013. They are the ones organising the monthly meet-ups and the Icelandic Skrafl Championship that took place for the first time in November 2013.

“The Icelandic language is very complicated,” Jóhannes starts. “Take

the nouns. In the English language, you have only two forms—singular and plural—and if you wish to expand on most words in the game, all you can do is add an ‘s.’”

“Or make a word within a word,” Siggí adds.

“Right. So this is the beauty of Icelandic Scrabble,” Jóhannes continues. “In Icelandic, we have 15 different noun endings because the article is part of the word. So you have all of these possibilities.”

Millions Of Possibilities

Counting only the words that contain 2 to 15 letters, which are the words playable in Scrabble, there are 2,264,383 possible Icelandic words to play. In English-language Scrabble, there are only 270,163.

“Before I got into it [Skrafl], I thought Icelandic was very limited because we don’t have any of the Latin words or the words from other languages that have been adopted that are changing all the time,” Siggí says. “Icelandic dictionaries come out very seldom and they’re very strict.”

Siggí and Jóhannes credit their grandmother with sparking their inter-

est in language and words as an unconventional Skrafl opponent.

“We would go to her house and play and she would put down some nonsense word, like something that would mean black-sweater-jumper,” Siggí says. “And she would say, ‘that’s what you call someone who wears a black sweater and jumps around,’ and you’d think, well, it could happen.”

They also credit her with being the impetus to founding Skraffélag Íslands.

“That’s what you call someone who wears a black sweater and jumps around”

“I had been playing Scrabble with my friends and came up with this idea for an association, but they covered and weren’t interested,” Jóhannes jokes, “and then I told my grandmother about it and she told Siggí and then Siggí—and Siggí is not a loser—he called me up and said, ‘we should do it.’”

They reached out to Norwegian Scrabble master Taral Guldaahl Seierstad, who had helped to build up Nor-



way's Scrabble Association five years ago. He gave them ideas for how to model their group and helped set up an online version of Icelandic Scrabble by uploading all of the allowed Icelandic words and creating a computer opponent.

With a group of trusted nerds, Siggi and Jóhannes rewrote the rules of the game to greater Icelandic specificity, and started organising a night where interested players could meet and compete. They both went from playing the game two to four times a month to playing it four to five times a week.

Alphabet Addicts

"If this seems like a lot of Scrabble, you should watch the film 'Word Wars,'" Siggi says. "It follows four players to the World Scrabble Championship. It's nice but it's also quite sad."

What the film 'Word Wars' does best is to provide examples of how some Scrabble players can literally become Scrabbled by the game. By definition, the word Scrabble means, "to scratch frantically" or "scramble for something." In a similarly obsessive and frenetic way, many of the world's best players treat the game like a constant itch.

The three-time World Scrabble Champion Nigel Richards from New Zealand is a mysterious Bobby-Fisher-like character who, in interviews, claims to live alone, avoid TV, radio and books (except the Chambers Dictionary and the Official Scrabble Words Dictionary) and says he is "not close to anyone."

Some players featured in 'Word Wars' have either spotty or no jobs and bet money they don't have on best-of-25-game matches that leave them sit-

ting in a living room for hours or days at a time staring at letter tiles.

These are, however, not major life-style changes that have plagued the champions of Skrafffélag Íslands.

The Secret To Skrafl

Back at Hjálmar and Guðmundur's table, points are getting into triple-digits and I'm throwing some astonished praise at the two players.

"Well the guy behind you is the Icelandic Scrabble champion," Hjálmar says, "and he's my son."

Reynir Hjálmarsson, who works as a translator, was deemed Iceland's Skrafl champion after the two-day tournament in November that was overseen by Norwegian master Taral himself. For now, the champion wins a mammoth hard-copy dictionary along with a yearlong subscription to the online dictionary Snara.

Reynir is a good sport and an easy-going player. On this particular night he is sipping on a beer and doesn't mind going in and out of the game, both playing and answering questions.

This comes as no surprise. You're more likely to witness emotive displays of triumph, loss or ego at a bowling game than a Skrafl match. No one is fist-pumping a 100-point word, but sly smiles break and the defeated slouch back into their chairs. The calculated celebration has a lot to do with the game's greater lesson: success in Skrafl comes from mastering impulses, from playing less obvious words that are worth more points—in essence, the ability to resist becoming scrabbled.

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Riding With Fire, Tölting On Ice

Anna Millward

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Anna Millward

Words

Anna Millward

Rule number one when riding an Icelandic horse: do not use your leg. Or at least, do not use as much leg as you would when riding a horse English-style. Swinging myself onto the saddle on a dark, snowy January morning, I had not imagined that my day riding through snow-capped mountains and frozen rivers with one of Iceland's top riding centres, Eldhestar, would begin with such an abrupt wake-up call.

You see, after spending the majority of my life trotting, dizzily round and round an English riding school, I have it drilled like a rusty nail into my subconscious to always, always, without fail, 'use your lower leg!' So, plonking myself down in the saddle, lo' and behold: I used my lower leg. Of course I should have waited for my guide to explain that riding in Iceland is somewhat different than riding in England. Instead of hugging the horse's sides with your lower legs, Icelanders commit one of British riding's greatest faux pas: gripping the saddle with the knees, and having as little lower-leg contact as possible. Of course I didn't listen. Instead, I let habit take its natural course and, after proceeding to use my lower leg, I found myself lurching forward at a god almighty speed, engaging in heated negotiations with my sparky four-legged friend and contemplating death-via-nose-dive into the oncoming snowdrift.

I should have known that riding in Iceland would be anything but ordinary. Forget fancy tweed jackets and delicate hairnets, dah-ling; riding in

Iceland is all about rocking the fur-lined boiler suit, six pairs of socks and itchy thermal underwear look. Donning my rather fetching man-boots, I was ready to tackle Iceland's extreme weather. It had snowed heavily all night, the winter sun was refusing to show up, and the wind was roaring at such speeds that I felt the need to apologise to my poor horse Margeir as he braced himself against the wind, with me sitting on top like a great sack of spuds.

A Fearless Companion

As we set off, away from the hustle and bustle of Reykjavík, I was amazed at how loud the silence was out here in the middle of nowhere; there were no buildings, no roads, no signs of life other than the towering mountains and snow-covered lava fields. The landscape was timeless. As we rode beneath Ingólfssjall (the mountain named after Ingólfur, Iceland's first settler in the late ninth-century), I felt like a Viking explorer in an Icelandic saga. Glancing down at my noble

steed as he picked his way up the rocky mountain path and stumbled head first into a pile of snow (he was distracted by some fuzzy green stuff that looked suspiciously like grass), I decided that I rather liked this whole horse riding in Iceland malarkey, as did Margeir, my fearless horsey companion.

Horses have, after all, been important in Iceland since the very first days of settlement. The Icelandic horse today is virtually identical to those horses ridden by the heroes galloping across the pages of Norse sagas over 800 years ago. Even the horse's attitude is badass. Take Margeir, for example. Halting at the top of a steep bank sloping down to a partially frozen, fast flowing river, Margeir contemplated the watery barrier in front of him. I would like to point out that a normal British horse would freak out at the prospect of tackling a half-frozen river (cue posh British accent): 'Oh goodness, dear rider, you don't expect me to cross that frightful monstrosity, do you? Absolutely not, I'll get my tail wet,' and then stubbornly refuse to

move for the next five hours. Dear little Margeir, however, eyed up the situation and tiptoed quietly downwards to the river's edge.

Testing the ice with his hoof by pawing at the river, Margeir proceeded to put some weight on the ice and see what happened; he fell through. He tried with his other hoof, and the same thing happened. Now, any British horse that I know would have had some sort of mild seizure by now, and be pining desperately for the comfort of their stable-rug and some nice, soft meadow hay and a dry martini. Margeir, however, decided that this was all rather dull, thank you very much. Happy that he wasn't going to die an ice-related death, my noble stallion (well, gelding, actually) proceeded to wade through the water, quite unabashed by the blustery gale and strong undercurrent that was trying desperately to drag him downstream.

Reaching the other side, we continued to ride on into the mountains. Around midday, we stopped for a break beside the Ölfusá river. I looked at the other horses, heads bowed and bodies braced against the wind: the dazzling reds, bright browns and dark-as-night colours of each horse were different, a dramatic smattering of colours against the stark, white landscape. With such striking appearance, it is not difficult to see why the Icelandic horse has captured the Icelandic imagination for centuries.

"In fact, Icelanders love their horses so much that they actually eat them."

In fact, our guide casually informed us of Iceland's supernatural beastie, the terrifying Nykur. According to Iceland folk legend, the Nykur is a horse-like lake monster, with ears and hooves that point inwards. The Nykur will jump out of the river or lake and drag unwitting riders below the surface to a watery grave. Of course, I knew that I had nothing to fear with dear little Margeir, but I couldn't help glancing at his ears as I backed away slowly from the river's edge.

And A Good Ride Too

Luckily Margeir did not attempt to drown me, and I made it down the mountain to Eldhestar in one very stiff and frozen piece. Upon dismounting Margeir, I was amazed to discover that my legs had not turned to jelly. Usually, after riding for an hour in England, I can't move and spend the rest of the day walking bow-legged. Yet six hours of hard riding and fast tölting, I didn't ache in the slightest. Of course, up until recently the Icelandic horse was an important mode of transport, with Icelanders riding for days at a time to get to their destination, so riding had to be reasonably comfortable. So that's why Icelandic horses don't need much leg: it would be too bloody knacker. Instead of prancing around with ribbons in their mane, Icelanders rely on their horses being brave, honest and kindly in nature. Hell, there is even a beer named after them, Gæðingur (meaning "good horse").

Icelandic horses clearly occupy an important space in Iceland's mental and cultural landscape. Icelanders are proud of their horsey heritage, sending unwitting tourists off on riding tours all around the country and still enjoying boozey, horse-filled fun at the annual Laufskálarétt (autumn horse round-up) in September. In fact, Icelanders love their horses so much that they actually eat them. I tried to imagine nomming on Margeir between two slices of bread and a garnish of pickle, but couldn't quite imagine him ever standing still enough.

Margeir, like the rest of the horses at Eldhestar, was a little fireball. The word Eldhestar actually means 'fire' or 'volcano horses,' and at first I was worried that Margeir was going to explode or spontaneously combust. As far as I am aware, this does not usually happen. Or perhaps I was just lucky. I prefer, however, to think of 'volcano horses' as referring to Icelandic horses' sparky nature. My noble steed Margeir was a bundle of energy and, together, he and I had a whale of a time bombing through the snow, tölting across icy lava fields and beneath misty mountains. It was a match made in heaven, a perfect date; I even got a slobbery kiss at the end.



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A Nazi's Disappointment With Iceland

Words
Helgi Hrafn Guðmundsson

In the early hours of May 10, 1940, British forces launched Operation Fork, invading Iceland. One of their first tasks, upon disembarking in Reykjavík, was to arrest the German consul, Dr. Werner Gerlach. He was a fanatical member of the Nazi Party and had tried, under orders from the highest level, to win Icelanders over to the German cause. The Nazi leadership had identified the Icelandic nation as a pure and brave “Aryan nation.” Dr. Gerlach became, however, extremely disappointed with Iceland and its inhabitants, which he deemed to be pathetic. “There is nothing left of the noble nation and its pride, but servility, lack of decency, toadying and humiliation,” he writes in his memorandum.



British officers examining Gerlach's office in Reykjavík, on May 11, 1940. A painting of Gerlach is seen in the background.

Iceland had been looked upon as a Germanic paradise of pure racial stock by the fanatical pseudo-intellectual circles inside the Nazi party in the 1930s. Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS and a leading party member, was very interested in mysticism and idolised the Vikings, who he thought were symbolic of the alleged racial superiority of the Nordic race. Dr. Bernard Kummel, a scholar close to Himmler, wrote a book on the “spiritual treasures” of the Icelandic people and encouraged Germans to seek these in Iceland.

Dr. Gerlach's assignment was to encourage the mighty Icelanders to join the Nazis in the pursuit of racial purity and domination of inferior peoples. Gerlach, who was a respected physician and a long-term member of the Nazi Party, did not find any of the spiritual treasures promised by his commanders. Instead he only saw what he describes as a pathetic behaviour of savage and corrupted degenerates. We know this because his memos on Icelanders have survived and are stored at the National Archives of Iceland. Werner Gerlach was released as a prisoner of war in 1941 in an exchange of Allied diplomats. He died in 1963. The Allies maintained control over Iceland until the end of the Second World War, denying Germany a chance to seize this “racially” and strategically important island west of Europe.

Telling Quotes From His Memos:

“It's nothing short of arrogance, that these 117.000 souls, one third of them degenerate weaklings, should desire to be an independent state. Add to that that the cultural level is as not high as they say.”

“Icelanders are a great disappointment. The upbringing of children is pathetic. Schools are beyond the pale. The only

school considered remotely acceptable is the Catholic school. In the others, the children learn only to argue. Lack of discipline. The director of educational affairs is a communist. The youth has no longer any idea of the sagas or Iceland's history, no sense of family or race.”

“We need to reconsider our position on Iceland completely. We need to have scientists do what can be done, but other than that, this grovelling, which meets no kindness, must stop. Modern Icelanders do not deserve us, neither for their temperament, nor their significance, with the exception of a few.”

“Earlier than ten in the morning, there is no possibility of waking anyone, and women not earlier than 12. Men work irregularly. Unemployment. Men do not use their energy for working, but rather to not go to the dogs. Everything, which for us is unimportant, becomes a goal for them (swimming, table tennis). All Germans, that have stayed here long, are not all there, or are apathetic and dumb.”

“Films are almost exclusively American spy films of the lowest sort. The theatre company performs Sherlock Holmes for a whole month. Here, the dramatic subjects from the sagas lie untouched in the gutter.”

“The theatre company performs a German farce by the Jewish pornographers Arnold and Bach. The police banned the play because of its corrupting influence. Then they stage another premiere in front a full house, where a committee of experts and members of parliament are given access and it's sold out. The press goes mad. Overwhelming enthusiasm and applause.”

“Musical life is of a very low standard here. There are one or two quite good

painters, but there is a lot of pretence and junk. Sculpture – Einar Jónsson is half-mad but very Icelandic. Then there's Ásmundur Jónsson, who is called a cosmopolitan. Clearly Jewish degenerate art. A book has been published on him.”

“Views on Jews – completely uncomprehending. An Icelandic student was asked by his fellows, when discussing the Jewish matters: “Would you marry a Jewish woman?” And he answered: “Yes, why not?” Even the director of the national museum will hand an ashtray to a negro in a red coat.”

“The Icelandic press is more British than the Times. When the Times confesses that the English have been forced to retreat, Visir publishes the tall tales of the United Press about Allied victories. And then there is the foreign minister's english-minded rag. You cannot point out enough that the Icelandic newspapers are fifth-rate English country rags.”

“Constant inconvenience day and night from crazy or drunk men – or both. All night, eleven o'clock, twelve, two, drunken Icelanders call and demand to talk with me. Awful alcohol abuse. Black death. Spirits. Alcohol and taxis. Drunken men out in the street. Smuggling.”

“No car tires to be found. Most cars are old, purchased from abroad. Fewer visitors to the swimming pool. No external stimulation. Men lose all standards. No fruits. We were going to buy a bed, in Reykjavík there were only two available. We were going to buy a sink, sinks have been unavailable for three weeks.”

“One thing is certain and must be clearly stated – there is nothing left of the noble nation and its pride, but servility, lack of decency, toadying and humiliation.”

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P.12



“If we continue this way, we will one day end up in an exhausted world. As a result we will be left naked, wondering what happened and where we went wrong.”

The anonymous maverick known only as **The Naked Handstander** bares his goods for a good cause.

P.14



‘Here,’ my companion said, putting a disk of something cold, soft, and whiteish on my plate. ‘Try the sour whale.’

Sampling traditional **Þorablót** dishes takes bravery, encouragement, and a strong stomach.

P.46



Counting only the words that contain 2 to 15 letters, which are the words playable in Scrabble, there are 2,264,383 possible Icelandic words to play. In English-language Scrabble, there are only 270,163.

The **Icelandic Scrabble Association** gives us empirical proof that ‘**Skraff**’ is eight times as fun as Scrabble, but can they tell us how many points “empirical” is worth?

P.50



“We need to reconsider our position on Iceland completely...Modern Icelanders do not deserve us.”

Behold the **Sorrow of Dr. Werner**, the Nazi consul for whom Iceland, and Icelanders, were a deep disappointment.

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Issue 2 - 2014

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Your essential guide to life, travel and entertainment in Iceland



Icelandic Women Know How to Rock KÍTON - 'Songbirds in Harpa'

Harpa | March 1 to 2 | 3,900 ISK

Newly formed KÍTON, which stands for "Konur í Tónlist" or "Women In Music," is taking over Harpa from March 1 to 2. KÍTON's self-proclaimed mission is to promote equality and encourage the up and coming generation of Iceland's female musicians, artists, and performers. The two day festival called "Tónafljóð í Hörpu" or "Songbirds in Harpa," will showcase the best female performers in the Icelandic music scene including a series of panel discussions on March 1, several performances in the open spaces of Harpa, and a grand performance on March 2 from 20:00 by Ragnhildur Gísla, Mammút, Ragnheiður Gröndal, Greta Salóme, Sunna Guðlaugs, and the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra. Join us at Harpa to show your support for the amazingly talented and gifted women of the Icelandic music scene and enjoy some of the best tunes Reykjavík has to offer. **BS**

Photo by Matthew Eisman

MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

Feb. 7 - Mar. 6

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

Friday February 7

Brikk
22:00 DJ Pabbi
Café Rosenberg
22:00 Ljótu hálfvitarnir
Dillon
22:00 Sailor Jerry Party
Harlem
22:00 Danni Deluxe / Weircore
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Símon
Mengi
21:00 Just Another Snake Cult
Paloma
22:00 Lady Boy Records DJ Set

Saturday February 8

Brikk
22:00 DJ KGB
Café Rosenberg
22:00 KK-band
Dillon
22:00 Godchilla / Sushi Submarine
Gamli Gaukurinn
21:00 Leoncie / Hide Your Kids
Harlem
22:00 Ojba Rasta (DJ Set) / Ultra
Mega Technobandið Stefán,
Highlands / Nuke Dukem
Harpa
20:00 Ég þrái heimaslóð – Longing
for my Homeland
Hitt Húsið
15:00 Four Four
Hressó
22:00 Dalton
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Alfons X / Katla
Paloma
22:00 DJ Pabbi
Park
22:00 RVK DNB #4 with GREMLINZ
Salurinn
21:00 The Lamb Lies Down on
Broadway

Sunday February 9

Harpa
20:00 Eg á líf
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Kristin Pálsson

Monday February 10

Gamli Gaukurinn
22:00 Elgar and Klint
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ JB

Tuesday February 11

Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Viktor Birgis
KEX Hostel
20:30 KEX Jazz Night

Wednesday February 12

Gamli Gaukurinn
22:00 Morgan Kane
Harlem
22:00 Sunna Ben
KEX Hostel
20:30 Sónar Warmup
Paloma
22:00 Bast Magazine / Grotta Zine

Thursday February 13

Austurbæjarbíó
20:00 Sign Album Release Concert
Brikk
22:00 DJ Arnar "beib"
Dillon
22:00 Snorri Helgason DJ Night
Gamli Gaukurinn
22:00 Blúsbrot
Harpa
20:00 Sónar Reykjavík
Hressó
22:00 DJ Cyprie & Sax player
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Árni Sveinsson
Mengi
21:00 Mikael Máni & Anna

Friday February 14

Brikk
22:00 DJ Plan B
Dillon
22:00 Skepna
Gamli Gaukurinn
22:00 In The Company of Men /
Icarus / Logn / Trust the Lies
Harlem
22:00 Óli Dóri / Steindór Jónsson &
Jón Edvald
Hressó
22:00 Kongó
Mengi
21:00 Ólafur Björn Ólafsson
Paloma
22:00 DJ KGB



8
March

Guitars Only Tommy Emmanuel Comes to Reykjavík

Háskólabíó | Mar. 8, 20:00 | Free!

His face may be a little aged, his hair grey but his fingers are still the fastest and finest in the world. Once Tommy Emmanuel steps onto the stage and starts picking his strings, you may have to close your eyes to fully absorb the acoustic miracle. There's a reason he's considered one of the best guitarists in the world, you know, and you should not miss the opportunity to see him live. **YN**

Photo by Allan Clarke



8
February

The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway Genesis Tribute Concert

Salurinn | Feb. 8, 21:00 | 3,500 ISK

To commemorate the 40 year anniversary of progressive-rock legend Genesis' album release 'The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway,' Salurinn will host a tribute concert. The album was released in 1974 and was Peter Gabriel's final recording. The album featured hit classics like "Counting Out Time" and "The Lamia," which, among their other great works, made Genesis the pillar of the progressive-rock genre. The concert will showcase music from throughout Genesis' long musical career by both local and international musicians. **BS**



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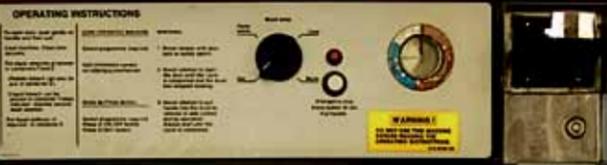
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Saturday February 15

Café Rosenberg
22:00 Elton John Tribute Band
Harlem
22:00 DJ Pabbi / Hypno / Yamaha / Exos / Maggi Legó
Harpa
11:30 Children Hour with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra
14:00 Yabba-dabba-doo – film soundtracks performed by the Iceland Symphony Orchestra
Hitt Húsið
15:00 Four Four
Hressó
22:00 Mr Mookie
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ KGB
Laugardalshöll
21:00 SkyBlu of LMFAO with guests
Mengi
21:00 Páll Ívan frá Eiðum
Paloma
22:00 DJ Kári
Salurinn
20:30 Ragnheiður Gröndal sings Bergþóra Árnadóttir

Sunday February 16

Hressó
21:00 Jazz Jam Session
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Z

Monday February 17

Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Pilsner

Tuesday February 18

Café Rosenberg
22:00 House Jazz Band
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Óli Dóri
KEX Hostel
20:30 KEX Jazz Night

Wednesday February 19

Gamli Gaukurinn
21:00 Fix up Gaukurinn Festival! – Low-Fi Night
Kaffibarinn
22:00 John Brainlove

Thursday February 20

Brikk
22:00 Intro Beats
Café Rosenberg
22:00 Svavar Knútur
Gamli Gaukurinn
21:00 Fix up Gaukurinn Festival! – Hip-Hop / Rap Night
Harpa
19:30 Doctor Atomic
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Árni Kristján
Paloma
22:00 Ravenator

Friday February 21

Brikk
22:00 DJ Logi Pedro
Dillon
22:00 Postartica
Gamli Gaukurinn
22:00 Fix up Gaukurinn Festival! – Heavy Metal Night
Harlem
22:00 FM Belfast DJs / Bypass / Skeng
Hressó
22:00 Diskólestin
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Sexy Lazer
Mengi
21:00 Auxpan & Baldur Björnsson
Paloma
22:00 DJ Katla

Saturday February 22

Bar 11
22:00 Icelandic Rock 'n' Roll Cover Band
Dillon
22:00 Gang Related / Knife Fights
Gamli Gaukurinn
22:00 Fix up Gaukurinn Festival! – Closing Party
Harlem
22:00 Maggi Legó / Logi Pedro / Benni B-ruff
Harpa
19:30 Piano and winds at the Chamber Music Society
Hitt Húsið
15:00 Four Four
Hressó
22:00 Playmo
Kaffibarinn
22:00 FM Belfast / DJ Sexy Lazer
Loft Hostel
22:00 Menn Ársins Concert
Mengi
21:00 Tiny Guy (Lítill Kall) by Friðgeir Einarsson
Paloma
22:00 RVK Soundsystem

Sunday February 23

Harpa
16:00 Young Voices – Ingibjörg Fríða Helgadóttir
19:30 The Chamber Music Society
Hressó
21:00 Jazz Jam Session
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Kristinn Pálsson
Mengi
21:00 Tiny Guy (Lítill Kall) by Friðgeir Einarsson



A Night of Distortion Blacklisted & Co Bring the Noise

Hellirinn TþM | Mar. 1, 19:30 | 1,000 ISK

Distorted guitar sound, an intense bass line and a blurred voice – that's the trademark of the US hardcore band Blacklisted who are performing tonight at Hellirinn. But: This night aims to cover the full circle of rock 'n' roll. That's why Blacklisted invited five distinct Icelandic bands to join them, including Kimono and Ofvitarnir that will satisfy all indie heads, punk poets Grísallappalísa that combine grunge with a saxophone and guitar solo, hardcore-punker Klikk and the devastating Kælan Mikla trio. So come one, come all, and get a plentiful serving of rock, indie and punk. **YN**



Gang Related Knife Fights Alternative New-Wave Cocnert at Dillon

Dillon | Feb. 22, 22:00 | Free!

And in other news, gang related knife fights are becoming more and more common in the 101 area. Or at least, that's the conclusion we've come to after hearing about the concert at Dillon on February 22 featuring new wave alternative rock bands Gang Related and Knife Fights. Both bands have been gaining popularity in the Reykjavík music scene over the past few years with the release of Gang Related's debut album 'Stunts and Rituals' in the Autumn of 2011 and Knife Fight's 'OK' EP released last April. February 22's show is sure to be an amazing performance and we expect to hear only more great things from these bands in the future – though hopefully not from a police blotter. **BS**

Monday February 24

Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Andri

Tuesday February 25

Kaffibarinn
22:00 Krystal Carma
KEX Hostel
20:30 KEX Jazz Night

Wednesday February 26

Harlem
22:00 Sin Fang / Hudson Wayne
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Katla

Thursday February 27

Brikk
22:00 Intro Beats
Harlem
22:00 DJ Pilsner / Fótafimi
Hressó
22:00 DJ Cyppe
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Alfons X
Paloma
22:00 Silja Glømmi
Stúdentakjallarinn
21:00 Jazz Night

Friday February 28

Brikk
22:00 DJ KGB
Harlem
22:00 Baarreagaard / Dj Katla
Hressó
22:00 Tandoori Johnson
Mengi
21:00 Kristín Þóra Haraldsdóttir

Paloma

22:00 DJ Einar Sonic

Saturday March 01

Brikk
22:00 Rix and Kerr
Café Rosenberg
22:00 KK and Maggi
Harpa
17:00 KÍTON: Songbirds in Harpa
Hellirinn TþM
18:00 Blacklisted / Kimono / Grísallappalísa / Klikk / Kælan Mikla / Ofvitarnir
Hitt Húsið
15:00 Four Four

Sunday March 02

Harpa
20:00 KÍTON: Songbirds in Harpa

Tuesday March 04

KEX Hostel
20:30 KEX Jazz Night

Friday March 07

Brikk
22:00 DJ Plan B
KEX Hostel
20:30 Reykjavík Folk Festival

Saturday March 08

Háskólabíó
20:00 Tommy Emmanuel
Hitt Húsið
15:00 Four Four
KEX Hostel
20:30 Reykjavík Folk Festival



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20 February - 29 March 2014

Kristinn E. Hrafnsson



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ART

OPENINGS AND ONGOING

Feb. 7 - Mar. 13

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

Opening

ASÍ Art Gallery

A Hard Day's Night

The second exhibition of a sequence called Interplay, A Hard Day's Night will feature pieces by prominent Icelandic artists and musicians, Svavar Guðnason, Magnús Helgason, Úlfur Karlsson, and Úlfur Eldjárn. The connection between these four different artists is their powerful voice of imagination. Free admission.

Opens February 15

Runs until March 9

Bió Paradís

German Film Days 2014

In cooperation with the Goethe Institute in Demark, Bió Paradís will host the fourth annual German Film Days, beginning with a screening of the drama and thriller 'Two Lives' (2012) directed by Georg Maas and Judith Kaufmann which has won several international awards. All screenings will include English subtitles.

Opens March 13

Runs until March 22

Borgarleikhúsið

Trilogy Dance Performance

The Iceland Dance Company's new show, Trilogy, showcases three short performances influenced by classical ballet, contemporary dance and breakdance. Admission: 4,500 ISK.

Shown on February 8, 16, 23, March 3 and 9

Eiðissker

Slab City

Fríðrik Örn's photography exhibition depicts the unique life in Slab City, a community without organised government, running water, or sewage disposal. The community has attracted residents from all paths of life in search of freedom from the traditional structure of modern society.

Opens February 7

Runs until February 28

Hverfisgalleri

Kristinn E. Hrafnsson

An exhibition of Kristinn E. Hrafnsson's artwork, a mixture of sculptures and photographs, will be on display.

Opens February 20

Runs until March 29

i8 Gallery

This two person show will combine art installations by Icelandic artist Ingólfur Arnarsson, a variety of his drawing and concrete reliefs, and a site-specific sound installation by Japanese musician Sachiko M, who is also performing at the Sónar music festival.

Opens February 13

Runs until March 22

Kunstschlager

Island of Anxiety

Sabine Schlatter's new exhibition will display large drawings and pieces reminiscent of organic structures. Her works portray hybrids between living and lifeless matter. Sabine was born in Switzerland in 1977 where she now lives and works.

Opens February 8

Runs until February 22

Listamenn Galleri

Reykjanesbrautin

Einar Falur Ingvarsson's new photography exhibition exposes the overlooked Reykjanes highway which virtually all visitors to the country pass through without ever really taking the time to get to know and experience.

Opens February 8

Runs until February 22

Læknaminjasafn Nesstofa

Fifteen students from the School of Photography are hosting a graduation exhibition. It promises to be as varied as the students themselves, covering topics such as what a day in the life is for a blind person or someone living on the fringe of society.

Opens February 15

Runs until February 23

The National Gallery

Think Less - Feel More

The Icelandic Love Corporation which is



Trip The Light Fantastic
The Winter Lights Festival Arrives In Reykjavík

All Over Reykjavík | Feb. 6 to 15 | Free!

To those of you that have been living under a rock the past few days, get your head out from under your pillow and see the light! The Winter Lights Festival has arrived in Reykjavík, with light installations by international and local artists illuminating public spaces all over Reykjavík. The Festival, which is sponsored by the Scandinavian art and culture fund Kultur Kontakt Nord, includes a variety of events such as Museum Night on February 7 which sees a total of 40 museums in the greater Reykjavík area stay open until midnight for free, and Pool Night on February 15, when three of Reykjavík's pools will also remain open to midnight for free and feature water light displays. **BS**

Photo by Ragnar Th. Sigurðsson

Ongoing

Árbær Museum

A guided tour in English through this open air museum, which consists of twenty buildings happens daily at 13:00. Admission 1,100 ISK.

On permanent view

ASÍ Art Gallery

Ingileif Thorlacius - Retrospect

Ingileif Thorlacius studied at the Icelandic School of Arts and Crafts and the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht, Netherlands. Her works cover a range of different mediums; oil paintings, watercolors, drawings and sculptures.

Runs Until February 9

The Einar Jónsson Museum

The museum contains close to 300 artworks including a beautiful garden with 26 bronze casts of the artist's sculptures.

On permanent view

Gallery Tukt

Regnskógar & Furðuhlutir

Kristel Dögg Vilhjálmssdóttir's new exhibition at Gallery Tukt, 'Regnskógar & Furðuhlutir' ("Rain forests and Bizarre Things"), feature oil and acrylic paintings.

Runs until February 15

Hverfisgalleri

Exhibition by Tumi Magnússon

Mixed media artist Tumi Magnússon will display paintings and video that is inspired by phones and phone calls.

Runs until February 22

The Icelandic Phallogical Museum

The museum contains a collection of more than two hundred and fifteen penises and penile parts belonging to almost all the land and sea mammals that can be found in Iceland.

On permanent view

Kling & Bang

Ragnar Kjartansson - The Visitors

A nine-channel video installation depicting the bohemian gathering of a group of friends and musicians in Upstate New York. The piece takes its title from ABBA's last album, which was marked by divorce and defeat. The performing musicians and poets are almost entirely drawn from the Reykjavik music scene.

Runs until February 23

Living Art Museum

made up of Eirún Sigurðardóttir, Jóní Jónsdóttir and Sigrún Hrólfssdóttir, is one of the more experienced performance teams in Iceland. It presents an interactive show that emphasises the importance of sensual experience and emotional expression.

Opens February 20

Runs until February 28

Reykjavík Art Gallery

7 Months Until August

Georg Óskar Giannakoudaki's new painting exhibition will be on display at the Reykjavík Art Gallery. This will be Georg's seventh solo exhibition and his first one in Reykjavík. He lives and works in Akureyri.

Opens February 8

Runs until March 13

Reykjavík Art Museum -

Kjarvalsstaðir

Harro

The exhibition will display Finish artist Harro's pop-art period, and present several of his best known works from 1968 to 1972. Harro's art is particularly relevant to current affairs in Icelandic society because of the ongoing recovery from the financial collapse.

Opens February 8

Runs until May 18

Hildur Ásgeirsdóttir Jónsson: Core

The exhibition features a collection of large-scale woven paintings made on a three metre wide loom. The impressive pieces were created on hand-dyed woven silk thread.

Opens February 8

Runs until May 18

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Children at Play

An exhibition of sculptures from the oeuvre of Sigurjón Ólafsson. The title of the exhibition refers both to Sigurjón's 1938 relief by that name and other works in the exhibition that might awaken children and teen's interest in Sigurjón's art.

Opens February 7

Runs until May 11

SÍM

Internal Darkness

The photography exhibition 'Internal Darkness' explores the mysterious ways darkness influences the human mind. The exhibition displays works by a number of artists whose interpretation and portrayal of darkness varies drastically.

Opens February 7

Runs until February 24



The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

IN YOUR POCKET

WHAT'S INSIDE | Reykjavík Map | Happy Hour Guide | Places We Like | Best Of Reykjavík | Practical Info

Reykjavík

February 7 - March 13

Keep it in your pocket

Five Weeks

The Grapevine picks the events, places and what to experience in the next five weeks

25 - 13
Jan April

Art Without Boundaries
Foundation

13 - 22
March

German Film Festival
Mehr Deutsch bitte!



Katrín Sigurðardóttir - Foundation
Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhús | 1,300 ISK

At Katrín Sigurðardóttir's exhibition in Hafnarhús the world of art breaks out into the streets of Reykjavík. Katrín's exhibition was Iceland's contribution to the Venice Biennale in 2013. 'Foundation' is a giant raised ornamental surface which visitors are encouraged to walk on top of. The platform is decorated with handmade tiles forming intricate baroque-style patterns and extends beyond the walls of the museum, making the exhibition the point of collision, where the life of the museum and the life of the city intersect. **BS**

Runs until February 23 **ONCE AGAIN, I FALL INTO MY FAMILIAR WAYS** If you haven't been to **Ragnar Kjartansson's The Visitors**, then you are in for a treat. It's one fifty minute long song performed in the Rockeby mansion, recorded and projected in nine distinct parts. It's amazing, and it's free at **Kling & Bang**. So don't be daft, head on over before it closes.

Feb 26 to March 1 **AN ANNIVERSARY TO REMEMBER** Celebrating beer's 25th anniversary of being legal in Iceland, **KEX Hostel** are putting on a four day beer tasting event. **American and Danish beer** are in the spotlight on Wednesday, there is a **beer conference** on Thursday, **Ólgerðin** and **Borg Brugghús** present their beers on Friday and **Icelandic craft breweries** take centre stage on Saturday.

Feb 19 to 22 **LET'S PATCH 'ER UP** In order to finance redecorating the bar, expanding the stage and upgrading their equipment, **Gamli Gaukurinn** is putting on a festival. It won't be free, but you should still show your face as it promises to be heaps of fun and will lead to a better music venue.



Take a Seat at the German Cinethek
Bíó Paradís

And the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film goes to ... the German drama and thriller 'Two Lives!' Or that's probably what Directors Georg Maas and Judith Kaufmann dreamt they would hear, but it was not so. Which is a shame because it's one of the best films the German cinema scene has produced lately and it is one of many to be screened at the German Film Days in Bíó Paradís. **YN**

13
February

Sign's Best Concert Yet?
'Hermd' Has Finally Arrived



Sign Album Release Concert
Austurbæjarbíó | 20:00 | 2,900 ISK

Ragnar Zolberg and the rest of Sign come out of the woodworks to give us a kick ass concert and celebrate the release of their new album 'Hermd.' We'd been waiting for the album for three years before it finally came out right after Christmas. The concert is going to be amazing with up to ten performers from the album packed on stage. As if that's not enough to get us all psyched, Ragnar promises that "this concert will undoubtedly be the finest and most remarkable of any we will ever perform." So rock out to Sign at Austurbæjarbíó while the rest of us continue to bang our heads against walls in desperation as we wait for Ragnar's other amazing band, Pain of Salvation, to come to Iceland. **BS**



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B

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C

MAP

Places We Like

Food

1 The Coccoo's Nest

Grandagarður 23

Nestled in an old fishing hut in the flourishing area of Grandi is a new Californian deli with an Italian twist. What is a Californian deli? You'll have to pay them a visit to find out. The owners, Iris and Lucas, have put much thought and work into every square inch of the place, creating a cosy and warm atmosphere. If you are in that part of town, head over to get your brunch or lunch fill of the day.

2 Krua Thai

Tryggvagata 14

For quick, tasty and well-priced Thai food, stop by this family run restaurant for reliably good and invigorating meals. Their cute harbour-adjacent location is both intimate and communal at once. Stay and enjoy the vibe or take your food to go, it will be delicious either way.

3 Lebowski Bar

Laugavegur 20a

A classic American style diner lies at the back of the pin-up clad bar on Laugavegur, boasting a short menu of quick and tasty bowling alley burgers named for The Dude (or His Dudeness or El Duderino if you're not into the whole brevity thing). It's a great place to chow down with a beer, but that could just be, like, our opinion man.

4 Nora Magasin

Pósthússtræti 9

Hard wood tables, turquoise blue walls, huge French windows, funk music in the background - Nora Magasin has all the makings of a classy place. The food is entirely home-made and designed by an imaginative team that's always adding fun novelties to the menu. The bar is an ideal night-starter, with a fine selection of wines, beer, and delicious appetizers. The deep-fried chicken with house sauce and the peanut butter brownie are a must-try. The best thing about Nora is definitely that it remains a homy atmosphere, always making you feel welcome.

5 Yummi Yummi

Hlemmur, Hverfisgata 123

After long years of lamenting the lack of quick, greasy and satisfying Asian fast-food in town, the owners of Thai super-restaurant Ban Thai have graced us with this pan-fried saviour! The dishes are super cheap at 1000 ISK each, the service is super fast but totally fresh and what seems like a small dish will stuff you full. They now do home delivery as well! Oh, happy day.

Drinking

6 Kaffitár

Bankastræti 8

Kaffitár on Bankastræti is a comfortable little café with a great selection of coffee, tea and baked goods on offer. Since Kaffitár is also a big-name Icelandic roasterie, the caffeinated beverages on the menu are quality. A classic spot for caffeine and laptop addicts and freelancers, but get there early because it fills up in no time.

Useful numbers

Emergency number: **112**

Medical help: **1770**

Dental emergency: **575 0505**

Information: **118**

Taxi: Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir: **588 5522**

BSR: **561 0000**

Tax Free Refund

Iceland Refund, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400

Tourist information

Arctic Adventures, Laugavegur 11,

tel: 562 7000

City Centre, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

Iceland Excursions - Grayline Iceland,



7 Den Danske Kro

Ingólfsstræti 3

This Danish-themed bar is located on Ingólfsstræti, just off Laugavegur. They serve up Danish favourites such as Tuborg beer and Akvavit schnapps and proudly promote the Danish tradition of daytime drinking. Their 'Happy Hour,' every day between 16-19, is a great source of fun. How to ask for a large beer in Danish: "Hej, jeg vil gerne ha' en stor."

Hafnarstræti 20, tel: 540 1313

The Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti 2,

tel: 522 4979

Trip, Laugavegur 54, tel: 433 8747

Pharmacies

Lyf og heilsa, Egilsgata 3, tel: 563 1020

Lyfja, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045 and Lág-
múla 5, tel: 533-2300

Coach terminal

BSÍ, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10,

tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

Domestic airlines

Air Iceland, Reykjavíkflugvöllur,

tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

Eagle Air, Hótel Loftleiðir, tel: 562-4200

8 Micro Bar

Austurstræti 6

Micro Bar sits snugged up behind the lobby of City Center Hotel and offers Reykjavík's best selection of microbrew beers, served by knowledgeable and polite staff. This is one of the few bars in Reykjavík where you can have a conversation with your mates without having to shout over live bands or loud music.

Public transport

The only public transport available in Reykjavík is the bus. Most buses run every 20-30 minutes (the wait may be longer on weekends) and the price per fare is 350 ISK for adults and children. Multiple day passes are available for purchase at select locations. Complete route map available at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700. Buses run from 07:00-24:00 on weekdays and 10:00-24:00 on weekends. Main terminals are: Hlemmur and Lækjartorg

Opening Hours

Bars and clubs: According to regulations, bars can stay open until 01:00 on weekdays and 04:30 on weekends.

Shops: Mon.-Fri. 10:00-18:00, Sat. 10:00-

9 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

A popular café on weekdays, on weekends Kaffibarinn turns into a ticket for a wild night out, as the space fills up with late-night souls oozing energy in every corner. With DJs playing and the occasional rock band, the party usually lasts until early morning, yet often manages to leave you begging for more.

16:00, Sun. closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

Swimming pools: Weekdays 06:30-22:00 and weekends 09:00-17:00, although each pool varies plus or minus a few hours.

Banks in the centre are open Mon.-Fri. 09:00-16:00.

Post Offices

Post offices are located around the city. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5, open Mon.-Fri. 09:00-18:00. Stamps are also sold at bookstores, gas stations, tourist shops and some grocery stores.

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D



13 Brikk
Hafnarstræti 18

Out of the ashes that was the much celebrated Faktory has risen the hip Brikk, and it is on a mission to get cityfolk to feel optimistic towards the live music scene. Sat right where Kaffi Zimsen used to be, Brikk currently only has DJs and a house jazz band playing, but they have big plans to expand the stage and get more live performers. Head on over and give them a chance.

Venue Finder
Music & Entertainment

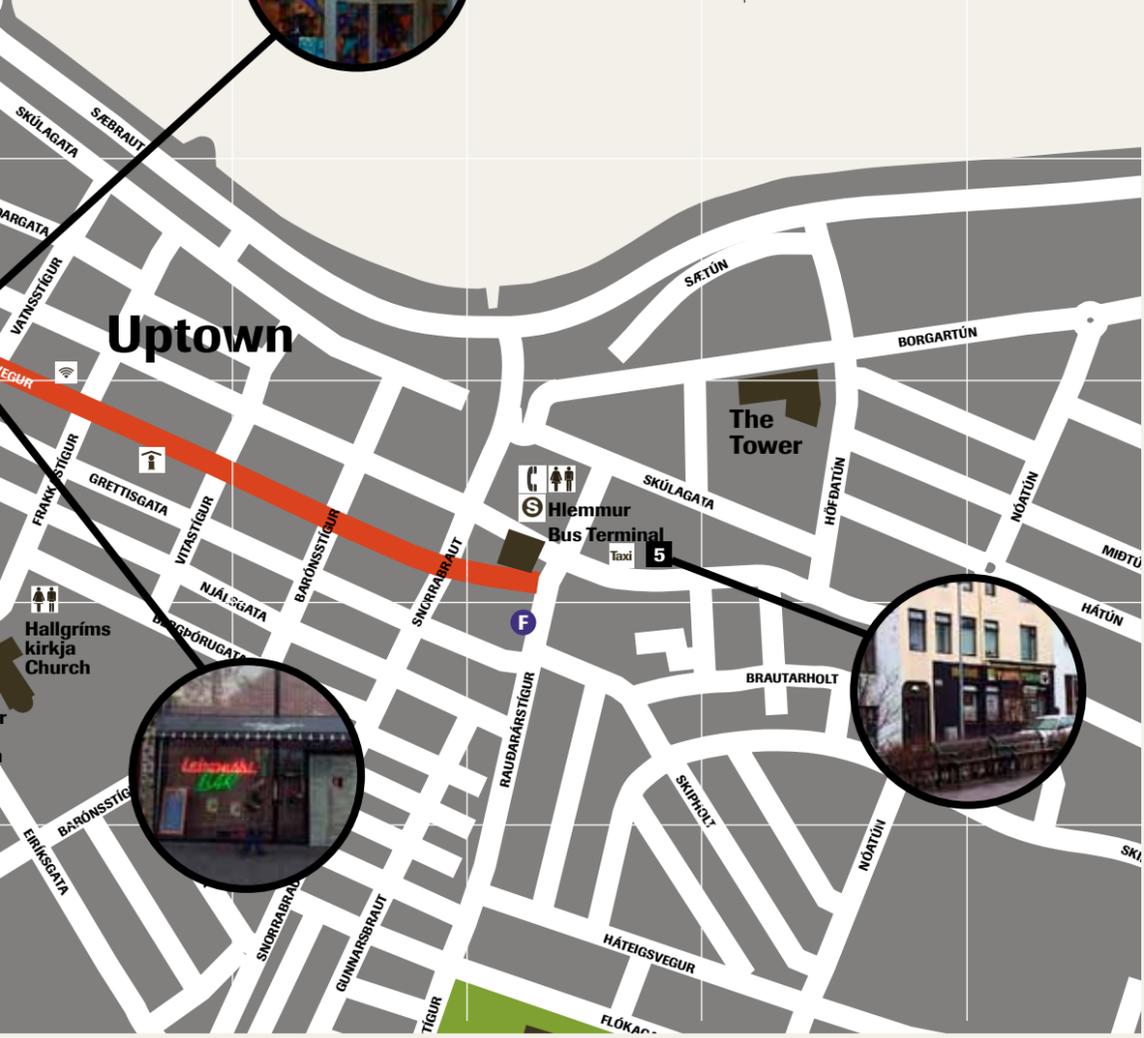
- | | |
|---|--|
| Amsterdam
Hafnarstræti 5 D3 | Glaumbar
Tryggvagata 20 D3 |
| Austur
Austurstræti 7 E3 | Harlem
Tryggvagata 22 D3 |
| B5
Bankastræti 5 E4 | Hressó
Austurstræti 20 E4 |
| Bar 11
Hverfisgötu 18 E5 | Kaffibarinn
Bergstraðastræti 1 E5 |
| Bíó Paradís
Hverfisgata 54 F6 | Kaldi Bar / Café
Laugavegur 20b E5 |
| Bjarni Fel
Austurstræti 20 E4 | Kofinn
Laugavegur 2 E5 |
| Boston
Laugavegur 28b F6 | Loft Hostel
Bankastræti 7 E5 |
| Brikk
Hafnarstræti 18 D4 | Mánabár
Hverfisgata 20 E5 |
| Bunk
Laugavegur 28 E5 | Ölsmiðjan
Lækjargata 10 E4 |
| Celtic Cross
Hverfisgata 26 E5 | Östofan
Vegamótastígur E5 |
| Den Danske Kro
Ingólfsstræti 3 E4 | Prikió
Bankastræti E4 |
| Dillon
Laugavegur 30 F6 | Reykjavík Beats
Hverfisgata 46 E5 |
| Dolly
Hafnarstræti 4 D3 | Rósenberg
Klappastígur 25 E5 |
| Dubliner
Hafnarstræti 1-3 D3 | Stofan Café
Aðalstræti 7 D3 |
| English Pub
Austurstræti 12 E3 | Thorvaldsen
Austurstræti 8 D3 |
| Gamli Gaukurinn
Tryggvagata 22 D3 | Vegamót
Vegamótastígur 4 E6 |

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Museums & Galleries

- ART67**
Laugavegur 67 | F7
Mon-Fri 12-18 / Sat 12-16
- Aurora Reykjavík**
Grandagarður 2 | B2
Tue-Sun 10-22
www.aurorareykjavik.is
- Ásgrímur Jónsson Museum**
Bergstaðastræti 74
Mon-Fri through Sept. 1
- The Einar Jónsson Museum**
Eiriksgata | G6
Tue-Sun 14-17
www.skulptur.is
- Galleri Ófeigur**
Skólavörðustígur 5 | E5
- Hafnarborg**
Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður
www.hafnarborg.is
- Hannesarholt**
Grundarstígur 10 | E5
www.hannesarholt.is
- Hitt Húsið**
Gallery Tukt
Pósthússtræti 3-5 | E4
www.hitthusid.is
- Hverfisgalleri**
Hverfisgata 4 | E4
www.hverfisgalleri.is
- i8 Gallery**
Tryggvagata 16 | D3
Tue-Fri 11-17 / Sat 13-17 and by appointment. www.i8.is
- The Icelandic Palaeological Museum**
Laugavegur 116 | F8
www.phallus.is
- Kirsuberjatréð**
Vesturgata 4 | C2
www.kirs.is
- Kling & Bang**
Hverfisgata 42 | E6
Thurs-Sun from 14-18
www.this.is/klingogbang
- Knitting Iceland**
Laugavegur 25 | E6
www.knittingiceland.is
- Kunstschlager**
Rauðarárstígur 1 | G8
Mon-Sat from 15-18
www.kunstschlager.com
- Living Art Museum**
Skúlagata 28 | E7
Tue-Sun 12-17
www.nylo.is
- Mokka Kaffi**
Skólavörðustígur 3A | E5
www.mokka.is
- The National Gallery of Iceland**
Frikirkjuvegur 7 | F4
Tue-Sun 11-17
www.listsafn.is
- The National Museum**
Suðurgata 41 | G2
Open daily 10-17
www.natmus.is
- The Nordic House**
Sturlugata 5
Tue-Sun 12-17
www.nordice.is
- Reykjavík Art Gallery**
Skúlagata 30 | E7
Tuesday through Sunday 14-18
www.artmuseum.is
- Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhús**
Tryggvagata 17 | D3
Open 10-17
Thursday 10-20
Kjarvalsstaðir
Flókagata 24
Open 10-17
Ásmundarsafn
Sigtún
Open 10-17
www.listsafnreykjavikur.is
- Reykjavík City Library**
Tryggvagata 15 | D3
www.borgarbokasafn.is
- Reykjavík City Museum - Árbæjarsafn**
Kistuhyllur 4
Open daily 10-17
Settlement Exhibition Reykjavík 871+/-2
Aðalstræti 17 | E3
Open daily 10-17
- Reykjavík Maritime Museum**
Grandagarður 8 | B2
www.maritime-vmuseum.is
- Reykjavík Museum of Photography**
Tryggvagata 16 | D3
Weekdays 12-19 / Sat-Sun 13-17
www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is
- Saga Museum**
Perlan, open daily 10-18
www.sagamuseum.is
- Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**
Laugamestangi 70
www.iso.is
- SÍM**
Hafnarstræti 16 | D4
Mon-Fri 10-16
www.sim.is
- Spark Design Space**
Klappastígur 33 | E5
Mon-Fri 10-18
Sat 12-16
www.sparkdesignspace.com
- Wind & Weather Gallery**
Hverfisgata 37 | E6
Open daily 09-02
www.windandweather.is
- POKA**
Laugavegur 25 | E5
www.thoka.is

HORNIÐ
Restaurant - Pizzeria

Hornið opened in 1979 was the first restaurant of its kind in Iceland, a restaurant with a true Italian atmosphere. Hornið is known for good food made out of fresh raw materials, good pizzas baked in front of the guests, good coffee and comfortable service.

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For reservations call 551-3340

Restaurant Hornið - Hafnarstræti 15, 101 Reykjavík - t. 551 3340 - www.horni.is

Shopping

10 Farmers Market

Grandi, Hólmaslóð 2

This design company and fashion line holds the integral values of sustainability, longevity, originality and environmentalism. Their modern take on the traditional Icelandic lopapeysa has struck chords worldwide. These are must-have items for locals and visitors alike.

11 Fjallakofinn

Laugavegur 11

If outdoor sporting is your bag, then Fjallakofinn is your kind of place, baby. This shop full of experts will set you up with all your climbing, hiking, camping, skiing and general good-times-in-nature needs.

12 Hrímm

Laugavegur 89

Unlike other design shops in town, this one goes beyond the local borders to bring some of the most innovative and stylish creations from designers around the world. They are also the official sales point of Lomography in Iceland, so get yourself a Diana camera and start snapping.

- Public phones**
There aren't many public payphones in the city centre. The tourist information centre at Aðalstræti 2, City Hall, Kolaportíð, entrance at Landsbankinn and in Lækjargata. Prepaid international phone cards are recommended for int'l callers.
- Internet Access**
Most cafés offer free wireless internet access. Computers with internet connections are available to use at:
Ráðhúskaffi City Hall, Tjarnargata 11
Ground Zero, Frakkastígur 8, near Laugavegur 45
The Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagata 15

- The National and University Library, Arngrímsgata 3
Tourist Information Centre, Aðalstræti 2
Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti 2
Reykjavík Backpackers, Laugavegur 28
- Swimming Pools**
There are several swimming pools in Reykjavík. The one in 101 Reykjavík, Sundhöll Reykjavíkur, is an indoor one, located at Barónsstígur. That pool features a nice sunbathing area and some outdoor hot tubs. Opening hours: Monday to Thursday from 06:30-22:00, Friday from 06:30-20:00, Saturday from 08:00-16:00, and Sunday from 10:00-18:00.

- Public Toilets**
Public toilets in the centre can be found inside the green poster covered towers located, for example, at Hlemmur, Ingólfstortorg, by Hallgrímskirkja, by Reykjavík Art Museum, Lækjargata and by Eymundsson on Skólavörðustígur. Toilets can also be found inside the Reykjavík City Hall and the Reykjavík Library.

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Álvaro Garrido is the chef and owner of "La Mina" restaurant in Bilbao, Spain. They have one Michelin star.

Álvaro studied in Bilbao where we worked for Daniel García, Chef of Zortziko Restaurant, awarded one Michelin Star.

Álvaro Garrido specialized in pastymaking and worked for Paco Torreblanca, one of the best patissier of the world. He worked in prestigious restaurants in Barcelona, such as EspaiSucre, owned by the prestigious Chef Jordi Butron; and Jean-Luc Figueras, one Michelin star.

Álvaro won the Prize "chef revelation" 2010. Álvaro was designated the prize "Chef Milleime" in 2011.

Food'n Fun

26 february - 2 mars

Álvaro's restaurant Mina has 8'5/10 in the guide "lo mejor de la gastronomia 2011." Mina is the first restaurant in Spain to receive a Michelin star in their first year, 2013.



Geirsgötu 7c - Sími 511 2300
www.hofnin.is

Best Of Reykjavík

Every year around the beginning of July, we make a BEST OF REYKJAVÍK ISSUE celebrating some of what makes Reykjavík-life worthwhile, posting some good entries into a hopefully never-ending discussion. The primary purpose of BEST OF REYKJAVÍK is celebration! It's about big-upping stuff, giving mad props to it and patting it on the shoulder. The following are some nice tips we pulled from BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2013 which you can read in full at www.grapevine.is



BEST BAKERY: SANDHOLT



For the third time Sandholt wins this category, which should not really come as a surprise. It is a little bit more expensive than the big bakery chains, but you'll be hard pressed to get better value for your money. They offer all sorts of pastries, chocolates, cakes, breads, and sandwiches that the other bakeries in town don't and - as our resident Frenchie notes - they use real butter in their pastries. "This is the only bakery in town that is consistently on point with their baked goods," our former food critic says. "Their products also stand out and have a richer flavour than anything else I've tried."

Located at Laugavegur 36



BEST PLACE TO GO TO A MOVIE: BÍÓ PARADÍS



Bíó Paradís is hands down the best place to go to a movie. This art house theatre always seems to have something exciting going on with regular festivals all year round. During the summer they have a series called 'Cool Cuts,' featuring six Icelandic films show with English subtitles. Last summer they showed 'White Night Wedding,' Sigur Rós' 'Heima,' 'Children of Nature,' 'Either Way,' 'Backyard,' and 'Nói the Albino.' The theatre also has a huge room with tables where you can drink coffee or beer and play games or catch the occasional concert.

Located at Hverfisgata 54



BEST SECOND-HAND SHOP: RED CROSS



We had some arguments about what exactly counted as a "second-hand" shop, but it ultimately came down to a vintage store with no curating--as in, no hand-picked collections or price mark-ups for various styles or labels. We ultimately boiled this down to the Red Cross stores on Laugavegur - one near Hlemmur and the other more centrally located - for their treasure trove-like atmospheres. Here you can get the best of a second-hand shopping experience, sifting and sorting and finally finding that dream item you never even knew you needed. Plus, they are really damn cheap so it's a total win-win.

Located at Laugavegur 12

A GUIDE THAT FUCKS YOU UP

A list of every Happy Hour in 101 Reykjavík

101 Hótel
Every day from 16:00-18:00. Beer 475 ISK, Wine 595 ISK.

Austur
Thursday to Saturday from 20:00 to 00:00
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

B5
Every day from 16:00-22:00. Beer 550 ISK, Cider 700 ISK, Wine 550 ISK.

Bar 11
Thursdays to Saturdays from 21:00-00:00. Beer 500 ISK.

Bíó Paradís
Monday to Sunday from 17:00 to 19:30
2 for 1 Beer 800 ISK, 2 for 1 wine 500 ISK.

Bjarni Fel
Monday to Friday from 21:00-23:00. 2 for 1 Beer 990 ISK, shot with soda 1,300 ISK, shot with energy drink 1,400 ISK.

Boston
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 550 ISK, Wine 550 ISK.

Bunk Bar
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
2 for 1 Beer 900 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

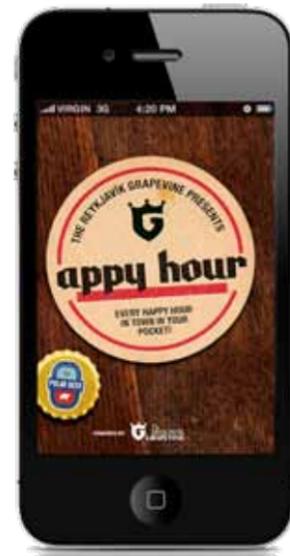
Celtic Cross
Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.
2 for 1 Beer 900 ISK.

Den Danske Kro
Every day from 16:00-19:00. 2 for 1 Beer 950 ISK, 2 for 1 Guinness 1,000 ISK, 2 for 1 Wine 1,000 ISK.

Dillon
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer, Wine and Whisky 550 ISK.

Dolly
Tuesday to Thursday from 20:00 to 22:00, Friday and Saturday from 17:00-22:00. Beer 500 ISK, wine 500 ISK.

Dubliner
Every day from opening - 22:00. 2 for 1 Beer 1,000 ISK, 2 for 1 Wine 1,000 ISK, Shot of Jameson 900 ISK.



Download the FREE Grapevine Appy Hour app!

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Einar Ben
Every day from 19:00 to 21:00.
Beer 500 ISK

Gamli Gaukurinn
Monday to Thursday from 21:00 - 22:00.
Beer 500 ISK, single shot 500 ISK.

Glaumbar
Monday to Thursday from 21:00 - 1:00. Friday to Saturday 21:00 - 4:30. Beer 390 ISK.

Harlem
Every day from 17:00 to 22:00.
Beer 550 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

Hótel 1919
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. Beer 600 ISK, Wine 575 ISK, Cocktail of the day half price.

Hótel Holt Gallery Bar
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. Beer 650 ISK, Wine 750 ISK, Cocktail of the day 1,200 ISK.

Hótel Natura
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00.
50 percent off all drinks, Beer 475 ISK, Wine 625 ISK.

Hótel Plaza Bar
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 500 ISK.

Iða Zimsen
Coffee happy hour every day from 8:00-10:00. All coffee 300 ISK, alcohol from 19:00-22:00
Beer 445 ISK.

Kaffi Kompaníð
Thursday to Sunday from 14:00 to 17:00.
2 for 1 Beer 850 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

Kaldibar
Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.
2 for 1 on Beer and Wine.

Kiki Queer Bar
Thursdays from 20:00 to 22:00.
Beer 450 ISK, Wine 600 ISK.

Kolabrautin
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
Beer 450 ISK, Wine 700 ISK, Cocktails from 1,000 ISK, Champagne 1,500 ISK.

Lebowski Bar
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
2 for 1 Beer 900 ISK, Wine for 1,100 ISK.

Loft Hostel Bar
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Cider 500 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

Micro Bar
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 600 ISK.

Miðgarður Bistro bar
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. All drinks half price, Beer 500 ISK, Wine 600 ISK.

Nora Magasin
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
Beer 500 ISK, House Wine for 600 ISK.

Prikið
Monday to Friday from 16:00 to 20:00.
2 for 1 Beer 750 ISK.

Roadhouse
Friday and Saturday 22:00 to 23:00.
2 for 1 Beer 895 ISK, Wine 895 ISK.

SKY Bar & Lounge
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 500 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

Slippbarinn
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00. Beer 500 ISK, Wine 500 ISK, selected Cocktails 950 ISK.

Stofan
Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

Pingholtsbar
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 500 ISK.

Vinsmarkarinn
Monday to Saturday from 18:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

ART ONGOING

— continued —

Psychotronic

In Bryndís Hrönn Ragnardóttir's exhibition the dismantling and reconstruction of the human being is explored via drawing and music. She emphasizes the idea of influencing the senses beyond the visual by playing with a sound diffuser.

Runs until March 9

Mokka Kaffi Gálgahraun

Artist Kristján Jón will exhibit a series of red and black chalk drawings from the protected Gálgahraun lava fields.

Runs Until February 13

Museum of Design and Applied Art

Artu tilbúin frá forseti?

The Museum of Design and Applied Art's exhibition, 'Are you ready, Mrs. President,' displays clothing and other accessories from the wardrobe of former Icelandic President Mrs. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir.

Runs until October 5

Paradigm

The exhibit consists of works by 18 Norwegian artists working in glass, ceramics and metals. The exhibition includes works by some of the most outstanding Norwegian artists in these fields.

Runs until March 3

The National Museum of Iceland From a Different Angle: Photography by Icelandic Women 1872-2013

The exhibition features a hundred pictures taken by Icelandic women in the past 125 years. The collection includes amateur and professional photographers, and is also shown in the Reykjavík Museum of Photography.

Runs until May 11

The Making Of A Nation

This exhibition is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.

On permanent view

Wood Carving Exhibition

A special exhibition devoted to the wood carvings of Icelandic artist Sigríður Sigurðardóttir will be on display. Sigríður learned and practiced wood carving in Iceland, Austria and England.

Runs until February 23

Nordic House

Nordic art books

A group of artists from Denmark, The Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden exhibit Art books in The Nordic House exhibition Halls.

Runs until February 23

Revolution: Generation Volcano

A mix of watercolors, drawings, sculptures, and super 8 videos which were shot on site at Snæfellsjökull and Pelée by artist and volcanologist Anne Herzog. Anne's work depicts a visionary, imaginative, and documentary inspired perspective of the volcanic landscape.

Runs until February 26

The Old Harbour

Iceland Expo Pavillion

Every day from 10:00 to 22:00, Sagafilms projects a film of Icelandic scenery inside their Iceland Expo Pavillion which provides a unique 360 degree movie experience.

On permanent view

Reykjavík Art Museum - Ásmundarsafn

"I've never seen figurative electricity"

The exhibition displays works by Icelandic sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson along with new works by nine Icelandic contemporary artists. The exhibition seeks to shed light on similarities found in works of contemporary art today.

Runs until April 27

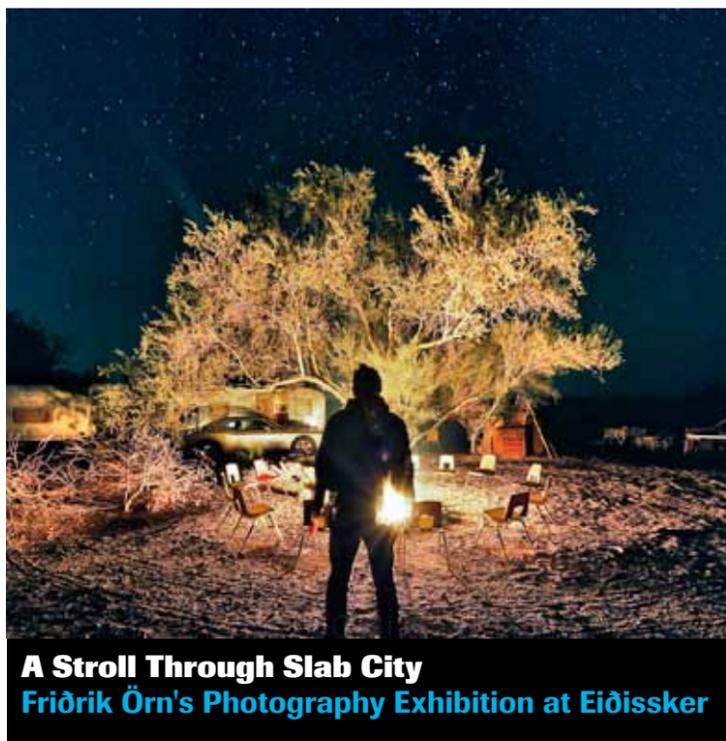
Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhús

Cadences of Line and Color

Featuring works by over 30 artists, the exhibition showcases works of art in the spirit of "visual music." The exhibition was organized in collaboration with the Reykjavík Centre for Visual Music and opened at the inaugural Reykjavík Visual Music Festival.

Runs until April 13

Foundation



A Stroll Through Slab City Friðrik Örn's Photography Exhibition at Eiðissker

Eiðissker | Feb. 7 to 28

One year ago photographer Friðrik Örn lived in Slab City, a small town deep in southern California without running water, sewage disposal, or any form of local government. Slab City is a beacon to those seeking freedom from the restrictions of modern society, attracting artists, hippies, tourists, and many others from all paths of life to live together in the comforts of the Californian desert. Friðrik's new photography exposition gives us a glimpse into the vibrant world of Slab City, and the amazing people that call it home. **BS**

Photo by Friðrik Örn



Find all art listings
online
listings.grapevine.is

Katrín Sigurðardóttir's large-scale installation which was Iceland's contribution to the 2013 Venice Biennale comprises a raised floor which extends beyond the walls of the exhibition space. Visitors can step up onto the platform and walk on it.

Runs Until April 13

Reykjavík Art Museum - Kjarvalsstaðir

The Seasons in Kjarval's Art

Every season imbues the land with new life, and every cloud sheds new colour upon the mountains. This exhibit focuses on how land and saga merge to become one in the works of Jóhannes Kjarval.

Runs until October 12

The Reykjavík City Library

The collection centres around new Nordic literature, both fiction and nonfiction. The library lends out novels, academic publications, audio books and more.

On permanent view

Reykjavík City Museum

Reykjavík 871 +/- 2: The Settlement Exhibition

Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre, open daily 10:00-17:00

On permanent view

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

The Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn

This vessel sailed through all three Cod Wars and has also served as a rescue ship to over 200 boats.

On permanent view

From Poverty to Abundance

Photos documenting Icelandic fishermen at the turn of the 20th century.

On permanent view

The History of Sailing

Iceland's maritime history that showcases the growth of the Reykjavík Harbour.

On permanent view

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Behind

Elo Vázquez's photography exhibition explores the things and people we leave behind, and the hidden world behind the obvious. The exhibition displays a variety of her works from Iceland and across Europe.

Runs until March 4

From a Different Angle: Photography by Icelandic Women 1872-2013

The exhibition features a hundred pictures taken by Icelandic women in the past 125 years. The collection

includes amateur and professional photographers, and is also shown in The National Museum of Iceland

Runs until May 11

Petites Pauses

This is the first of a series of exhibitions in Kubbin (The Cube) where various photographers can share their images through a projector. The first exhibition is "Petit Pause" by the French photographer Vincent Malassis. Vincent works with realism and the traditional interpretation seen in occidental painting.

Runs until May 9

Photography Days

The biannual Ljósmyndadagar ("Photography Days") festival is held for the second time. It is not only about looking at fine art photography but also about exploring the artists' intentions that engraved certain moments on a film reel or a SD card.

Runs until February 9

SÍM

Celestial Navigation

Artist Húbert Núi Jóhannesson has recreated with paint, entirely from memory, a box which depicts the stars of the night sky. The installation questions the limitations of mankind's ability and the connection between accuracy and art. It is on display in Neskirkja.

Runs until March 31

Spark Design Space

Reflection

Linda Árnadóttir, the founder and creative director of Scintilla, will open a show of mirrors. Up until the present Scintilla has focused on creating textiles for the home but will now extend its product range and create new products from different materials.

Runs until February 28

Volcano House

The exhibition gives a brief overview of Iceland's geological history and volcanic systems with superb photographs of volcanic eruptions and other magnificent aspects of Icelandic nature.

On permanent view

Wind and Weather Gallery

'Spann Sinnep Silkrangi'

This exhibition by Ásta Fanney Sigurðardóttir is an assemblage of mixed media art, including paint, sculpture, video, and sound. The exhibition opens up a dialogue between texture, colour, the cyber and the organic.

Runs until February 28

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Press Photo Exhibition



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„Are you ready, Madam. President?“

Paradigm



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F O O D

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The Cocoo's Nest

Grandagarður 23, 101 Reykjavík

What We Think:
Screams out hipster.

Flavour:
Fresh, healthy, organic.

Ambiance:
Sarcastic?

Service:
Exceptional.

Price for 2 (without drinks):
Less than 4,000 ISK



The Cocoo's Nest opened last summer in the very happening harbour area, next to insanely popular ice cream parlour Valdís. Conceptually, the establishment is of the kind found in the coolest quarters of cities like New York, Berlin or Paris.

The place is difficult to categorise right off the bat: it's a prime place for a lunch date during the week, a place to visit after work for an "aperitivo," a place to get you started with pancakes and bacon on weekends, and finally a place to get a delicious and healthy sourdough pizza and a cheap bottle of wine later on in the evenings.

It is my understanding, however, that the best time to visit is for lunch. Although the place is small, it's well designed to make

maximum use of its space. With large windows and high ceilings, the room itself is bright and feels spacious. It's almost as if you're eating at an outdoor European café.

The lunch menu is short and simple, consisting of soups, salads and sandwiches. A clever option is to mix two of the three, for example a soup and sandwich, in which case you only pay for the sandwich. This is what my companion and I did.

We both had the soup of the day (1,590 ISK), which was a carrot-ginger-coconut soup. It was of a perfect consistency, fragrant and full of flavour. A nice drizzle of olive oil on top made it even more silky smooth. It would have been nice to get some bread along with the soup, which I am sure the servers would have provided had we asked.

My companion chose a signature Turkey & Cranberry sandwich (1,790 ISK) while I chose a "sandwich of the day," an Open BLT with aioli sauce (1,690 ISK). It should be noted, and commended, that all sandwiches are made from homemade sourdough bread, which is nothing short of sourdough bread heaven. The Turkey and Cranberry had a generous amount of real slices of turkey (not the kind of cheap ham-like stuff) soaked in delicious cranberry sauce. My companion also asked for an added slice of avocado, which he deemed to be perfect next to the main ingredients. I'll take his word for it.

The Open BLT was, as the name suggests, open and had therefore only one slice of bread. In my opinion, just keep the sandwich closed, especially when working with this kind of crunchy and delicious bread. The aioli left something to be desired, but the sandwich was still very tasty with fresh tomatoes and lettuce and perfectly cooked, crispy bacon on top.

Given the modern hipster vibe of the place, we of course felt it essential to finish off our meal with a cup of coffee, which is, you guessed it, organic of course. The coffee served at The Cocoo's Nest is very likely among the best that Reykjavík has to offer and, make no mistake about it, Reykjavík has some pretty fine coffee. It was served by one of two wonderful servers who were both exceedingly professional and attentive.

Next on our agenda is to visit during aperitivo-hour, which lasts until 19:00 every evening. It is my understanding that after ordering a glass of wine (from a surprisingly ambitious wine list), the chef will simply make you something that comes to his mind, a kind of tapas served on some of that oh so nice bread.

✍️ BJÖRN TEITSSON
📷 ALISA KALYANOVA

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www.yummy.is



People Get Ready, There's A Train A Comin'

Hraðlestin

Lækjargata 8, 101 Reykjavík

What We Think:
Westernized Indian.

Flavour:
Mild, balanced.

Ambiance:
Laid back.

Service:
Friendly and professional.

Price for 2 (with drinks):
8,000 ISK (a steal).



Hraðlestin is a chain serving a westernized version of Indian food. It started as a single take-away restaurant on Hverfisgata called Austurlandahraðlestin (essentially a translation of East-Indian Express, which does not exist in real life as far as I know). They now have four locations—the most presentable one located on Lækjargata—that offer a place to sit down in addition to their original take-away arrangement. Today, Hraðlestin could be considered a younger sibling to Austur-Indíafélagið, being a less expensive alternative to the more established Indian restaurant on Hverfisgata.

My companion and I came in on a Friday evening. Hraðlestin does not take reservations, but I was informed that I would not have to worry—if there would be any wait, it would be short and sweet, which was the case. The menu is colourful and simple, a bit "dineresque" even. It consists of three starters, nine main courses and various accompaniments, typical westernized Indian food dishes, such as Samosa-pockets, Tandoori-lamb/chicken, Madras-chicken etc.

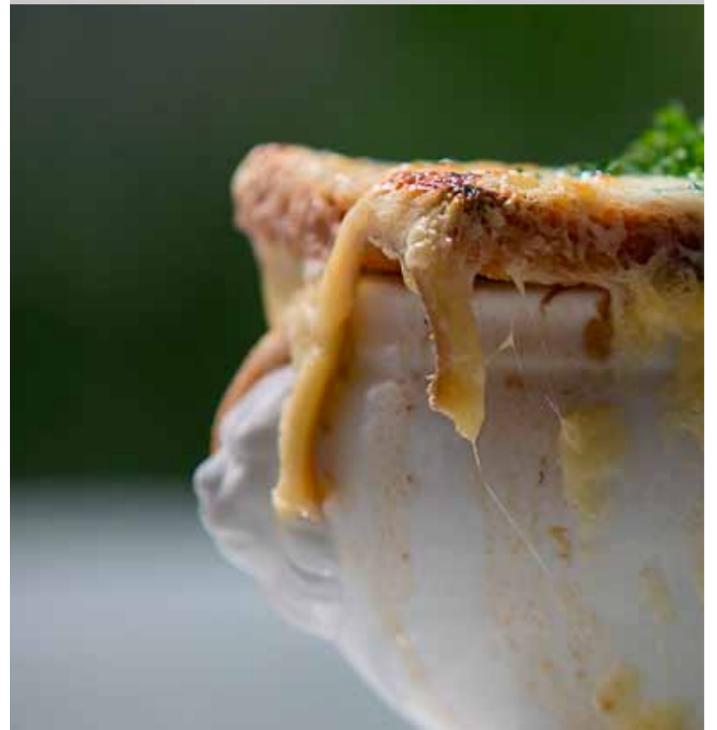
My companion and I settled upon "Special offer 3," which seemed to be what everyone else in the dining room was ordering. When in Rome and all that. For a mere 2,495 ISK per person, we got a bunch of food. The deep fried Onion Pakoda was delicious, crunchy and flavourful, served with coriander chutney, which was lovely. Plenty of naan-breads were also served, which is really difficult to mess up, and they didn't. The raita (mint-cucumber-garlic dip) could have been a bit more flavourful, but was of a nice consistency.

The main dishes were Chicken Tikka Masala and Lamb Kurma. The Tikka Masala was very nice. The chicken was perfectly cooked and not too dry at all. The sauce was well balanced, fragrant and of a lovely consistency. It was a bit lacking in spice in my opinion, but

then Chicken Tikka is not known for its "explosive" elements anyway. All in all, it was a fine dish. Here the naan-bread and Onion Pakoda came in handy to soak up the sauce. The Lamb Kurma was a bit of disappointment. The sauce was nice, although I must make a claim for more spice—as it is stated on the menu that the dish is supposed to be hot. The raita was essentially just sitting there, useless, as there was never any need for cooling. That was not the main problem though. The lamb was simply too dry. When broken up, it was of a very unappealing, grey colour.

That said, the visit still made for a nice experience. A friendly staff presented the dishes very well and, in general, the food was good, save for the lamb. The atmosphere is laid back, in fact perfect for going out with a bunch of friends to have a taste of various exotic dishes (as far as "exotic" goes in our post-modern society). The portions are generous, so there is no need to worry about leaving the place wanting more. It should also be noted that not only is the food quite fairly priced, but also the drinks! Cheers!

✍ BJÖRN TEITSSON
📷 ALISA KALYANOVA



SNAPS

Reykjavík | B I S T R O - B A R | Est. 2012

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Sónar Reykjavík Brings The Best In Electronic Music To The Winter Masses

Words by **Bob Cluness**

Today we live in a truly globalised Bass Culture. Whether it's dubstep from Santiago or drone techno from Kazakhstan, our digital interconnections ensure that the entire canon of dance music, past and present, is at our fingertips. Local sounds and flavours on street corners all over the world are ripe for plucking and commodification by DJs and producers in another continent. Every weekend, there are more new club nights, more new festivals and parties catered for by DJs criss-crossing the continents on low cost airlines armed only with a toothbrush and laptop.

At the heart of all this mayhem, standing like a calm fortress against a whirlwind of blind hedonism is Sonar, a shining beacon that celebrates a global cultural phenomenon, a fortress that draws fans, artists, and industry professionals into its steady embrace.

Sonar has come a long way since its humble beginnings more than 20

years ago. Founded back in 1994 by three men, Ricard Robles, Enric Palau and Sergi Caballero, it was simply titled "A Festival of Advanced Music and Multimedia Art." That year, Mixmaster Morris, Laurent Garnier and Sven Väth performed to around 6,000 people. Over 20 years, its brand and stature have grown organically in tandem with dance music itself and it is now one of the biggest and most important events on the dance music calendar. Last year was its biggest year ever, with over 100,000 people passing through its gates.

The festival has defined its importance by helping define a canon for the genre itself, while being able to capture and book artists in their prime (Daft Punk in 1997, LCD Soundsystem in 2003, Ricardo Villalobos back-to-back with Richie Hawtin in 2004). It also manages to trace the line of current dance music back to its pioneers, booking such acts as The Pet Shop

Boys, Kraftwerk and Derrick May last year alongside newer acts such as Skrillex, Karenn, Seth Troxler and Fatima Al Qadiri.

While keeping to its core beliefs as festival, Sonar has continued to grow. Two years ago, it moved on from its traditional daytime venues at the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA) and the adjacent Center for Contemporary Culture of Barcelona (CCCB) in favour of a bigger spot, Fira Montjuïc in Plaça d'Espanya. At the same time they created Sonar+D, a series of events that aim to look at the link between dance music, creativity and new digital technologies.

In reality though, Sonar is a brand, and since 2002 it has spread its reach out to cities across the world in a series of franchises and parallel festivals. Step forward Sónar Reykjavík. The festival decamped to Reykjavík's Harpa Concert Centre last year where, despite some institutional issues (crappy

licensing hours for starters), it passed off as a success. There were exceptional performances from foreign artists like Diamond Version, Squarepusher, James Blake and LFO, while locals Ghostigital, Sisy Ey and Gluteus Maximus wowed the international media present.

In its second year now, the festival has grown from two nights to three and has 67 artists lined up on the bill. This year also sees the festival run in tandem with Sonar Stockholm, with headliners travelling between the cities on different nights. This could mean a fair bit of standardisation in the headline acts, but a number of top line international artists such as Evian Christ, Diplo and Paul Kalkbrenner will still be appearing over the festival weekend. Meanwhile, far away from much of the heat and light of more established scenes around the world, there are also some incred-

ibly talented young artists, DJs and producers plying their trade on these shores.

To that end, the organisers of Sónar Reykjavík have a gold-plated opportunity to use the festival as a vehicle for change by not only making it a well-planned showcase for Icelandic electronic music, but also a breeding ground to foster new growth and much needed dynamism from Icelandic dance music both in terms of DJing and producing. But whatever expectations you may have for this year's Sónar Reykjavík, all we can say is this; no matter your preferred flavour of electronic music, be it glitchy electro pop, deep disco house, or stonking techno, we can safely guarantee that there will definitely be something on offer this weekend that will cause your ears to burn and your hips to grind.

Now get going and remember to have it large, OK?

Bob Cluness' Picks!

Starwalker is a new project by popular French musician Jean-Benoit Dunckel (member of duo Air), with Icelandic producer and vocalist Bardi Jóhannsson (Bang Gang, Lady & Bird).



Daphni

Talk about seeing the light. As the head of neo-psychedelic band Caribou, Dan Snaith had a good thing going on. But then he had to go and do a Four Tet by going to clubbing after gigs, which ignited a passion for dance music and culminated in the creation of his DAPHNI alias. His 2012 debut album, 'Jiaolong,' a collection of previous 12"s and unreleased tracks, shows a deft, astute hand in understanding the language of dance grooves that at the same time feels loose and nimble. He also showed that his mixing skills and ear are up to scratch, producing a SEVEN AND A HALF HOUR long mix on the release party for 'Jiaolong.' This guy is definitely no slouch. Highly recommended.

Saturday, February 15, SonarClub – Silfurberg, 23:00–00:30

Exos

If you fancy your beats a bit harder and righteous (No disco tech house for you, right?) then we recommend getting down to the car park on Friday night to hear some tr00 deep local techno action where you can hear EXOS holding court. A pioneer in the Icelandic techno scene, EXOS (IRL name Arnviður Snorrason) has been DJ'ing and producing techno of the purest form since the '90s, releasing music with the likes of Thule and Force Music. With a canon that includes three albums (We recommend 2001's 'Strength') and over a dozen EPs, he's played with legends such as Dave Clarke, Surgeon, Mortiz von Oswald and Marcel Dettmann. With new stuff coming out in 2014 on his new label, Strobelight Network, you need to check him out.

Friday, February 14, Sonar-Lab - Car Park, 23:00–00:00

James Holden

Dance music comes in all shapes and forms these days and it doesn't come in a more multifaceted or mysterious form than music from the head of JAMES HOLDEN. He burst on the scene in 2006 with 'The Idiots Are Winning,' a skittering blend of microgrooves and abstract downtuned electronica. But it was his 2013 sophomore album 'The Inheritors,' (released on his equally enigmatic Border Community label), where things got really interesting. A no holds barred mix of analogue drone sounds, splintered techno fragments and evocations of krautrock and KLF chaos magick. If you have ever danced in a dark forest or cave with the wood nymphs, then JAMES HOLDEN will be the desired soundtrack for you.

Saturday, February 15, SonarHall – Norðurljós, 23:15–00:15

Housekell

There's been some interesting stirrings happening in the local house scene over the past 12 months, with many local producers and DJs upping their game a bit, injecting fresher sounds and grooves into their sets, something which was sorely needed. Out of all the local house acts on display over the weekend, the inside money says you should go and dance to HOUSEKELL on Saturday. Áskell Harðarson may be one of the newer kids on the block, but his preference for playing deep soulful house music marks him out from the rest of the pack. When he joined local club house/garage collective BORG in 2012 though, it all went up a notch and now we're expecting some banging 12" vinyl releases from him in 2014. Tapps Aff!

Saturday, February 15, SonarFlói - Bay View Area, 00:00–01:00

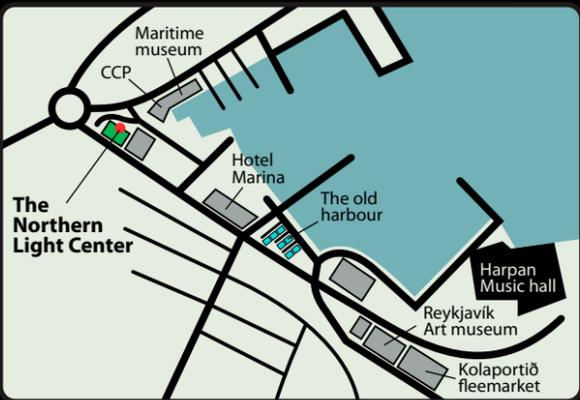
Starwalker

There are quite a few acts on this year's SONAR line-up that are so new, they've yet to release any actual material or make their live debuts. But out of all of them, none seem to invite more intrigue and interest than Icelandic/French duo STARWALKER. Making their live debut at Sonar, the pedigree behind this new project is copper bottom solid. On one side you've got Jean-Benoit Dunckel (of existential French pop act Air), on the other you have Barði Jóhannsson (of Bang Gang and Lady & Bird fame), and... um... that's it as far as we know! But on the strength of their debut single "Bad Weather" we can expect some gorgeously layered, downer pop of the highest order.

Friday, February 14, SonarHall – Norðurljós, 20:00–20:45



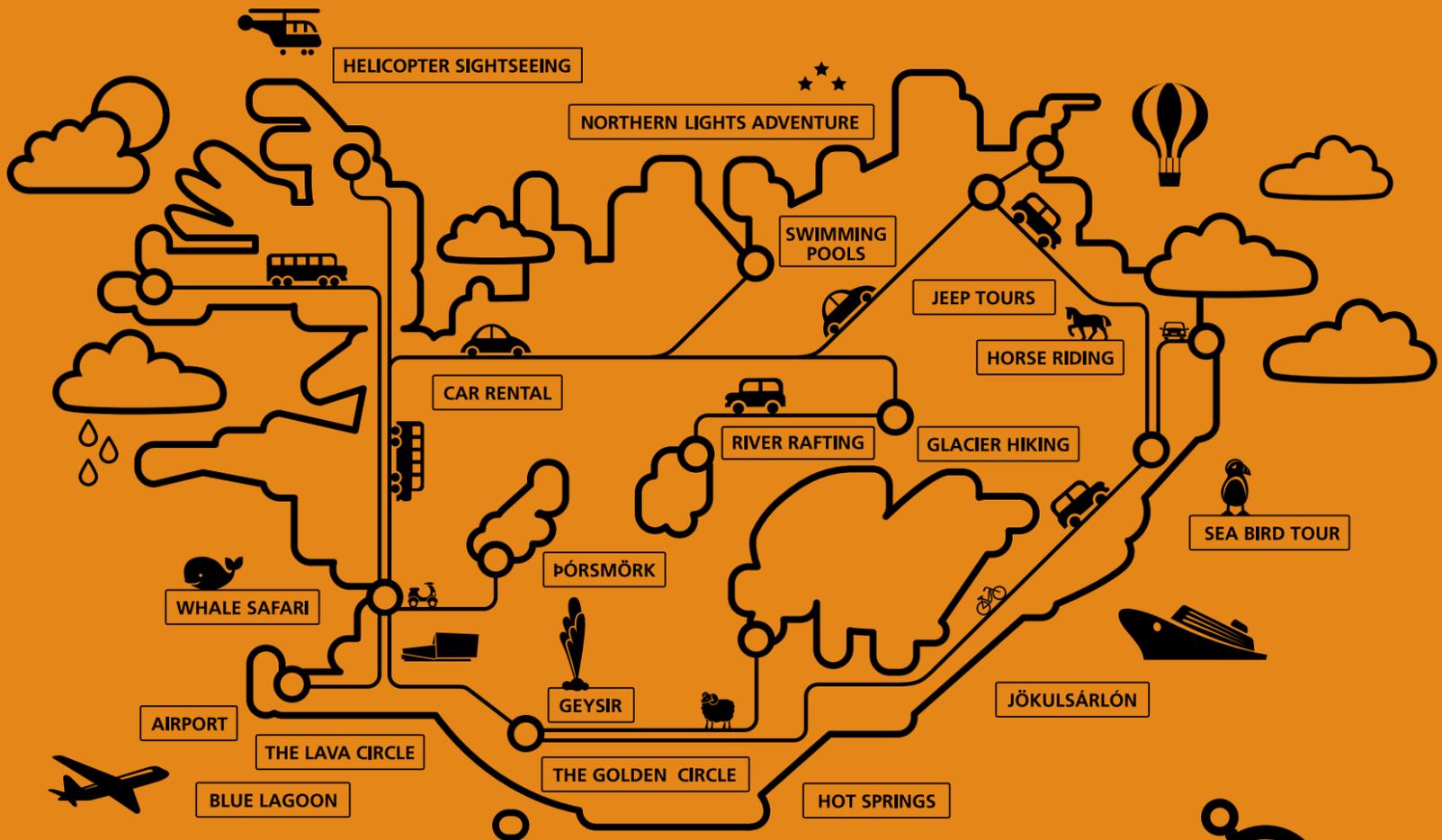
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Bonobo

A Trip Hop Legend

Words by **Simon Chetrit**

Friday, February 14 — **SonarClub - Silfurberg**

21:45–22:45



Simon Green's alias, Bonobo, took formal shape in the late '90s with the release of the 1999 song "Terapin," which later found a place on his seminal debut album, 'Animal Magic,' released in 2001. Later, he was signed to independent British record label Ninja Tune, with which he has gone on to release four studio albums, most recently 2013's 'The North Borders.'

This most recent album is a clear evolution for Simon as a musician. It's an organic and soulful sound made possible with electronic beats, a sound entirely less sample-reliant than previous works. At the same time, it's more instrumental, with slightly faster 4/4 beats that, perish the thought, stray towards the realm of the danceable. At times evocative of James Blake and even Pogo, 'The North Borders' has solidified Bonobo's reputation as one of the most exciting beatsmiths in electronica.

Simon recently took some time off while driving through the Colorado Desert to share his thoughts on Iceland, the differences between American and European crowds and the evolution of his musical style.

What have you been working on lately?

I haven't had much time to work on anything lately, as I've been on the road promoting my newish record for the last seven months. But actually I've been working on a compilation album called 'LateNightTales.' It's kind of a mixture of all sorts of stuff, more or less late night stuff. It's a real privilege to be asked to contribute to one of these albums [other artists who have been select-

ed to make these albums include MGMT, The Flaming Lips, Four Tet, Belle & Sebastian, Jamiroquai and Arctic Monkeys]. Other than that, I've just been touring. I've been on the road forever.

So you've been touring quite extensively lately, do you have any insight on the differences between touring in the US and Europe?

I mean yeah, it's kind of tricky. I live in New York, but I'm still British. I live in New York on a visa, so um... I do half my touring in America and half of it in Europe. It feels very familiar now, touring in America. The American crowds react more to the louder parts of the set whereas I think the European audiences kind of appreciate the deeper parts of the music, you know? They appreciate the more subtle nuances of the music.

Collaboration And Influence

In your music, especially lately, it seems you've got a penchant for collaborations. Are there any kind of dream collaborations you'd love to see happen?

I guess I worked with Erykah Badu, who was kind of one of those, you know, she was definitely on my list of dream collaborations. But I think if you ask a lot of producers, you know, who make this kind of music, I think everyone's gonna say Björk. I think everyone would love to work

with Björk. Q-Tip would be a great thing too, but it really depends, sometimes I think the greatest songs can come from people who are completely unknown.

What have you been listening to lately, as far as inspiration?

I'm listening to a lot of stuff. I've been listening to a lot of more neo-classical, experimental kind of stuff, like Matthew Bourne and Dustin O'Halloran. Also, some really good kind of beats producers, like Lap for Lux. The new Om Unit album is great. Stuff like Gang Colours, there's some really interesting music coming out.

Are you listening to any Icelandic musicians?

I like a lot Icelandic folk music, a lot of the accordion music. There's a lot of very beautiful, kind of wistful Icelandic folk music.

A Constant Evolution

How would you say your music has evolved since 'Animal Magic'?

I think it's just evolved over the years. I think that 'Animal Magic' was such a product of its time, which was, you know, that kind of very down-tempo, sample-based jazz-y kind of instrumental music. I wouldn't want to do that now, 10–15 years later; it would seem a little sort of out of place. I think my

music is reflective of what's exciting to me at the time, not that it necessarily follows trends, but I'm aware of what's happening and what's relevant and what's exciting. I think that's kind of how my music has evolved with the general music.

Where would you like to see your music go and the genre develop?

I think it's always nice to break out of a scene, and I think I'm doing that a little, to sort of cross over from being just in its own specialist area, to make your music without compromise, that appeals to people who're maybe not familiar with that style. I think I just wanna keep pushing it to see how far I can take it, I don't have an end goal really. I'm just sort of making it, making music as best I can. If people seem to be getting along with it, and that kind of makes me happy.

Iceland And The Festival

Seeing as how you're playing a multiband festival in Iceland where people may or may not be very familiar with your music, can you offer a convenient entry point in your discography for a new listener?

I would go back just one album to 'Black Sands.' It gives a very sort of broad idea of what my sound is like and I think it's maybe a broader album than the last one, because it has more of that live, jazz-y aspect,

along with the more programmed electronic stuff. I think that would be a good one.

Are there any bands on the Sonar Reykjavík bill that you'd like to see?

I haven't had a chance to look, but I know James Holden is playing and I love what he does, so that's something I'm gonna check out. I think I'm only there for one day, but definitely James Holden, if I can.

Is there anything in Iceland itself you'd like to see?

I want to see all the springs, the volcanic stuff, the landscape, you know. It's one of the places I've wanted to go to the most, out of anywhere, so I'm gonna try to get out there a few days before the festival, to go out into the country and hopefully get a chance to explore a little bit.

CELL7

A Pioneer Of Icelandic Hip Hop

Words by **Burke Jam**

Friday, February 14 — **SonarFlói - Bay View Area**

22:00-23:00

To say in 2014 that hip hop is solely an American art form is a grave misnomer. While the origin and root are indefinitely seated within black urban culture in the United States, to assume this is still its only functional place of residence disembodies the original placement and strength of its very genre. To have voice and identity, to celebrate it, and to articulate your position within your experience authentically are the first and most significant hallmarks of hip-hop.

A veteran of the Icelandic scene, CELL7 (Ragna Kjartansdóttir) does it extraordinarily well and with confidence, understanding of her roots and distinct authenticity. Born in Reykjavík to a Filipino mother and Icelandic father, Ragna was part of the original Icelandic hip hop group Subterranean (1997–99). After moving to New York to study audio engineering and recording, she relocated back to her home city and has been working up to her new record, 'CELLF,' after an almost 15-year hiatus.

Hip hop in Iceland may still be a small and young scene, but with this MC there is real soul, strength and identity present. Steeped in infectious groove and a full frontal arsenal of rhymes, Ragna is ready to kick in the doors of any preconceptions of what Icelandic music should sound like. While giving nod to the musicians and sounds that have come before her and opened the doors to international audience, she is ready to add her two cents and wants the world along for the ride. She does this with a fierce flow that is as honest as it is assertive, as authentic as it is aware of its roots, and as willing to break those roots to create a sound that is distinctly CELL7.

Musically speaking this is evident on 'CELLF.' It harkens back to the basics of hip hop while simultaneously morphing into distinctly new sounds through the help of Icelandic producers Earmax and Introbeats. She views the vibe of the record as a bit of an education for younger up-and-coming



MCs who are removed from some of the origins of hip-hop and rap. With a massively solid album to stand upon, her attention is now directed at delivering the best performances, being a truly good live entertainer and creating staying power for herself and her genre in Iceland.

An interesting contrast to much of the other Icelandic electronic sound on display at Sónar, CELL7 has more in common with international headliners like Diplo and Major Lazer. This MC is distinctly of Iceland however, and her performance should certainly deliver a new dynamic to the already amazing array of Icelandic music being showcased. In her own words here are some thoughts about this year's Sónar festival and her role in it.

How do you feel about this festival as a representation of Icelandic electronic music?

The Icelandic music scene is filled with electronic treasures and Sónar is an excellent venue to showcase Iceland's finest. Both up-and-coming artists, as well as veterans, are playing full sets in the prestigious

environment of Harpa. With the harsh weather conditions at this time of year, it's the perfect venue for working up a sweat while experiencing numerous trending musicians at the same spot.

Your record is one of the most buzzed about leading up to the festival, what should we expect out of your performance?

My goal is to give a dynamic and energetic performance. My music is diverse even though it's hip hop at its core. You can expect everything from organic hip-hop to dancehall to electronic music. I try to stick to the basic rule: just plain old rockin' the crowd like an MC does.

How would you describe the Icelandic hip-hop scene and where do you fit in it?

The Icelandic hip hop scene has been low key; even though it has its dedicated followers it hasn't been one of the mainstream genres in Iceland for years now. If we think of hip-hop

in terms of record releases, the genre is one of the smallest ones in Iceland. Yet, Icelandic hip hop musicians are very visible online; they upload videos and songs that are getting thousands of hits and views.

To be honest I don't know where I fit into it and it has never been a great concern of mine. But I guess being a female MC rapping in English kind of sets me apart from most Icelandic hip-hop artists as the majority rap in Icelandic.

Some have said recently that Icelanders should not try to make music that is not of Icelandic, i.e. hip-hop and reggae; do you have any thoughts on what it means to be an MC hailing from Reykjavík?

I don't know anything else than being an MC from Reykjavík. But I can imagine it might be easier getting overseas exposure if you are an indie rock/pop musician or electronic musician from Reykjavík, as we have so many talented artists such as Sigur Rós, Björk, OMAM, GusGus,

who have all paved the way. I am not saying that it's easy being an indie or electronic musician in Iceland—being a musician in Iceland in general is hard!

Every one of us hip hop artists differs musically even though we do have the MC factor and genre in common. Hip-hop often gets a bad rap because we throw in the attitude with our overblown egos, incorporated with a slight hint of aggression in performance. And listening to a combination of all that in Icelandic while not knowing the language must be hard to relate to.

Furthermore, if people approach Icelandic hip hop music with a preconceived idea that Icelanders have no business in making music of the African diaspora, especially reggae and hip hop, it intercepts their susceptibility. I'm a rapper and when working on my album I wasn't restricted to the hip hop genre even though it has a tremendous influence on me. I define my music, not the other way around.

Who are you looking forward to seeing most at the festival?

I know that Major Lazer is amazing live. I'm also looking forward to rockin' out to Diplo's live DJ set.

Besides your set, who would say is a must-see Icelandic band in this year's line-up?

The cool cats of Moses Hightower have always been a favourite of mine. Other good bands that are a must-see as well are KiriYama Family, Hermigervill, Sykur, Berndsen, Introbeats, Sisy Ey, FM Belfast and Ojba Rasta.

Any closing thoughts?

Break boundaries, be unafraid of new sounds and don't get stuck in what you think music is supposed to be.

Meet The Venue: Harpa

Words by **John Rogers**



Over the years, Sonar has become internationally recognised for curating cutting-edge live line-ups, but here at the Icelandic edition there's another big star at the core of the festival.

Originally operating under the rather less catchy moniker of "The Reykjavík Concert Hall and Conference Centre," Harpa is the glittering, hard-to-miss building that dominates the city centre's coastline. It houses four concert halls of varying size and design, as well as numerous smaller stages, shops, bars and cafes, including a high-end restaurant and a branch of the 12 Tónar record store.

The hall's distinctive facade is the result of collaboration between artist Ólafur Eliasson and Danish architect Henning Larsen, and is made up of 16,000 irregularly shaped, hand-crafted glass plates. As well as looking pretty damn spectacular, this sculptural carapace unites form and

function by working as a component of Harpa's heating system.

The walls of each performance space are equally full of technology, featuring moveable felt and wooden panels that allow each room to be "tuned" to suit the performance at hand. The multi-tiered Eldborg hall is flanked by two near-invisible echo chambers, cavernous in scale, that are activated by adjusting discreet hatches to varying degrees. The volume inside these spaces is reputed to be deafening with an orchestra in full flow.

Today, Harpa is a mainstay of Reykjavík's cultural life, but its construction was cloaked in controversy, grinding to a prolonged halt during the economic collapse of 2008. It stood half-finished for a seemingly interminable period, a hulking reminder of the country's financial turmoil. The building's future hung in the balance

for a while, and various attempts to get the project back on track faltered. But after some "clever financing" that placed a light burden on the public purse, the opening concert was finally held in May 2011.

Since then Harpa has become a favourite amongst locals and visitors alike. It is currently the home of Iceland's Symphony Orchestra and Opera, and hosts concerts by a diverse range of artists, from Dirty Beaches to Phillip Glass. The Airwaves Festival makes good use of the venue, and the second Sónar to be held in Iceland will add another string to Harpa's bow by shipping in an international line-up of renowned electronic artists to make use of its world-class acoustics.

Premiering



Högni Egilsson Shows His Teeth

Words by **John Rogers**

Thursday, February 13 — **SonarClub - Silfurberg**

21:30–22:30

Högni Egilsson is a busy man. He arrives at Hotel Borg's cocktail bar in relaxed and confident form, straight off the back of a photo shoot, which came after recording some organ music in Reykjavík's cathedral earlier in the afternoon.

"I've been working on a theatre piece," he explains. "We recorded some organ there today. It's going to premiere on Saturday. I'm also writing a wind quintet for the ensemble here in Iceland, for a performance on February 23."

Between the two, and the small matter of applying the finishing touches to a new album with GusGus, he will be premiering a new project entitled HE at Sónar. With so much on his plate already, how did HE come about? "The seeds were planted a couple of years ago when I was working on a project with a male choir," he says. "I wrote some music for a concert, and since then I've been working on it, on the side. Few people have heard it."

The Edge Of Intuition

While Högni winces at my use of the word "compromise" as a factor in collaborative and band process, he does acknowledge his urge to create something in which he had full creative control. "I wanted to make music that I was responsible for, something deeper and per-

sonal, that struck a different kind of chord," he says. "I was trying to fish out some sort of a centre, to start from there and create a universe around me, filled with endless reflections, something at the edge of my intuition. When you're in a band, you're part of a wave, a team that makes something happen. This is something else. It's not more ambitious or grand than any other project, but different."

As well as being Högni's initials, I wonder if HE is meant in the broader sense also, of mankind more generally. "HE is a persona," he expands. "HE is an archetype, too—of some goodness, of some worldly affection." He is masculine, he says, hesitantly, noting its gentle qualities. "Masculinity can be thought of as some kind of 'heroic grandeur,'" he says. "I wouldn't say this work is masculine in that sense. There's beauty, tragedy, modesty, lush orchestration, a warm, human, choral sound."

It's clear that over the years in development, this project has been thought through and through, and developed in different directions to encompass a range of contrasting ideas. "Initially, this was to be a reflective look at society and humans in a timeless sense," he explains. "There's a progression when humans enter a new century. We enter a new paradigm, a new gateway, and a reflective process takes place,

rooted in both the past and the present."

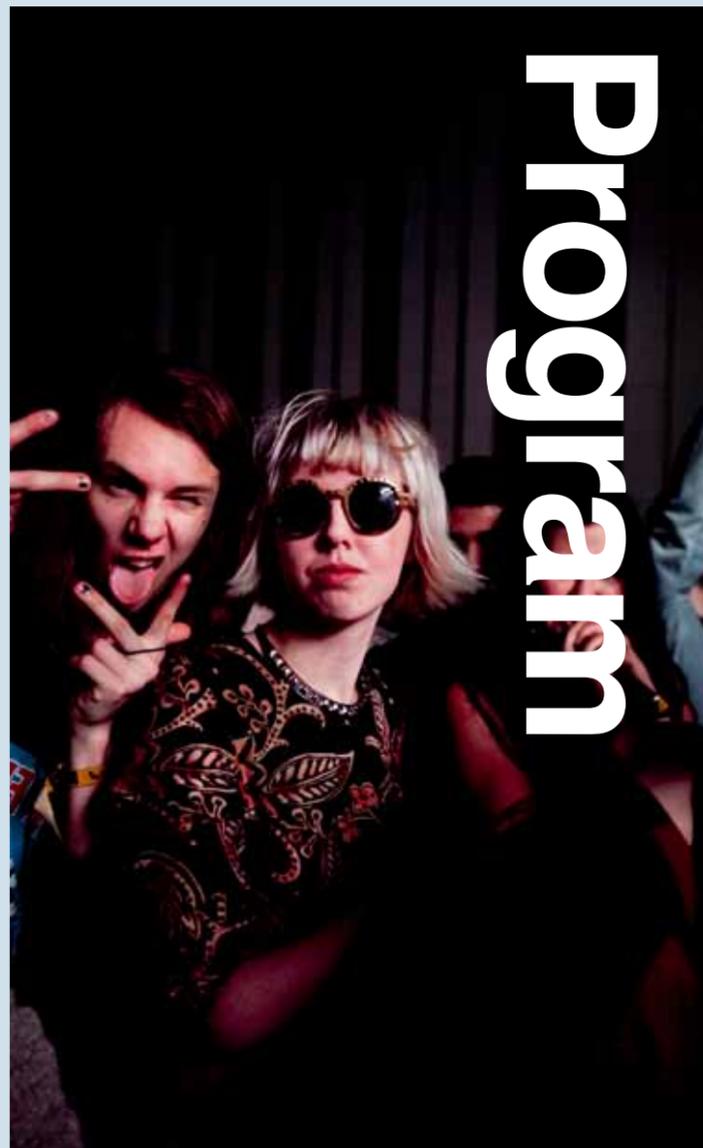
There Are No Friends In Art

And how is it to take the stage for the first time with a new project? Does stage-fear wear off for such a veteran performer? "I do feel quite comfortable performance-wise, but it'll be a little bit strange to be alone, but then, there are no friends in art," he laments, "so you're always kind of alone."

Högni notices my surprise at this statement. "I remember when I said that to a long-time collaborator, and he was insulted," he says. "Of course people can be friends within art, but for the sake of creation, for the sake of driving towards some divine abstraction, when you want it to become strong, if you want to play that game of being serious about your art..."

He pauses, gathering his thoughts. "For a lot of people, creating is supposed to be fun," he says, carefully. "And I agree with that, but you have to exchange something personal—if you believe music is precious and important, you have to be willing to go for it completely. I learned this in theatre, with set designers and artists from Russia and the Ukraine—they are serious about the realisation of art. In pop music, especially here in Reykjavík, things are very soft and friendly, but if you want to find some sort of a real core and say something, you can't pad it with warm cushions. Sometimes, you have to show your teeth."

Program



Thursday, 13th

SonarClub - Silfurberg
20:00 — Ryuichi Sakamoto & Taylor Deupree
21:30 — HE
22:45 — Eloq
23:45 — GusGus

SonarFlói - Bay View Area
20:00 — Tonik
21:00 — Introbeats
22:00 — Kiriya Family
23:00 — Moses Hightower
00:00 — Hermigervill

SonarComplex - Kaldalón
20:00 — DADA
21:00 — Fura
22:00 — Good Moon Deer
23:00 — Muted
00:00 — Tanya & Marlon

Friday, 14th

SonarClub - Silfurberg
19:30 — Viktor Birgiss
20:30 — Downliners Sect
21:45 — Bonobo
23:00 — Gluteus Maximus
00:00 — Paul Kalkbrenner

SonarHall - Norðurljós
20:00 — Starwalker
21:00 — Kiasmos
22:15 — When Saints Go Machine
23:30 — Kölsch
01:15 — Jon Hopkins

SonarLab - Car Park
21:00 — Kristinn Bjarnason
22:00 — DJ Yamaho
23:00 — Exos
00:00 — Kid Mistik
01:00 — The Mansisters

SonarFlói - Bay View Area
20:00 — Halleluwah
21:00 — Gísli Pálmi
22:00 — CELL7
23:00 — Futuregrapher
00:00 — Berndsen
01:00 — Terrordisco

SonarComplex - Kaldalón
21:00 — Sachiko M
22:00 — Stereo Hypnosis
23:00 — Skurken
00:00 — Orang Volante
01:00 — Jon Edvald

Saturday, 15th

SonarClub - Silfurberg
19:30 — Steindor Jonsson
20:30 — Mind In Motion
21:45 — FM Belfast
23:00 — Daphni
00:50 — Major Lazer

SonarHall - Norðurljós
20:00 — Highlands
21:00 — Sísý Ey
22:00 — Hjaltalín
23:15 — James Holden
00:45 — Trentemøller

SonarLab - Car Park
21:00 — DJ Hendrik
22:00 — Evian Christ
23:00 — Diplo
00:00 — Kenton Slash Demon
01:00 — DJ Frimann
02:00 — DJ Margeir

SonarFlói - Bay View Area

20:00 — Low Roar
21:00 — Ojba Rasta
22:00 — Sykur
23:00 — Steve Sampling
00:00 — Housekell
01:00 — Fknhndsm

SonarComplex - Kaldalón
21:00 — Sometime
22:00 — Vök
23:00 — Re-Pete and the Wolfmachine
00:00 — Árni?
01:00 — Einóma

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Ísafold, meaning old Iceland was the inspiration for the theme of the Ísafold bar's cocktail menu. In the old days, Icelanders believed in the Norse Gods, mythological characters that populated the Sagas that were passed down in the form of poetry and stories. Why not have a taste of Þór, Loki or even Óðinn?

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