



# The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

Issue 1 × 2016

Jan 8 - Feb 4

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Tonik Ensemble  
- Snapshots

## The Reykjavík Grapevine Music Awards 2015

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Album prize.  
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KronKron & Selected  
Men

# REALITY'S DARK CHAOS AND ME: A LOVE STORY

An editorial by Haukur S. Magnússon

Growing up in an isolated fishing village (Ísafjörður, pop. 2,500) on Iceland's northwest corner—at the edge of the Arctic Circle—I developed an immense curiosity about the world beyond my fjord and family as soon as I became aware of its existence. Deeply invested in learning everything I could about this world and its workings, yet frustratingly unable to experience any of it firsthand, I greedily and indiscriminately imbibed every potential source of information within reach, seeking glimpses and hints of what lay in store beyond the looming mountains that framed my reality.

Early investigations involved picture books and television—the recent advent of VCRs ensured there was always something to watch, or re-watch. It's hard to say what, if anything, I learned through these initial efforts; however my excessive TV regime resulted in me being able to speak a second language, English, by the time I turned five. This might explain why I sound like a cartoon character in English.

In first grade, patient adults taught me and others how to read. What good fortune, what a gift. My curiosity reached a boiling point once I fully fathomed that learning to read had granted me access to a whole new world of information. Subsequently, I would spend entire days at the library, carefully inspecting its seemingly infinite collection of books spanning every conceivable topic. Based on my investigations, some careful consideration and a lot of guesswork, I surmised that the combined knowledge contained in all the library's books was conclusive and all-encompassing, in the broadest sense. As far as I was concerned, those books represented the totality of collected human knowledge of and ideas about the world. By systematically reading all of them, I would thus be able to conceptualize a fairly comprehensive idea of the whole world without ever leaving Ísafjörður, I reasoned—thereby sating my growling curiosity.

Being a kid is busy work. There are many distractions, and there is much

to explore and investigate, even within the confines of a narrow fjord on the edge of nowhere. My interest in the outside world remained strong, but I soon forgot my plan to read everything in the library. Biking around town with my friends was also important—as was searching for treasure and breaking car windows down at the dumps. I also liked doing my homework, since it pleased my



grandmother, and standing around on the harbour to see the boats come in, and watching TV. And reading books. Just not all of them.

I decided to try newspapers and magazines, thinking they might offer a different type of information about everything. I read them all. A few were published by political parties—the conservative one, the socialist one, the centrist one—then there was the tabloid, and some weeklies and glossies. I instantly liked all of them, even though a few were mostly boring, and others had zero stories that interested me. Here's why: each of them felt like its own, unique universe, each represented a certain worldview or philosophy or mode of thought. The words and images they brought felt secondary to the unique character that accompanied each of them, a great source of the sort of information you can't well convey with words. The different characters didn't have a specific placement or indicator. I would glimpse him in certain words or letters, in images, in the way the stories were arranged, and sometimes creeping on the margins.

I was surprised to find that the act of reading a newspaper or a magazine felt almost categorically different from reading anything else I had come across. They demanded a different kind of attention, and yielded a different sort of reward. I wondered why, or at least to

what end. Then, I sort of understood. Their central purpose was not to inform or educate or mediate, regardless of their makers' intent. They formed the basis of a club, a shared idea of an intangible space for socializing and engaging with others of a similar mind. A nod to the tribes and clans of our forefathers, or maybe a giant country club of the mind. They helped us position ourselves and provided a vague sense of family or community. No wonder they started being a thing around the time of the Industrial Revolution—we look to them to replace whatever we lost when our traditional communities dissolved and we all became individuals.

Necessarily disposable and impermanent in nature, The Newspaper's aim is to evoke in its readers a sense of active participation in the world, granting them a stake in the events and movements they deem significant, while forging a comprehensible narrative out of reality's dark chaos. This promotes a sense of belonging and comfort for The Readers, who share a temporary community centered around the world as outlined by The Newspaper, in accordance with the readers' conscious, or subconscious, wishes.

I was fascinated, enamored. Providing a space, granting a stake, forging a narrative—building community!—for those of us who felt the lacking, and sought them out. What noble goals! What a fun project! So I kept reading, and wondering.

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The Reykjavík Grapevine's first issue of 2016 is as usual dedicated to pondering the year we just left behind. As usual, we're hoping that that accounting for where we're coming from might help us discern where we are, which might in turn give us an idea of where we're headed. Perhaps you'll find some sort of narrative in here that helps you make sense of all that dark chaos. Perhaps some of the music that we're lauding will provide solace or new ideas. If nothing else, it should be good for a chuckle or two.

PS: Thanks to Kwaku at 1919 Hotel! <3

## A special thanks!

We'd like to say a special thanks to the companies that supplied our Reykjavík Grapevine Music Awards winner with their lovely prizes. The prizes are:

One winner gets a free night of luxury at **Hótel Búðir**, chilling in the countryside. Thanks to **Reykjavík Excursions**, a

lucky artist gets a tour-friendly one-year **Flybus** ticket for getting to and from Keflavík Airport. We teamed up with **Sushi Samba**, who've invited one of the bands to have a luxurious dinner party for six. One of the bands will receive a print run of 50 band T-shirts, courtesy of **Dogma**.

A lucky winner will receive a free year of bass / guitar strings from musicians' haven **Tónastöðin**. Another will get a vinyl-junkie's dream: a 10,000 ISK gift-voucher to spend in **Reykjavík Records**. Finally, we've teamed up with the Grapevine-award-winning restaurant **Snaps**, who'll



## TRACK OF 2015!

### Vaginaboys "Elskan af því bara"

Download it FREE at grapevine.is

Seeing as we're spending much of this January issue celebrating Iceland's 2015 in music—a vintage year, by any standards—we thought it fitting that our Track Of The Issue should be, in fact, our Track Of The Year.

The fact that Vaginaboys' quietly astounding torch-song "Elskan Af Því Bara" ("Baby, Just Because", in English) sat lonely and unlistened to on YouTube for almost a year before it went suddenly viral is oddly fitting. It's a particularly virulent earworm of a track, combining a languid rhythm and sparse synth arrangement with an affecting, pitch-shifted, delay-swathed, vocodered lead vocal to create a sense of mournful, disconnected melancholy.

And forget the language barrier. It's a testament to the quality of the song that the emotions are transmitted to the listener whether they can understand Icelandic or not, as proven by the positive reaction of the international press to Vaginaboys' Airwaves appearances.

The track also has impressive cross-generational appeal. As Grapevine music critic David Roach presciently noted back in December: "No one had a clue who they were, but everyone fell in love all the same... their unique brand of ice-cold, sexy, 808 auto-tuned R'n'B resonated in hip-hop and indie circles alike."

Track of the issue, and track of the year—good job, Vaginaboys! We're glad we put you on the cover! Twice! Happy 2016!

host a luxurious dinner for one of the bands.

This will hopefully serve as encouragement for future generations of musicians to release music and perform concerts, and possibly get free stuff in return. Who knows.



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# SOOR GRAPES & STUFF

THIS ISSUE'S LOVELIEST LETTER!

*Hello My name is Julian Fox and I am 12 years old, in the 6th grade. I live on Cape Cod in the state of Massachusetts.*

*I am looking to find a Pen Pal to share about our lives in different countries. We could share music, art and other interests via e-mail and regular mail. Do you know of anyone who might like to do this? At the end of April I will be visiting Iceland with my mother for one week during spring break vacation. I would like to learn more about Iceland before we go and maybe I could meet with that Pen Pal when we visit. My email address is: [REDACTED—write to letters@grapevine.is if you wish to become Julian's pen pal]*

*And my home address is: [REDACTED—again, write to letters@grapevine.is if you wish to become Julian's pen pal] Thank you so much and if you can let me know that would be great!*

Hi Julian,

You sound really nice. What a nice kid you are. Not like those rotten millenials. Nope. You represent a new breed of human, a brand new generation. Exciting times, we're living in! Generation Nice, we'll call you guys.

Anyway, good idea you had, getting a pen pal. Turns out Generation Nice is also Generation Smart! Pen pals are great, you know, because unlike real, physical pals, pen pals can't steal your stuff. The only things they can take from you are intangible, useless and boring—like your hopes, dreams and innocence. Nobody cares about that stuff, it will only get in the way of your career advancement when you eventually grow up. So, yes! Great idea! We applaud you!

Sincerely: Good luck finding a pen pal, young man. We hope you learn a lot and have a great time

when you make it to Iceland. We'd write to you ourselves, but since you want to meet up when you arrive here, we figure it's better if we keep our distance, so as not to disappoint you. Adulthood is hard on both body and soul, but it doesn't even come close to what working at the Grapevine will do to you. From the bottom of our long-since putrified hearts and the shrunken core of our grey, shriveled souls, we urge you: keep clear! Stay away!

Also, we get way too many effing letters as is.

Stay cool,  
Your Friends At The Reykjavik Grapevine

(PS—you get a prize for being an exemplary member of Generation Nice: A cool Grapevine t-shirt that will surely serve to impress all of your friends back in Cape Cod. Just drop us a line to claim it.)

*Hæ, I live in Akranes and although I drive I sometimes have to look at the bus schedule for friends. I have been shocked to see that the website bus.is only has storm warnings or information regarding buses that are cancelled due to bad weather on their Icelandic page and not on the English page. This means that immigrants and tourists are not getting vital information and often are waiting at bus stops in drastic weather as according to the English page everything seems fine.*

*I've sometimes had to rescue such folk and put them up in my home until the bus service resumed. I've written to the bus company several times about this problem but they have not even acknowledged my emails. Con-*

*sidering that we are expecting a great storm today, I wonder if Grapevine would get better results from Stræto? Can you please ask them why they don't have warnings about buses that are cancelled due to the weather on their English page? I'm sure it is just an oversight, not that they are deliberately trying to have tourists die of exposure.*

LoVe, Pauline

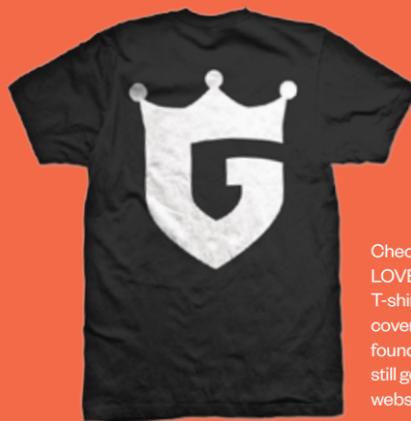
Hey Pauline, thanks for writing, and for placing your trust in us. We will make a modicum of effort to not let you down too hard.

Anyway. Yes. We agree. This is no good, it's a case of bad—or at least extremely sloppy—organization.

Hopefully things will get sorted out at Strætó at some point, although we must note that they are traditionally rather hard to get a hold of in general—heck, a teenage girl with severe developmental disabilities went missing for seven hours in one of their vans last year. Yup, that's an actual thing that happened. But they've been getting better lately, we hear.

While you await word from Strætó's Director of Public Relations, here's a great tip for how you can check the weather: take a look outside. YOU'RE WELCOME. #lifehack #wow

Best regards,  
Your Friends At The Reykjavik Grapevine



**LOVELIEST LETTER**

Check it out! Whoever sent in this issue's LOVELIEST LETTER gets a free Grapevine T-shirt, featuring the regal G that adorns our cover. DON'T PANIC if your letter wasn't found to be this issue's loveliest. You can still get a tee for a low, low price over our website, [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is).

**FREE GRAPEVINE TEE HEE HEE!**

And guess what: we always give out SICK prizes for each issue's LOVELIEST LETTER, so be sure to send in some fun and/or interesting missives.

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



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## Fun With Icelandic Names!

Ragnar Egilsson Explains Some Words!

Most Icelandic names have some cool, ancient symbolism. My name, Ragnar, means something like "Soldier of God" (no biggie). The name has some female variants and one of them, Ragnhildur, just means "War" (for real).

But you can Google all that stuff for yourself. Personally, I enjoy pretending I'm from Texas and I'm transcribing Icelandic names the way they sound to me. So you get:

Gissur: Geezer  
Einar: A Nerd  
Sæbjörn: Cyber  
Gunnleifur: Gonna Leave Her  
Heiðar: Hey There

Steinbergur: Stained Burger  
Jóhannes: Yo, Honeys  
Snæfríður: It's Not Free Though  
Ólafía: All Over Ya  
Ásgeir: Assgear  
Ásbjörn: Assburn  
Áslaugur: Asslicker  
Ásdís: Assdick  
Áslaug: Assbastard  
Haukur: Go to Hell For Making Me Write Another Stupid Word Article I Have No Idea What I'm Doing

It's not my fault some of these sound a bit rude. Why, I'm just a humble word wrangler, I jus' rope 'em and write 'em, jus' like my grandpappy did... yessiree. Please start doing that.

### AMEN'S WORLD A poem by Eydís Blöndal

Dear God

Tell them that I get afraid because I know  
what they can do and what I can't do

Tell them that my body is not exchangeable  
for niceness and beer

Tell them to please listen to me, even though  
my voice is annoying and my boobs are big

Tell them that when I talk about my reality  
I'm not attacking them. Not everything is  
about them.

amen "NOT ALL MEN"

## GIVE TRASH ANOTHER CHANCE



BY REBECCA CONWAY & HREFNA BJÖRG GYLFAÐÓTTIR!

Everyone wants to recycle. Especially in 2016. It was your New Year's resolution, remember? Sure you do. But, it can get confusing. "Where do the jam jars go?" "Is there a special thing for cork?" "What do I do with all these batteries?" "And should I really be rinsing out toilet paper to stow with old Fréttablaðiðs?"

Don't you fret! We've made you this handy guide to recycling in Iceland. You should totally cut it out and stick on your fridge for future reference.

#### Cardboard, paper, beverage cartons

- Rinse beverage cartons and remove residue from the cardboard, then compress them as much as possible to save space.
- Put them in the appropriate containers at drop-off centres and SORPA recycling centres, or in paper recycling bins found at some residences.

#### Plastic bags, plastic containers, plastic packaging, trays, even Styrofoam is okay now (not really though. Everyone hates styrofoam. Don't buy stuff with styrofoam, OK?)

- Empty the items completely, and compress them to save space.
- Put them in the appropriate containers at drop-off and SORPA recycling centres. Reykjavík city is also goin' big and offering plastic recycling containers

for homes now - see [www.ekkirusl.is](http://www.ekkirusl.is) for more info.

#### Porcelain and glassware (bottles, jars, etc.)

- Clean or empty them as best as possible.
- Bring them to SORPA recycling centres, and deposit them in the glass recycling containers. Three drop-off centres in Reykjavík currently have containers for glass, as well.

#### Glass bottles, plastic bottles, aluminium cans, any deposit beverage bottle

- Empty them of contents. Do not compress them, even if you're really good at crushing beercans against your forehead. (Ok, maybe do that one more time).
- Take them to a drop-off centre or a recycling centre (see [sorpa.is](http://sorpa.is)), and put them in the Skátarnir containers, for no refund. You can also take them to Endurvinnslan hf if you want them krónur.

#### Clothing, working electrical appliances, household goods, knick-knacks, etc.

- Separate clothing from other goods, and place each in a closed bag or box.
- Bring the bag/box to one of SORPA's recycling centres. Put clothing in the

Red Cross (Rauði krossinn) container and other goods in the Good Shepherd (Góði Hirðirinn) container.

#### Hazardous materials (batteries, spray cans, paint), light bulbs, CFLs, broken electrical appliances

- Separate hazardous materials from electrical appliances. Don't try to eat them.
- Go to a SORPA recycling centre. Deposit hazardous materials in a hazardous material container, and electrical appliances in an electrical appliance container.

#### Metal objects, aluminium trays, aluminium foil, jar lids, nails, food cans, etc.

- Remove residue from food containers.
- Put smaller metal items directly into the grey container or bring them to a SORPA recycling centre.

#### Organic waste: leftover food, paper towels, diapers, animal waste

- Either put waste into a plastic bag, or just throw it directly into the grey bin. Oh! And you're supposed to take candles to the recycling centre, too! Weird, right? *for more information and rules about recycling, go to [www.sorpa.is](http://www.sorpa.is)*



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#VULNICURA\_SNAP\_RELEASEGATE

Iceland's 2015-in-gates-and-hashtags got off to a fast start when Björk's eighth LP, 'Vulnicura', leaked. She responded by "going nuclear," snap-releasing the record via iTunes. The shock-and-awe strategy worked, and the album shot to the top of the iTunes charts in 30 different countries. Good work, Björk!

January

The year started off with some long-awaited news for immigrants and asylum seekers alike—namely, the creation of the Immigration Appeals Board. Designed to be an independent body that reviews cases rejected by the Directorate of Immigration, the board had been a long time coming. In theory, it was to make things run more smoothly. In practice, the Board soon reported they were backlogged with cases pending review, claiming a lack of funding and manpower to meet the demand. A step in the right direction, nonetheless. January also saw a crucial step in Jón Gnarr finally getting his name legally changed to Jón Gnarr in Iceland's National Registry, as he had his name legally changed in the US while serving as a guest professor at Houston's Rice University. This proved to be a laughably simple, easy and financially painless (\$100 USD, to be exact) process that puts our local bureaucracy to shame.

#BANKERSLAMMERGATE

The gavel of Lady Justice fell upon four of Kaupping's main men this February, to great applause. Two of the company's former CEOs, the chairman of the board, and the owner of 10% of the company, were each sentenced to four years or more of jail time, as investigations into Kaupping's activities revealed the company's shenanigans were a contributing factor in the 2008 economic collapse.

February

In this month, a comparatively easy-to-pronounce volcano, Holuhraun, finally stopped spewing crap into the sky. Having dominated headlines throughout 2014, it might not have been as spectacular or confounding for anchorpeople as Eyjafjallajökull, but we were still glad it finally wound down. Holuhraun would have the last laugh, though, as it came to light later in the year that the sulphur dioxide it had been puking up was very likely responsible for killing off a great number of sheep. At the time of writing, reports are coming out that the area is rumbling again... so send your prayers to our sheep. Undeterred by our geological shenanigans, tourists in this month generated enough revenue to make tourism the largest industry in the country, beating out such perennial heavyweights as fishing and banking. In fact, in 2015 tourist numbers crossed the one million mark, with final numbers showing four times the population of Iceland visited the country in this year alone.

#PIRATESAREPOPULARNOW?-GATE

In what would become one of Iceland's political stories of the year, March saw the small but forward-thinking Pirate Party leap to the top of the national opinion polls. Even the Pirates themselves were surprised by this development, but it was no blip—nine months later, they're still at the top, with a wider margin than ever.

#EU\_LETTERGATE

After years of discussion about Iceland entering the European Union, Iceland's post-collapse, left-wing government formally applied to join in July of 2009. The discussion didn't end there, and Iceland's bid to join was one of the 2013 parliamentary election's most heated topics. Despite both of the currently ruling parties' campaign promises that the application's fate would be determined via referendum, Foreign Minister Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson single-handedly attempted to repeal the EU accession process. He did this by sending the EU a letter which he wrote without the consent or knowledge of the nation's Parliament. He was roundly slammed for the undemocratic, eccentric, off-piste gesture, which was ultimately not accepted as a formal withdrawal by the EU.

#FREETHENIPPLEGATE

In protest against the double standards for nipple-baring, Icelandic woman began baring their breasts on social media under the hashtag #freethenipple. The movement quickly gained traction, as news of the endeavor went global—prompting weird, sweaty men from all over the world to try and glimpse them some Icelandic boobies—with everyone from singers to politicians joining in. Although hardly critical to the campaign's widespread success, Grapevine's online coverage of it reached hundreds of thousands of readers all over the world, culminating in that time Facebook determined Grapevine.is was a pornsite and blocked the entire site for a couple of days. Oh, we also had a lot of fun rickrolling the aforementioned weird, sweaty men via the classic April Fool's post "PHOTOS: The Hottest Icelandic Titties From #FreeTheNipple".

March

Perhaps jealous of all the attention #FreeTheNipple was getting, Minister of Foreign Affairs Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson sent a letter to the EU announcing that Iceland was no longer seeking accession. As the matter had never been put to a parliamentary vote, many Icelanders were upset by this side-stepping of the democratic process, and organised protests at Austurvöllur to voice their displeasure. In the end, the EU grudgingly accepted that Iceland just wasn't that into them, while leaving the caveat that if we changed our minds, we could totally hit them up anytime for Netflix and chill.



NEWS × HASHTAGS

A Sexy Infographic View of the National Discourse 2015

By Paul Fontaine × John Rogers

Traditional media and social media have a symbiotic relationship. Stories spread from the former to the latter, and the resulting discussion in the latter can make it back into the former. It's a fun back-and-forth. When a news story really lights a fire on Facebook and Twitter, the results can be good: they can sway callous government policy and change bad business decisions, for example. But they can also backfire, as the facts of the story become distorted or exaggerated as they pop from feed to feed. Here, we've collected a few of the stories that bounced back and forth between news sites and social media over the past year, for better or for worse (although mostly for better). Additional material by Rebecca Conway, Ciarán Daly, Hannah Jane Cohen, York Underwood and Gabriel Benjamin.

#PLANEVOMITGATE

In April, a pukey Progressive Party politician (known henceforth as the PPPP) projectile-vomited all over passengers on a flight to Washington DC, citing illness as the cause. What was he eating? We don't know. Maybe more to the point was what was he drinking—numerous fellow passengers claimed he was wasted. If so, perhaps he should perhaps have played the rehab card, to garner sympathy rather than disgust.

#PINKGEYSIRGATE

As part of an ongoing project called "Pink State," Chilean artist Marco Evaristi dumped pink fruit dye into everyone's favourite geyser, Strokkur, resulting in a few hours of pink eruptions. Marco claimed to love nature (that's why he decorates it), and even though the effect was temporary, he was punished with a 100,000 ISK fine and two weeks in jail. And lots of angry comments to our Facebook.

#GENERALSTRIKEGATETHRONE

With big companies reporting great profits and boards getting massive pay bumps, several labour unions banded together this spring for a general strike, calling for something resembling a living wage for the workers. After some 50,000 stopped work, deals were struck. And everyone lived happily ever after. Lol.

April

This month had one dominant theme, and that theme was general strike. While trade unions engaging in work stoppages and strikes is not an unfamiliar phenomenon in Iceland, it's been a long time since so many unions vowed to engage in them. In fact, tens of thousands of workers were set to walk off their jobs, in fields from wholesale food service, to the tourist industry, to general labour. The show of solidarity, and just what kind of impact all these people clocking out would have, would lean on management throughout the year. Even public opinion rested solidly with the workers, which isn't always the case. In the end, many new collective bargaining agreements were drawn up, while others are still pending.

#FEMINISTSIGNAGEGATE

The 2015 edition of The Reykjavik Art Festival focussed on the role of women in Icelandic art, and began by commissioning a new work from the feminist art troupe Guerilla Girls. The resulting billboard, located by the harbour, noted that only around 10% of Icelandic film funding goes to female-led projects, raising awareness and sparking a much-needed debate.

#CAKEGATE (also known as #FATTIEGATE)

2015 was a landmark year for politics. We saw the beginnings of a major refugee crisis across Europe, new and important environmental campaigns—such as Björk and Andri Snær's #ProtectThePark—and, of course, a range of major new challenges for policymakers in Iceland as abroad. With so many difficult problems to worry about, who could then blame our Prime Minister, Sigmundur Davíð, for turning to the buffet table? He was so overwhelmed by all this important parliamentary business last summer that he needed to skip a debate in order to go and grab the last slice of yummy pear cake from the parliamentary cafeteria table. Solidarity, Siggí, for caring about the real issues so much. May your #cakethrone never grow stale.

May

Whaling season began, again, and while this would end up having consequences involving the hacktivist group Anonymous later in the year, there was one big story this month: changing the clocks in wintertime. Iceland bears the distinction of sharing in common with Russia and Belarus the refusal to set clocks back an hour in the fall and forward an hour again in the spring. Everyone from the Directorate of Health to members of Parliament hotly contested the pros and cons of the practice. Not even our readers could seem to agree whether "spring forward, fall back" is a wonderful way to just adjust your circadian rhythm with the sun, or a horrible tool of oppression from those damn farmers. Spoiler: we haven't changed our clocks.

#BAMGATE

The second Secret Solstice festival hit the headlines when rapper and sunglass-enthusiast Gíslí Pálmi was videotaped throwing more than rhymes at former Jackass star Bam Margera. Bam had purportedly become belligerent whilst seeking festival promoter Leon Hill, whom he claimed owed him money. A war of words ensued online, with Leon denouncing the claims and Bam reiterating them in a facially bruised Instagram post, but no charges were filed in any direction. As of right now, Bam fans from all over the world keep commenting on our news story about it. Bam fans? Yes, Bam fans. Those guys mean business. And they like Bam. Bam fans.

#OUTLOUD, #KONURTALA, #ÞÖGGUN

These three conjoined hashtags originated in the women-only Facebook group Beauty Tips, but soon spread across Facebook and Twitter like wildfire. The campaign was highly visible, harnessing social media to successfully highlight the ways that female voices are discredited or ignored on a plethora of issues.

#BONKERSPRIMEMINISTERBLACKMAILGATETHRONE

The month's most deliciously amusing news story involved two sisters, Malín Brand and Hlín Einarsson, attempting to blackmail Iceland's pudgy Prime Minister by linking him to the purchase of Icelandic newspaper DV (the latter sister just happens to be DV-buyer Björn Ingi Hrafnsson's estranged lover... mysterious). In a plot reminiscent of a Coen Brothers movie, the hapless girls told the PM to meet them in the lava fields outside Hafnarfjörður with a suitcase of money. He didn't show up, obv, rather opting to send some cops, who in turn arrested the handsome twosome. What is this, 'Burn After Reading'?

June

Perhaps one of the most bizarre stories of the year happened in June, when two sisters attempted to blackmail the Prime Minister. What did they want? Money, of course. What did they have on him? That's the bizarre part. The pair contended they had proof, in the form of emails, that the Prime Minister took an active part in the purchase of magazine DV by media company Vefpressan. You see, Vefpressan is owned by one Björn Ingi Hrafnsson, who used to be a Reykjavik city councilperson for the Progressive Party. Prime Minister Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson, as you know, hails from that same party. Oh, and Björn Ingi had just broken up with one of the two women. But more importantly, this month also saw a grassroots movement started in the unlikely Beauty Tips Facebook group: #KonurTala (Women Speak), wherein numerous women came forward to speak candidly about abuse they had survived. The movement caught international headlines, and spawned similar campaigns in other countries.

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**#ERUPTINGXENOPHOBIATHRONEGATE**

When news broke that a Nigerian man had been detained on suspicion of deliberately passing on HIV to at least two women, panic, criticism, and a bunch of comment board-slash-talk radio xenophobia ensued. As the story unfolded in the media, the proof of whether or not he'd spread the infection knowingly came into question. The man—an asylum seeker—was held in custody for a month and given a four-month travel ban, a decision later ratified by the Supreme Court of Iceland. Later reports confirmed that the man was unaware of his HIV-positive status.

**#LAMESNOOPGATE**

Snoop Dogg aka Snoop Lion aka DJ Snoopadelic hoped to impress Iceland with his doggy stylings when he arrived to DJ at Reykjavík sports arena Laugardalshöllin this summer. But even setting the bar low proved to be too high for the King of Kush, whose performance was sorely disappointing. Dear Snoop: Put down your joint. Turn the music off. In fact: just retire (oh, alright, you can keep the joint).

July

In July, Iceland brought an end to a very old and largely unenforced blasphemy law, which—while making international headlines—made little difference whatsoever to the local culture at large. Leaked emails of the now-hacked Italian hacking team known imaginatively as Hacking Team showed an Icelandic cop trying to acquire some spyware, and he was none too pleased with being called up about it. But most of all, July will be known for tourists shitting all over the place. They shat in the street, they shat behind buildings, they shat in the moss and then set it on fire. It was pretty shitty. In fairness, there is a dearth of outdoor toilets in the countryside, which is something numerous tour guides have complained about, to the deaf ears of municipalities.

**#DUNKINDONUTSWILLDESTROYICELANDICULTUREGATE**

"OH MY GOD," screamed Icelanders, country-wide, when American corporation Dunkin' Donuts opened its first Icelandic store at a Laugavegur location. The global Icelandophile community soon joined in on the outraged yelping—for some reason, those guys just can't fathom why Icelanders might want to enjoy a fuckin' corporate donut every now and again (indeed, guys, if you hate it so much, go and protest the one on your block the next time you grab breakfast there). The opening ceremony was thrilling, though, complete with a DJ, a bouncer, a dancing donut-man and a line down the block, creating a frenzy around the city. It has been enthusiastically serving donuts to patrons ever since. Note: the donuts are way more expensive here than in the US. And they're not any better, either.

August

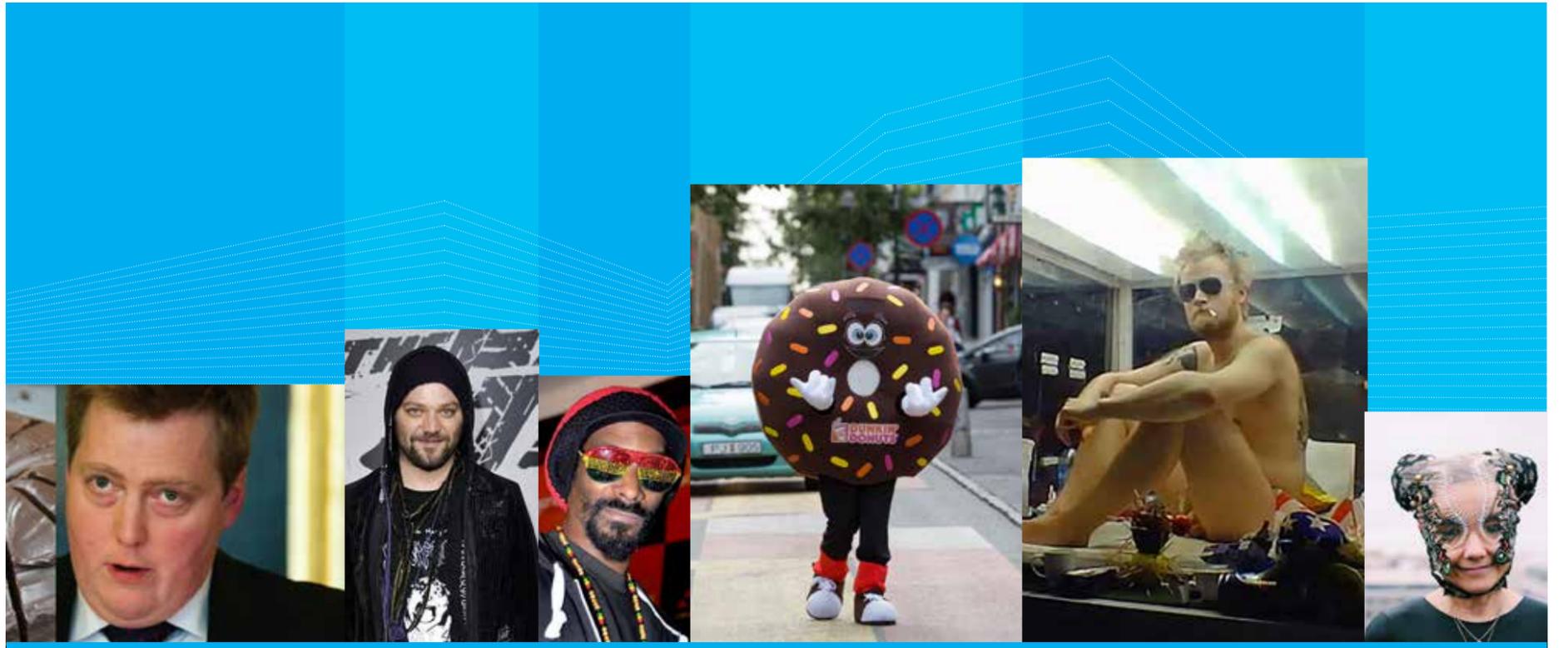
This month witnessed a stunning flight from custody that gripped national headlines, as a baby seal escaped from the zoo. Perhaps wanting to set an example for other would-be escapees, the seal was summarily put down, and fed to other zoo animals. Further afield, Iceland joined sanctions against Russia, already underway in the EU and in direct response to Russian incursions into Ukraine. Russia, predictably, in turn began boycotting Icelandic products. You may scoff, but that means fish, and lots of it. Mostly mackerel, too. While our local fishing kings were displeased, Iceland has stood fast by their sanctions against Russia, which continue to this day.

**#BLOODMOONTHRONE**

Earlier this year, astronomers and bloodlusts alike rejoiced at the coming of a BLOODMOON-SUPERMOON 97% lunar eclipse. Critics such as famous astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson contested the superness of said supermoon—but what does he know, right? Smarmy git.

September

In a perhaps well-intentioned move, Reykjavík City Council elected to stop making city purchases of goods made in Israeli-occupied territories. The move was widely misreported as being made by all of Iceland, and being against all Israeli products. More importantly, the Icelandic government announced it would accept 50 Syrian refugees this year. This announcement set off a grassroots movement that would make international headlines, as author Bryndís Björgvinsdóttir started a social media campaign, #KæraEygló, imploring the government to accept a lot more, which quickly snowballed, gaining the support of several thousand Icelanders. Like always, misreporting in the international media was prevalent, as it was falsely reported that 10,000 Icelanders had opened their homes to refugees. While the outpouring of support was indeed tremendous, the government has still yet to announce any official change to their initial numbers.



**NEWS vs. HASHTAGS**

**An Infographic View Of The Orðræðublábla Landscape**

By Paul Fontaine x John Rogers

**#SCALEGATE**

October saw a revelation of epic proportions, the kind that causes people to absolutely lose their shit and burn the whole sick, broken system down. Ordinary citizen Flori Fundateanu bought an extremely heavy paprika from Bónus. However, further examination revealed that the scales had been rigged to fuck you, the consumer, personally, through overcharging and general trickery. Bónus denied any wrongdoing, proceeding to "recalibrate" the scales and charge the regular price for a pepper, which was pretty damn high to begin with.

**#ISITASTEALTHADCAMPAIGNORWHAT?GATE**

In October, 66° North put some pricey parkas in glass ad displays on bus stops. Predictably, parka-less thieves quickly broke the glass and stole them. "The thieves are presumed less cold than they were," and lo, 66° North got into every newspaper for free. Nobody asked why they didn't use plexiglass. The chilly robbers would have needed jet fuel to melt that. Or, you know, why they didn't just print one of their patented frowny-parka-wearing-beardman posters. If the parka's flat against some glass, it's hard to tell the difference anyway, right?

October

As hard as it may be to believe, Iceland does engage in industrial factory farming. Factory farms were prominent in the news this month—pig farms in particular. The Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority found that all of Iceland's pig farms kept animals that suffered pressure sores resulting from a lack of movement, and at least one (so far unnamed) farm keeps pigs in stalls too small to even allow them to stand up. This has put Iceland's pig farmers on the defensive, with every farm but one refusing to allow reporters to visit and film their grounds. It was also reported that thousands of foreigners are needed to fill tourism jobs, a story that still gets me plenty of emails and tweets from prospective job seekers. Stop. Please stop.

**#PROTECTTHEPARK**

During the Iceland Airwaves festival, writer Andri Snær Magnason and a masked Björk held a press conference slamming the government for failing to protect Iceland's highlands from planned industrial development. The two continue to front the campaign to establish a national park in the area. Find out more at [www.heartoficeland.org](http://www.heartoficeland.org).

November

The Directorate of Immigration made news this month for the type of behaviour that has made the institution famous, er, infamous. And by that we mean regarding all foreigners as guilty until proven innocent. Yes, November saw a Vietnamese couple accused of having a sham marriage (an accusation that was revealed to be way off the mark), and the deportations of two asylum-seeking families: one from Albania, and the other from Syria. In fact, two Albanian families would end up being deported, to widespread public outcry, but would ultimately be granted citizenship. Someone else who sparked widespread public outcry: Justin Bieber. In a recent video, he was seen cavorting and gallivanting around the country. Most notably, it seems he also tromped through some naturally protected areas—some of which are covered with fragile moss that takes decades to grow—before taking a swim in the waters of Jökulsárlón. Tourism industry workers in Iceland were none too pleased with the example the young pop star set, and said so. Bieber has yet to issue an apology.

**#SNOWMAGEDDONSTORMPOCALYPSEGATE**

Storm of the century! Icelanders dreaming of a white Christmas got their wishes granted when Mother Nature decided to take a massive snowy dump over literally everything at hurricane-force speeds. While citizens and tourists were advised NOT TO LEAVE THE HOUSE OR EVEN MOVE, one beacon of hope remained: That famous Bæjarins Beztu hot dog stand, which carried on serving right through the #stormpocalypse. They weren't the heroes we needed right then, and probably not the ones we deserved either. But they had hot dogs.

**#NAKEDARTSTUDENTINABOXGATE**

In the name of art, December saw a naked first-year art student spend one week living in a glass box, which was on display to the public both on location and via live internet stream. Wait, did we mention he was naked the whole time? Yes, a naked guy. We know you have a lot of questions, but don't worry—the whole thing was filmed and streamed online. Apparently he pooped in there. Jacked off, too. Oh, art.

**#HEARTLESS\_UTLGATE**

In the wake of the refugee crisis, Iceland's mask slipped off, revealing the bubbling fascist Sith skin underneath. Iceland's directorate of immigration, the Nazi-founded UTL (seriously, look it up), made the decision to forcibly deport two Albanian families (both of which had toddlers with life-threatening ailments) in the middle of the night on International Human Rights Day. After much public outcry, UTL backtracked, eventually granting the families citizenship. Yay!

**#REDNECKGATE**

After discussing her battle to save the highlands from "redneck politicians" in the international media, Björk was caught in a comment-section shitstorm, with some protesting that the term "redneck" is a slur against rural people. Björk countered by clarifying her perception of the term as "those who seek to control nature, often at the expense of others." Erm, git 'er done?

**#BRITISHFAKEADVENTURERJERKGATE**

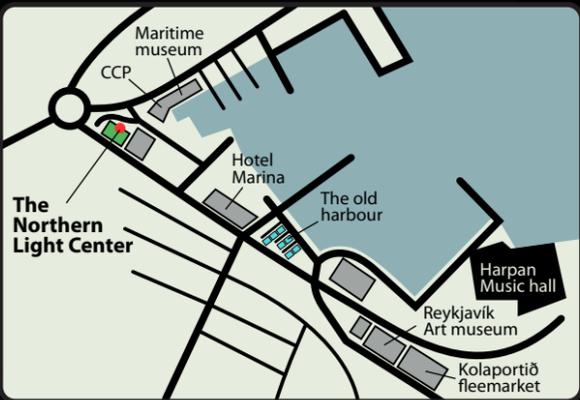
Three British adventurers seeking to be the youngest and fastest mountainjerks to traverse Iceland in the wintertime were bailed out a grand total of three times by the Icelandic Search and Rescue team over the course of a couple of weeks. Jerks. As expected, Internet commenter rage followed, with some recommending that ICE-SAR charge a fee for such rescues. Others simply offered to show those boys what a bitter storm in Iceland really looks like.

December

This month kicked off interestingly enough, as hacktivist group Anonymous launched a concerted distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack against numerous Icelandic websites. But they weren't doing it for the lulz—their objection was to the hunting of fin whales. They managed to shut down many government websites for a number of hours, and have vowed to continue their campaign in other ways. For those of us living in Iceland, what really captured our imagination was the fact that we were getting snow. Lots of it, like record-breaking levels. You may find it hard to believe a place called Iceland doesn't see a lot of snow in the winter, but in the capital area anyway, winters are more known for high winds and freezing rain. Everyone who doesn't drive was very happy.



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Athlete of the year:

## Eygló Ósk Gústafsdóttir

by Hrefna Björg Gylfadóttir

On the second to last day of 2015, twenty-year-old swimmer Eygló Ósk Gústafsdóttir was crowned Iceland's Athlete of the Year, becoming the fifth female winner to win the title since it was first awarded in 1956. She earned it, too, having swum the 200 metre backstroke in just 2:09.86 minutes this past March, breaking the Icelandic and Nordic records. Furthermore, she was the first Icelandic athlete to earn the right to participate in this year's Olympic Games, which will commence in Rio on August 5.

Upon receiving the award, Eygló noted that it was a huge honour that would encourage her to do even better in 2016. Eygló will be warming up for her eventual, inevitable Olympics triumph at the 17th biennial Games of the Small States of Europe (GSSE) in San Marino this June, where she will no doubt crush the competition. Go Eygló! You're the best!

## Iceland's year in: football

by John Rogers

Supporting a shit football team is an emotionally gruelling activity. When it's a club team (let's say, for argument's sake, Chelsea FC), people often root for a sneaky "second team" affiliation,

like Barcelona, to get a vicarious taste of victory. However, you're stuck with your national team, for better or worse.

more successful than the men's one. After some steady progress into the European Cup finals in previous years, they

# It's wasn't all bad! For once!

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM LAST YEAR'S SPORTING LIFE

As such, followers of Iceland's national men's team have suffered almost a century of hurt, never once qualifying for the finals of a major tournament.

That changed in 2015, as a new "golden generation" of male Icelandic footballers finally broke through into the 2016 Euros. Literal generations of Icelandic football enthusiasts have prayed for this, and now that it's happened, they still seem to harbour a sense of disbelief. Wise footballing heads cited everything from the building of indoor training facilities to a retention of former players in coaching, to the plain old indomitable Icelandic spirit as possible reasons for the breakthrough. Whatever it was, 2016 is the biggest year ever for Icelandic men's football. Áfram Ísland!

It wasn't such a vintage year for Iceland's famously competitive women's team, which has historically been far

failed to qualify for the 2015 Women's World Cup, held in Canada. Shame—it was a surprise hit and reached a record-breaking TV audience, with an estimated 25.4 million Americans tuning in to watch Japan beat the US side 5-2 for the title. But 2016 is a new year...

## Iceland's year in: cage fighting

by Gabriel Benjamin

Following a disappointing loss to Rick "The Horror" Story in 2014, Gunnar Nelson, Iceland's premiere cage fighter, took some time off and went back to the drawing board. Gunnar had earned a name for himself for his prodigious grappling

and his methodical approach to fighting before getting signed onto the UFC, and he displayed exactly those qualities when he returned to the octagon in July to fight and beat Brandon Thatch in just two minutes and 54 seconds.

With fresh wind in his sails, he accepted a match against another skilled grappler, Demian Maia, only to find he had bitten off more than he could chew—Gunnar lost the match, receiving 193 punches in the exchange. Gunnar has reassured his fans, however, that this setback won't stop him, and that he still aims for the top. Also, he and Demian have remained friendly after the match, and plan to meet up and train together later in the year.

## Iceland's year in: basketball

By Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

What a year it was for Icelandic basketball. Admittedly, the domestic competition was concluded in much the same way it usually is, with teams being crowned Icelandic champions, but that's not what's important. All the glory fit to print should be reserved for the Icelandic national team, which made its first ever appearance at a major tournament. Yes, last summer's EuroBasket was very much a coming out party for Icelandic basketball. Granted, the team lost every game. But every game was lost in a heroic fashion. The team held its own in a historically strong group including hosts Germany, eventual champs Spain, semi-finalists Serbia, as well as powerhouses Italy and Turkey.

As brave as their performance may have been, the team was still outdone by the Icelandic fans who accompanied them to the tournament—they would have been awarded the tournament's MVP trophy, if that were possible, on the strength of their unbreakable spirit.

On the women's side, the Icelandic national team returned to international play after years of inactivity on that front, somewhat sweetening that acid taste of seeing prominent teams withdraw from league play for financial reasons and/or lack of enthusiasm.

## Iceland's year in: being super strong

by Gabriel Benjamin

Hafþór Júlíusson, AKA "The Mountain," broke two things in February: A 1,000-year-old weightlifting record, and the Grapevine's website (our story about that ancient record was Iceland's most read news article of 2015).

Alongside winning the World's Strongest Viking competition for the second time in a row, Hafþór also took on another challenge described in the Sagas. The previous record holder had carried a monster wooden log that was 10m long and weighed 650kg for three steps, but Hafþór managed to improve on that by a further two. He then took to his Instagram, exclaiming he was on his way to his ultimate goal: becoming The World's Strongest Man. "NOTHING CAN STOP ME!! NOTHING CAN BREAK ME!"



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“I wanted to write and draw, make some motherfucking music; I wanted to express myself.”

# ENTER THE WOLF TARANTULAS ULFUR ULFUR ARE BAND OF THE YEAR [\*\*\*\*\*]

BY LAURA STUDARUS

In the video for “Brennum allt,” Úlfur Úlfur duo Arnar Freyr and Helgi Sæmundur roll through the suburbs of Reykjavik, spitting rapid-fire lyrics on horseback and chilling in the countryside like a champs. (Meanwhile guest emcee Kött Grá Pje chills with three oversized Saint Bernards and visits a dog show, because why not?) Coupled with the song’s opening salvo, a line that roughly translates to “I’m alone in the world,” it might be easy to assign the single a glass-half full optimism, making it a tribute to sticking it to the man, or perhaps a musical encouragement to let one’s freak flag fly. Not quite.

“The [opening] lyric is one of the oldest ones on the album, written more than three years ago,” explains Arnar. “I remember the day. I got up on the wrong side of the bed, mad at everyone, myself included, disgusted with consumerism and individualism. ‘The rat race,’ if you will. Then I went to the gym to let out some steam and wrote the lyric on my phone between sets.”

It’s a matter-of-fact, slow-burning “us against them” mentality that’s carried the band along in their career so far. Although they’ve been writing together for over a decade—by their count, thirteen years on five separate projects—“Tvær plánetur” (released in 2015) is the duo’s first official full-length. It’s not an accident they reference the idea of meeting in orbit. To hear Arnar tell it, that’s exactly what happened.

“We don’t take ourselves too seriously but I think Úlfur Úlfur was our attempt to make serious art for the first

time, rather than just ‘do something’ like the years before,” he notes of the protracted gestation time.

## Nórdic Deáth Röv

The album is heavy with bass and drum, featuring melodic washes of guitar and vocals. Even though they wouldn’t be completely out of place on Death Row’s roster (or at least on a Nordic arm of the iconic label), it also features rich melodies and intricate beats, as though Úlfur Úlfur are bound and determine to push the sides of the rap box out just a bit farther—or blow them out completely.

That new-school/old-school vibe, says Arnar, can be traced back to his earliest days as a hip-hop fan. Never mind the fact Iceland doesn’t exactly boast a booming gangster population—and if there’s any sort of East Coast/West Coast rivalry the players are mum on the matter. The MC’s relationship with 2Pac and Snoop Dogg began early. (“I started listening to it as a kid for the simple reason that it was the coolest thing I had ever experienced,” he notes. “It still is!”) And sure, he even identified with them back in the days when he was a burgeoning big fish in a pond of some 2,500 inhabitants, the village of Sauðárkrókur. But not exactly in the way one might expect.

“Being cool and expressing yourself is international so it never hindered me that I was just a country boy in Northern Iceland,” Arnar reveals. “My ‘difference’ was the need to make some kind of art no matter what. I wanted to write and draw, make some motherfucking music; I wanted to express myself. Sauðárkrókur is a small town and I felt there was little foundation for a guy like me. Not much support, but that just made everything I did more punk and I liked that. Punk is good. Today I still

struggle with this, though, the voice within me that tells me I’m different like it’s a bad thing, that I need to grow up and start behaving. Fuck that shit! Being different, having an explicit identity, is the best thing ever and the mental struggle just makes it more satisfying.”

## Pissing off conservative nationalists is always fun

Arnar makes it clear that his music isn’t born of an attempt to ape influences. He can only rep himself—as if it wasn’t 100% clear by the fact Úlfur Úlfur rap exclusively in Icelandic. He handles the obvious question (why?) with characteristic grace. After all, it might still be an important aspect to ask about, but it’s one that has to be addressed less and less these days.

“It has gradually increased, thankfully,” he says, noting that there are plenty of hip-hop acts busy reclaiming the national language. “Icelandic is stiff and most words are longer than their counterparts in English. Being able to bend the language opens new dimensions, really, and it pisses off conservative nationalists, which is always fun.”

He jokes about the “sprinkle of depression” that comes with Icelandic life, a sentiment that anyone who has survived a Nordic winter is likely to agree with. Much of the band’s music is incredibly expository regarding this topic. (“‘Tvær plánetur’ was very personal, so personal that we actually thought that it would be ‘too much,’ he notes. “But in retrospect it was one of its biggest strengths.”) But overall, Arnar describes himself as content.

## A million dollars and a yacht

Really content, to be correct. He’s just finished a business degree from Uni-

versity of Iceland. The group has forged ahead writing new songs. (He obliquely mentions that they have “big goals for the New Year” but declines to say more on the topic.) To quote one of Úlfur Úlfur’s own heavily translated lines, “I don’t want for anything.”

“I’m a meek man, happy with what I got,” he confirms. “I feel like I’ve worked hard in the past, and being where I am today is great. Of course I want more, I’m still hungry—that is what drives me, but yeah, I don’t really lack anything even though I wouldn’t turn down a million dollars and a yacht. You know, the difference between needs and wants.”

Thoughtful? Well, of course. At that observation, Arnar veers slightly off

laughs.

“Holy shit! That’s me.”



Surprisingly to some, Icelandic hip-hop totally dominated local airwaves, venues and charts in 2015—hell, as well as the radio airwaves, those rappers even claimed ownership of the Iceland Airwaves festival, which would have been unthinkable only a couple of years ago. The reason is clear though: all those years spent on the fringes granted Iceland’s hip hop scene time and freedom to expand, experiment and exercise—to carefully hone their skills to perfection, reaching a new plateau.

As the scene blew up, it quickly became clear that among many great contenders, Úlfur Úlfur had established themselves as its main ambassadors to mainstream Iceland. While Gísli Pálmi has the most dedicated following, and Emmsjé Gauti gives the best live performances, Úlfur Úlfur are the Icelandic hip hop act that Icelanders best connect with, managing to entice even the most whitebread, U2-loving, Manchester United-supporting, Independence Party-voting listeners.

And 2015 was certainly their year. They released a best-selling, chart-topping debut, “Tvær Plánetur,” played a number of huge shows, and were universally admired across different sections of the population. As one of our panelists put it: “They’re impossible not to love. Both my mother and my five-year-old son constantly play their record. Even [AOR-MOR station] Bylgjan plays their record.”

The panel concurred: “Úlfur Úlfur’s skills, attitude, stage presence and songwriting are all top grade. Their frequently viral music videos are stylish and tasteful, and their sound came to define the year to a large extent, reaching a surprisingly wide audience.”

2014: Prins Pólo

course, lest one get the idea that Úlfur Úlfur is strictly about taking a swim in the deepest philosophical wells. He points to the hook of their tune “Tarantúlur,” as proof that he and his bandmate are more than adept at letting their hair down. After all, not everything in life has to be a metaphor.

“Wolf wolf tarantula/Flies like skimming tongues/you and I and the full moon, just lie and hugging, well-baked and soft.”

“It’s a perfect example of saying something for the simple fact that it’s cool and it rhymes,” he says of the hook (which indeed rhymes in Icelandic). “But it inevitably paints a big picture in the mind of the listener, wolves and tarantulas, somehow combined in one grotesque animal.”

At this, Arnar

## By Davíð Roach | Photographs by Magnús Andersen

How often does an event have to be repeated to warrant tradition status? If the number is four, we present to you the on-going tradition of the Reykjavík Grapevine Music Awards! Since its first ever edition, music journalism has always been one of the cornerstones of The Reykjavík Grapevine media empire and the vibrant Icelandic music scene an endless source of inspiration, debate, and drunken dancing among our writers and staff throughout the years.

In light of all this, we want to hand something back to the music community that in a way spawned us and has given us so much over the years. Those who give our grey and meaningless existence something resembling a purpose deserve to be honoured, even though we, the Grapevine staff don't have a lot of said honour in stock.

What we give is our admiration and unbridled celebration, but also moderate prizes and a non-fancy ceremony where awards are handed out and copious amounts of alcohol will be consumed. Without further ado, feast your eyes upon The Reykjavík Grapevine's fourth annual music awards!

Our method is as scientific and peer-reviewed as we could manage. We got three people we trust better than God and Ghandi together in a room with pizzas and a large amount of time. It's like jury duty, everybody has to agree on the results. Their meeting was put to tape with a recording device and below is transcribed some of the reasoning for the awards handed out.

### THIS IS HOW WE DID IT

As per usual, we called up some folks who are deeply involved with Icelandic music and whose opinions we trust pretty well, asking them to serve on a small committee that would determine who we should deck out in shiny medals and fancy prizes for their music related activities in the year 2015. These were the people we called up this time around: Eldar Ástþórsson (a veteran concert promoter and Kraumur Music Fund board member), Henny María Frimannsdóttir

(Icelandic Airwaves' PR and Marketing Manager), and our very own Óli Dóri (music journalist, DJ and host of Iceland's premier alt. radio show, Straum).

We arranged two meetings with these people, which we ceremoniously monitored and recorded for the purposes of eventually writing down and publishing their arguments. They had preliminary discussions at the first meeting, talking about what they liked in Icelandic music in 2015 and who they thought should get an award and why. Then we exchanged records and songs

and ideas and reconvened a week later, after everyone had had plenty of time to think and listen, to determine the final list of recipients.

All in all, it was around four hours of feverish and passionate talking about music. And the results are here! Read on for our condensation of the discussion of how they reached their decision. Feel free to fret and disagree, you could even write us a letter telling us why (if it's not an asshole letter, we promise to print it. We could even give you some sort of prize... imagine that!!)



You Should Have Heard This In 2015:  
Bjarki  
– I Wanna Go Bang

# IT'S THE 2015 REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE MUSIC AWARDS



One of the most interesting things we learned through our panel discussion was that one of the most—if not the single most—successful Icelandic musician of 2015 is almost entirely unknown to Icelandic listeners. He makes techno. He's called Bjarki. And in 2015, he totally went bang.

"It's odd to think that Bjarki barely got a nod in any local year-end lists," our most techno-savvy panellist noted, "as he was responsible for one of the year's biggest international dance music smashes, 'I Wanna Go Bang.'" The numbers confirm that it really is a smash hit—it currently has 800,000 YouTube views and 150,000 Spotify plays.

The track's global success is no wonder. With booming sub-bass as deep as the Pacific, skittering hi hats and a robotic voice repeating endlessly "Sometimes I feel like...I wanna go BANG," it could transform a squeaky-clean choirboy into a hedonistic Berghain-dweller at the beat of a bass drum. And overseas at least, he's reaping the rewards of his tireless work—he probably played 200 sets this year, DJing for huge crowds all over the world."

"We're experiencing a second wave of Icelandic techno, and Bjarki is at the forefront," our techspert noted. "While he and associates like Exos and Ilo are very active in social media in their respective scenes, they don't send press releases to Fréttablaðið every time they play a successful gíg abroad. They simply don't care about becoming celebrities in Iceland. That's why nobody's noticed them—their scene is underground."

2014: Asonat - Connection  
2013: múm - Smilewound  
2012: Skúli Sverrisson and Óskar Guðjónsson - The Box Tree



Artist To Watch:  
GKR



GKR burst onto the scene at the beginning of 2015 with his spitfire rhymes and a pair of playful videos for the songs "Ballin" and "Hello." By the year's end, he'd caught the public's attention with his sincere ode to breakfast, "Morgunmatur," one of the best tracks in a strong, resurgent year for Icelandic hip hop.

"With "Morgunmatur," GKR demonstrated that his approach to music and life is way different from his peers'. Everyday swag, total sincerity and not a hint of posing. No bitches, no money... just being yourself, waking up, eating cereal and doing your thing. It's a simple celebration, and that's so refreshing."

Where GKR's newfound success might lead him is anyone's guess, but it's sure to be a hell of a ride. "GKR obviously has loads of raw talent, coupled with high ambitions and fire in his belly. I'm really excited about what 2016 has in store for him."

2015: Fufanu  
2014: Samaris  
2013: Muck

# A SPACE OF COLOUR TONIK ENSEMBLE'S MUSIC IS RICH AND INTOXICATING

BY JOHN ROGERS



Surprisingly enough, choosing ALBUM OF THE YEAR 2015 proved the easiest decision of the bunch. Basically, as soon as Tonik Ensemble was mentioned, our panellists started raving about 'Snapshots', seemingly trying to one-up each other in their declarations of love. "I wish we could give Tonik Ensemble the award in every category," one of them noted as the lovefest peaked, succinctly summarizing the group's collective feels. "But is it album of the year?" asked the moderator. "Tonik. Right on. Agreed." And that was that.

With a decision in the bag, our panel was far from done heaping praise on 'Snapshots'. Some select quotes:

**On how 'Snapshots' rewards repeated listening:** "I heard it for the first time and thought it was good, probably one of the year's best. Almost a year and dozens of listens later, my conviction has only grown. It's album of the year."

**On Tonik's remarkable artistic growth:** "I've always liked Tonik's stuff, but never like this. There is a sincere and powerful aura hovering above the album, bittersweet, soulful and beautiful. It gets better with every listen."

**On how 'Snapshots' serves as a testament to Tonik's professional approach and attention to detail:** "He just knows what he's fucking doing. It's evident from listening that he has an encyclopedic knowledge of electronic music's history, along with being up to date on the latest trends. The sprawling and unique nature of 'Snapshots' is the result of Tonik's undying enthusiasm for music, and years of dedicated experimentation. He lays the album's foundation by infusing his own, carefully crafted style with elements of 90s rave and IDM, and then sprinkles a plethora of rewarding little references all over it, which imbue the album with life and serve to provide context and points of departure..."

Worth noting is the fact that the person responsible for last year's Album Of The Year, Hörður Már of M-Band, plays a pivotal role in 'Snapshots', his gorgeous vocals lending soul and lustre to its mechanics.

2014: M-band – 'Haust'

2013: Sin Fang – 'Flowers'

2012: Hjaltalin – 'Enter IV'

Sometimes, "dance music" goes beyond its implied mission of moving people's feet, and moves them in other ways, too. Grapevine's album of the year 2015—Tonik Ensemble's 'Snapshots'—does just that. An educated, simmering take on house-techno-pop, it's a lush production of cello, saxophone and various differing styles of vocals, all laid over a rich base of synth pulses and languid rhythms with a dark, emotional tint.

The album was made through an impressively long-term investment of time and effort from its creator, the mild-mannered and quizzical Anton Kaldal, who's a graphic designer by day (full disclosure: he's sometimes jumped in and designed issues of The Reykjavik Grapevine. Keep in mind that our awards panel was wholly unaware of the fact, not that it would have affected their verdict). After a decade-long process of developing his style under the Tonik moniker, Anton expanded his sonic palette considerably for the 'Snapshots', resulting in his most ambitious collection to date.

"Snapshots is a turning point," he says. "It was an evolution over time, but the big difference from what I'd been working on previously was the inclusion of vocals. What I like about using vocals is that you could take the most difficult noise track in the whole wide world, but if you put a vocal on it, all of a sudden you have this bridge to a wider audience. It can almost trick people into listening to something they might not normally listen to. That's what the human voice does for the listener—it's very powerful."

#### Electro-scholar

Anton talks in an almost scholarly style about contemporary music. He's a voracious and ever-curious listener and follower of new developments, from mass-cultural pop stars to cultish niches and from neo-classical composition to the ever-evolving troposphere of dance sub-genres.

"I've always been framed—or framed myself—in the electronic scene," he says. "But I don't label myself either as pop music, or not. I'm a huge fan of all music, and some of that is very mainstream. I like catchy music and hooks. Pop has certainly gone into interesting directions lately. When you have someone like Arca producing pop acts like FKA twigs, then we're in interesting times. There's always the bland stuff of course, but there's also substance to a lot of pop music now."

'Snapshots' took several years to create, and Anton watched music change around him during that period. "It's interesting to see how certain sounds that appeared a couple of years ago can still break into the mainstream," he muses. "When I started making the album, I was transitioning from

**"I lost a close relative around the time I started writing 'Snapshots'. It coloured the whole album. The lyrics deal with that, and I think it subconsciously slipped through into the sound as well."**

synth-heavy electronica into a more retro '80s sound, and also into a darker palette. I'd been listening to yacht-rock, disco, post-dubstep... electronic music like Jon Hopkins and Trentemøller. I became very fixated on a cinematic feel, and wanted to take it further."

#### Musical trolling

As well as expanding his palette of sounds and his range of collaborators, Anton pushed himself in other ways during the creation of 'Snapshots'.

"I put myself into a playful mode for this record," he explains. "On the technical side of things, I went out of my comfort zone with song structures... but I was also almost thinking of doing

some 'musical trolling', by doing things like starting the vocal four minutes into a track. I was reminded of this the other day when I heard that particular track on the radio. The host played four minutes of the song, and started introducing the next track—but at the very moment she was going to push the button, the vocal began." He laughs mischievously, finishing: "She paused, and said 'Interesting! Let's stick with this...' and just left it running. So I got to hear the 'trolling' happening in real time, on live radio."

But along with the playfulness and experimentation, the album has a dark and at times sombre sound. "I lost a close relative around the time I started writing it," he reflects. "It coloured the whole album. The lyrics deal with that, and I think it subconsciously slipped through into the sound, as well. One of the reasons for the jazz elements on the album—other than liking jazz—was that the relative was a big fan of jazz, so the saxophone parts were a small tribute."

#### Made of solid gold

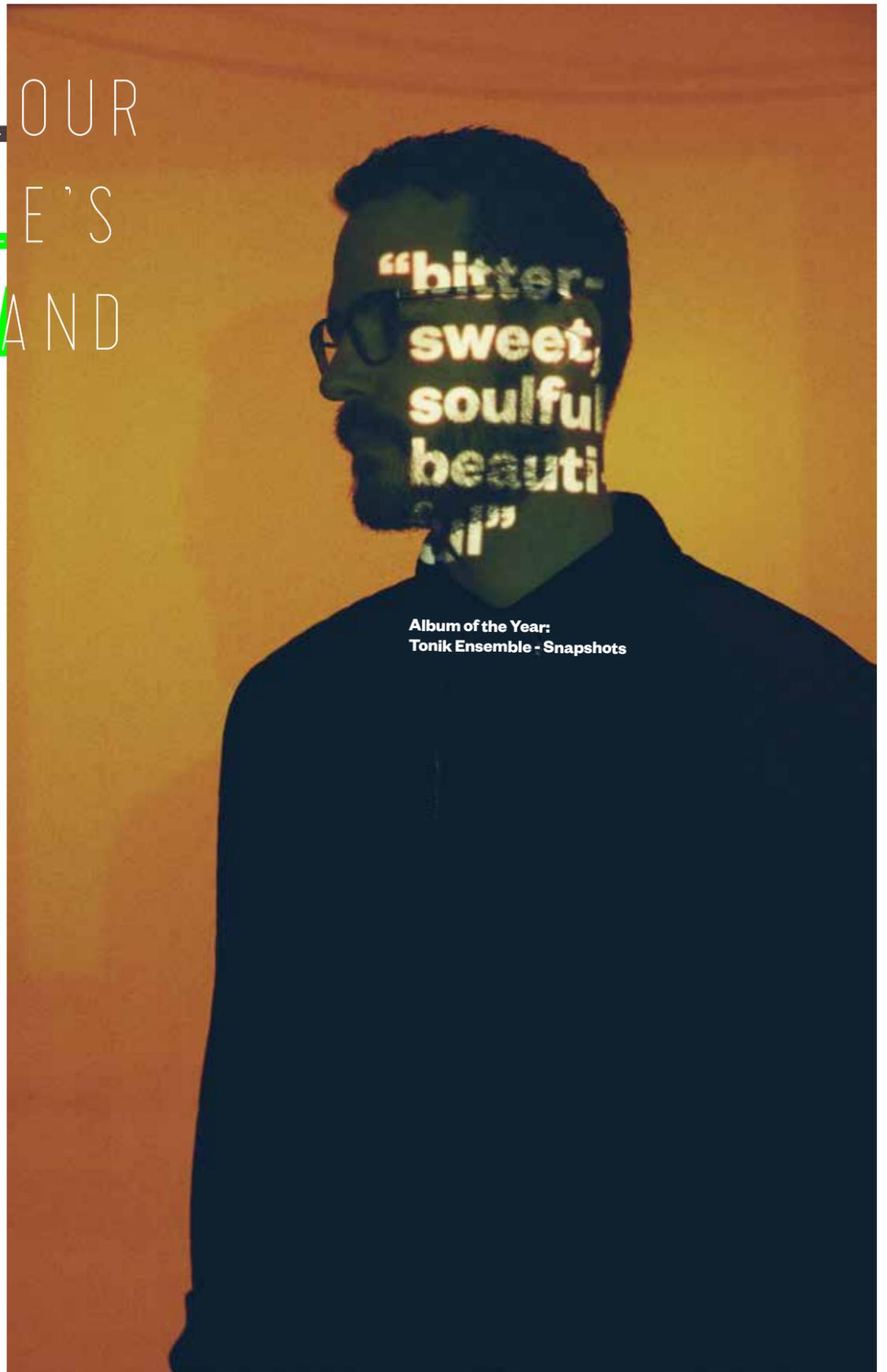
One of the most striking contributions from Anton's expanded Tonik Ensemble comes from Hörður Már Bjarnason, also known for his work as M-Band—perhaps not coincidentally, the winner of Grapevine's album of the 2014 award for his debut LP, 'Haust'. Hörður's rich tenor voice brings a spine-tingling spirituality to inner landscape of the album, swirling amongst the strings, saxo-

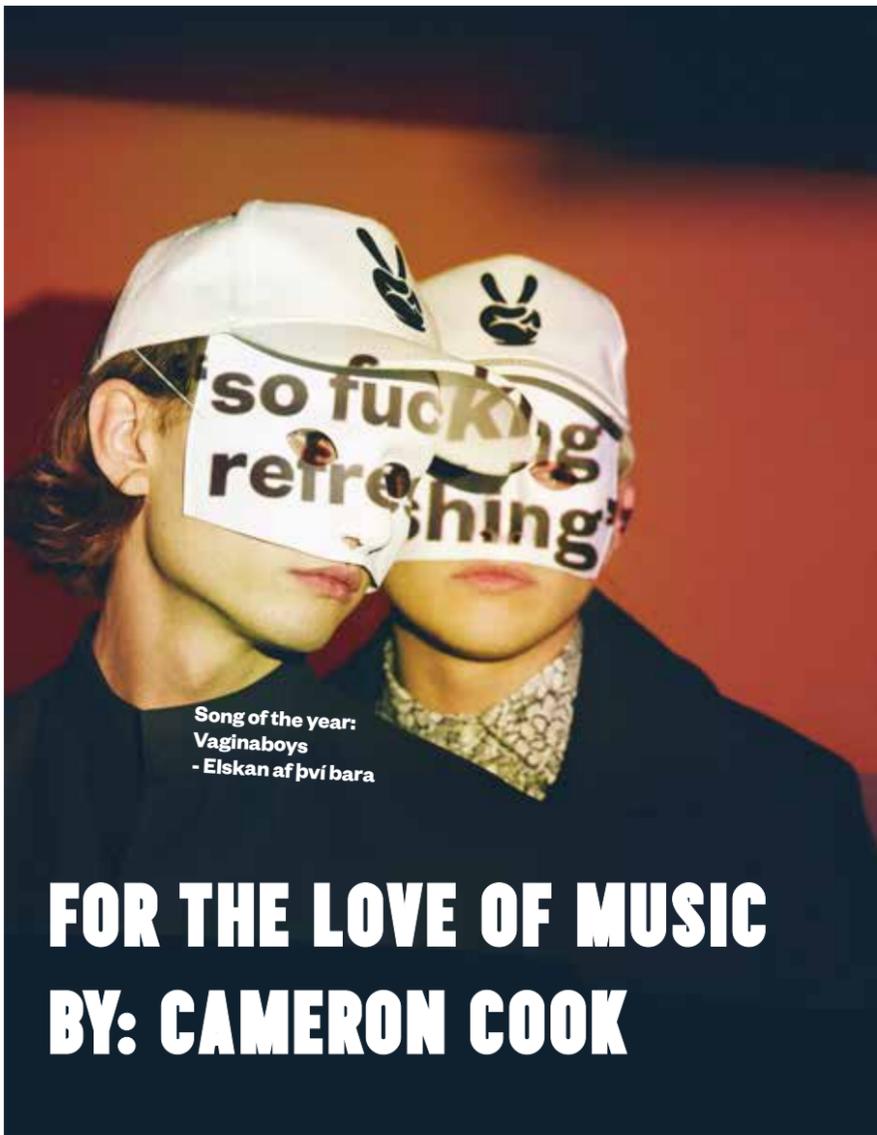
phone and synth arrangements with artful sensitivity.

Having been impressed by M-Band's first EP, Anton first asked Hörður to join him onstage at the Extreme Chill festival in Snæfellsnes. "It was a late-night slot," he recalls, "so I'd made some visuals, and asked Hörður to join me as a surprise vocalist alongside the cello." He pauses at the memory, his eyes lighting up. "Little did I know his live skills until then."

"All of the musicians and vocalists on this record brought something that elevates the whole piece to another level," he continues, "and Hörður did make a big mark on this record, as you can hear on the opening track onwards. His voice has an unusual quality—almost Arthur Russell-like. He also studied piano for a long time, and although he doesn't really know it himself, his way of working is very impressive—fluid, and natural."

The homeland success of the album has left Anton pleasantly surprised. "I think the word is humble," he smiles. "I had prepared myself for it to go totally under the radar in Iceland, because the PR was in the UK, and label was in the Netherlands. So it's humbling to get some recognition, especially for something as personal about this. Although I might sometimes talk with a design vocabulary about music, it's a very personal album. It totally reflects what I was going through during that time. And that makes the recognition even more special."





Song of the year:  
Vaginaboys  
- Elskan af því bara

## FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC BY: CAMERON COOK

The biggest music story to come out of Iceland in 2015 was arguably Vaginaboys, the anonymous, maybe-or-maybe-not-a-supergroup, masked electro-pop-R&B crusaders who released an EP called 'Icelandick', played already iconic sets at Airwaves, and made music that managed to be sexy, sad, weird and creepy all at once—no small feat for a band who dropped their debut single on Soundcloud a little over a year ago, with no fanfare to speak of. Their videos have also left a mark on our collective psyche—VHS-ripped images of woman simulating sex acts on colorful backgrounds, 80s-esque neon logos emblazoned across the screen. What makes Vaginaboys seem so fresh is their amazing aesthetic sense: it's clear that everything they do is painstakingly thought-out, calibrated and unveiled accordingly. Nonchalance is so 2000s.

In keeping with seasonal tradition, they even released a wonky Christmas song last month, "Jólaglag" ("Christmas Song"), complete with sleigh bells and their own trademark autotuned vocals. It seems like, from their name to their approach to marketing (or lack thereof), Vaginaboys expertly walk the line between comedy and seriousness, novelty and sincerity, sex and love.

It's fitting that our expert panel decided to name their debut single, "Elskan af því bara," as Song Of The Year 2015. A nice cap to a good year.

We caught up with an anonymous Vaginaboy over email right after ringing in the New Year, and it turns out they are setting their sights on new horizons in 2016, between expanding their live show out of Iceland, writing songs in English, and just generally spreading the gospel far and wide. Godspeed, Vaginaboys. Godspeed.

### What a year!

#### What is your best Vaginaboys-related memory of 2015? Shows, lyric, audience?

Oh where should we begin! Well, we just started doing shows in May, and a lot has been going on for us since, fortunately. To be honest, I guess our best memory is how our debut song blew up and we just took it from there. Around the beginning of the year Sin Fang's Sin-

dri asked us if we could perform with them, which resulted in our debut concert at Húrra. It was amazing to see so many people show up, and the reception we got was really heartwarming. We played a lot of shows after that, and most of them were pretty packed. We did five shows at Airwaves and every single one of them went beyond our expectations. It was also kind of sexy to get a call from KEXP to perform for their sound and camera crew at the KEX Hostel, to wake up a few tourists.

#### It's always interesting, yet unusual, when non-English pop acts with an obvious potential for international success choose to sing in their native language. Why do Vaginaboys sing in Icelandic?

Yeah. We just kind of felt like it. It's easier to relate to natives through their own language. I guess people in Iceland were seeking more love-inspired music in their native language.

### Masked marauders

#### A lot of the time, performing anonymously adds a level of immediate notoriety to your band (think: Daft Punk, The Knife, Burial, etc). What exactly is the reason Vaginaboys decide to wear masks?

Yeah, it's funny. The reason is that we don't really aspire to become publicly known faces. We do music for our love of music rather than to reach some kind of social status, and if we wouldn't perform, very few people could potentially relate to our music. It's basically done to keep our private stuff private, and our music stuff music.

#### Is your use of autotune another level to the anonymity, or is it purely an aesthetic choice?

We see the vocals as an instrument, and adding autotune makes it more easy to work with, and sometimes it rhymes better with our music. You're also much quicker to produce and record songs that way, especially when you're doing everything yourself in a low-budget home studio.

#### Explain the title of your EP,

#### 'Icelandick': simple pun, or is there more meaning there?

The plan is to do more songs in English, so that was kind of our goodbye to the Icelandic lyrics for a while. Simply naming it 'Icelandick' was not interesting enough, and when we figured "dick" goes very well with "vagina," it was love at first sight.

#### The video for "Ekki nóg" fits perfectly with the band's aesthetic—sexual, wobbly, old-school yet futuristic. How did the treatment come about—who are the women in the video?

Thank you so much. We know some talented people from when we were doing graffiti and I checked a few of them who have graduated from art school and they were kind enough to help us. The women are friends of ours who made the video.

#### You've described your music as "romantic," yet the name Vaginaboys, the masks, and all that, they convey a level of sexual detachment, coldness. Can you describe what about your music makes it romantic to you?

them soon enough, there's a lot of new stuff on the way.

### Book some Vaginaboys!

#### Obviously the Icelandic music community is small but very prolific. How do Vaginaboys fit in?

We are doing pretty good. It's amazing to feel how everybody in the scene sticks together, and it's heartwarming to feel the love when we meet fellow musicians, like backstage for example. Perhaps there's something about music's ability to bring people together that makes them so likeable, or perhaps only the likeable people produce music here. We have yet to figure that out.

#### Who came up with the logo? From your social media presence, it looks like it's becoming a bit ubiquitous, no?

Björn Loki, the man behind our first music video, made the logo for us. We produced a few T-shirts and baseball caps that Macland at Laugavegur is selling for us. We've been making that peace sign our main trademark for now, and the sales are going pretty well—hopefully people are satisfied with their apparel.

#### Any resolutions for 2016? What are your musical ambitions for the new year?

We're going to keep experimenting and bringing new talent to the crew. Our main goal for now is to nail the Sónar show at Harpa in February. Then we'll be playing at Secret Solstice in June. We hope to be able to do more DJ sets in Iceland and abroad. If anybody reading this knows any good clubs in Europe and the US please hit us up at info@vaginaboys.com.



Live Band Of The Year:  
Börn



Börn won this category hands down, drawing admiration from all quarters.

Said one of our panellists: "The power and energy they produce on stage is just enormous. They are fun and inspiring and angry and tight as fuck, exuding a kind of raw, primal power that could fill any venue."

They even appeal to folks who don't normally go for that whole "punk" thing. As one of our panellists noted: "It's not the type of music I listen to at home, but their performances always

thrill me." As much as they probably hate the thought, their appearance also factors in their appeal: "They come off as a gang of nerdy cool misfits, but as they start playing you get the feeling that they might be a little bit dangerous."

2014: Pink Street Boys  
2013: Grísalappalís  
2012: Gusgus



This was a fun discussion, and reaching a conclusion was far from easy, as 2015 brought many great tunes. In the end, our panel reached a consensus, agreeing that Vaginaboys' breakout hit "Elskan Af Því Bara" ("Baby Just Because") should take the cake, because it's "so fucking refreshing," as one panellist put it. "What a breath of fresh air—'Elskan' manages to be retro, poppy, experimental, detached and wholly sincere all at the same time," they continued. The panel was also impressed with Vaginaboys' original sound and vision: "While most local purveyors of nu-RnB take after Drake and The Weeknd a little too much, Vaginaboys' approach to songwriting—and their overall aesthetic—is wholly unique. Nothing else around sounds quite like it—serious RnB, with soul and guts."

2014: Prins Pólló – "Paris Nordursins"  
2013: Sin Fang – "Young Boys"  
2012: Moses Hightower – "Háa C"

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**BLUE LAGOON**  
ICELAND



Band to Remember: Risaedlan

## A BAND TO REMEMBER THE SUPERFUN REPTILE RETURNS! BY DR. GUNNI



Risaedlan was made up of kids that were keen followers of the great resurrection of Icelandic rock in the early 80s. Magga Stína (vocals/violin) and Dóra Wonder (vocals/saxophone—the sister of drummer Kommi from Taugadeildin and Oxsmá) had been inspired by Grýlurnar, the first all-women rock band in Iceland, to go out and do something. In MH college they met up with Margét Örnólfssdóttir, who played the keyboards, and three boys: bassist Ívar Bongo, drummer Tóti (who also played in Vonbrigði) and guitarist Siggí (formerly of a group called Trúðurinn, “The Clown”).

The six-piece started playing in 1984, using names like No. 1 and Júhú-stelpur (“Yoo-hoo-Girls”) before settling on Risaedlan (it means “The Dinosaur,” but they translated it to “Reptile” when making their moves abroad). This was during the 80s so reptiles were cool, along with space gadgets and colourful dresses—think ‘Pee-wee’s Playhouse’, with a slight punk leaning. The B-52’s were an important influence—the kids would go to the Safarí discoteque (next door to where Kex Hostel is now), where the highlight of the night was dancing to “Planet Claire.”

### That sweet indie cash

Nothing much happened with Risaedlan until 1988, when the band had gotten tight enough to play regularly at the Reykjavik joints at the time: Safarí at Skúlagata (which by then had changed its name to Casablanca), Hressó, the tiny Duus-hús at Fischersund and Tunglið at Lækjargata (Duus-hús was later torn down, and Tunglið burned to the

ground). Like other bands at the time, Risaedlan also performed at schools and recreational centers around the country.

This was the time when the Sugarcubes were becoming international indie darlings.

All the attention they got worked like a shot of vitamins for the local alt-bands. The Sugarcubes had their own label, Smekkleysa, and when the indie cash started rolling in from across the seas, Smekkleysa had money to finance releases from various local bands. Along with Risaedlan, bands like Ham and my own band, Bless, benefited from the Sugarcubes’ support. The Sugarcubes would invite them to play support slot in their shows abroad, enabling them to finally play for more than the loyal 50-200 local fans that

Everyone agreed: “It’s about time we pay tribute to Risaedlan, one of the best bands to come out of Iceland in the 80s.”

Why was Risaedlan so great? Everyone agreed: “Their music made them great. And their unbridled creative joy! And the chemistry between singers Magga Stína and Halldóra Geirharðs.”

Risaedlan played a wacky, unhinged type of rock music, rife with punk undercurrents, yet simmering with pop sensibilities. Surfacing in the late 80s as part of the Smekkleysa collective, they made a huge mark on the scene, and their influence remains audible in certain corners of Icelandic music. “I was, unfortunately, too young to attend their shows when they were active,” noted one panellist, “but I really loved their music. It was so wonderfully weird and full of whimsy, unlike anything else you’d hear on the radio.”

We hear Risaedlan are planning a reunion gig at this year’s Aldrei fór ég suður festival, so our panellists’ dreams of seeing ‘em play might finally come true. Risaedlan: what a wonderful band!

he had appeared before the bands back in Iceland. At the time, Risaedlan were a five-piece, as Margrét Örnólfssdóttir had left and joined the Sugarcubes. Their first gig was at an East Village bar called Downtown Beirut II. Speaking as someone who also performed that night,

generally made up their crowd. They would often perform together in Iceland at so-called “Smekkleysa Nights,” and were collectively referred to as “the Smekkleysa Bands,” even though none of them sounded at all similar.

### World domination!

Risaedlan’s first release, a 4-track 12” EP, came out in June of 1989. Shortly after, the band ventured to New York to perform at the New Music Seminar along with fellow Smekkleysa bands Ham and Bless, and a shy poet called Jón Gnarr, who usually got booed off stage when

I can confirm that the show was kind of a letdown, as the venue was about half the size of the smallest place in Iceland. Nonetheless, we kept our spirits high, pushed the bar’s pool table to the side and tried our best to entertain the few NY-based Icelanders who showed up, while keeping at bay the grumpy regulars who wanted their pool table back. The following stateside gigs were much better, at New York City’s Pyramid Club and upstate in Albany, where the bands and poet travelled in a beat-up van.

The New York sojourn was part of Smekkleysa’s “World Domination or Death” plan to push local artists on cool foreigners in the wake of the Sugarcubes’ popularity. Various deals were made, and Risaedlan’s debut album ‘Fame and Fossils’ was released on UK indie lable Workers Playtime in May 1990. “Risaedlan will be the next band to break through after The Sugarcubes”—the Icelandic media claimed. “We have no idea what is going to happen or what we are gonna be doing,” the band said in an interview at the time. “We don’t know what it means to get our photos published in some dead boring English pop magazines. The only thing we know is that we are going to be collecting debts this summer.”

### The Icelandic Way

And so, Risaedlan collected debts. First on the East Coast of the USA, where the band toured for three weeks that July. That tour’s highlight was a concert at NY’s fabled Knitting Factory, where David Byrne was among the audience, along with Swans’ Roli Mosimann,

whom Risaedlan had spotted on the street and dragged in just before the show started. Roli went on to become a friend of the band, doing recording sessions with both Risaedlan and Ham. Next, Risaedlan embarked upon a fairly successful European tour—however, that autumn Dóra was forced to quit the band upon commencing studies to be an actor at Reykjavik’s drama school, as students at the school were not allowed to perform publicly while enrolled.

The group soldiered on and got a boy from the East Fjords, Hreinn Stephensen, to play guitar and the accordion. The band started working on a new album with Roli Mosimann, but split before the album was finished, reportedly because Magga Stína got pregnant and took it so seriously that she saw no recourse but to give up on music for the time being. Risaedlan’s second effort, ‘Efta’, was thus not released until 1996, when it was finished and released on CD with some older songs thrown in for good measure.

Risaedlan was and is unique on the Icelandic pop landscape, truly a band to remember. Their mix of Western and Middle Eastern grooves and hooks is funky and always fun. There was nothing like them then, and there is nothing like them today.

And here’s the good news: We can all brace ourselves for a comeback! Ó yes! Risaedlan are reforming, and are set to perform at the Aldrei fór ég suður festival in Ísafjörður during Easter 2016.



## "I want to carry Reykjavik on my chest!"

We teamed up with fancy design firm **karlssonwilker** to make you some artisanal t-shirts sporting several **iconic Reykjavik buildings**. Get them at [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is) and also probably at some store eventually, when we get around to talking to the store people.

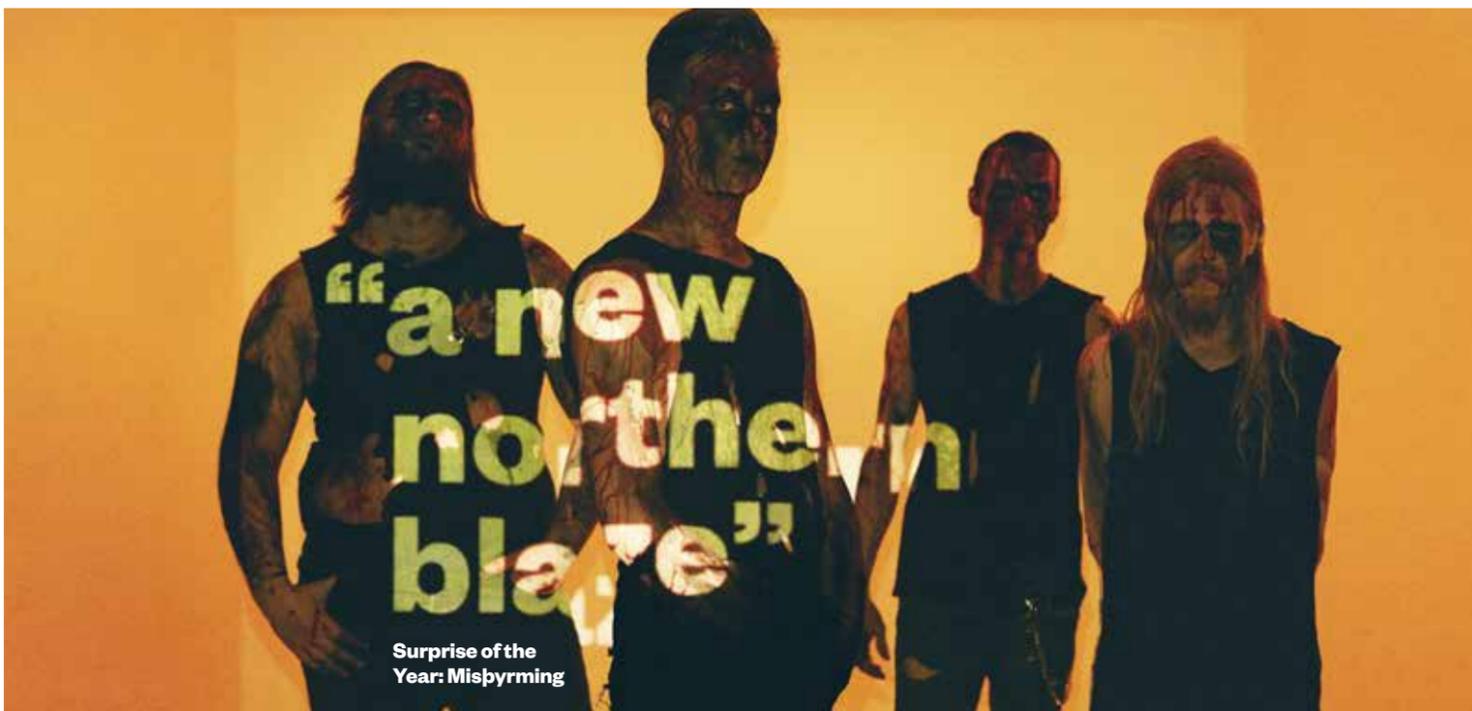


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## The Panelists



**Eldar Ástþórsson** has been an active presence in the Icelandic music scene since the late '90s, when he made a name for himself as writing about music for fabled street mag *Undirtónar* and hosting the legendary drum'n'bass radio show *Skjyjum ofar*. He began working for Iceland Airwaves in 2002, eventually assuming duties as the festival's director, overseeing its growth from an up-and-coming music festival to one of the country's most well-known cultural events. Eldar was part of the team behind music streaming service Gogoyoko, and has since 2010 been a board member of the Kraumur Music Fund. He also works at CCP Games by day. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. We thank Eldar for sharing his vast experience and knowledge of the Icelandic music scene.

**Óli Dóri** is a well-known advocate of new and exciting music—Icelandic and otherwise—via his long-running radio show *Straumur* (tune in to X-ið 977 Monday nights at 11pm) and through his website, *Straum.is*. He can regularly be found behind the decks of Reykjavík's top bars and clubs, and co-writes a running New Music column for this very magazine. He spends his days managing Reykjavík's art-house cinema, *Bió Paradís*, where he regularly sets up concerts and screenings of music-related films. Óli Dóri has top-notch taste and an impeccable record collection, and follows the local scene with eagle eyes. What a guy!

**Henny María Frimannsdóttir** has been working as Iceland Airwaves' PR and Marketing Manager since 2014, but she has followed the local music scene with enthusiasm for much longer. Henny was CEO for the powerhouse concert promoters Prime Ehf. for five years, and as such has produced and planned shows for countless bands and musicians, both domestic and foreign. Henny's knowledge of Icelandic music new and old is superior—and, as part of the team behind Iceland Airwaves, her grasp of what's happening in the local scene is as sharp and current as it gets. Thank you for granting us access to your expert knowledge, Henny, you are supercool!



Once every category had been accounted for, a minor panic overtook our fine committee. Despite several attempts, they hadn't managed to fit in one of their favourite contenders for almost every category. This was no good.

The editor was phoned and told of the dilemma. His response: "What? No! It's our goddamn magazine, we can do whatever the hell we want. Just make up another category or something?" So we did. Because leaving out *Misþyrming* would be absurd.

So, black metal maestros *Misþyrming* are our SURPRISE OF 2015! Because no one really expected them, yet they came

through on so many levels.

After building tension and excitement through a series of intense live shows, *Misþyrming* established themselves as serious contenders in their genre with the release of their face-meltingly amazing debut, *'Söngvar elds og óreiðu'*. Black metal fans know about *Misþyrming*. And they love them.

However, it was probably their appearance at Iceland Airwaves that proved *Misþyrming* are that rare type of genre band that has appeal beyond the niche. Their *Gaukurinn* show was packed with all types of punters, curious to check out this new local band that was getting hype from

taste-making publications like *Vice*—many of them entirely unfamiliar with metal's more extreme fringes. As the band's set reached a climax, it became apparent that people were fascinated by the sheer power and magnitude of their performance—and that they would be coming back for more.

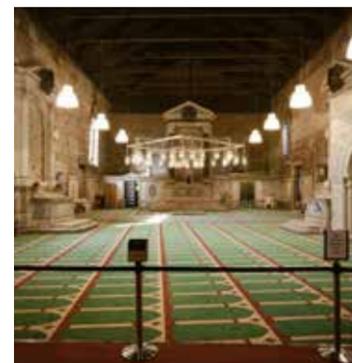
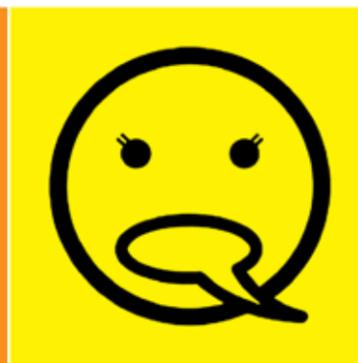
Noted the panel: "For years, *Misþyrming* have quietly perfected their unique take on a genre that's often at risk of going stale, and in 2015 it became obvious that they had managed to reignite that northern blaze."

- IT'S A NEW CATEGORY!

# NIPPLES & FACIALS

## Icelandic art in 2016

By Valur Brynjar Antonsson



If one were to try and summarize the main Icelandic debates of 2015 in a magazine article, *Nipples & Facials* would make for a catchy title. It was year when no single artist reigned supreme in shaping the identity of Icelandic culture, and no single writer penned that perfect article that captures the soul of our times—rather a great multitude of people did. Well, relatively speaking, in Icelandic terms.

The reason is clear. The medium is the message. And this year, the medium was Facebook. More than ever.

Usually, in what now feels like ancient times... there would be this One Person who managed to seize the moment and define what it means to be the face of a nation. There was room for more than one at a time, of course—but not in the same field. So we had this One Politician. The One Writer. The One Musician. And so forth. A shot at becoming The One was somewhat akin to the story of Luke Skywalker. Get out, go deep into space—til útlanda—and make a big bang. Halldór Laxness, awarded the Nobel Prize in 1955, became the One Writer. And Björk, of course, would define the meaning of Icelandic Music for years to come.

Lately, the story of the One has lost its lustre. It was always a lie, of course. An omission at best. It takes a village to raise a genius. If Icelandic culture ever managed to reflect anything else than

its own idiosyncrasies, it's because it is a village of many creative people who, despite their isolation, have been remarkably cosmopolitan. The genius who managed to represent the village had to embody these contradictions—beneath a worldly veneer, a sense of rugged provincialism.

In 2015, the story of One is wholly untenable. To single out a work of art that I found personally memorable, I would mention Björk's *'Vulnicura'*. Also of note is *'Hystory'*, a play by Kristín Eiríksdóttir; the film *'Rams'* by Grímur Hákonarson won the Prix Un Certain Regard in Cannes; the novel *'Wastelands'* by Ófeigur Sigurðsson won the Icelandic Literature Prize. But it would be far from accurate to claim that these work of arts took centre stage in the cultural debates. The centre stage belonged to a particular medium: Facebook.

Let's consider the material conditions. Iceland is a large island, scarcely populated. A nostalgic depiction of the isolation living as a farmer in a desolate valley can be found in the film *'Rams'*. But nowadays every farm, village and town is hooked up. Iceland is saturated with Facebook users. The account for 72,5 % of the total population.

### Redemption

A people once accustomed to silence are bombarded by a barrage of other people's opinions. And Icelanders don't like it. Or so they say. They just can't stay away from social media. Every opinion is debatable. And there's a

creeping sense of being monitored by a Panopticon society. Everyone regulates the opinions of everyone else. This is a global phenomenon. We're walking on eggshells everywhere. We feel that there's a new gag order in place.

Yet, Iceland is also where the redemptive power of social media has become apparent. I would like to mention two examples. Young women flocked to social media and out on the streets to bare their breasts. The Nipple Revolution. An attempt to desensitize our pornographic gaze. They are just as natural as men's. They can be just as erotic as men's. They should not be censored. Or appropriated by porn. Women should be allowed to breastfeed in the open. Girls should be able to bare themselves wherever they see fit, without fear of being slutshamed. The second example took place on a closed discussion group, but soon migrated into the open. Women began to share their stories of sexual and domestic abuse. It was hashtagged, #konurtala—women speak up.

Something quite spectacular happened. If I were to choose The One Artist of 2015, it would be the duo Edda Ýr Garðarsdóttir and Jóhanna Svava Rafnsdóttir. They designed the icon that quickly became viral. The facial emoticon of a person speaking up. Orange meant: I've been sexually abused. Yellow meant: I know someone who's been abused. Countless of people on Facebook adopted the icon. It hit a nerve. With men and women alike. The icon transcended age, class and location. But it was not a One Artist movement. Yes, Edda Ýr and Jóhanna Svava designed the icon, but it was the power of a multitude that shaped the debate.

The effects are being felt on society's every level. The justice system is scrutinized. Legislation is reconsidered. Debates on freedom vs. security have been reignited. Just as importantly, what began as a women's movement

has now forced young men to re-evaluate their own position; not as passive onlookers, but as active explorers in search of an identity.

### A horrible year

That was the cultural scene. Art is of a different kidney altogether. Art may influence culture. But if art is to be anything else than mere reflection of tendentious sentiments, then art can not be subjugated to culture. Artists need to question and distance themselves from current affairs—precisely if they are to be in the vanguard of opening up new horizons. Art is ceding ground to culture every day on social media. Novelists, musicians and filmmakers are somewhat protected by the conservative structure of the art form. They get leeway to distance themselves. But visual artists are particularly vulnerable. They need space.

2015 was a horrible year for the visual arts. Their space has been encroached upon. Fortunately, there are many artists who have stood their ground. Skyrocketing rents are forcing independent galleries out of the city centre. Týsgallerí had to shut down. They've exhibited works by Bryndís Hrönn Ragnarsdóttir, whose *'Holning/Physique'* was one of the most memorable sights at the 2015 Reykjavík Art Festival. Also of note is Haraldur Jónsson's *'Kjör'*, whose minimalist exploration of existential themes question the autofictional perspective of our times. Another gallery, Kling & Bang, an artist collective that has spearheaded shows by people like Ragnar Kjartansson, also closed its doors, albeit temporarily. Ragnar's last exhibition at Kling & Bang, *'The Visitors'*, attracted numbers that would make any theatre envious. Gallerí Þoka survived by merging with

Hverfisgallerí. They've exhibited such artists as Hulda Rós Guðnadóttir, who's been exploring the transformation of harbour spaces and the life of dock workers who are gradually turning into a tourist curiosa. Another artist of note is Ásdís Sif Gunnarsdóttir, who's been exploring the inner space of female fantasies.

### SCANDAL

What is City Hall thinking? Well, they've had their own space to deal with. This year marked the 100-year anniversary of Women's Suffrage. City Hall invited Ekkisens gallery to host an exhibition that featured mostly young female artists, along with a few men—*'Kynleikar'*—where they were given the opportunity to assimilate and critique the gender debates. But City Hall staff covertly sabotaged the exhibition by turning off the artists' projectors and screens.

And, finally, a veritable scandal—this year marked the unheard-of occasion when the City of Venice issued a gag-order on Iceland's contribution to Biennale Venice 2015. The exhibition featured a live-in Mosque. The work explored the shifting borders of European space, the interlocked relation between art and religion; and the very idea of sanctuary. The exhibition was censored. In light of the Syrian exodus and Europe's fragility—at a time when iron curtains are once more being raised—it's particularly worrisome that art's space is being encroached upon in such a violent manner. Art should be a sanctuary. A scarcely populated island in the North-Atlantic is well positioned to enshrine such a place.



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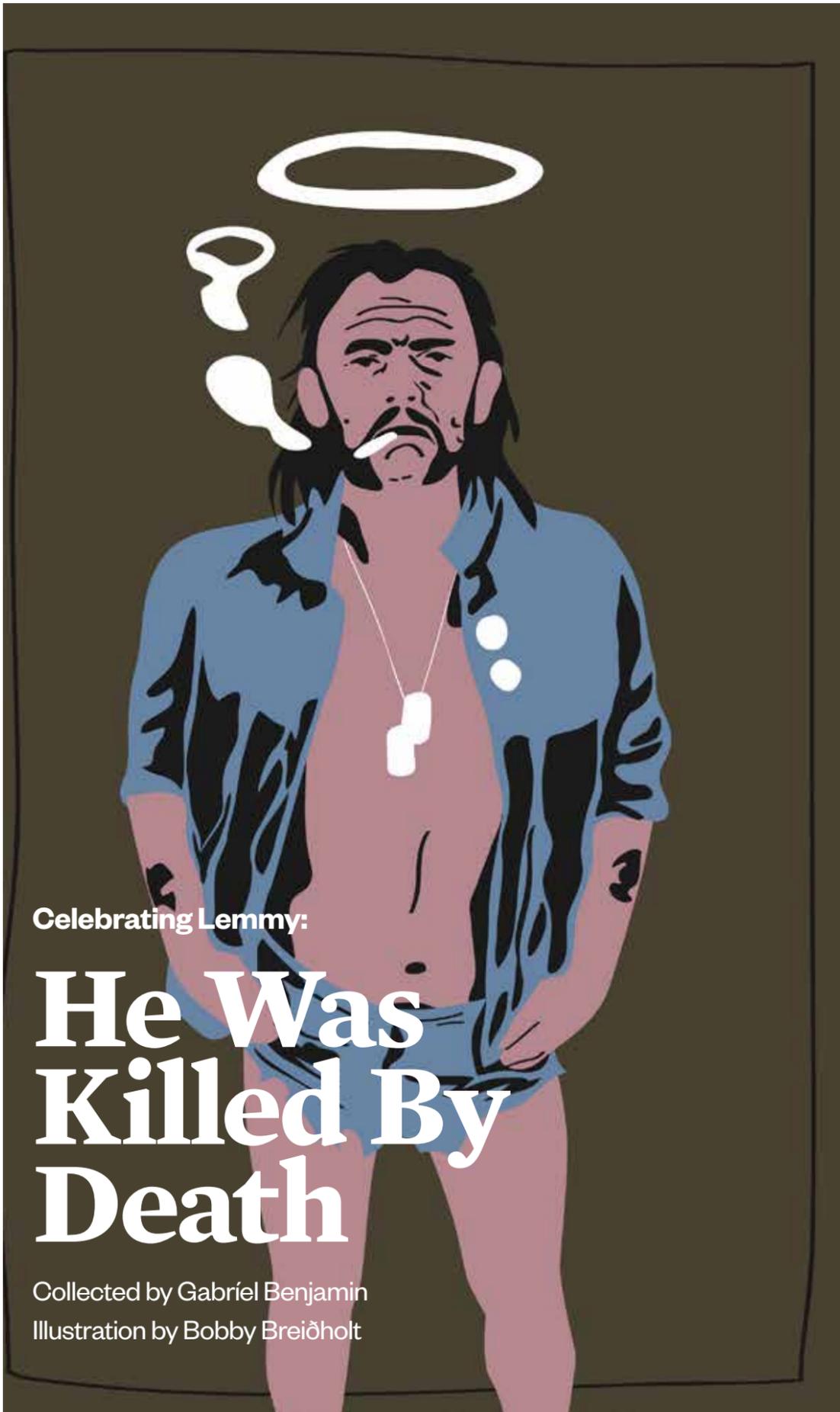
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Celebrating Lemmy:

# He Was Killed By Death

Collected by **Gabriel Benjamin**  
Illustration by **Bobby Breiðholt**

## Óttarr Proppé Rock 'n' roll politician

To me, Lemmy has always been a great role model. He was a genius at making the most out of his simple merits. He was a great bass player, and the first to cast his instrument into the lead role in a heavy metal band, in place of the more ubiquitous guitar. He also sang few words, and with a limited vocal range—but in a manner that made every single one count.

Generally speaking, Lemmy was just a good, no-nonsense guy. He lived by a slogan familiar to Icelandic metallers as the motto of the Eistnaflug festival: "Don't be a dick." A simple sentiment, but he took it all the way, and it'll live on in his wake.

## Axel Björnsson Rocker (Pink Street Boys)

My first memory of Lemmy is from hanging out in Japis, a record store, when I was ten or eleven, digging through the rock and heavy metal rack. I had already discovered Metallica's 'Kill 'Em All' by then, as well as Korn, Ma-

chine Head, and RATM. Anyway, I pull out some Motörhead Best Of album and ask the staff if they like it. They tell me it's old as hell... and that got me excited.

I carefully examined the CD cover as I listened in-store, and on the back I found three of the dirtiest rockers I'd ever seen! The guy in the middle had such a cool beard and sunglasses, majestic long hair, and two huge warts on his cheek. I bought the album in a heartbeat.

It had all the hits: "Ace of Spades," "Killed By Death," and "Bomber"—the last of which became my favourite. Motörhead have remained with me since then, and unlike the other bands I listened to at that time, they've never stopped being cool. Lemmy was the coolest rock 'n' roller in the world for almost 50 years, and that's inspirational.

Later on, when I got into psychedelic music, Lemmy showed up again. I was trying to start a new band, and got to know an older guy who was the biggest Lemmy fan ever. He had a Rickenbacker bass, and we were jamming a bit, but it was not working out so well. I told him I wanted to do a more psychedelic sound, and then he starts talking about Lemmy's old band, Hawkwind. When I said I hadn't heard of it, he took me to his car and blasted "Silver Machine." Then

there was no turning back.

Fuck, man, Lemmy was a true legend. I was recently digging into Hawkwind's discography, and it turns out everything they made after firing Lemmy sucked. That's when I understood he was more than just a whiskey'd-out speedhead who looked good on stage.

He was also a really good musician. God bless you, Lemmy.

## Krummi Björgvinsson Underground King (Mínus, Esja, Döpur)

There was a time that I wanted to sound like Lemmy.

There was a time that I wanted to play like Lemmy.

There was a time that I wanted to dress like Lemmy.

There was a time that I wanted to think like Lemmy.

Now I'm just myself, thanks to Lemmy.

See you on the flipside.

## Gyða Hrund Þorvaldsdóttir Death-metalhead (Angist)

Lemmy was larger than life, a legend. It is in fact very hard to write this piece, because... where do you start with such a force of nature?

I was fortunate enough to witness Motörhead in concert a few times.

At every show, Lemmy kept the crowd enchanted throughout with his well-known wit, refreshingly honest pearls of wisdom and fierce stage presence.

Lemmy's authenticity shines through in some of the numerous quotes he left behind. He had this amazing knack for putting difficult and controversial things into a very down-to-earth and relatable perspective.

He had no time for bullshit, and his charisma and music has influenced many of my favourite bands. In my opinion, it's impossible to be a metalhead and not to be affected by Lemmy's contribution to the music, whether you're a Motörhead fan or not.

He was one of the good ones, one of the great ones.

So long Lemmy, and thanks for all the fish!

## Snæbjörn Ragnarsson Viking-metalhead (Skálmöld)

R.I.P LEMMY

Motörhead was never my favourite band. It was just one of those bands we all listened to from the very beginning, and have listened to ever since. I got into metal when I was just a kid in the mid-80s, and Lemmy was there. My taste got heavier during the 90s, and he was still there, right next to Sepultura, Metallica, Slayer and even Deicide. In the mid-90s I got more into punk. Lemmy was there, too. For me, there has always been Motörhead.

Lemmy was a true embodiment of rock and roll. This has to do with so much more than just the music. Rock and roll is about being true to yourself and sticking to your beliefs, even when they're not trendy. Real rock and roll has substance, and is never out of fashion. It can be ugly, smelly, loud, drunk, even crappy, but it is always cool as long as it comes from the heart. And that is the key: You can't fake rock and roll.

Seeing Motörhead in concert changed me, and I don't say that lightly. By now, I've seen all of my favourite bands live, but this was just something else; three dudes playing the easiest and most straightforward music, with no gimmicks to hide behind. It was just loud, rude, and done with such disregard to everything else that you just couldn't help but shake your head and try to grasp the whole thing. And the fucker just stood there.

For some reason, I've kept on checking out new Motörhead releases to this day. For a long, long time, Metallica was my favourite band, but after the black album I simply lost interest. The same goes for almost every band I've enjoyed through the years. Somehow, though, I've always wanted to know what Lemmy had to say. I've liked some of their releases better than others, but it didn't really matter, because it was always all true, and the guy yelling into the microphone meant every word, always. He was ugly, smelly, loud, drunk, even

crappy at times, but he was always true to himself.

It is funny to think of someone that didn't ever know you, but had so much of an influence on your life. It is clear as day that had Lemmy not taken his path, I would have developed into a totally different person than I did. Heavy metal is my life, and without Lemmy, the culture and my band would just not be the same. I know these are big words, but they are true.

**He had no time for bullshit... in my opinion, it's impossible to be a metalhead and not to be affected by Lemmy's contribution to the music, whether you're a Motörhead fan or not.**

And how do you talk about such person? There is this joke in the 1994 movie 'Airheads' that goes something like this: "Who would win in a wrestling match, Lemmy or God?" Someone answers: "Lemmy. No, God." But neither is true: "Wrong, dickhead, trick question. Lemmy IS God!" And it's kind of true. I don't like to idolize people, but when you put it all together, how can you not when it comes to Lemmy?

Lemmy, you were never my favourite.

That's just absurd. Here's to rock and roll's finest!

--

## Óskar Logi Ágústsson Vintage rocker (The Vintage Caravan)

Lemmy's death was expected, yet somehow unexpected. I felt like he would keep going forever. Now, it feels weird, living in a world without Lemmy.

He was rock 'n' roll.

I think he was an underrated lyricist; he had a very cool style, witty but classy, sometimes even kind of sleazy, yet at the same time sophisticated—now that's art!

Lemmy was and is a huge inspiration, reaching old age, still touring, still living the rock 'n' roll lifestyle, never giving up, continually doing what he loved. I think we can all learn something from him.

Let's keep his memory alive, and play Motörhead loudly! I also highly recommend checking out his work with Hawkwind, it's awesome.

Skál, Lemmy!

## Ragnar Kjartansson International Art Superstar and former local Rock Star

I love him.

Lemmy was a ridiculously fun guy, at least from a distance, and a true pioneer in creating ironic tough guy noise. It was always interesting how much he loved The Beatles. He said that when he founded Motörhead, he wanted to be in a band that was as loud and brutal as The Beatles he witnessed at the Cavern Club.

One of my favourite Lemmy-lines is about love: "relationships destroy relationships." He drowned his sorrows in speed, leather, Nazi outfits, Jack Daniels, casual sex, rock, and noise, and he lived surprisingly long nonetheless. I think it was his creativity that kept him alive. Over the past few days I've been blasting "Killed By Death" and of course "Ace Of Spades" in his honour.

*You know I'm borne to lose  
And gambling is for fools  
That's the way I like it baby, I don't wanna live forever*

Oh, yes indeed.

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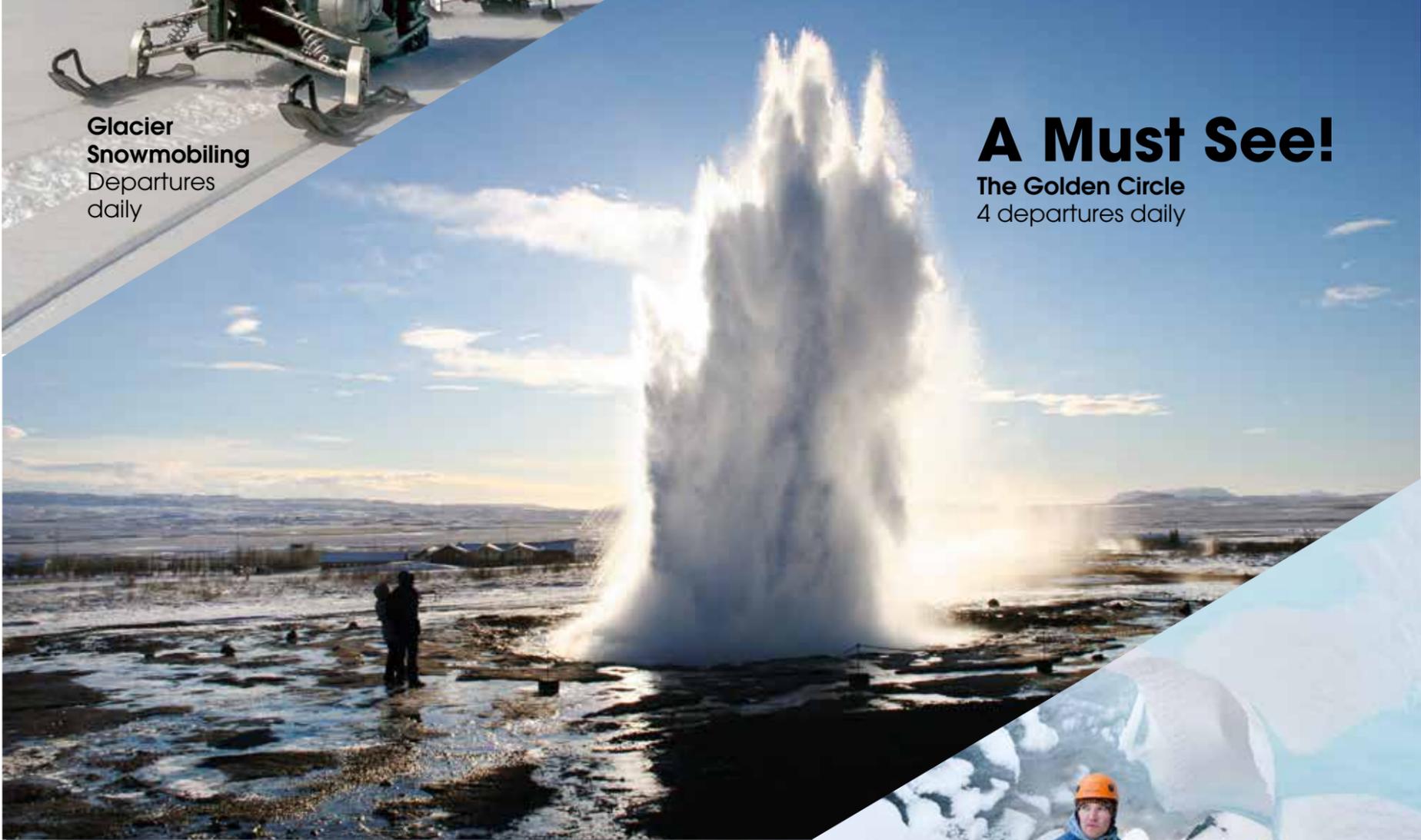
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# South Iceland

How to get there: Tours leave from BSÍ bus terminal.

Car provided by hertz.is  
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By John Rogers



The majestic Route One ring road threads down through the mountains from Reykjavík to Iceland's southern coastline, passing an endless trove of natural wonders along the way. From the famous "Golden Circle", to the various vast lava fields, tumbling glacier tongues, tiny picturesque towns, craggy gullies and canyons, endless black beaches and beautiful iceberg lagoons, it's an unforgettable experience, and one that bears repeating. Our Mini South Iceland travel guide aims to point out a few tucked away treasures you can find along the way—places to eat, sleep, or catch some local culture, for example—and a few lesser-known spots, off the beaten track. In this first of two installments, we venture from Reykjavík to Sólheimajökull—part two will see us traversing from Vík to Kirkjubæjarklaustur—exciting stuff, so look out for that in a future issue.

Remember to be safe, respect the nature, check the weather, dress well, and hire a 4x4 if you're thinking of taking any of the many side-roads.

Most of all: have fun enjoying one of the most beautiful places in Europe and, perhaps, the world.

**1 Rauðhólar & Heiðmörk: wild tracks and (just about) unspoiled beauty**  
[www.heidmork.is](http://www.heidmork.is)

One of the first sights to greet the hungry eyes of most southbound travellers is Rauðhólar, a series of red rocky outcrops at the outer edge of the capital area. These naturally formed volcanic craters were mined for construction materials during the 1900s, but what remains is still impressive, jutting up out of the ground dramatically. The rocks now lie inside the protected area of the Heiðmörk nature reserve, acting both as a landmark and as a cautionary tale to those who'd "develop" Iceland's wild places. If you're looking for a short afternoon drive to make the most of the winter light, or have the time to spare on your trip south, Heiðmörk also contains forest walks, pools and lakes, and heathland criss-crossed with wild dirt roads.

**2 Hveragerði: Art, Food & Nature**  
[www.hveragerdi.is](http://www.hveragerdi.is)

The first town you'll encounter if you take the southern ring road is Hveragerði. Like many Icelandic towns, this unassuming place contains many secrets for those who know where to look. The town is most tourist-famous for a mountain trail that leads to Reykjadalur, a naturally hot stream that's fit

for bathing. However, seeing as it's winter, the track is probably waist deep in snow right now, so perhaps it's better to visit the airy Listasafn Árnésinga, which hosts a year-round programme of visual arts, or to have a snack at the town's well-regarded bakery or ice-cream parlour.

**3 Flúðir: the unlikely oasis**  
[www.secretlagoon.is](http://www.secretlagoon.is)

The sleepy agricultural town of Flúðir has some unexpected highlights, including one of the most unlikely Ethiopian restaurants you're likely to find. It also has an IcelandAir hotel, with a good restaurant, and hot pots that are open all hours to guests and perfect for aurora-spotting. On top of that, there's Gamla Laugin, or 'The Secret Lagoon'—a century-old outdoor swimming place that lay in disrepair for years until it was reopened in 2013, with water piped in from a nearby hot spring. Despite a modern changing room building, it's still pleasingly rough around the edges, with a tumbledown shack on the far shore and walls made from roughly-hewn stone.

**4 Sólheimar & Friðheimar: farms full of character**  
[www.solheimar.is](http://www.solheimar.is)  
[www.fridheimar.is](http://www.fridheimar.is)

These places are both farms that grow vegetables in greenhouses, but each has a unique and distinctive culture surrounding it. Sólheimar is a certified eco-village and a community that teaches skills to residents that include the disabled, the infirm, former prisoners and the long-term unemployed. The fruits of the residents' labour are for sale in the shop, from arts and crafts to freshly grown produce, and there's a cafe where you'll get a warm welcome and a warm meal. Friðheimar is a different kind of farm, which also runs a stable, and grows famously sweet tomatoes resulting in a super-fresh vine-to-table tomato soup, served right there in the greenhouse.

**5 Þjóðveldisbærinn: Recreated Vikingism**  
[www.thjodveldisbaer.is](http://www.thjodveldisbaer.is)

This recreated Viking settlement includes a turf hall and a small church in a jaw-dropping picturesque location. In the summer, it's a popular tourist stop, with a programme of Viking-themed events. When we visited, it was closed for the winter, but we wandered around the buildings taking in the vastness of the surrounding plains and mountains. If the roads are open—and be sure to check in advance—it's worth the drive just to feel some off-the-beaten-track remoteness.

## Sólheimajökull: a glacier in retreat

As the dizzy heights of the Eyjafjallajökull glacier come into view, most people understandably feel a magnetic pull to the otherworldly ice cap. The most accessible place to satisfy the urge get your feet on the ice is Sólheimajökull.

Various tour companies offer short hikes onto the glacier, which is accessible from Route One via a short dirt road. They'll supply crampons and experienced guides, who can point out and educate you about the glacier's various features. If you don't fancy that, you can still get a spectacular view over the jagged blue ice—but don't go walking on there alone, as the slippery glacier can be deadly to the untrained.

Photo by Art Bicnick





**6 Rauða Húsið,**  
Búðarstíg 4, Eyrarbakka  
Tel: 483 3330

Rauða Húsið ('The Red House,' in English) is a restaurant in Eyrarbakki that offers countryside fine dining at its very best. We have been serving up melt-in-the-mouth Icelandic lamb and some of the best seafood in the country in our historic building since 2005. The quaint seaside town of Eyrarbakki is a scenic 45-minute drive from Reykjavík, just 10 minutes from Selfoss. It's ideally situated for a wonderful meal to top off a Golden Circle tour or a south coast adventure. The restaurant is open for dinner every evening from 5pm. Lunch is also served during winter weekends, or daily in the summer season, from May 1.



**7 Við Fjöruborðið**  
Eyrarbraut 3a,  
Stokkseyri

In the town of charming seaside town of Stokkseyri, located 60km from Reykjavík in Iceland's largest lava field, you'll find Við Fjöruborðið, a homely and welcoming restaurant. The menu specialises in juicy Icelandic langoustine tails sautéed in garlic herb butter, and succulent locally-sourced lamb. You can start with Við Fjöruborðið's famous lobster soup, but remember to leave room for one of our delicious desserts. For a memorable meal, circle Stokkseyri on your map, and come visit one of south Iceland's very best eateries.



**8 Icelandic Mountain Guides**

Icelandic Mountain Guides offer dazzling glacier walks that are a safe but daring trip, and a great way to get up close to the wonders of the Icelandic nature. Whether you're by yourself or in a group, take a glacier walk on the blue ice to experience one of Iceland's most popular tourism activities. Icelandic Mountain Guides operate glacier walks every day, all year-round on the Sólheimajökull glacier and at Skaftafell national park. Look for the Mountain Guides sign at the glacier, or book online.



**9 Laugarvatn Fontana**  
Hverabraut 1, Laugarvatn

Laugarvatn Fontana is a place to come and experience authentic Icelandic nature whilst relaxing in warm geothermal pools and natural steam rooms. Nature meets tradition at Fontana, where hot, healing steam simmers from the ground up through the cabin floors of this newly decorated wellness centre. The baths vary in depth, size and temperature, and the steam rooms sit directly over natural hot springs that have been used for healing and relaxation since 1929. Fontana is happily situated by the lake of Laugarvatn, and offers picturesque views from sauna and pools alike.



**10 LÁ Art Museum:**  
Austurmörk 21  
Hveragerði

Listasafn Árnésinga is a tucked-away art hub with four spacious galleries, offering a year-round programme of contemporary art. Located in Hveragerði, the gallery also offers an insight into the historically creative nature of this peaceful town, as well as a rich selection of catalogues and magazines in the cosy cafe-shop that'll provide a fascinating insight into Iceland's contemporary art scene.



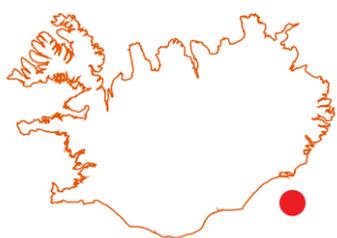
**11 Humarhöfnin**  
Hafnarbraut 4, Höfn

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# Southwestern Greenland

## #2: A dogs life

### Feasting, sledding & seeing stars in the Arctic Circle

Words John Rogers

Photos Axel Sig

Welcome to part two of our Greenland diary. In part one (read that in our December issue, or online at [is.gd/grape-land](http://is.gd/grape-land)), we experienced the wilderness airport-town of Kangerlussuaq, and took a drive to the vast Greenlandic ice cap. The story resumes as we head back into town for a Greenlandic feast to remember.

On the outskirts of Kangerlussuaq, on the shore of Lake Ferguson, lies a well-regarded restaurant named Roklubben, or “The Rowing Club” in English, one of the town’s only eateries. Named after the building’s previous use, Roklubben specialises in locally sourced ingredients, including thick reindeer steaks, various cuts of musk ox, and gamey grouse—all hunted in the region—as well as Disko Bay halibut.

The meal’s finale is a “Greenlandic coffee”—a super-strong dessert cocktail, mixed by pouring a stream

of flaming liquor into the glasses from a height, to create an “indoor aurora.” Despite being in the smallest town we’ll visit, Roklubben definitely served the best meal we enjoyed on our trip.

#### “Just jump on!”

The next morning, we sit in the departure lounge, sleepily watching the sky’s gradient change from dark, inky blue to fiery orange and luminous pink. Kangerlussuaq airport is tiny, but it’s also Greenland’s main air travel hub, and an improbably atmospheric hive of activity, with snow-blowers constantly clearing the runway of ice. Planes come and go in rapid succession, with their attending baggage carts, landing vehicles and fuel wagons zipping busily across the frozen runway.

The flight takes off into a glorious sunrise that floods the plane’s cabin and the frozen plains below in pink

light. Just twenty minutes later, we descend into Sisimiut, coming to a halt on a seaside airstrip so picturesque it feels almost unreal. Sun rays catch the tops of the snowy islands that dot the bay, casting long shadows over the icy sea, and the world takes on an indefinite magic-hour glow.

We’re met at the gate by Ólafur, an Icelander and an enthusiastic champion of Sisimiut who’s lived there for several years. Our first order of business is to go dog-sledding. Before long, we’re in the hallway of a nearby wooden house, suiting up from head to toe in bulky sealskin clothing, worn over the top of our lopapeysur, parkas, hats, scarves and everything else.

Marius, a no-nonsense Greenlandic dog-team driver with a weathered, lined face, waits outside. His dogs howl with building anticipation as he gestures for me to sit in the back of the sled. He sends Axel running up to the

top of a nearby ridge. “Just jump on as it comes past!” he shouts. “Okay then!” replies Axel, gamely, running up the hill. The dogs’ howling reaches a crescendo, and suddenly, the creaking sled leaps forwards. I grip the ropes that criss-cross the frame for dear life, giggling uncontrollably as we shoot up the steep slope. Within a few seconds Axel appears out of thin air, plopping down in front of me, his camera held aloft. We cackle with laughter as we cross the ridge into a flat white expanse.

Marius reappears from behind us, clambering deftly to the front of the sled. He communicates with the dogs by shouting out high-pitched syllables such as “jú, jú!” and they turn or change speed in response. He sometimes hollers to us in broken Danish over the hissing of the runners scraping over the snow. “We’re crossing a frozen lake, now,” he shouts. “All of this is water in summer.”

We pass through a couple of route marker flags, picking up speed. “I take the sled to Kangerlussuaq every year to hunt the musk ox,” shouts Marius, “and bring back four, on the sled, to feed the dogs.” He cracks the whip to either side of the pack occasionally to guide them. “I once took some tourists on a trip across the ice cap on the sled,” he yells. “It got damaged and I had to repair it along the way. It took a month to cross it, and another month to come back.”

After an hour of mushing between the frozen mountains, the colourful houses of Sisimiut come back into view. As we reach the house once again, we clamber off the sled, breathless and aching. I’m filled with admiration for the indefatigable Marius.

#### A dog’s death

Sisimiut, population 6,000, has a very different atmosphere to the more urban



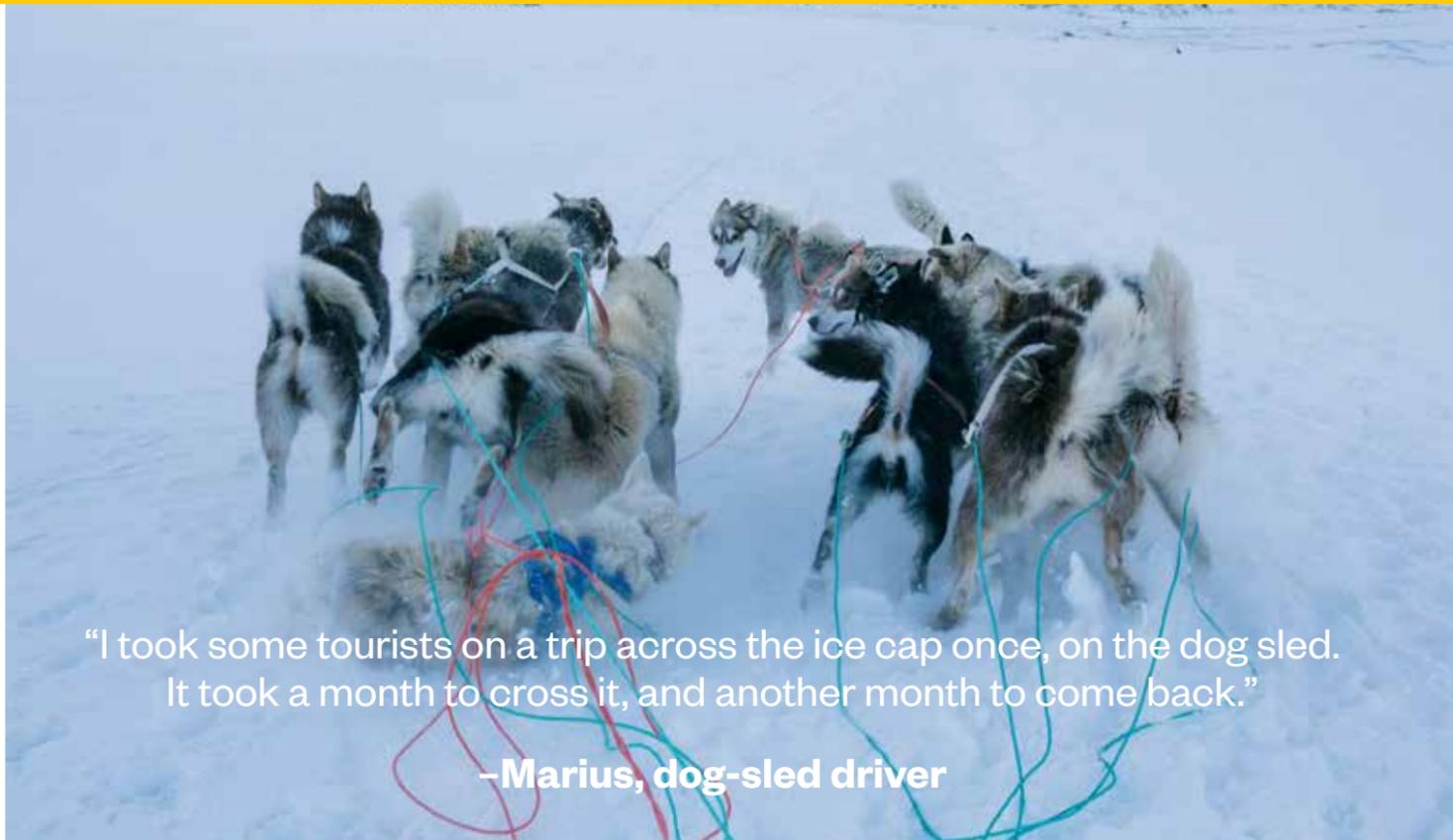
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Distance to Nuuk  
1,434 km



"I took some tourists on a trip across the ice cap once, on the dog sled. It took a month to cross it, and another month to come back."

—Marius, dog-sled driver

capital of Nuuk. The people we pass smile and wave as they walk the colourful, hilly streets, instead of marching by heads-down. Ólafur tells us about the town's culture, which includes an annual music festival called Arctic Sounds, now on its third year. He shows us around the recently completed culture house, which hosts open mic nights, workshops, and an international exhibition programme, and takes us to visit a small independent music school. With no music on the national curriculum, the school aims to fill a valuable gap.

We also drop into a Greenlandic art centre, where a handful of old Inuit people are showing off their craft skills, whether knitting or carving from soapstone, whale bones, walrus tusks and bear claws. The most talkative of them is a funny old Inuit guy called Barse, whose workspace carries the dentist-drill smell of burning bone. "I buy my materials from hunters all over Green-

land," he says, as Ólafur translates. "I got this walrus tusk from a Japanese guy up North, to make these polar bears."

He holds one of the finished bears up to the sawed-off end of the tusk, showing us the before-and-after. "I also use polar bear claws," he says. "I had twenty, and I'm working on the last two now. I have to finish them before December 11." He hands us various finished and in-progress objects to look at, and gives out business cards with a gummy grin. "You have Facebook?" he asks, in rough English. "Follow me on Facebook!"

Around the corner is a workshop and store called Quiviut, specialising in clothing made from musk ox wool. The shelves contain expensive mittens, socks, and decorative scarves that feel cashmere-soft. "I buy the musk ox skins in Greenland," says Anita, the store's Danish owner, who pioneered the use

of this material, which was previously burned by hunters who thought it useless. "They're cleaned and washed here. But we don't have anywhere to spin it into wool in Greenland, so I send it to Denmark and Peru to get the wool made."

The tour winds up with a short walk out into the hills, where most of Sisimiut's dogs are kept. The adults are kept apart in pairs, each one having a radius dictated by its chain. Some of the mothers and their puppies run free, bounding around our feet. As we approach, dogs start to howl, and the sound soon passes through this dog-town, creating a chilling, discordant symphony as hundreds of dogs join in.

At one point, a fight breaks out—a large female picks up a puppy, shaking it violently until its neck gives a sickening crack. She carries it off as we stand watching, stunned. "I thought they were just playing," says Ólafur, shocked. "I've

never seen that happen before."

It's a chilling reminder of the animal nature of the pack.

#### Seeing stars

When we return to Nuuk the next morning, the temperature has plunged down to -25° C, and the city has gone fully Christmas. Every building in town seems to have sprouted an illuminated orange star in its window, a cosy tradition apparently passed down from German missionaries hundreds of years ago, and now considered not so much a custom as a civic duty.

We spend our final day chatting to locals and checking out museums. The Nuuk Art Museum houses an excellent collection of paintings, sculptures and objects of interest, both contemporary and historic, and the National Museum, located in the well-preserved colonial harbour area, offers a fascinating his-

tory of the Inuit people. The displays start in pre-colonial times, explaining the hunting culture, instinctive survivalism, and other aspects of the Thule culture (the indigenous people known later as Eskimos and, today, Inuits). It also explains the traditional Inuit spiritual belief system, which centres on mythology, shamanism, and maintaining a respectful harmony with the natural world. I feel a pang of sadness that this deeply rooted philosophy seems confined to museums in modern, Danified Greenland.

Afterwards, we stop off for a chat with Maliina Abelson—a former UN representative for Greenland, on the Indigenous Peoples' Council, and current head of the 2016 Arctic Winter Games. "I'm quite sure that if you went to the high school here and asked students 'Do you consider yourself an indigenous person?' they would say 'No, I'm just a Greenlander,'" Maliina explains. "But I think what they fail to see is that we're also citizens with a relationship to the rest of the world. The statement 'We are an indigenous people' is important to me. That's what got us self-governance. In 2009, we got the right to manage our own natural resources—the right to the soil. I got goosebumps that day, but a lot of people said: 'It's just soil.' But for me, the land is a big part of our identity."

As the sun sets, we visit a Christmas fair in a sports hall, meeting a boatman from Ilulissat at one of the stalls. He carves ornamental fish that he sells at craft fairs, and tells us about his planned trip to Hafnafjörður next summer to sell his work at a Viking fair.

We leaf through photo books and writings by various people who have, over the years, become curious and then infatuated with Greenland's landscape and culture. I realise that, in the space of just seven days, I've become one of them.

A week in Greenland might sound like a lot, but it serves as just a tantalising glimpse of a wild, immersive and fascinating country.

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# Völsungasaga, The Saga Of The Völsungs

## Recap:

### Episode three:

### The one with the most badass shield- maiden



As usual, this story starts with some dude who is the son of some other dude. They have a bunch of other sons and all of that is boring. I'll skip to the good stuff shortly, but here is what you need to know: There is one guy named Völsungur, which is where the story gets its name, but of course he dies. There is a bunch of a marriage, someone offends someone, there are a heaps of revenge killings, a dash of incest (or "twincest" if we want to get technical), some children are killed because they're too wussy to commit more revenge killings, a super old, creepy guy marries a super young babe, and then eventually Sigurður is the son of somebody. There is also a prophecy about how he's gonna fuck up everything for everyone resulting in his own bloody murder (which somehow doesn't change the course of events). See how easy that was?

Words Grayson Del Faro

Illustration Inga María Brynjarsdóttir

Now I can't deny this part is important but it's honestly not very interesting. If you're a normal human in 2015, you've probably seen 'Lord of the Rings' or 'Game of Thrones' (both of which were obviously ripped off from whichever poor, anonymous Icelander[s] wrote the poems on which this Saga is based), so you know how this shit goes. (And if you're German, you're probably thinking, "Nuh-uh, those were totally ripped off the German epic Niebelungenlied." But A) No, the Eddic poems probably came first and B) Seriously just shut up and keep reading.)

Basically, someone tells Sigurður to slay the dragon because he has a bunch of gold, which includes a ring of dubious magical properties. (Real original, eh, Tolkien?) Surprise, surprise, he kills the dragon. When he eats its heart and drinks its blood, he is magically able to hear the birds gossiping about how the guy that asked him to kill the dragon is going to betray him. So he kills that dude too.

As he rides triumphantly into the sunset, rich as fuck and tripping balls on dragon's blood, he sees light shining from a mountain. When he goes there, he sees this badass warrior maiden sleeping—so naturally, he rips her sexy armor off and wakes her up. Instead of being like, "Hey asshole, I was sleeping," and murdering him on the spot like any sensible warrior maiden would do, Brynhildur is super turned on by his blood-crusted manliness. He thinks

she's hella smart and is like, "Teach me your sexy ways and also about runes." She's like, "Sure," and they vow to marry.

Then they meet at her dad's castle. He's all in love with her, but she says never to trust a woman because they can't keep promises. (Internalized patriarchy, much?) Like the smooth player that he is, he says he can't wait "to enjoy each other" (actual translation, not my shitty paraphrase). But she's like, "Listen up, dumbass, I'm a shield-maiden. I'll never be your wife because I have battles to fight, plus you're gonna marry that dumb bitch Guðrún." He swears he won't, gives her the magic ring, and they vow again to get married. Talk about mixed signals from both sides. What even just happened?

#### Gunnar needs to grow a pair

Sigurður shows up at the castle of some guy named Gjúki, who has three stupid sons named Gunnar, Högni, and Guttormur. More importantly, his wife is a malicious shitbag named Grímhildur and she ruins everything for everybody. She also happens to be a witch and she slips Sigurður a medieval roofie (or "portion of forgetfulness") so he forgets his betrothal to Brynhildur. Sigurður enters into bromance with Gunnar and Högni, (or "blood brotherhood") and everybody successfully bullies him into marrying Guðrún. Then Grímhildur insists that Gunnar try to woo Brynhildur and says Sigurður will help because Gun-

nar is too much of a dumbass to do it himself.

They go to Brynhildur's dads (father and foster-father, technically, but it's funnier to say "dads" because it makes them sound gay) to ask their permission. Both are chill with the marriage but warn that Brynhildur, like Beyoncé and Malala Yousafzai and J.K. Rowling and basically every woman ever, is a beautiful, powerful, independent

## Morals of the story:

1. Treat women with respect.
2. Let them make their own decisions.
3. Don't deceive them into sleeping with you.
4. If you do, they might crave your blood and when they get it, no one will pity you because you were a sexist asshole

woman capable of making her own decisions—including whom to marry. Also she has a sky-high wall of flames encircling her tower to keep men away and she'll only marry someone who can get through that. Just like annoying men at the bar these days, they're like, "Challenge accepted!"

When they get there, Gunnar can't get his horse or even Sigurður's even fancier horse to jump through the flames. This is because horses are always fucking shit up in the Sagas. So they transform into each other in a Polyjuice-like fashion as Grímhildur apparently taught them to do, and Sigurður rides through pretending to be wussy Gunnar to propose to Brynhildur. She says, "Don't bother unless you're the hottest man in the world and will murder everyone else who wants to

marry me" (paraphrase), adding that her "weapons have been stained with the blood of men and this I still desire" (literal translation).

She marries him anyway and he lays his sword between them when they sleep, saying he swore an oath to avoid boning his wife in this way. He takes the magic ring he gave her and gives her another as "Gunnar." She then dumps her daughter she apparently had with Sigurður (when the fuck that happened is never explained) with one of her dads and moves into Gjúki's hall with everyone like some weird medieval reality TV.

#### The Real Housewives of the Rhine

This is where shit gets real. And confusing. Real confusing. One day, the queens are bathing in the Rhine river (okay, fine, Germans, you get this one). Brynhildur wades further out, which is medieval body language for, "Guðrún, you're a basic bitch and your husband is weak and probably gay, unlike my dads." Guðrún retorts, "Whatever, slut, you married him first," and shoves the magic ring in Brynhildur's face to make her jealous.

It works. Brynhildur realizes she's been cheated out of the hottest of husbands and this sends her into a downward spiral of suicidal depression and homicidal rage. (Both urges will be satisfied.) While it obviously doesn't pass the Bechdel Test, this scene is notable as one of very few Saga scenes with two main female characters, both in positions of power, having any kind of discussion.

Brynhildur locks herself away in grief and everyone takes turns trying to chill her out but she's not having it. This sequence results in a conversation between Brynhildur and Sigurður where they do something that's unheard of with lovers in medieval heroic literature: talk about their feelings. Considering people can't even do this today, I think that's commendable. But despite

Sigurður's manly confessions of love, Brynhildur has been betrayed and she wants blood. Also they've both seen the future, which you'd think would have helped them steer clear of this whole clusterfuck, but nope. Hell nope.

#### Sigurður Bloody Sigurður

So Brynhildur comes up with the sensible solution of telling Gunnar that she boned Sigurður when he was pretending to be Gunnar. I guess this was not part of the deal between the dudes, but Gunnar can't kill Sigurður himself because of the bonds of bromance. So he gets his littlest brother Guttormur (who wasn't part of the bromance) to stab Sigurður in his sleep. But as Guttormur is leaving the room, Sigurður throws his sword at him, which slices him in half at the waist so his torso falls into the hallway and his legs back into the bedroom.

Guðrún awakens in the blood of her dying husband to find half a corpse on her doorstep. (Although someone must be pretty fucking hungover to sleep through a murderfest like that, amirite?) She lets out a horrific scream that Brynhildur can hear from across the castle and she laughs. How badass is that? But then she starts crying and after much more elegantly written articulations of her grief and betrayal, she stabs herself and requests that she and Sigurður lay together in a funeral pyre. This is granted to her, and they are finally able to lay together in some hella morbid but still touching conclusion to their romance.

The Saga drags on to describe how Guðrún is basically sold off to Brynhildur's brother, who happens to be Attila the Hun (Atli in Icelandic). She'll never be Brynhildur, but in her defence, she does stab Atli to death for killing her brothers and then burn his whole castle down. And nobody lived happily ever after because everyone was dead. Everyone loves a good love story.

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P.15



*“Icelandic is stiff—most words are longer than their counterparts in English. Being able to bend the language opens new dimensions, and it pisses off conservative nationalists, which is always fun.”*

Úlfur Úlfur are our band of the year in the fourth Grapevine Music Awards

iNFO P.9



*“The more I get to know the music business, the more I know you don’t have to do anything you don’t want to do. It’s perfectly possible to keep your integrity, and be wildly successful, at the same time. You just need to be a bit wise about it. Anyone can do that.”*

Kira Kira reflects on ten years of making music

iNFO P.18



*“This is probably the only photograph of this iceberg that was ever taken. I got this shot, and we sawed off a piece of ice to put in our whisky.”*

Photographer Ásgeir Peterson went to Greenland for a week, and came back nine months later

P.24



*“He had no time for bullshit... in my opinion, it’s impossible to be a metalhead and not to be affected by Lemmy’s contribution to the music, whether you’re a Motörhead fan or not.”*

Icelandic metalheads remember Lemmy



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# MUSIC

## CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

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- Hip-hop, R&B.
- Hardcore, metal, rock.
- Troubadour.
- Experimental.
- Acoustic, folk, jazz.
- Indie, pop

### Jan 8 - Feb 4

How to use the listings: Venues are listed alphabetically by day. Events listed are all live performances, with troubadours and DJs specifically highlighted. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit [listings.grapevine.is](http://listings.grapevine.is). Send your listings to: [listings@grapevine.is](mailto:listings@grapevine.is).

### Friday January 8

- American Bar**  
22:00 Troubadour Biggi / DJ Pétur
- Bar 11**  
22:30 Vertigo / Skerðing / At Breakpoint
- Bar Ananas**  
22:00 DJ Pilsner 2.25%
- Boston**  
22:00 DJ De La Rosa
- Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Stebbi Jak & Andri Ívarar
- Dillon**  
22:00 Foreign Land
- English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadours Alexander / Eiki & Steini
- Harpa**  
19:30 Iceland Symphony's New Years Concert 2016
- Húrra**  
22:00 Axel Flóvent / DJ Simon FKNHNDMSM
- Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 DJ Alfons X
- Mengi**  
21:00 Samuel Gouttenoire: Opaque Transparent
- Prikið**  
21:00 DJ Logi Pedro
- Stofan**  
22:00 DJ Myth

### Saturday January 9

- American Bar**  
22:00 Troubadours Maggi & Ívar / DJ Maggi
- Bar Ananas**  
22:00 DJ Styrmir Dansson

### ★ PICKER OF THE ISSUE ★

— Þórunn Gréta Sigurðardóttir —



This issue's picker is **Þórunn Gréta Sigurðardóttir**, the chair of the Society of Icelandic Composers, and artistic director of the Dark Music Days festival. Since starting piano lessons as a child, Þórunn's life has revolved around music, being educated in composition and music theory, graduating most recently with an M.Mus. from Hamburg's Hochschule für Musik und Theater. She's been busy since June of last year working on **Dark Music Days**, a festival that focusses on debuting Icelandic and foreign music compositions. Þórunn says she is drawn to live performances, in particular alternative events. Her taste has evolved through the years, and she often finds herself checking out events that she's unfamiliar with and sound interesting.

You can find the events our picker of the issue found to be interesting spread out over the music and art pages, marked with this icon.

**9 January**

**Arise, Icelandic Black Magic**  
X-Heart / Mammút

### Húrra

Naustin (D3) | 🕒 21:00 | Admission: from 2,000 ISK

The dark and moody pop-rock quintet **Mammút** bring their sonic witchcraft to Húrra. They had a busy 2015 after signing to legendary UK indie label Bella Union, so they'll surely be in top form for this hometown headline show. If fate smiles upon us, they might even play some new material. Before that, rockers **X-Heart** will heat things up with their dreamlike sound. Expect distortion, darkness, and a beautiful night of moody rock music. **HGB**

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offers a range of artwork by contemporary Icelandic artists represented by the gallery, selected works by acclaimed artists and past Icelandic masters.

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JÓN ÓSKAR  
ÓLI G. JÓHANSSON  
STEINUNN THÓRARINSDÓTTIR

**Also works by:**  
HADDA FJÓLA REYKDAL  
HULDA HÁKON  
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KRISTJÁN DAVÍÐSSON  
— among others

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**Boston**  
22:00 DJ Herr Gott ⚡

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Svavar Knútur 🎸★

**Dillon**  
22:00 Volcanova 🎸

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadour Ingunn 🎸

**Gaukurinn**  
22:00 The Vintage Caravan 🎸 / Electric Elephant 🎸

**Harpa**  
16:00 Iceland Symphony's New Years Concert 2016 🎻  
19:30 Iceland Symphony's New Years Concert 2016 🎻

**Hlégarður**  
21:00 Stormsveitin 🎸🎸 / Meistarar Dauðans 🎸

**Húrra**  
21:00 Mammút 🎸 / X-Heart 🎸★

**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 DJ Símon FKNHNSM ⚡

**Mengi**  
21:00 Krakkbot, AMFJ & Svavar Knútur 🎸🎸🎸

**Paloma**  
23:30 RVK Soundsystem 🎧🎧

**Prikið**  
21:00 DJ King Kocoon ⚡

**Stofan**  
22:00 DJ Doodlepops ⚡

### Sunday January 10

**American Bar**  
21:00 Troubadour Siggí Þorbergs 🎸

**Bryggjan Brugghús**  
20:00 Sunjazz 🎸

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadour Biggi 🎸

**Gaukurinn**  
21:00 Dr. Hook Tribute Band 🎸

**Harpa**  
16:00 From Beloved to Forbidden: Music of Robert Fuchs & Ernst Toch 🎻

**Húrra**  
21:00 Open Mic Night

**Mengi**  
21:00 Kira Kira & friends 🎸🎸★

**Prikið**  
21:00 Lowercase nights ⚡

### Monday January 11

**American Bar**  
21:00 Troubadour Roland 🎸

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Reykjavíkur Blues Company 🎸

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadours Ingi Valur & Tryggvi 🎸

**Húrra**  
21:00 Monday Night Jazz 🎸

### Tuesday January 12

**American Bar**  
21:00 Troubadour Ellert 🎸

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Spottar 🎸

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadour Biggi 🎸

**Gaukurinn**  
21:00 Karaoke Night

**KEX Hostel**  
20:30 KEXJazz 🎸

### Wednesday January 13

**American Bar**  
21:00 Troubadour Alexander 🎸

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadours Ellert & Rolland 🎸

**Húrra**  
20:00 Grúska Babúska 🎸🎸 / Just Another Snake Cult 🎸🎸 / Milkhouse 🎸

**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 DJ John BRNLV 🎸

**Prikið**  
21:00 DJ Volante ⚡ / Sonur Sæll ⚡

### Thursday January 14

**American Bar**  
21:00 Troubadour Matti Matt 🎸

**Bar Ananas**  
22:00 5immtudans & Stél

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Hið Íslenska Illmannafélag 🎸

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadours Hjálmar & Dagur 🎸

**Gaukurinn**  
21:00 Kósý Ljósár ⚡



**9**  
January

### Vintage Is The New Black

The Vintage Caravan / Electric Elephant

#### Gaukurinn

Tryggvagata 22 (D3) | 🕒 22:00 | Admission: 1,500 ISK

The **Vintage Caravan** have been growing at an exponential rate since 2014, when they were featured at the Roadburn Festival and Wacken Open Air. Mixing classic, psychedelic and stoner rock influences, they produce their own progressive bluesy rock sound—they'll make you feel like you're attending a gig by a hybrid band made of pieces of Led Zeppelin, Mastodon, and Them Crooked Vultures, to name a few. Yeah, their shit's real. **HC**

*Photo by Johanna Persson*



**16**  
January

### Melancolia Perpetualis

Kristinn Sigmundsson & CAPUT

#### Breiðholtskirkja (the Indian tent)

Breiðholt, 109 Kópavogur | 🕒 16:00 | Admission: 2,000 ISK

Beloved Icelandic composer **Haukur Tómasson** has written a piece made specifically with bass singer **Kristinn Sigmundsson** in mind. The collection consists of ten songs inspired by the poems of **Gyrðir Elíasson**. **CAPUT** ensemble will perform with Kristinn, and actor **Orri Ágústsson** will perform a reading of poems. The performance is said to be designed with the acoustics of the church in mind, so it's safe to expect a unique, site-specific experience. **HBG**

*Photo by Pétur Jónsson*

**Harpa**  
19:30 Young Soloists 🎻★

**Hlemmur Square**  
21:00 Logi Marr and Frank Raven 🎸

**Húrra**  
20:00 In The Company of Men 🎸 / Grit Teeth 🎸

**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 DJ Alfons X ⚡

**Prikið**  
21:00 DJ Agzilla Inc. ⚡

**Salurinn**  
20:30 Jón Ólafsson & Páll Óskar 🎸🎸

**Solon Bistro**  
21:30 Nuestro Vicio 🎸

### Friday January 15

**American Bar**  
22:00 Alexander & Guðmann 🎸 / DJ Maggi ⚡

**Bar Ananas**  
22:00 DJ Styrmir Dansson ⚡

**Boston**  
22:00 DJ Vigfús Steinsson ⚡

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Rúnar Þórisson Album Release Party 🎸

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadours Ellert & Roland 🎸 / Ingi Valur & Tryggvi 🎸

**Gaukurinn**  
21:00 System of a Down Tribute Band 🎸

**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 DJ Kári ⚡

**Prikið**  
21:00 Ty (Geimfara DJ Set) ⚡ / Gervisykur ⚡ / Marteinn ⚡

**Salurinn**  
20:30 Jón Ólafsson & Páll Óskar 🎸🎸

**Stofan**  
22:00 DJ Lappalísa ⚡

### Saturday January 16

**American Bar**  
22:00 Troubadours Ellert & Roland 🎸 / DJ André ⚡

**Bar Ananas**  
22:00 DJ Silja Glömmi ⚡

**Boston**  
22:00 DJ Sexitæm ⚡

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Soffía Karlsdóttir 🎸

**Dillon**  
22:00 Low/Mid/High 🎸

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## CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

### English Pub

21:00 Troubadours Andri P / Hjalmar & Dagur

### Gaukurinn

22:00 PowakaSIRKUS Hip-Hop Mini-fest:  
MC Björ & Bland / Powaka /  
Since When?!

### Húrra

20:00 Babies

### Kaffibarinn

21:00 DJ Margeir

### Mengi

21:00 Björk Nielsdóttir (vocals) & Grímur Helgason (clarinet); music by Anton Webern, Luciano Berio and more

### Prikið

21:00 DJ Karítas / Emmsjé Gauti

### Stofan

22:00 Krystal Carma DJ Set

### Sunday January 17

#### American Bar

21:00 Troubadour Alexander

#### Bryggjan Brugghús

20:00 Sunjazz

#### English Pub

21:00 Troubadour Arnar

#### Stofan

22:00 Ambient Sunday: Beatmakin Troopa

### Monday January 18

#### American Bar

21:00 Troubadour Ellert

#### English Pub

21:00 Troubadours Ingi Valur & Tryggvi

#### Húrra

21:00 Monday Night Jazz

#### Kaffibarinn

21:00 DJ Pilsner 2.25%

### Tuesday January 19

#### American Bar

21:00 Troubadour Roland

#### Café Rosenberg

21:00 Kvæðamannafélagið Iðunn

#### English Pub

21:00 Troubadour Arnar

#### Gaukurinn

21:00 Karaoke Night

#### Kaffibarinn

21:00 Krystal Carma DJ Set

#### KEX Hostel

20:30 KEXJazz

#### Prikið

21:00 DJ Volante

### Wednesday January 20

#### American Bar

21:00 Troubadour Siggí Þorbergs

#### Aurora

21:00 Foreign Land

#### Café Rosenberg

21:00 Myrra Rós Þrastardóttir Album Release Party

#### English Pub

21:00 Troubadour Biggi

#### Kaffibarinn

21:00 Ívar Pétur Undir Áhrifum

#### Prikið

21:00 DJ De La-Rósa



The Dark Days Are Over  
Dark Music Days Festival

### Harpa

Austurbakki 2 (D4) | January 28-30 | Festival pass: 12,500 ISK

It's time to wipe away your (proverbial) emo-kid bangs, even if it's still dim and dreary outside—because the **Dark Music Days** festival is here. Since 1980, this cosy festival has been providing much-needed light and inspiration during the darkest winter days, also offering emerging and established composers a platform to share new work written during their hibernation. The programme blends classical and electronic music, with highlights including **Nordic Affect**, **The Iceland Symphony Orchestra**, and **Þórunna Björnsdóttir**, to name a few. For these three days at least, the dark ain't such a bad thing after all. **RTC**

Photo by Baldur Kristjánsson

### Thursday January 21

#### American Bar

21:00 Troubadour Hreimur

#### Bar Ananas

22:00 Simmtudans & Stél

#### Café Rosenberg

21:00 Tónelskir Læknar

#### Dillon

22:00 Hector Rector

#### English Pub

21:00 Troubadours Eiki & Steini

#### Gaukurinn

21:00 Funky Jazz Jam Session

#### Harpa

09:30 Iceland Symphony: Open Rehearsal

19:30 Osmo and Mahler

#### Hlemmur Square

21:00 Jara

#### Húrra

20:00 Celestine / Great Grief / Grit Teeth

#### Kaffibarinn

21:00 DJ Ewok vs. Kocoon

#### Prikið

21:00 DJ Introbeats

#### Stofan

22:00 DJ Baldur Hjörleifsson

#### Solon Bistro

21:30 Boogie Trouble

### Friday January 22

#### American Bar

22:00 Troubadours Biggi / DJ Bogi

#### Bar Ananas

22:00 DJ Óli Dóri

#### Café Rosenberg

22:00 Sigga Eyrún & Band

#### Dillon

22:00 Þrír

#### English Pub

21:00 Troubadour Siggí Þ / Biggi

#### Hallgrímskirkja

14:00 The Icelandic Academy of the Arts in Hallgrímskirkja

#### Húrra

21:00 DJ Styrmir Dansson

#### Kaffibarinn

21:00 DJ Introbeats vs. Yamaha

#### Prikið

21:00 DJs Sunsurá

#### Stofan

22:00 Nolo DJ Set

### Saturday January 23

#### American Bar

22:00 Troubadours Siggí Þorbergs / DJ Pétur

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**Bar Ananas**  
22:00 DJ De La Rosa 

**Boston**  
22:00 DJ Styrmir Dansson 

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Axel Ó & Co. 

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadours Ingunn  / Eiki & Steini 

**Gaukurinn**  
22:00 Porridge and Metal:  
Narhraal  / The Restless  / While My City Burns  / Aaru 

**Húrra**  
21:00 DJ KGB Soundsystem 

**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 DJ Housekell vs. Ómar Borg 

**Mengi**  
21:00 Berglind María Tómasdóttir  

**Prikið**  
21:00 DJ King Kocoon 

**Stofan**  
22:00 DJ Dorrit 

### Sunday January 24

**American Bar**  
21:00 Troubadour Siggí Þorbergs 

**Bryggjan Brugghús**  
20:00 Sunjazz 

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadour Alexander 

**Gaukurinn**  
21:00 Blues Night with Andrea Gylfadóttir & Eðvarð Lárusson 

**Harpa**  
19:30 Chamber Music Society #4 

### Monday January 25

**American Bar**  
21:00 Troubadour Roland 

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Stebbi Jak & Andri Ívars 

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadours Ingi Valur & Tryggvi 

**Húrra**  
21:00 Monday Night Jazz 

### Tuesday January 26

**American Bar**  
21:00 Troubadour Ellert 

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Rakel & Band 

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadour Alexander 

**Gaukurinn**  
21:00 Karaoke Night

**KEX Hostel**  
20:30 KEXJazz 

### Wednesday January 27

**American Bar**  
21:00 Troubadour Alexander 

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Þórunn & Band 

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadours Ellert & Rolland 

**Húrra**  
21:00 Monday Night Jazz 

**Prikið**  
21:00 DJ Kári 

### Thursday January 28

**American Bar**  
21:00 Troubadour Matti Matt 

**Bar Ananas**  
22:00 Símmtudans & Stél

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Stebbi Jak & Andri Ívars 

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadours Hjálmar & Dagur 

**Gaukurinn**  
21:00 Omotrack 

**Harpa**  
19:30 Melkorka & Víkingur 

*Dark Music Days*  
18:00 Elektra Ensemble & Errata Collective 

21:30 Dans Les Arbres 

**Hlemmur Square**  
21:00 Indriði 

**Húrra**  
20:00 Þórunn Antonía & Bjarni. 

**Mengi**  
21:00 Daníel Friðrik Böðvarsson & Bryndís Jakobsdóttir  

**Prikið**  
21:00 Karaoke Time

**Salurinn**  
20:30 Jón Ólafsson & Páll Rosenkranz 



## From Berlin To Reykjavík With Love (And Jazz)

Berlin X Reykjavík Festival 2016

### Húrra

Naustin (D3) |  21:00 | Admission: 4,900 ISK

The second edition of the **Berlin X Reykjavík Festival** presents jazz and electronic music from the German and Icelandic scenes. Various artists will perform in both capital cities in late January, with artists like **M-Band**, **Sísý Ey**, **Berndsen**, **dj. flugvél og geimskip**, and many more representing Iceland in this refreshing avant-garde festival. On the German side, **Studnitzky** (pictured) and his orchestra mix jazz and classical music, creating something unique. **HC**

*Photo by Art Bicnick*

### Friday January 29

**American Bar**  
22:00 Troubadours Maggi & Ívar  / DJ Maggi 

**Bar Ananas**  
22:00 DJ Styrmir Dansson 

**Boston**  
22:00 DJ KGB Soundsystem 

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadours Siggí Þ  / Ingi Valur & Tryggvi 

**Gaukurinn**  
22:00 Andrea Gylfadóttir & Bíóbandið  

**Harpa**  
21:00 Eivør and the Legend of the Seal Woman  

*Dark Music Days*  
12:00 The Icelandic Guitartrio 

16:00 The children tackle the composers 

18:00 Edda Erlendsdóttir, piano 

19:00 Kristín Mjöll, bassoon 

20:00 Caput 

21:00 Jennifer Torrence, percussions 

22:00 Electrical Music 

**Húrra**  
21:00 Berlin X Reykjavík: Beatmakin Troopa  / Studnitzky  / dj flugvél og geimskip   / Futuregrapher  / Frank Murder 

**Prikið**  
21:00 DJ Gunni Ewok 

**Salurinn**  
20:30 Jón Ólafsson & Páll Rosenkranz 

**Stofan**  
22:00 Krystal Carma DJ Set 

### Saturday January 30

**American Bar**  
22:00 Troubadour Ellert  / DJ André 

**Bar Ananas**  
22:00 DJ Pabbi 

**Boston**  
22:00 DJ Herr Gott 

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadours Arnar  / Eiki & Steini 

**Gaukurinn**  
22:00 Vertigo  / Ring of Gyges 

**Hallgrímskirkja**  
17:00 Organ concert: Beyond Human Control 

**Harpa**  
*Dark Music Days*  
12:00 The Adventure of Sölvi and King Oddur 

14:00 Guðný Jónasdóttir, cello 

15:00 Nordic Affect 

16:00 The Icelandic Saxophone Quartet 

17:00 Vents du Nord - Norðan Garri 

19:00 Hlíf Sigurjónsdóttir, fiddle 

20:00 ERKI Tónlist 

21:00 Reykjavík Chamber Orchestra 

**Húrra**  
21:00 Berlin X Reykjavík: King Lucky  / Samúel Jón Samúelsson  / Studnitzky & Eyþór Gunnarsson  / Sísý Ey 

**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 DJ KGB Soundsystem 

**Prikið**  
21:00 DJ Logi Pedro 

**Reykjavík Cathedral**  
*Dark Music Days*  
13:00 Guðný Einarsdóttir performs Jón Norðdal organ pieces 

**Stofan**  
22:00 DJ Api Pabbi 

### Sunday January 31

**American Bar**  
21:00 Troubadour Alexander 

**Bryggjan Brugghús**  
20:00 Sunjazz 

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadour Biggi 

**Stofan**  
22:00 Ambient Sunday: Bervit 

### Monday February 1

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadours Ingi Valur & Tryggvi 

**Húrra**  
21:00 Monday Night Jazz 

### Tuesday February 2

**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadour Arnar 

**Gaukurinn**  
21:00 Karaoke Night

**KEX Hostel**  
20:30 KEXJazz 

### Wednesday February 3

**Harpa**  
20:00 The Tin Drum: Högni Egilsson 

**Prikið**  
21:00 DJ Siggí Skurður 

### Thursday February 4

**Gaukurinn**  
21:00 Funky Jazz Jam Session 

**Prikið**  
21:00 Árni Kristjánsson Boogie DJ Set 

**Stofan**  
22:00 Gylfi Freiland DJ Set 

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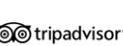
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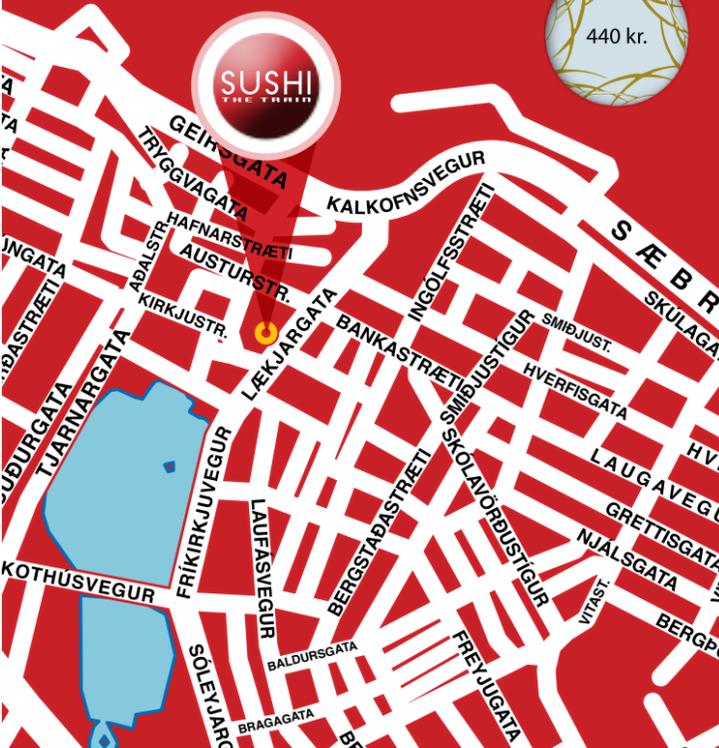
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## Album Reviews



**Singapore Sling**

'Psych fuck'

Fuzz Club Records

Perversity, desperation and death

**+** Although not quite of it, Singapore Sling are a constant in the Icelandic music scene. As trends cycle from hip-hop to krútt to metal to techno and back again, Sling comfortably rest on the outskirts, eternally gazing into the void through dark shades and a haze of cigarette smoke, just doing their nihilistic rock thing until the darkness finally engulfs them. And this is a good thing, as their eighth studio album, 'Psych Fuck', aptly demonstrates.

It starts with a krautrock drum machine beat before a sticky-sounding bass synth joins the mix. As unintelligible demonic whispers and creepy minor key piano chords fade in, we find ourselves engulfed deep in the tar pool of concentrated murk that is 'Psych Fuck'.

Dark as that pit may be, there isn't a moment of dull depression down

there. Rather, what you're drowning in is a seemingly infinite stream of novel expressions of hate, contempt and madness, in equal measures. Pay attention to bandleader Henrik's voice on "Let It Rise," as he abandons any last pretention to humanity, whatever remains of him hovering in circles around the bass line.

Singapore Sling's ideology is focused, their aesthetic effective: feedback drones, leather, dirty organs, rockabilly swagger, Henrik's haunted Lou Reed drawl and an eternal, sneering contempt for any- and everything held dear by bourgeoisie society. This music absorbs light and hope, intently celebrating perversity, desperation and death. And it is good.

We reach Peak Nightmare on album standout "Try." The mechanistic drum machine beat is scrambled to

oblivion as the guitar fuzz tears through your eardrums. An out-of-tune bar piano hammers home the truth, while over it all an outright Satanic Henrik implores the listener, "Set me on fire!"

But then, there are lighter moments throughout 'Psych Fuck', although I wouldn't go so far as to call them playful. "Give Me Some" offers a bubblegum melody, albeit one drenched in piercing J&MC feedback, and album closer "Tower of Fornicity" brings uplifting organ chords that are stacked with piles of white noise as the song progresses.

"All I want is to be held/Stay by myself in the darkest cell," Henrik draws on "Na Na Now." If he keeps on churning out albums like these, I hope they lock him in that cell and throw away the key.

✂ - **DAVÍÐ ROACH GUNNARSSON**

Jón Ólafsson & Futuregrapher

'Eitt'

Möller Records

For pure-hearted children of all ages



**+** I was taken aback when I first started listening to this album, which manages to simultaneously sound like a score for an unmade film, theatre music and meditation music. I really started enjoying it when out walking, as it provided the perfect soundtrack for my people-

watching.

At first, I somehow felt a bit too grown-up listening to music that can only be described as beautiful and honest... and totally without any edge to it. I like punk rock, for crying out loud! It took a few listens to realise that it is actually the opposite of grown-up music—it is pure

and innocent, like a child's heart, and the more I listened to it, the more it made me think of new beginnings, childlike games, and the timelessness that is often associated with youth.

There are eight songs on the album, all with single-word titles: "Pictures," "Window," "Children," "Psalm," "Presence," "Circle," "Fragment," and "West." They all stand by themselves, but also fit together, like chapters in a book that you have to write yourself. When the last song dies out, you realised you've just finished a wonderful and artistic journey—and like a Teletubby, you just want to experience it again.

✂ - **HEIÐA EIRÍKSDÓTTIR**

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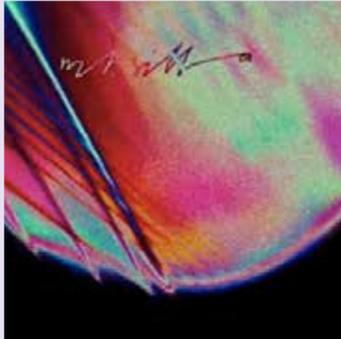
## Our Definitive List Of 2015's Best Albums And Songs

⏮ Straumur radio show airs Mondays on X977 at 23:00

👉 [www.straum.is](http://www.straum.is)

**Words:** Davíð Roach Gunnarsson & Óli Dóri

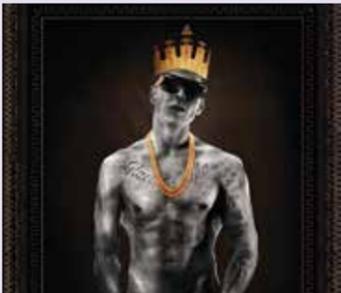
Us Straumur guys would like to wish all of our readers a happy new musical year! With that out of the way, let's dig into the recent past to uncover our top five favourite Icelandic albums and songs of last year. Head to our website, [www.straum.is](http://www.straum.is), for an extended version of both lists, with far more entries, and also YouTube embeds.



### THE FIVE BEST ALBUMS OF 2015

#### 5. Mr. Silla – 'Mr. Silla'

Mr. Silla has been active in the local music scene for over a decade, most prominently as a singer of múm, but this is her first solo offering, and it doesn't disappoint one bit. Silla's angelic voice towers over the impeccably produced album, which conveys an irresistibly bittersweet melancholy. While her eponymous debut might bring to mind hypermodern songstresses like FKA twigs and Kelela, Mr. Silla fully succeeds in building a sound and world of her own.



#### 4. Gísli Pálmi – 'Gísli Pálmi'

After releasing a string of YouTube videos to critical and popular acclaim over the course of the last three years, Gísli Pálmi finally dropped a proper LP this spring. The record was a major event in Iceland, with eager GP fans lining up outside the record store to score the first copies—and as soon as folks managed to bring the record home, Iceland's Twitter community basically exploded. People went apeshit. It's no wonder. 'Gísli Pálmi' is a real phenomenon, cinematic and larger than life, sporting futuristic hi-fi extravaganza beats underscoring GP's debauched lyrics and outsized character.



#### 3. Vaginaboy's – 'Icelandick'

Vaginaboy's are mysteriously masked musical love machines who claim to make music that aims for your heart and genitals. They finally dropped a debut EP, 'Icelandick', (heh) at the end of the year, offering six servings of 808s, heartbreaks, synthesizers and sincerity. We can't get enough.



#### 2. Pink Street Boys – 'Hits#1'

For the second year in a row, those Pink Street Boys made our second favourite album of the year. PSB have firmly cemented their status one of Iceland's most explosive live bands (and they have the Grapevine Award to prove it!), and on 'Hits#1' they manage to harness that power—and then some.



#### 1. Tonik Ensemble – 'Snapshots'

'Snapshots' is so blazingly ambitious and carefully thought-out that one can't help but feel in awe of Tonik's craft. It is a techno album that goes far beyond techno, featuring some pristine vocal performances and meticulously arranged and sequenced "real songs." Every detail has been considered to the point where there's not an ounce of excess to be found. 'Snapshots' is digital and analogue, uplifting and gloomy, a humanist soul shining through it all.

### THE FIVE BEST SONGS OF 2015



#### 5. "Love, love, love" – Helgi Valur

Helgi Valur composed this epic ten-minute journey of a song while committed to a mental institution in the midst of a schizophrenic episode. Fittingly, the lyrics hone on in that brand of insanity we commonly refer to as love. Complete with a spoken word rant and hair-raising guitar solo. Listen to it now. And again.

#### 4. "We Will Live For Ages" – Hjaltalín

Finally Hjaltalín released a new song, three long years after the release of their breakthrough masterpiece, 'Enter IV'. The tune is a blend of neo-classical minimalism and electronics, where every sound has its own space. Högni's vocals kill it in the chorus.



#### 3. "Stelpur" – Jón Þór

In "Stelpur" ("Girls"), Jón Þór digs into the essence of being young, desperate and lovesick in the midst of the whirlpool of a drinking binge in the Reykjavík nightlife. The ridiculously catchy chorus sticks to your frontal brain for weeks after listening to it.



#### 2. "Morgunmatur" – GKR

Rapper GKR managed to make a name for himself and get ahead of the competition in what was by all accounts a very strong year for Icelandic hip-hop. He did this with a song about what some say is the most important meal of the day, breakfast. While other rappers brag about how hardcore they are, GKR offers a very keen eye for everyday life and the various details that make it up.



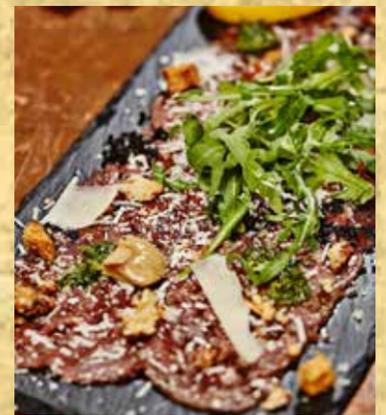
#### 1. "Elskan af því bara" – Vaginaboy's

This oh-so beautiful breakout hit from Vaginaboy's burst onto the scene this spring from out of nowhere. It's a wonderfully bittersweet RnB-tinged slow jam painted with old-sounding drum machines and warm synth pads. The icing on the 1980s cake is the vocals, drenched in layers upon layers of autotune and vocoder as they are, and tweaked in all sorts of unexpected ways. It is both sad and sexy, like that final breakup fuck after you decide to end a relationship and part ways with a lover.



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# Call It Magic

Words by John Rogers

Photo by Sigga Ella

**Reflecting on ten years of music-making, Kira Kira arrives at a new beginning**

Kira Kira, aka Kristín Björk Kristjánsdóttir, stands at the front of a low-lit lecture theatre. As music students file in, she plays a deep, harmonic sound over the speakers, and wafts a smouldering piece of Palo Stanto "Holy Wood" in circles, spreading its pungent aroma. The room gradually fills up with people, and atmosphere.

They're assembling for an hour-long glimpse into Kristín's intriguing body of work as an artist and a musician, which stretches back to the late

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and grow in different directions.”

Even given her strong instincts for improvisation and experimentation, Kira Kira has distilled her work into three albums to date. The first one, ‘Skotta’, came out in 2005, and has just passed its tenth birthday.

“I actually feel like another musician made that record,” she smiles. “And I mean, every cell in your body regenerates, over time. So, both physically and spiritually, I’m literally a different person. But I still have that same affection for making an immersive world of sound... it’s all very much a part of the journey. There are no regrets.”

Kristín is also very candid about the obstacles and difficulties that artists have to deal with over time. The new choir, formed from Kristín’s community of musician friends, also acts as a place where people come together and discuss where they’re at.

“That part is so important,” says Kristín. “Sometimes you really don’t know how to continue, or even why you would continue. Every artist goes through that, and it’s tough when you’re in it. It comes in waves that crash down, and rise again. It feels amazing when the wave is rising. It’s a special time, when you’ve found what you’re going to work on and you’re in the flow of it. But when you complete a project and let it out into the world, you can feel completely lost. That’s when community becomes very important.”

### Building the momentum

As well as investing time in nurturing a creative support network, Kristín has recently started to expand in other directions, embracing the more business-minded aspects of being a musician.

“I put a lot of love and a tremendous amount of passion into what I make,” she explains, carefully, “but up until recently I hadn’t really focussed on creating a set-up that allowed those creations to be enjoyed by a wider group of people. For the longest time, I wanted to keep things at home and run them in a DIY, organic way, with no outside voices interfering. But the more I get to know the music business—and the world—the more I know you don’t want to do. So you just make sure you don’t make bad deals. It’s perfectly possible to keep your integrity, and be wildly successful, at the same time. You just need to be a bit wise about it. And anyone can do that.”

And despite the discursive, varying nature of Kristín’s practise—which often lies between sound art, experimentation with new technologies, music performance and group improvisation—it’s the sense of warmth, inclusivity and creative curiosity that most defines her work.

“That’s just the way I roll,” smiles Kristín. “It’s certainly not the easiest way to go. But what really turns me on is taking on things I’ve never done before. It keeps me alive, and in a place where I feel like my artistry is expanding. And that’s completely by choice. I could have made things easy for myself by following the momentum at various different points in my journey. But I’m really happy things are exactly the way are.”

Kristín pauses, and a smile creeps over her face. “I actually have this strange feeling that it’s all just beginning,” she finishes. “That so far, this was school. And now, we do it.”

1990s. She begins by talking about her very first band Spúnk, moving on to describe her path through the prolific Kitchen Motors collective and founding Big Band Brútal; creating a kite symphony in Shanghai; producing the award-winning documentary ‘Amma Lo-Fi’ and, of course, her work under the Kira Kira moniker, amongst many other projects.

Now, at the tail end of 2015, Kristín shows no signs of slowing down. Having recently founded a new choir, Kristín discusses a forthcoming film on the theme of “the creative spark,” now in pre-production for shooting in three different countries in 2017. She’s also working on two new collaborative albums—one with LA musician Eskmo, and one mass-collaboration called ‘Kira & Friends’. “It’s very important to push yourself,” she says, to the throng. “To belong to something bigger than just yourself in a bottle.”

### Conversations, organizations, waves

Later, at Stofan café, we talk over Kristín’s creative journey. I remark that all of the different interconnected projects seem to be driven along by the will to maintain a generous, plural, open-ended practise.

“Well, I’ve always created things from a place of wanting to be in conversation with the world,” says Kristín. “There’s almost a sense of responsibility there—that you’re not allowed to just be in your cave and make things, forever. It’s so important to inspire conversation and dialogue. And for me, that is the process of making things. I’ve always had a very open process—sparking something, then allowing it to find its own shape. Like an open organism that can move

**“What really turns me on is taking on things I’ve never done before. It keeps me alive, and in a place where I feel like my artistry is expanding.”**

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# ART

OPENING & ONGOING



**Temporal Moments Made Eternal**  
The Icelandic Photography Festival

### Reykjavík Museum Of Photography

Tryggvagata 15 (D3) | Until January 17 | Admission: Free

The **Icelandic Photography Festival** is upon us for the third time, and this year it focuses on photo-books. The programme includes exhibitions, talks and portfolio reviews, and takes place at various venues in Reykjavík and Kópavogur. The festival also seeks to strengthen the relationship between the Icelandic and international photography scenes, as well as to promote photography as an art medium. Highlights include exhibitions 'Moods' by **Fríðgeir Helgason** and 'Independent Mothers' by **Annie Ling**; the full programme can be found at [www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is](http://www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is). **HBG**

Photo by Annie Ling

### Jan 8 - Feb 4

How to use the listings: Events are listed alphabetically. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit [listings@grapevine.is](http://listings.grapevine.is). Send your listings to: [listings@grapevine.is](mailto:listings@grapevine.is)

### Opening

#### ASÍ Art Gallery

**'L' ile infernale'** by **Anne Herzog** ★  
Anne searches for the middle of the Earth in Snæfellsjökull through various mediums. She graduated from Pantheon-Sorbonne University in Paris, and has had her work exhibited in Iceland, New York, Trinidad, Tobago as well as other places in Europe.

**Opens January 9**  
**Runs until January 31**

**'Roði, strokur, andrá'** by **Hulda Vilhjálmsdóttir & Marta María Jónsdóttir**

Hulda Vilhjálmsdóttir & Marta María Jónsdóttir exhibit new paintings and drawings where they look at subjects both on a surface level, and at what's hidden beneath, dealing with personal subjects.

**Opens January 9**  
**Runs until January 31**

#### Gaukurinn

**'Come Talk Funny' – Open Mic Standup Comedy in English**

The Goldengang Comedy group hosts its weekly OpenMic stand-up session. Come for some laughs.

**January 11, 18, 25 & February 1 at 20:30.**

#### "Drag-Súgur" Drag Cabaret

For all the beautiful creatures of the night, from queens to kings, fairies to trolls, and everything in between. The event will feature drag, cabaret, music and comedy acts.

**January 22 at 21:00**

**'Make THIS Funny!' – Improvised Standup Comedy**

Members of the Goldengang Comedy group take your suggestions and run with them, turning them into improv comedy.

**January 13, 20, & February 3 at 20:30**

#### Poetry Party

Join host Hildur Knútsdóttir and a slew of Icelandic poets for a night of poetry and parties. There will also be musical performances by Kauko Röyhkä and Olga Välimaa.

**January 8 at 20:00**

**"So here's a funny story" – Standup Comedy Story Night**

Members of the Goldengang Comedy group tell some of their funniest stories.

**Jan 27 at 21:00**

**Standup Comedy Jonathan Duffy**

Australian comedian Jonathan Duffy shows his comedy guns. After the show, the Benjamin Náttmörður Jazz Trio will perform.

**January 17 at 21:00**

#### Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

**'My world' – Guðrún Ingibjartsdóttir**

Guðrún has been painting with watercolours for more than twenty years, and has attended various masterclasses in Iceland, England and France. Guðrún finds much of her inspiration in nature.

**Opens January 17**

**Runs until March 6**

#### Hafnarborg

**Kristbergur Pétursson**

This exhibit features new oil- and watercolour paintings by Kristbergur, an artist who has been painting for over twenty years. His aesthetic leans toward the abstract, where colours flow within dark, gloomy landscapes.

**Opens January 23**

**Runs until March 13**

**'Diktur' by Ragnhildur Jóhanns**

Ragnhildur uses mediums such as sculpture, collage, drawing, and print to explore the relationship between language and art.

**Opens January 23**

**Runs until March 6**

**Harpa Norðurbyggja**

**'Hljóðalestur' Dark Music Days Festival Installation by Þórunn Björnsdóttir**

'Hljóðalestur' or "sound reading" explores the relationship between certain read words and the soundscapes they articulate. Þórunn is an artist noted for both her electronic music and her classical approach to creating soundscapes.

**Opens January 29 from 18:00-22:00**

**Dark Music Days Festival Installation by Gunnar Karel**

In this installation, Gunnar recreates a performance of his composition, 'Pansonic 1', offering viewers the chance to experience the concert.

**Opens January 30 from 16:00-22:00**

#### Hverfisgallerí

**Óvera' by Sigga Björg Sigurðardóttir**

Sigga Björg Sigurðardóttir presents her work at Hverfisgallerí. There is a special opening event on January 16 at 16:00.

**Opens January 16**

**Runs until February 27**

**Kópavogur Art Museum**

**Gerðarsafn**

**'Deltas' by Ingvar Högni Ragnarsson**

Ingvar Högni exhibits photographs taken during a three week residency at ARCUB in Bucharest, Romania. He focuses on quiet spaces within the bustling city, thereby shedding light on the interactions between everyday life and complex social issues.

**Opens January 15**

**Runs until February 27**

**'Double Happiness' by Katrín Elvarsdóttir**

Katrín exhibits work created in China in 2010-2014. She explores city life, mainly the lines between the everyday and the fantastic, and builds an idea of happiness out of solemn, unreachable settings of photographs.

**Opens January 15**

**Runs until February 27**

**Listastofan (Hringbraut 110)**

**Life Drawing Sessions**

Flex your drawing muscles at Listastofan's weekly Life Drawing sessions. There will be a professional nude model at the session. Light refreshments and good vibes are provided, but please bring your own sketchpad and drawing tools. There is an extra session on January 16.

**January 11, 16, 18, 25, and February 1 at 19:00**

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Reykjavík Map | Happy Hour Guide | Places We Like | Best Of Reykjavík | Practical Info

Reykjavík

January 8 - February 4

Keep it in your pocket

## Four Weeks

The Grapevine picks the events, places and things to check out in the next four weeks.

**30 January** **Veganuary**  
**Pig Out On Vegan Food**



### Veganuary potluck

Friðarhúsið, Njálsgata 87 (G8) | 20:00 | Free!

The vegan and vegetarian society in Iceland has been hard at work promoting **Veganuary**, an international event that challenges people to go vegan for the whole of January—which is, after all, a month often associated with change and new beginnings. The association is running an online campaign, offering plenty of advice on where to find good ingredients and recipes on their website [www.vegnuar.is](http://www.vegnuar.is). The challenge culminates in a potluck event, with people bringing along homemade food and chewing the definitely metaphorical fat. **GB**

Every Monday and Wednesday

### Stand-up comedy in English

Every Monday, a group of comedians called the **GoldenGang** get together and perform a free comedy set in English for expats and locals alike. Then on Wednesdays there are improv nights, and a story night at the end of the month—admission is 1,000 ISK.

**Gaukurinn at 20:30**

January 9

### Svavar Knútur X FALK

Beloved folk singer **Svavar Knútur** joins extreme music collective **FALK** for an unforgettable night, where he plays his normal repertoire of tunes, only to have his guitar and vocals mixed live by **KRAKKKBOT** and **AMFJ**. Admission: 2,000 ISK.  
**Húrra at 21:00**

January 29

### Eivør and the Legend of the Seal Woman

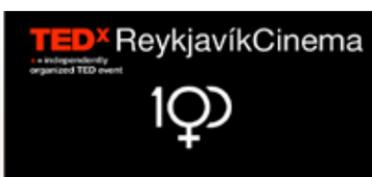
The Faroese goddess **Eivør** interprets the legend of the transformation of the **Seal Woman** with the **Danish National Vocal Ensemble** and the **Danish Radio Big Band**. Admission: 5,900 ISK.  
**Harpa at 21:00**

February 3

### Högni Egilsson - The Tin Drum

Front man of **Hjaltalín** and **Gusgus** Högni is performing his solo project **HE** as part of **The Tin Drum**. Admission: 3,500 ISK.  
**Harpa at 21:00**

**11 January** **TED**  
**Women Of Their Word**



### TEDxRvk Cinema

Stúdentakjallarinn, Sæmundargata 4 (G2) | 20:00

In conjunction with Reykjavík City's celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's suffrage, TEDxReykjavík presents talks by TEDxWomen, in addition to TED and TEDx talks by female speakers. Activist and queer feminist **Uglya Stefania Kristjónudóttir Jónsdóttir** hosts the event—and she is well-suited to do so, having been a spokesperson for transgender people in Iceland, involved in activism both abroad and at home, and on numerous boards and associations for queer and trans students. The talks will be in English, and participation is welcome. Come celebrate women's suffrage with fries, burgers, and food for thought. Oh, and admission is free! **RTC**

**30-7 Jan Feb** **Photography Exhibit**  
**The Fall From Paradise**



### Photography Graduate Exhibition

Læknamínjasafnið, Neströð Nesstofu | Free!

**School of Photography** graduates will come together and exhibit their final projects. Their work tackles subjects as diverse as environmentalism, 101 shopkeepers, cosmopolitanism, and much more, drawing inspiration from a varied selection of ideologies and techniques. There's an opening party on January 30 at 15:00, after which the exhibit is open for nine days, from 15:00-20:00 during the week, and 12:00-18:00 on weekends. **HBG**

Photo by Ellen Inga Hannesdóttir



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# MAP

## Places We Like

### Eating

#### 1 Hverfisgata 12

Hverfisgata 12

In an era when everyone is obsessed with visibility and self-promotion, Hverfisgata 12 attracts its own crowd through word of mouth and nothing more. It offers the kind of pizzas you are unlikely to have tried before, with inventive toppings such as barbecue sauce, shredded pork, pears, roasted seeds and horseradish cream.

#### 2 Bergsson Mathús

Templararsund 3

Offering an eclectic selection of fresh and healthy flavours, this addition to casual downtown dining prides itself on using local and seasonal produce. Using this ingredient base, they produce Middle Eastern, Soul Food, vegetarian and vegan dishes that are perfect when you need more than a snack, but less than a full horse.

#### 3 Nora Magasin

Pósthússtræti 9

With its hardwood tables, turquoise blue walls, huge French windows and funk music playing in the background, Nora Magasin has all the makings of a classy place. The food is entirely home-made and designed by an imaginative team that's always adding fun novelties to the menu.

#### 4 KEX Hostel

Skúlagata 28

KEX Hostel is the darling of Reykjavík hipsters and professionals and their visiting peers from abroad, drawing crowds daily. With its great views and cheap accommodation, excellent dining and choice beer selection—along with an abundance of exciting events—you don't have to wonder why.

#### 5 Uno

Hafnarstræti 1-3

UNO cucina italiana combines traditional Icelandic and Italian dishes. They've got a whole lot of appetizers to choose from and mouth-watering main courses at affordable prices. (And you can observe them craft their fresh pasta daily!)

### Drinking

#### 6 Tíu Dropar

Laugavegur 27

Located in a small, cosy basement on Laugavegur, Tíu Dropar is one of Iceland's oldest cafés. During the day it serves a selection of coffee, tea and food (including grandma-style pancakes), and during the night it turns into a French-styled wine bar.

#### Useful Numbers

Emergency number: **112**

Medical help: **1770**

Dental emergency: **575 0505**

Information: **1818**

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

Tourist Info Centre, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

Iceland Excursions – Grayline Iceland,  
Hafnarstræti 20, tel: 540 1300



#### 7 Prikið

Bankastræti 12

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

#### 8 Sólón Bistro

Bankastræti 7a

Don't find your crowd at Prikið? Maybe you'll fit right in on the other side of the street at Sólón Bistro. A café in the daytime, restaurant in the evening and a club at night. A great location in the middle of Laugavegur and ideal for people watching.

#### 9 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

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

**The Icelandic Travel Market**, Bankastræti 2,  
tel: 522 4979

**Trip**, Laugavegur 54, tel: 433 8747

#### Pharmacies

**Lyf og heilsa**, Egilsgata 3, tel: 563 1020

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

#### Coach Terminal

**BSÍ**, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10,  
tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

#### Domestic Airlines

**Air Iceland**, Reykjavíkflugvöllur,  
tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

**Eagle Air**, Hótel Loftleiðir, tel: 562 4200

#### 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 400 ISK for adults and children. Multiple day passes are available for purchase at select locations and through their eponymous app. Complete route map available at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700. Buses run from 07:00–24:00 on weekdays and 10:00–24:00 on weekends. Main terminals are: Hlemmur and Lækjartorg.

#### Opening Hours

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

**Shops:** Mon–Fri 10:00–18:00, Sat 10:00–16:00, Sun closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

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

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

#### Post Offices

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



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# BEST OF REYKJAVÍK

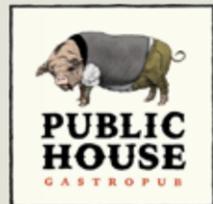


Every year around the beginning of July, we make a BEST OF REYKJAVÍK ISSUE celebrating some of what makes Reykjavík-life worthwhile, posting some good entries into a hopefully never-ending discussion. The following are some nice tips we pulled from BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2015, which you can read in full at [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is).



## THE COOLEST GASTROPUB IN TOWN

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Laugavegur 24 | #publichouse101  
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## Dining and Grubbing

**Best Ice Cream**  
Valdís



Grandagarður 21

The last few years saw a lot of growth in new artisanal ice cream parlours, but for the best all-around ice cream joint, it still has to go to Valdís. You won't go there for the soft serve, but if it's inventively flavoured scoops you're after then Valdís is your place. It's not gelato in the strictest Italian sense, but the rhubarb and peppery liquorice scoops are perennial favourites with locals and tourists alike. One panellist recommended the caramel and salted peanut, noting that the freshly baked waffle cones really take it to the next level.

## Activities and Funtimes

**Best Place To See A Movie**  
Bíó Paradís



Hverfisgata 54

This downtown "cinema paradise" is a surefire winner for the movie category. Showing indie flicks, older movies, cult films and a selection of new art-house productions, the programme offers something for everyone, whilst avoiding the latest Hollywood stuff. Indeed, Iceland's only art-house cinema should satisfy any would-be cinephile, hosting mini-film festivals and special events alongside recent Icelandic films with English subtitles. It's even a nice place to hang out for a drink or two, as the theatre has a pleasant seating area and regularly hosts art exhibitions and even concerts. Also notable is the fact that Bíó Paradís is Iceland's only cinema that doesn't have intermissions.

## Shopping and Commerce

**Best Bookstore**  
Bókabúð Steinars (Sjónarland)



Bergstaðastræti 7

Even though Iceland is a country with a remarkably high number of published authors per capita—some might say a nation of writers—it's kind of surprising how limited the bookstore game is. Bókabúð Steinars on Bergstaðastræti is quite singular though, offering a lovely and well-curated selection of primarily non-fiction books almost exclusively in English. Ranging through topics such as biography, gastronomy, fashion, art, photography and beyond, they are the only first-hand indie bookstore in town. "Not only do they have great books showing styles and photographs, they also have an excellent selection of beautiful tutorial books," said one bibliophile. "It is really great to find something fun or to find something to help you learn a serious skill." Sounds great to us.

## A Guide That Fucks You Up

A list of every Happy Hour in 101 Reykjavík

### American Bar

Friday and Saturday from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.

### Austur

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

### B5

Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 500 ISK, Cocktails 1,100 ISK, Wine 600 ISK.

### Bar 7

Every day from 16:00 to 21:00.  
Beer 350 ISK, Shot 350 ISK.

### Bar 11

Friday to Saturday from 21:00 to 01:00.  
Beer 500 ISK.

### Bar Ananas

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 600 ISK, Cocktails 1,650 ISK.

### Barber Bar

Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 700 ISK, selected cocktails 1,150 ISK.

### Bíó Paradís

Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 500 ISK.

### Bjarni Fel

Monday to Friday from 21:00 to 23:00.  
2-for-1 Beer 1,090 ISK, single with mixer 1,500 ISK.

### Boston

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 650 ISK.

### Bravó

Every day from 17:00 to 21:00.  
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.

### Bunk Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.

### Café Haiti

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

### Den Danske Kro

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. 2-for-1  
Beer 1,000 ISK and Wine 1,200 ISK.

### Dillon

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 550 ISK, Wine 700 ISK, Whiskey 550 ISK.

### Dubliner

Every day from 12:00 to 22:00  
Beer 700 ISK, Wine 800 ISK

### Dúfnhólar 10

Every day from 17:00 to 22:00.  
Beer 490 ISK, Wine for 700 ISK.

### Einar Ben

Every day from 17:30 to 20:00.  
Beer 700 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

### English Pub

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.

### Frederiksen Ale House

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

### Forréttabarninn

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 650 ISK.

### Gaukurinn

Every day from 14:00 to 21:00 Beer 600 ISK, Wine 750 ISK, Shots 750 ISK.

### Glaumbar

Thursday to Saturday from 20:00 to 00:00. Beer 500 ISK, Shot 390 ISK.

### Hótel 1919

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 575 ISK, selected cocktails 1,090 ISK.

### Hótel Holt Gallery Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 750 ISK, selected cocktails 1,200 ISK.



## Download the FREE Grapevine Appy Hour app!

Every happy hour in town in your pocket. Available in the App Store and on the Android Play Store.

### Hótel Natura

Every day from 16:00 to 18:00. 50% off all drinks. Beer 550 ISK, Wine 1,000 ISK, selected cocktails 1,600 ISK.

### Hótel Plaza Bar

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

### Hraðlestin

Monday to Friday from 16:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 590 ISK, Wine 590 ISK.

### Húrra

Every day from 18:00 to 21:00.  
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

### Íslenski Barinn

Everyday from 16:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 700 ISK, Wine 700 ISK, selected cocktails 1,000 ISK.

### Íða Zimsen

Every day from 17:00 to 22:00.  
Beer 450 ISK.

### Ísafold Bistro

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

### Kaffibarinn

Every day from 15:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 650 ISK.

### Kaldi Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 650 ISK.

### Kiki Queer Bar

Thursday from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 500 ISK, Shots 500 ISK.

### Kitchen & Wine Bar

Thursday from 16:00 to 18:30.  
Beer 750 ISK, Wine 900 ISK, selected cocktails 1,500 ISK.

### Klaustur Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

### Konsúll Café

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

### Lebowski Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. 2-for-1  
Beer 1,100 ISK and Wine 1,100 ISK.

### Loft Hostel Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

### MarBar

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

### Matur og Drykkur

Thursday to Sunday, 21:00-22:00.  
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 500 ISK.

### Micro Bar

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 700 ISK.

### Nora Magasin

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 600 ISK.

### Petersen Svítan

Wed-Sat from 17:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

### Prikið

Monday to Friday from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 500 ISK.

### Public House

Every day from 14:00 to 18:00. 50% off beer and wine. Beer 495 ISK, Wine 695 ISK.

### Reykjavík Chips

Every day from 20:00 to 22:00. 2 beers and fries 2,000 ISK.

### Río Sportbar

Every day from 12:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 750 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

### SKY Bar & Lounge

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

### Skuggi Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. 2-for-1  
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

### Skúli Craft Bar

Every day from 14:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 700 ISK, Wine 1,000 ISK.

### Slipbarinn

Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 600 ISK, selected cocktails 1,000 ISK.

### Sólón Bistro

Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

### Sushisamba

Every day from 17:00 to 18:30.  
Beer 645 ISK, Wine 745 ISK.

### Tíu Dropar

Every day from 18:00 to 21:00. 2-for-1  
Beer 1,000 ISK and Wine 1,000 ISK.

### Tacobarinn

Mon-Sat from 16:00 to 18:00.  
Fri-Sat from 22:30 to 23:30.  
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

### Uno

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 545 ISK, Wine 600 ISK.

### Uppsali

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. 2-for-1  
Beer 950 ISK and Wine 1,200 ISK.

### Vínsmakkarinn

Monday to Sunday from 17:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

### Ölstofan

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 490 ISK, Wine 890 ISK, gin & tonic 990 ISK.

### 'Stranger Than Fiction' Creative Reading Night ★

Each month, a selection of writers read excerpts from their fiction, scripts, creative nonfiction, or other writing in Listastofan. This event offers an informal platform for both emerging and well-seasoned writers to share their work.

**February 4 at 18:00**

### Social Theatre Workshop with Martina F. Kartelo

Actress, performer, and teacher Martina F. Kartelo helps you explore your voice, body, and creation through the Brazilian oppressed theatre technique, created by Augusto Boal. Wear comfortable clothes and bring a willingness to explore.

**January 30 at 15:00**

### 'ÞAÐ SEM PETTA ER ER EKKI - WHAT THIS IS, IS NOT' by Íris Indriáadóttir, Ólöf Björk Ingólfssdóttir & Signý Jónsdóttir

In this exhibition, artists give a new perspective on things. There will be an opening party on January 28 with wine, olives and light refreshments at 19:00.

**Opens January 28**

**Runs until February 11**

### Living Art Museum (Nýló)

#### 'Boekie Woekie - 30 years - Books and More'

Boekie Woekie is a bookshop in Amsterdam, founded by Rúna Porkelsdóttir and Jan Voss. This exhibit reconstructs the original Boekie Woekie. A special performance will be at the opening.

**Opens January 9**

**Runs until February 21**

### Loft Hostel

#### Once Upon a Human

This event creates both dialogue and understanding between people. Individuals will volunteer as human 'books', and then participants 'read' the book by having a one-on-one conversation with the volunteer. Admission is free.

**January 28 at 17:00**

### Swap Till You Drop

You know the drill: bring jewellery, clothes, etc. to swap. Exchange them for other things, thus renewing your wardrobe at no cost. What people bring is not counted or checked - just leave your things on the tables and feel free to take anything someone else has left. Admission is free.

**January 27 at 16:30 - 19:30**

### Up-cycling Café

In this workshop, learn how to redesign old clothes into bags and turn old juice boxes into fashionable wallets and buckets. Old scrap paper and brochures will also be transformed into colourful, personalized notebooks. The space is open, so ideas are encouraged. Admission is free.

**January 21 at 16:00**

### Museum of Design and Applied Art

#### 'Iceland is so ceramic' - retrospective of Steinunn Marteinsdóttir's works

Icelandic artist Steinunn has had a long and successful career as a ceramicist in Iceland. She is known for her elegant, diverse works, as well as her influence on the field of Icelandic ceramic art.

**Opens January 9**

**Runs until February 28**



Twentieth-Century Art Tourists  
'The First Exhibitions of Icelandic Art in Copenhagen'

### The National Gallery of Iceland

Fríkirkjuvegur 7 (F3) | January 21-November 9 | Admission: 1,200 ISK

In 1920, over 160 works by five Icelandic artists reached the shores of Denmark. The occasion? The first joint exhibition of Icelandic art, held by the Danish-Icelandic Society, entitled 'Fem islandske malere' ("Five Icelandic Artists"). These works made such waves that seven years later an even bigger survey of Icelandic art took place, this time with almost 350 works by twelve Icelandic artists. This exhibition was incredibly influential in opening Icelandic art up to the international public. Now, the **National Gallery of Iceland** looks back on these events in their showcase, which presents pieces from both landmark exhibitions. **RTC**

### The National Gallery 'QUARTET' by Chantal Joffe, Gauthier Hubert, Jocken Nordström, & Tumi Magnússon

This exhibit brings together the work of four contemporary artists. Their works all centre on the human being as depicted in various stages of art history, with each artist taking aesthetic inspiration from a different period.

**Opens January 15**

**Runs until May 1**

### 'UDSTILLING AF ISLANDSK KUNST - THE FIRST EXHIBITIONS OF ICELANDIC ART IN COPENHAGEN'

In 1927, 'Udstilling af islandsk kunst (An Exhibition of Icelandic Art)' presented Icelandic art to the public in Copenhagen for the first time. This exhibition explores some of the works presented at this landmark event.

**Opens January 21**

**Runs until September 11**

### The National Museum of Iceland 'breeze'

'Andvari, or 'Breeze', features black and white landscape pictures by five contemporary photographers, as well as Sigurður Tómasson and Arngrímur

Ólafsson. Katrín Elvarsdóttir curates the exhibit, which is a part of the Icelandic Photography Festival.

**Opens January 16**

**Runs until February 28**

### 'Independent mothers' by Annie Ling

In this photography exhibit, Canadian Annie Ling showcases the lives of single Icelandic mothers.

**Opens January 16**

**Runs until February 28**

### Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhús

#### 'Back to the Sandbox: Art and Radical Pedagogy'

Some evidence suggests that potential for learning declines while in school. This exhibit features works by artists who are inspired by this paradox and who consider learning and education a key issue in today's world.

**Opens January 15**

**Runs until April 16**

### 'Envoi' by Monika Grzymala

Monika Grzymala is known for her three-dimensional drawings, as well as her unique and innovative approach to contemporary drawing and installation art.

**Opens January 15**

Route 40 takes you to

# Experience Icelandic Art and Design

on your way to the Blue Lagoon

--- [Route 40] ---

### Conversing with Existence

November 7th - January 17th  
Exhibition of works from 1983 - 2008 by artist Eiríkur Smith.

### Double Happiness

Katrín Elvarsdóttir  
15/1 - 27/2 2016

### Deltas

Ingvar Högni Ragnarsson  
15/1 - 27/2 2016

### KEEPERS

Icelandic design highlights, from the Collection

### ICELAND IS SO CERAMIC

- a retrospective of Steinunn Marteinsdóttir's works  
Jan 9, runs until Feb 28 2016

### Hafnarborg / The Hafnarfjörður Centre of Culture and Fine Art

Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður  
Open 12-17 / Thursdays 12-21  
Closed on Tuesdays  
www.hafnarborg.is

### Gerðarsafn - Kópavogur Art Museum

Hamraborg 4, Kópavogur  
Open 11-17 / Closed on Mondays  
www.gerdarsafn.is

### Hönnunarsafn Íslands / Museum of Design and Applied Art

Garðatorg 1, Garðabær  
Open 12-17 / Closed on Mondays  
www.honnunarsafn.is

# National Museum of Iceland & The Culture House



sjónarhorn  
Points of view



National Museum of Iceland  
The country's largest museum of cultural history from settlement to present day.

Suðurgata 41  
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www.thjodminjasafn.is  
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The Culture House  
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101 Reykjavík  
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The exhibitions, shops and cafés are open daily 10-17

Closed on Mondays 16/9-30/4

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

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

CHECK OUT THE NEW

# REYKJAVÍK CITY MUSEUM

COMPRISING 5 TOP MUSEUMS:



Árbær Open Air Museum



The Settlement Exhibition



Reykjavik Maritime Museum



Viðey Island



Reykjavik Museum of Photography



Reykjavik City Museum

More information in the Museums & Galleries section.

 Reykjavik City Museum



**Get Excited, Writers, Readers, Drinkers & Dilettantes**  
There's a new reading series in town...

### Listastofan

Hringbraut 119 | February 4 | Admission: 1,590 ISK, 900 for students

Listastofan, a newly opened arts collective and gallery in Vesturbær (see page 13), already has a lot going on, with weekly drawing sessions (featuring live models!), knitting nights where folks can practice their Icelandic and a variety of special exhibitions and openings. And, they've already added a new event to their monthly calendar, one that involves reading, writing and drinking beer!

Yes, readers, writers and drinkers can look forward to Listastofan's new monthly reading series, which will commence on Monday February 4. Entitled "Stranger Than Fiction," each iteration of the event will see a different handful of select writers reading to a lively audience—with beer!

Fun fact: the event is hosted by frequent Grapevine contributor Grayson Del Faro (check out his Saga Recap on page 30!). And guess what—he wants you! Here's his pitch, which we cunningly culled from an email:

"We're looking for submissions of writing from both new and established writers, including fiction, scripts, essays, poems or any genre of writing that is weird, funny, or otherwise wonderful. Send your work to [info@listastofan](mailto:info@listastofan) to be considered for the first event—or any of the following. We know Reykjavík is jam-packed with both weirdos and literary geniuses, so don't be shy. Submit or just come listen. Bring your own bottle; we'll bring the books. But be warned: this is not your middle school English teacher's historical fiction reading. You'll have fun."

You should listen to Grayson. He knows about fun.

*Photo by Art Bicnick*

#### Runs until April 10

##### 'Rate of Return %' by Sæmundur Þór Helgason

In this exhibit, Sæmundur Þór explores the functions and pathways of art in today's technologically advanced and economically-driven world. Gallery D at Hafnarhús primarily shows work by artists who have not yet held a solo show in one of Iceland's major galleries.

Opens January 15  
Runs until February 21

##### Reykjavik City Library 'Drawings and Nice Things – A Comics Exhibition' by Lilja Hólmfríðar Pétursdóttir & Sigmundur B. Þorgeirsson

The exhibition features a variety of drawings and sketches by cartoonists Lilja

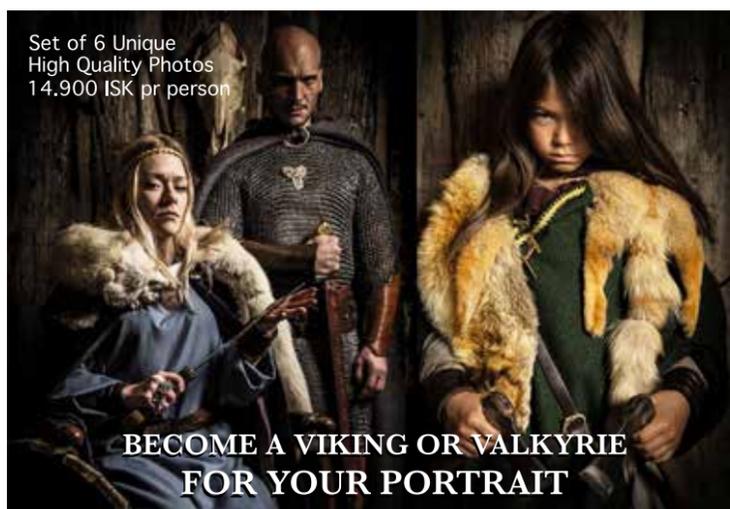
and Simmi, some of which are taken from Simmi's graduation project, the graphic novel 'Super Viking Boy: When Alien Robots Attack!'

Opens January 8  
Runs until March 26  
Reykjavik Maritime Museum  
'Wigry - a wrecked polish cargo ship'

On January 15, 1942, the Polish cargo ship Wigry was wrecked while sailing through heavy weather on the southwest coast of Iceland. Only two of the 27-man crew survived. This exhibition is dedicated to that ship and its perilous voyage. On January 16, there will be a talk discussing this harrowing event.

Opens January 15  
Runs until February 5

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### The Reykjavik Museum of Photography

#### 'MOOD' by Friðgeir Helgason

This exhibit features photographs from both Friðgeir's homeland, Iceland, and the United States, in which he has lived for a large portion of his adult life. The exhibit brings attention to the identity-shaping powers of place.

Opens January 16  
Runs until May 15

### Ongoing

#### Arion Banki

##### Georg Guðni Exhibition ★

Selected works (1985-2009) of Georg Guðni will be shown, some of which have never been shown in Iceland before.

Runs until December 11

#### Anarkía

##### Anarkia Group Exhibition

An exhibition of works by Anarkia Group, the group that stands behind the Anarkia gallery.

Runs until January 10

#### ART67

##### January Guest Artist: Ásgerður Höskuldsdóttir.

Ásgerður Höskuldsdóttir is an interior architect who has studied in art schools in Denmark, Sweden, and Iceland. She has participated in exhibitions for over twenty years.

Runs until January 31

#### Árbær Culture house

'Cocktail' by Unnur Þóra Skúldóttir  
Unnur Þóra spent her childhood drawing, and recently starting painting with oils and creating mosaics, which are exhibited at Árbær Culture House.

Runs until January 29

#### Árbær Open Air Museum

'Between the lines – How stay-at-home women earned a living 1900-1970'

This exhibition looks at how women were able to generate revenue with odd jobs in the twentieth century when many of them stayed at home.

Runs until January 31

#### Better Weather Window Gallery

'Bein í Skriðu' by Steingrímur Eyfjörð  
Steingrímur, Iceland's artist for the 2007 Venice Biennale, has set up a site-specific exhibition of wood cut-outs, fabrics and paints called 'Bones In A Landslide'.

Runs until January 30

#### Gallerí Gróttá

##### 'Portrett og landslag' by Kristján Jónsson

In this exhibition, Kristján enters the rich tradition of landscape painting. The works show the artist's profound love for his country, in which he has spent many years as a tour guide for foreign tourists.

Runs until January 8

#### Gallerí Skilti

##### 'Flicker' by Anna Hallin & Olga Bergmann

This photography exhibit is different from most artist collaborations, in that it doesn't concern itself with mankind's relationship with nature and other systems, nor is it site-specific. 'Flicker' is a personal piece, with strong elements of projection and silhouettes, and can be said to be a tableau of a certain period in the two artists' lives.

Runs until June 15

#### Gallerí 78

##### Þorbjörg Höskuldsdóttir Exhibition

Þorbjörg is lauded as one of the more prominent contemporary Icelandic artists, whose paintings show the range and beauty of Icelandic landscapes. Her art has a political nature, stimulating the debate surrounding the preservation of Icelandic nature.

Runs until January 9

#### Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

##### 'A Visit to the Monsters'

A child-friendly exhibit that shows the daily lives of Little Monster and Big Monster. See how they live, where they sleep, and what they do to pass the time.

Runs until April 24

#### 'Úr Ýmsum Áttum' by Erna Johannesdóttir

'Úr ýmsum áttum' ("from various directions") is an exhibit of oil paintings. This is Erna's first solo exhibit.

Runs until January 10

#### 'The wishes of Icelandic children' by Ásta Kristjánsdóttir

A series of photographs illustrate the desires of children who suffered through abuse in their childhood. Ásta made the photographs based on texts provided by the UN.

**Runs until January 10**

**Hafnarborg**  
**'Conversing with Existence' by Eiríkur Smith**

The last of a five-part series started in 2010, this exhibition features watercolour and oil paintings completed by Eiríkur Smith from 1983 to 2008. The human figure often appears in the foreground, while surrounding landscapes and objects provide powerful frameworks. Admission is free

**Runs until January 17**

**Húrra**  
Cult movie night. 20 pm. Free entry.  
**February 2 at 20:00**

**Hverfisgallerí**  
**'Blind Spot' by Gregg Louis**

This exhibit consists of a series of distorted self-portraits of the artist. These self-portraits are made quickly—sometimes without looking—in vivid colours, exploring memory's role in perception and identification.

**Runs until January 9**

**The Icelandic Phallogical Museum**

The museum contains a collection of more than 215 penises and penile parts belonging to almost all the land and sea mammals that can be found in Iceland. There's also a penis sculpture honouring the Icelandic men's handball team.

**On permanent view**

**i8 Gallery**

**Arna Óttarsdóttir Exhibit**

Arna's textile exhibit is centred around one idea that she rejected when it was in its infancy called "Stelputeppi" ("Women's Blanket"). All the works reflect on the experimental process in which she tries to take her prime materials, Icelandic wool and Swedish cotton, in bold new directions.

**Runs until January 9**

**Mengi**

**Crisis Meeting** ★

Performing are Árni Vilhjálmsson, Friðgeir Einarsson, Ragnar Ísleifur Bragason.

**January 29 & 30 at 21:00**

**Museum of Design and Applied Art**

**'Keepers'**

This exhibit focuses on the collections in the Museum of Design and Applied Art, displaying a few key pieces, and explores how and why the museum curates the works that it does. The title refers both to the objects themselves, the ones worth keeping, as well as the people who preserved them, kept them, and eventually gave them to the museum for safekeeping.

**Runs until June 10**

**The National Gallery**

**'Art in a Changing World' by Nína Sæmundsson** ★

Though born into 19th-century farming society, Nína Sæmundsson was the first Icelandic woman to work as a professional sculptor. Through hardships and international travels, Nína developed a classical style that persisted late into her career. In her works, she combines the magnificent and the intimate, mainly through the use of both the upright human and her specialised style of bust.

**Runs until January 17**

**Vasulka Chamber** ★

Steina and Woody Vasulka are some of the pioneers of multimedia and video art, and have a show at the National Gallery.

They began experimenting with electronic sound, stroboscopic light, and video in the late '60s, and haven't stopped since. The chamber's purpose is not only to present art from the genre, but to encourage preserving and mediating such works.

**On permanent view**

**The National Museum of Iceland**  
**'Bundled Up In Blue'** ★

This exhibition is centred around new archeological findings from bones believed to belong to a woman from the settlement era, discovered in 1938 in East Iceland. New research provides answers as to the age of the woman in question, where she came from, together with indications of what she may have looked like and how she would have dressed.

**Runs until August 31**

**'The Making Of A Nation'**

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

**On permanent view**

**'What Is So Interesting About It?'** ★

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote in Iceland, this exhibit presents examples of the work and struggles women have faced since gaining that suffrage. This show celebrates women who have achieved in fields that were previously dominated by men, such as politics, business, arts, and sports.

**Runs until August 31**

**Reykjavík Art Museum - Ásmundarsafn**

**'Yearning for Space'**

This exhibit presents dreams of the future from the eyes of the 50s and 60s, during the age of space exploration. It addresses the dialogue between visions of the future, spatial and formal perception, and the genre blend between science fiction and modernist art.

**Runs until February 7**

**Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhús**

**'The Making of Erró'**

This exhibition explores Erró's early days as an artist, showing his experiments with self-expression, and his move from impressionist art to collages.

**Runs until October 9**

**Reykjavík City Library**

**'Paris, Rome & Bird Fashions' by Sigrún Eldjárn**

Sigrún exhibits new works, inspired by her stay in Rome and Paris. Influenced by the fashion, culture, and birds, this exhibition shows a fraction of what Sigrún made during her stay.

**Runs until January 10**

**Reykjavík City Library: Spöngin**

**'RUMSK Textile and glass works' by Ólöf Einarisdóttir & Sigrún Einarisdóttir**

This exhibit features textile and glass works inspired by Icelandic landscapes and the pressures of internal and external forces.

**Runs until January 9**

**Reykjavík City Museum**  
**Reykjavík 871 +/- 2**

Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre, open daily 09:00-20:00.

**On permanent view**

**'Settlement Sagas - Accounts from manuscripts'**

This special exhibition is held in

collaboration with the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies. At the centre of this special exhibition are rarely seen manuscripts that tell the history of the settlement of Reykjavík.

**On permanent view**

**Reykjavík Downtown Hostel**  
**Candle Workshop**

Learn how to reuse wax from candles and create new ones as well. All materials will be provided, though participants are invited to bring their own candles. Admission is free.

**January 11, 16:00**

**Scrub-making workshop**

Come and make scrubs out of coffee grounds and various scents. The hostel will provide everything, including the recipe. All you have to do is create. Admission is free.

**February 1 at 16:00**

**Reykjavík Maritime Museum**  
**The Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn**

This vessel sailed through all three Cod Wars and has also served as a rescue ship to more than 200 ships.

**On permanent view**

**'From Poverty to Abundance'**

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

**On permanent view**

**The History of Sailing**

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

**On permanent view**

**'If I had been...' by Nina Zurier**

Nina Zurier has collected photographs from the Reykjavík Museum of Photography archives to reconstruct old memories, and construct new ones. There's a special opening party on October 16 at 17:00.

**Runs until January 17**

**'Seawomen - the fishing women of Iceland, past and present'** ★

This exhibition, in celebration of the centennial anniversary of women's suffrage in Iceland, explores Icelandic women at sea. It is based on research conducted by the anthropologist Dr. Margaret E. Willson, who discovered that Icelandic women have

been working at sea since the mid-900s.

The exhibit presents not only historical material but also interviews with Icelandic women who work in the fishing industry today.

**On permanent view**

**The Reykjavík Museum of Photography**  
**Gunnar Rúnar Ólafsson - a retrospective**

The Reykjavík Museum of Photography honours the late photographer Gunnar Rúnar Ólafsson. This collection contains photos illustrating how Reykjavík developed from a small village to a city in just few decades. Gunnar Rúnar took many photos of his wife, Amy Bjarnadóttir, and their children who would often accompany him on his journeys.

**Runs until January 10**

**'Where the Land Rises' by Peter Holliday**

Scottish photographer Peter Holliday turns his lens toward Heimaey and its occupants, some of whom experienced the volcanic eruption of 1973. He explores ways in which both people and land are exposed to continuous processes of destruction and creation.

**Runs until January 26**

**Sólón Bistro**

**Úlfar Örn exhibit**

In this exhibit, Úlfar Örn looks at the mind and soul of the Icelandic horse. He explores what the creatures are thinking, how they're doing, and what they might see.

**Runs until January 31**

**Spark Design Space**  
**Spark Design Space's Annual SALON** ★

Spark's Annual SALON shows work by designers and artist that have exhibited in the space during the past five years. The exhibit contains local product design, graphic design, textile design, and architecture, as well as a book selection.

**Runs until February 27**

**Tveir Hrafnar**

**'New Year'** ★

This exhibit shows selected works from some of the gallery's most beloved artists, including Guðbjörg Lind Jónsdóttir, Hallgrímur Helgason, Húbert Núi Jóhannesson, Jón Óskar, Óli G. Jóhannesson, Steinnun Þórarinsdóttir, Georg Óskar, Hadda Fjólá Reykdal, Hulda Hákon, Nína Tryggvadóttir, and Kristján Davíðsson.

**Runs until January 31**

**Volcano House**

**'The Volcano House Geology Exhibition'**

The exhibition gives a brief overview of Iceland's geological history and volcanic systems with superb photographs of volcanic eruptions and other magnificent aspects of Icelandic nature. Oh, and you're allowed to touch the exhibits.

**On permanent view**

**Wind And Weather Gallery**

**'Svona sirka nákvæmlega svona' by Halldór Ragnarsson**

Halldór's exhibition 'Svona sirka nákvæmlega svona', or 'Kind of exactly like this', is a mixed-media installation with text on paper and wood.

**Runs until February 27**

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“There’s just nothing I can compare it to. It’s 22 times bigger than Iceland—you can sail somewhere, walk to shore, and know that probably nobody has walked in your footsteps before.”

# Frontier Photography

Ásgeir Pétursson’s stunning photographs of southern Greenland



By John Rogers – Photos by Ásgeir Pétursson

Ásgeir Pétursson is a 23-year-old photographer who’s just opened an exhibition at Reykjavík’s Greenland Centre, at the top of Laugavegur. He first went to Greenland in January 2014, supposedly to visit with his relocated parents for two weeks, but wound up staying for nine months.

“I just loved it,” says the soft-spoken young photographer, standing in the gallery space. “It’s hard to describe why. There’s just nothing I can compare it to. It’s 22 times bigger than Iceland—you can sail somewhere, walk to shore, and know that probably nobody has walked in your footsteps before. It feels like travelling for 24 hours to

some completely different place in the world—like the middle of Africa or something—but it’s just two and half hours away. Greenland and Australia are the oldest countries in the world, and Iceland is the youngest, so it’s a completely different landscape.”

His exhibition shows a keen eye for the vast emptiness of Greenland. Many of the shots were taken whilst Ásgeir travelled around the country’s coastline by boat. One particularly eye-catching shot shows an iceberg in the sea, with various organic ice shapes rippling down into the ocean.

“I was sailing from a reindeer farm I was working on,” recalls Ásgeir. “We

saw this iceberg, and I asked if we could go for a look. We went over there and stopped there for ten minutes. I got this shot, and we sawed off a piece of the iceberg to put in our whisky. This is probably the only photograph of that iceberg.”

## The middle of nowhere

He’d been doing some heavy work on the farm, owned by another Icelander. “The farm was three hours from Qarqortoq, in the middle of nowhere,” recalls Ásgeir. “I had a job erecting a reindeer fence up over a mountain, with the farmer’s son. We would walk up there with the poles tied to our back. The weather was perfect—we were just in shorts—but it was quite brutal work.”

Throughout his travels, Ásgeir was always on the lookout for a good picture. “I always had my camera with me,” he says. “When I was sailing or working, my boss always gave me good opportunities to shoot. These photographs are all of Nuuk and South Greenland, so I still have many areas of the country left to photograph—the brutality of north Greenland, especially.”

## Fast glaciers

One magnificently textured shot shows a glacier with twin icefalls, where the vast Greenlandic ice cap tumbles down to ground level close to the coastline. “I went to this glacier with two Greenlanders, who said that six years before, the glacier had come all the way down

into the sea,” says Ásgeir. “They were in shock about how rapidly it had retreated. In a couple more years, there’ll be a big area between the glacier and the sea. You can really see what’s happening with the climate there.”

Having caught the bug for Greenland, Ásgeir plans to go back and see the east coast this summer, both for the fun of exploration, and to further develop his portfolio of images. “I’m already working on a photography book,” he says. “It’s in the works. I know already I’ll go back many times. They say that nobody goes to Greenland just once.”

*The show is at Greenland Centre, Laugavegur 96, open 10:00-19:00 daily until Feb 1. More info: [www.facebook.com/greenlandcentreykjavik](http://www.facebook.com/greenlandcentreykjavik)*

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## The Blackest Metal In The Dark Heart Of Icelandic Winter February's Oration Festival revels in the darkness...

Words by: Hannah Jane Cohen

Photo by: Haukur Hannes

Presented by Studio Emissary and the Oration record label, February's Oration Festival will bring some much-needed black metal to the Icelandic winter. And with bands like Svartidauði, Wormlust, Slidhr and Abominor on the bill, the two-night engagement (concurrent to Sónar Reykjavík) might be all the rock you need to keep that eighteen-hour darkness perpetual.

To learn more, we sat down with Stephen Lockhart, the man behind the festival (and record label it draws its name from, and Studio Emissary, and the band Rebirth of Nefast).

### Oration is presented by Studio Emissary. How'd you start the studio?

I have this one-man band called Rebirth of Nefast and there weren't that many people to work with, so I just decided I would record everything on my own. Then over the years I started recording friends' bands and eventually doing other people's stuff to the point where I was like—hold on, this is a lot more fun than my regular job! It started with Svartidauði asking me if I would record drums for them, and then I just ended up recording more and more stuff and eventually the Svartidauði album, and that's it. This has now been my job for the last few years. Basically, I am a black metal producer. I've recorded Slidhr, Sinmara, Zhrine, Abominor, Svartidauði, a ton of stuff. I also did all the Angst stuff and recently the Church-house Creepers.

### Then you started a record label...

Well both myself and my friend Joe, a couple of years ago, we had this idea of doing this record label thing, but it was around the time of the crash, so getting stuff into the country—getting vinyl presses made—just wasn't an option, so the idea just kinda evaporated.

Now we're doing it properly, though. Basically I had these bands coming through the studio, new bands, and they don't really know how good they are yet! You can normally tell pretty quickly, like this band has got it, the "X factor"—if you wanna call it that—even at pretty early stages of recording.

So rather than me giving names and recommending other labels, it would make so much more sense for people to come to me, and I'll just release directly. Then they aren't going to an unknown source. You know, if they are happy with my work in the studio, then they know they'll get the same results from the record label.

And then the other half is, we just want to do our own thing, rather than getting record labels to, I don't know, make t-shirts? That's basically giving

them a license to print money. We can do that ourselves!

### And now the Oration festival...

Well, I was trying to think of ways to promote the studio and I thought, well, the bands that are coming out of the studio—that's a large percentage of Icelandic black metal. Then I thought, ok, we could have a gig, but you know, I haven't worked with Misþyrming or Wormlust, so basically if I wanted them to play then it couldn't just be a Studio Emissary thing. So I broadened it a little bit and then it just became this Oration thing.

### Ok—sorry to ask—but how did you persuade Wormlust to finally play live?

I am trying to think of a humorous answer, but really it wasn't that difficult. I decided early that I wanted this festival to have a lot of bands that have never played in Iceland before. Like Slidhr has never played here—I'm a part of Slidhr. We just played our second gig ever, which was in Ireland. We'll play our first Icelandic show at Oration. The Wormlust thing—I just asked him and he said yes. That's pretty much it. I told him the lineup and what I was thinking and he just said yes outright.

Now, Rebirth of Nefast — this is actually for me the most stressful element of the whole thing. It'll be the first time I play it live.

### The festival is the same weekend as Sónar. Is it a competitor?

[laughs] No, I don't think so. Sónar might actually be an incentive, because Oration is not a huge festival. It's just two evenings and, at least by international standards, tickets are cheap, so some can come for Sónar and pop in for Oration as well. I must admit I didn't think of it, though. I don't even think Sónar had been announced for those dates when we chose them.

The original idea for having the festival at this time was that there really isn't much happening in February. In the summer there are festivals everywhere, and in November there's Airwaves, but then things are pretty quiet. I know myself from being an útlendingur ["foreigner"] that winter is one of the things that brings people here, more so than summer. If tourists are coming here, they are coming to see landscapes that look like 'Game of Thrones', you know.

So having a black metal festival in the heart of the Icelandic winter? You might get some northern lights, some snow, eighteen hours of darkness... It's a perfect fit.

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REMEMBER ALL THAT FOOD YOU ATE IN 2015?

## fish

Skólavörðustíg 23  
sími: 5711289steamed fish  
fish stew  
fish soupTHE YEAR IN FOOD:  
A GRUMPY GLUTTON'S GUIDE

BY RAGNAR EGILSSON, THE FOOD EDITOR MAN

To mark the New Year, I am giving you what I give my friends every year: opinions. Opinions are like orange peels at Christmas, why toss 'em away when you can boil 'em in syrup, dip 'em in chocolate and force 'em on your friends? What are we waiting for? Let's dissect the corpse that was the food year of 2015 (dibs on the thigh meat).

## VEGANS EAT EVERYTHING

Worldwide, 2015 was The Year Of The Vegan. Vegans both grew in numbers and were recognized as a bankable demographic by the food industry.

The portents are plentiful. Isinglass may sound like a hobbit marital aid but rest assured it's a simple fish swim-bladder used to filter beer and in 2015, Guinness replaced it with a vegan-friendly substitute.

In major US cities, restaurants began to label their culinary approach as "vegetable-forward," which is about the sleaziest adspeak this side of Saul Goodman. (Seriously, if I see this phrase one more time I will stab a broccoli to death with a sharpened asparagus.)

Last but not least, men's magazine GQ picked the veggie burger at New York Superiority Burger as the best all-around burger of the year. Better than meat burgers. Men's magazine. Veggie. No meat. 4 real.

Iceland was no exception. Vegetarians and vegans saw an increase in vegetarian offerings at mainstream restaurants and a growing selection of veggie-wares in stores—whether it be the holy grail of quorn or dairy-free cheese (we are still holding out for cruelty-free food programming, but I can't seem to get Guy Fieri to follow me into a dark alley). Even meat-and-potatoes sandwich company Jumbó introduced a vegan variety (their fare was mostly cardboard to begin with anyway).

Yet, somehow, the only restaurant in all of Reykjavík catering exclusively to vegetarians and vegans is a single, tiny coffee house called Gardurinn. My theory is that this is the same effect that has seen a reduction in bars catering exclusive to LGBT people in the last decade. As the mainstream has become more welcoming, the need for places that cater exclusively to the niche has dwindled. So in a weird way, fewer veggie-only restaurants may be a cause for celebration among vegans and vegetarians.

## ICELANDIC FOOD ABROAD

Iceland-ish restaurant Skál on Canal St. in New York closed its doors this year, but when life closes a door it opens a train cart because Gunnar Gíslason of Dill and Noma co-founder Claus Meyer



are set to open a new Nordic restaurant in Grand Central Terminal in early 2016.

For some insane reason, an Icelandic family opened a fish store thirty minutes away from Grand Central, in Closter, New Jersey. It's called The Fish Dock.

In Berlin, Victoria Elíasdóttir, sister of artist Ólafur Elíasson, opened the seafood restaurant Dóttir in the Mitte neighborhood of Berlin, to much acclaim.



In Copenhagen, Unnur Pétursdóttir won an international Deaf Chef contest which no one had known existed until an Icelander won. You hear that Christine Ha and Michael Caines!? Unnur is the new sheriff in town, you bastards.

Also in Copenhagen, Icelandic chefs from Gallery at Hótel Holt, led by Friðgeir Ingi Eiríksson, fought bravely

in the Nordlige Norden gourmet hot dog contest last May. This fun, annual event was held in the courtyard of a repurposed church in the heart of Copenhagen, and saw numerous Nordic small producers promoting stuff like kelp jams and rhubarb pralines. Iceland was represented via birch liquor from our very own Foss Distillery, licorice salt from Saltverk, and white chocolate skyr morsels from Rjómbúið Erpsstöðum. The contest saw huge lines, and featured a lot of inventive hot dogs. The Reykjavík Grapevine's intrepid food editor happened to serve as a judge in the contest (Grapevine knows its hot dogs) and tried his best to be impartial and eat the other teams' votes when no one was looking. Alas, like the redheaded stepchild of Scandinavia that we are, the Icelandic hot dog team turned up late and ended up in last place (despite serving up a tasty and innovative dog). The Danes took the prize because they have always been better at cheating than Icelanders.

## FOODTRUCKAGEDDON

In Reykjavík, food trucks continued to multiply. Noteworthy additions in 2015 were the two fish & chips carts, where before there had been none. One was pretty traditional, but the other went a little leftfield, offering south-of-the-border condiments. The traditional one is usually parked by the Víkin maritime museum. There were also reports of a third fish & chips truck spawning in the town of Stykkishólmur, although I cannot confirm that at present.

Speaking of fish, we also got the

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# FOOD

THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY



surprisingly decent Shirokuma Sushi truck, which you'll usually find at Mæðragarðurinn in downtown Reykjavík.

## SPREADING OUT OF 101

The Reykjavík food scene started, finally, to diffuse into other corners of Reykjavík after decades of being crammed in the 101 postal code.

### 104

Hole-in-a-wall restaurant "Pad Thai Noodles Iceland" in Álfheimar have been diligently serving up their steaming eggy noodles since 2014 but 2015 was the year the Grapevine called them out as one of Reykjavík's best-kept secrets.

### 105

Reykjavík got its first beer garden with Björgarðurinn at the gargantuan new Foss Hotel (which also houses the restaurant Haust). The beergarden-ish restaurant Pylsa/Pulsa sprang up at at Hlemmur Square around the same time for some strange reason. Plans were also announced for an indoor gourmet food market styled after Copenhagen's Torvehallerne at the soon-to-be discontinued Hlemmur bus station. And the coffee-perverts of Reykjavík Roasters branched out into a larger spot in Brautarholt, serving up an expanded selection of food offerings.

### Grandi

While technically part of the 101 Reykjavík area, the Grandi section on the other side of the marina feels more like it belongs to Reykjavík's West Side (107). The area has been ballooning as a restaurant hub for the past three years, and 2015 was no exception. Food-history-savvy fine dining spot Matur & Drykkur opened in Sögusafnið. Brunch favorites Bergsson opened up an offshoot called Bergsson RE in the area. Fish joint Verubúð 11 opened up in one of the last remaining slots in the row of old green fishing huts by the marina. And Magnolia-esque cupcake shop and bakery 17 Sortir opened shortly after.

### 108

Reykjavík got two ambitious taquerias in 2015 (a 200% increase!). It started with Tacobarinn in a lovely house at Hverfisgata, and ended with Taquería No mames at Ármúli 21. The Ármúli location is not far from Reykjavík's only place to get real pho—at the aptly named Pho Vietnamese Restaurant on Suðurlandsbraut.

### GASTROPUBS

Reykjavík got its first self-styled gastropub with Public House only two decades after the trend first took off in America. However, Frederiksen Ale House and Bunk Bar had basically been mining the same vein. Another "official" gastropub is set to open where bizzarro faux-Mexican restaurant Tabasco's has lain for about a decade, cunningly ambushing its tourist prey. It will have a pig in the logo. Like Pub-

lic House. It will be designed by Leifur Welding. Like every restaurant in Iceland. That is the way of things. The way of the Welding.

## MANDI VS. ALI BABA

Who could forget The Great Kebab War of 2015? The owners of Iceland's two most popular shawarma places literally traded blows this summer. The owners of shawarma joint Ali Baba pressed charges against the owners of next-door kebab-slingers Mandí. The owners had been in business together before going into direct competition, with nothing but a wall separating them.

## 7 RESTAURANTS WE REALLY LIKED IN 2015

### Hverfisgata 12

A nameless pizza place that's not afraid to play with pork, pickles, and pears.

### Fish Company

Despite the name, their tasting menus are far removed from the assembly-line New Nordic approach, featuring tasting menus full of far-flung ingredients.

### Snaps

Our dependable French neighborhood bistro where the downtown cool cats gather to lick their wounds.

### Dill

New Nordic powerhouse. Possibly the best restaurant in Iceland. 'Nuff said.

### Matur og Drykkur

A playful approach to Icelandic ingredients and culinary history. What I mean is: they serve cod heads. A big honking cod head staring right at you with its cold, dead eyes. Delicious.

### Kopar

A dependable place to start the night with a little horse meat and seafood.

### Restó

Restó didn't close this year, which is a bit of a shame as I really want to use my pun ("Restó in peace"). However, it would be far more of a shame were Restó to close down, all puns be damned, as it is one of the best and most affordable places in Reykjavík to grab Mediterranean-inspired seafood.

## FAD INGREDIENTS

Craft beer enjoyed a great year in Iceland, and may have reached a pinnacle with the opening of an outpost of ale god dispensary Mikkeller & Friends on Hverfisgata, with the sours and lambic beers getting quite popular among the locals. The artisan coffee movement grew as well, with Reykjavík Roasters opening up a new, and larger, branch. However, looking back at 2015 I am struck by how fad-less it seemed. Sure, there was a continuation of trends from 2014, like pomegranates in salads, avocados in smoothies, roasted beets, home cooks using sous-vide, etc. But the macro trend among the hardcore food nerds was that there didn't seem

sushi  
samba

Amazing  
7 course menu

## A unique Icelandic Feast



Starts with a shot of the Icelandic national spirit "Brennivín"

### Puffin

Smoked puffin with blueberries, croutons, goat cheese, beetroot

### Minke whale

Date purée, wakame and teriaky

### Arctic charr

"Torched" arctic charr with parsnip purée, fennel, dill mayo

### Lobster

Lobster cigar with chorizo, dates, chili jam

### Reindeer

Reindeer slider with blue cheese, portobello, steamed bun

### Free range icelandic lamb

Lamb with coriander, pickled red cabbage, fennel, butternut squash purée, chimichurri

### And to end on a high note ...

### Icelandic Skyr

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to be a trend.

A few years ago, I started a small food community in Iceland for ambitious home cooks and expats called SUMAR. The community serves mostly as a resource for people trying to track down hard-to-find ingredients on this strange, isolated island by working together. In 2013 and 2014, picking out common threads in the group discussions was fairly easy, but in 2015, the members' interests were all over the place. People would inquire about furikake, okra, clotted cream, affordable paco jets, natto, squid ink and tigernut flour. They would share recipes for pine soups, seaweed mussels, polish stews, and carne seca. Of course, the people who haunt that forum are outliers, but is it nonetheless more than possible that your average Icelander became more food-adventurous in 2015?

### REALLY DUMB FAST FOOD

Surprisingly, the Kebab War wasn't the weirdest thing that happened in the Icelandic fast food scene last year. In 2015, we got a fast food place serving nothing but french fries, courtesy of pop singer Friðrik Dór and modern composer Ólafur Arnalds. Then we got yet another burger place in 101 Reykjavík with Block Burger on Skólavörðustígur. In an attempt to properly brand the place, the people behind Block Burger basically came up with a carbon copy of the Shake Shack logo, in what was surely the most audacious attempt at logo design since Cardiff restaurant Dirty Bird made the news. Too bad they failed to properly copy Shake Shack's burgers, though. Speaking of foolhardy

marketing, Ugly Pizza opened for business at the tail end of 2015, not to be confused with pizza place The Ugly Pie Co. Meanwhile, sandwich and smoothie place Lemon continues to spread around Iceland, as if Joe and the Juice wasn't already a thing. Because Icelanders are nothing if not original.

Oh, and lest we forget, Icelanders lost their tiny frozen minds over Dunkin' Donuts, queuing around the block for a chance to patronize a franchise that miserably fails to contend in the one arena Dunkin' Donuts always excelled in globally—keeping the

prices down.

And the cherry on top of the Bavarian cream donut would have to be the announcement that the USA's eighth-biggest fast food chain, Denny's, is set to open an Icelandic location 2016, no doubt lured by the prospect of not having to turn away too many black customers.

### FOOD BOOKS FOR ALL SEASONS

Of the Iceland-connected food books released in 2015, 'Vín: Umhverfis jörðina á 110 flöskum' made for a particularly pretty entry.




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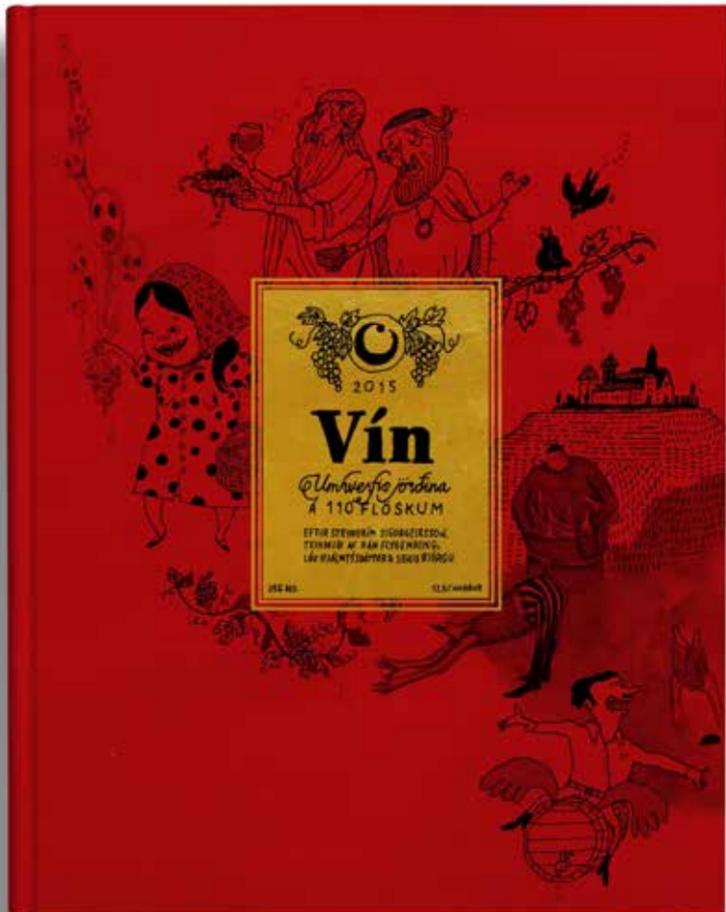

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The big fuck-you doorstopper of a book for the serious foodie would have to be Magnus Nilsson's 'The Nordic Cookbook', which featured a few Icelandic restaurateurs.

In more global terms, the hip young food lover's must-owns for 2015 were J. Kenji Lopez-Alt's 'The Food Lab: Better Cooking Through Science' and Danny Bowien's 'The Mission Chinese Food Cookbook'.

### FOOD TRENDS IN COUNTRIES THAT AREN'T ICELAND

Cold brew coffee and ramen went more mainstream (mainstreamer?). Everyone American ate a lot of avocado on toast and pretended it was cooking. Foodies remained in thrall to the same pre-industrial preservation methods they have been for stuck on for the past five years or so, and thus everything was mostly slow-cooked, smoked, salted, pickled, or fermented—just as long as it wasn't refrigerated or frozen. For some reason, we continue to embrace smartphones and post-17th-century medicine, the cowards that we are.

In countries that are not Iceland there was that self-fulfilling prophecy of making Hawaiian food the new Japanese food. Some seemed to think it was good enough for a poke. This was

of no interest to anyone except the food writers who talked it up and down.

UberEats launched and may shut down the takeaway market faster than Skepta at the Marquee.

The six part Netflix series 'Chef's Table' had everyone talking, and for good reason. It's the best bloody TV series in ages.

### 2016 IN FOOD

The year ahead? How would I know? Who am I, Foodstradamus?

Well, I guess I might as well have a go. Ahem.

The year 2016 will see more tourists taking OMG wedding photos in front of melting glaciers and restaurants will benefit from this and sell these starry-eyed tourists many charred arctic charrs on chard. Those restaurants will then continue their slide into the matrix of New Nordic Cuisine and the name will change to: Lemme-Tell-You-Young-Bloods-About-Real-Nordic-Cuisine.

Considering the popularity of beef jerky at the moment I wouldn't be surprised if harðfiskur (wind-dried cod) caught on abroad. Someone with a wooden mallet and a fancy beard should get started on artisanal harðfiskur and export it. You could have a good run until we run out of cod and

wolffish. Speaking of which...

Chefs worldwide will pitch low-grade bycatch fish, insects and bitter greens, and attempt to dress it up like they're making this change by choice and not because we've sucked our overworked dairy cow of a planet dry. They'll give them a snazzy name to reflect our relentless consumption (Tribble Nibbles?).

In 2016, amateur chefs and regular Jóns will start worshipping at the altar of some magical vegetables or super-powered berry which they've been told will shrink their waistlines using carbo-telepathy. Because the solution to overconsumption is to consume more, as long as you're really anxious about it.

It looks like we might get more pop-up restaurants and one-off food events. Those kinds of events are a great way to try out new ideas, and therefore you guys should attend as many as you can. They are also fun.

Internationally, I think 2016 will be the year of bitter and sour. We will see more hot and sour soups, hot and sour sambals, more Indonesian food overall, and more bitter veggies and fruit as an extension of our tolerance for IPAs, dark chocolate, and black coffee.

Huh, that wasn't that hard. Fuckit, here's my prediction for 2036. By then, self-sailing solar energy vessels will be harvesting jellyfish from the toxic and boiling-hot North Atlantic. These jellyfish will be served with a steaming bowl of James Hansen's I-told-you-so's. At night, we will keep ourselves warm with memories of a world caught in a constant state of civil war, before we had to ride to work on explosive-detecting robot mules. By 2036 the Bacon Festival will be labeled a crime against nature and will be held in an underground bunker where only the ultra-rich and ultra-deprived may attend. The curiously ageless Sigmundur Davíð will be master of ceremonies at these events. And, in a dramatic turn at the height of the 2036 Extreme BaconFest, it will be revealed that he is actually three cannibalistic pigs wearing a flesh suit. This will dominate the headlines until October, when Iceland gets sucked into the polar vortex.

Foodstradamus has spoken! Now I must rest... and feed.



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# CAPIRA

january



6. Ojba Rasta 20:00 2000 isk 7. Hí á Húrra: Stand-up comedy 20:00 1000 isk

8. Axel Flóvent 21:00 free entry  
DJ Simon FKNHNDSM

9. Mammút & X-Heart 21:00 2000 isk  
DJ KGB

10. Open Mic Night 21:00 free entry

13. Greeks Babushka,  
Just another Snake Cult

11. Monday night jazz 21:00 free entry

14. In The Company

& Milkhouse 20:00 tickets tba

of men & Grit Teeth 20:00 1000 isk

16. Babies 20:00 free entry

15. The Reykjavík

18. Monday night jazz 21:00 free entry

Grapevine Music

20. Fóstbræður

22. DJ

Awards line-up & tickets tba

pub quiz 20:00 free entry

Styrmir

DJ Óli Dóri

21. Celestine :00 tickets tba

Dans—

23. DJ KGB

25. Monday

son

28. Þórunn Antonía

night jazz 21:00 free entry

& Bjarni

20:00 tickets tba

29—30

21:00 2000 isk

21:00 2000 isk



Berlin x Reykjavík festival

1. Monday night jazz 21:00 free entry

february



2. Hefnendabíó: cult movie night 20:00 free entry