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+ **COMPLETE CITY LISTINGS - INSIDE!**

VOLCANOES

Will they kill us all dead forever?

FASHION

What stood out at RFF?

GIRLS! GIRLS! GIRLS!

Some really weird ones!

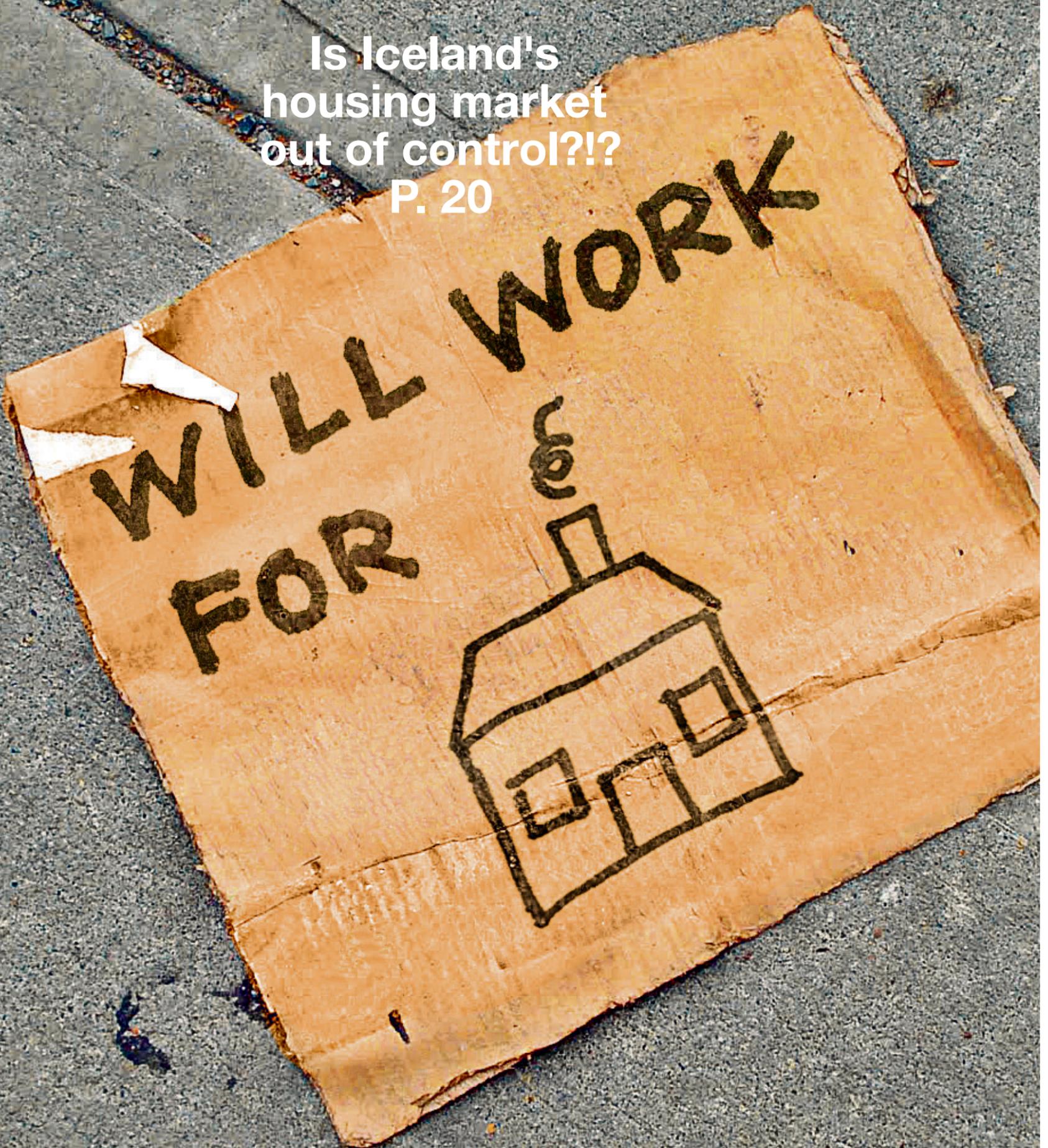
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Hallgrímur Helgason: Iceland was hit by tsunami of tourism and media attention

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housing market
out of control?!?
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In post-collapse Iceland, mortgages are hard to come by, and a growing number of people are turning to the rental market. Yet, with such increased demand, finding apartments to rent is only getting more difficult, with many would-be tenants claiming it is taking them **MONTHS** to find an apartment. Grapevine explores.

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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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Hristbjörnsson

Editorial | Anna Andersen

Looking Out The Window

Anna's 5th Editorial



Whenever we share a photo of the view from our offices on Facebook, there's always that person who points out that our view is rather boring and ordinary. But really there's a lot to see. For instance, we overlook Bæjarins Bestu—a hot dog stand arguably selling the town's best hot dogs. There's almost always a queue and we like to monitor its guests closely. "Yep, there's Steingrímur J. Sigfússon eating another hot dog..." No, he's not really one of the more avid hot dog eaters.

Looking past the hot dog stand there's a large parking lot with two hundred spaces. In fact, Reykjavík has a surprisingly large number of parking spaces. Hjálmar Sveinsson, a member of Reykjavík's Environment and Transportation Committee, wrote last year that there were between 700 and 800 parking spots per thousand jobs in downtown Reykjavík, one of the largest ratios in the world. We also have a lot of cars (more about this on page 10).

Finally, past that parking lot we have a small view of the harbour. Our resident designer not only monitors people eating hot dogs, he also monitors the ships in the harbour and keeps us abreast of any exciting developments. "See that ship, it's called Sóléy. It used to be a freighter, but it ran

aground. The insurance company couldn't get it loose to float so this man came along and said, 'if I can get it loose can I keep it,' and they said, 'fine.' And he came and he sawed it in two and pulled it to harbour where he put it back together again and from this ship he made an empire of selling sand, which he pumped from the sea. He's now dead. But his company Björgun, which means rescue, is still around."

We don't see much of Esja anymore, as Harpa—our conference centre and concert hall—largely obstructs it. It's been almost one year since we featured it on the cover of this publication. The Financial Times recently called it a symbol of our recovery (pages 12 and 14). Perhaps the author was onto something; Harpa happens to feature in a number of articles this issue—being the venue of EVE FanFest (page 16) and The Reykjavík Fashion Festival (page 28), as well as hosting a number of concerts, which you can read about in our listings pull-out inside.

Enjoy your stay in Reykjavík! And don't be shy about those hot dogs... we promise not to tell. If hot dogs aren't your thing, though, our food critic just adored the Indian restaurant Gandhi (page 31).



TRACK OF THE ISSUE

Steve Sampling feat. Bragi Eiríkur – "Distance"

Download the FREE track at www.grapevine.is

Our treat for you this issue is "Distance" by Steve Sampling. Influenced by disco and considered house friendly, Steve Sampling's "Distance" features vocals by Bragi Eiríkur.

With over ten years of experience in producing and remixing and four previously released albums, Steve Sampling is no newbie to the scene. This is his second release on Möller Records and there are certainly more to come. The song adds to his history of soulful melodic tunes that often cross genres from hip hop to house to break beat and dub step.

So get your free download at www.grapevine.is and if you like what you hear you can get the whole album at www.mollerrecords.com. More about Steve: www.facebook.com/stevesampling



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Sour grapes & stuff

MOST AWESOME LETTER FREE ICELANDIC GOURMET FEAST

There's prize for all your **MOST AWESOME LETTERS**. And it's a scorcher! No, really! It's a goddamn scorcher is what it is! Whoever sends us **THE MOST AWESOME LETTER** this issue will receive **A FRIGGIN GOURMET FEAST FOR TWO** at **TAPAS BARINN**.

Did you hear that? Write in and complain about something (in an admirable way), win a gourmet feast at one of Reykjavík's finest? **THIS IS THE DEAL OF THE CENTURY IS WHAT IT IS!**

What's in a 'lobster feast'? Well, one has to assume that it has lobster-a-plenty. Is there more? Probably, but still... Gourmet feast? Wow! **DON'T PANIC** if your letter wasn't picked **AWESOME LETTER**. There's always next month!

Now, if you're in the market for free goodies next month, write us some sort of letter. Give us your worst: letters@grapevine.is



MOST AWESOME LETTER:

Dear Sir or Madam

I want to make a complaint to the Icelandic tourist board, about a practice I encountered on my last visit whereby taxi drivers in Reykjavik start running the meter up early when they are called to pick up customers that are obviously tourists.

Specifically, on the 4th Feb, I asked my hotel to call a taxi to take me to the domestic airport, for 8.15 am. I arrived at the front of the hotel with all my luggage at what I thought was 8.15 am. Once I had loaded my bags and got in the cab I realised the driver had already been running up the meter for a few minutes, it was stating 1700 kr, unlike the usual 500 kr.

I complained to the driver who said that it is company policy to start the meter at exactly the time the taxi is ordered, and I subsequently called the operator who confirmed that this was the case. However, I have been travelling to Iceland for three years and have never encountered this practice before, when I have got taxi's with local friends. I am certain (and my friends agree) that the meter was run up because I am a tourist.

I am sure that the taxi company would never try and pull this stunt off on a local person because you could

- reject the ride and just call a different taxi company (there are enough taxi's driving around the center of Reykjavik)

Hi,

My partner and I had the pleasure of coming to Iceland for the first time a couple of weeks ago and absolutely loved your country.

However when doing research and reading local press such as your own publication, I was surprised at the height of negativity within Iceland press about yourselves and the current financial crisis.

Think everyone appreciates how tough the global economies are right now and whilst its always good to use lessons learnt about our prior attitudes, I think sometimes its too easy to focus on the bad.

And seriously what a fantastic experience we had. We were made to feel welcome right from the start – Iceland Air is a credit (especially compared to other national airlines and I am a frequent flyer) but throughout our stay - the taxi driver, the hotel staff, the tour guides, the restaurant staff, fellow drinkers in the bars and everyone is just so friendly, helpful and chatty - certainly not the case in London! The geological wonders are obvious but you have so much more and should remember this, celebrate this and make sure you can do all you can to keep this.. the negativity should be kept in reality to ensure such a situation doesn't happen again but again you need to remind yourselves not every-

- lose trust in the taxi company and avoid using them again.

Overall, I find it rather depressing that tourists are being exploited in this way. Taxi fares are expensive enough in Reykjavik. If the tourist in question realises they've been overcharged, it gives a terrible impression of the Icelandic people. You need to act to curtail this.

I really hope you will act on this email

Yours faithfully

Neil Holdsworth

PS: The taxi company in question was Hreyfill. As they are Reykjavik's biggest taxi firm, I doubt that this practice is confined to this company.

Dear Neil,

Thank you for sending us a copy of this letter. We just called up Hreyfill and got the low-down on fares. Are you ready for this?

The metre starts at 600 ISK unless you ordered a taxi for 5-8 people. In that case it starts at 780 ISK. It does not start when the taxi is ordered. It starts the moment the taxi arrives to pick you up. The taxi has a sophisticated computer that charges you per minutes when the taxi is stationary. So if your taxi hits

thing is doom and gloom

Looking forward to coming back!

Warm Regards
Shaun

Dear Shaun,

We're really happy that you had such a great time in our country. And we're glad that you didn't get Neil's taxi driver. And you're right. All this negativity can be exhausting and we should keep in mind that it's not all doom and gloom. It's only been overcast and rainy here for the last THREE MONTHS straight! Oh... there we go being all negative again. No wonder we're no longer the happiest people in the world.

While we could do with some more positivity, we certainly don't want to report exclusively on Icelanders spotting Merlins eating small birds. If we did that, who knows what our politicians and bankers and other authorities would get up to...

Anyways, do come back and say hello next time!

The Grapevine

a bunch of red lights or gets held up in traffic, this metre is running. Are you ready for the break down?

After one minute, you pay 135 ISK
Two minutes, 270 ISK
Three minutes, 404 ISK
Four minutes, we didn't catch what she said for four minutes
Five minutes, 674 ISK
Ten minutes, 1348 ISK
From ten minutes on, you pay every ten minutes...
After twenty minutes, you pay 2695 ISK...

Right, so don't take a taxi during Gay Pride.

Now, of course you also pay per kilometer. During the daytime hours 8AM to 5PM, you pay 299 ISK for the first kilometer and 187 ISK/km thereafter. During nighttime hours 5PM to 8AM, you pay 372 ISK for the first kilometre and 247 ISK/km thereafter.

Wow. We hope that helps. Unless you spent ten minutes fixing your hair before coming downstairs it sounds like you were scammed. That's totally lame.

Our sincerest condolences,
GV

Hello Anna,

You can write very nice, last you told me you eat only natural products, but now you eat pizza and spaghetti, I think you are getting fat from pizza, now it is 18 degrees in holland, you can wear your bikini and make bikini photo's, If you have less time it is not necessary to e-mail me each day, I can wait some days. In Holland we have financial crises, people don't buy clothes, how is that in your clothing store, is it busy, do many people buy clothes? Your e-mails are not boring, I like them.
Kisses,
Hans.

Greetings Hans,

Thank you for your letter. It was not entirely boring.

Someone tweeted this the other day: "Never buy a pizza from Iceland....Never!!! Fookin' rank!" They must be talking about that grocery store. The pizza here is all right. We get Gamla Smiðjan at the office every once in a while. We're pretty into letter N but sometimes we order V. It depends on how we feel at the time. And then sometimes we order a 2-litre coke to go with it. People probably still buy clothes. At least most people don't walk around naked and the stores are mostly still standing.
Good-bye!
Anna



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

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THE HAARDER THEY FALL...



Reykjavík, March 12. Disgraced former billionaire tycoon fancypants man Björgólfur Guðmundsson (once estimated as worth \$1.4 billion by Forbes) arrives to testify at Landsdómur court's criminal trial over disgraced former PM Geir H. Haarde. Proceedings in the state's case against Geir ended on March 16, and some sort of verdict is expected from the panel of fifteen judges presiding over it in the coming weeks. PHOTO: SIGTRYGGUR ARI/DV

News In Brief: March Edition

A brief overview of some stories we published online at www.grapevine.is/news since our last issue—go there for the full story on EVERYTHING mentioned...

March started off with some earthquakes with the largest measuring 4.2. Perhaps we'll have another eruption this year... And perhaps President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson will be there to do some "damage control" for he has FINALLY decided to run again!

Although he has been elected for four consecutive terms now, he is by no means guaranteed a victory this time. The 37-year-old former broadcast journalist Þóra Arnórsdóttir is leading the race, at least in a poll conducted by DV in early April. The 58-year-old entrepreneur Ástþór Magnússon is also running. He tends to do that.

So yeah, this should be exciting. Our former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance Baldur Guðlaugsson began serving his two-year prison sentence for insider trading before the financial crisis. This is the first time in Iceland's history that someone is convicted for insider trading.

But by far the most newsworthy event this month was the trial of former Prime Minister Geir H. Haarde, who was charged with negligence over the financial crisis. Amongst those testified were politicians like former prime minister and Governor of the Central Bank

Davíð Oddsson and bankers like former Chairman of Landsbanki's Board of Directors Björgólfur Guðmundsson and former CEO of Landsbanki Sigurjón J. Árnason. We're still waiting for the judges to deliver their verdict...

But does it even matter when Iceland's real estate market is recovering (defying odds again?), and we may just have discovered a way to become filthy rich after all!

Yes, we've discovered oil in the Dragon Area. Let's just hope that there are tonnes and tonnes of it... As the director of N1 said, Iceland could become the richest country in the world within 12 years. "I believe we should all be smiling," he said.

We'll see.

Meanwhile a bill proposing that school nurses be allowed to give minors the birth control pill without parental consent has been creating a frenzy. "... we know that the average age of sexual intercourse for the first time among girls is about 15, which tells us that we need to help them protect themselves against disease and unplanned pregnancies," Medical Directorate of Health Geir Gunnlaugsson said.

The British government added "Se-



vere effusive (gas-rich) volcanic eruptions abroad" to its National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies report. It cites Icelandic volcanoes of course.

Despite the fact that it's forbidden to import insects to Iceland, there's a pet store in Reykjavík selling cockroaches, millipedes and grasshoppers as pets. We don't understand why anybody would buy a cockroach—even for the small sum of 1.300 ISK.

In more appealing news, the mighty Sigur Rós, announced details of their impending sixth studio LP titled 'Valtari'

(that means "steamroller"), which will be released on May 28.

In a recent interview with Q magazine, the band said that the tourists are the worst thing about Iceland's economic collapse, that there have never been more, due to the failed króna, and that these tourists are the only people that bother the band for autographs.

So, if you are reading this, tourists or potential tourists, do note that Sigur Rós are not fans of giving out autographs.

It was probably wise of them to

make known their aversion as Iceland will likely be getting a whole lot more tourists now that easyJet is flying to Keflavík. Yep, the airline will fly to and from Iceland three times a week: Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.

Finally, Icelanders are no longer the happiest of people on the planet. And we are amongst the most pessimistic people on the planet on the subject of world peace, according to a Gallup poll.

And we don't even have an army! 🍷



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Emil

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Katlaaaaaarrgghh (Not This Again)!

Grapevine's resident volcanologist sifts through the scaremongering rubble



What time is it? Time for the annual Katla eruption scare, apparently. I was recently forwarded an article from The Telegraph – a generally well thought-of UK newspaper – which was written by someone who appears to have some genuine knowledge of the subject at hand. The piece essentially claims that Katla is brewing, ready for an imminent eruption that could lay waste to parts of Iceland and screw things up on a global scale. Reason to panic, then?

No.

I'm going to lay this down simply, in a desperate attempt to get as far away from the media scaremongering as possible. Katla HAS seen an increase in activity lately. Katla COULD erupt within the next few months. Katla WILL erupt at some point. And none of this is reason to worry about a thing.

Words

James Ashworth

Photograph

Baldvin Pálsson Dungal in 1918

THERE ISN'T A SCHEDULE

Volcano prediction is a muddy science. Imprecise at best and more often than not totally woeful on any kind of medium to long-term time scale. Forecasting isn't much better, and that's just assigning percentage probabilities to things. Let's take the infamous Hekla as an example and look at the years of recent eruptions: 1970, 1981, 1990, 2000. Its next eruption should be in 2010 then, right? Wrong. It's even showing many of the detectable signs of being 'ready' to erupt, but it hasn't. It's a year or two 'late' already. Hekla is an odd example and volcanoes are rarely kind enough to offer such a regular schedule of activity—things only get harder from there. The best we can do is make a vague forecast – “an X% chance of an eruption of size Y or larger before date Z”. An eruption at Katla has already been FORECAST by people in the know, but there is nowhere near enough activity to yet be able to conclusively make any kind of PREDICTION.

But when it does go, it's going to be huge, yeah? Again, there is nothing to say this. It's certainly possible—Katla has a history of quite large eruptions and it has been a relatively long time since the last major eruption back in 1918, but this

doesn't guarantee anything. The eruption could be small, it could be large, it could be 'catastrophic'. It could be explosive or it could be the kind of pretty, tourist-friendly, lava-fountaining eruption we saw on Fimmvörðuháls in 2010. We don't know.

Now, that's not to say there isn't any decent reporting out there. There is, if you know what to look for. In fact, the Telegraph article I referenced earlier wasn't bad at heart... it had just been passed through the wringer of journalistic sensationalism a couple of times before being published (and garnished with an inaccurate photo caption—the cherry on top), because that's what sells papers. Alas, what little accurate and levelheaded journalism there is out there is buried deep within piles and piles of, frankly, complete shit (not naming any names here!).

ARE YOU A PARANOID WEIRDO?

Quite aside from all of this science and sensationalism, though, there is a more basic reason why you shouldn't worry: BECAUSE YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT ANYWAY. You could refuse to go to Iceland because of the 'risk', but you'd be missing out on visiting a wonderful country. You could refuse

to use air travel in case you get stuck somewhere, but you'd be missing out on visiting ANY country. You could prepare an emergency bunker full of food supplies and gasoline, but you'd be a paranoid weirdo. Rest assured that governments and organisations around the world should have pretty comprehensive guidelines in place regarding how to deal with a large Icelandic eruption (especially since Eyjafjallajökull caught everyone with their pants around their ankles). They will (should...) do the best they can and there's nothing you can do to affect that. Just live your life already!

There are only a select few groups of people who really have a vested interest here. First, the local residents, who would be on the 'front line' if something were to happen. They should, well, be prepared. Second, international organisations like civil aviation authorities and government bodies, whose job it will be to actually deal with this stuff. Third, the scientists who are trying to understand it all... and to improve the science to help the former two groups. If you don't fall into one of those, then chill out, relax and enjoy.

Oh and please visit Iceland (while you still can)...

Opinion | B.R. Neal

Save The Rats!



A friend of mine swears there are rats in Reykjavik, but in my ten years in this town I have never seen one. There is, however, another type of rat that you should become familiar with. It's the so-called “Miðbæjarrottur”, which literally translates to “Downtown Rats”. They are a common sight on the streets of Reykjavik. They prefer to spend the vast majority of their time in the zip code of 101 Reykjavik; that is they like to work, live, shop, eat, and party within a five kilometre radius.

The best-known rat species are the Hipster Rat (*Rattus-Bakkus*) and the Party Rat (*Rattus-djammicus*). Hipster rats are often involved in music, fashion, art, theatre and various other creative enterprises. They can be identified by their glasses, and their distinctive odour of Kollaportið, the local flea market. And they are all cooler than you. Party rats are a less common sight during daytime hours. They are nocturnal and can be spotted out on weekend nights at any bar, livers and blizzards be damned. Student Rats (*Rattus-háskólis*) exhibit the same behaviour, yet they manage to attend classes during the week by consuming extraordinary amounts of caffeine. Family rats (*Rattus-familius*) make up a large part of the population, although little is known about how they sleep on weekends.

Hard-core downtown rats pride themselves on being able to get everything they need in 101 and love nothing more than walking or biking home from work, stopping at the bakery for bread, and nodding to the people they know along the way. Most do not own cars and prefer to spend their gas money on delicious lattes or weekday pub visits, which their suburban cousins almost never enjoy. Extreme cases can result in a feeling of slight unease when venturing out of 101.

However, a combination of factors including sky-high rent, increased competition from shopping malls, and rising tourism threaten the downtown rats' way of life. While it was once possible to go to a toy store or buy a pair of running shoes on Laugavegur, many of these shops have closed down. Quaint shops run by real people have been replaced by guesthouses and shops full of cheesy souvenirs. Downtown rats call them “puffin shops.”

A few strongholds still exist; thank Thor for Brynja, an old-fashioned hardware store where not unlike like Santa's magic bag, everything you'll ever need magically fits into a small two-room shop. There are also welcome newcomers like Litli Bóndabærinn, where coffee and pastries are made with love and local ingredients.

The Society for the Preservation of the Endangered Downtown Rat suggests that tourists interested in the preservation of this majestic creature spend their hard earned dollars or euros on a real souvenir.

One beautifully designed garment, piece of art, or pair of real grandma-knitted mittens is worth all the gold plated lava rock necklaces in the world. Take your picture at an Icelandic rock show with real Icelandic Viking mansweat on you instead of in front of a fake Viking village. Return home with a suitcase full of amazing Icelandic albums that will have you smugly saying “I listened to them before they were big,” for years to come.

So let us consider the beauty of this symbiotic relationship and do our part to keep it real in Reykjavik

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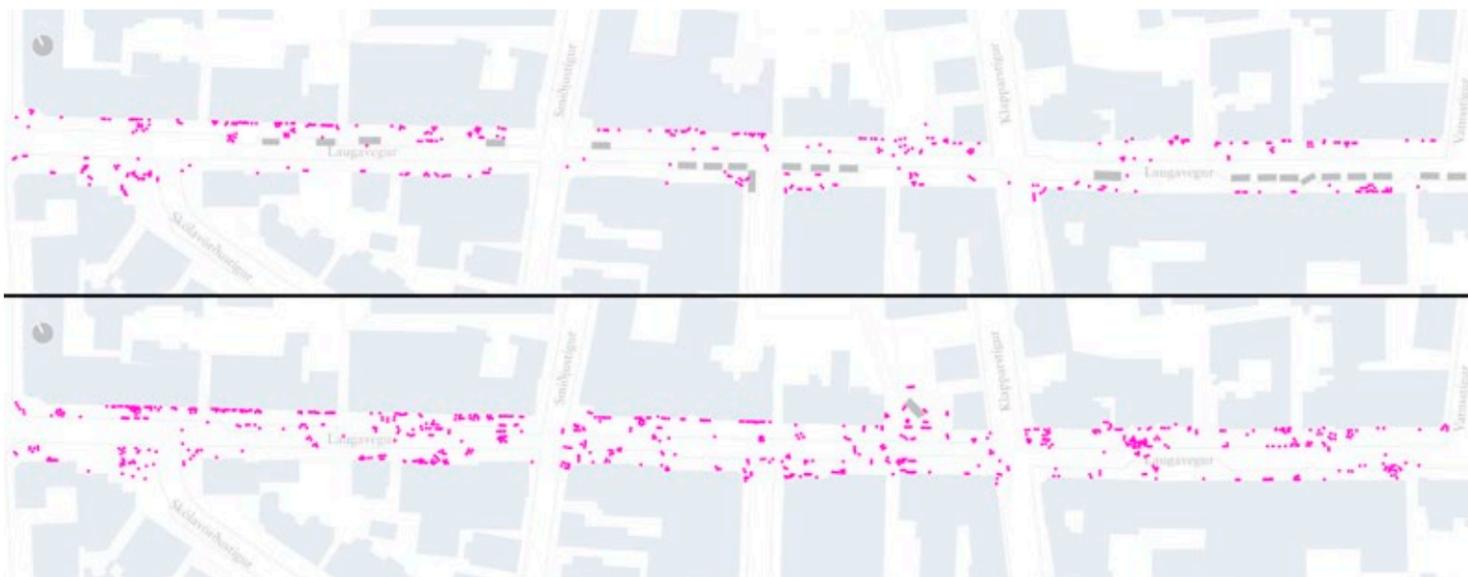
NOSTALGÍA

Laugavegur 32



WHAT'S HAPPENING ON LAUGAVEGUR?

How Reykjavík's city planning influences its everyday life



Inspired by urbanist William H. Whyte's work in New York, a group of young Icelandic architects (plus one music composer and one graphic designer) decided to re-search city life in Reykjavík. With grants from the Icelandic Student Innovation Fund RANNÍS and the EU's "Youth in Action" programme, the group—which calls itself Borghildur (the combination of "city" and the female name "Hildur")—has spent nearly two years looking into how and why people use public spaces. Two of the group members, Auður Hreiðarsdóttir and Gunnhildur Melsteð, tell us what they've learned.

One of your projects involved monitoring changes on Iceland's main shopping street, Laugavegur, when it was closed to traffic last summer. What did you observe?

Auður Hreiðarsdóttir: When there's traffic, people typically walk along the buildings. During the summer, however, they started wandering around and were thus much more relaxed. The street became a space rather than just a place to walk through. Our mapping revealed that there was a 90% increase in stops on the street. And after talk-

ing to people on Laugavegur, it became obvious there was a desire for better urban life.

How do you conduct your research?
Auður Hreiðarsdóttir: When we make a map of a certain space, we go there and mark spots where people stop for ten to fifteen minutes. We do that four times a day and get an average of where people stop. To compare the findings, it is important that the conditions, such as the weather, are the same.

Gunnhildur Melsteð: We also film and make time lapses to observe what people tend to do in a certain spot and catch interesting behaviour. Usually, people are very predictable, but sometimes someone does something unexpected.

AH: When people do something unexpected, it's typically due to something in the environment. If you see something unusual, you can almost be sure that another person is going to do the same thing.

GM: For example, last summer a person walked across Lækjartorg and sat down on a bench in the square. She took her shoes off, rubbed her feet, put them back on and walked along. Ten minutes later, a boy came and did the exact same thing. We don't know what in the environment made them do it, but it was very interesting to see.

You set out to find out how people use public spaces and why they use them that way. Do you have an answer?

AH: I think when it comes to urban research there's no conclusion or sin-

gle answer. There are definitely many clues, but the city is always developing. What we discovered are patterns.

I'm sure our research will continue indefinitely, be it as a group or individually. Researching how people use public spaces is a never-ending story, and it probably should be, as people's behaviour is bound to change with time and new surroundings. It probably repeats itself though, like fashion, where some things are always classic.

Generally speaking, how does design influence people's everyday life?

AH: Design has a lot of influence on people, but it is never only the design. Combinations of design, the function of a place and even weather influence city life. If something is well designed, it doesn't necessarily attract people if there are no services around.

And horribly designed things, such as hot dog stands, still attract many people because they attend to a specific need. So good design can lead to something happening, but it doesn't guarantee it.

GM: Good design means taking everything into consideration, and it is best when it doesn't strike you as being too designed. But ultimately, some street vendors can set up shop in front of a grey wall and bring street life to the duller part of Austurstræti.

So will your work have an impact on the city?

GM: It will be a good reference for the future when people look back at how the city has changed over the years. A lot of the places we have observed

have the potential to become better city spaces simply by adding services and making the space more inviting.

AH: We are trying to contribute to the discussion and perhaps influence the future design of our city. Perhaps architects and urban designers who work in Reykjavík will use our research. We also hope our project makes people more interested in thinking about our city spaces in this way. 🍷

The illustration shows Laugavegur in June (above - with cars) and July (below - car-free).

Explanation: We mapped where people stopped on Laugavegur on a weekday in June and July. We marked where people stopped four times during the day and why they were stopping. This mapping analysis revealed that there was a 90% increase in stops on the street. Furthermore the pattern of movement was different and the stops were distributed more evenly in the street space. This comparison was reasonable in terms of weather because conditions were the same. (Previous date was Tuesday June 21st, average temperature from 9:00 to 18:00, 12.1°C, partly cloudy. Later date was Wednesday July 20th, average temperature from 9:00 to 18:00, 12.3°C, partly cloudy.)

Opinion | Mikael Lind

Who Rules The Streets?

The skirmish over Laugavegur continues



After Laugavegur was temporarily closed to traffic last summer, many are wondering whether the experiment will be repeated this year. Although it seems like people were happy with the change, with foot traffic increasing from 9,000 to 14,000 per day, the move remains controversial.

In particular, a group of fifty merchants from the Laugavegur area are not thrilled with the idea of a "pedestrian only shopping street." They have now handed Mayor Jón Gnarr a petition arguing that closing Laugavegur to car traffic seriously damages their businesses. The group's spokesperson Björn Jón Bragason says that commerce suffered when the street was closed to traffic. "The truth of the matter is that the customers want to be able to get to the shops by car and to park close to them. If they don't get a parking space, they will go somewhere else," he tells me. He also argues that walking has never been successful in Iceland "due to gloomy weather."

There's no doubt that Icelanders are big on cars. In fact, only Monaco has a higher number of passenger cars per 1,000 inhabitants than Iceland. However, Karl Sigurðsson, chair of Reykjavík's Department of Environment and Transportation, believes Icelanders could be open to other means of transport. "It's easy to say that Icelanders 'have chosen' the private car when city planning is simply aimed at getting them into the car and keeping them there," Karl says. "The car has been given the right to dominate everything for years, but there is a changing attitude amongst the public, and my department needs to take this into account and aspire to more equality in different ways of transport."

Furthermore, he doesn't believe that weather alone—though characterised by violent winds and heavy rain or snow for a good part of the year—rules out a pedestrian only shopping street. "We don't live in the windiest or the snowiest country in the world and it's easy to point to foreign cities that have a far worse climate than we do, but still have pedestrian shopping streets," Karl says. As a frequent biker, often in low temperatures and heavy winds, he says that it is simply a matter of wearing proper clothing. Here, he admits, Icelanders still have a lot to learn.

While some fifty merchants are petitioning the city's move to close the street to traffic again, Karl says that a greater number of merchants were happy with the experiment. "It is clear that the experiment last year went well and was approved of by most of the people who visited the city centre, and there is no reason why we shouldn't redo the experiment this year," he says.

However, time will tell if, how and when it will be done. "Contrary to what has been said, we have not yet reached a decision on the matter, but different ideas are being discussed," Karl says. He maintains that the department will take into account all of the different concerns expressed by merchants and interest groups, but ultimately The City Council has the final word. 🍷

Words

Lynn Klein

Illustration

Borghildur

Mountaineers of Iceland

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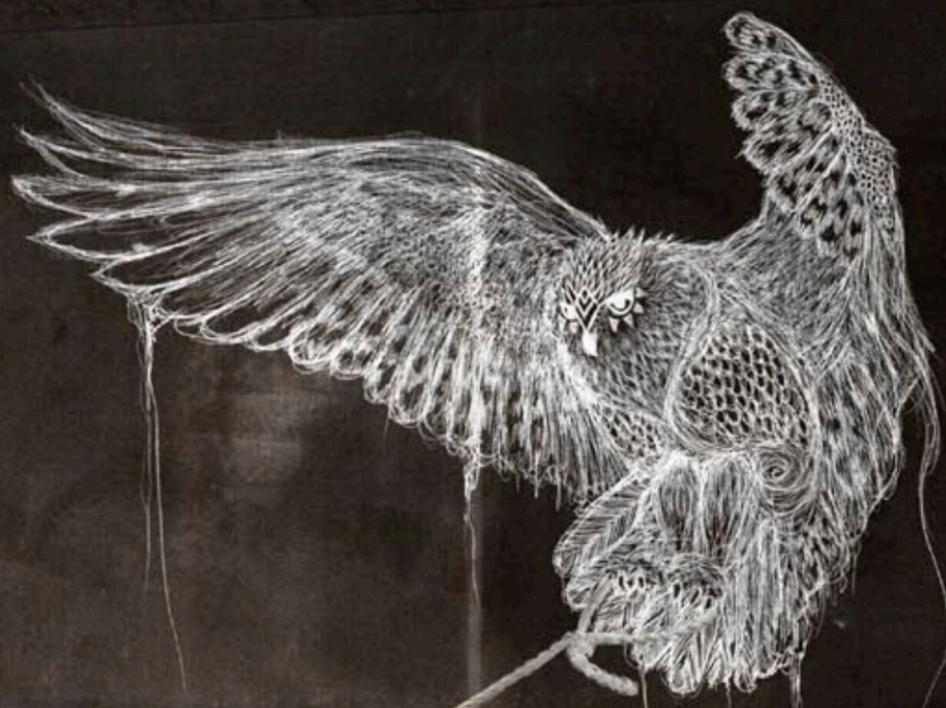
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Davíð Oddsson Told A Joke

Icelandic society explored at The Humour Symposium in Hólmavík



Writer E.B. White—well known for his children's books and co-authoring one of the most famous English language style guides, 'The Elements of Style'—once wrote the following: "Analysing humour is like dissecting a frog. Few people are interested and the frog dies." E.B. White died a couple of decades too early to visit the annual ICEF Humour Symposium in Hólmavík, a small town in the northwest of Iceland. But the room was full of interested people, and the humour survived dissection; when people were better aware of the context of the joke, they laughed even harder.

The biggest name at the festival was probably Þorsteinn Guðmundsson, a jack-of-all-trades when it comes to Icelandic comedy. While his stand-up was funny, his lecture was even funnier—the true highlight of the festival. He dissected a single joke, told by former Prime Minister and current Morgunblaðið editor, Davíð Oddsson. Davíð is arguably the most powerful politician of the last twenty years and the power he still holds over the populace was evident in the recent trial of former Prime Minister Geir H. Haarde, who was charged with negligence over the financial crisis. The day Davíð testified, the headlines of the many of the leading news sites read: "Davíð Oddsson told a joke."

The joke in question went like this: "When I was told that Björgólfur Thor and Björgólfur Guðmundsson were not related parties I asked if that wasn't hard on Þóra—who was the mother

of one and the wife of the other." The point being how absurd it was to try to say that the father and son—both connected to Landsbanki bank—were not related parties. Þorsteinn's lecture was considerably funnier than this so-called joke, as it is a myth that Davíð Oddsson is funny. He hasn't been truly funny since his radio days in the '70s, and the bar isn't set very high for Icelandic politicians in this regard.

WHAT THE JOKE SAYS ABOUT ICELANDIC SOCIETY

In any case, Þorsteinn used the joke—all the players in it, including Davíð himself—to analyse their status in Icelandic society and their relations to each other. In addition to Björgólfur Senior and Junior, another father-and-son pair has dominated the landscape of Icelandic business, namely Jóhannes Jónsson and Jón Ásgeir Jóhannesson. Many have thought that Davíð has been siding with the Björgólfurs, so in a way the joke was a canny way of distancing himself from them, as they have now both fallen from grace.

Þóra's role in the joke is also noteworthy. What does Davíð mean by saying it's hard on her? Does he mean that perhaps Björgólfur Thor is not Björgólfur Guðmundsson's son after all—and if so, why is that hard on her, rather than her husband? The tycoon's wife usually stays out of the media spotlight, yet she is the one who gives the family its historical clout, being the grandchild

of Thor Jensen, one of Iceland's most famous businessmen of the early twentieth century. The one time that she was in the news was due to the publication of the book 'Thorsarnir' (The Thors family) where her previous marriage to George Lincoln Rockwell, founder of the American Nazi Party, was mentioned. Björgólfur senior used his influence to buy and destroy all copies of the book, which was eventually published without this chapter. Then he even tried to buy DV, the newspaper that eventually told the story about how he censored it.

These kinds of relations are remarkably common in the higher echelons of Icelandic society, even considering its small population of 320,000. If it's not through a family connection, power structures can be traced to old cliques in high school or university or the youth organizations of political parties. By highlighting this and other aspects of Davíð's joke, Þorsteinn illustrated how Iceland's recent political and economic history often resembles a really bad joke. And when all the major news sites ran the headline "Davíð Oddsson told a joke," the media felt like the most terrible joke of all. But as is often the case with jokes, the joke is ultimately on you. ☘

ÁSGEIR H. INGÓLFSSON
NATO

Mad Money, Big Fish And Kiss-Me-Quick Tourism



The short and narrow of it is that those who have never graced these shores have no clue what we're about, but you can't blame them. All they really have to call upon is what they read in their newspapers and what they see on TV. Eyjafjallajökull on CNN, 'Game Of Thrones' on HBO, President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson on Bloomberg.

The old dictum is truer than ever. You can't believe much of anything you read, or see on the box—about Iceland. At the very least, you'll probably need to take it with a large lump of rock salt.

Surprisingly, this last month, writing in the Financial Times (FT), Michael Stothard presents an almost balanced picture of recent Icelandic events—or does he? He kicks in by poking a little tongue-in-cheek fun at that beehive leviathan that sits down at the Reykjavík harbour, Harpa. Although Icelandic taxpayers have been grumbling about its costs, he says, Harpa appears to be one of the few institutions that is actually making a profit.

Are you telling me, Mr. Stothard, that they already amortized construction costs?

An icon of the degenerate excesses of Mad Money suddenly becomes a symbol of national pride, particularly if Björk stretches her vocal chords there. Even "Steingrímur Sigfússon, minister for economic affairs [sic]...[is] one of those who sing the praises of the Harpa."

Poor old Geir Haarde—Prime Minister from June 15, 2006 to February 1, 2009—gets a right bashing as if he might be the root of all evil. And the criminal investigations go on investigating and investigating. No one else is to blame. Stothard quotes Elias Pettersson, one-time owner of a now-bankrupt construction company: "The Haarde trial is a step in the right direction, but it is political and cannot give us the whole truth... this is the year when the bankers hopefully are made to pay," he says.

Yet, this very well-attended Harpa, is the same building that was commissioned by Björgólfur Guðmundsson, a former Viking wheeler-dealer and once-owner of West Ham Football Club who, like others, "exploited cheap credit... following financial deregulation... to create a billion-dollar empire." Harpa was his supposed gift to the nation, all purchased with Mad Money. Now, however, Harpa belongs to the tax-indebted people, who still have to pay 12,000 krónur to see Björk.

And yes, on paper, Iceland looks far better than Ireland: "Net debt stands at 65 per cent GDP... far below the 100 per cent of Ireland." On the other hand, Reuters recently noted that the Icelandic

króna has fallen over 6% against the Euro so far this year. Good for tourism, bad for Icelandic tourists abroad.

The FT tells us that Iceland's recovery is being led by fishing and tourism, "re-sources that even the most over exuberant financiers and politicians could not damage... Today the wealthy men and women buying the tickets for galas at the Harpa are the heads of companies with fishing quotas and airlines rather than traders in derivatives."

And then finally, Stothard gets to the root of the matter: "The average household has suffered a 30 per cent fall in purchasing power since 2008. The private sector remains heavily indebted, with household debt levels exceeding 200 per cent of disposable income and corporate debt 210 per cent of GDP... domestic companies are reluctant [perhaps loathe is the more precise word] to invest." Björgólfur Jóhannesson, chief executive of Icelandair (once the CEO of Icelandic Group, who was urged to step down in late 2007 due to poor results) told the FT: "Now we work with real things—with fish and with tourists."

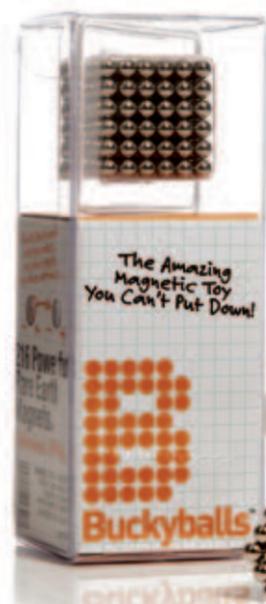
Put the emphasis on "real." And yet, The Iceland Chamber of Commerce's April 2012 Status Report tells us that "... general economic activity is well functional and many Icelandic businesses remain strong and prosperous." Is this the same Iceland Chamber of Commerce that paid Frederic Mishkin of Colombia Business School 124,000 USD in 2007 for a report that stated "Iceland is an advanced country with excellent institutions, low corruption, rule of law... prudential regulation and supervision is generally quite strong."

Stothard only manages to scratch the "real" surface. His short quote from Iceland's man on the street, Linus Orri—"I dislike politicians only slightly less than I dislike bankers"—gives small insight into the true feelings and situation of the Icelandic common man. Surely a productive nation must be a happy nation—as Iceland was once considered to be.

Once again in March both inflation and consumer prices rose. The Króna is weakening against the Euro, and yes, everyone is expecting a bumper tourist season this year—what with the both of Wow air and easyJet bringing cartloads of budget travellers through Keflavík.

Ah, what the Hekla. Better just sit back, chill out with Siggí's homemade landi (moonshine) and the new Sigur Rós single, "Ekki múkk," dream about the lazy days of summer and—er, get "real." ☘

MARC VINCENZ



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Remember to bring a swimsuit and a towel.



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HARPA AS A SYMBOL OF ICELAND'S RECOVERY

Iceland was recently described as a success story of the economic crisis in a Financial Times article. Just free from under the International Monetary Fund's wing, Iceland was considered an interesting experiment in getting out of a crisis of this kind, moving quickly from a bubble economy based on finance to an economy based on real things. The article noted that Iceland had allowed the banks to fail, the country's debts had been reduced to a manageable 65 percent of GDP, and government bonds had been moved from trash to investment rating. With growth reaching 2.5 percent for this year, Iceland's future seemed quite bright.

The Financial Times article called Harpa—the new conference centre and concert hall on the Reykjavík harbour front—a symbol of Iceland's recovery. Building such a house in a city with less than 200 thousand inhabitants could be considered a megalomaniac folly—and surely construction started during the boom years, when Icelanders were in the grasp of what has been called collective madness—but since its opening in May last year, it has been a great success.

A VERY UNPOPULAR GOVERNMENT

It could be considered a paradox that the government—a coalition between the Social Democrats and the Left-Green Movement, which came to power shortly after the crash—has not been reaping the benefits of the country's recovery. Quite the opposite; its confidence rating now rests at 28 percent, making it the second most unpopular government in Iceland's history, right behind the government that was in power during the crash. It must be noted that a while before the collapse the government's approval rating was 83 percent. It is now common knowledge that at that time, in 2007, the economy was totally out of control, resulting in the collapse of all the banks in October 2008.

Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir of the Social Democrats and Left-Green Party Chair Steingrímur J. Sigfússon are deeply unpopular politicians, who are often talked about in a hateful manner.

One of their problems is that they are not very good at communicating their policies, though they themselves would say that they are too busy cleaning up the mess. Another problem is the supreme propaganda flair of the opposition, The Independence Party, which has dominated Iceland's political history. This party, which is a broad right-wing alliance, was in power for eighteen consecutive years leading up to the crash. It enjoys a lot of support in the business, fishing and industrial sectors and is able to inflict serious harm on a government it does not like.

Words

Egill Helgason

Illustration

Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir

A LIST OF FAILURES

Still, there are also a number of failures that can be put squarely on the doorstep of Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir and Steingrímur J. Sigfússon. One is household debts, which rose steeply after the crash and the collapse of the króna. Unfortunately, the government's solutions have been found to be seriously lacking—despite Jóhanna promising to build a protective fortress around the homes in the country. This has caused large demonstrations in the city centre, and will likely be a big issue in the upcoming elections, set for April 2013.

Another is Icesave, a deal with the UK and the Netherlands on how to repay money deposited into savings accounts that the Icelandic bank Landsbanki operated in the two countries before the crash. This has been a serious international dispute for Iceland, and a deal has been reached twice, both times supported by the government and narrowly passed in Parliament, and both times—in early 2010 and 2011—vetoed by President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson and put to a general referendum where the government got duly thrashed. These are blows—which caused them to lose a lot of supporters—from which Jóhanna and Steingrímur will never recover.

There are other big issues causing serious friction. As the Euro crisis deepens, an application to join the EU has become deeply unpopular; a process of rewriting the Constitution has met with filibustering in Parliament; and, not least, the government has opened a real Pandora's Box in the process of trying to reform the fishing quota system, an issue which tends to make everybody in Iceland hopping mad with anger.

Some might say that the government was too ambitious for its own good at the outset. It took over when everything was in disarray, now it has a very hard time living up to its promises.

DEVALUATION OF THE KRÓNA

Nonetheless, there has been a recovery, which even the opposition has had a hard time denying; it actually uses this recovery as an argument against joining the EU. Unemployment has not risen to figures seen elsewhere in Europe, the welfare state has mostly been protected, and Iceland seems to

“The value of the króna is now propped up by strong currency restrictions. One euro is worth about 168 krónur, but on an offshore market you get up to 250 krónur for one euro.”

be better off at the moment than other countries which suffered such economic shocks—Ireland, Greece, and Latvia.

Of course this is somewhat due to the devaluation of the króna, down from less than 90 krónur to the euro to 168 to the euro now. One of the reasons for the crash was a totally overvalued currency, but now when the króna is down on the skids, it is helping the export industries—mainly fish and aluminium—and tourism is blooming like never before. There is a sizable trade surplus to pay the country's debts, which is a great change from the times before the crash when deficits rose to twenty percent of GNP.



In Iceland, however, there is a different perception. The króna has in a way been both the sickness and the remedy. The collapse of the currency put a heavy burden of debt on the back of the population, both in the form of loans in foreign denomination—which

To adopt the euro, Iceland would have to join the EU which, despite the application to join, seems a distant possibility. Other ways have been mentioned, for example adopting the Norwegian krona—the Norwegians do not seem to be thrilled—or the Canadian "loonie"—the Canadians have been rather polite about this.

FROM A HOLE IN THE GROUND TO A FULL HOUSE

Perhaps Harpa is after all very much a symbol of the recovery. It was originally going to be built by the oligarch Björgólfur Guðmundsson of Landsbanki bank. Then he and his bank and everything around him collapsed. In 2008 we had a big, ugly hole in the ground, which stayed that way for a while. Many said it should remain a hole in the ground as a reminder of the crash, but in the end the house was built. The state and the city adopted the project and put a lot of money into it. That was not uniformly popular.

But it has been a success. People seem to like the architecture and artist Ólafur Elíasson's huge glass façade. It is a nice experience seeing the house from different angles. The acoustics are also very good. The building gives Reykjavík the feeling of a big city, making it a great meeting place. And people flock to the concerts. The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra—a surprisingly good one—came from an old concert hall that

seated 800 people and seldom sold out. Now it fills Harpa's largest concert hall almost every time it plays, which means that attendance has about doubled.

Björk did a series of concerts in the house, and local favourites like Páll Óskar and Helgi Björnsson have performed to full houses. There have also been foreign artists such as conductor Gustavo Dudamel, tenor singer Jonas Kaufmann, soprano Kiri Te Kanawa, John Grant and Yoko Ono—and among those who are expected in the next months are piano virtuoso Arcadi Volodos, Elvis Costello, James Taylor, Bryan Ferry and Tony Bennett. Even Iceland's most celebrated marching brass band, called The Swans, has played in the house two years in a row.

It is nearly always full. Who knows if it will last, but the period after the crash has actually been quite good for culture in Iceland. 🍷



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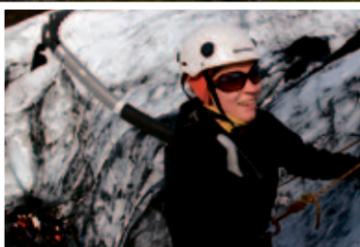
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Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon

Activities

AH10 Greater Area Reykjavík Sightseeing - Kosa wrote: Monday, January 30, 2012:

★★★★★

" (...) The friendly, chatty bus driver was our guide, too. He was a native Icelander with a funny, lovely English accent. It was still dark, in wintertime, but we could take photos, and the colours of the lights proved to be very impressive. We went around the greater city, stopping and getting off the bus at the places of interest. We got a picture not only about the highlights, but Iceland's history, people, customs, moreover, we heard interesting stories. It was a really enjoyable tour. "

AH35 South Coast & Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon - Ponjee wrote: Wednesday, August 17, 2011:

★★★★★

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The Future Is Here

EVE Fanfest 2012 shows where gaming is headed



When many people hear the words “online gamer,” the image that comes to mind is a socially crippled basement-dweller who is glued to his or her computer and probably hasn’t seen actual sunlight in years. People who believe this is what gamers are like should come to EVE Fanfest—an annual event hosted by EVE Online, the tremendously successful MMO run by CCP Games in Iceland.

This year it was held at Harpa, Reykjavík’s less than one-year-old concert hall and conference centre. Seeing the crowd, you wouldn’t have guessed that it was a gaming convention. There was almost no cosplay and people were very social. By all appearances, this looked more like a gathering of suburban professionals than a group of video game fans.

However, these were definitely video game fans and many of them were waiting anxiously for the release of DUST 514—a free FPS for PlayStation 3 wherein console gamers and PC gamers are able to share the same universe for the first time in gaming history.

Words

Paul Fontaine

Photography

Alisa Kalyanova

Another highlight of any EVE Fanfest is the PvP tournament wherein teams go head-to-head against each other, ascending the ranks to the finals. For the final round, the teams Hydra Reloaded and Wolfsbrigade sat at their respective computers, facing each other, in front of an audience, watching the action unfold on giant screens above the players.

GETTING INTO EVE ONLINE

For those not already familiar: EVE Online is an online, sci-fi roleplaying game. You create characters, build spaceships, and head out into the EVE universe. You are pretty much free to do whatever you want out there—you can safely mine asteroids for a tidy profit, engage in combat with other ships, or just about anything else. Most veterans will advise you to join up with a larger group of players, called a “corp,” as there’s safety in numbers. While there are areas with high security for new players and low security for more adventurous players, you should basically assume that this is a lawless universe where anything can and will happen.

Despite the stereotype of EVE being a slow game, the actual fighting was so fast that it was over before I knew it and Hydra Reloaded, a team from Finland, had won.

In many ways, one of the winning team members from Finland explained to me, EVE PvP is comparable to chess: there are certain strategies and moves that can be used to easily defeat players who aren’t aware of them. “It’s less

about how fast your reflexes are and more about strategy.”

MERGING GAMING UNIVERSES

Making my way through the crowd, I bumped into a developer drinking beer with his friends. I mentioned to him that I thought the crowd was pretty massive. “Every year it’s bigger than the year before,” he said. “I don’t think you can really define the demographic. There are people coming in from all over the world. There’s definitely a lot more press, but also a different kind of press, because of DUST 514. Last year it was more MMO press. Now we have that, and the console games press, too.”

As the hype this year was around DUST 514, I asked him how he thought EVE players would take to it. EVE, you see, is a PC game—it can be played on any computer that has the hardware to run it. DUST 514, however, is a console game, made specifically for the PlayStation 3. While traditionally PC gamers and console gamers occupy two separate worlds of gaming, CCP has allowed these two different gamers to share the same space in the EVE universe.

“I think that most EVE players will probably not be playing DUST 514,” he said, “but they’ll probably appreciate it, as it’ll benefit them. It gives them a new opportunity to backstab other players. You can have a player on a PS3 player DUST 514, who laser-targets an area, and then contacts an EVE player to bombard the area. That’s something that’s never been done before, this link between console and PC gamers, in

the same gaming universe. That’s what we’ve been seeing with DUST 514—it expands the FPS into something totally new.”

The crowd began to fill up as HAM and GusGus took to the stage. Wandering into the VIP area, I met the guys from Wolfsbrigade and we chatted about EVE.

“There is a steep learning curve,” admitted a team member from New York. “But so long as you get into the right corp, and have the right people around to teach you, you’ll learn quite easily. This isn’t a game where you grind, like in World of Warcraft. You set a skill, and come back a week later, and it’s done. You don’t need to be logged in the whole time. But it takes a long time to be able to go into a low-sec area and get into some real fights. Otherwise you’ll just be mining in high-sec like a lot of these people.”

Before parting ways to go see the bands play he said something that seemed to sum up Fanfest: “once you’re in a nice corp in the EVE community, you almost become a second family. You love meeting the other people in your corps, and even other people you play against. You forget about who’s in what alliance. You just get together, drink, have a good time, and once it’s over, you go back to killing each other.”

Indeed, Fanfest felt more like one giant party than a gaming convention. ☘

WHAT ARE THESE GUYS TALKING ABOUT?

As you may have noticed, a lot of acronyms and game specific terminology get tossed around in this world. Here’s a glossary to help you understand what they’re talking about:

COSPLAY: Dressing as a favourite fictional character in public, usually at anime, comics or gaming conventions.

CORP: Refers to corporation, which is the EVE equivalent of a guild—a group of players who stick together and work together on missions.

DEV: Refers to a developer, the person who makes the games work.

FPS: First-person shooter, means that you are a person with a gun running around shooting people.

GRINDING: Refers to repeating an action or series of actions multiple times to build up a skill level.

LOW-SEC/HIGH-SEC: Low security and high security, refers to different parts of the gaming universe in EVE. In high security, players are generally safe from unprovoked attacks. This is usually where new players start out. Low security, by contrast, is a survival-of-the-fittest environment.

MMO: Massive Multiplayer Online game, means that many different players log in to the same server to play and interact with each other in real time.

PVP: Player versus player, refers to fights between players, either one-on-one or spaceship fleets in combat.

PVE: Player versus environment, means that players interact with the environment around you, e.g., mining asteroids, rather than other players.



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'101 REYKJAVÍK' WAS WRITTEN ABOUT A MORE INNOCENT PLACE

Hallgrímur Helgason on his new books, and old



Writer/artist Hallgrímur Helgason should be familiar to most of our readers, not the least for his 1996 novel '101 Reykjavík', which along with its movie adaptation managed to define downtown Reykjavík as a party-hearty nightspot full of lovable slackers, a reputation that the area is still coasting on. His first novel written in English, 'The Hitman's Guide To Housecleaning' was recently released by Amazon Crossing and is charting nicely, while on the homefront his latest book 'Konan við 1000°' has been well received, while causing a stir. This caused us to think: "this is an excellent time to interview Hallgrímur Helgason." So we did.

Words

Haukur S. Magnússon

Photography

Alísa Kalyanova

TRAGIC, FUNNY

What's new, Hallgrímur Helgason?

Painting. I'm painting now, for the first time since 2007. I'm having big fun doing crazy coloured paintings, all the things you're not supposed to do when you're an artist. I feel like a child again. Your eighth and latest novel, 'Konan við 1000°' ['The Woman At 1000°'] was released last year. Could you tell us more about the book?

It's about Herra Björnsson, an eighty-year-old Icelandic woman, who was the granddaughter of the first president of Iceland. She was born in 1929 and grew up on the Breiðafjörður islands. Her father was among the few Icelanders who fought on Hitler's side in WW2. Her life was very much affected by this fact, and during the war she was left alone, a young girl roaming around Germany. You can say she never recovered from this experience.

After the war she goes from here to there, has many husbands and lives all over the place. She then ends up bedridden, in a garage in Reykjavík, where she spends her last years living alone with a laptop and an old German

hand grenade, her sole souvenir from a turbulent life. The book plays out in the present, with her in the garage, doing her tricks on Facebook and such, but also in the past, as she looks back on her eventful life. The novel is very much Herra's life story, peppered with some eighty years of North European and Icelandic history. It's very tragic at times, but funny as well, I hope.

THE BOOK IS FICTION

The book created quite a stir in Iceland upon its release, as some of its characters are based on real people. Did you anticipate such trouble?

Yes, Herra is based on a real person, Brynhildur Georgía Björnsson, whose father also fought with the Nazis and whose grandfather also was our first president. I tried to minimize the damage by stating straight out in every promotional interview that I based my character on her life and her biography, which was published in Iceland in the early eighties. Still there were people who were not happy, and I can understand this. The only thing I can say is: This book is fiction. Though it's based on a real-life person, the character of Herra is fictional. Half of what happens to her in the book is from my imagination only.

'Konan við 1000°', with its ultra-dramatic backdrop and female protagonist (your first in a while) is quite the departure from your previous novels. Is this intentional? Does it reflect the times at which it was written?

Well, my first and second novels were about women. 'Hella', from 1990, and the comic troll called 'Þetta er allt að koma' ("Things Are Going Great"), from 1994 (neither book has been translated). It's always exciting to write about women, you have to "try to become a woman" yourself, so it's quite a challenge. It was quite refreshing to do so after writing five books in a row about men. I tried to give it a feminist touch, since I believe so strongly in feminism. I had great fun making fun of the male species.

"A CALF IN SPRING"

'The Hitman's Guide to Housecleaning' is the first novel you write in

English. Was the process in any way different from writing in Icelandic? If so, how?

It was a fresh new departure for me. It was quite a ball writing in English. It was like getting a new PC, full of new features. I also felt like writing for a whole new audience. But of course it proved quite difficult in the end. My English is not 100% and in the last version I almost had to google every tenth word. After two years working with the English language I was getting so tired... And when I started to write the next one, I was so happy to get back to my mother tongue that I felt like "a calf in spring" as we say in Iceland. I think you can sense this joy in the style of 'The Woman at 1000°'. It was a very happy homecoming.

I understand 'HGTH' was published in the US as part of an initiative by Amazon.com's new publishing firm, Amazon Crossing. Could you elaborate on this?

For four years my agent tried to get a publisher for 'Hitman's Guide' in English, without success. It was already out in Germany, Denmark, Russia, Poland and elsewhere, but the text proved to be too rough for the refined tastes of London and New York. So we found Seattle: On the occasion of Iceland being the guest of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2011, the Seattle-based Amazon decided to publish ten Icelandic novels. And one of them was 'Hitman's Guide'.

A TSUNAMI OF TOURISM AND MEDIA ATTENTION

The book's main character, Croatian hit-man Tomislav Bokši (Toxic) is not far removed from '101 Reykjavík' protagonist slacker, Hlynur Björn. One might imagine Hlynur Björn making some of Toxic's choices had he come from a similar background, and the two oftentimes seem to share anxieties and ambitions (or lack thereof). Could one imagine 'HGTH' as a revisit to some of the sentiments from '101 Reykjavík'?

No, you are absolutely right. I even let Toxic visit Hlynur Björn's old hangout, the famous Kaffibarinn. That is no coincidence. 'Hitman's Guide' is a bit like '101' with a gun. The Reykjavík book was written when Iceland was a more

innocent place, like a thousand-year-old maiden in the middle of the Atlantic. Since the mid-nineties we've had a Tsunami of tourism and media attention. The world has been making love to the maiden for fifteen years now. Then, around the millennium we also saw the rise of Nordic crime writing. I don't think I would have written a book about a gunman without this crime wave. I'm not a big reader or an expert of crime novels, and of course 'Hitman's Guide' is not a crime novel in that sense—at the most you can say it's a crime novel inside out, for here the criminal is the hero and not the police—but still it was influenced by the genre, I would say.

Do you consider yourself a moral artist / writer?

Yes. Even though I may deny it myself, as I have in many interviews, you should not really listen to me. I think you can spot an underlying moralistic tone in my books. Even in the dead sarcastic and cool '101 Reykjavík' you can sense a longing for a better world. And 'Hitman', despite all its gory scenes, is all about the search for happiness and a decent kind of life.

LAXNESS IS CRUCIAL

What other Icelandic novelists should we be reading?

Halldór Laxness of course. His 'Independent People' is crucial. Jonathan Franzen rated it as one of his five favourite novels. 'Blue Fox' by Sjón is a beautiful little book. He also recently got nominated for the Independent's Foreign Fiction Prize for his 'From the Mouth of the Whale', which I have not read yet. Bragi Ólafsson's 'Pets' is a modern classic as well. And then it's Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir's 'Greenhouse', also published by Amazon Crossing. It's a charming tale and was a massive hit in France and Spain. There are more good books from Iceland, but not all of them have seen English translations.

What's next?

I started with sixteen ideas for a new novel back in January. They have been playing against each other in the preliminary rounds through February and March. This coming weekend will see the semi-finals. And then the final is scheduled for late April, after the opening of my show of paintings. Then we'll have a winner... ☘

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A BLACK BOX

Post-crash realities of the housing market explored

In post-collapse Iceland, mortgages are hard to come by, and a growing number of people are turning to the rental market. Yet, with such increased demand, finding apartments to rent for would-be tenants is only getting more difficult.

So where are we supposed to live?

By Anna Andersen

“When we advertise an apartment for rent, it’s gone two or three days later,” Brandur Gunnarsson, a real estate agent at Stakfell agency tells me. “We continue getting inquiries about it for the following two weeks, though. A rental usually gets at least fifty to sixty enquires.”

Another real estate agent, this one working for Eignatorg, Björgvin Guðjónsson, says that in his opinion the rental market is very underdeveloped. “When you find a flat to rent, it’s typically because it’s for sale or the owner is not using it for a short period of time,” he says. “So you regularly have to move, and it’s difficult to find an apartment that you could rent for ten years.”

In fact 56% of Icelanders say that there are either few or very few rental housing options that would suit their family’s needs, according to a Capacent poll conducted for the Housing Financing Fund (Íbúðalánasjóður) in October 2011.

A TEMPORARY OPTION

It has long been the government’s policy to encourage home ownership and the large majority of Icelanders own their homes today. As a result, the rental market is historically small and has been seen as a temporary option. While this wasn’t such a problem before the financial crisis of 2008, when loans were given to just about anybody, it has become increasingly evident that the housing needs of a fair chunk of people are not being met.

There appears to be a problem that needs solving.

The Housing Financing Fund (Íbúðalánasjóður, HFF) was founded by the government to provide individuals with loans for the purchase, construction and renovation of residential housing in Iceland, or as its director Sigurður Erlingsson puts it, “it’s a government agency with the task of making sure Icelanders have a place to live.” Sigurður confirms that there is increasingly a demand for rental housing in the greater Reykjavík area.

“Our polls show that crash or no crash, people still want to own their homes,” Sigurður says. “Icelanders are quite individualist, and much like Americans, they pride themselves in owning a home.”

However, it’s not that simple. The post-crash reality is that not everybody can afford to buy a home. “I think the obvious reason is that there is a larger group of people who, due to their finances, are not eligible to borrow money,” he says. “We can see in our polls that there is a direct connection between having a poor state of finances and entering the rental market.”

In fact, 24% of all people applying for a regular mortgage last year said that they were denied, according to the aforementioned Capacent poll. “That was really surprising,” Sigurður says, “and it supports the idea that there are some people who need to rent because they won’t be able to get a loan in the next few years.”

HOMES FOR EVERYBODY!

Prior to the financial collapse, nearly everybody was eligible to borrow money. The game-changing year is 2004,

when recently privatised bank entity Kaupping began offering competitive housing loans. Not only were they competitive with the HFF, but they were also “allowing up to 80% loan financing (as opposed to the 70% limit applicable to HFF at the time),” a July 18, 2011 EFTA decision states.

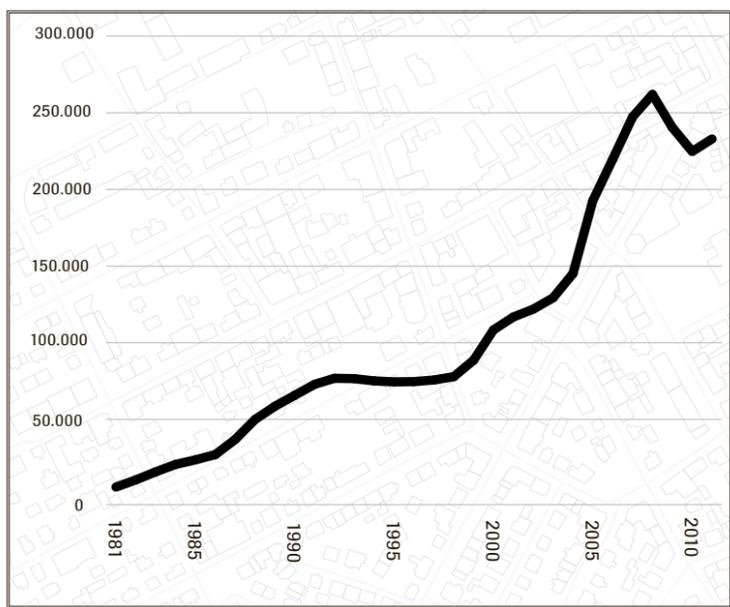
This led the other two large private banks to offer similar mortgages, which in turn led the HFF to lower interest rates on their mortgages and to lend on a higher loan to value ratio, with the HFF briefly offering up to 90% loan financing.

Meanwhile, the banks were offering up to 100% loan financing and in some cases bank loans far exceeded property value. A particularly glaring example is a certain home in 101 Reykjavík, which was advertised for auction with a debt to Arion Bank (formerly Kaupping) totalling 516.821.227 million ISK (around 4 million USD)—a property that had been valued at 77 million ISK (around 600,000 USD) in March 2010.

In light of these developments, housing prices skyrocketed—within two years, apartment prices in the capital area had doubled.

PROBLEM?

In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, it turns out that the lending system was problematic for a number of reasons. First, loans pegged to foreign currency—which have since been ruled illegal—became up to two times as expensive due to the króna’s plummet. Second, indexed loans—which make up the bulk of the housing loans—became



Average price per square meter in the Capital area (1,000 ISK)

significantly more expensive due to the crisis-induced inflation.

“Of course inflation has been a problem in Iceland for a long time,” Sigurður explains. “The indexation was meant to encourage owners of money to lend because nobody wants to lend money long-term without being sure that it won’t burn up.”

This worked fine for the last 30 years when salaries typically exceeded inflation, but it became clear that there was a flaw in the system when the trend reversed. “Suddenly the relationship between salaries and inflation didn’t hold true,” Sigurður says. “People’s salaries have been kept constant for three years while cumulative inflation has gone up over 40%. This is why people are so angry.”

In other countries, such as in Poland and Chile, where mortgages have been indexed, salaries were also indexed so that the mortgage payment is always relative to salary. “Iceland is, as far as I can tell, the only country using a system where obligations are indexed but salary is not,” Sigurður says. “My personal view is that the system is flawed.”

“PROPERTY ISN’T GOING ANYWHERE”

While Iceland’s current leftist government has taken some steps to relieve the resulting debt burden facing homeowners—for instance, by passing the Law on Mitigation of Residential Mortgage Payments—many still find themselves in a tight spot. In 2011, the Central Bank of Iceland submitted the following information to the EFTA Surveillance Authority:

- 25% of households have mortgages that are more than 500% of annual income (debt situation);
- Around 12% of households use over 50% of their disposable income to service their mortgages (debt service ability);
- The total debt service of 1/6 of households is in excess of half of their disposable income (debt service ability);
- Around 20% of households have negative net assets and 22% have only a marginally positive net equity position (net assets of households).

Despite all this, housing prices have not plummeted. Bucking a trend seen widely in post-collapse Europe, Iceland’s housing prices are rising. This is not making it any easier for the average person to enter the housing market.

“I think the rising housing prices can somewhat be explained by the capital controls, which mean that there are limited investment opportunities. If you want something safe, you can buy government bonds or you can buy a house. It’s basically a flight to safety for investors. You hear stories of people taking money out of the bank or from under the mattress and putting it into property, which is not going anywhere,” Sigurður says.

“There’s also a limited supply of new properties. Hardly any homes have been built since 2008, so there is a shortage, which is especially evident

with smaller apartments selling for less than 15 million ISK. People—typically young people buying their first home—fight heavily for the smaller apartments. So it’s just supply and demand at play.”

THE GOVERNMENT’S NEW AGENDA

Working on behalf of the Ministry of Welfare (formerly the Minister of Social Affairs and Social Security), a consultative committee charged with looking into ways to meet changed housing needs post-crash, reported in 2011 that the percentage of households in

“People’s salaries have been kept fairly constant for three years while cumulative inflation has gone up over forty percent. This is why people are so angry.”

long-term rental homes is lower in Iceland than it is in most European and Nordic countries and recommended that government officials work toward strengthening the rental market.

While the previous government encouraged home ownership through interest benefits given to offset the mortgage costs of purchasing residential housing, Sigurður tells me that the current government plans to re-evaluate this system in the coming years so that it does not discriminate between ownership and non-ownership.

“After the crash people have been saying that it is not desirable to have a system that encourages you to borrow. Obviously you always have to borrow some amount to buy a home, but the current system encourages you to borrow even more because that entails benefits and interest repayments,” Sigurður explains. “The benefits should not pull you one way or the other.”

DEVELOPING A RENTAL MARKET

Due to foreclosures, the HFF—which, as a state institution, cannot go bankrupt—now owns 1750 properties. “Instead of having a fire sale—shaving off thirty percent and putting them on the market—the plan is to slowly put their properties on the market,” Sigurður says.

Of those 1750, Sigurður says 650 are rented out. “If people lose their home, we are obliged to offer that person or the tenants living in the home a twelve month rental contract,” he says. “After that we have no obligation, but we have been renewing contracts for the second or third time.”

In the meantime, the HFF owns 1150 that currently not on the market. Thus far the properties that HFF owns have otherwise not been available for rent, but by summer, Sigurður says they will for the first time be on the rental market. “We have properties that we could sell or we could rent and we will try to do either one,” he says. “Of course, especially in areas where there is a shortage of rental housing, like here in Reyk-

javík, we will try to increase the supply of rental housing.”

The banks too own a number of apartments, which are also collecting dust—or so they think. While there are no official numbers, a number of people have taken up squatting since the financial crash.

In one case, a couple moved into an empty apartment on Laugavegur after the banks foreclosed on its previous owners. While it sat empty, a furnace exploded leaving water to sit in the empty apartment for an unknown pe-

riod of time. The damage is evident as I peak inside and there is a musty smell, but the couple say they live comfortably and rent-free. They tell me that a bank representative once showed up to find them there, but ultimately did nothing.

In another case, certain tenants have found themselves living for free when the apartments they inhabit get repossessed—it seems the collapsed banks creditors are not all that interested in reaping from their investments.

“The apartment we were renting was auctioned off from under the owners,” a 29-year-old student tells me, “they just arrived one day and told us that it had been auctioned off to the bank. Then nothing happened for almost a year. We just stopped paying rent, and the new owners never showed up to claim it or attempt to charge us rent. I’ve heard of lots of other examples of this happening, I am sure there are people living for free right now all over Reykjavík.”

DEMISTIFYING THE MARKET

Sigurður says the rental market is still very much a mystery. “After we accumulated so many properties I realized that the market was like a black box,” he says. “I had no way of finding out how many people were renting in the market. Nobody could give me a precise answer.”

The first step HFF is taking to develop the market is to make it more transparent. “What we have been doing, for example, in collaboration with The National Registry (Þjóðskrá), is figuring out what the market price for rent is in different areas,” he says. “We are also encouraging that all rental agreements be registered so that we can absorb pricing data and people will have a better idea of what it will cost them to live and rental companies that want to invest in property somewhere can accurately estimate how much they can rent it out for.”

With data about the cost of renting by size and location last year published time by the National Registry in collab-

oration with the HFF, for the first time last February, it is possible to start analysing the rental market and whether it is makes sense to rent or to buy.

RENT IS NOT CHEAP

Naturally, the rental market varies depending on whether we’re talking about Reykjavík or Ísafjörður. And it probably comes as no surprise that it’s most expensive to rent in downtown Reykjavík, postal code 101.

A two-room, 63 square metre, apartment in 101 Reykjavík rented for an average 109.863 ISK/month in 2011. To afford rent, somebody working full-time (171 hours/month) at minimum wage (182.000 ISK/month in 2011) would need to work 103 hours, which is 60% of the work month.

There is slight variation in the average price of an apartment in the greater Reykjavík area, with a pocket of lesser expensive apartments being found in Breiðholt, which has a large concentration of social housing. Still, somebody working at minimum wage would need to work at least 87 hours in a month to afford rent there.

The least expensive in Iceland apartments are located in the remote Westfjords. An average two-room, 63 square metre, apartment in Ísafjörður, which is considered the capital of this region, rented for 57.477 ISK/month in 2011. To afford renting this apartment, somebody working for minimum wage would need to work 54 hours per month, which is 32% of the work month.

LESS EXPENSIVE TO BUY

The price-to-rent ratio—which compares the price of a home to what it would rent for over a twelve-month period—is widely used in the United States to determine whether it makes more sense to rent or to buy in the current housing market. It is generally believed in the States that if the ratio is above 20 that it is a better idea to rent while if it is below 20, it is a better idea to buy.

If the same threshold applies in Iceland, preliminary price-rent calculations by the HFF indicate that in all Reykjavík postal codes, renting is more expensive relative to buying—with the ratio ranging from 14 in downtown Reykjavík (postal code 101) to 10,65 in Breiðholt (postal codes 109 and 111).

This of course is a rough measure, but as a rough measure it suggests that rent is high for the current housing market conditions. So it seems that Icelanders’ almost philosophical aversion to renting is partly based in the stubborn pride depicted in Halldór Laxnes’ ‘Independent People,’ and partly in the fact that at the moment buying still seems to make more sense.

Unfortunately it’s just no longer an option for everybody. ☹

KEEPING IT LEGAL

By Ólafur Halldór Ólafsson

Given this increased demand for rental apartments, landlords are reportedly getting away with renting to tenants without going through the proper legal channels, paying taxes or providing a lease. This of course results in poorly protected tenants that are left without a choice to accept of-ten-illegal and usually uncertain terms. It is common for black market renters to be asked to leave without notice at the whim of landlords who have perhaps finally been able to sell their over-mortgaged flats.

On the excellent expat blog Iceland Chronicles, blogger ‘Pu The Owl’ describes her experience, “A lot of land-owners would not offer a regular contract and would only accept to be paid in black money, which of course is very profitable for them but doesn’t provide any guarantee to the tenant. Some asked from four to six months in advance as initial payment, which is totally crazy in some cases, given the condition of the apartments and given the services included in the rent.”

As an experienced tenant I will stress this: You need to make sure you sign a lease with your landlord. With out a lease, you will be entirely unprotected legally and on uncertain terms—and you won’t receive state rent benefits.

You apply for rent benefits by turning in a special form that is available from your local authorities or social services offices.

The purpose of rent benefits is to bring down the cost of accommodation for lower income tenants and to reduce inequality on the rental market. Rent benefit entitlements are calculated on the basis of an apartments rent and the tenants income, net assets and number of dependent children. All those who inhabit residential premises that they rent are entitled to rent benefit. Foreign nationals residing in Iceland are also entitled to rent benefit. Tenants living in rented state or social housing are also entitled.

The basic sum for each flat is 13.500 ISK; an additional 14.000 ISK is paid in respect of the first child, 8.500 ISK in respect of a second and 5.500 ISK in respect of a third. The children must be registered inhabitants in the premises. The maximum monthly amount of rent benefit is 46.000 ISK, and it may never exceed 50% of the total rental costs.

There are three factors, which disqualify applicants from receiving rent benefits. If the tenant—or any other person occupying the tenant’s premises—is a close relative or associate of a landlord who lives in the same building, he or she is ineligible. If a tenant or any co-inhabitant is currently exercising his or her rights to interest benefits (interest repayments for apartment owners), they are ineligible. If the lease is made for a period of less than six months, the tenant is ineligible.

People do cheat the system. The most common way to do so is when people share flats and only one individual is a registered inhabitant of the premises. ☹

Some Resources For Finding A Place To Rent In Reykjavík

Newspapers

Fréttablaðið (online: www.visir.is) and Morgunblaðið (online: www.mbl.is) both contain housing sections.

Online classifieds

Leigulistinn.is: basically a pay-for-use Craigslist. Classifieds on www.leiga.is, www.bland.is and www.grapevine.is all contain free housing sections.

Word of mouth

Iceland is a small, sparsely populated country and its apartments are often rented by word of mouth or through social networks like Facebook. While this may work well for the native population, it may prove harder for new Icelanders. Solution? Befriend an Icelander.

Cooperative housing: www.buseti.is, www.bumenn.is

Family: Again, Iceland is a small country. Given the volatile nature of the housing market, some may rent from their family, which may prove to be a more secure long-term option. Establishing family connections in Iceland may prove a bit of a task for the uninitiated, unfortunately.

DISCLAIMER: This list is by no means comprehensive. We’re just trying to help. If you have tips on finding housing, please drop us a line at grapevine@grapevine.is and we will share your wisdom with all our readers!

Music Battle Royale 2012!

Iceland's newest crop of bands duke it out for cash and glory



Since 1982, The ÍTR, Reykjavík's sports and youth council, has put on The Battle of the Bands (Músíktilraunir) as a massive search for the best new acts the nation has to offer. It's a hugely popular event and many of its winners have gone onto have great careers, like Mínus, XXX Rottweiler, Mammút and Agent Fresco. Most recently, 2010 winners Of Monsters And Men were signed to Universal Records. We checked it out this year to see what's on the horizon, and gave them each an "award" of our own while we were at it.

WHITE SIGNAL

The cutest band of the night

This bunch of peppy teenagers bounded with energy playing sweet, dance-pop tunes. We expected a Disney Channel band, but we actually loved their synchronised dance moves that got the crowd going. It even made cynical bastards like us go "aww!" They seemed very assured in what they were doing and displayed an impressive amount of musical skill, especially considering they were all fourteen to seventeen. They make Retro Stefson look old!

Words

Rebecca Louder and Bob Cluness

Photography

Brynjar Gunnarsson

ICARUS

The band that needs to come out of its shell

These three young dudes playing some heavy, '90s style garage rock brought us back to the age where alternative met nu-metal, but sans vocal. The bassist lacked any sort of stage presence, but time and stress control will fix that. The guitarist put in the most physical performance, but overall they kind of sulked away at the back of the stage. Not bad at all, but a long way to go yet.

THE LOVELY LION

The Oprah Winfrey follow-your-bliss band

They sort of filled the Of Monsters And Men follow-up-act quotient. They were also the first of many bands of the night to have a costume gimmick (head and leg-bands!). Both the tunes and lyrics were overly positive and motivational to a mawkish degree, which reminded us of Dawson's Creek era alt-folk-pop. They were good performers, but they can probably make better music.

THE YOUNG AND CAREFREE

The band made for a John Hughes movie

When they started we turned to each other and said "ONE REPUBLIC!" but by the time they hit the first chorus of their dreamy '80s synth-emo with the hook-line "nothing is beautiful..." we found them more akin to Echo & the Bunnymen or M83. The electronics and synth guys gave super cool and collected performances in the back while their Kelly-from-Stereophonics-look-alike singer delivered intense, brooding

vocals. The beats could have been a bit crisper, but we fucking loved it.

FUNK THAT SHIT!

The magician-at-the-birthday-party act

We take it these guys are studying jazz composition because their technical level was way above everyone else in the showcase. We know who's winning the instrument awards tonight! But it was a lot of empty calories—lots of solos and displays of skill, but the songs were not much fun, and you can't spell 'funk' without F-U-N. (Little secret: we'd like to see them team up with the sax player from White Signal to play the soundtrack of Lethal Weapon.)

RETROBOT

The big hot mess of a band

During the break that preceded this band, we had noted that none of the acts were sloppy. We spoke too soon. From their awkward stage placement to their disjointed compositions to a seemingly unnecessary second guitarist, this group was kind of confusing. They crammed in so many different electronic styles that it was the sonic equivalent of an overpacked suitcase and their half-cocked lyrics didn't convince. Luckily it was pretty entertaining to watch the two main singers did flail around not giving a fuck.

AETERNA

The best song title for "Signal from a Demon Star"

These guys were the only metal band in the show, and also the only band to attempt a real joke! Their singer kicked off the set by throwing out a light dig at Bubbi Morthens before launching into their set of mixed metal styles. They are very good technically, but not much originality to the songs or awesome vocals—the voice could use more whisky. They just need to find their niche.

GLUNDROÐI

The band that made us want a beer

The second folk-rock act of the night had a distinctly stronger belligerent pub-vibe. We disagreed on the source of their sound, one of us hearing more Americana, the other more Ireland. Either way it was solid, rough-edged booze-music. Their fiddle player's over-enthusiasm and posturing was a bit too much for us to take, but the guitarist/shirtless accordion player redeemed the set with a big booming sing-along that carried on until they were off the stage.

POKA

The kind of band you want at Café Rósenberg

The pace slowed way, way down for this three-piece, vocal-blues band that didn't even sport a rhythm section. This act paired up a guitar and an electric piano to highlight their singer's rich, husky voice. A bit muted and flat, but not a trace of pretention in it, with the vocalist delivering a really sincere and emotive performance, making her the obvious front-runner for best voice. They get a honourable mention for best James Taylor look-alike.

HINDURVÆTTIR

The bless-their-hearts-they-tried band

Oh dear. This band's closing performance of one very (veeeerrrrryyy) long song rather than three songs over about fifteen minutes did not go well. At all. And when we saw the members walking around after, it looked like they knew it. Thus, the less said about it the better. It happens, guys!

Prior to the prize announcement, we both agreed that The Young and Carefree were our definite favourite to win, with our picks for second and third going to White Signal (for the cuteness!) and RetRoBot (for the lulz!). Turns out the judges felt differently.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

3. Funk That Shit!
2. Poka
1. RetRoBot (pictured)



ADHD

ADHD 2

ADHD is the coolest un-cool band going and you'd be a damned fool to miss them.

I've made up my mind. ADHD's latest album rules. This being my virgin foray into their world of sound, I was initially worried when I saw the line-up of musicians. They are all fantastic players, but I figured these skilled cats would play all over each other and forget about proper song-writing and memorable songs. I was skeptical to say the least. However, I'm happy to report that my worries were unwarranted and I'm chewing on my hat with a big frown across my face.

This album is cool. I mean, it makes you feel like you are fucking cool just listening to it. It is cool like cool jazz is cool, but it's not really 'cool jazz'. Rather, it's a potent mix of modern and standard jazz (there's no such thing!), with hints of blues here and there and something up-beat, warm and energetic. Opener "IFE" will have you run and hug the nearest person and start to dance. And just when you think you have them pegged down, they switch gears and the affair gets a tad more triply and calm with "Merkilegt." Two songs deep, you know this is no one-trick pony. The mournful, lonely mood of "Örtré" is a true delight. The production values must be applauded. The earthy and live-like tone lifts this one up to higher grounds.

This album is as dynamic as they come but it never falls apart into fragments or sections. There's soul, fusion, a hint of funk and deceiving moments of floating ambience. Herein lies its strength: you can't point a finger and slap ADHD2 with a specific genre moniker. Instead it breezes by with a surprising range of emotions, leaving the listener stimulated and inspired. Recommended.

✎ BIRKIR FJALAR VÍÐARSSON

SCHEDULE

Whale-Watching Tour Duration: 3 hours

The tour includes a stop by Puffin Island 15th May - 20th August

	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV-MAR
08:55	08:55	08:55	08:55	08:55	08:55			
12:55	12:55	12:55	12:55	12:55	12:55	12:55	12:55	12:55
		16:55	16:55	16:55				

ADULTS: 47€ / 7.500 ISK
CHILDREN: 7-15 22€ / 3.500 ISK
CHILDREN: 0-6 FREE

Other Tours

Puffin Island Tours Duration: 1-1,5 hours

15th May - 20th August Every day
10:00 | 12:00 | 14:00

ADULTS: 3.800 ISK • CHILDREN: 1.900 ISK • CHILDREN: 0-6 FREE

Sea Angling and Grill Duration: 3 hours

May - September Every day
17:00

ADULTS: 10.500 ISK • CHILDREN: 5.000 ISK • CHILDREN: 0-6 FREE

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EL-01 / EL-02 / EL-03							
Jan-Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct-Dec
	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	
			10:00	10:00	10:00		
13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00
		17:00*	17:00	17:00	17:00	17:00*	
			20:30**	20:30	20:30**		

* From 15 May to 15 September
** From 15 June to 15 August

Viðey ferry

Viðey Island is situated just few minutes from Reykjavik by ferry. It is interesting to visit any time of the year and each season has its own charm. The ferry's winter schedule runs through three seasons; autumn, winter and spring with departures on Saturdays and Sundays from Skarfabakki pier.



elding.is

Music | Reviews



Muck

Slaves

myspace.com/muckiceland

As far as hardcore-whatever goes, this is the best stuff being released here for a long time

I do not demand 100% originality or wild surprises at every turn of a new album. Many original albums are intolerable, pretentious dog shit. Some bands' influences are very easy to detect. Often it is their folly. That's not the case here. Muck take established styles and sounds, run with them and make it their own with raging nuances and excitement that threatens to spill over. This is Slaves' slam-dunk quality. Example: the band has lately been developing their love for twangy guitar sound. Here it's twangy to the point that most bands and engineers would have said "dudes, that's too much." Not Muck. Muck's devil-may-care attitude explodes with infectious, care-less energy that's hard to resist. I ran this shit by hardcore purists, connoisseurs of metal, d-beat and apocalyptically addicted crusties and most of them found something to write home about after getting hit over the head by 'Slaves.' Iceland's extreme sector has the rest of the year to come up with a challenger to top this.

✂ - BIRKIR FJALAR VIÐARSSON



GRM

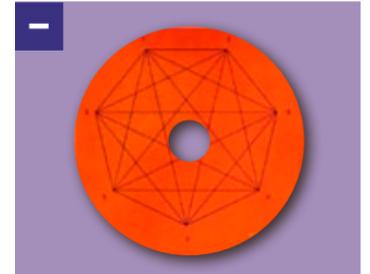
Brjár stjörnur

Plenty of fun to be had here, but if you don't know them, you might be better off starting with their solo catalogues

The three stars of the album are as known for their quality song writing as they are for their unconventional singing styles, so bringing the three together to harmonise seems a rather novel idea. Gylfi is best known for his sailor songs (and cap), Rúnar is an old-school rocker in leather and shades and Megas is a first-rate lyricist. The album is something of an overview of Icelandic popular music through the past decades. Hearing Megas sing Gylfi's anthem 'Stolt siglir fleyið mitt' is a treat, and the favour is returned on Megas' wonderful 'Við Birkiland.'

Megas has the most impressive catalogue, so his material is best represented. Rúnar's contributions are not as well known, but work well in this context. Gylfi gets to write the new title track, which sounds like it was written for (or at) a "sveitaball" in the '70s. This is probably as close as Iceland gets to its own Travelling Wilburys.

✂ - VALUR GUNNARSSON



Todmobile

7

www.facebook.com/todmobile

'7' is last year's biggest disappointment

Finally the mighty Todmobile have returned. I figured the best way to engage with this new epic was to take it for a long car drive in the countryside. I listened to it twice in a row to confirm my immediate conclusion: This album is alarmingly boring and pompous.

What made Todmobile special was how quirky and unpredictable they were, and their ability to marry those qualities with gripping, gorgeous and often menacing operatic pop/rock tunes. That edge is gone. What kills this album is the horrid Hollywood musical meets Eurovision contest-like feel to it. Case in point is "Hér og nú," which is decapitated on its chorus' altar. Such brutal deaths are strewn across the album. It's as if mastermind Þorvaldur Bjarni accidentally sent intended Eurovision contest entries to the rest of the band and they went along with it. Other ill-advised decisions include cutting Andrea Gylfadóttir's vocal time to make room for the band's latest vocal addition, singer Eyþór Ingi Gunnlaugsson. This guy can sing and his almost power metal singing-on-a-top-of-a-snowy-mountain approach is amazing, but the two singers don't always gel.

At the end of the day '7' needs more Andrea Gylfadóttir. Opener "Sjúklegt sjóv" possesses redeeming qualities; it's a bit different from the band's older material, playful in its peculiarity and Andrea leads over its odd vibes. "Gleym mér ei" also escapes the band's poor judgement, light on its feet yet mysterious. That's Todmobile with its head screwed on. It's all for naught, though.

✂ - BIRKIR FJALAR VIÐARSSON



Gang Related

Stunts & Rituals

www.facebook.com/gangrelatedband

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery

With the resurgence of lo-fi surf Pop/Rock, it's easy to see where Gang Related are coming from. The song writing here is solid, interesting and enjoyable at times (see 'I Slay' and 'Mona'), but there is little in the way of a unique twist.

The exception is 'Bouquet,' a slender torch song, vocals hanging in the ether barely supported by brittle guitar strums, drums arriving closer to a funeral march than a rush to the beach, building until everything stops, leaving only the ether behind. It feels like their voice... their own twist on the sound. A whole album of songs like it would indeed be rather boring, but it seems like a starting point for developing their own identity.

✂ - CLYDE BRADFORD

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Same Old Charm

It isn't that Benni Hemm Hemm (Benedikt H. Hermannsson and his gang of musicians) aren't talented. It isn't that their gentle horn and guitar-filled songs don't resonate with enough grace to make one temporarily forget the agony of daily life. And I'd certainly like to believe it isn't that I'm completely heartless. It's just that...well...what else have you got? Falling lockstep into their previous four releases, Benni Hemm Hemm (the man) has delivered another beautiful (and very predictable) ten-song cycle.

Even the admirable energy of showstopper 'Þú mátt aldrei detta' can't hide the fact that this ain't our first time at the rodeo—we've seen this song-structure before. Repeatedly, minimal openers blossom into guitar and horn filled choruses. It's almost as if during the writing process, Benedikt scribbled down a series of crescendos and then went out for a beer—assured his superior command of melody would carry them through. It does, at least partially. 'FF ekki CC' is about as pretty as they come, guitars taking on a light tropical bent. 'Tenant' is even saved by formula, its barely-there opening resuscitated by strings and shimmering percussion. It's difficult to argue with the sensitivity of the band's execution, as ultimately Benni Hemm Hemm brings us a well-crafted seven-course meal. It would be nice, however, to know that they could also deliver a burger and fries.

✂ - LAURA STUDARUS



Pórir

Janúar

myspace.com/muckiceland

Bi-Polar Lo-Fi

Pórir Georg's second solo album under his own name displays both ends of Pórir's increasingly diverse and expanding musical palette as he ventures off into his own bleak world.

In reality, 'Janúar' is actually two separate albums living in a single entity. The first album, 'Janúar,' is the structured, conscious piece, containing songs of feedback infused power and melody. Tracks such as "Ekki neitt," with a simple drum machine rhythm, growling guitars and bleached out vocals are eerily reminiscent of the solo work that Curver did back in the early '90s.

The second album, which we shall call 'Untitled,' is the subconscious side which is shorter, more mysterious. Faint whiffs of formless sound mix with luminescent pools of guitar noise and soft drones. More like a half remembered memory than your standard music fare.

Both these "albums" are kept separate and distinct with the shift between the two abrupt and sometimes jarring, although on a couple of occasions, they begin to bleed into each other, such as on the intro to "Helst." The impression on listening to the record is that of clashing emotions and seasons, of warm sunlight and grey gloom. His album is currently available to buy at Gogoyoko. You could download it for free from the pbb punk website. But personally I think you should buy this record, as it's a finely honed piece of lo-fi music that shows the pretenders how it's done.

✂ - BOB CLUNESS

ALBUM RATING MADNESS !

READ FULL REVIEWS + MORE ON WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS

Song For Wendy - Meeting Point

✂ "There's one pretty good song on here."
Sindri Eldon

Rúnar Þórisson - Fall

✂ "Passes by pleasantly enough, but it's hardly an earth shattering experience."
Valur Gunnarsson

SND Y P R L RS - Bring Death To SND Y P R L RS

✂ "Sleepy sincerity."
Laura Studarus

Elephant Poetry - Thrash Can Honey

✂ "'Trash Can Honey' isn't the worst thing I've heard this week, but it's nowhere near as clever or insightful as it thinks it is."
Bob Cluness

Ruddinn - I Need A Vacation

✂ "Definitely Ruddinn's best album so far."
Wim Van Hooste

Helgi Jónsson - Big Spring

✂ "A classic lesson in dreariness."
Bob Cluness

Reykjavík! - Locust Sounds

✂ "The Reykjavík! cocktail this winter is a mixed mélange of soft and sweet alcohol, with a heavy crème fraiche topping. Not healthy, but delicious."
Wim Van Hooste

Gímalain And Friends - 'Þú ert ekki sá sem ég valdi'

✂ "Creative by design."
Valur Gunnarsson



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Lækjargata 8

PROGRAM 17th-22nd of April 2012

Reykjavik Children's Culture Festival

ONGOING THROUGHOUT THE FESTIVAL, FROM APRIL 17 - 22

11:00-17:00 Iceland's Settlement Inspired Art

Fifth graders from Vesturbæjarskóli elementary school open an exhibition of visual art that's inspired by Iceland's settlement years.

11:00-17:00 Fun Education

Don't forget to drop by at the museum's fun education room, where you can try on costumes, listen to stories and play with helmets, swords and shields. **National Museum Of Iceland, Suðurgata 41.**

13:00-16:00 Knit Graffiti at The Ásmundarsafn Sculpture Garden

Knit Graffiti by Auður Alfífa and Tinna Þóru- and Þorvaldsdóttir will be created in the garden. During the festival, school groups and other interested are encouraged to come and witness the work in progress and perhaps take part. **Reykjavík Art Museum - Ásmundarsafn.**

14:00-16:30 Symbols and Textures

A collaboration between Háteigsskóli Primary School, Kampur Youth Centre and the Reykjavík Art Museum. Students create a collective work with objects from their own culture, in relation to the work of Antoni Tapies. Guest are encouraged to participate. **Reykjavík Art Museum - Kjarvalsstaðir.**

11:00-17:00 Þingvellir

Over the winter months, students at Reykjavík School of Visual Art have contemplated the painting 'Þingvellir' by Þórarinn B. Þorláksson, and made new pieces based on their observations. **The Culture House, Hverfisgata 15.**

All day Fun at Frosti

A beading marathon and jewellery making will be in the forefront at the Frosti community centre, while the book club ponders literature that has to do with "fountains". **Frostaskjól community centre, Frostaskjól 2.**

All day The Culture of Children and Teenagers

Two storefronts on Laugavegur 84 display children's rooms as they looked in 1950-1960 and from 2000-2010. This fun exhibit displays how things have changed through the decades. **Laugavegur 84.**

08:00-15:00 Hávamál - Past and Present

Students of Ingunnarskóli have studied 'Hávamál', the Poetic Edda, using artistic techniques to understand its relationship to their own lives and communities. The insightful results of their work are on display at the school. **Ingunnarskóli, Maríubaugur 1.**

09:00-20:00 Bíospretta Exhibit

This exhibit at grocery store Melabúðin features animations created by sixth grade students of the nearby Melaskóli. **Melabúðin, Hagamelur 39.**

12:00-18:00 Children at Play

Þorbjörg Pálsdóttir's sculptures are vivid and powerful. She is best known for 'The Dance' (which can be seen by Perlan), but she also created many sculptures of children. **Reykjavík City Hall.**

12:00-17:00 Hijinx at Nýló

An exciting play area where you can enjoy playground equipment, solve puzzles and jump around in a bouncing castle. Saturday and Sunday, candyfloss, hot dogs, popcorn and balloons will be for sale. **Nýlistasafnið, Skúlagata 28.**

TUESDAY APRIL 17

11:00-12:00 Children's Cultural Festival Opening Ceremony

Footloose fourth graders from Reykjavík elementary schools fill Harpa. The kids will dance in the hallways of Harpa before attending a concert with Ingó and Blár Opal in the Eldborg hall.

13:00 - 14:00 Fun Songs and Poems

The National Choir of Kindergarteners performs a programme of songs accompanied by music school students from Tónskóli Sigursveins and dancing from students from the Listdansskóli Islands school of dance. Come and sing along.

16:00-16:30 Swan Lake

Twenty-five students from the Iceland Ballet School of perform act number two of the beautiful ballet, The Swan Lake. **Harpa, Austurbakki 2.**

12:00-16:00 Whittling Centre at Mógilsá

Klébergsskóli in cooperation with Kátakat and the kindergarten Berg stages a whittling centre, where participants can practice and learn about whittling techniques and the various items one can whittle out of wood. **Mógilsá, Kjalarnes.**

16:00-17:30 Crescendo - With Growing Strength

The kids of the Regnbogaland youth centre along with the teenagers from youth club Fjörgyn and children of kindergarten Sunnufold perform the art piece Crescendo, which is made up of visual art, music and dancing. **Gufunesbær, Hlaðan by Gufunesvegur.**

17:00-18:00 SVoM Concert in the Castle

Come visit the Hljómskáli, the tiny castle in Hljómskálagarðurinn, examine various wind and percussion instruments and listen to Skólahljómsveit Vesturbæjar og Miðbæjar perform fun hits for everyone! **Hljómskálinn, Hljómskálagarðurinn.**

WEDNESDAY APRIL 18

13:30-14:40 Charlie Chaplin's 'The Circus'

Chaplin assumes here the role of the tramp and accidentally becomes a part of a circus act. He gains sudden popularity, which leads to him participating in all sorts of circus escapades.

13:45-14:20 'The Red Balloon'

The movie tells the tale of a young boy that encounters a red balloon that follows him to school, in the bus and through the streets of Paris. **Bió Paradís, Hverfisgata 54.**

16:00-18:00 Arthouse at Laugarnesskóli School

Families can participate in various workshops; subjects include dancing, textiles, visual arts, theatre, carpentry, cooking and science experiments. **Laugarnesskóli, Kirkjuteigur 24.**

16:00-19:00 The Wonders of the Beach Explored

We explore the wonders of the beach, its rocks, algae and small shells, while we practice throwing rocks into the sea. Wearing rubber-boots is advised, as well as bringing a small bag or a box for the "treasures" you might find, and a magnifying glass. **Norðarkotsvör rock beach, (Located near the parking lot by the Sigurjón Ólafsson sculpture museum, follow the asphalt path to the right).**

THURSDAY APRIL 19 (THE FIRST DAY OF SUMMER)

10:00-17:00 Children and Animals

Children will present their pets to visitors in Fjölskyldu- og húsdýragarðurinn and tell all about them (adults pay a discounted entry fee today). **Fjölskyldu- og húsdýragarðurinn, Laugardalur.**

11:00-15:00 Fun and Science

Science comes alive in a fun and interactive way at University of Iceland's Science Workshop. See experiments, magic mirrors, puzzles, pendulums and much, much more!

11:00-13:00 and 13:00-15:00 Biophilia - A Musicology Workshop for Families

Enter the magical world of science and music in a lively and interactive manner. Create your own music in Björk's magical world. **Háskólabíó Theatre, enter from Hagatorg.**

11:00-15:00 Green Ice

Children can participate in various workshops run by Iceland Academy of the Arts students, where they work with various mediums using the ongoing Rúrí retrospective as a starting point. **National Gallery of Iceland, Fríkirkjuvegur 7.**

11:00- 16:00 Creative Carpentry Workshop

Youth centre Kampur invites you to set your imagination free doing carpentry, whittling playing and creating under the guidance of its staff. **Kjarvalsstaðir, Flókagata 24.**

13:00-16:00 A Game Session with Spilavinir

Spilavinir's ("Game Friends") will teach children and grown ups how to play a variety of popular board and card games. Kids, parents and grandparents should join this fun event that brings people of all ages together by playing family friendly board games. **Reykjavík City Hall.**

13:00-17:00 Do You Want to Become a Fictional Character?

Step inside 'The Giant Book', put together by 300 students at Vesturbæjarskóli elementary school. The book contains hidden images, poetry, texts, sound, messages, smell ... and there is also room for you! **Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagata 15.**

13:00-15:00 Art Workshop

An art workshop for children of all ages where they can create swords and shields, forge settlement era style jewellery and draw runes.

14:00-14:30 Rimmugýgur Vikings

Members of the Viking club Rimmugýgur stage an authentic Viking fight and generally behave like proper Vikings.

15:00-15:45 Gilitrutt - Puppet Theatre

'Gilitrutt' an Icelandic puppet theatre play based on the classic Icelandic folk tale of the horrid ogress and the peasant woman who wished to escape her duties and responsibilities. **The National Museum, Suðurgata 41.**

14:00-14:30 and 15:30-16:00 Fyrr var oft í koti kátt - A Family Concert

Join us for a performance of songs based on poems and rhymes from the collection 'Vísnaðókin', first published in 1946, and beloved by many generations of Icelandic children. **Árbæjarsafn Museum, Kistuhylur 4**



14:00-14:45 and 15:30-16:15 Skýjaborg - Cloud City

Skýjaborg is a dance performance for the youngest children, where colours, movement, shapes and music engage them and tell a story. **The National Theatre, Hverfisgata 19.**

14:00-15:00 LAUR And KARAOKE - Contemporary Music for Curious Children

Reykjavík Chamber Orchestra will perform "LAUR", receiving their instructions from a computer screen. What is the composer asking the musicians to do and what are the results? The Orchestra also performs the piece "KARAOKE" along with the kids, who get to participate and play some very unusual instruments like carrots and balloons. **Tjarnarblói, Tjarnargata 12.**

14:00-17:00 A Nature Walk by Lake Elliðavatn

A nice and easy stroll at a relaxed pace, first along the banks of the lake and then into the forest. We will breathe the fresh air of spring and listen to birds chirping, hug a tree and stroke some flowers. Bring walking shoes, a snack and binoculars if you have a pair. **Elliðavatnsbærinn by Lake Elliðavatn in Heiðmörk** (Follow Route No. 1 going east/southwards, turn right immediately after Rauðhólar pseudo-craters, onto road 408 (towards Heiðmörk) and follow the road, after a left turn in the road, cross the narrow bridge and turn right on the path leading to Elliðavatnsbær).

14:30- 16:00 The Icelandic Horse

What makes us a nation? Rider Begga Rist welcomes guests to her stable, where she will talk about the Icelandic horse as a source in the nation's culture and reveals its talents and specialties. Children can try their hand at riding the horses, too. **Hestaleigan, Surtlugata 3, Fjörborg.**

FRIDAY APRIL 20

10:00-11:00 and 14:00-15:00 Earth Day - We are the World

Children and employees of the kindergarten Gullborg celebrate Earth Day with their spring exhibit, 'We Are The World'. **Gullborg, Rekagrandi 14.**

11:00-12:00 and 13:00-15:00 Creation and Games

Open house at the kindergarten Sæborg, where the children display their artful creations based on their work with various themes. **Sæborg, Starhagi 11.**

14:00-16:00 Source

The children of the youth centre Skýjaborgir and the kindergarten Dvergasteinn premiere a fascinating installation project, Uppspretta ("Source") that is a result of their collaboration. **Skýjaborgir, Vesturvallargata 10-12.**

14:00-16:00 We are All Made of Iceland

The children of youth centre Frostheimar invite you to help them create a map of Iceland by pasting a piece to the wall, creating a 'collage' of the country. **Frostheimar, Frostaskjól 6.**

17:00–20:00 Hike Mount Úlfarsfell

Enjoy a slow and leisurely group hike up to the top of Mt. Úlfarsfell, taking in a beautiful view of the capital area. The hike features an ascent of 295 metres. Bring walking shoes, a snack and something to drink and some binoculars if you have them. **Hamrahlíð forest area parking.**

SATURDAY APRIL 21

10:00–12:00 Guidance about Móðurmál – Bilinguality

Gerður Gestsdóttir will inform guests about Móðurmál (Mother Tongue), the programme for bilingual children, and its importance.

10.00–11.30 Móðurmál and Culture

The Spanish Móðurmál group presents games, wordplay and lyrics for visitors to learn and enjoy.

10:00–12:00 Learn a Few Words of Russian...or Spanish!

The children of the Móðurmál groups teach the guests to speak and write a few words in Spanish or Russian and about famous cartoon characters. Books and toys are also on site.

11:00–12:00 and 13:00–14:00 Marimba Workshop

Make music with the African marimbas while learning about the instrument. The sessions culminate with the entire group playing together. No musical skills needed. **Hagaskóli, Fornhagi 1.**

11:00–15:00 Fun and Science

Science comes alive in a fun and interactive way at University of Iceland's Science Workshop. See experiments, magic mirrors, puzzles, pendulums and much, much more! **Háskólabíó Theatre, enter from Hagatorg.**

11:00–13:00 and 13:00–15:00 Biophilia – A Musicology Workshop

Enter the magical world of science and music in a lively and interactive manner. Create your own music in Björk's magical world. The project's goal is to integrate music, science and technology in a novel way. **Háskólabíó Theatre, enter from Hagatorg.**

12:00–6:00 Woolgathering – A Woollen Exhibit!

Learn about the wool working methods of yesteryear by testing, tinkering and playing with the various items on display at this playful exhibit! **The Settlement Exhibition, Aðalstræti 16.**

13:00–13:40 Happiness Workshop – Drum Circle

Join in the drum circle and make a beat! No drum skills required, just play your own way and enjoy harmonizing with others! **Reykjavík City Hall.**

14:00–17:00 Happiness Workshop – Thank you Notes

Write a Thank you note to someone in your life that deserves one. The post office will deliver it for you, free of charge. **Reykjavík City Hall.**

14:00–17:00 Happiness Workshop – The Fountain of Happiness

A work of art created by children from the Kampur youth centre entitled "Uppspretta hamingjunnar" ("The Fountain Of Happiness") will be unveiled. The piece entails performance art, inviting you to share whatever makes you happy with the people of Reykjavík. **Reykjavík City Hall.**

13:00–15:00 Children's Photography Workshop

Children learn about and experiment with Cyanotype, one of the earliest forms of photographic printing. At the end, the kids get to take their own developed photos home! **Reykjavík Museum of Photography, Tryggvagata 15.**

13:00–15:00 Got Money?

Find old, strange and funny coins in your grandparents' drawers and cupboards and bring them to the Children's Library where members of the Coin Collectors' Association will tell you about their histories and secrets. **The Children's Library, The Nordic House, Sturlugata 5.**

13:00 - 15:00 Lets Have Fun Together

Let's dance, sing, make crafts, read and enjoy ourselves in this programme inspired by Polish, Spanish and Icelandic culture. **Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagata 15.**

13:00–16:00 Shorts by Teens at Bíó Paradís

View a selection of the best short films that teenagers have been working on at their youth centres lately. Humour, excitement and drama are well represented in these offerings! **Bíó Paradís, Hverfisgata 54.**

13:00 - 17:00 Design for Children

View uniquely designed items for children. Wooden toys, pillows, soft beings and other fun things. **Handverk og Hönnun, Aðalstræti 10.**

13:00–17:00 Children and Man's Best Friend

Members of the Icelandic Kennel Club bring their dogs and teach children the proper way to treat man's best friend (adults pay a discounted entry fee today). **Fjölskyldu- og húsdýragarðurinn, Laugardalur.**

14:00–14:45 and 15:30–16:15 Skýjaborg – Cloud City

Skýjaborg is a dance performance for the youngest children, where colours, movement, shapes and music engage them and tell a story. **The National Theatre, Hverfisgata 19.**

14.00–15.00 Classical Chamber Concert – Pictures of Immortal Composers

Members of the Reykjavík Chamber Orchestra play classical music. The kids get to watch the musicians up close, ask questions and influence the concert's progression. Why are people still playing music by composers who lived hundreds of years ago? And who were these guys, Bach, Mozart and Beethoven? **Iðnó, Vonarstræti 3**

14:00–16:00 Baseball Heroes!

Members from the Base- and Softball Association of Reykjavík teach about the basics of baseball. Learn about the equipment needed—gloves, bats and balls, and try your hand at playing some baseball. **Hljómskálagarðurinn, by the playground equipment.**

14:00–16:00 Origami workshop

Björn Finnsson from Origami Iceland shows guests how to do this Japanese paper art. **Foldasafn library, by Fjörgyn.**

15:00–16:30 America Concert

Students of Nýi tónlistarskólinn (music school) stage a theme concert at the Nordic House, where an emphasis is placed on the interplay of different groups of instruments. **The Nordic House, Sturlugata 5.**

16:00–19:00 Make Sandcastles by Skarfaklettur

Explore the wonders of a sand beach, practice shovelling sand into a bucket and make a castle. We look at the various formations of the large rock at the middle of the beach, stroke it and feel the difference of each rock layer. Weather permitting, we take off our shoes and socks and dance barefoot in the sand! Rubber-boots are advised, a bucket and a shovel, a towel and an extra pair of socks. **Skarfaklettur beach, by the Viðey ferry parking lot.**

SUNDAY APRIL 22

11:00–15:00 The Spring – By Nature

We connecting kids to the elements of nature; sun, earth, water and fire. We make mini-greenhouses out of old jars, build wooden sundials, BBQ on a bonfire and fish in the Lake Elliðavatn. Guests can furthermore participate in an entertaining scavenger hunt around the area. **The house Elliðavatnsbær, next to The Reykjavík Force Service in Heiðmörk.**

13:00–17:00 Children and Man's Best Friend

Members of the Icelandic Kennel Club bring their dogs and inform children about the proper way to treat man's best friend (adults pay a discounted entry fee today). **Fjölskyldu- og húsdýragarðurinn, Laugardalur.**



13:00–14:30 and 15:30–17:00 Art Workshops for Families

Join us for a graphic-, photograph- or an animation workshop at the Myndlistarskólinn í Reykjavík (school of visual art). **Myndlistarskólinn í Reykjavík, Hringbraut 121.**

CLOSING FESTIVAL AT LAUGARDALSLAUG SWIMMING POOL:

13:30–16:00 Drum Circle

Join in the drum circle and make a beat! No drum skills required, just play your own way and enjoy harmonizing with others!

14:00–14:15 Draumaraddir Norðursins Concert

The girl's choir Draumaraddir norðursins sings a few beautiful songs.

14:15–14:45 White Signal Concert

The band White Signal consists of young teenagers from Reykjavík area. They recently had good success at Músíktílaunir competition and promise to bring the fun to the pool!

14:45–15:00 Sirkús Íslands

Sirkús Íslands ("Iceland's Circus") entertains pool guests with their many circus acts that are both foolhardy and fun! Expect exciting stunts, great tricks and plenty of clowning around.

15:00–15:10 Rokkhljómsveit Íslands Concert

Rokkhljómsveit Íslands ("Iceland's Rock Group") is made up of four ten year-old girls that rock out in style!

15:10–15:20 Sirkús Íslands

Ongoing fun with Sirkús Íslands.

15:20–15:30 Gymnastic Fun!

Kids from the Ármann gymnastics department display unbelievable stunts by the pool.

15:30–16:00 Pollapönk Concert

Pollapönk play their children's songs and whip the pool crowd into a frenzy! **Laugardalslaug, Laugardal.**



14:00–15:00 Children's Yoga

Yoga and meditation for children of all ages, as well as hearty mantra singing, led by the staff of kindergarden Sælukot. **Reykjavík City Hall.**

15:00–16:00 Dance – "Ísland er land þitt"

Students of the JSB contemporary school of dance perform dance pieces from the show "Ísland er land þitt" **Reykjavík City Hall.**

16:00 –17:00 Dream Voices of the North – Girl Choir Concert

This concert by the girl's choir Dream Voices Of The North will feature celebrated and beautiful songs from all over the world, as well as some popular numbers from Disney movies. **Reykjavík City Hall.**

14.00–15:00 Family Workshop – SPLASH

Dancer/art teacher Sigrún Guðmundsdóttir leads children in an exploration of how water may be used to create. **National Gallery of Iceland, Fríkirkjuvegur 7.**

14.00–14:30 Hiphop Heat – All ages!

Try hiphop dancing with Natasha! Great beats and fresh music!

14:30–15:00 Breakdancing Madness – All Ages!

Breakdancing has never been as popular with boys and girls! Awesome music with a soft beat, this is something all kids should try!

15:00–15:30 Zumba – Especially for Kids!

Eva Suto brings us Kid's Zumba. It's new, refreshing and fun—and great exercise!

16:00–16:30 Afro Dancing for Kids

Sandra Erlingsdóttir teaches kids how to dance afro. Fresh new music, lots of dancing and excitement.

Kramhúsið, Skólavörðustígur 12 (Walk in through Bergstaðarstræti).

14:00–16:00 Sönglist Fun With Music

Students from the Sönglist, singing and drama school, take the stage and entertain with their singing, dancing and theatrics. Fun times for all! **Tjarnarbíó, Tjarnargata 12.**

14:00–16:00 Comic-Strip Workshop

Lóa Hlín Hjálmtýsdóttir, illustrator, musician and artist, moderates a comic-strip workshop. Kids learn the basics in structuring and creating comic-strips, with reference to the work of Erró. **Reykjavík Art Museum, Hafnarhús, Tryggvagata 17.**

14:00–17:00 A Giant Love Story

A play for children based on a story by Guðrún Helgadóttir and adapted for the stage by Pétur Eggerz. Afterwards there will be a workshop where the children can make their own troll costumes and play games. **Gerðuberg Cultural Centre, Gerðuberg 3-5.**



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The Skinny On Reykjavík's Fashion Fest

Ragnheiður Axel reports from the third annual event

Reykjavík's third annual Fashion Festival was more ambitious than ever. The two-day event, which took place at Harpa, was truly a fashion feast.

Day one

Day one began with Mundi's runway show set in a cold industrial parking garage in Harpa's basement. It was a perfect location for his show, which started with a short film shot on a snowy mountain with a hipster exploration group. Mundi managed to tell a whole story with his models—mostly dressed in his knitwear with geometrical patterns—by having them carry props from the film. It has been nice to see him mature as a designer and he is definitely taking his design to the next level of professionalism.

Next up, Hildur Yeoman's mushroom sculpture adventure garden was set in Silfurberg Hall. Hildur put on a wild show including GusGus singer Daníel Agúst, dancers, kids and gorgeous colourful models. As one beautifully embroidered showpiece after another came out, and the dancing crowd grew, I thought how much fun it must be to wear one of Hildur Yeoman's outfits and be part of that wild party. She knows how to surprise and get the audience's attention. Can't wait to see what she does next season.

KronKron followed with their candy-like stockings and shoes. They have a keen eye for colourful prints and their products are selling to various ages. The Kalda melancholy line reminds me of early Undercover Jun Takahashi design, minimalist prints and soft silhouette.

Then came Ýr, an emerging talent with an interesting and dramatic flair. She gave her models the power lady aura with a hint of masculinity.

Kormákur & Skjöldur ended the night with a bang. Designer Guðmundur Jörundsson has a refined but comical outlook on menswear. Masculine butcher male models wore tweed suits, leather items and canes. My old saying: "there is a tree in my backyard that has more personality than this model" did not apply to this group of models.

Day two

Kicking off day two, Ella brought sexy and slick, embodied by the lady everyone wants to work with at the office. She turns day into night in a heartbeat and probably has her passport in her pocket at all times because she is going places. The balance in styling of garments and accessories was perfect.

Milla Snorradóttir showed off a super cute and quirky line. If Wes Anderson were a fashion designer, this is what he would be designing. She is inspired by Reykjavík and its landmark buildings

from architect Guðjón Samúelsson. The show made me want to be a quirky girl wearing Milla's outfits and her wooden glasses, and to enroll in art school.

Birna had the difficult task of showing after two home runs by Ella and Milla. The styling was a bit scattered, but there were some wearable items.

Ziska featured black magic and traditional Icelandic runes. Krummi, the singer of Mínus and Legend, carried out a huge animal skull and then went down on his knees and moaned a mysterious mantra. The show was brilliant and Harpa was surrounded by magic.

REY closed the event with an easy fit feminine line. Her strength lies in knitwear and draped jersey. As a young upcoming designer she has a bright future.

All in all, I have to say "bravo!" to the RFF team for a great event promoting Icelandic fashion design. 🍷

Prime People Watching

While the Fashion Festival is about Iceland's top fashion designers showing off their new lines, fashionistas, too, show up to strut their own stuff.

The most worn look was a popular look from last season: black skinny pants, Jeffrey Campbell platforms and big coat, preferably made of fur. That look, which was on repeat every night, is getting so boring. It's almost as much of a faux pas as wearing leggings with open stilettos. And fifty percent of women wearing those platform shoes have serious difficulty walking in them, which makes them look like they should be on crutches or using a cane.

Meanwhile über-talent fashion designer Bernhard Willhelm gave fancy the finger and dressed like a house painter in white overalls with a leather cape, looking a little bit like a character from an Ole Lund Kirkegaard book, but with far more sex appeal.

While some might call these events superficial and self-conscious, it's a great time to stare, and fashionistas love to have their ego boosted by being asked what they are wearing or having their photo taken. Next time, don't be shy to go up to some colourful person and get all the details. The worst they could say is "No," and then you can use your blog to vomit your annoyance.

RAGNHEIDUR AXEL
ALISA KALYANOVA

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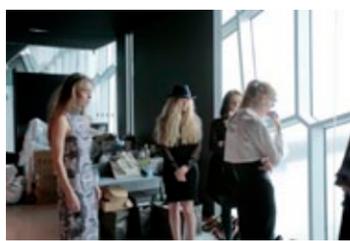
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Designing With Some Heart

Snoop-Around visits Milla Snorrason designer Hilda Gunnarsdóttir

With Reykjavík Fashion Festival just behind us, we decided to track down one of the most recent additions to the Icelandic fashion scene: Hilda Gunnarsdóttir. She launched the label Milla Snorrason in 2009 after her graduation collection, which consisted of wooden eyewear and striped socks. It was especially well received; the products were snatched up by fashion conscious Icelanders almost faster than she could make them available. At the Fashion Festival, she showed off her new fashion line, which is characterised by quirky modern silhouettes juxtaposed with a vintage sensibility. That, and earrings made from moss!

So how did the fashion show go?

It went really well. Everything went as planned. It's the most amazing thing in the world to do a show like this. My adrenaline is still pumping...

Has your style changed since you put out your graduation collection?

I think I have a strong style; I see similarities between my college work and this collection. I still like the same things that I liked back then. I'm really fascinated by classical shapes and light colours. I don't use black at all; Goth is, well, just not me. I like geeky things. I never go for obvious sexy; I prefer a different kind of sexy.

Ultimately, being sincere is most important. That's so much better than trying to be cool all the time. Just be honest. That's something I started thinking about when I was living in London.

Was this collection a long time in the making?

It may have taken me longer than it needed to, but I'm just figuring out what the process really is. I spent quite some time designing the collection, for instance the prints. One of them is based on forms from architect Guðjón Samúelsson's buildings. To make it, I cut out all these little pieces and stuck them back together and the whole process took close to three weeks. But the other print only took about a day to sketch up.

Do you prefer drawing from something familiar, something you care about?

When I was in London, I was very homesick so I decided that my line would be based on Reykjavík, and that's where these patterns come from. I wanted to use the city in some new way that I hadn't seen done before.

I look back to the 1920s. Many details came from looking at old photos, which are a constant inspiration to me. On one hand I'm inspired by nature around me today, and on the other I can look at old albums for ages and disappear into a bygone world. With my next collection I want to focus on a different place in Iceland and work from there.

What matters to you when you're creating? Who are you designing for and what is your market?

I try to think about a group of consumers, but I also try to make sure that the group is not too narrowly defined, as the market in Iceland isn't very big. In general my market is "smart women." I always try to think about the body. Even though I'm slender, I try not to just make clothes that would only fit me.

It's really important to be sincere and to try to put yourself completely into what you're doing. It makes everything so much more interesting. ☘

Words

Erla Björk Baldursdóttir

Photo

Nanna Dís Jónsdóttir

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Hello, Kitty!

Reykjavík's weirdest girl scored a free trip to China and told us how



Sometime in early 2007, a fabulous group of women were gathered in a living room along with their finest costumes and a pile of glow strips for a night of fun in front of the camera. After it was all done and up on the internet, the one who had planned it decided it was too much fun to not do again. This is how the Weird Girls Project began and the woman in question is their undisputed spandex-queen, Kitty Von-Sometime. For five years, she has self-financed this video series which brings together women to an unknown location to perform an unknown concept in unknown costumes for a single day's filming. Fifteen episodes and three special projects later, she has been summoned to China by Converse to produce video projects for the 2012 limited colours campaign. We sat down with her to get the whole story on her viral success.

“When I moved here it seemed to switch and I mostly had female friends. I was really surprised at the level of being asked, ‘does my bum look big in this,’ to more severe issues of confidence.”

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE AND INTO THE FIRE

So what was the original inspiration for the project?

When I was in the UK I mostly had male friends. I was quite a tomboy growing up. When I moved here it seemed to switch and I mostly had female friends. I was really surprised at the level of being asked, “does my bum look big in

this,” to more severe issues of confidence, so it stemmed from that.

I noticed that when we would go to a bar or a party, they would stand back against the wall—typical wallflower routine—and they were very conscious of saying or doing anything that other people wouldn't think was cool. I've been lucky enough to be raised in a way that I was never that self-conscious. I was getting a bit bored of this concern about other peoples' opinion,

so I decided to shove them in front of cameras.

It definitely feels from watching your videos that the women are not in their comfort zones. Is that an important element?

It is really about that. That, in fact, is the human aspect of this project. They would never normally wear something that tight, or be that exposed, or be in front of a camera or even turn up to meet a group of strangers they've never met before and try to make friends. That's something I find Icelanders shy away from. The part about keeping the women in the dark about the episode concept until the day of shooting is also a way of pushing their comfort. Nearly every time I do an episode, there are girls calling me up a couple of days before going “I can't do this,” totally petrified because they don't know what they're doing!

How important is it to you to have cohesion between the visual and musical aspects?

Very, actually! I tend to have a concept first and find music that goes with that, but the mood of the women and the mood of the piece tend to evolve with the music. I grew up in the first MTV generation and I was very obsessive whenever I was listening to music on my Walkman. I would always run some imaginary music video in my head, so that's why I really like using this format. It's part of why I do this and it's how I've always operated, just me alone with my Walkman.

THE ICELANDIC WAY SPREADS ACROSS ALL LANDS

Tell me about your trip to China.

I'm going in April sponsored by Converse. They release four limited edition colours of Chuck Taylors every year and I've got two contrasting colours in each

Hemmi  Valdi

Laid back coffee house and all-night party place.

Laugavegur 21

of the two pieces, so I represent all four. Chinese cinema uses four seasons, four acts and things like that, so I want to try and have some reference to it. Then they are also paying for another episode where I can do whatever the hell I want, and I am doing whatever the hell I want! It's brilliant.

How did the hook-up with Converse happen?

It came about in a very Icelandic way—a good friend of mine from my hometown in England works for them [in China]. Last November I was going over there for a holiday and she was talking to the marketing director [about me] and ended up showing her the [Weird Girls Project's] website. I suddenly got an email a couple of days before I was supposed to leave for China asking if I could pull one off while I was there and I was like "are you kidding me!?" Normally I spend three months of Excel spreadsheet organisation before.

The marketing director asked if I could do one just as a tester to see how I do with the Chinese women because this is kind of a totally new thing for them. She came down and watched me just do a photo shoot and halfway through the day she sat me down and said, "right, you're coming back here and doing a tour." She told me that in just a couple of hours she'd watched these girls go from standing against the wall to running around. It's a great feeling. It's very scary now though. I've got to try and do it again with eighty-five different women in the next three videos.

THE FEAR AND THE FUN

What is the most exciting and/or terrifying part of all of this for you?

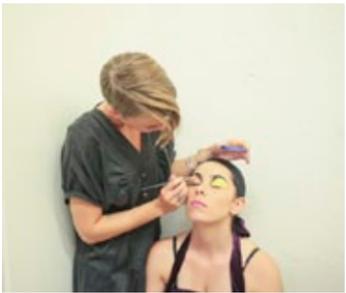
Oh my god, I don't know! Everything that is exciting is also terrifying—although not really in a bad way. I've gone from just mucking around with my friends to a massive budget from a huge company and I have to deliver something. They are supporting me as an artist—these are not adverts, they are being done for the content—but the bottom line is there is someone else paying. I'm talking, like, A LOT more money than I've ever spent on episodes. Major stuff. I've got the best cameras I can have, the best lenses I can have, I have a section of the Great Wall for one of the episodes! It's going onto another planet, so it's totally intimidating and totally exciting.

Also, directing women whom I have no language in common with is something I'm nervous about. I'm going through these very simple moves to do with the girls in China, and I want to see if I can direct them without any words. I have a translator but it's much easier to interact with them eye-to-eye because if they look to the translator, I lose a lot of what I'm trying to express to them.

The other thing is that this is going to have huge exposure—they said that a "bad" view-count would be three million in China. I have no arts qualification, I have no film qualification and I've suddenly been able to go to China with the best equipment to shoot in some of the most amazing locations. I feel a lot of pressure to do good because this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I really want to be able to burst with pride when I show the pieces I've done.

Did you ever think it would come to this point?

No! Never! I mean, I haven't been stupid. I have a bit of a business-head, really, and a lot of what I've done has been to get further. The fact that I'm using the music video format has been strategic from the beginning. I know that art galleries only have a limited number of people coming and, even though YouTube is massive, there are only a limited number of art videos. A music



video means that it gets exposure from the band's fans, as well as the fact that it can end up on television as a lot of my videos do, so the artwork gets seen on a much broader spectrum.

I know that to a lot of people I am missing the exclusivity of high-brow art stuff because I'm just putting it on for as much exposure as is humanly possible. But as far as I'm concerned, the more people that see it the better. If they don't like it, they're not gonna like it whether they see it in a gallery or on television. I plan to do more of this strategy when I'm in China because I want to get to Japan. I WILL do Japan next! 🇯🇵

Words

Rebecca Louder

Photography

Alisa Kalyanova

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Go To Bíó Paradís

They offer everything from Nazi aliens to rocking grandmothers

Bíó Paradís is a welcome oasis in that barren wasteland of American teen-flicks that is the Icelandic cinema scene. We had long been hoping for an arthouse cinema in this country. That we got one as good as Bíó Paradís is something of an accident. Instead of taking over a basement somewhere to show indie and European films in, the aptly named Cinema Paradise was opened in the autumn of 2010 in the locale of the then defunct Regnboginn multiplex theatre. So, instead of the basement, we get four whole state of

the art screening rooms for our viewing pleasure.

As well as being able to look forward to the Finnish Nazi Alien comedy 'Iron Sky,' and Shakespeare's 'Coriolanus,' which will both be screening next month, Paradís is putting on a bunch of exciting film festivals. Last month, we got both a German and a Polish one, and this month, we will have the first Indian film festival held in Iceland.

Fans of melodramatic plots and OTT dancing scenes will be able to indulge in their habit guilt-free, as the festival is co-hosted by the Friends of India Association and proceeds will go to orphans on the sub-continent. But the festival should also be worthwhile in purely cinematic terms, with offerings such as

'Dhoom 2,' a spoof on Hollywood action films set in Brazil; 'The Robot,' which is the most expensive science fiction film made in Asia so far; and perhaps the jewel in the crown, 'The Necklace,' about illicit love during the end of British dominance.

Icelandic cinema is also represented in Bíó Paradís. They are showing the hugely popular crime flick 'Black's Game' with English subtitles; 'Baráttan um landið,' the documentary about the current craze to destroy the highlands; and 'Amma lo-fi,' the true story of a grandmother who started composing music in her 70's. ☺

VALUR GUNNARSSON

You're Just Too Krútt To Be True

Grandma Lo-Fi is a twee-laced documentary



As far as old clichés go, 'better late than never' is one of the easiest to doubt. Sigríður Nielsdóttir may have spent much of her life putting off what she wanted to do, but in the later years of her life she did indeed put the skepticism to bed and went for it.

Sigríður is the subject of 'Grandma Lo-Fi,' a new documentary by first-time filmmakers Kristín Björk Kristjánsdóttir (also known as revered electronic musician Kira Kira), Orri Jónsson (of the band Slowblow) and Ingibjörg Birgisdóttir (of Seabear). Over the course of seven years, the directors shot Sigríður in the process of making music in her home, which she only began doing at age 70. They watch in fly-on-the-wall style as she records on her electric organ (which she affectionately nicknamed 'the entertainer'), makes DIY instruments out of kitchen items like an egg-slicer and a hand blender, and the physical process of putting each of her CDs together by hand. When one considers that she self-produced 59 albums before passing away last year, it's quite a humbling proposition.

The film itself is a work of lo-fi beauty. Mostly shot on Super-8 film, it is an intentional stylistic tool that melds perfectly with their featured subject and her music, never seeming cloying or desperate. Added to it are montages of cut-out art, photography and naïve animation that complement the collage work that Sigríður shifted to as her primary art form after she felt satisfied with music. Within several of these montages are performances or



narrations by local artists who she inspired, including Mugison, Sin Fang, Kría Brekkan and Hildur Guðnadóttir. Indeed, her infectiously catchy and well-crafted songs match her tenacity in pursuing her goals.

However, her life was not always so peachy. In the movie, we are given a glimpse of her life and upbringing, which had its fair share of hard times. In one animated sequence, she recounts how she disobeyed her father when she married her husband: "No daughter of mine will marry a sailor!" Her husband subsequently drowned in a shipwreck, never to be found. She describes having many regrets and spending much of her life trying to make up for lost time and chances. Even in its cutesy approach, the visual aspect appropriately conveys the tone

of Sigríður's entire story without a trace of saccharine, both in the happier and sadder times. A strong element of Sigríður's later life resided in her Christian faith, from which she drew much of her positivity.

At her core, Sigríður can be described as a true outsider artist. She was rather unaware of the impact on local music she had until she was approached by the filmmakers to play a show, which she declined, but a sort of super-group band performed her songs instead. She made her music as a form of spiritual catharsis with no intention of distribution or even a sense of artistic purpose behind it. Everything she did, she did to survive. ☺

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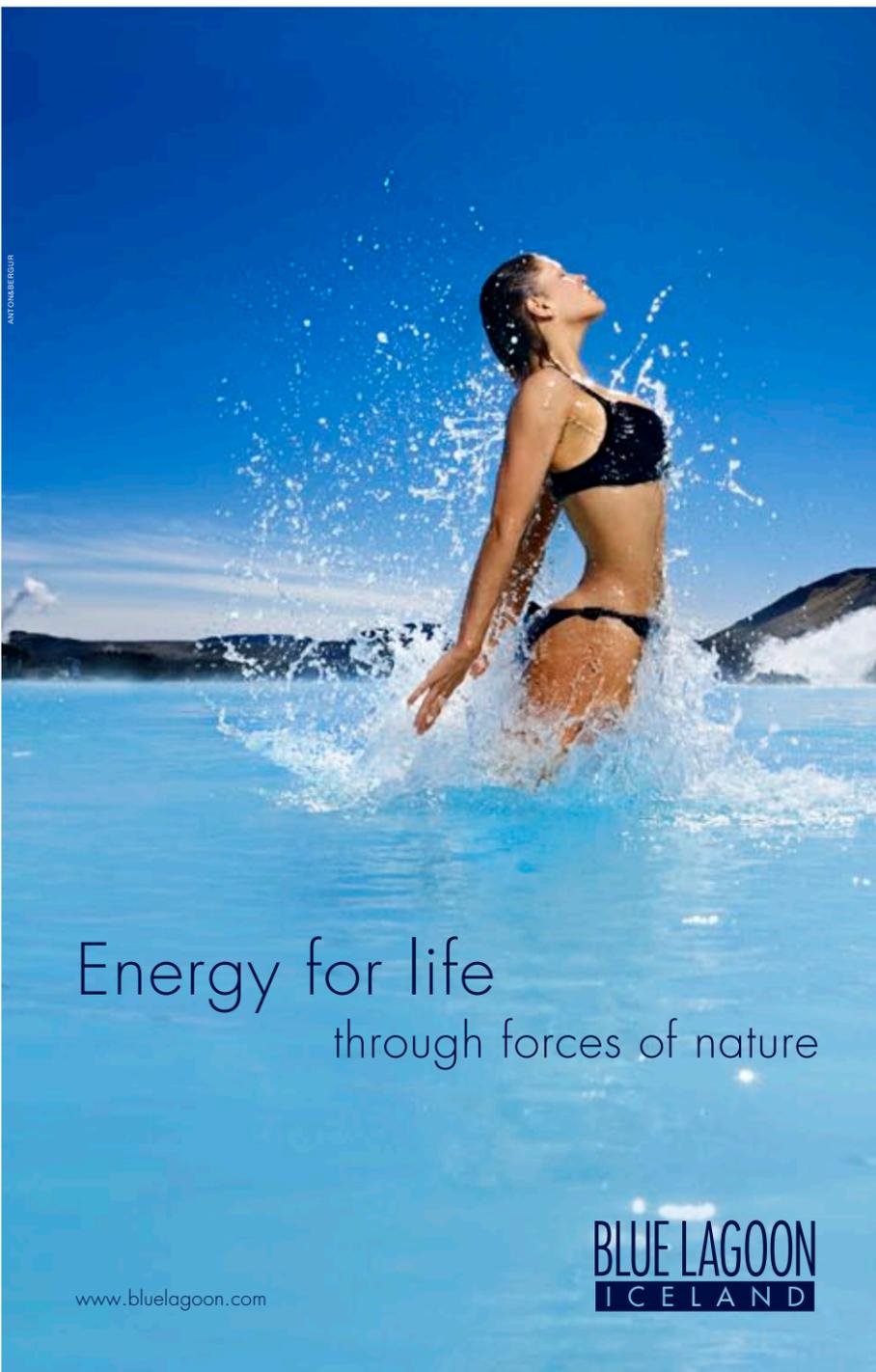
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Floating On A Sea Of Snow

A day tour to Langjökull and Iceland essentials



Our driver and guide for the day Stefán Gunnarsson surrendered to the glacier at an altitude of 800 metres, just a few hundred metres from the top. He had already deflated the car's tyres twice to increase their surface area and minimize the risk of getting stuck. The Land Rover couldn't find grip in the powdery 50 centimetre deep snow. Never mind not making it to the top, it was incredible to be standing on a glacier, surrounded by an incredible silence and an untouched panorama of snowy mountains on a beautiful, sunny day.

LEAVING THE GREY BEHIND

Seven hours earlier in Reykjavík on an overcast morning, the five of us had climbed into the jeep for a tour called Essential Iceland. Despite the fact that visibility was no more than 50 metres as we left Reykjavík, Stefán was optimistic that the clouds and fog would disappear by the time we reached our first stop at Þingvellir National Park, where the Alþingi general assembly convened in 930 A.D.

Sure enough, we were greeted by a bright, glowing sun hanging just above the horizon. For-

tunately, at 9 a.m. there were only a few tourist busses there. The viewpoint, which also marks the beginning of the path between continental plates, would turn into a mad circus later in the day. Unfortunately the path itself was closed because a crack in the pathway revealed a 10 metre deep fault below. To escape the other tourists, we drove down to the edge of the lake, where the water is crystal clear and you can see every single coin that has sunk to the bottom.

After a short lunch stop, we drove on towards Kaldidalur, a highland route leading to Langjökull glacier. While the route is used during the summer, it's often impassable during the winter when the road is covered by a thick layer of snow, which blends into the white desert landscape. Nevertheless, Stefán was itching to give it a try, as the weather was very promising. The Land Rover was equipped with an accurate GPS system, which would ensure that we'd stay on the road even if it was nowhere to be seen.

FLOATING ON SNOW

As we drove on, I feared that we would get stuck in snow—you know, when the tyres don't grip anymore and turn on the spot. Every time this

happened, Stefán put the Land Rover in reverse, backed up a few metres, and then went straight on again, gradually moving through the half metre deep snow. Despite those manoeuvres, he made driving through a vast sea of white look as easy as cruising down Laugavegur in downtown Reykjavík, and while we enjoyed the view, he was definitely enjoying himself.

It was a tedious process, and finally we scrapped the Kaldidalur route and took an alternative road through the valley. While we descended, Stefán told us stories about tourists trying to drive to impossible places with unsuitable cars. "Iceland doesn't have any snakes or poisonous dangerous animals, instead we have tourists in rental cars," he said.

THE LAST OF THE ESSENTIALS

On our way to Hallmundarhraun, a vast lava field, we passed Deildartunguhver, the largest thermal spring in Iceland. This was followed by a stop at Barnafoss, where bright blue water gushes out from under the remains of a stone arch. The diversity of the landscape was incredible, although much of it was covered in snow. In the summer, the change of colours, from black mountains to

green plains, to the white glacier is an even more intense experience, Stefán told us.

After seeing Barnafoss, we climbed Langjökull glacier, the second to last stop—and easily the most dramatic part—of the trip. At eight hundred metres above sea level, the Land Rover would climb no higher and Stefán took us down to our final destination, Vígelmir, a 1500 kilometre long lava tube. Where the roof of the lava tube had collapsed, we climbed down, traversing icy stones to take a peek into the underworld before journeying back to Reykjavík. [✈](#)

[✍](#) MELANIE FRANZ
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A Wet And Windy Adventure Along The South Shore



When we arrive to the BSÍ terminal early in the morning, the air is crisp and clear and it looks like we picked a great day to tour the south shore of Iceland. However, we would soon learn firsthand that the weather in Iceland is fickle to say the least.

On the bus and heading south, our guide begins to tell us all about the mountains around Reykjavík, and how geothermal activity plays an important role in Iceland. In fact, more than 90 percent of all buildings are heated by geothermal energy.

The scenery is ever changing as our bus makes its way along Route 1. When the volcano, Hengill, comes into view in the distance, our guide informs us that it had erupted just recently. "About 2,000 years ago," he continues, anticipating a laugh from the bus. Although Iceland has experienced two eruptions in the last two years, 2,000 is not a big number, geologically speaking.

We would later see that one of the two more recent eruptions, including the Eyjafjallajökull eruption of 2010, has left its mark on the area with volcanic ash still blocking the riverbeds. This is because, as our guide explains, volcanic ash solidifies when it comes into contact with water and

mud.

Driving past Hengill, we descend on a small town called Hveragerði. Small houses stand forlornly in the green landscape against a dark sky. The illuminated greenhouses in the valley look like spaceships that have just landed. Most of Iceland's vegetables are grown in this area with the help of geothermal heat during the dark winter months.

FROM A BLUE GLACIER TO A BLACK BEACH

The first big highlight of the trip is a stop at Sólheimajökull, an outlet glacier that comes into view after a rather bumpy drive on a gravel road. The glacier tongue provides an extraordinary view from both afar and up close. The compressed ice is an amazing shade of blue, interspersed with black and white, which changes from every angle and change in the weather.

On we go to Vík í Mýrdal, the southernmost town in Iceland. Now, it might be charming in the summer when the weather is a bit more welcoming, but on a cloudy day in February, the only beautiful view is of the waves hitting the shore a few hundred metres away.

This view became even more breathtaking from the beach Reynishverfi, named after Reynir,

first settler in the area. Never before had I seen such a magnificent black sand beach. The sea is in uproar and the waves turn parts of the beach into white foam, before receding again. The basalt rock formation at the beach, stemming from volcano eruptions thousands of years ago, remind me of the Giants Causeways in Ireland and are just as fascinating to look at.

The Reynisdrangar sea stacks, which rise from the water a few hundred metres from the coast, were reportedly formed when two trolls tried to drag a ship to the shore, but were caught off guard by the rising sun and turned to stone. At least that's what the information sign by the parking lot says. The weather is getting rainier and windier and I am becoming colder and wetter, but this is definitely worth a stop.

WATERFALLS DON'T ALWAYS OBEY GRAVITY

Off we are, to the warmth of the Skógar museum, which proves to be a nice escape from the elements. The museum features thousands of artefacts from the last centuries collected by its founder, Þórður Tómasson, who opened the museum in 1949. It is clear that life in Iceland was not easy for settlers, and they had to be especially

resourceful to make tools and find use for every part of the animals they killed. Þórður picks up a couple of old instruments and plays some Icelandic tunes for us.

Finally, our last two stops are at the waterfalls, Skógarfoss and Seljalandsfoss. Waterfalls tend to have a calming effect on me due to their steady rhythm of crashing water. Skógarfoss has this effect. It is impressive and soothing to watch, as I stand there thinking how this could go on forever. Nothing can stop a waterfall, it seems. Seljalandsfoss, though smaller, is equally impressive. It is so windy that the water is derailed from its usual course, and blows away horizontally. Although you can walk behind this waterfall, I decide to enjoy the view from afar, feeling plenty wet already.

This is the end to our day in the south. I'd say that it would have been nicer if we had had better weather, but I suppose this was a typical Icelandic experience. You never know what the day brings here, especially weather-wise. 🇮🇸

LYNN KLEIN
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Be There Or Be Square

An entire village attends a rock concert

When I learned that a young artist that I had never heard of was putting on a show exclusively for the residents of a tiny hamlet I didn't remember ever hearing of, I just had to go witness it. The event's producer, Kári Viðarsson—a Hellissandur native, actor and film student—was attempting to get every living soul in the village of Rif to attend a rock concert. That's all 165 of them, including newborn children, the elderly and everyone between.

Kári told me he'd personally make sure of that people would attend. And he wasn't lying. A few weeks prior to the show he'd been on a couple of Rif crusades, visiting each household to deliver a personal invitation, and on the day of the event he was on the phone calling up people and reminding them. Only he wouldn't tell them who was performing, and then he would make a documentary capturing the crowd and the performances.

Googling Rif revealed that the village is located on Snæfellsnes, smack

dab between Ólafsvík and Sandgerði. I called my driver and photographer; we looked at the map and decided that if we drove around the Snæfellsnes peninsula that we would reach Stykkishólmur and from there we would turn left toward Ólafsvík, and then it would be somewhere between Hellissandur and Ólafsvík. "We'll figure it out" was the general consensus and set off on a three hour drive from Reykjavík.

IN AN OLD FREEZING PLANT

It was Sunday, March 11 and the weather gods were not being particularly nice. With no steep mountains, Rif is largely unprotected from the elements and its streets, homes and their dwellers are like sitting ducks. Thus it was cold, fucking cold. Were it not for the ocean, Rif would be a hellhole weather-wise. But it's not. It's just very cold, grey, barren and windy at this time of year and I loved it.

It felt like a ghost town. There was no one around. The venue was an old freezing plant called Frystiklefinn. It looked and smelled like it. The ghouls of fallen shrimps and triumphed fish must be around, but I chose not to think about such abhorrence. We found Kári there, eager and ready for the evening. Kári showed me a list of all of the residents and started reading out their names. Everyone has a nickname. After doing the door to door and calling and emailing everyone, he felt certain

that they would show up, provided they were in town.

It was an event in and of itself when both young and old explained that they could not attend. The reasons varied. Some were out of town, others were registered to claim benefits in Rif, but live somewhere else. Many were at sea. The rest were ill or at home nursing newborns. I got a taste of the local humour as Kári talked about what kind of characters the missing persons were, and everyone was laughing.

PLAY AND THEY WILL COME

Ylja kicked off the evening ever so pleasantly, immediately captivating the audience. It was as if they did not want a single note of music nor a single heartfelt slide-guitar lead go to waste and the angelic twin-vocal melodies had Rif's population in a lock. The set went over so well that Ylja resorted to playing the same song twice when they ran out of tunes. Svavar Knúts was up next. "It's fantastic getting these young artists for a visit. It pulls the community closer together," Guðrún Gísladóttir (55) tells me as Svavar sets up. His performance goes down with a storm. Half of his set was spent spilling his guts to the crowd and they loved every second of it. This was the perfect environment for him.

Then Kári got on stage to inform the attendees of the final tally. "There are 133 people currently in the hamlet, and

92 are at this concert," he told us. He calculated that this was about 70%. Being an optimistic man, he reminded us that this was the equivalent of 92,000 people turning out for a gig in Reykjavík. We all chuckled. He continued: "It says something about your community that so many of you came without knowing who would play." And indeed it does. Ragna Magnúsdóttir (24) told me she wasn't surprised by the sizable turnout. "People are just happy to not have to go to Hellissandur and Ólafsvík for cultural entertainment," she said. "I find countryside folks are by and large more eager than city folks to engage in social events."

ONE MAN'S 70% IS ANOTHER'S 100%

Kári admitted that he had hoped for a larger turnout. "I tried my darnedest but not everyone was informed," he told me. I asked him whether the stereotype about small town gossip—everyone knowing and participating simply 'cause it's something to do, didn't apply today. He wasn't sure. "A lot of foreigners live here and during roll call I realised a lot of them were not here. There is a division between them and the Iceland natives. I assume some have moved since the list was published. Others simply didn't want to be here. I sent my cameraman out during the show to encourage more people to come, and he had a door or two

slammed in his face," he said laughing. It was not for lack of trying on Kári's part for he had invitation cards translated so every non-native would feel welcome. "Some of them came. That's great. It's better than nothing. I've been involved in theatre productions in this very venue and the Polish never came. So this is encouraging. I'm proud so many people came for this first Rif-residents-only concert."

Being a firm believer in Kári's sincerity and passion to entertain and engage his people, I couldn't help but to play devil's advocate. Was this event self-serving to facilitate him with material for his film? "It's a good question," he said. "I don't think the goals are mutually exclusive. The initial idea was born while studying documentary filmmaking. The setting and context is inspired by this venue because it's been on my mind since I did my monodrama graduation piece there. Achieving the 100% was not the sole purpose. I'm more concerned with giving back to this community because it has been good to me and supported my artistic endeavours from day one."

The Frystiklefinn art space is here to stay and Kári and his friends will continue to explore its potential year round. If Rif's reaction and acceptance is anything to go by, it will cement itself as a hub for arts and culture for years to come. ☺

Words

Birkir Fjalmar Viðarsson

Photography

Ægir Freyr Birgisson



MILLENNIUM
Icelandic art through the ages. Phase one.



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Festivals | Aldrei fór ég suður

Ísafjörður's 100% Free Good-Time Family Festival

Aldrei fór ég suður is the place to be!

"It's such a treat for us," Sigurlaug Gísladóttir of Mr. Silla and múm said. "All the companies in Iceland have an annual party and we don't have that as musicians, so this kind of feels like one." Sitting backstage, jam-packed with members of other bands and friends, brimming with smiles and laughter, it was easy to see how the Aldrei fór ég suður music festival would make you never go south (as the name essentially translates).

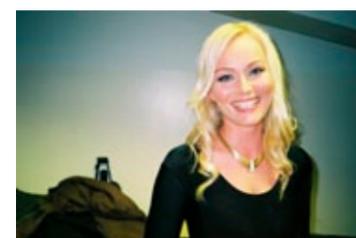
It seemed like everyone was in Ísafjörður over Easter weekend. As we rolled into town late Thursday night, the city was swarming with packs of beer can-clutching revellers. The celebration was in full swing as we arrived, everyone having just returned from the festival's kick-off party stand-up show with Anna Svava Knútsdóttir and Huggleikur Dagsson. Between the six-hour drive and a terrible hangover of my own, I hit the hay to rev up for the next day's show!

WHO DOESN'T LIKE PLOKKFISKUR!?

On Friday morning, after a quick coffee and mini-breakfast, we were off to make the rounds and meet friends. First stop was over to our hosts for the weekend Magnús and Ragnheiður's seafood restaurant Tjörúhúsið on Neðstikaupstaður, the oldest part of town, famous for its killer dinner buffet and arguably the best plokkfiskur in the country. Their whole family takes part in this operation, and we even found Bóas Hallgrímsson, singer of Reykjavík!, sporting an apron in the kitchen.

Once totally stuffed, we jumped over to Edinborg, restaurant and cultural centre, to meet up with Gang Related and Morðingjarnir drummer Helgi Pétur Hannesson. He and his family recommended we take a quick trip through the longest tunnel in Iceland to Flateyri. On the way out, we ran into Ása Dýradóttir of Mammút in the entrance, glowing with excitement over finding a dead raven in Flateyri. "I'm going to make art!" she said. So we went there too, and it was lovely, but we didn't bring back any bird corpses.

We got back to Ísafjörður in time to hit up Edinborg again for a kick-off



beer—which was grossly overpriced, but what are you going to do. Over in the room across from the eatery I ran into Kristján Freyr, drummer of Reykjavík! and festival coordinator, who told me a short conference on music in Iceland was about to take place. He invited me to stay and flippantly demand the panel to switch to English but the show was about to start so we hit the road.

CAN'T RAIN ON OUR PARADE

We got to the show while the second band was playing—the mighty Mugison! Mugison and his father masterminded the festival back in 2003 and got it happening with the help and goodwill of their fun-loving friends and neighbours. When I run into him later on I ask if it's still exciting for him. "Yeah, when the weekend comes and everything is smooth," he said, "there are so many things to get done. We're just eight guys doing this and we juggle the whole process. It's one of these things where you postpone a lot, but finally when you get to it it's not that big of a deal. A couple of weeks later everybody's like 'what the fuck?'"

The weather had started out seemingly bearable, but as the evening wore on, despite all the beers, we were wet and freezing so we squeezed our way inside for the end of Páll Óskar's set. Next up were Gang Related who knew how tough their spot was to fill. "I am freaking out and really, really excited,"

said their frontman Albert Hauksson, "This is a hundred times more people than we've ever played for. I hope we do a good job. We were joking that he [Páll] was here to open up for us!" They damn near stole the show when the

wards we decided to check out the Westfjord Artfest. At Edinborg we ran into exhibiting artists Þorvaldur Jónsson and Björk Viggósdóttir supervising the Phobo Phobia exhibition, a collection of posters from different artists il-

"There were seemingly no bad vibes, even when the police were trolling about with their 'drug-sniffing' dog that seemed more adept at smelling teen angst than Mary-Jane. The love-in hit its peak during Reykjavík!'s set when a couple was called onto the stage and got engaged."

festival's announcer Pétur Magnússon lightly coaxed the drummer's three-year old son onto the stage, rocking a tiny two-stringed guitar perfectly to the beat. That pretty much topped the night right there.

AMERICANS AND LOVERS

The show on Saturday started two hours earlier than Friday so we ignored our minor hangovers to take in as much of the town in the daytime. The liquor store was finally open so it all started with a mandatory stop there to grab whatever was left on the shelf. After-

lustrating various phobias. A collection of individual, large artworks—mostly paintings—were also on display over at the Nordic Bakery.

We made it to the gig in time to see the end of opening band Pollapönk, who are the only children's music band ever that rocks. We'd never heard of the next band, Katura, so we thought it would be some local kids, but it turned out to be an American electro-rock duo. According to Kristján Freyr, a friend of theirs from Súðavík who played the previous year was responsible. "There's a really nice guy from Súðavík named Eg-

gart who rents Mugison's house when Westfjord Artfest. At Edinborg we ran into exhibiting artists Þorvaldur Jónsson and Björk Viggósdóttir supervising the Phobo Phobia exhibition, a collection of posters from different artists il-

After running off for an incredibly delicious buffet dinner back at Tjörúhúsið, we spent the next solid six hours at the show. The weather was no better than the day before but everyone was boozed up and feeling really good. There were seemingly no bad vibes, even when the police were trolling about with their "drug-sniffing" dog that seemed more adept at smelling teen angst than Mary-Jane. The love-in hit its peak during Reykjavík!'s set when a couple was called onto the stage and got engaged. Then Retro Stefson gave their most top-notch performance to close the show and everyone went off their tits. Sadly, in a few hours, we had to go south. ☹

Words

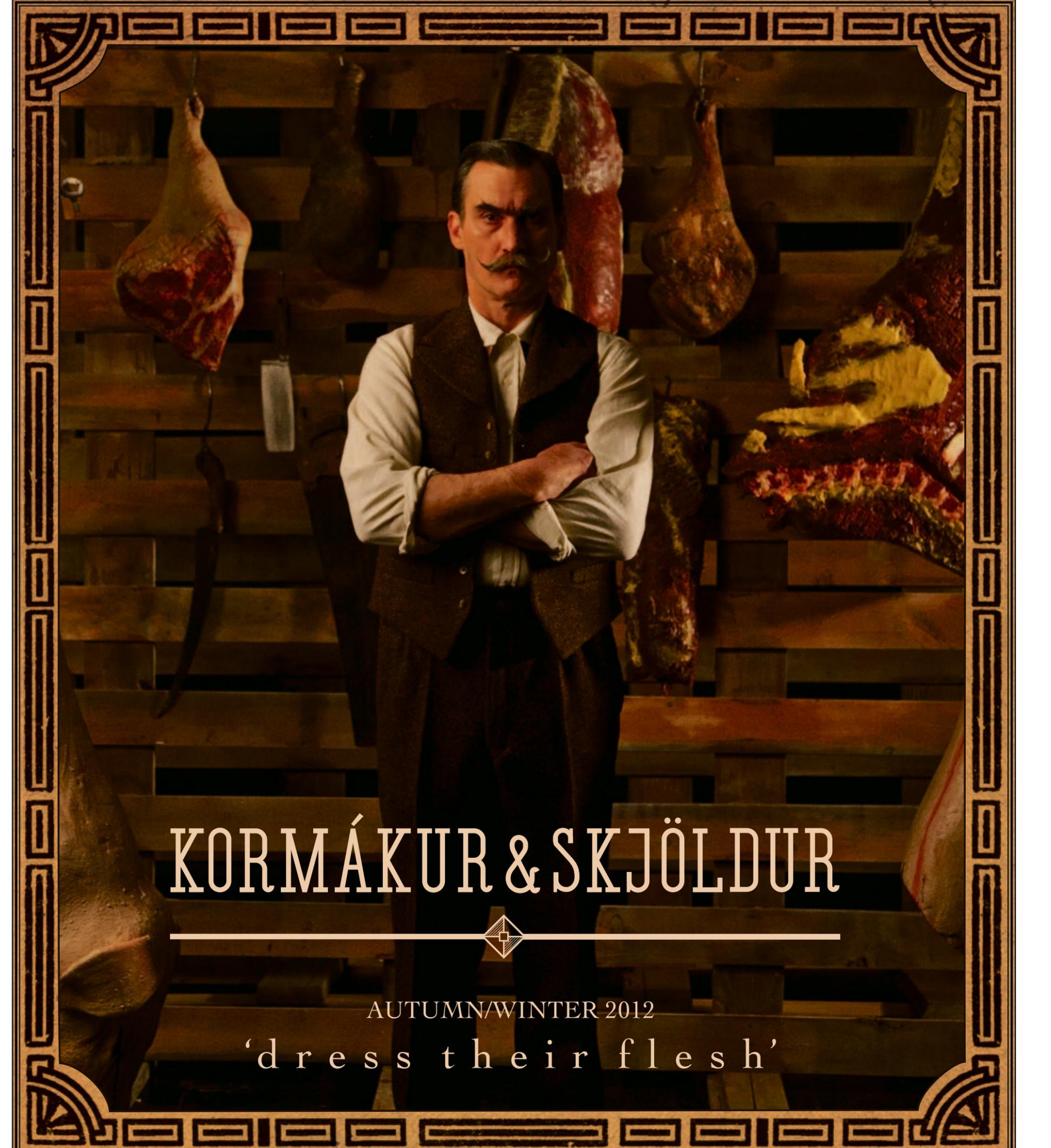
Rebecca Louder

Photography

Alísa Kalyanova

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ENJOY SHOPPING
ENJOY THE NORDIC HOUSE





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PAGE 8

“Katla HAS seen an increase in activity lately. Katla COULD erupt within the next few months. Katla WILL erupt at some point. And none of this is reason to worry about a thing.”

Our very own volcanologist explains why we shouldn't panic because of a volcano that may or may not cause trouble.

PAGE 18

“Herra is based on a real person, Brynhildur Georgía Björnsson, whose father also fought with the Nazis and whose grandfather also was our first president.”

Hallgrímur Helgason tells us about his latest novel, “Konan við 1000”

PAGE 22

“We checked it out this year to see what's on the horizon, and gave them each an “award” of our own while we were at it.”

Rebecca Louder and Bob Cluness checked out The Battle of the Bands! There's some bright hope out there...

PAGE 30

“Sometime in early 2007, a fabulous group of women were gathered in a living room along with their finest costumes and a pile of glow strips for a night of fun in front of the camera.”

Kitty Von-Sometime talks about her Weird Girls Project and how she won a trip to China this month.

PAGE 28

“While the Fashion Festival is about Iceland's top fashion designers showing off their new lines, fashionistas, too, show up to strut their own stuff.”

Fashion enthusiast Ragnheiður Axel reports on Reykjavík's third annual Fashion Festival.

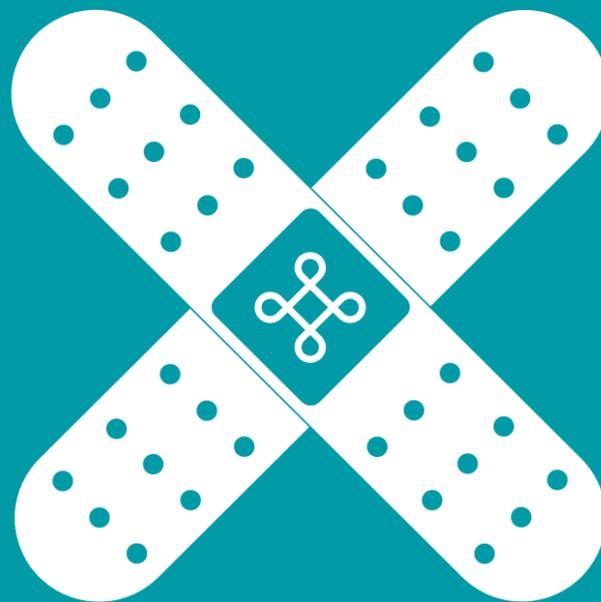
PAGE 38

“As we rolled into town late Thursday night, the city was swarming with packs of beer can-clutching revellers. The celebration was in full swing as we arrived, everyone having just returned from the festival's kick-off party.”

Aldrei fór ég suður was once again awesome.

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- Online service applications
- News and events

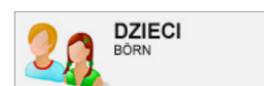
www.reykjavik.is/english



Zycie w Reykjavíku?

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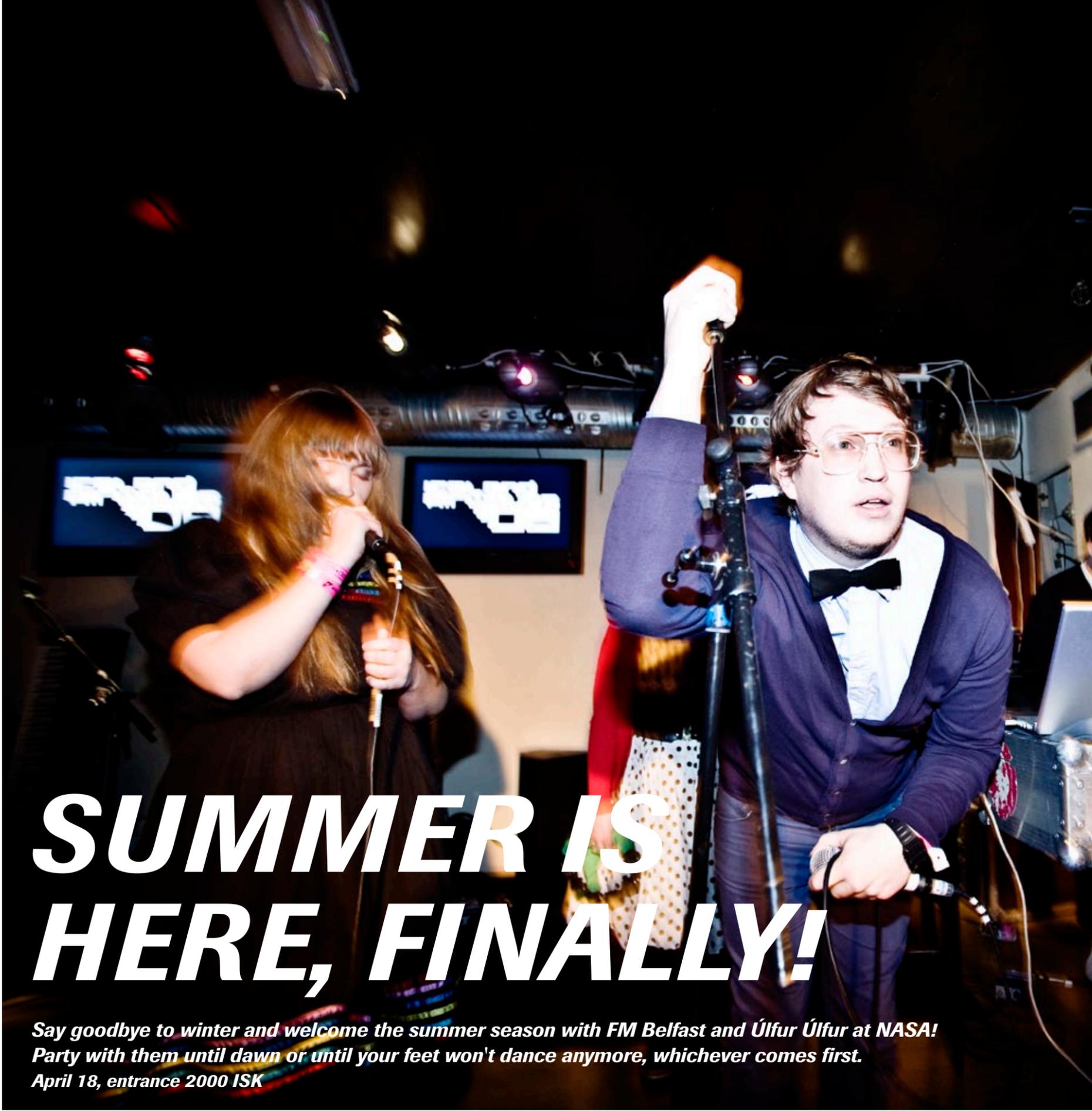


Music, Art, Films and Events Listings + Eating, Drinking and Shopping + Map

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL AND
ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

Issue 4 - 2012

www.grapevine.is



**SUMMER IS
HERE, FINALLY!**

*Say goodbye to winter and welcome the summer season with FM Belfast and Úlfur Úlfur at NASA!
Party with them until dawn or until your feet won't dance anymore, whichever comes first.
April 18, entrance 2000 ISK*

MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN APRIL



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Reykjavík was featured in the New York Times as amongst the top four places in the world to travel to in 2011, with Harpa as one of its main attractions. Harpa is definitely a must-see on any Iceland travel agenda.

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

13 FRI

B5
21:00 DJ Einar

Bar 11
22:00 Singapore Sling + Sparkle
Poison

Café Rósenberg
21:00 Myrra Rós

Esja
21:00 DJ Hlynur/DJ Bogi

Faktóry
23:00 DJ Danni Deluxe and DJ
Kanill

Gaukurinn
21:00 Air guitar contest

Glaumbar
21:00 DJ Gunni Stef

Hressó
21:00 Samsara and Danna Pol-
lock

Iðnó
22:00 African music dance

Kaffibarinn
21:00 Retrobot and DJ Kári

Prikið
21:00 DJ Gunni Stef
Reykjavík Backpackers
20:00 The Reykjavík Backpackers
Party!

14 SAT

B5
21:00 DJ Simon

Esja
21:00 DJ Hlynur/DJ Bogi

Faktóry
23:00 Triangular and Bensol, Ca-
sanova and Sean Danke

Hressó
21:00 DJ Fannar

Kaffibarinn
21:00 DJ Margeir

Prikið
21:00 DJ Danni Deluxe

15 SUN

Esja
20:00 DJ Hlynur

Faktóry
21:00 Live Jazz

14
April



Benni Hemm Hemm Returns With New Band En Tow!

BRAND NEW SONGS, TOO!

April 14, 22:00

KEX Hostel

1.000 ISK

Benni Hemm Hemm has long since proven himself an excellent composer and musician, whose career is well worth following closely. This Saturday he will take the stage at KEX Hostel with a brand new band to play some brand new songs, and it promises to be unlike anything we've seen from the man before. The new band reportedly sports eight keyboard players who also sing and two percussionists in lieu of a drummer. Between numbers, visual artists Halldór Arnar Úlfarsson, Huginn Þór Arason, Jesper Pedersen and Páll Ivan Pálsson will create music through the band, by taking its sounds and processing them through home-made electronic equipment. Go forth and witness random craziness and psychedelic darkness from Benni Hemm Hemm, a first if there ever was one.

Gaukurinn
21:00 Katrín Comeback Concert

Prikið
21:00 Hangover Cinema - Baron
Münchhausen

16 MON

Café Rósenberg
21:00 Pub Quiz

The English Pub
22:00 Live Music

17 TUE

Kaffibarinn
21:00 Bedroom Community Concert

Reykjavík Backpackers
20:00 Bingo Night

18 WED

Café Rósenberg
21:00 Jón Rafnsson – Vorvindar

Faktóry
23:00 DJ Logi Pedro

Hressó
21:00 Vj Fúzi

Kaffibarinn
21:00 HalliValli & Svenni Sólo

Nordic House
21:00 Múlinn Jazz Club: Wes Mont
gomery Tribute

19 THU

B5
21:00 Vignir Snær og Matti Matt

Café Rósenberg
21:00 Jón Rafnsson – Vorvindar

Esja
21:00 Partyzone lounge session

Faktóry
22:00 DJ Atli Kanill



Need A Hug?

Go hang out in Reykjavík on April 18

Hallgrímskirkja 14.00

Free

If so, you will be thrilled to hear that some people from ESN have organised an event that will guarantee you as many free hugs as you'd like! The organisers thought it was a pity that face-to-face human contact has become a rarity, as everyone is eager to protect their personal space. And because everybody needs a hug from time to time, they thought they would start to just spread the love and hug anyone who's willing. The goal is to make as many people as possible smile and thus make the streets of Reykjavík a happier place. The shindig starts at Hallgrímskirkja at 14:00 on April 18, so be ready to dole out some happiness! Look up the Free Hugs Campaign Reykjavík on Facebook for more information.



Weekly Jazz In The Memory Of Jón Múli Árnason

Wednesdays, 21:00–23:00

The Nordic House, Sturlugata 5, 101 Reykjavík

1500 ISK

In an event organised by the Icelandic Music Union FHÍ, The Múlinn Jazz Club opens its doors every Wednesday night, presenting the best of Icelandic Jazz music from the Agnar Már Magnússon trio to Stefán Ómar and the band. The jazz Club is dedicated to the legendary radio presenter Jón Múli Árnason, a famous radio broadcaster who worked for the National Radio from 1946 to 1985, especially known for his promotion of Jazz music on the radio.

Múlinn Jazz Club presents an ambitious and diverse programme, which stirs up the Icelandic Jazz scene. For the detailed programme and the list of the musicians go to <http://mulinn.is/>.



Celebrate The Beginning Of Summer!

April 19, 17.00

Where: Eldborg Hall, Harpa

3200-4900 ISK, available at midi.is

Wait, summer in April? Here in Iceland? Yes indeed, according to the old Norse calendar, summer begins on April 19 this year. This makes far more sense when you know that back then, one only knew two seasons: winter and summer. And this year, summer will be celebrated with a huge pop concert at Harpa!

All the big names will be there to perform, including Páll Óskar Hjálmtýsson, Steindi Jr. and Bent, Jónsi and Gréta Salóme, Ingó Þórarins, Jón Jónsson and Friðrik Dór. Sverrir Þór Sverrisson and Logi Geirsson will present the shindig, and who knows, they might sing a song or two themselves.

So get ready for a big celebration, although summer will probably only kick in much later.

Glaumbar

21:00 Beer Pong – Resident DJ

Glaumbar

22:00 Magni

Harpa

17:00 Sumarpopp Concert

Prikið

21:00 DJ Gay Latino Man

Reykjavík Backpackers

20:00 Trivia Quiz Night

20 FRI

B5

21:00 DJ Jói

Bar 11

21:00 Kiriya Family and DJ

Café Rósenberg

22:00 Don Randi & Geir Ólaf

Esja

21:00 DJ Hlynur/DJ Bogi

Faktorý

23:00 DJ Pabbi

Glaumbar

21:00 DJ Seth Sharp

Hressó

21:00 DJ Fannar

Kaffibarinn

21:00 DJ KGB

Prikið

21:00 DJ Danni Deluxe

Reykjavík Backpackers

21:00 90s Theme Night!

21 SAT

B5

21:00 DJ Jónas

Café Rósenberg

22:00 KK & Maggi

Esja

21:00 DJ Hlynur/DJ Bogi

Faktorý

23:00 DJ Housekell

Gaukurinn

21:00 Iron Maiden Tribute

Glaumbar

21:00 DJ Gunni Stef

Hallgrímskirkja

17:00 Mozart Celebration

Hressó

21:00 DJ Solid

Kaffibarinn

21:00 Maggi Legó

Prikið

21:00 DJ Addi Intro

22 SUN

Esja

20:00 DJ Hlynur

Faktorý

21:00 Live Jazz

Nordic House

15:15 15:15 Concerts: English Cavaliers and Roses in French Company

Prikið

22:00 Hangover Cinema - Les Visiteurs

23 MON

Café Rósenberg

21:00 Pub Quiz

The English Pub

22:00 Live Music

24 TUE

Kaffibarinn

21:00 Hannes Finnson

Reykjavík Backpackers

20:00 Bingo Night

25 WED

Café Rósenberg

21:00 Hugajónafólkið

Dubliner

20:00 Pub Quiz

Hressó

21:00 Live Jazzband

Kaffibarinn

21:00 DJ Pilsner

Nordic House

21:00 Múlinn Jazz Club: Agnar Már Mágússon Trio

26 THU

B5

21:00 Vignir Snær and Hreimur

Café Rósenberg

21:00 Steinþór & Jói Jóns

Esja

21:00 Partyzone lounge session

Faktorý

22:00 DJ Kanilsældur

Kaffibarinn

21:00 Housekell

Prikið

21:00 Surprise Night

Reykjavík Backpackers

20:00 Trivia Quiz Night



Enjoy Music For A Good Cause

Every Thursday at 22:00

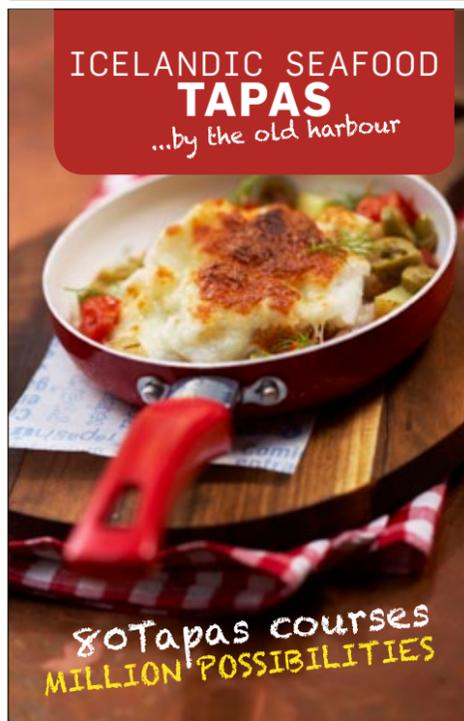
Hressó

Free, donations appreciated

There's a new concert series in town! Starting April 12 at 22:00, Hressó will host a weekly Thursday night show. But it won't be any ordinary show. The proceeds will go to a charity designated by the bands performing that evening.

The eclectic line-up sounds promising indeed. By the time this paper prints, Elín Ey, supported by Day, will have kicked off the series. Then Krummi will take the stage on April 19, Retrobot, Ljósvaki, M-Band, ReTroBot on April 26, Kiriya Family on May 3, Snorri Helgason on May 10, and For a Minor Reflection on May 17. The final event will be a garden party at Hressó on June 14, where all the artists are going to play.

So go enjoy a show and throw in some króna for a good cause!





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MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN APRIL

27 FRI

- B5**
 21:00 DJ Jónas
Café Rósenberg
 22:00 Beggi Mood
Esja
 21:00 DJ Hlynur/DJ Bogi
Faktory
 23:00 DJ Housekell
Glaumbar
 21:00 DJ Egill Mainstream
Hressó
 22:00 DJ Fannar
Kaffibarinn
 21:00 DJs fknhdms
Prikið
 21:00 DJ Krúsi
Reykjavík Backpackers
 20:00 Ladies' Night

28 SAT

- B5**
 21:00 DJ Einar
Café Rósenberg
 22:00 Santiago
Esja
 21:00 DJ Hlynur/DJ Bogi
Glaumbar
 21:00 DJ Seth Sharp
Hressó
 22:00 Timburmenn and DJ Frigor
Kaffibarinn
 21:00 Alfons X
NASA
 20:30 Klezmer Kaos
Prikið
 21:00 DJ Benni B Ruff

29 SUN

- Esja**
 20:00 DJ Hlynur
Faktory
 21:00 Live Jazz
Nordic House
 15:15 15:15 Concerts: Hafliði Hallgrímsson Tribute
Prikið
 22:00 Hangover Cinema - Rambo 3



Friction: Art And The City

April 14 - May 12, every day except

Monday, from 13:00-17:00

ASÍ Art Museum, Freyjugata 41

Free

Friction is an exhibition curated by Einar Garibaldi Eiríksson, Kristinn E. Hrafnsson and Ólafur Gíslason based on the idea that artists use the space the city has to offer. The exhibition includes works by a number of artists known for their profound interest in the diverse context of art and urban communities in recent years.

The project consists of works at different stages: from ideas to already implemented works, ranging from simple presentation of the city as art, to works with any type of topographic interventions in public spaces, as well as complex social connections. Art in this context is used as a tool to increase our knowledge and understanding of the urban environment and its community. In addition to the participating artists, different scholars support the projects with their research, writing and publications. Different procedures lead to different results—and this is where friction comes into play.



A 'Kaotic' Night At NASA

April 28, 21:00

NASA

3000 ISK, tickets available at midi.is

French-Icelandic band Klezmer Kaos is releasing a new album and they want to celebrate that with you! Having toured all over Europe, they are now back to present what they have been working on. Their new album, called 'Froggy,' is once again inspired by Icelandic, Yiddish and traditional Klezmer tunes.

They describe themselves as a chaotic group, which seeks to reinvent well-known tunes. They hence combine classic expertise with rock and jazz sounds. The Icelandic clarinetist Heiða was seized by the beauty of Jewish folklore and has experimented with it ever since. So come along to NASA and let Klezmer Kaos' folky music enchant you!



Explore Image, Body, Pathos

Kjarvalsstaðir

Runs until May 20

1100 ISK

The exhibition 'Image, Body, Pathos' displays paintings by the artist Antoni Tàpies. The Catalan artist is hailed as "the last great artist of the 20th century." The exhibition consists of paintings on canvas or wood—spanning over seven decades from 1958 to the present. Included are many key works that exemplify Tàpies' unique use of materials that range from sand, cement, paste and granite dust to everyday objects.

It is the biggest exhibition that the Reykjavík Art Museum has ever imported from abroad. The artworks only arrived after weeks of transportation from Germany to Reykjavík, and some of the paintings were stuck on the Faroe Islands due to bad weather conditions. Let yourself be overwhelmed by this great artist's works.

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

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 12-19 mon-fri, 13-17 weekends
www.photomuseum.is

30 MON

Café Rósenberg

21:00 Margrét Dórothea & Tónlistarskóli Seltjarnarness

Faktorý

23:00 DJ KGB

Hressó

21:00 Krulludýrið and DJ Frigor

01 TUE

Kaffibarinn

21:00 HalliValli

Reykjavík Backpackers

20:00 Bingo Night

The English Pub

22:00 Live Music

02 WED

Hressó

21:00 Live Jazzband

Kaffibarinn

21:00 These Fists

Nordic House

21:00 Múlinn Jazz Club: Stefán Ómar & Band

03 THU

Esja

21:00 Partyzone lounge session

Hressó

22:00 Kiriyaama Family

Kaffibarinn

21:00 DJ Andrés

The English Pub

22:00 Live Music



When Designers and Farmers Team Up

Spark Design Space, Klapparstígur 33

Runs until May 19, Mo - Fri 10 - 18, Sat 12 - 16

Free

What started four years ago as an innovative design project for students at the Iceland Academy of the Arts can now, for the first time, be fully admired at Spark Design Space. For this project, one of the oldest professions of Iceland, farming, merged with one of the newest ones, product design, with the aim of developing new and interesting food products of the highest quality. The focus lies on design and traceability. In addition to being delicious and pleasing to the eye, Skyr Konfekt—which won Best Product in The Grapevine's second annual Product Awards this year—is a good example of the project's success.

The exhibition, which opened on March 20, is meant to share the experience and knowledge gathered throughout this comprehensive project. You can find more information about the project and the people involved at www.designersandfarmers.com.

ART IN APRIL

COCKTAIL PLEASURES AND VISUAL STIMULATION

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

OPENINGS

ASÍ Art Museum

April 14

Friction

An exhibition curated by Einar Garibaldi, Kristinn Hrafnsson and Ólafur Gíslason. Numerous Icelandic artists are exhibiting their various artworks.

Runs until May 12

Gallery Kling & Bang

April 14

33

Looking the Devil in the Eye, an exhibition by visual artist Sígga Björg Sigurðardóttir.

Runs until May 6

Gullkunnst Helgu

Apr 28

Is Life Salted Fish?

Salome Fannberg is known for using unusual materials for her work, especially Icelandic seaweed and wool. This exhibition shows her dreams and hopes during her journey of the last 4 years. The artwork is her way of showing the Icelandic way of life, a raw image of the little island in the north.

Runs until May 28

Gerðasafn

April 19

Thoughts on drawings. Exhibition of drawings by Icelandic artists from the 20th and 21st centuries.

Hafnarborg

April 19

Skjalda's Coat of Arms

Exhibition of work by Icelandic folk artist Atli Viðar Engilbertsson. Atli creates sculptures and reliefs, using cardboard as his main material. The exhibition is a part of the Life and Art Without Boundaries Festival.

Runs until April 29

April 21

Hrafnkell Sigurðsson

Exhibition of new work by Hrafnkell Sigurðsson, mostly from 2011 and 2012, displaying photography, video and wall mounted sculptures.

Runs until May 28

Nordic House

April 14

National Purist Routes

The project National Purist Routes explores the intersecting fields of hydro and thermal energy, tourism, and natural landscapes. It is a proposed network of hydrogen filling stations for rental cars developed as destina-

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HAFNARSTRÆTI 5 & SKÓLAVÖRDUSTÍGUR 10

A

Café Loki in front of Hallgrímskirkja

Icelandic traditional homemade food



Open 10-18 Mon - Sat
Open 11-17 Sundays

B

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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C

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E

MAP

Places We Like

1 Hressó

Austurstræti 20

You know, Hressó is basically the only place I go for coffee. Why? Their coffee is decent to excellent, but their forte is surely their wonderful patio, where you can enjoy the spring breeze in the sun, wrap yourself in a blanket beneath an electric heater in January and at all times: smoke.

2 Laundromat Café

Austurstræti 9

At the Laundromat Cafe you can do laundry, drink a beer and have a grandma read to your children all under one roof. This kid-friendly restaurant opened last spring in Reykjavík and prides itself on its full menu, cool concept, 5,000 books (that you can buy or trade), board games, and up-to-date newspapers and magazines (including a WALL OF GRAPEVINES).

3 Sægreifinn

Geirsgötu 8

Down by the Reykjavík harbour, Sægreifinn fish shop and restaurant is a pretty unique establishment. The menu features various fish dishes (including most of the "crazy Icelandic food" you'll want to tell your friends you had) and a rich portion of some pretty good lobster soup. Good food and welcoming service make this place a must-try.

4 Grái Kötturinn

Hverfisgata 16a

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

5 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

Weekends are somewhat overrated at Kaffibarinn if you ask me. Don't get me wrong, they can be brilliant if you're completely pissed, the DJs fresh and the crowd is full-blooded, still the weekdays are better. You should always expect to get caught in some shenanigan, whether it's a crazy Monday bender or a wacko Tuesday...well... bender.

6 Café d'Haiti

Geirsgata 7b/Verbúð 2

Now in a spacious new location, Café d'Haiti is surely one of Reykjavík's best cafés (and this is no mean feat, as the city has some nice coffee on offer). Go there for an excellent cup whenever you feel like it, or indulge in beer and low-key concerts at night.

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

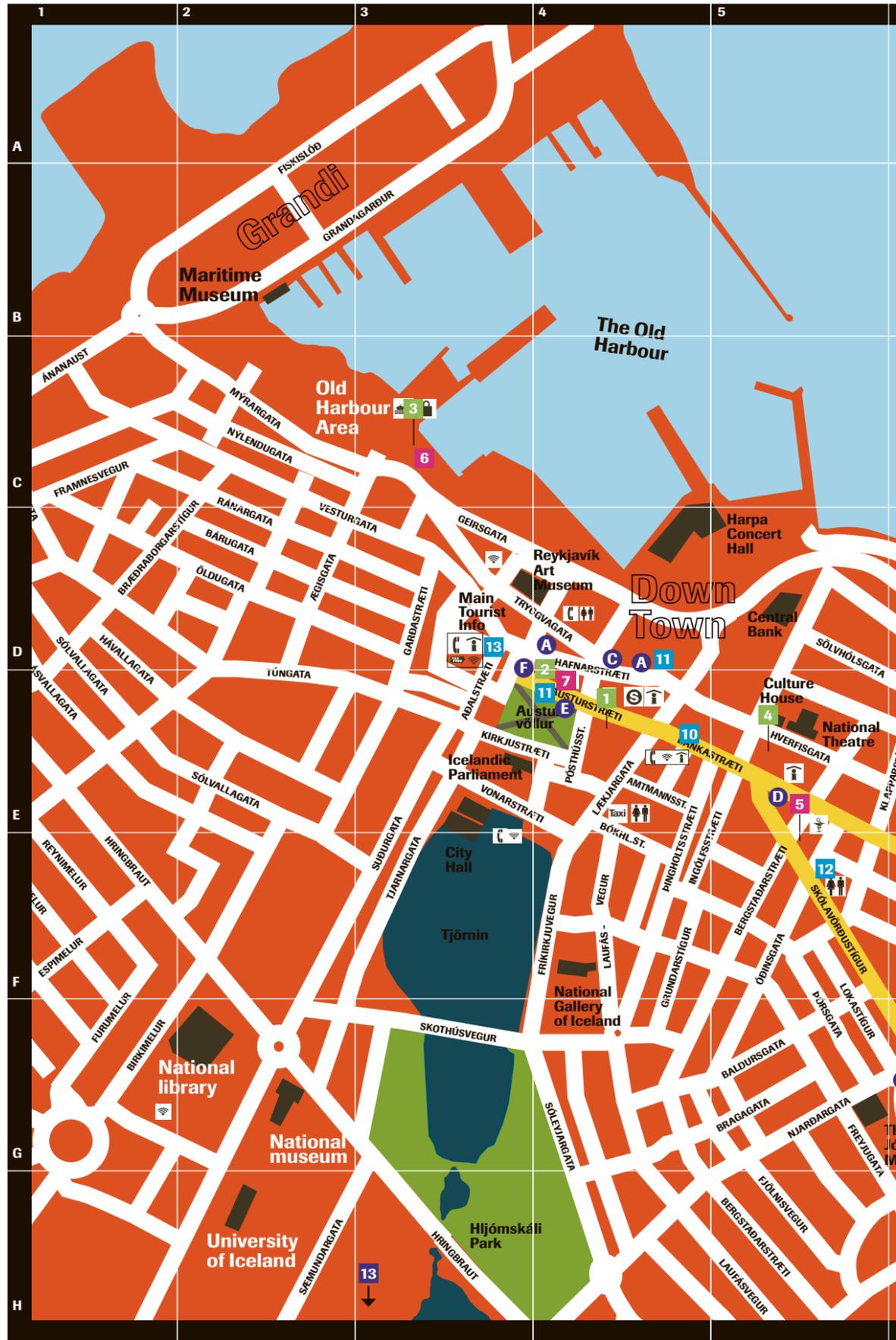
Tourist information

Arctic Adventures, Laugavegur 11,

tel: 562 7000

City Centre, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

Iceland Excursions - Grayline Iceland,



7 Austur

Austurstræti 7

Sleek and shiny, this new restaurant and bar is a straight-up boutique hot spot for stylish kids and trendy professionals alike. Appropriate for formal business meetings but casual enough for the roll-out-bed-at-5pm crowd, they serve up ample, satisfying, modern dishes at reasonable prices. This is also one of the rare places to get a full breakfast all day long!

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 Lágmúla 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 Reykjavík Backpackers

Laugavegur 28

Mingle with internationals and enjoy free wifi at this convenient hangout right in the middle of the action. Reykjavík Backpackers is an inexpensive hostel with a cool downtown vibe. They serve up sandwiches, cakes and coffee during the day, and offer live entertainment, beer and drink specials at night."

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 05:30 on weekends.

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

9 Nikita

Laugavegur 56

The Icelandic skate design brand Nikita now has a flagship store in Reykjavík and girl, it is awesome! The hot pink exterior is only the beginning; inside you'll be treated to some of the coolest and most comfortable ladies street and skate wear on the market.

10:00-16:00, 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.



LEGEND

EATING # DRINKING # SHOPPING # ADS

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

13 NEW IN TOWN

Rub 23
Aðalstræti 2

RUB 23 has long been a tourist magnet in Akureyri and as of last month it can also be found in the heart of Reykjavik. The name RUB stands for the spice blends that are put on and/or rubbed into the raw ingredients like fish and meat. Their concept is that you can choose your main course and then the sauce with which you want it to be cooked. Don't miss the house speciality, sushi pizza, which, as the restaurant claims, already has its own fan base including Tobba Marinós and Marta "Smarta" María from Mbl.is.



A Day In The Life
Addi Knutsson

What's up, Addi?
March 1 was the premiere of my first feature film 'Svartur á leik' ("Black's Game"), directed by Óskar Þór Axelsson. It marked the end of a seven-year process that started when I read the book that the film is based on and secured the film-rights. I'm very proud to have produced this film; it's been hard work but definitely worth it. It doesn't hurt to have received such amazing reviews from both critics and the public; it's way beyond my wildest dreams. It has become the third largest-grossing film in Iceland's history; over twenty percent of the population of Iceland have seen it. It's still in theatres (you can see it with English subtitles at Bíó Paradís). So I'm very happy and I guess a bit overwhelmed these days.

EARLY MORNING >

I usually start my days at home with coffee and newspaper in hand. I know I should be hitting the gym, but for some strange reason it doesn't work out like that. More often I find myself going for a gourmet coffee and croissant at Prikið on Bankastræti. It's a great place to meet people who have also not gone to the gym.

LUNCH >

Snaps Bistro on Þórsgata is my new favourite place for lunch. It's very convenient for meetings, it's budget-friendly (being a producer and all) and it just so happens that the food they serve there is really, really good.

MID-DAY >

Mid-day is usually the busiest time of the day for me. I'm at meetings, working on location or in the editing room, so I drive my car a lot. Reykjavik is not a very pedestrian-friendly city and being stuck in traffic or looking for that perfect parking spot is not an uncommon practice for me.

AFTERNOON >

I've got a Labrador retriever that needs its daily exercise and we usually try to go out before dinnertime. This is also a good time to catch up on some missed calls or tune into the news on the radio. The latter hasn't really been working for me lately, as all the news seems to be bad news here in Iceland. It seems that negativity has become the new national sport. So I sometimes just talk to my dog, who is always in a good mood.

HEAT OF THE NIGHT >

After the dinnertime routine I try to rest my brain a bit, catch up on some TV shows or go to the movies. Icelandic cinemas have intermissions and I love it. And then I fall asleep thinking about all the fish and fowl I'll catch this summer. After all, I'm a hunter (that sometimes comes out in film).

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10 66° North
Bankastræti 5

Highly fashionable and highly practical, 66° Norður is a classic outdoors store in Iceland for everybody. Nearly every Icelander has a 66° sweater or two. Their quality apparel is made to last and keeps the elements out. You may also find their products in high-end stores around the world.

11 ÁTVR (Liquor store)
Austurstræti 10a

In Iceland, alcohol isn't sold in the grocery shops (that stuff in the shops that looks like beer—it isn't beer. Trust us). You can buy alcohol in the state-owned liquor stores named ÁTVR, usually referred to as Ríkið ("The State"). One store is located in the city centre. Opening hours for the downtown one are: Mon.–Thu. 11:00–18:00, Fri. 11:00–19:00, Sat. 11:00–18:00.

12 Eymundsson Bookstore
Skólavörðustígur 11

Eymundsson is a chain with several outlets but the one on Skólavörðustígur is the best in town. The premises are equipped with a coffee shop, tables and sofas to lounge in and the all-glass exterior lets in a lot of light, which is good for reading real books, not Facebooks.

Public phones

There aren't many public payphones in the city centre. The tourist information centre at Aðalstræti 2, City Hall, Kolaportið, 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 Reykjavik City Library, Tryggvagata 15

The National and University Library, Arngrímogata 3

Tourist Information Centre, Aðalstræti 2
Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti 2
Reykjavik Backpackers, Laugavegur 28

Swimming Pools

There are several swimming pools in Reykjavik. The one in 101 Reykjavik, 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, Ingólfs-tortorg, by Hallgrímskirkja, by Reykjavik Art Museum, Lækjargata and by Eymundsson on Skólavörðustígur. Toilets can also be found inside the Reykjavik City Hall and the Reykjavik Library.

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ART IN APRIL

tions across Iceland, suggesting possible symbiotic energies between the expanding energy and tourism industries.

April 20

Numismatic Association Exhibition

The collectors' exhibition in the cellar of the Nordic House features various currencies from past to present and many old valuables that will wake up old memories. On April 21 there will be a collectors market where various collectives will be for trade. On April 22 people can bring collectives for analysis.

Reykjavík Art Museum,
Hafnarhús

April 21

Iceland Academy of the Arts - Graduation Exhibition 2012

Students from the Iceland Academy of the Arts in the Fine Arts, Design and Architecture Departments show their final projects.

Runs until May 6



Art Is Fun Is Art!

Curver Thoroddsen's "Family Fun"

Runs until April 29

The Living Art Museum

Free

ONGOING

The Culture House

Islande - Israel

Exhibition by French artist Anne Herzog as part of the art exhibition series at the café and shop.

Runs until May 29

Medieval Manuscripts Eddas and Sagas

It includes principal medieval manuscripts, such as Codices Regii of the Poetic Edda and Prose Edda, and law codices and Christian works, not to forget the Sagas of Icelanders.

On permanent view

Child of Hope - Youth and Jón Sigurósson

Exploring the life of Icelandic national hero Jón Sigurjónsson, made especially accessible to children, families, and school groups

On permanent view

Medieval Manuscripts - Eddas and Sagas

Some of Iceland's medieval manuscripts on display. Guided tour in English on Mondays & Fridays at 15:00

On permanent view

Millennium - phase one

Selection of pieces from the collection of the National Gallery displaying a variety of works by Icelandic artists in the last two centuries.

On permanent view

The Library Room

The old reading room of the National Library. Displaying books of Icelandic cultural history dating from the 16th century to the present. Works include oldest published versions of the Sagas, Eddic Poems, and more

On permanent view

The Einar Jónsson Museum

Einar Jónsson

The museum contains close to 300 art works spanning a 60 year career: carvings from the artist's youth, sculptures, paintings and drawings. A beautiful tree-clad garden adorned with 26 bronze casts of the artist's works is located behind the museum

On permanent view

Gerðuberg

Stepping into The Living Art Museum for Curver Thoroddsen's Family Fun exhibit was a completely disorienting experience. An outdoor family festival had been inserted into the gallery space. The art museum was full of kids running around, playing and screaming.

There was a bouncy castle, there were scouts selling cotton candy and the floor was covered with Astroturf. And perhaps most disorienting of all, the grown-up crowd consisted of the same exact people who come to art openings, except instead of standing around eating cheese and drinking wine, they were running after their children. Frankly, it was information overload. I stumbled around until a friend, who was tending to his pink-clad, face-painted daughter, pointed me towards some clandestine beer. As I stood in a calm spot, sipping beer and observing the Brownian motion of excited child-particles and exhausted parent-compounds, something in my perception was catalysed.

The fact that I was inside a piece of art asserted itself and suddenly everything became an aesthetic object. Face paint, clothes worn by children and cotton candy, became pieces of art. My rearranged mind did not stop there. The noise of playing children, the movement of parents trailing after sugared-up offspring, the trajectories of tiny humans inside a bouncy castle, the exhaustion of the adults, the confusion of tourists visiting an art museum and the giddiness of the children all became art.

Meanwhile the kids and parents around me continued to have fun. Having accompanied my parents to many art exhibits as a kid, I sort of envied the kids who got to take over a museum. That said, I enjoyed immensely playing with aesthetic ideas in my head. The exhibit managed to expand the boundaries of what I thought of as artistic objects. Since then I have been having fun looking at various things and phenomena in my everyday life, considering them as art.

It's not everyday that art changes your perception of the world like this, so go check it out! For more information, visit <http://nylo.is/>.

Stone, scissors, paper and the keys to heaven

The exhibition Steinn, skæri, pappír og lykjar að himnaríki features Icelandic stones, scissors of various shapes and sizes, paper (in the form of biblical pictures and bibles) and keys, some of which (who knows?) may unlock the doors of heaven itself.

Runs until June 22

Desire

An exhibition of oil paintings by Lilja Þorsteinsdóttir.

Runs until: April 15

i8 Gallery

Ívar Valgarðsson

In his solo show at i8 Gallery conceptual artist Ívar Valgarðsson will show new works in various media.

Runs until May 12

Kjarvalsstaðir (Reykjavík Art

Museum)

Tàpies - Image, Body, Pathos

Exhibition of Catalan artist Antoni Tàpies' oeuvre. Paintings on canvas and wood from 1958 to present.

Runs until May 20

Knitting Iceland

Come and knit at Laugavegur 25, 3rd floor, every Thursday, 14:00 - 18:00

On permanent view

Latin Dance Studio, Faxafen 12

Guided Practica - Argentine tango, Sundays from 17:30-19:30

Register by phone 821 6929 or email tangoadventure@gmail.com, 500 ISK for students, 800 ISK for others. Six week courses are also available

Museum of Design - Hönnunarsafn Íslands

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Thoughts on drawings
Collection of drawings by Icelandic artists

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Skjalda's Coat of Arms
Atli Viðar Engilbertsson
Hrafnkell Sigurðsson Exhibition

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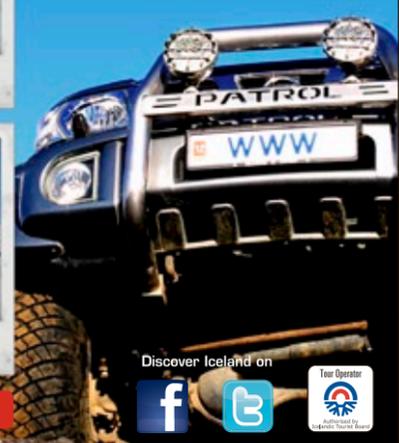


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landic designers who all express themselves through knitting. The works exhibited are made within a certain framework and testify to the designers' full artistic freedom for expression which does not stoop to perceived laws of market and fashion. Curated by designer, Steinunn Sigurðardóttir.

Runs until May 20

National Gallery of Iceland
Rúri - Retrospective

Retrospective of Rúri's major works over the last four decades.

Runs until May 6

The National Museum

The Making of a Nation - Heritage and History in Iceland

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

On permanent view.

The Nordic House

The Library

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

On permanent view

Reykjavík Art Museum, Ásmundarsafn

From Sketch to Sculpture - Drawings by Ásmundur Sveinsson. The exhibition offers a first insight into the rich collection of drawings by the sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson, as the Reykjavík Art Museum has recently



Don't Fall Asleep Just Yet...

Thursdays, 21:00

Hótel Natura, Nauthólsvegur 52

Free

Do you miss the good old days when your mother used to tuck you in at night and read you a bedtime story before you fell asleep? Are you interested in Icelandic literature, from the sagas to elf stories to Halldór Laxness? Then put on your pyjamas and head to Icelandair Hotel Natura on a Thursday evening where a professional actor reads in English.

The theme changes from week to week. You might learn all about Icelandic trolls and sorcerers one week, and then you might hear a chapter from 101 Reykjavík the next week. And, in addition to the stories, you will learn about the settings in which traditional tales were first told or about the authors of modern Icelandic literature. Let the storytellers take you away to a place you have not yet discovered or a long gone era that fascinates you.

You are welcome to make yourself comfortable in the auditorium where blankets and pillows await to keep you warm and cosy. Special treat on the house: a mug of hot chocolate with cream and cookies! Yum.

completed the digital registration of about 2000 drawings that the artist bequeathed to the Museum.

Runs until April 22

Magnús Árnason - Homage

Árnason's works, whether in his sound-pieces, sculptures or performances, stand on a vague line between the real and unreal, fiction and facts. In his recent work, he has worked with nature and natural history; moving away from the mythological references seen in his earlier work.

Runs until April 22

Hafnarhús

Erró- Drawings

The exhibition consists of 180 drawings Erró has done since 1944 until the present day

Runs until August 26

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, 600 ISK per adult, 300 ISK for children (children under 12, free) and 450 ISK per person in groups (10+)

On permanent view

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

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 and the growth of the Reykjavík Harbour

On permanent view

The Call of Sagas

A exhibition from Finland about a adventurous voyage in an open boat from Finland to Iceland, honoring the old viking shipping routes.

On permanent view

The Watercolours of Ólafur Thorlacius

Ólafur Þór worked with the Icelandic Coast Guard for many years as a map-maker. He is now retired and paints beautiful watercolors in his free time.

On permanent view

Reykjavík Museum of

Photography

Echo

Charlotta Hauksdóttir & Sonja Thomsen look at time and the reproduction of the past

Runs until May 6

Calendar Breaking Christians

Christian Scheirbeck's photos from the early 1900's capture moments in the lives of local people during work and play.

Runs until May 6

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Milestones: Sigurjón Ólafsson's Key

Sculptures

Exhibition with some of Sigurjón Ólafsson's key works from different periods of his prolific career as a sculptor. The earliest work on the exhibition is a newly acquired relief of two sisters which he made at his first year at the Royal Academy of Art in Copenhagen. This relief has not been exhibited in Iceland before.

Runs until: Oct 1

Spark Design Space

A Salon show is being prepared at Spark containing selected projects from the past as well as a few new things we can not resist.

Spark is open during the transformation.

Skafftelli, Seyðisfjörður

Check www.skafftelli.is for latest shows

Sláturhúsið, Egilsstaðir

Check www.slaturhusid.is for latest shows



Challenged By Power Lines

Ívar Valgarðsson exhibits Power Lines at i8 Gallery, Tryggvagata 16

Runs until May 12

Free

Akranes-born Ívar Valgarðsson is a visual artist who fashions his pieces out of DIY and home improvement material. As i8 Gallery describes it, his work is "a subtle conversation between art history and architecture," which "questions the space between ideology and the tangible world where the relationship between nature and the man made environment is a recurrent theme."

Power Lines, which is his third solo show at i8, consists of an installation of conductor cables, along with five photographs of the same cables in situ against the backdrop of the blue sky. Three power lines stretched between the gallery walls at different heights make it a challenge for the audience to manoeuvre around the space. By taking away the function of the lines, the artist seeks to put them into an aesthetic environment. The photographic print that accompanies the exhibit shows a hand touching water, the same source of the electricity conducted by the power lines. We think it sounds pretty cool!

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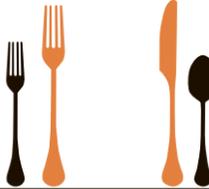
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Ghandi

Pósthússtræti 17, 101 Reykjavík



What We Think: Delicious and a welcome variety to the Icelandic restaurant flora.

Flavour: Indian/Kerala. Think Indian meets Indonesian. Coconut, fish, coriander, lamb. Piquant rather than simply spicy.

Ambiance: Cosy, romantic.

Service: A little erratic but special praise for Lloyd the waiter for friendly service bravery in the line of fire during a packed restaurant on a weekday.

Price: (2 people): 13-15.000 ISK (with wine)

When I heard about Gandhi I immediately welcomed the idea even before looking at the menu. Reykjavík only has one proper Indian restaurant, the wonderful Austur-Indíafjelagið, which focuses mostly on the northwestern part of India (with a honourable mention going to the lovely Pakistani restaurant Shalimar). Gandhi's emphasis is on Kerala cuisine (Southwest India) and the price range is somewhere between Shalimar and Austur-Indíafjelagið.

Kerala is an Indian state, formerly part of the feudal kingdom of Travancore (I just had to include that as it has to be the coolest name of a kingdom ever). Traditionally known for their spice production, they produce loads and loads of black pepper, vanilla and cardamom.

South-Indian cuisine can be divided up a bit like a boy band. Andhra is the spicy one, Karnataka is the sweet one, Kerala is the nutty one and Tamil is... eh... Justin Timberlake (?). Kerala cui-

sine is nutty both in the sense that it uses coconuts with wild abandon and in that its influences are maddeningly diverse as the region boasts a reasonably large (mostly) non-vegetarian Christian and Muslim community while the surrounding regions are mostly Hindu and/or vegetarian. As a result Kerala people have a balanced diet high in vegetables and fish. The Kerala people eat really well without abandoning taste or freaking out over fibres and antioxidants. Basically, they will have something for everyone, but rice, fish, pickles and coconut feature prominently.

The head chef bears a passing resemblance to Ving Rhames (a resemblance that grew stronger as the mixture of curry and beer proceeded to "go medieval on my ass" the following morning). And according to their website, Tobba Marínós, blogger, local celebrity and avid Grapevine-reader is a big fan of their cooking. Two notches already and we still haven't had a bite to eat.

The menu at Gandhi is a perfect size for an Indian restaurant. As much as I agree with Gordon Ramsey about the simple two page menus, it simply doesn't apply here. No one in their right mind goes to India for minimalism. India invented OTT. The menu is a solid three-pager, which is perfect for anxiety cases like myself who start chewing on the curtains whenever they're provided with more than three choices. The selection is about two-thirds Kerala and one-third generic Indian (which is fine by me).

I've been on a huge chutney binge at home, putting chutney-coconut milk sauces on everything from roasted vegetables to fried fish. So I started out with the most perfect naan (390 ISK) that I have had in a while (puffy, crispy, not too oily) with a mild mango chutney on the side (495 ISK).

For the first course my date had a beautiful turmeric-coloured Masala grilled fish (1590 ISK), which collapsed on the fork and she immediately claimed it was one of the better fish dishes she had had here (wouldn't go quite that far, but definitely an excellent dish). I had the mushroom fry (1560 ISK), which was deep-fried button mushrooms—simple little nuggets of ginger, garlic and awesome.

For the main course my date had the Mutton Malli Perala (3990 ISK), a delicious boneless rack of lamb heavy on onion and coriander and I picked the Malabar Fish Curry (2990 ISK), which is quite a traditional Kerala dish by all accounts. I think the mutton should please any meat-eater, but I'd heavily recommend the fish dishes even if you're not a big fan of fish.

Simply dubbed "Indian dessert" (1050 ISK) was some variation on gajar ka halwa (at least this time around). A spicy carrot pudding with raisins and almonds served with ice cream and a slice of French chocolate cake. Maybe they figured that "carrot pudding" wouldn't sound appetising to Icelanders. But fussy eaters, trust me, this is a really tasty dessert. But I would have liked to see more traditional dessert options such as a sambharam ginger buttermilk drink or vada donuts.

The only downsides I can think of are that I would have liked more strictly regional choices and more vegetarian options. But other than that, Gandhi offers an all-around great dining experience.

Valare upakaram, Gandhi!

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CORRECTION:

The price quoted in the Geysir food review in issue 2, 2012, was supposed to be for two people, which we failed to make clear. Furthermore, we stated that the entrecote steak Geysir served was not a real entrecote steak when in fact it was. We apologize sincerely for our mistakes.



NOSH, NOSH, NOSH

Forréttabarininn

Nýlendugata 14, 101 Reykjavík



What We Think: A head-on collision between bistro and tapas. Small portions. French/Icelandic. Great meat-dishes. Interesting concept. Surprisingly affordable. Drinks a letdown.

Flavour: Small portions packing a dense, savoury punch. More laborious and constructed than simple and fresh. Spanish portions. French tradition.

Ambiance: Wide-open. Enviably ceiling height. Open kitchen but neither awkward nor clamorous. Guests were chatty and casual. Good for a small group of friends catching up.

Service: Knowledgeable. Top marks.

Price: (for two): 10-12.000 ISK

Forréttabarininn specialises in starters—but think tapas meets bistro rather than 2-for-1 hot wings. In fact, Forréttabarininn (The Starter Bar) is sometimes jokingly referred to by locals as Forréttindabarininn (The Privilege Bar). There is no denying that the place looks a little on the chic side, but it's hardly the surgical steel of the nouveau riche or the vaulted ceilings of the gentry. I looked around and saw mostly young professionals enjoying a relatively affordable meal. It's a place of minimal and fashionably raw interiors and an open kitchen.

The starter theme is a playground format that lets Forréttabarininn grind out inventive concoctions mixed in with

some safer choices—safe in the sense that any duds are sure to be lost in the avalanche of flavours. It's essentially one big tasting platter with two to four small dishes taking the place of a traditional three-course meal.

Plates are divided between warm, hot and cold; and everything, except for the desserts, is available in half and full portions. The dishes come at a very reasonable 790 ISK for a half portion and 1190 ISK for a full portion. Desserts are 890 ISK.

The wine was similarly affordable, averaging around 1.000 ISK for a glass, but I had expected more selection. We went with the Folonari Montepulciano, Besheim Pinot Blanc and the surprise cocktail. The cocktail, which turned out to be cherry syrup treacle called lollipop, was not my cup of tea whatsoever. I downed it like cough syrup and tried to forget it ever happened.

On to the dishes that my date and I tried:

Oxtail meatballs with blue cheese and cranberries—fat and pungent, with the cranberries struggling to tart it up. A great dish but you wouldn't want to follow that up with anything too delicate.

Horse wellington with mushrooms, béarnaise sauce and ham—don't be shy to try the horse. While well-cooked horse (most likely foal) can be quite good, this was not the best I've had (for good horsemeat, I recommend Humarhúsið).

Lamb hearts with bacon, dates & green apples—the hearts had a deep and slightly gamey flavour. This was surprisingly tender, rustic cooking brought to life by skill and great technique.

Beetroot, pears, figs & ricotta cheese—the ingredients had been shredded and stewed together into something almost like a compote. Not sure ricotta was the best choice, but the fig and beetroot were bang on.

Beef belly with apricots and ginger-soy vinaigrette—slow-cooked into a something between a fine stew and a rillettes. A well-balanced dish served in a thin rolled-up pancake. This was the standout dish of the evening.

Beef Carpaccio, Dijon, capers, croustons—simple, classic, fresh, tasty. A very safe bet.

Salted cod waffle with sour milk, crowsberries and Masago (capelin roe)—a basic waffle with a light bacalau flavour. I appreciate the risk-taking, but this would have been more at home in the dessert section and the taste wasn't that interesting.

We finished with the chocolate, raspberries, salted peanuts, caramel desert—even my dessert-detesting wife was happy with it, which says something. Salt and caramel is an established combo by now and the raspberries gave a tart finish. Definitely one of the better desserts I've had recently.

All in all, Forréttabarininn is offering a different kind of indulgence. Sure, you could "award" yourself for sticking to the gym routine this week by bludgeoning your tongue with a cheesy Dominos mallet or you could ambush that tongue and tickle it at Forréttabarininn until it cries frændi ("cousin").

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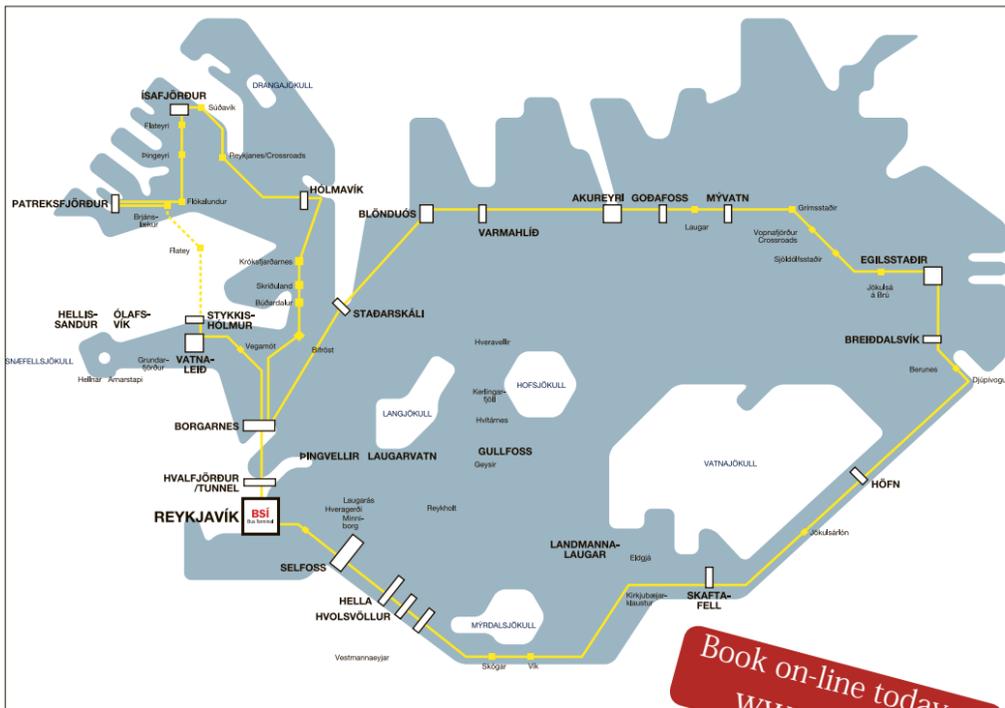
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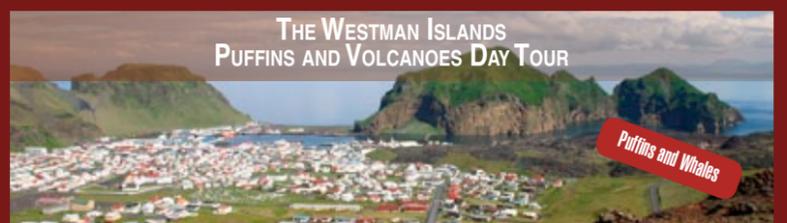
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mountain sides down to the ocean. The population has been dwindling the last decades mostly because of how isolated the area is during the winter. But it is this isolation that makes the area so magical. The calm fjords can make even the most restless of people stoic. This being said, there is no shortage of life and excitement in the villages along the coast of the Westfjords during the summer. Festivals of all sorts, markets and exhibitions take place every week. Last and not least this passports connects with tours to the amazing Hornstrandir; once inhabited by farmers and fishermen but now deserted, a triumph of nature.

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