



# The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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YOUR **FREE COPY** > THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

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We go **DEEP** INSIDE THE **VOLCANO**

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Tom Cruise vs. the farmers of northern Iceland

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Is Icelandic wool spun of **LIES**?

### ART

Ugly duckling Reykjavík admired

We've of course been into Greenland since way before it was cool, and we still are. We go there all the time. It's no big deal. However, with a burgeoning tourism industry showing signs of the island 'going mainstream,' and global warming having its effects, we are inevitably left to wonder whether irreversible changes are occurring. Read all about our trip to wonderful Ittoqqortoormiit as well as Greenland's independence movement, Greenlandic music and the history of the Norse settlement in Greenland **INSIDE**.

# Go To Greenland While It's Still Cool

#nofilters  
📍 Greenland



**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:**

A. Woman  
 Atli Arnarson  
 Bergún Anna Hallsteinsdóttir  
 Birkir Fjalur Viðarsson  
 Bob Cluness  
 Clyde Bradford  
 Eliza Reid  
 Jennifer Karchmer  
 Jessica Emory  
 Joe Shooman  
 Jón Bjarki Magnússon  
 Kári Tullinius  
 Laura Studarus  
 Marc Vincenz  
 Paul Fontaine  
 Valur Gunnarsson

**EDITORIAL INTERNS:**

Alfrún Gísladóttir / [alfrun@grapevine.is](mailto:alfrun@grapevine.is)  
 Byron Wilkes / [byron@grapevine.is](mailto:byron@grapevine.is)  
 Sarah Pepin / [sarah@grapevine.is](mailto:sarah@grapevine.is)  
 Eli Petzold / [eli@grapevine.is](mailto:eli@grapevine.is)  
 Cory Weinberg / [cory@grapevine.is](mailto:cory@grapevine.is)

**PHOTO INTERN:**

Juli Vol / [juli@grapevine.is](mailto:juli@grapevine.is)

**JOURNALIST**

Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir / [vala@grapevine.is](mailto:vala@grapevine.is)

**ON-LINE NEWS EDITOR**

Paul Fontaine / [paul@grapevine.is](mailto:paul@grapevine.is)

**ART DIRECTOR:**

Hörður Kristbjörnsson / [hoddi@grapevine.is](mailto:hoddi@grapevine.is)

**DESIGN:**

Páll Hilmarsson / [pallih@kaninka.net](mailto:pallih@kaninka.net)

**PHOTOGRAPHER:**

Alisa Kalyanova / [www.alisakalyanova.com](http://www.alisakalyanova.com)

**MUSIC MANAGER:**

Bob Cluness / [bob@grapevine.is](mailto:bob@grapevine.is)

**SALES DIRECTOR:**

Ádálsteinn Jörundsson / [adalsteinn@grapevine.is](mailto:adalsteinn@grapevine.is)

Helgi Þór Harðarson / [helgi@grapevine.is](mailto:helgi@grapevine.is)

**DISTRIBUTION MANAGER:**

[distribution@grapevine.is](mailto:distribution@grapevine.is)

**PROOFREADER:**

Jim Rice

**RELEASES:**

[listings@grapevine.is](mailto:listings@grapevine.is)

**SUBMISSIONS INQUIRIES:**

[editor@grapevine.is](mailto:editor@grapevine.is)

**SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES:**

+354 540 3605 / [subscribe@grapevine.is](mailto:subscribe@grapevine.is)

**GENERAL INQUIRIES:**

[grapevine@grapevine.is](mailto:grapevine@grapevine.is)

**FOUNDERS:**

Hilmar Steinn Grétarsson,  
 Hörður Kristbjörnsson,  
 Jón Trausti Sigurðarson,  
 Oddur Óskar Kjartansson,  
 Valur Gunnarsson

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



Cover by: Dödlur  
 Photography: by Julia Staples - [www.juliastaples.com](http://www.juliastaples.com)

**Shhh! Don't Tell Anyone About Greenland**

**Anna's 10th Editorial**



On the day after this paper hits the streets, Iceland's presidential race will be over. Incumbent Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson may now be the longest sitting president in the history of the Republic—or we may now have a fresh face in office the first time in sixteen years.

As much fun as it has been to follow stories about candidates and their religious beliefs (which may or may not have changed over the years), as much fun as it has been to gape over outlandish and racist comments (which may or may not have been taken out of context), and as much as it's been fun to keep tabs on the fact that one candidate spoke for 12 minutes in a debate while another spoke for 14, it will also be nice to think about something else.

It makes you wonder what the media would have been focusing on had a media event like this one not been occupying it. Surely there would have been something interesting to talk about. It also makes you wonder, 'What did we miss? What went unnoticed? What about China?'

What about our dwindling puffin population? What about the European Union? What about factory farming? What about all those people the Special Prosecutor has been investigating for two years? What about Magma Energy? Whatever happened to them after they changed their name to Alterra something?'

Who knows... While the Icelandic media seems to have a lot of freedom, maybe it's not using it so much. Maybe the media is too conformist, writing about the same stories, and about each other's stories. Meanwhile maybe we're missing something that's right under our noses.

For instance, IMMI turned two this month. In case you've forgotten all about it, as we haven't been reporting on it much since it made its splash two years ago, IMMI is the International Modern Media Institute, formerly the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative, which is supposed to be making Iceland a media safe haven, but hasn't really done much...[yet]. You can read all about that on page 18.

For now we'd like to direct your attention to Greenland. We went there a few months ago and we thought it was pretty cool. You can read about our trip on page 22. Or at least check out the photos.

And then you should of course go there, while it's still cool. That is, if you promise to keep it a secret, because when we were there, in Ittoqqortoormiit—a town in East-Greenland that's only accessible to ships two months of the year—it struck us that perhaps Greenland is now Iceland when Iceland was Greenland.

This is probably okay, that is until Greenland turns into Iceland.

**TRÖLL by Gísli Darri**



Auto-skating

# Loving the elements

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\*or thereabouts - depending on the elements

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### GEYSIR

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THE LAMBURGER

# BE SQUARE AND BE THERE

Gullfoss and Geysir are surely a must-see in Iceland, but neither is something you eat. That's why we have 14 brilliant and creative hamburgers at the Hamburger Factory.

The Reykjavik Grapevine's Best of Reykjavik panel awarded the Hamburger Factory "Best specialty burger 2010" and "Best veggie burger 2011".

It made us happy. Because we aim to please.

The Factory offers Iceland's best selection of gourmet hamburgers with a nice selection of salads, meat courses and delicious desserts. And of course we only use 100% fresh high-quality ingredients, directly from the Icelandic nature.

Located on the ground floor of the highest tower of Reykjavik, with an amazing view of Höfði, the meeting place of Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, the Hamburger Factory has been packed with burger-craving customers since its opening in april 2010; among the regulars is Iceland's best known fisherman, Eric Clapton.

**Attention:** Our hamburger buns are not round. They are square. Does it taste better? You tell us.



## HOW TO GET HERE

SOME TIPS ON HOW TO GET TO US WHILE LOOKING COOL AND LOCAL

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**"Sælar! Hvað er að fréttu"**  
(Hello! What's up)

**"Ég er þokkalega svangur, get ég fengið hamborgara"**  
(I'm quite hungry, can I get a hamburger)

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2010

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## Sour grapes & stuff

### MOST AWESOME LETTER TWO FREE PAIRS OF WOOLLEN SOCKS!!!!11!

There's a wonderful new prize for all your **MOST AWESOME LETTERS**. What kind of prize, you ask? THE BEST KIND OF PRIZE THERE IS: **FREE WOOLLEN SOCKS! TWO PAIRS OF FREE WOOLLEN SOCKS!**

Yes, this lovely prize will keep your feet warm and cosy throughout your stay in Iceland and in any subsequent places you might go that sometimes get cold. And these aren't just any old woollen socks either, these are the **colourful, wonderful, extra-long kind from Geysir** (for inspiration, why not go check them out at the Geysir store on Skólavörðustígur before you write your AWESOME LETTER?).

Congratulations to whoever had MOST AWESOME LETTER for this issue, you should drop us a line at [letters@grapevine.is](mailto:letters@grapevine.is) and enquire how you collect your free socks! And if you're in the market for some socks come next issue, why not write us a wonderful reader letter to that same address. Like Axl Rose said: "It's so easy!"



## MOST AWESOME LETTER:

Hello all

I do hope you are fine. I am addressing you after I read a news on your website about a camera lost and found in Iceland.

My name is Alfredo, from Chile and in my last day before returning back home I lost my camera in Reykjavik in the proximities of the Cementery. I think it's Hringbraut. It's a Canon one (model A-1200), colour grey with two duracell batteries in it. It's very simple, small and cheap but it contains a lot of photos (Reykjavik, Whales watching, Blue Lagoon and Golden circle) from my trip to Iceland that lasted until Tuesday 26/06/2012, the day in which I lost it. I would like to ask you for help. I saved money for a long time to go to your country and it is very unlikely that I will be able to make it again for different reasons. What do you think I can do to find my camera?

I will be happy if you can give me some advice.

Many thanks and best wishes

Alfredo Andrés González  
alfredoandresgonzalez@gmail.com  
Bsc. in Forest Engineer  
Forest Engineer  
Universidad de Chile  
Santiago, Chile

Dear Alfredo,

thank you for your letter, even though the events that lead you to ultimately sending it our way are kind of sad. Who wants to lose their camera with all their precious holiday pictures? No one, that's who! We are very sorry that you lost yours, and we are very flattered that you think we can be of assistance to you in finding it.

Indeed, we hope we can help (although, to be honest, we must admit we are afraid it was maybe found by some unruly teenagers who went on to use it to snap pics of their privates or perhaps a dope fiend who sold it to finance

their next hit of 'new magic'). We will do our best to help, in the only way we know how, namely by printing your letter and email address in our publication.

Look above. Read back. It's there, it's printed.

And now we play the waiting game... Hopefully some honest citizen found your camera as it lay there on the ground, and hopefully we still have some honest readers left who might be friends of that honest citizen and can instruct him how to get in touch with you.

Hope is important.

Thank you for writing, Alfredo, but more importantly thank you for visiting Iceland and contributing to our economic recovery in all of the ways you did. Your contribution is greatly valued. In fact, we value it so that we will bestow upon you FREE WOOLLEN SOCKS! WHOO!

Grapevine,

As someone who greatly enjoys your mix of fun stuff and hard stuff, bits I like and bits I don't like mixed with things I love and things I hate I have to wonder: do you print articles from just anyone? Is there a criteria? How many journalists do you employ? I noticed you were seeking a journalist the other day, did you find one? Can it be me? Thank you for your time.

Oliver Smith  
Dear Oliver Smith,

thank you for writing. To answer your questions, in the order you asked them: yes! Not really, except we have to understand them and they can't be racist or crap or horrible. One in summer, half in winter. Yes, several! Maybe, who knows! Thank you too!

I want a job as a freelance journalist with you people. NOW NOW NOW NOW NOW NOW NOW NOW!!!!

Benjamín [via Facebook]

Dear Benjamín from Facebook,  
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### Comic | Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir



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**Borgarnes, 21.06**—A father and daughter pair pose for a photographer in their vessel after surviving a boat trip that took a turn for the worse. On the eve of June 17, Jón Karl Jónsson and his thirteen-year-old daughter Erika Mjöll left the Borgarnes harbour on their inflatable Zodiac boat, intending to go fishing in Borgarfjörður. After an hour at sea, Jón Karl fell overboard and heavy currents carried him away. His daughter struggled to get ashore to alert authorities. She ultimately made it to land, swimming to the Borgarey islands, and Jón Karl was rescued by a coast guard helicopter after drifting a total of ten kilometres over the course of nearly three hours, his body temperature down to 33°C at the time of rescue. *Photo: DV / Sigtryggur Ari*

## News In Brief: Late June Edition

We're now in mid-June and things are going famously. **Tom Cruise** arrived to take part in the filming of the movie 'Oblivion,' which will be shot in the north of the country, near Mývatn. Upon his arrival, he spent the first few days at Hilton Hótel in Reykjavík, to much fanfare. He plans to celebrate his 50th birthday in Akureyri, which should be fun for all involved. **Morgan Freeman** will also be coming to Iceland for the filming of 'Oblivion,' but this hasn't been covered with the same detail and tenacity as Tom's arrival.

With **presidential elections** coming up on June 30 (the day after we publish), it seems the odds favour incumbent president **Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson**, who leads his closest challenger, **Póra Arnórsdóttir**, by about 10% in recent polls. So confident is gambling website Betsson of his win that they are only giving 1.18 to 1 odds on Ólafur being re-elected. Odds on Póra, by the by, are paying out 3.6 to 1.

It seems as though there's a light at the end of the tunnel where **Icesave** is concerned, too. Landsbanki—or rather, the resolution committee handling the funds of the former Landsbanki—made another payment to the UK and Holland, so that half our debt has now been paid off. It sure feels great to be out from under that much money. There's

only about another 500 billion ISK left to pay off. Good times.

They might be kicking up their heels at Landsbanki, but the Icelandic government is for the first time finding itself being accused of **torturing** an asylum seeker. Mohammad Askarpour, the refugee in question, is currently hospi-

*“Trial fever spread to the Supreme Court, too, as a man plans on taking his ex-husband to court to gain custody of a cat. Reykjavík District already ruled that the cat in question, Ita, belongs to the ex in question”*

talised in Iceland, but his lawyer, Katrín Oddsdóttir, claims that he was denied medical and psychological attention, despite telling authorities that he was suffering from a severe sinus infection, depression, and suicidal thoughts. The suit against the state, Katrín admitted, is intended to get the state's attention with regard to Mohammad's condition. Hopefully it'll work.

Speaking of being taken to court, the **Datacell v. Valitor** trial has begun. In 2010, when credit card companies were blocking donations to Wikileaks,

the Icelandic company Datacell offered its services as a proxy through which donations could be made to the site. However, Valitor, which oversees Visa and MasterCard in Iceland, blocked cardholders from donating to Datacell. This precipitated the lawsuit. Datacell says Valitor is guilty of a breach of con-

tract, contending that Datacell never told them they were acting as a proxy for Wikileaks. Datacell denies. The truth of the matter? Well, we'll probably never know, but it's definitely going to be a historic trial.

Trial fever spread to the Supreme Court, too, as a man plans on taking his ex-husband to court to **gain custody of a cat**. Reykjavík District already ruled that the cat in question, Ita, belongs to the ex in question; they live together, and the cat is legally registered to the ex. Although the court's ruling

was final, and the plaintiff, Juan Carlos, was ordered to pay his ex 200,000 ISK in legal fees, Juan isn't stopping there. He's started a fund to raise money to pay the court order and to appeal the matter to the Supreme Court. And you thought you loved your cat.

In lighter news, Iceland's **first female bishop** officially took over this month. Rev. Agnes M. Sigurðardóttir was ordained by former bishop Karl Sigurbjörnsson at Hallgrímkirkja, before an audience including many bishops from abroad, Icelandic President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson and Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir. Agnes said that the main mission of the church should be to increase membership—said possibly in response to church members leaving in droves over the past two years due to a sex scandal involving the previous bishop and his predecessor, Ólafur Skúlason.

And speaking of the church, some priests do seem a little worried that **separation of church and state** could be right around the corner, or is already in the works. Article 19 of the new constitutional draft, which gives parliament the right to put the church's fate up for public referendum, was

among the subjects at a recent clerical meeting. While theologian Hjalti Hugason said he could see how Article 19 would open the door for such a separation, Rev. Gunnlaugur Stefánsson believes the ball is already rolling in that direction. ♡

Trivia | What do you know?

### Trivia Question!

**Which crash-or-post-crash year had the highest number of registered restaurants and mobile food service activities in Iceland?**

- A. 2008
- B. 2009
- C. 2010
- D. 2011

Turn to page 32 for the answer. Hint: If you know your pylsur, then this is obvious.



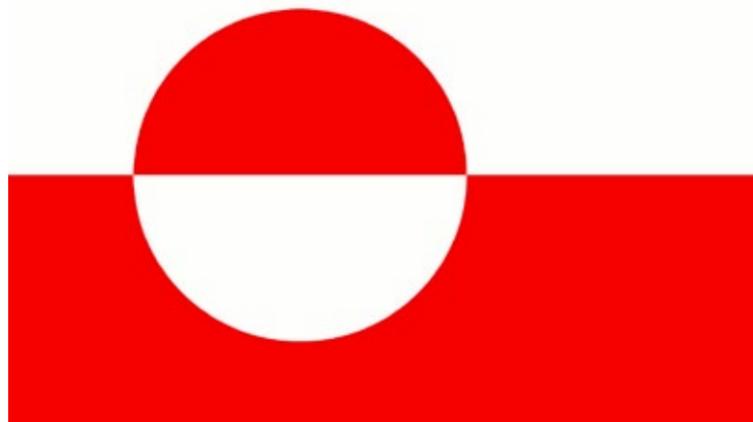
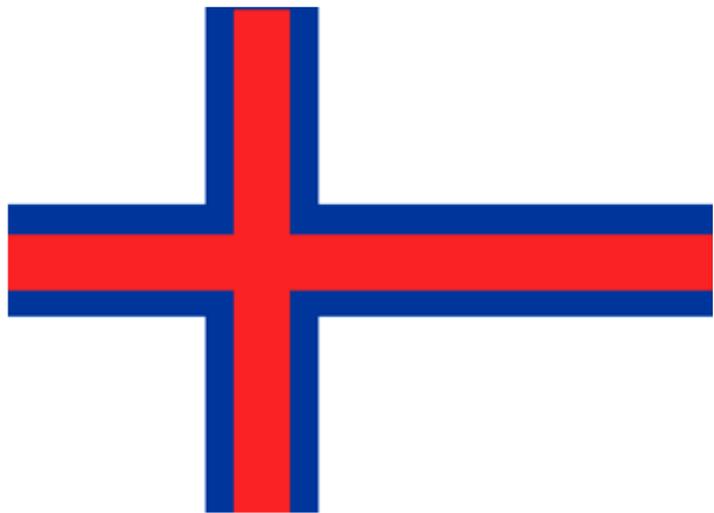
Keeping Iceland warm  
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## **It's not really summer. It's just winter with less snow.**

In the middle of the ocean, south of Iceland, there's an archipelago called the Westman Islands. It's the windiest place in Iceland and it gets lots of rain. In the old harbor we opened the valves on the water mains, unleashing an artificial downpour. When the ice-cold water came lashing down – it really made us think of the Icelandic summer.

# Iceland's Neighbours Turn Up Heat On Declaring Independence

Denmark still rules Greenland and Faroe Islands, but change could come as natural resources emerge



In her 2007 electro anthem “**Declare Independence**,” Björk shouted patriotic lyrics dedicated to Iceland’s neighbours—Greenland and the Faroe Islands. “**Start your own currency! Make your own stamp! Protect your language!**” the Icelandic pop star cried.

#### But it's not so easy.

Still part of the Kingdom of Denmark, like Iceland was until 1944, the two sparsely populated North Atlantic countries are stuck on the edge of independence. Both have inched closer to earning full sovereignty, but the Danish crown—and the economic subsidies and security that come with it—has been hard to shake.

“We feel that the same applies for a country as it does for an individual. There’s desire to be independent and to make your own life. You grow up, live with your parents, but at some point you have to move out,” said Gunvør Balle, a Member of Parliament in the Faroe Islands.

Two countries could soon wean itself off Denmark’s annual pay checks by finding their own treasure chests of sorts. Arctic waters have warmed 1.5 degrees Celsius over the past half-century—a pace double that of the rest of the world’s seas. That could pay off

for Greenland and the Faroes, opening up accessibility to oil, gas and minerals as the ice melts.

And as the Arctic warms, the countries’ aspirations for independence are also heating up. The outline of Greenland’s first constitution will be written this year, and the Faroese Parliament goes back and forth in drafting its own first constitution, putting their futures in flux.

“It’s no longer just the musicians singing songs about revolutions. It’s politicians setting an agenda. It’s the new generation rising,” said Aleqa Hammond, a member of the Greenlandic Parliament called Landsting.

#### WE THE (FROZEN) PEOPLE

Greenland is the world’s largest island, but it might as well be the world’s largest block of ice, too. About 57,000 people, most of whom are native Inuit, live in the country that is more than 80% ice. The economy is based almost entirely on fish exports, and social problems like alcoholism and domestic abuse have plagued the nation.

A self-government referendum in 2008 gave Greenland control over government functions like healthcare, education, police and courts. About 75% of the country voted in favour of greater autonomy. Denmark, however, still dictates foreign policy, and Greenland receives almost one-third of its \$2.1 billion gross domestic product from Danish subsidies.

Up next, the country could create its own constitution. Greenland’s parliament gave the green light last fall to draft an outline for the guiding document, which Aleqa, the proposal’s au-

thor, called “one of the greatest moves we’ve made that is concrete toward creation of the nation of Greenlanders.” The constitutional proposal will be forwarded to parliament on November 10.

Aleqa is leading the charge toward Greenland’s independence as chairwoman of Siumut, the country’s social democratic party, which is a minority party in its parliament. She says both the economic and nationalistic motivations are stronger than ever to declare independence. “I don’t look like a Dane. I don’t feel like Dane. I don’t feel like a sister of Danes. This is a question of

future profitable resources in the region. Greenland has started reaping some of these benefits, selling licenses to firms like ExxonMobil and Chevron to drill for oil in its western Disko Bay. “Suddenly, Greenlanders are of interest to Danes not because they think we’re great people to deal with, but because of the riches of the Greenlanders,” Aleqa said.

#### WAVES CRASH ON THE ISLANDS

In the Faroe Islands, scattered between Iceland and Norway, enthusiasm for independence has come in waves since

#### STEPPING UP ONTO THE WORLD’S STAGE

Now, the parliament, Løgtingið, continues to debate over a new constitution, a document that’s been in the works for a decade. “The constitution is like an egg, you’re afraid to carry it because you might break it,” she said. “We’re afraid of losing it all, and having to start all over again.”

She said the country needs to take the reins over decisions like immigration laws and to take control of its airspace to gain greater autonomy. And with more responsibility, its politicians will need to grow up, she added.

“We don’t have that impetus to be prudent, be wise, and take all the responsibility needed for a country,” she said. “We don’t need to be involved in world politics and to have an opinion on what’s going on in the world. When we have a debate in our parliament, the debate is narrow and limited.”

While independence may still be decades away, the melting Arctic is driving the conversation. In the Faroe Islands, where whaling, fishing and agriculture have ruled the economy, a mineral industry is also burgeoning.

“The Danish interest in Faroese and Greenland is obviously geopolitical because the whole world is focused on the Arctic region,” Gunvør said. “There is a strong will to be independent economically, but what speed? [My party] wants it to happen very quickly. We have to make a decision and we have to do it our way.”

*“It’s no longer just the musicians singing songs about revolutions. It’s politicians setting an agenda. It’s the new generation rising”*

seeing my own future in our own country,” she said.

#### RESISTANCE TO THE RESISTANCE

But some are balking. The majority party in parliament, the left-wing Inuit Ataqatigiit, is not as eagerly jumping toward independence, Aleqa said. The IA party is also holding back Greenlandic autonomy in another way, she added, with some ministers “speaking Danish from the podium” instead of the native Greenlandic.

Denmark would also likely challenge complete Greenlandic independence. The two countries’ prime ministers both signed the Kingdom of Denmark’s “Strategy for the Arctic” through the next decade, which lays out plans for making sustainable use

the country became self-governing in 1948, said Faroese MP Gunvør Balle, a member of the left-wing Republican party, Tjóðveldi.

Most recently, the Faroese faced severe austerity measures from Denmark after an early ‘90s banking crisis in the Faroe Islands. With Danish leaders calling for spending and wage cuts, 4,000 Faroese Islands citizens emigrated, and a streak of independence was formed, Gunvør said.

“When it dawned upon us that so-called security had let us down, the Faroese were angry and bitter,” she added. “We always thought the Danes would be there for us in a great crisis. That created a huge movement [toward independence].”

#### Words

Cory Weinberg

#### Illustration

Faroese flag / Greenland flag

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Society | Rape culture

## Have Some Rape With Your Coffee, Guys



**Dear Men,**  
I have reached my limit. I read yet one more harrowing account of rape and one more intelligent dissection of the case and the reactions from certain people and the reactions to those reactions, and I can't take any more. I have reached the limits of my rape quota. So I did what any normal insomniac would do. I ranted.

Usually when the subject of rape comes up, I change the subject. I do not want to discuss how a woman was brutally attacked a block away from my home or how sick it is to show the picture of an alleged victim on a popular website. I am disgusted by the continuous underhanded references by mainstream media that the victim's behaviour somehow led to the rape in question. I am even more sickened by their less than subtle sympathy for the rapist. I really am afraid that I have little energy left. I am so damn tired of rape. I am tired of reading about it and talking about it and trying to figure out why it occurs and how we should prevent it.

I am amused at the novel ways women come up with to get their point across, like the Reykjavík Slutwalk (that was clever). I am saddened by victims' Facebook pages or campaigns against rape where victims use their pain for the good of others (I think you are amazing). I am exhausted by endless debates by intelligent people discussing rape and arguing over its roots in society. The discussions are complicated and circular to some extent. The participants

### Words

A. Woman

### Photography

Juli Vol

in these discussions are most often women. These are women who use their experiences, intelligence, pens, time, energy, care and education to somehow make a dent in men committing violence against women. For even braver women who feel like sharing their story to help others, I am in awe. For those who would bring rape charges against a powerful man, to then be raped again in the media, you deserve my fierce support, but I have little left.

*"We need YOU to help us. We need men to talk to their brothers, friends, and sons."*

I have warned my daughter about certain men and explained rape, sexual abuse, and inappropriate touching despite the infringement on her innocence. I have explained to my older girls why we don't leave our drinks on the table, why we never go out alone, and that you can say "no" at any time. I have forgiven and released any anger, self-loathing, and sorrow, which lived in my body for a long time.

Although not everyone is open to discussing it and many would not admit it, even to themselves, most of the women you know have been or will be sexually abused, sexually harassed, raped, or find themselves the victims of violence at some point in their lifetimes. This violence will occur at the hands of your cousins, your friends, your brothers and your sons and yourselves. Swallow that truth down.

When we think of those icky subjects we tend to feel uncomfortable, in fact many have stopped reading by this point, "rape... yada yada..women...yada

yada... feminists...yada yada... .zzzzz." We think of rape as a woman's issue when in fact it is the opposite. RAPE IS A MAN'S ISSUE.

I do not feel that violence against women will stop the way we are going now. Women have organised, talked, and become angry. We have calmed down, discussed and intellectualised the problem to death. We have started programmes to educate and to help victims. We have to some extent created a safer environment for victims to come forward. We have established that date rape is indeed rape. These are great strides. Yet to progress we need something more.

We need YOU to help us. We need men to talk to their brothers, friends, and sons. We need the Rape Talk to be another one of those uncomfortable talks dads have with their sons, not unlike the Boner Talk or the Safe Sex talk. We need men who at this point in time think, "I'm not a rapist," or even worse, "I don't want to get involved," to understand that there is a serious problem that YOU need to handle. There is no way that all this fucking raping and sickness is going on inside a vacuum. Handle it!!!

Men, I appeal to you. I speak to you on behalf of myself, my daughters, my friends, your sisters, your mothers, your daughters, your friends, and your partners. I think men are wonderful and I love you. I know that you guys love us too. I am sure we could count on you to go kick some sick fuck's ass, but that isn't how we handle problems in our society; we have evolved. We need you to actively, aggressively and without shame or embarrassment do your part to PREVENT further violence against us. TAKE CARE OF IT! TAKE CARE OF US!

Sincerely, A. Woman

Opinion | Paul Fontaine

## Why Iceland Doesn't Need A Parliament (Anymore)



Presidential elections are coming up at the end of this month, and it's arguably been the most contentious one in Iceland's history. Among the topics that have come up in public discussion has been the question of whether the office itself has become obsolete.

While I think it's interesting to consider, it limits the focus to the Office of the Presidency, when I'd argue that the entire government body should be regularly reviewed within the context of our modern lives.

One of the more striking things that occurred to me during my brief time in parliament was how small a role the actual halls of parliament play in the crafting of legislation. In fact, I'd argue that the continued existence of parliament is based in part on some misconceptions as to what parliament actually does.

Contrary to popular belief, parliament does not create a lot of bills. Rather, almost all the most important bills come from the ministries. Work groups assembled by the ministries get together to examine and discuss a particular subject, eventually crafting a bill, which is then submitted to the floor of parliament. That's where a great many of our laws come from.

But even after being submitted to parliament, the fine-tuning of a bill does not take place in parliament, either. Rather, it takes place in committee, the chairperson of which answers to the ministry from whence the bill came. It's in committee that special interest groups are invited to share their input, which is usually submitted electronically, and where committee members shape the bill into a more viable form.

So what is it that parliament actually does, you ask? They discuss and/or argue about bills—usually repeating the same arguments they made in committee—and then vote on them. That's it in a nutshell. We are a nation of about 320,000 people. Surely, we can discuss/argue about bills—and then vote on them—ourselves, right?

I think we can. I submit that we abolish parliament altogether. I think that doing so would not only increase transparency and democracy; the functions of government would also not be too much different from what they are now. If I had to give this new structure a name, I suppose it could be called "ministerial democracy." So here's my general idea of what a parliament-free Iceland could look like:

People vote for ministers and their alternates. This includes voting for a

prime minister, who would serve largely the same function as before, only without appointing the cabinet. Ministries would still assemble work groups for crafting bills, only these would be posted online for people to discuss and argue about. After a nominal period of time, the bill would be referred back to the work group from whence it came, where they would take the discussion into consideration, re-work the bill, and then post it again. Just as a parliamentary bill goes to committee three times before a final vote, the posted bill would be re-worked three times by its work group before being put to an electronic vote for approval or rejection.

Realistically, there would have to be a way to conduct a discussion on said bill, and vote on it, in an orderly and civilised fashion. People could be re-

*"Icelanders want direct democracy, and if there's one country in the world where it can be achieved, it's here"*

quired to register on a ministry website in order to participate, but they could register for as many ministries as they want—just as members of parliament are often in many different committees. Not every single bill posted by the ministries would be subject to requiring a national majority for passage. In fact, most of them could simply require say, a two-thirds majority of registered users of a ministry's website for passage. Larger issues—such as joining the EU—would, however, be subject to national referendum.

Certainly, there are other questions that arise here—for example, could "ordinary" citizens submit bills of their own, and how? Would there still be a president? Would there even be political parties? And there would be practical aspects of this idea that would need fine-tuning, but these could be worked out on a trial basis: perhaps a ministry could craft and post a "sample bill" on its website to see how it goes, and work out the procedural kinks.

But would our esteemed members of parliament, many of who have hoisted their political careers aloft with their zeppelin-like egos, allow for such an experiment? Whether they like it or not, I'd say the time has come to give it a chance. Icelanders want direct democracy, and if there's one country in the world where it can be achieved, it's here.

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# Travellers Take Their Toll On Tourist Destinations

*Are you loving Iceland to death?*



The image of pristine wilderness is one of Iceland's main attractions, but this resource may be in jeopardy as the environment around some of Iceland's most popular tourist attractions and hiking areas is gradually deteriorating. A growing number of visitors in environmentally sensitive areas, and a lack of tourism regulations and strategic sustainable management, are contributing to vegetation and soil degradation and—in some cases—irreversible damage to natural formations.

We sat down with Dr. Rannveig Ólafsdóttir, associate professor in Tourism at the University of Iceland, who has been active in research on the impact of tourists on the environment, to discuss the issue.

## Words

Atli Arnarson

## Photography

Atli Arnarson

## DON'T STRAY OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Is unregulated pedestrian traffic in sensitive areas an issue that deserves concern?

If something is sensitive it definitely deserves concern. The Icelandic nature is by far the largest factor attracting tourists and, as such, the most valuable resource for the tourist industry.

## What are the main consequences of off-trail hiking around popular tourist attractions?

It depends on the number of tourists hiking off-trail, and also on the type of environment such an impact takes place in. But even in the most sensitive areas, one or two people hiking off-trail should be okay. However, when we start to get mass tourism in unsuitable areas it may lead to deterioration of sensitive ecosystems and severe soil erosion. Our soil is particularly susceptible to erosion due to its high content of volcanic ash, which greatly reduces its resistance to erosion. Wind and water erosion are also very active processes here in Iceland once the vegetation cover has been damaged.

Is it likely that off-trail hiking, or unrestricted access to sensitive natural formations, could damage the environment to the point that it

## would adversely affect the quality of visitors' experience?

Mass tourism in the country's most sensitive areas could very easily cause environmental decline to the point that it would reduce the value of the areas for tourism. So far, damage has been met with increased infrastructure, such as construction of hiking paths, wooden stairs, viewing platforms, larger parking lots, service facilities and so forth. Such development changes the appearance of the landscape and thus also the tourists' experience. That's the dilemma of tourism. Too many visitors can furthermore create a negative perception for tourists.

## DYNAMIC, DIVERSE, BREATHTAKING AND UNIQUE

Which areas are most sensitive, and which natural formations are most susceptible to permanent damage?

Moss-covered areas are particularly sensitive to trampling. They are also very uncommon outside of Iceland, and thus a valuable resource. In moss-covered areas, it sometimes takes only one step to make long-lasting damage. Areas covered with moss or moss heath on dry, unsteady soil on steep slopes are definitely among the most sensitive areas. There is, however, a lack of a holistic overview of the country's ecological sensitivity, so I cannot answer this

precisely. But right now I'm working on a project that aims to map the country's ecological sensitivity based on a spatial analysis of available data on vegetation, soil and landscape characteristics. We aim to finish it this summer and I hope that managers and planners will find it useful for future planning regarding nature tourism here in Iceland.

The most sensitive natural formations are recent volcanic features, primarily pumice and slag craters that easily break down. Examples of this are Laki and the craters on Fimmvörðuháls. Many tourists also have a special desire to take a bit of Iceland with them back home.

Many popular tourist attractions in Iceland are located within the volcanic zone where the soil is particularly susceptible to erosion, as you pointed out. Do you think Icelandic landscapes are, in general, more sensitive to traffic compared to popular tourist destinations elsewhere in the world?

Icelandic landscapes are very dynamic, diverse, breathtaking, and unique. That is our resource. But yes, they are highly sensitive, especially to external physical impact such as trampling, off-road driving, etc. The most environmentally sensitive areas are definitely more sus-

Accurate information on the number of tourists visiting the most popular tourist sites isn't even available. Tourism in Iceland has been growing at an unprecedented rate during the past years. Despite the economic importance of tourism, studies focusing on the environmental impact of it have yet not received any financial support, at all.

Tourism carrying capacity is a complicated concept and depends on what type of tourism is considered suitable for each site. But yes, I would say that some of our natural tourist attractions have exceeded their carrying capacity.

## BE AWARE, AND ENJOY

Which strategies do you think would be most effective to minimize the impact of tourists and hikers on the environment?

In order to develop sustainable tourism, we urgently need holistic planning and management for tourism development in this country, based on qualified research on the resources. In my mind, the most effective and best strategy is tourism management in such a way that visitors will not realise that they are being managed. This can, for example, be done by controlling accessibility and by enhancing information and education for tourists and hikers.

*"Tourism carrying capacity is a complicated concept and depends on what type of tourism is considered suitable for each site. But yes, I would say that some of our natural tourist attractions have exceeded their carrying capacity."*

ceptible to damage than many tourist destinations in other countries that promote similar tourism as here. However, the sensitivity is influenced by many factors and is therefore very different depending on where you find yourself in the country; there are also plenty of places in Iceland that can tolerate heavier traffic.

## EXCEEDING THE CAPACITY

In tourism, carrying capacity is defined as the maximum number of visitors that can travel within an area without causing unacceptable damage to the environment or reducing the quality of visitors' experience. In your opinion, have any tourist attractions exceeded their carrying capacity?

We still lack the data on Icelandic tourism to be able to answer this question.

## Do you think off-trail hiking should be prohibited in certain areas?

Yes, I believe so. But such a decision has to be based on reliable data and a management plan pulled together by active collaboration of all stakeholders. Tourism management is a complex process, as there are many stakeholders involved with different and sometimes conflicting interests. Therefore, collaboration of all stakeholders and researchers is of vital importance when it comes to zoning an area for different activities.

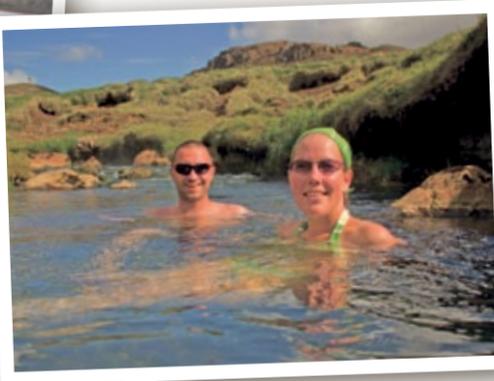
## Do you have any advice for environmentally concerned tourists visiting Iceland? How can they minimize their impact on the environment?

Be aware of the sensitivity of your environment, take care, and enjoy! 🍷



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# Iceland Cubed



The question of how best to package Iceland for international consumption has long been a contentious issue, one that has no doubt been on the minds and lips of private and public citizens alike since well before the economic downturn officially hit. But following the dramatic halt to Iceland's financial golden age, when we were called out as the emperor with a hole in his pocket, Iceland was forced to scramble a bit for a new script and, in the process, discovered we still had a few things left to hold on to. For one: we had our rich cultural past and present. And second: we still had our looks—our splendid and celebrated natural beauty.

It was in January of 2008 that the government of Iceland made the decision to take part in the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai—a festival of sorts held every five years as an opportunity for the countries of the world to showcase, in individual pavilions, their unique features of choice. In December of that same year, months into the economic collapse, the government of Iceland granted 140 million ISK to the project.

The following January, as part of an open competition held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the

contract to the pavilion's concept and planning, project proposals were evaluated and a collaborative venture by Páll Hjaltason, a partner in +Arkitektar who would come to curate the exhibit, and Sagafilm was chosen for the task of bringing a piece of Iceland to Shanghai.

One component of that project, a cube strewn with canvas, projecting a video of Icelandic nature on each side and above the viewer, is now available for the first time to the Icelandic public, for a fee, at Harpa.

The fifteen-minute film was recorded at five angles, four of the RED cameras recording simultaneously, hooked onto planes and helicopters flying over the Icelandic wilderness.

## INEVITABLE NATURE

Halldór Guðmundsson, the new Managing Director of Harpa who has seen the film, hundreds of times in his capacity as Director of Iceland's contribution to the Frankfurt Book Festival last year—where a similar version of the Shanghai Expo was on display—says that the exhibit's focus on Icelandic nature was inevitable.

"That which marks our unique position with regard to other European countries," he says, "is literature and nature."

"You can probably see in this all sorts of clichés, but the fact remains that when you walk into a cube, and the image surrounds you on all sides and above you, you get a stronger experience than even if you had on 3D glasses at the movies," Halldór says. "It creates some sort of whole, which leaves quite a strong impression."

## "A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE"

Kjartan Þór Þórðarson, CEO of Sagafilm, says that the idea of bringing the display to Iceland had been "on the drawing board" since the first signs of the exhibit's success were visible in Shanghai. When Harpa came into the negotiations, Kjartan says, the idea of bringing the exposition home became a real possibility for the first time, particularly because of the "considerable" cost of setting it up.

Halldór was instrumental in bringing the exhibit to Harpa, as well as to the Book Fair in Frankfurt, where Iceland was the Guest of Honour and thus in particular focus. He says that in Frankfurt he observed the impact of the display first-hand.

"I was seeing, for example, German visitors just laying on the floor," says Halldór, "watching this thing as though it were a religious experience."

"The wilderness is what puts Iceland in a totally unique position," Halldór says. "I think you can make a lit theory argument for this connection between nature and literature. The Icelandic sagas have to do with the genesis of Icelandic civilization. This society begins with settlement, when man in a sense conquers heretofore unutilised areas. And if you come here as a visitor, one of the most interesting things about Iceland is that 90% of the country is uninhabited."

## "A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE FOR ANYONE"

The cost for the original expo project—including design, set-up and operation—is estimated at around 210 million ISK, according to the project's website.

The project's creative team included architect Páll Hjaltason, artist Finnogi Pétursson, graphic designer Ámundi Sigurðsson, fashion designer Steinunn Sigurðardóttir, photographer Ragnar Axelsson and composer Hilmar Örn Hilmarsson, who composed the film's original soundtrack.

Magnús Viðar Sigurðsson headed production and the film was directed and edited by Sævar Guðmundsson.

The idea was always to allow people the experience of being able to "walk into the country" says Halldór, but even in Iceland the concept is not entirely redundant.

"The Icelanders who have seen it have not been any less impressed," says Halldór, "it is a unique experience for anyone. But certainly not least of all for tourists who come to Iceland when it happens to be pouring rain the whole time. They can at least see the nature in Harpa." 🍷

# Everything But The Goldfish Bowl



On June 12, after months of relative international silence, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, Iceland's Prime Minister, grants Reuters a rare interview. Patting herself on the back, she tells Reuters that struggling Eurozone members should seriously consider taking leaves out of Iceland's Economic Repair Manual.

Here are some key DIY pointers: "We believe and so does the IMF that our case may be a role model from some of the countries in crisis now." Apparently, "Iceland's mix of measured austerity and unorthodox policies—such as private debt forgiveness and defending welfare payments as much as possible—could offer some lessons to Eurozone members." Bold statements indeed!

Yes, as far as the IMF is concerned, and as far as Statistics Iceland are concerned, things are looking up. Unemployment is down from 7.5% to 5.1%, GDP growth will likely soon hit 2.7% (compared to ailing Greece and failing Spain, that looks like a bloody miracle)—but isn't offering lessons in "debt forgiveness, austerity and sovereign default" a bit much?

And the boldness doesn't end here: "Becoming more disciplined and lowering state expenses, while at the same time keeping the welfare system strong, is what needs to be done to have wide support from the public for such measures."

Remind me. What was that Kitchenware Revolution? Why were eggs and skyr always out of stock at Bónus? And: Why did two referendums take place?

Is all this praise in the international media going to someone's head? Either way, Reuters seems to be swallowing everything but the goldfish bowl.

Thankfully there are still a few international beacons of equilibrium this month. Here's Stefán Karlsson in The Christian Science Monitor: "[Although] growth has recently been positive in Iceland, the absolute level of output remains well below the previous cyclical peak."

And: "And as long as output is below it, we can clearly say that the current state of the economy is unsatisfactory. [...] The entire slump in Iceland came after its currency started to depreciate and its modest recovery started only a long time later after its currency had stabilized."

Or here's Philip Aldrick in the Telegraph: "The country is not back in full health by any stretch of the imagination [...]. The public finances have been trashed [...]. Last year debts were 65% of GDP."

Granted, in Iceland, a very small "European" country, things have turned around much faster than expected, and granted there is reason for some moderate back-patting. But let's not run before we can walk—one would have thought we'd already learned that lesson.

Now the biggest problem facing Iceland in the near future is these stringent capital controls (something that Greece—yes even though they're in the Eurozone—is now considering even without giving up the Euro).

In an interview with the Financial Times (FT), University of Iceland's Ársæll Valfell explains the consequences of capital control: "Initially, the winners include the local banking system. They can borrow in [...] controlled currency, and use it to buy claims on anything else [...]. The problem comes when the assets of the locals get so damaged due to inflation and negative real rates that the real liquidity in the system is reduced."

And a recent IMF employee also told FT: "There are no winners in capital controls. But if banks and your economy are losing capital, you may use them to stem the tide."

So might we, by chance, just be stemming the tide?

Well, see what Ársæll has to say about it: "Eventually the banks hit a funding problem, because inflation and devaluation offset the effect of money creation."

And, don't shoot the messenger, but it appears an asset bubble may be about to burst. According to Bloomberg, due to those currency control measures "close to US\$8-billion in kronur are held by offshore investors unable to get their money out of the country...funds are flowing into one of the few longer-term investment options: real estate...The market is now 'driving home-loan debt higher.'"

Asgeir Jónsson, a Reykjavík-based asset manager, told Bloomberg that if this development continues "there's a greater risk of an asset bubble being created in an economy that is closed off behind capital controls." And, if anything sounds like inflation is running amok, listen to this: "The central bank has raised borrowing costs four times since August 2011." Household debt is now edging close to 270% of disposable income.

More interestingly still, according to Bloomberg, "Bonds sold by Iceland's Housing Financial Fund make up 68% of the nation's 'liquid guaranteed debt market.'" Doesn't this sound like Katla is about to blow?

A few days ago on The London Review of Books' blog, a level-headed Peter Geoghegan noted that (and here we come back to Jóhanna's earlier statement about so-called "measured austerity") "the Alþingi did indeed introduce a relief package for indebted homeowners [...]. Under the scheme, mortgage debt cannot exceed 110 percent of the value of the property[...]. It is a reasonable, well-intentioned policy. But it is not a Biblical debt jubilee. Many Icelanders are still struggling under huge monthly repayments they cannot afford."

When asked by Reuters about the remaining debts of her citizens, the Prime Minister said: "[...]no further large scale debt-forgiveness would [be forthcoming].]" Three simple questions, then: 1) What happens when the real estate bubble bursts? 2) What happens when the banks hit their next funding problem? And, 3) What happens when household debt exceeds 300% of disposable income? I wonder if there will be lessons for the Eurozone then? 🍷

MARC VINCENZ

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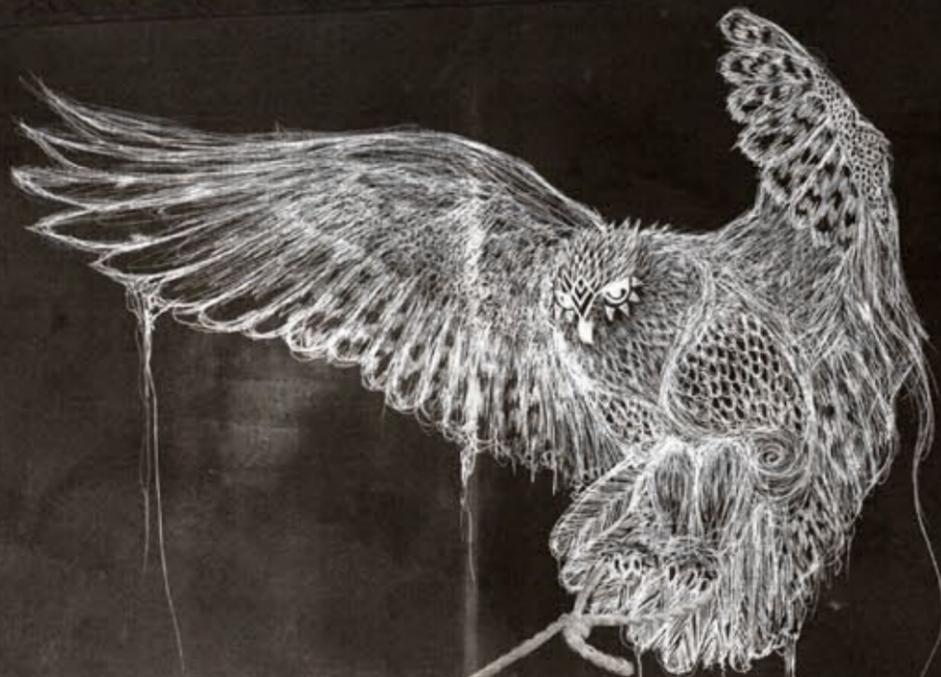
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# When Tom Cruise (Nearly) Met The Icelandic Sheep Farmer

*Farmers in the north of Iceland are unhappy with the film star*



**For centuries it's been their territory, but that's about to change. The Icelandic sheep farmers of the Eyjafjörður area in the north of Iceland have met their match: actor Tom Cruise is back on the volcanic rock, and he's settled down close to a sheep farm. Security around the star is tight and farmers in the area are complaining to the media that they are under surveillance, clearly unhappy with the way they are being treated in their own backyard.**

The actor is in Iceland for the filming of a motion picture tentatively titled 'Oblivion' in an area called Hrossaborg in the northeast of the country. The area is located about 25 km from Lake Mývatn and is strictly off-limits to visitors. Three scenes will be filmed in the area and another two will be filmed near Lake Þórisvatn. While filming, Tom Cruise resides in Hrafnabjörg in Eyjafjörður, a luxury country retreat formerly owned by one of Iceland's pre-crash tycoons, merchant Jóhannes Jónsson (founder of the Bónus empire).

been rounding up sheep in Vaðlaheiði and were on their way down an old mountain road when they were met by the film star's security guards.

Until that day farmers in the area had used the mountain road freely. With tightened security in the area, things have changed. The three men saw Tom Cruise's helicopter flying above their farm and wanted to stop by the open road to see what was going on. They were met by two security guards from Öryggismiðstöðin, a private security firm, who instructed them to evacuate

*"The story has left the public pondering some moral questions: Do people want private security teams employed by the wealthy to be able to harass locals doing their daily work?"*

The villa is currently owned by Swiss magnate Thomas Martin and comes equipped with all your basic luxuries—including a swimming pool. Tom reportedly even had his own furniture flown in.

## MEDIA CIRCUS

Observing the Icelandic media these past two weeks, one couldn't miss the endless stories about the Hollywood star's adventures in Iceland. Tom Cruise arrived to Reykjavík on June 15 in a private jet with his wife Katie Holmes and daughter Suri. Every step the family took during their days in the capital was heavily documented by local media, proving that the myth about foreign stars living in peace with the locals in Iceland is indeed a myth.

Tom later flew north via helicopter, settling down in a villa in the quiet and rural Eyjafjörður area. Few days passed until he made the front page of local newspaper DV, with farmers in the area relaying ugly stories about the film star's security guards. "We were not allowed to be on the road," one farmer's wife told me over the phone last week. Her husband and two other men had

people want private security teams employed by the wealthy to be able to harass locals doing their daily work? Is the supposed safety of one individual so important that the rights of the public can be slightly altered now and then?

The locals I spoke to did not want to make a big deal of the matter. One person told me they were not upset with Tom Cruise, that they were only angry with his security guards. I did sense the sincere will of everyone to live in peace with the star. However, people seemed to be interested in the activities of Tom Cruise, with some noting that he should be left alone, "like any other human being."

What irritated them were the effects his visit was having on their own lives. When I asked the farmer's wife for her name she was quick to answer: "No thanks! I don't want to be in the spotlight. We just live here, and we want to do our jobs in peace and quiet." She did say she found it "weird how people need to act just because they are somewhat famous." Behind her I could hear her husband screaming: "They should be ashamed of themselves, these men!"

## "IT'S MINE"

Tom Cruise's clash with the Icelandic sheep farmers touches a nerve in the local community. Many Icelanders are worried about how their once wide and open land with its mountains and lakes, seems to be getting closed in the interest of private owners. Very recently it was customary for anyone to be able to tread anywhere they wanted, say in pursuit of some blueberries or on a hike. Anyone can tell you that it is getting increasingly harder. New private owners, who'll often live in the city, using the land as summer resort, have closed down roads and put up signs, barring the public from entering. This is new to many raised in the once wide-open countryside of Iceland.

In the last few months, DV has been covering issues where people are barred from entering private areas that were once open to the public. For example, people were prevented from entering Keríð, a famous tourist attraction, whilst the Chinese premier Wen Jiabao was on an official visit in April. One of the owners of Keríð, Morgunblaðið publisher Óskar Magnússon, explained that he wasn't a big fan of either the Icelandic or Chinese governments and thus did not wish to grant the party access.

Another example is how new landowners of Horn, close to the famous mountain Skessuhorn in Borgarfjörður, closed down a road leading to the mountain. For a long time hikers have used the road to get to the roots of the mountain, but now that has changed. In the aftermath, owner Ingibjörg Davíðsdóttir's Facebook status about the mountain has become infamous: "Such beauty! It's mine!"

Closing off land to the public seems to be the next big thing in the so-called post-crash New Iceland. 🇮🇸

Opinion | Eliza Reid

## Brownies For Þóra

*My first presidential election as an Icelander*



In June 1996, I drove from Buffalo, New York to Seattle with two friends and a fake ID so I could gamble in Vegas (I lost). I was heading into my third year of university, contemplating law school and whether Doug and Carol would ever get back together on ER. Tweets were the sounds birds made.

The only thing I knew about Iceland was that Reykjavík was its capital. I certainly did not know that the same month I cruised up California's Pacific Coast Highway, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson was elected Iceland's fifth president.

Fast forward four World Cups, more than a dozen Eurovision song contests, another Icelandic Miss World, and one major economic meltdown, and here we are in June 2012.

I haven't returned to Vegas and I never went to law school. But early on in grad school I encountered a tall, dark and handsome Viking: I'm now mother to three exuberant half-Vikings and a citizen of Iceland.

Ólafur Ragnar is still president—for at least a few days anyway.

This is the first presidential election in which I will be voting and I'm as giddy as during Olympic hockey matches (I grew up in Canada).

Saturday's election is going to make history. Barring an incredible upset, either a sitting president will have been re-elected for a record fifth four-year term, or a sitting president will have been defeated by the youngest person ever to run for the office.

This campaign is also historic because it's the first time a sitting president has been seriously challenged. There is a choice: do voters want to keep the same president for a generation or do they want a fresh one to steer it in a new direction?

Full disclosure: I want the leading challenger, TV journalist Þóra Arnórsdóttir, to win. This is a different country than it was sixteen, or even six, years ago, and I believe it is time for a different leader—someone with integrity and an intelligent, contemporary vision—to guide us.

So, to make my own tiny contribution to my adopted homeland, I'm trying to help. I baked brownies for the opening of Þóra's campaign office and cupcakes for the June 17 festivities. I'm volunteering at her campaign office.

The experience is giving me a fascinating, albeit narrow, glimpse into the world of political campaigning, Iceland-style.

Þóra's campaign HQ—and, I assume, the others—is open daily to anyone who wants to stop by for a cup of hot coffee and some homemade pancakes. There is plenty of campaign material of course, but also friendly chat about current affairs of all sorts.

Even after almost a decade here, I still can't follow all the conversation, but the gist involves analysing the latest opinion polls and debates, and the requisite discussion to uncover the inevitable common acquaintance. Everyone seems to know personally either a candidate or one of his or her relatives.

They also want to know why an immigrant would be so interested in the campaign.

I believe the campaign should intrigue and be accessible to all of us new Icelanders. Although we may not all be able to follow the debates because of language barriers, two of the six candidates have their websites in English (and other languages); there was even an all-candidates meeting tailored to the immigrant community that was simultaneously interpreted into nine languages.

Maybe this access is why I'm so excited about the campaign. There is a personal dimension to it that I would not find in my home country. Never in Canada would I come face-to-face or be able to interact with, say, prime ministerial candidates.

But here, I have met both Ólafur Ragnar and Þóra on several occasions, and heard the other candidates speak in person. I can shake their hands and ask the questions I believe most relevant to the campaign.

This means I can make a more informed choice than I possibly could from reading manifestos alone.

In 1996, almost two decades ago, I never thought I would be volunteering for an Icelandic presidential campaign. But with access like this and the chance to be even a tiny part of what I hope will be a ground-breaking election, I feel privileged and compelled to do so. The country's size means each individual can have a proportionally larger impact, and that our elected officials have more of an impact on us.

As immigrants, we have a duty to get involved and to help mould this country for the future. This is our chance to make a mark, to exert our influence. Language barriers can be a challenge, but should not be an impediment. This election is about who we believe can unify our country, about who will make us proud to be Icelandic.

I know who I believe can do that. Do you? 🇮🇸

## Words

Jón Bjarki Magnússon

## Photography

Promotional

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# Two Years Old: IMMI Inches Through Icelandic Parliament



**When IMMI, the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative, turned two years old this month, supporters cheered a few accomplishments it has made toward protecting freedom of information. However, IMMI—a legislative proposal to re-position Iceland as an information safe haven—is still very much in the developmental stages and not yet a law on the books, despite some cases of international press embellishing its progress.**

But there is still much work to be done on IMMI, which is now operated under the non-profit organisation known as the International Modern Media Institute, of which co-author, software developer and digital freedom advocate Smári McCarthy is Executive Director.

"It is a common misunderstanding that our task is complete, or that it has stalled," Smári wrote in an IMMI public status report published in April. "Our original aspirations for completing within a year were overly ambitious, but it is clear that the project is going on and has great momentum."

That momentum started when the Icelandic Parliament approved IMMI as a parliamentary resolution on June 16, 2010, a fancy way of saying the Icelandic government could move ahead researching ways to strengthen press freedoms and protections for sources and whistle-blowers.

Once the news of IMMI was out and the international press jumped on the story, some of the publicity made it seem like IMMI had been adopted into law.

The New York Times published an article "A Vision of Iceland as a Haven for Journalists" on February 21, 2010 which began: "Iceland, where the journalists run free." Other international

headlines strengthened that notion such as: "WikiLeaks and Iceland MPs propose 'journalism haven,'" (BBC News, Feb. 12, 2010).

#### THE IMPETUS FOR IMMI

To appreciate the beginnings of IMMI, let's go back to August 1, 2009—a date

exposed a few days earlier.

Moments before airtime, Björn and the RÚV team scrambled to rewrite the 19:00 newscast, fearing that if they didn't abide by the injunction that they would face monetary fines. "But we did it in a way that was tenable to us to tell the story, without telling the story," he

when I meet him at RÚV's studio. "If you panic, then the audience panics." By this time, almost a year after Iceland's financial crash, the media was familiar with covering it. Bogi went into ad-lib mode:

"We are not allowed to present all of the news that we were going to," Bogi said on air.

The suppression evoked public outcry and members of the Journalists' Union of Iceland and the RÚV News Broadcasters' Association criticised the bank's move to control the news.

"I remember thinking at that time that this was a counterproductive move by the bank, Kaupþing. It blew up in their faces. It drew even more attention to what they were trying to hide. It was hugely damaging to the bank," Björn recalls.

This egregious instance of news control over a WikiLeaks report thrust the idea of freedom of information into the news headlines and connected WikiLeaks' Founder Julian Assange with the IMMI team.

*"Media in Iceland is not free. Jón Bjarki is a professional reporter ruined financially from reporting a story. I'm a blogger driven to the brink of personal bankruptcy after telling a story I know to be true."*

that involves the news business, an injunction and WikiLeaks.

On that Saturday, five minutes before RÚV's evening newscast, TV journalist Björn Malmquist found himself "shocked and angry"—even "pissed off," he says. Björn shared his experience with me during an interview held at RÚV's TV studio in February.

Kaupþing bank issued RÚV an injunction, forcing the national broadcaster to pull the lead story about insider loans—a story that WikiLeaks had

tells me.

As the top of the hour approached, word of the ban got to anchorman Bogi Ágústsson. Amid his pre-broadcast ritual of reviewing scripts, straightening his tie and fitting in his earpiece that connects him with the show's director, Bogi was informed of the embargo on the bank story.

"I have been a newscaster for thirty years. You know that in a live broadcast 'shit happens' as they say, but it's important how you deal with it," he says

Continues on page 32

#### Words

Jennifer Karchmer

#### Photography

Alisa Kalyanova



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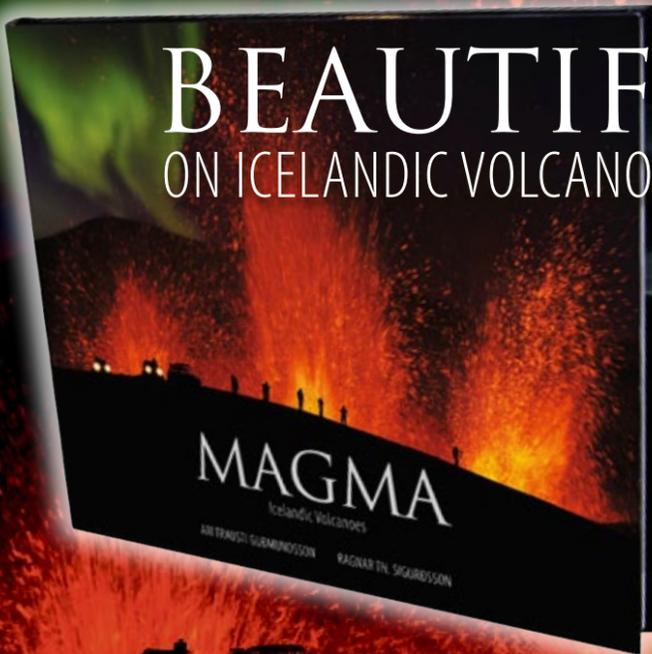


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# Putting The Green In Greenland: Eric The Red Decides To Start Over

**Surely Eiríkur Rauði, Eric the Red, must be one of the more Viking of the Vikings. Banished from Norway for manslaughter in 960, he decided to start over in Iceland, where he lived semi-peacefully for over a decade until suffering a relapse. In the early 980s, the Ping assembly at Þórsnes found him guilty of several killings and exiled him. Having run out of known places in the North Atlantic to move to, there was naught to do but discover new ones.**

Eiríkur heard of a place farther west called Gunnbjarnarsker, named after Gunnbjörn who claimed to have seen it. Like many sociopaths, Eiríkur Rauði had a gift for marketing as well as acquisition. He claimed the country but, with little viable farmland, found it hard to convince people to move there. Nothing a little rebranding couldn't fix. Gunnbjarnarsker was renamed Greenland, and a fleet of 25 longships set sail. Many ships were caught in a storm, got lost or turned back, and only fourteen made it to this latest earthly paradise. Others would follow, and at its peak around 3,000 people of Nordic descent lived in Greenland, divided among roughly 300 farms in two different settlement areas.

## ERIC THE RED LOSES HIS RELIGION

Less homicidal than his father, Eiríkur's son, Leifur, nevertheless had the same knack for exploring. He found his own land still further west, but how could he outdo the old man when it came to branding? What could possibly be better than evoking the lushness of the colour green in order to get people over? Well, wine, of course, and so he decided to call his country Vinland.

Leifur later brought Christianity to Greenland on behalf of the Norwegian king Ólafur Tryggvason, making an early convert of his mother. Old Eiríkur would have none of this "love thy neighbour" business and stubbornly stuck to his ways. His wife prayed for his soul, and, more drastically, refused to go to bed with a pagan, but all for naught. Leifur also asked Eiríkur to come with him westwards, but when Eiríkur fell off his horse on the way to the ship, Leifur took this as a bad omen and stayed at home. It would take another 500 years before people

arrived who combined the missionary zeal of Leifur with the homicidal-ness of Eiríkur, and could claim the new continent as their own.

## ARE GREENLANDERS GREEN, THEN?

The Vikings may only have stayed in North America for a couple of winters, but the settlements in Greenland spanned some 500 years. Unlike what the Viking Age equivalent of brochures may have said, the climate was too cold for growing corn, but the south was adequate for grazing cattle and sheep. They also seem to have occasionally sailed to what is now Canada for timber, something that was always in short supply.

The main accounts of Medieval Greenland come from 'Eiríks saga Rauða' ("The Saga Of Eric The Red") and 'Grænlendinga saga' ("The Saga Of The Greenlanders"), both of which deal with the founding and settling of the country. The following centuries are less well documented, but around a century later, in 1076, Adam of Bremen says that the people there live much like the Icelanders do, except they are more hostile and known for plundering ships in the area. Were these the genes of Eiríkur Rauði kicking in, or perhaps just economic necessity? Then again, Adam says that the people there have green-coloured skin due to the salt water, and so his account should be taken with a grain of, well, salt.

Later stories tell of adventurers going to Greenland to procure polar bears,



which made an excellent present to the medieval Norwegian monarch who had everything. The last reliable account of the Greenland colony comes from the accounts of the crew of a Norwegian ship en route to Iceland, which was blown off course. This was in 1406, and after that the Norse in Greenland slipped out of history and into myth.

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE GREENLANDERS?

Almost in the vein of mythological places such as Atlantis, the disappearance of the Norse colony in Greenland has led to all manner of possible explanations. Some of the most popular are:

### 1. It was climate change, of course

In this day and age, with melting glaciers and lonely polar bears set adrift on ice floes, it is tempting to blame climate change for previous calamities in Greenland as well. In fact, it may have been rising temperatures in the century between the settlement of Iceland and that of Greenland, which is the reason for the discrepancy in names. Iceland may indeed have been icy when people



came there, but a 100 years later, things had warmed enough for Greenland to be called green. By 1200, the average temperature was declining, and even if it went slightly up again by the year 1500, this may have been too little, too late, to save the Greenlanders.

### 2. Blame it on the King.

Greenland came under the Norwegian king in 1261, a year before Iceland did, and the Iceland-Greenland sailing route ceased to exist. Norway itself went into decline in the 14th century, due to competition from the Hansa and the destructiveness of the Black Plague. The Icelanders had been promised six ships a year bringing supplies, but the Greenlanders had to make do with one. When the ship sank in 1369, no new ship was commissioned and Greenland was, for all intents and purposes, cut off from the outside world.

### 3. The Mongols did it.

Some have suggested that the main reason people ventured this far north to begin with was an effect of the Arab conquest of the Middle East. When Europe was cut off from oriental ivory, a market opened up for walrus tusks from the far north and even narwhal horns, which are probably the inspiration behind all that unicorn imagery. When the Mongols took over much of Asia in the 13th century, making Asian trade safe again, those who had banked on northern tusks went out of business.

### 4. Because they were fashion victims. Literally.

An excavation in Ikgait in 1921 showed that as late as the 15th century, people in Greenland kept abreast of the latest Parisian fashions, rather than adapt to the climate. No one who has seen Icelandic girls in mini-skirts in the middle of winter will be surprised to learn that people sometimes choose haute couture over comfort. This may also have applied to people preferring European style timber houses over, say, Inuit igloos. Attempts to maintain a life standard not sustainable in the far north may well have spelled their doom. Again, modern day parallels are glaring.

### 5. It's the bloody English, again.

English ships were so frequent in Icelandic waters in the 15th century that historians have often dubbed it the "English Century." Most came to trade, but some to raid. In her historical novel 'Hrafninn,' Vilborg Davíðsdóttir suggests that the remaining settlers, already in decline, were carried off by English pirates. No accounts of this exist, but then again, nor do accounts of anything else, so why not?

### 6. They were killed by Inuit.

Not very politically correct to say these days, it is nonetheless possible that the settlers were massacred by the Inuit. In fact, the Inuit first arrived in Greenland in ca. 1300, having made their way from Alaska. They displaced the earlier Dorset culture and are the forefathers of today's Greenlanders. Unlike the Dorset, the Inuit had bows and arrows and might have

*"The most fun theory in this category is no doubt that some members made is as far down south as present day Mexico, where one of them became worshipped as the white, bearded god Quetzalcoatl."*

been better placed to attack the declining Norse settlements. Some archaeological evidence of conflict has been found, and Inuit folklore speaks of their ancestors driving away the giants who previously occupied the land, but whether this refers to the Norse or the Dorset is impossible to say.



### 7. They became gods.

Some have chosen to interpret finds of Norse artefacts among Inuit as evidence that they interbred, and that the Norse may even have disappeared into the Inuit tribes. Others have searched farther west, suggesting that they moved to Canada. The quest for a blond Inuit tribe has so far not yielded results, but the prospect remains tempting to those who want to make as much out of the Nordic presence in North America as possible.

The most fun theory in this category is no doubt that some members made it as far down south as present day Mexico, where one of them became worshipped as the white, bearded god Quetzalcoatl. For this to make any sense, it would have



to have taken place close to the settlement period, as he seems to have been worshipped there from around 900. The Mormons claim old Quetzal to have been Jesus Christ himself, but perhaps he was a Viking after all.

Ironically, the worship of the god made the job of plundering the Aztec Empire that much easier for the Spanish. When Cortez arrived, beard and all, he was mistaken for the deity and welcomed by the unsuspecting population.

### 8. They drowned on the way back home.

Less sexy than being worshipped by lost empires, but perhaps more likely, is that sometime in the century after ships stopped arriving, the inhabitants may have tried to get back to Iceland through perilous, ice infested waters in boats that in no way were intended for ocean sailing. It wouldn't even take a Titanic style iceberg to ruin such a venture. In any case, not much evidence exists, and Leonardo DiCaprio is unlikely to star in a hit movie about it. Sadly. ☹

## Words

Valur Gunnarsson

## Illustrations

Eric the Red stamps



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# I LEFT MY HEART IN ITTOQQORTOORMIIT

The Grapevine spends three days in a remote city of East Greenland

Located at the mouth of Scoresby Sund—the largest fjord system in the world—Ittoqqortoormiit is so cut-off that supply ships can only reach it two months of the year, in July and August, when temperatures rise to 5°C and the eastern Greenlandic sea ice melts.

Otherwise the city's 475 inhabitants rely Air Iceland's small Fokker 50 planes, which fly into Constable Point—home to little more than a landing strip and hotel—once a week during winter and twice a week during the summer. From there, Ittoqqortoormiit—"the place with the big houses"—is another 40 kilometres northwest by helicopter or snowmobile.

Wearing everything that might stand up to the -15°C temperatures typical of April, Grapevine photographer and I journeyed to Ittoqqortoormiit to spend three days with Nonni Travel's Árni Valur Vilhjálmsson. The easy-going Icelander in his early thirties welcomed

us into his family's home just outside of town in Kap Tobin. We would wind up spending a fair amount of time there, drinking Slovenian brewed coffee and staring out at the expansive frozen-over fjord with its multiple storey-tall iceberg conveniently planted just outside the house this year.

Come August, the ice will have melted enough for sailing and Árni—who goes back and forth to Akureyri—will return, but this time to spend an entire year there to take on a larger role in the company that his mom started sixteen years ago with local Ole Brønlund, who Árni affectionately refers to as his older brother.

## A BIT OF A LOVE STORY

The story of how Árni's mom, Helena Dejak—an Icelander from Slovenia—wound up with a home and a company in remote east Greenland is an interesting one. "In a way it's a little bit of a love story," she begins to tell me over coffee back in Reykjavík.

"In 1990, I was flying over Greenland with my husband—who is a pilot—on our way to the national park when suddenly I saw some houses. At first I hardly dared to ask him if it could be true because it seemed so unrealistic that anybody could live so far away

from civilization, but I'm a courageous woman, so I asked, 'Siggi, is it possible that I see houses?' And he said, 'yes. This is Scoresby Sund.' I said, 'I don't believe it. I don't believe that people can live so far away from civilization.'"

That moment, she said something happened: "I say it's a love story because something happens in your body and your soul, which tells you that you just have to pursue it. I didn't know how, I didn't know when, but at that moment, I knew it would happen."

When she got to the national park, she met a hunter who came to her one day with a rabbit. Though they couldn't communicate, she happily cooked it, and continued to have him over for dinner every evening for the week that they spent at the park. When they were getting ready to leave, she told him that she would see him again.

And sure enough, four years later she had made her first visit to the houses that had once seemed so far away when she flew over in 1990, and sitting by the harbour was the hunter.

## NO TO TOURISM

With experience running a travel agency in Iceland, Helena says she wanted to share the knowhow with the town, which she saw as an opportunity,

something that hunters could do during the offseason. It would, however, take her another three years to convince the town that tourism might be something worth trying. The mayor wouldn't hear it.

"I told her that I had a travel agency

"It took a lot of persuasion, a lot of soul, crying, and smiling," but in the end they understood me. I told them, 'be yourself.' I said, 'I'm not asking you to be in polar bear trousers or a seal outfit. Just be yourself, and this is what people will come and see how can you

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**"At first I hardly dared to ask him if it could be true because it seemed so unrealistic that anybody could live so far away from civilization"**

---

in Iceland, that my husband had often flown over the village and that something in my heart was telling me that I had to be here, that it was not because I wanted something from them, but the mayor said, 'if you're talking about tourism, we don't want it,' Helena recalls. "And I told her that I understood because tourism can spoil people and bring corruption."

Finally she said she was able to convince a group of hunters that they could in fact make a business introducing their land and country to foreign people by dogsledding in the winter and kayaking and taking boat trips during the summer.

survive here with the conditions as they are."

Now, sixteen years later, Helena says the company is 80% owned by locals, and that it employs some twenty hunters who are able to make a living where making a living is tough.

## A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Nanu Travel remains the only tourism company in town, which has no restaurants, cafés or gift shops selling stuffed animal polar bears. This was a breath of fresh air to discover about Ittoqqortoormiit, having just arrived from downtown Reykjavík, which seems to increasingly cater to tourists with

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## Words

Anna Andersen

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## Photography

Ryan Parteka

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stuffed animal puffins.

We woke up to a sunny morning, but immediately upon stepping outside the -15°C air bit at my fingers through my two layers of gloves. The photographer and I walked down a path evidently carved out by heavy snowmobile tracks and I popped into Nanu Travel to borrow a big red snowsuit, which proved invaluable on the rest of the trip.

An ex-hunter called Scoresby picked us up on a snowmobile and took us down to the fjord edge where Áge Uugi Pike was roping up dogs for our first taste of dogsledding. After he lined up the dogs, we climbed on the sled and the dogs took off—much like horses, taking care of their business on the run. While difficult to talk with the wind in our faces, our driver Áge turned around and told me that he had won the town dogsledding competition the day before.

#### LOOKING FOR POLAR BEARS

We were heading to Kap Tobin on a mission to see a polar bear. We had heard that this would be our best chance to see one. Scientists had left their outpost there where they had been taking samples from the hunted polar bears to measure toxin levels. As the world's trash gravitates to the poles, seals and polar bears, which are both part of the Greenlandic diet—have shown increased levels of toxins.

Áge tied up the dogs, put his gun over his shoulder, and we walked to a lookout over the ice edge, scanning in the distance, hoping to spot the majestic creature. There were three polar bears left of the east Greenland's annual quota of 35 and two had been spotted wandering not far off from Kap Tobin a day earlier. Nothing.

We walked back to the dogs where we ran into Ejner Hammeken, known as Abaaba. We asked him if he had hunted any polar bears, and he traced the number 109 in the snow, and then added 1981, which we took to be the year

he killed his first bear. We later found out that he is one of the best hunters in town.

By the time we got going again the cold had found its way through my fur lined boots and wool socks. It was a forty-minute ride back to town, where we met Árni, who then took us straight back to Kap Tobin via snowmobile this time, and twice as fast.

Árni's home is cosy and the fjord-front view is unreal. We went out onto his porch into the brisk air, and enjoyed a couple of shots of whisky and Opal-Icelandic black liquorice vodka—that we had unknowingly smuggled into the country. As of January of this year, it is illegal to bring strong spirits into the country—a government effort to curb drinking and the corollary abuse, murder and suicide.

After enjoying a nice meal, Árni took us up to America Mountain, where an old American radio tower once stood, but now lays knocked over. Then he showed us a hot spring—which was far too hot for bathing—but could potentially be developed.

We spent the rest of the evening sitting around a fire, chatting about realities of life in this town, drinking tea and eating cake until the sun had gone down. "You really have to plan in advance. If people want a sofa set, they have to plan it a year in advance, and to make sure it gets on the ship or they won't get it, and that goes for everything," Árni told us. "They always run out of something, like mayo or canned tomatoes or ketchup."

#### MODERN CONVENIENCES

We woke up the following morning after having slept a good ten hours. We were in Ittoqqortoormiit, but there was no stress to go anywhere or to do anything. We didn't have a checklist of attractions to see. We were just there, and part of the beauty of being there was being able to slow down.

Árni doesn't have internet, and he

powers the house with a generator, which he affectionately calls Genny. He doesn't have a shower and the toilets are essentially glorified bags that you sit on—aptly named "bag toilets." In fact—and they need to be taken out, much like you take out the trash.

Taking out the trash in Greenland means dumping it in designated piles, which I would later catch a glimpse of—suspicious looking black bags picked up from the pile and scattered about by the wind. I was surprised to learn

### "Nobody feels stuck, but people feel forgotten," the Mayor told me"

that the trash has been piling up for 87 years, not once being removed.

"Before ships started bringing in plastic wrapped food, cans and bottles, the Inuit used nearly everything, and what they didn't use would be picked up by birds and ravens," Helena would later tell me. "Today, cans and bottles, this stuff doesn't disappear, so can you imagine?" she asks.

#### A FROZEN WONDERLAND

After spending that early afternoon lounging about inside, the sky cleared up and we decided to go on Árni's planned adventure for the day—exploring the surrounding areas by snowmobile.

We rode to town to meet Ole Brønlund, who would be my experienced driver for the day, racing us up and down snowy passes, crossing down into the ice-covered Lillefjord ("Little Fjord") and climbing back up to an incredible lookout over to the ice edge. We stopped to have a Coke and a Kit Kat, a few items that often run out at the general store before the supply ships come again.

Finally we headed back to town, with Ole stopping every now and then to plot points on his new GPS system.

Ole's wife Serena had prepared a musk oxen feast for us, which we spent hours feasting on while listening to Ole tell stories.

Although it was the town's designated 'no alcohol week', Árni was sure the bar would be open. It was Friday after all and bar is only open on Fridays between the hours of 22:00 and 3:00. We were amongst the first to get there, but it wasn't long before more trickled in—people of all ages, not unlike at Icelandic bars in the countryside.

On the way home I was thankful for the snowsuit, the air whipping against my face. I closed my eyes and let the sound of the motor drown out my thoughts. The reality of having to catch the helicopter a few hours later didn't seem to matter. Finally, after many delays, during which time we watched 'Idiocracy' and I caught a much-needed shower, the flight was officially cancelled and the three of us went back to Kap Tobin.

#### THE FUTURE OF THE CITY

If a handful of politicians from Nuuk hadn't been in town for an annual meeting, I may have been stuck for a few more days, but the Constable Point airport opened for us on a Sunday. In the small airport waiting room I talk to Mayor Asii Chemnitz Narup and other members of the municipality about the meeting and the future of the city. I had heard rumours in town about there being discussion of closing the town down, but they denied that this was true.

They were pleased with the turnout—50 people, which seems like a lot considering the meeting was conducted in West Greenlandic, quite a bit different than the East Greenlandic

spoken in town.

"Nobody feels stuck, but people feel forgotten," the Mayor told me, pointing out that the area of this municipality is equal to the size of France and Portugal and that there are 21,000 people living there, and 16,000 of them are Nuuk.

They discussed the future of the town and ways to boost tourism, such as moving the Constable Point airport to Ittoqqortoormiit, making it easier for people to come and go.

But as they discussed these opportunities, I couldn't help wondering if making it easier to get to this remote town would not also ruin much of its charm. In many ways East Greenland reminded me of Iceland's not too distant past, before tourists began trampling the country. Are we losing what it is that makes Iceland special? Is Ittoqqortoormiit in danger of the same thing?

Photographer Ryan Parteka had stayed behind a few more days would leave on a more grim note, witnessing the body of a 21-year-old boy being taken into the church—the third suicide in the town this year. All of them were young boys in their twenties.

"We talk about civilization, but what have we given them," Helena said. "Maybe we took them from an igloo into a house, but they lost their soul. They don't know where they come from; they do not know where they are going. They are confused; it's so sad to see that. And I believe that tourism, if they build the infrastructure and move the airport, then this village could support itself, but it has to be done slowly, over the next twenty to thirty years."

"It's not enough to give people money. We need to teach people to be independent. It brings so much back, gives people the feeling that you are doing something from your heart," she says. "Don't give them the fish. Teach them how to fish." ❧

# Nuuk Posse, Sume And Other Great Bands!

What's going on in Greenlandic music?



I'm guilty of not tapping into Greenland's culture. Hell, my brushes with this great island's pop culture have been hurried, few and far between. And let's face it, rarely does Icelandic media, or any other media for that matter, pay attention to our friendly neighbours and their music.

#### Words

Birkir Fjalmar Viðarsson

#### Photography

Ludovic Hirilmann

Last time I checked in with Greenland was when I watched their latest and most successful feature length film 'Qaqqat Alannui' ("The Shadows In The Mountains"). It portrayed the legend of a murderous spirit that loves killing drunk and horny teenagers who party in the wilderness. I was surprised by how Americanised its stylistic approach was, but why wouldn't it be? Almost everything, everywhere, is influenced by the big bald eagle. So it is fair to assume current Greenland rock and pop is too. Right? No?

To help me find out and enlighten me about other aspects of Greenland's music I was joined by Karsten Sommer,

who ran ULO Records and released much of Greenland's most popular and renowned music through the years. He's now a reporter for Greenland Radio (KNR).

#### DRIVEN BY INDEPENDENCE

"Modern music plays a big role in Greenlandic society," Karsten tells me. "Its presence and impact started way back in 1973, when the first ever Greenlandic LP was released. The group was **Sume** (English: Where?) and the LP was called 'Sumut' (English: Where to?). Danish record label Demos, which was a part of the Vietnam anti-war movement, handled its release. We got the idea to find a Greenlandic group, mainly because we were "anti-colonialists" and saw Greenland as a symbol of Danish colonialism," Karsten says. His is a firsthand account, for he produced the album. "Sume made songs in Greenlandic about being proud of Greenlandic culture, urging people to have self-confidence, and expressing respect for the forefathers."

So it was rock for change—more than just music—a quality prevalent in some of today's Greenlandic bands, especially those of the hip hop variety. Take hip hoppers **Prussic** for example. Their raps don't shy away from taking an inward and honest look at their people's problems: namely substance abuse, broken families and adult role models and their effect on the youth, be it good or bad.

Sume (who are still active) helped unify Greenland's people and provided the soundtrack for "home-rule" in opposition to the Danish one. Quickly, rock 'n' roll sung in the native tongue had a purpose beyond storytelling and entertainment. "At that time no one was tempted to sing in English or Danish," Sommer says, adding: "Music was a way of keeping our big country together, and telling others about your feelings. During the late '70s and '80s, lots of LPs (later CDs) were released. We're 50,000 people up here, yet many of the releases sold 7,000–10,000 copies!"

However, much like everywhere else, album sales have recently plummeted due to downloading.

#### YOUTH GONE WILD

Greenland's youth has embraced Internet and smartphone technology in spite of the cost: "It's very expensive up here: 15Mb cost 1,000 Danish kroner [about \$170] a month," Sommer says.

Greenland is the least densely pop-

ulated country in the world, so let's not underestimate how internet access has revolutionised the way music is consumed and how artists and fans alike engage. "The Internet is a gift from 'God.' It opens the world. Especially for the young ones."

*"As it stands, hip-hop is probably the strongest wave running through Greenlandic pop these days."*

ulated country in the world, so let's not underestimate how internet access has revolutionised the way music is consumed and how artists and fans alike engage. "The Internet is a gift from 'God.' It opens the world. Especially for the young ones."

Indeed, not-for-profit festivals like Nuuk Underground (which has the goal of "creating an open space for the alternative culture in all of Greenland") and the Katuaq—Nordic House, (a prestigious and beautiful cultural venue that hosts and produces a variety of culture / art events and concerts, and houses a cinema) reach out to people online. Clearly, Greenland's music scene is thriving and producing acts that fall under a variety of genres. Lets name-check a few that haven't been mentioned already.

#### GREENLANDIC FOLK, INDIGENOUS HIP-HOP, ALTERNATIVE ROCK

**Nanook** and **Nive Nielsen's** international appeal should not be lost on anyone. The former came forth with a successful and likeable blend of pop and rock, sometimes light on its feet and other times emotional and thoughtful. The latter has gained international renown, being released by a prominent German label, touring globally and becoming quite the sensation stateside. KEXP video instalments, appearances at festivals like SXSW and Iceland Airwaves, to name but a few of the hotspots she and her band have hit, have done nothing but increase her popularity.

Legendary folk singer **Rasmus Lyberth** is by now one of the country's

most beloved and respected figures and an integral part of Greenland's tapestry—their Dylan/McCartney if you will. **Simon Lynge's** pretty voice and cosy acoustic guitar strumming will bring even the most cold-hearted of us around the campfire. **Torluut!** assem-

bles at least nine members on stage at any given time and their loud, playful and theatrical shenanigans go well with their rock-hybrid. Denmark-based **Small Time Giants'** socially conscious melodic and atmospheric alternative rock has quickly garnered a loyal following. As it stands, hip-hop is probably the strongest wave running through Greenlandic pop these days. "When we were active in ULO, Greenlandic hip hop was what we exported most, mainly to the US, Canada and Japan. The hip hop music is kind of 'open'. Fans love to hear their music sung in other languages than English," Sommer says. And this trend has further evolved and spread wider via social networking. Seminal '90s hip-hop group **Nuuk Posse** helped pave the way for acts such as **Prussic** and **Peand el's**. The latter's Aftermath Records-inspired hip hop recently found its way onto The Discovery Channel's 'Flying Wild Alaska', a new reality TV series.

This article is not intended as a comprehensive guide to pop music's development in Greenland and its current state. Look at it as a quick introduction to a largely untapped source of unique artists—who are also earnest students of Western pop culture—now you should seek out their sounds online. Thanks to Jens Guðmundsson for his assistance. ☘

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# Tight Like A Bumblebee's Ass

*Botnleðja's long-winded, yet triumphant return*



What was supposed to be an anal, sharp and critical review of Botnleðja's first comeback show at Gaukurinn quickly turned into an open fan letter. You object? That's probably because you just don't get it. And I'll spare you the history lesson. Just be aware that this country's love of rock trio Botnleðja is not to be played down. The same goes for the group's constant, enduring influence over Icelandic rock music ever since they won Músíktilraunir (Battle Of The Bands) in 1995. Everyone has a Botnleðja story to tell. The band has been present in one form or another during a lot of our lives' pivotal moments. At any given day, you can find the most unlikely of heads willing to debate which of their albums is the best one, or which of their songs is the most excellent one. Their crossover appeal was, and still is, immense. At this show in question, I wasn't really surprised seeing 38-year-old punks-turned-businessmen getting their rock on alongside twenty-year-old art-students-in-a-band. There's something to be said about that.

Anticipating a late night and a long set from Botnleðja, I opted to skip openers Nolo and gorge on anti-aging powder at home instead. As the originally announced Saturday comeback show quickly sold out, Friday night's bash was a 'second show' and turned out to be not as packed to the rafters. The turnout was still great, and in hindsight I am glad I didn't go to the sold-out one, because I soon found myself engaging in shenanigans reminiscent of what my friends and I pulled at Botnleðja concerts in the mid and late '90s. Those moves would have definitely

been harder to pull off in a packed Gaukurinn, where one couldn't move.

## AN EPIC SET—TOO MANY HITS TO MENTION

Without warning, like the '90s never happened, we were singing along, jumping up and down, drooling over everyone and trying to sneak in some crowd-surfing. Such is the power and nostalgic magic of Botnleðja's music. Mugs and bottles got broken, and at

*"Fuck it. The band played a set of 31 songs. Bloody hell!"*

some point an idiot pulled out his rotten penis in front of the stage and proceeded to urinate on the floor. That son-of-a-turd-bucket got thrown out. Fuck.

Highlights included hearing 'Óbyggilegi heimur' again and going mental as a result and 'Rassgata 51' (Botnleðja's meanest song), when ex-members KGB and media personality Andri Freyr Viðarsson got on stage to give it that extra oomph and grit. People lost their shit.

Fuck it. The band played a set of 31 songs. Bloody hell! I cannot review shit like that. Was the show too long? Sure. Did I give a shit? No. Not a single shit was given. Everything you needed was there. Even dumb numbers like 'Húsi.' Bass player Raggi carelessly swayed and stumbled like his vintage self all the while nailing some of the best bass licks ever recorded. Drummer Halli took it upon himself to engage the crowd

with words and contorted facial expressions. Beat-wise he was on point. Guitarist/vocalist Heiðar seemed a bit subdued. Maybe he was too busy anchoring everything with the instantly recognisable and classic riffs. His voice in top shape, reserving energy was maybe wise. But sod it. He can easily afford a bit of recklessness, 'cause rarely has Iceland seen a band so subconsciously and instinctually in sync. The unspoken connection, man. That was one of their calling cards since the band's inception and still is. Tight? Tight like a bumblebee's ass, son.

## BACK TO THE FUTURE

When asked to compare this show to the era when the band was active, Halli had this to say: "We still feel the same things when on stage. But we didn't play much material from the first two albums during the latter-day era. Back then we wanted to play new material but when so much time has passed we've grown to appreciate the oldest material more and that's actually more fun to play. The difference is that tonight we are more comfortable performing and sharing all the stuff compiled through the years. The crowd is and reacts almost exactly the same after all this time. But I was surprised seeing a lot of young faces. Tonight's audience emitted a great atmosphere, which energised and encouraged us." 🍷

✍ BIRKIR FJALAR VIÐARSSON  
📷 MAREVA NARDELLI

# SUMMER SOLSTICE FILIGREE FOLK

*Ólöf Arnalds and Skúli Sverrisson at Sumarsólstöðutónleikar on June 21*



**The first time I heard Ólöf Arnalds play live was at the Aldrei fór ég suður music festival in 2010. Though I had been a fan since first hearing 'Við og við' when it came out in 2007, I was not instantly taken by her live performance. It quickly dawned on me, however, that it was the situation and not the performer. Her light, delicate vocals and down to earth presence were somehow awkward in the rocky, claustrophobic crowd in Ísafjörður and it was that which made me feel a bit indifferent about her set there, rather than her performance as such.**

Remembering this first impression made me realise how appropriate a venue Café Flora is for the Ólöf Arnalds Sumarsólstöður concert series, held in celebration of the summer solstice. With her voice warbling, bird-like amongst the flowers, lucent in evening sunlight, it seemed as though this music was meant to be heard amidst the greenery and life of the Grasagarður botanical garden. There was a moment where I could hear birds chiming in, singing in the trees outside and there was a feeling of almost unbelievable synchronicity. It was almost too well timed.

In this atmosphere there was a natural quality to the show; a quietness in the air not usually found in a concert. To call it exciting would be way off the mark, but despite a lack of 'action' there was a definite pulse amongst us. It must be the always-complementary combination of music and plant life, or something.

In matters more musical, Ólöf played a good mixture of old and new material, giving us a taste of her upcoming album 'Sudden Elevation,' which is due out in autumn. But she also played old favourites, like 'Klara,' in honour of her sister, which always makes me a bit misty, and 'Englar og dárar' about none other than her venerable accompanist Skúli Sverrisson on bass.

Her performance style and interaction with the crowd had a comfortable, off-the-cuff feeling. Though she was dressed head to foot in sparkling sequins and beads, there was no diva in her. It was just two old friends, playing to a crowd. No drama, just midsummer sunshine.

If her performance on Friday night is anything to judge by, 'Sudden Elevation' promises to be in a similar vein to her two previous full-length albums. They can best be described as filigree folk (yes, that is a made up genre), with her delicate guitar and ethereal voice winding together to create something dreamy, yet somehow earthbound. All in all, 'Sudden Elevation' is something to look forward to.

Sumarsólstöður is a follow up to a winter solstice concert series she did, which I didn't see. If the atmosphere in the murky depths of winter is anything like the quiet calm, which prevailed in Café Flora, then the midwinter equivalent will definitely be worth checking out. 🍷

✍ BERGRÚN ANNA HALLSTEINSDÓTTIR  
📷 MAREVA NARDELLI

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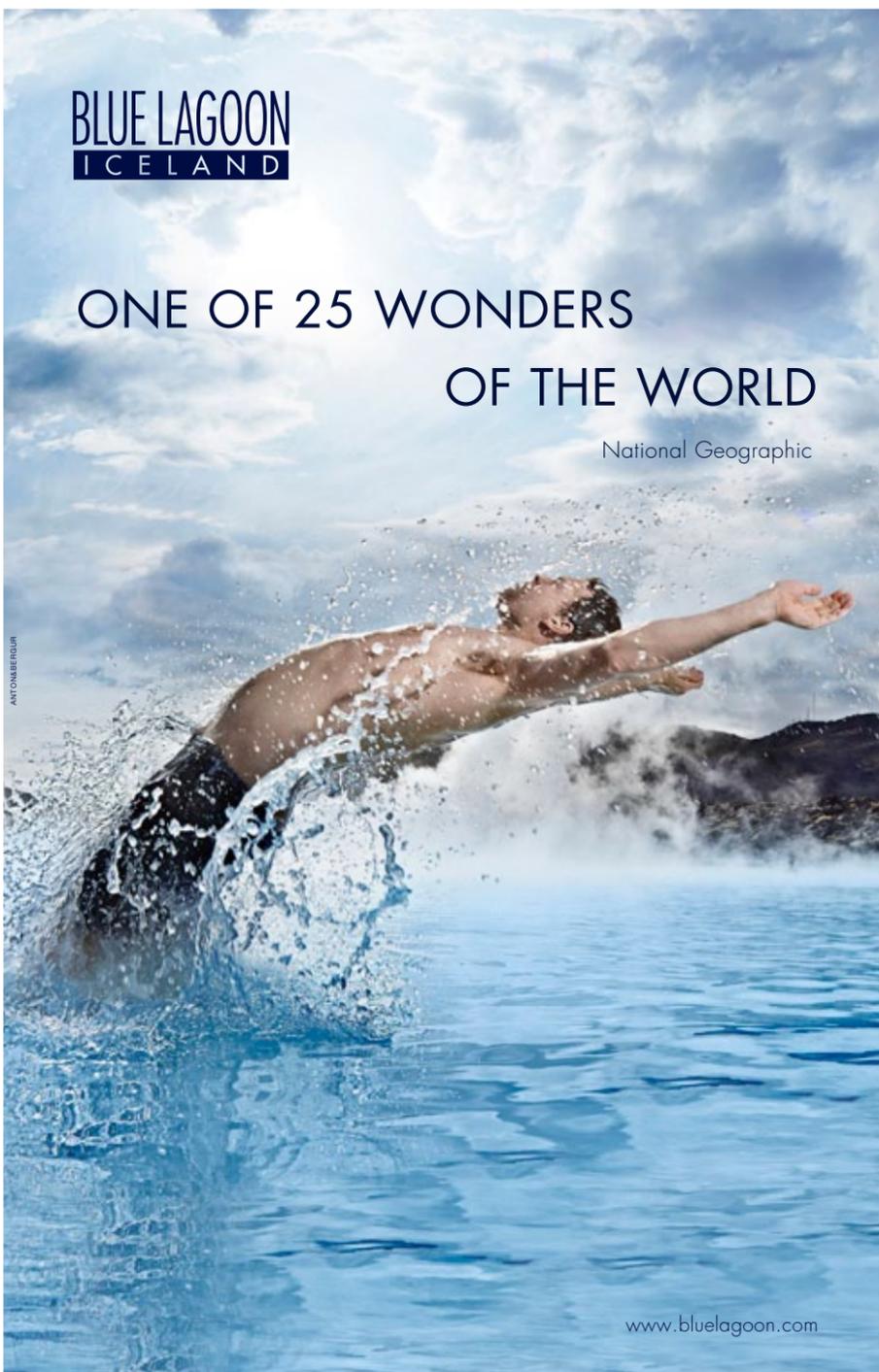
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18. júlí kl. 12 / July 18 at 12 noon  
19. júlí kl. 12 / July 19 at 12 noon  
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22. júlí kl. 17 / July 22 at 5 pm  
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28. júlí kl. 12 / July 28 at 12 noon



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Andreas Warler



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9. ágúst kl. 12 / August 9 at 12 noon  
11. ágúst kl. 12 / August 11 at 12 noon  
12. ágúst kl. 17 / August 12 at 5 pm  
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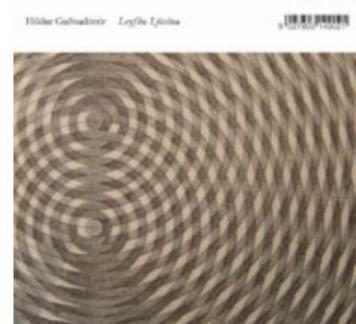
Growing pains

‘Í fráhrarfi ljóss, myrkrið lifnar við’ is the debut album from grindcore dudes Logn. They’re a precociously talented bunch, but unfortunately this is not always readily apparent on this release. For example, drummer Ægir is an impressively tight whirlwind of limbs normally, but on the opening track “Klofnun sakleysis,” the blast beats are a little sloppy and should have been re-done.

Furthermore, “Klofnun sakleysis” probably shouldn’t have opened the album; the sonic whip crack of “Vítishungur” would have better started proceedings. And the interlude track “Salt í sárin” should really be a quarter of its length, being that it is seven minutes long with minimal development.

Awareness of these sorts of “mistakes” come with maturity and experience though, so hopefully Logn will build on this in the future. There are some killer tracks on this album and in many ways Logn are far ahead of a lot of bands, but they have some maturing to do.

✂ - CLYDE BRADFORD



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Leyfðu ljósinu

[www.hildurness.com](http://www.hildurness.com)

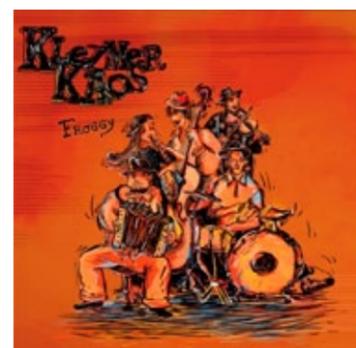
The beat goes on (and on and on and on)

In an age where the proliferation of home recording tools means everyone’s a musician at the push of a button, it’s nice to see a bit of ambition. Classically trained and able to hang with the cool kids (Animal Collective, múm, Throbbing Gristle), cellist Hildur Guðnadóttir brings a level of sophistication back to the art. As though capturing a continuous stream of thought, Hildur recorded ‘Leyfðu ljósinu’ live to tape at the Music Research Centre at the University of York, and presented it as a continuous 40-minute-long track. This would be well and good if Hildur had anything to say, but are we really at the point where we’re ready to honour the mere absence of editing as a sign of sophistication?

No. Sorry.

Subtle to the point of sleepy, there’s very little payoff for those willing to wade through the entirety of Hildur’s hypnotic refrains. Hints of cello sprinkled through a sea of ethereal voices, ‘Leyfðu ljósinu’ is minimalism at its most minimal. Nothing approaches melody—but then again, nothing has to. This isn’t just background music; it’s sonic wallpaper. And as anyone knows, by the time you’ve started discussing the wallpaper, the party is officially dead.

✂ - LAURA STUDARUS



## Klezmer Kaos

Froggy

[www.klezmerkaos.com](http://www.klezmerkaos.com)

Don’t listen to this whilst exercising; you’ll end up dead

Get ready to dance! And possibly cry. And then to say, “Hang on, how come this band is now playing excerpts of Nintendo game themes?”

Therein lies the chaos; this supreme set of musicians grab the Jewish roots of this most insistent music, blends it with some jazz licks and lets it loose when it needs to. Take “Froggy Kaos 2” as an example—half the time it sounds like a horse is playing in the woodwind

section. Then some noises that sound like what you get when Tom gets twatted on the head by Jerry. Then a frog croak from a cello.

This is superb, silly, brilliant stuff, which is waiting for some bizarre Eastern European black and white animations, or the Beatles to add visuals.

✂ - JOE SHOOMAN

Trivia question answer from page six:

At the end of 2010, there were 757 registered restaurants and mobile food service organisations. The year 2011 was only slightly behind with 753. In 2009, there were 740, and in 2008, the year of the crash, there were only 696.



# The Decisive Moment

*Ari Sigvaldason is a doting admirer of ugly duckling Reykjavík*

Ari Sigvaldason has the relaxed, unhurried sense about him of someone who decides his own working hours. As the owner of Fótógrafi—the only fine photography gallery of its kind in downtown Reykjavík—Ari is in the relatively rare position of making a living, for the most part, off his art.



But Ari is also in the unique position of being a doting, resident street photographer to Reykjavík—scouring the city's public spaces, alleys and back gardens with the wanderlust of a Romantic poet.

In his shop on Skólavörðustígur—originally opened in 2007 at a slightly larger venue down the same street—Ari sells his photographs alongside those of fellow local legends Jóhannes Frank, Friðbjófur Helgason, Stígur Steinþórsson and Gunnar V. Andrés-son, among others.

"I often get people in [the shop] who say that they think Reykjavík is kind of cool," Ari says. "They find it funny, running into the same people again and again. And for a weekend trip I think it's ideal—you're able to see the entire city in three days. But for me, that's just a challenge. I've been taking pictures of people in Reykjavík for the past twenty years or so. And I walk around every day and try to imagine that I'm in a foreign city, try to check out all the back-streets and gardens—to never walk the same way twice. And I'm always finding something new."

## SWEET ON REYKJAVÍK

The most recent product of Ari's unabated curiosity is 'Shot in Reykjavík,' a book of his black and white photography shot between the years 1987–1991 and 2004–2012. The book is a reflection of what Ari does best: recording the city's impromptu moments, moods and faces—resulting in a collection of photographs which, although imbued with the distinct spirit of his city-muse, are often hard to locate in time.

"In black-and-white, you see no difference," Ari says. "When you take the colour away, it becomes timeless. It can be whenever. Unless you see

something that is clearly not in use anymore, like a car. But if it's just people, then everything is still the same. There is no basic difference."

"I have always been sort of half-invisible," Ari continues. "I try to capture people without their noticing and putting up a face. I always have my camera with me, whether I'm at the dentist or out walking or at the mall. In my photographs there is nothing that is staged or arranged, there is just what happened naturally. Most of

*"It's interesting that portrait photographs don't really sell. There's something about not wanting to have faces of strangers up on the wall, people are very shy about that. Which I think is strange, but it seems that if it's not pop-stars or relatives, people don't want pictures of them on the wall."*

them are from 101, because I am there the most, but they can just as well be taken at the bar as at the daycare. And anywhere there in between."

The book blends some of Ari's personal favourite and best-selling photographs, something that, after five years of selling his prints, he knows a little something about.

"I have very little tolerance for photographs that just hang around years on end without selling," Ari says. "It's interesting that portrait photographs don't really sell. There's something about not wanting to have faces of strangers up on the wall, people are very shy about that. Which I think is strange, but it seems that if it's not pop-stars or relatives, people don't want pictures of them on the wall."

## A DOCUMENT FOR CHANGING TIMES

But though Ari's photographs may capture Reykjavík with a certain degree of timelessness, there are some things, like the city's commercial landscape, which have in fact changed.

"It's a different reality now," Ari says. Five years ago, when he opened his shop, Ari says, he was selling prints for three to ten times the prices he is selling at now.

"Before the crash people bought

not a tourist shop—a label he adamantly resists.

"I'm careful to have certain rules," Ari says, "because there are so many stores in Iceland that are full of puffins and wool sweaters and ash in bottles. So I decided that there would be nothing in here which was reminiscent of a volcanic eruption or anything like that. No puffins. Nothing tourist-y. I try to have the store a little bit scruffy, maybe not too staged. I want this to be a little bit different."

## FREE FROM THE GRIND

Instead, Ari's shop has a vintage feel, with second-hand furniture, old LPs for sale and analogue cameras littering the shop—one even serving as a door-stop.

"The beauty of it is the freedom," Ari says. "I am somehow never stressed; I just do this on my own terms. And if I have to do something today, it just says 'closed today,' or 'opens at 17:00.' To me that is incredibly rewarding, because I worked for so long doing shift-work: working from 08:00 until 20:00, always stressed out about everything. It's just so much freedom to be able to decide yourself what you're going to do today. Good for the nervous system. And the temper. It's sort of a dream job, in that way."

"And anyway, I would much rather sell more for cheaper. It means my photos exist all around the world. It's pointless to take photos if they are just going to be stuck in the drawer." 🍷

## Words

Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir

## Photography

Alísa Kalyanova / Ari Sigvaldason

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# Two Years Old: IMMI Inches Through Icelandic Parliament

Continued from page 18

## MUCH WORK TO BE DONE

Still, two years later, Smári tells me IMMI faces challenges because it is run by a handful of volunteers, with no centralized office or paid staff, and lacks funding needed to hire international libel law experts to write policy protecting freedom of speech and information.

Language is also a sticking point, as the proposal will pull from existing laws in countries from around the world, including Belgium, Estonia, Norway, Sweden and the U.S. “We’ve hit a wall where volunteers are useful but we need to start paying for specialists’ knowledge,” he says.

Smári, a self-described “information activist,” has been travelling around the world attending conferences and speaking on news programs about IMMI. Smári explained on the Russian Alyona Show on May 25 that Iceland could become an attractive location for companies that house data. With geothermal energy and reliable Internet connectivity, he said, Iceland could also offer the benefit of strong freedom of information protections to a company willing to move or establish itself. That interest could boost the nation’s economy, which is recovering from the 2008 crisis.

“We’re kind of out of the slums. We’re not quite there yet. But we’re definitely doing a whole lot better than most of Europe at the moment, which is a bit ironic I guess, but we’re getting there,” he said.

## FACING ICELANDIC REALITIES

Jóhann Hauksson, a 57-year-old award-winning journalist who has been in and out of the news profession since 1986 and now works in public relations for the government, knows the pressures of the news business and how nepotism and cronyism contributed to the financial crash. He has written an entire book on this topic: ‘Þræðir valdsins: Kunningjavelði, aðstöðubrask og hrun Íslands’ (“Threads Of Power: Nepotism, Abused Positions and Iceland’s Collapse”).

“You can’t change values that have supported nepotism. You won’t change them over night or in one week. Change is slow. It takes many, many years,” Jóhann tells me.

This sentiment of pressure on the press has been documented in a 2010 report by Birgir Guðmundsson, a University of Akureyri Associate Professor of Media and former journalist and editor: “Icelandic courts have in the last decade tended to pass tougher sentences in libel cases against the media than before.”

Additionally, layoffs and cuts to resources affect journalists doing their profession. “We’ve had to meet more demands because the people want better media and better coverage,” Sigga Hagalín Björnsdóttir, RÚV’s deputy head of national news, tells me. “IMMI is a great idea, and I sincerely hope it becomes reality,” she says.

While the Kaupping bank injunction

underscored how news control plays out behind the scenes in broadcasting, print journalists have been under fire. DV reporter Jón Bjarki Magnússon is in the midst of appealing the 2011 ruling by the Reykjavik District Court, which ordered him to pay a source 500,000 ISK for his story about a custody battle he wrote in DV, a tabloid known for investigative work.

Believing that he was doing his job as a solid, ethical journalist should, Jón is fighting the ruling and is appealing to the Supreme Court. The case is expected to resume later this year, he says. “If worse comes to worst and they decide to sentence me, I might have to pay a fine that is a big chunk of my yearly salary. If I decide not to make the

payment or if I cannot pay, I might have to declare bankruptcy,” he writes to me via email.

Meantime, blogger Andrés Helgi Valgarðsson has just ended his libel case on the same story. Andrés was sued for quoting publicly available records about the neighbour dispute happening in Aratún.

“My case is over, the bad guys won,” he said in an email. The Supreme Court ruled that it would not hear his appeal, saying it did not qualify. He could take the appeal to an international court of human rights, however that would mean even more legal fees and he said he’s already spent more than two million ISK (15,500 USD/12,321 Euro) defending himself. That’s sepa-



DV



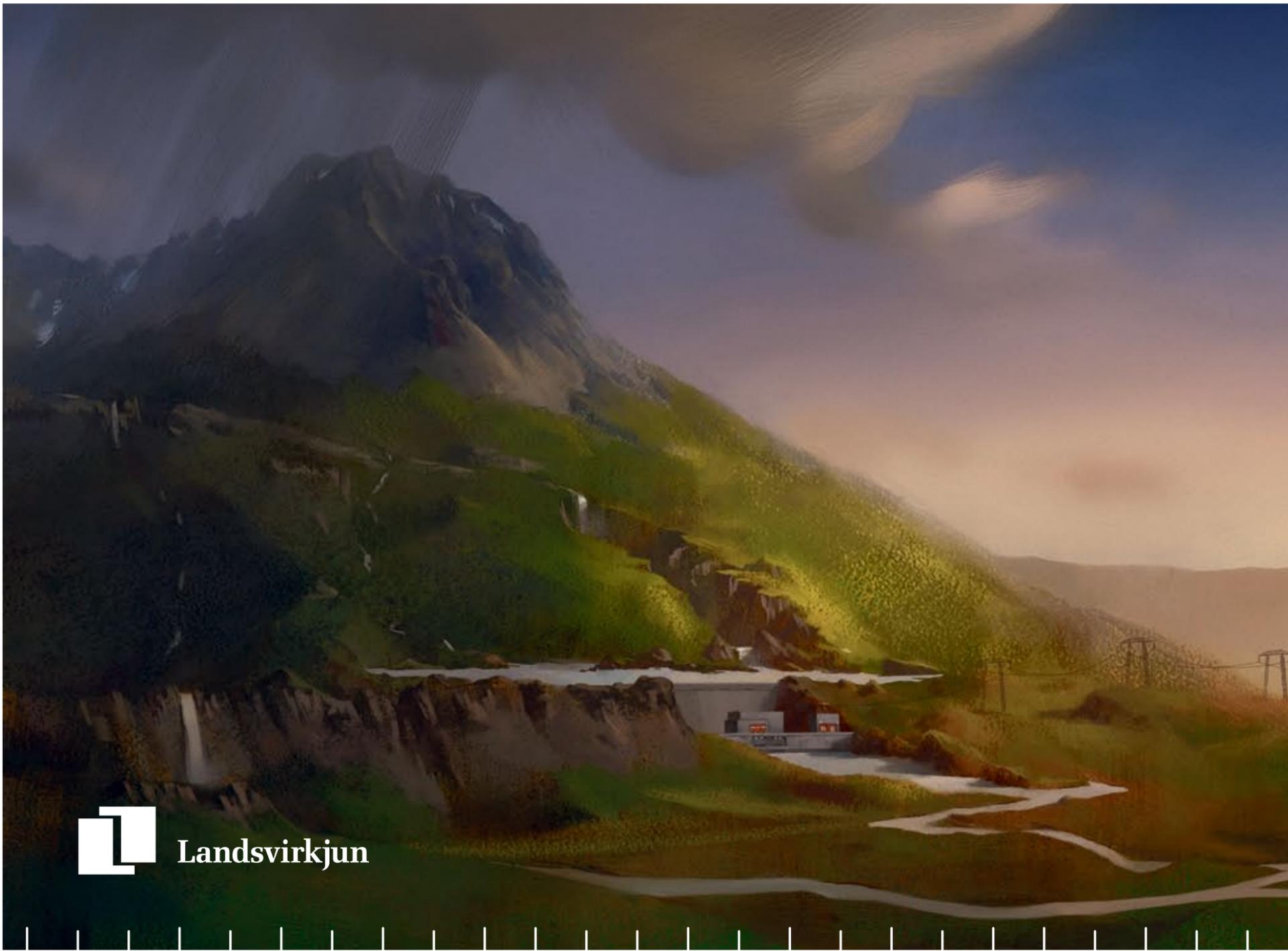
Fréttatíminn



Fréttablaðið



Morgunblaðið



rate from the 950,000 ISK in damages he was ordered to pay.

"Media in Iceland is not free," Andrés said. "Jón Bjarki is a professional reporter ruined financially from reporting a story. I'm a blogger driven to the brink of personal bankruptcy after telling a story I know to be true."

#### A PERFECT PRESS?

Despite libel suits, journalists in Iceland say they work in relative safety with generally good access to politicians and sources—an atmosphere much different from their news counterparts in repressive regimes like China, Cuba, Mexico, Pakistan and Russia. "We in the Western world including Australia and New Zealand, live in enviable societies that are pretty safe," Bogi says.

Sigga, who has lived and worked in the US, earning a master's degree from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in New York, acknowledges that Icelandic reporters enjoy a high level of freedom relatively speaking, but "there is no such thing as perfect press freedom."

Valgerður Jóhannsdóttir, a long-time journalist who has worked at RÚV and now teaches news writing and broadcasting in the masters of journalism programme at University of Iceland, says the profession is in "a crisis."

"Our media was badly hit by the crash," she tells me, referring to the effects of downsizing and concentration of media ownership. At RÚV alone, almost one quarter of the news staff has been slashed since the financial crash, and employees are being asked to do the same amount of work amid lack of public trust.

That lack of public trust may come from the fact that the largest media conglomerate in Iceland, 365, which

runs TV, radio stations, and magazines, as well as one of Iceland's daily papers Fréttablaðið, had been owned by Baugur Group until 2008. Baugur, an Icelandic investment house, applied for bankruptcy protection in 2009. Its former CEO, Jón Ásgeir Jóhannesson,

*"In 2009, career politician Davíð Oddsson was appointed editor of Morgunblaðið"*

is being investigated for fraud. Today, the Icelandic telecommunications company Dagsbrún runs 365.

In the meantime, Árvakur has owned Morgunblaðið, another Icelandic daily newspaper, since 1913. In 2009, career politician Davíð Oddsson was appointed editor of Morgunblaðið. Davíð served as the longest running Prime Minister of Iceland during an era of liberalisation policies that many attribute to Iceland's financial crisis, not to mention he was head of the Central Bank during the collapse itself.

#### PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION

While IMMI supporters say progress is slow, they have made strides in a few key areas. For instance, the protection of sources is a critical point for journalists, and Smári notes that Article 25 of Iceland's new media law instituted in 2011 guarantees sources anonymity if requested. Iceland's proposed constitution also ensures source protection.

"Journalists who are asked to keep sources anonymous have a legal obligation not to expose the source," he said.

Access to public records is also

important. Currently, under Iceland's Freedom of Information Act of 1996, if a journalist or citizen wants access to government documents, he or she has to go through a complex and time-consuming process to obtain the information.

With the influence of IMMI, the law would change to "publish by default" putting all public documents in an online database. Documents held back for national security or privacy issues would be the ones listed with an explanation and FOI requests can be made for those documents specifically, Smári says. "This change is the most important alteration of many," he wrote in the status report.

Going forward, IMMI is trying to pick up steam and gain interest on a global front trying to establish a "global inter-parliamentary group on the subject of freedom of information, expression, speech, media and privacy," Smári said in the April status report.

Additionally, IMMI representatives have been in touch with groups in Germany, Ireland, Italy and Spain that wish to adopt some of IMMI's goals, he said. "While this collaboration has started slowly, due to time and budgetary constraints, it shows much promise," he went on to explain in the report.

And despite only gradual progress on making IMMI a law, Birgitta Jónsdóttir, a free speech advocate and Parliamentarian co-sponsoring and co-authoring IMMI said to me in an email, "Everything is moving a lot slower than I would prefer," but she is optimistic on its progress to date.

"We've got one more session to go next fall to put this all into place," she added, referring to parliament taking up IMMI at its next session that begins October 1. ☺

#### ICELAND HAS HIGH PRESS FREEDOM, RELATIVELY SPEAKING

For ten years Iceland has steadily ranked among the top countries in the world regarding the freedom of its press. The accolade, however, does not indicate the quality of journalism or newsgathering that occurs in Iceland. The honour measures violations happening against newsgatherers and media outlets, and relatively speaking, Iceland is pretty free.

At least two well-known press freedom indexes—Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders (RWB)—place Iceland high in their rankings.

The US-based bi-partisan organisation known as Freedom House, which researches and monitors democracy and freedom around the world, listed Iceland as "Free" in its 2010 Map of Press Freedom, noting at that time, "despite enduring problems associated with the global financial crisis of late 2008, the Icelandic press is still among the freest in the world." The report went on: "Freedoms of the press and expression are protected under Article 72 of the constitution, and the government generally does not interfere in the independent media's presentation of a wide variety of views."

Meantime, another organisation that protects and defends press freedom, RWB, has consistently ranked Iceland among the top ten countries (out of more than 170) in its Freedom of the Press Worldwide Index. In 2002, RWB began this as a tracking tool of press freedom violations. Using a 44-question survey sent to journalists and partner media organisation, RWB gathers information on violence and threats affecting journalists and netizens, including murders, physical

threats and attacks, harassment, abusive treatment and censorship. There are also questions regarding violations on the free flow of information via the Internet.

While the RWB index does not measure quality of journalism, it reflects the degree of freedom that journalists have and the efforts of that country to respect and protect press freedoms.

Over the years, Iceland has held the RWB number one position eight times (often tied with Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden among others). There have been a few fluctuations with Iceland moving to number nine in 2009, most likely reflecting effects of the financial crash, and moving back up to number one in 2010. In its most recent figures published in January, RWB places Iceland number six in terms of press freedom.

The slight movement downward is mainly due to "the impact of the economic crisis on this small and quite isolated information market," Olivier Basille, Acting Director of RWB, said in an email correspondence. Additionally, reports of libel cases like Andrés Helgi Valgarðsson's and Jón Bjarki Magnússon's, the journalists being handed fines for alleged "violation of private life," influenced Iceland's position, Basille added.

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# Bastard Love

Vesturport performs 'Bastard—A Family Saga' at Reykjavík City Theatre on June 2.



**We are not entirely lost to ourselves. Our gaping wounds and ghastly inadequacies do not escape us, though in the untrained eyes of others the possibility of inscrutability remains—at least for a time. Especially if we lie. Especially if we run.**

'Bastard'—a transnational theatre project assembled under the auspices of the Vesturport theatre collective—is a love story in no traditional sense of the term. Though the narrative motif is Oedipal—Mikael, played by Ólafur Darri Ólafsson, wants to kill his father and marry his (in this case, soon-to-be step-) mother—the story's embroiling of familial loyalty and romantic

dependence is wholly and at times uncomfortably unconventional.

With unflinching candor, 'Bastard' presents us with the grotesque products of the lies we tell ourselves: characters on the run—literally sprinting across the stage—from themselves and the people wanting to love them. What their desperation reveals is a rather painful, but all too recognisable truth—that in love we often seek an accomplice to our self-deceit: someone willing to nurse our wounds even while pretending they aren't there.

The plot centres around a reunion between the children of an emotionally abusive father who invites his herd back to the estate where they grew up on the occasion of his surprise wedding to a former sweetheart of one of his sons. The details of the family's dysfunction blossom forth within the other-worldly stage decor—an intricate natural setting which stands in eerie compliment to the conflict on stage.

Alain de Botton, in his novel 'Essays in Love,' says "we locate inside another

a perfection that eludes us within ourselves."

"We fall in love," he says, "hoping that we will not find in the other what we know is in ourselves—all the cowardice, weakness, laziness, dishonesty, compromise and brute stupidity."

*"With unflinching candor, 'Bastard' presents us with the grotesque products of the lies we tell ourselves"*

What is perhaps most disconcerting about 'Bastard' is the way in which it makes an existential hero out of its most despicable character. Although he is no doubt loathsome—nearly inhuman in his cruelty—the father figure Magnus, played by Waage Sandö, manages to make his children seem even more disgusting for their humanness. In some sense, the children all strive to be as unfeeling as he, and it is in this unwillingness to embrace their fragility that they destroy themselves on his behalf.

'Bastard' is in this sense a story of how natural things spoil, and in the course of the play, everything does indeed begin to break down, revealing the rot at each character's core. Marriages are shattered, loyalties destroyed. All is revealed and yet no one is willing to tell the truth, least of all

to themselves.

What was a beautiful natural setting at the play's opening—moist green grass bathed in ethereal light—is by intermission littered with the remains of conflict. We murder to dissect, said Wordsworth; we do not the better understand ourselves by virtue of our self-scrutiny. Instead, cursing our fragility, hating our humanness, we bleed to death under the watchful eye of those we pretend to love—and who pretend to love us, but who we do not allow to know us.

The play's cynical suggestion is that this is perhaps inevitable: that no matter how good it may feel, the sun is bound to burn us, to turn our supple skin dry. But there is also a kind of beauty in the gore. There is the promise of salvation in self-revelation. The characters willing to relinquish their illusions of themselves may, very well, have achieved salvation by the story's end. But for the ones who ran, we have no reason to hope.

But perhaps there is no reason, either way, to hope. Perhaps there is no alternative to selfish-love. Perhaps we are alone, abandoned, bastard children to an indifferent human family. Or perhaps we're just not doing it right. Perhaps. 🍷

## Words

Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir

## Photograph

Per Morten Abrahamsen

## SCHEDULE

### Whale-Watching Tour Duration: 3 hours

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

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

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

### Other Tours

#### Puffin Island Tours Duration: 1-1,5 hours

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

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

#### Sea Angling and Grill Duration: 3 hours

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### Fashion | Interview



## Fashion Inspired By Art Brut And '60s New Wave Films

Snoop-Around visits fashion newcomer Sævar Markús Óskarsson at his studio

Sævar Markús Óskarsson's first line, a small collection of silk accessories inspired by Romanian folklore, sold out in a fortnight. Now he's getting ready to debut his men's and women's wear collections this fall, which feature androgynously tailored pieces mixed with silk dresses for women and printed shirts with detailed patterns for men. We met the fashion designer at his studio on Laugavegur to find out more about this work and how his background as an artist shapes his designs.

#### YOU STUDIED ART BEFORE GOING INTO FASHION?

Yes, I originally studied art and art history. However, I became interested in fashion when I went to Paris to work with a group of visual artists. They were doing a lot of multimedia art and some performances, and I was making costumes. It was really through collaboration with the fashion house Agnès B, when I was working in their space and going through their fabric collection, that I really decided to go into fashion.

#### Words

Erla Björk Baldursdóttir

#### Photo

Nanna Dís

#### DOES YOUR BACKGROUND IN ART COME INTO PLAY WHEN YOU'RE DESIGNING?

It does, as my field of interest is so broad. I really enjoy researching and finding inspiration from a wide variety of sources, such as literature, antiques, art or films. I like grabbing bits from

*"I like grabbing bits from here and there, like a moment in a film, just a few seconds, that makes you go, 'Wow, that's something.'"*

here and there, like a moment in a film, just a few seconds, that makes you go, 'Wow, that's something.' In the end all this research comes together in a big database that I can then work from.

#### DID SOMETHING IN PARTICULAR INSPIRE YOUR NEW FALL/WINTER COLLECTION?

I was inspired by Art Brut, where artists that may not be traditionally educated often work from a naïve perspective. I was also deeply inspired by Czech and British new wave films from the '60s. The cut of the garments is mostly androgynous; the classic tailored pieces are sized to fit both sexes. Some things, like the dresses and ladies shirts, are extremely feminine though and are made from feminine fabric like chiffon. One dress in particular is dedicated to the singer of Broadcast, Trish Keenan, whom I've always felt a strong connection to.

#### HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR DESIGN, IS THERE A SINGULAR CONCEPT?

I would say it's very classical, at least the cut. I like classical tailoring and want garments to be well made and cut. This collection was mostly inspired by art, but next summer I will be work-

ing with florals and Finland for example. It's mainly classic looks, but is heavily infused with what I'm inspired by at that moment.

#### WHAT'S IT LIKE TO START YOUR BRAND IN ICELAND?

The market is small and it is a lot of work. It's expensive to import fabrics and you can, at most, hire a seamstress to help out when it's really busy. You have a lot on your plate at any given time. But I'm just starting out, so all the work is on me at the moment. However the good thing about working here is that you can try things out, taking one step at a time. And in the end, you never know what's going to happen! ♥

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# Belly Of The Beast



**Einar Stefánsson is the kind of man who whistles while descending into the mouth of a volcano.**

**I'm standing in an open elevator system with him and two other strangers, dangling—it would seem—above the 120-metre deep magma chamber of a dormant volcano.**

**Feeling the sharp, numbing waves of panic start to lap over my upper neck and temples, I close my eyes and try to think about anything other than the reality of the situation.**

**'If you're going to die somewhere,' I muster, reassuringly, to myself, 'it's probably best that it be inside a volcano.'**

I had just been standing in the sunshine—warm, delusional, happy—with a spectacular view of Reykjavík from one of the three mounts of Þríhnúkagígur, on the Reykjanes peninsula. Björn

Ólafsson, one of a number of the dazzlingly tanned, robust-looking and all-around trust-inducing mountain guides accompanying us that day, had just been pointing to a wood carving of the volcano's inner recesses.

He did say plenty about "descent." He did say something about the chamber being longer than the Statue of Liberty. But it wasn't until Björn had harnessed me to the railing and I had begun walking the plank stretching across the ominous, gaping free-fall below that it dawned on me:

I was about to go. Down there. Into that.

Einar hooked another clip to my harness before releasing me from the railing, and I stepped inside the metal basket.

"Are you scared?" says Einar—a man who, I would later learn, has climbed Everest.

"Yes," I said.

"It's better if you're scared," he says, and begins our squeaky, downward descent.

#### WITHIN THE WALLS

As we move down the slim tube of the upper crater—the neck of the bottleneck—Einar points out the icicle-shaped smears of lava on the wall an arm's length away—thin-flowing basaltic magma that had spread in layers during the eruption 4,000 years ago; "like butter on bread," Einar says.

The way down is a little crooked, and at one point we have to guide the elevator down at a

slight diagonal by pressing against the wall. No natural light follows us down. The voices from our group below echo in such a way as to sound to be coming from within the damp walls.

Near the end of the upper tube, the walls start slanting away from us. Despite the scattered voices there is an eerie quiet below: the sound of water dripping; someone stumbling over a rock. Then we descend fully into the lit-up magma chamber.

Words cannot describe the magnificence, the illustrious expanse of the elfin temple of doom that came into view. We were being ushered into the mausoleum of a prehistoric monster. It was better than Jules Verne's wettest dream. We were at the gates of hell, the centre of the earth; the beast had swallowed us whole.

As the basket touched ground, I moved quickly out of the 'drop zone' beneath the opening, as the guides insisted. The air was cold and entirely still. Like everyone else, I turned my face and my eyes upwards, towards the expanse above, and didn't say a word.

#### ELFIN TEMPLE OF DOOM

"For 4000 years, this dripping has been the only sound," our third guide Jón Gauti says.

The entire thing seems eerily implausible. The magma chamber itself was, for one, never meant to be. Caverns such as these, where lava seeps in from fissures and collects in preparation for an

eruption, tend to close up following the inevitable eruption, once the lava begins to cool and harden to rock at the opening. But in the case of Þríhnúkagígur, the magma must have either hardened within the chamber or simply drained out of it, back into the depths of the earth. Making the fact of my being able to be here a bit spooky. Making the whole premise a bit super-natural.

No bones, not even of animals or birds, have yet been found inside the cavern, which sat untouched and unseen until 1974, when Árni B. Stefánsson—the aforementioned Einar's brother—first touched the chamber floor after descending, ahem, the depths of darkness harnessed to a rope.

As the elevator brings the last of our group down, Jón Gauti begins to sing, demonstrating the echo off the rocks burned with a violent, dark rainbow of colours. Another five people from our group board the elevator and it begins to ascend, meaning I have about another fifteen minutes. Right before he disappears from view, Einar begins to sing as well in chorus with Jón Gauti. The walls stand indifferent to the warmth of the human voice. Stately. Immovably silent. 🍷

#### Words

Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir

#### Photography

Atli Arnarson / Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir

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# Calmly Tölting Mordor



The fog was exceptionally low. The rain hung heavily in the sky, the greyish tones blanketing Reykjavík. As we drove out of the city, the southeast was even foggier and rainier than the capital. Raindrops raced across the window as we followed road 1 towards Hveragerði. We were about to find out if Icelandic horses were really as docile as they are made out to be, even in these conditions.

After a twenty-minute drive, we pulled up to the farm, Eldhestar, which has 350 horses working during the peak summer season, taking roughly 80 horses on trips each day. At the stables, we put on riding helmets and large neon-orange waterproof pants and coats, which would turn out to be pretty useful 'costumes' in the murky fog.

We all climbed onto our horses, which in my case was Skufur, named after the tassel of the traditional Icelandic headdress, and our French guide Flo gave us a short introduction to riding before

we set off on our six-hour journey through the Hveragerði countryside.

## GEOTHERMAL ENERGY AND CUCUMBERS

Traversing lava fields and moss-covered paths, we arrived at Hveragerði, one of the most active geothermal areas in Iceland. From the foot of the Hveragerði mountains, we could barely make out the town below us through the fog. The area is home to many of the island's greenhouses, which Flo told us grow a range of produce from tomatoes to cucumbers.

As we rode up the mountain, we were completely exposed to the elements and the rain soaked us. Skufur, however, bravely and patiently rode on. This patience intrigued me. As an experienced horseback rider, I felt that in these conditions it would have been normal for the horses to show signs of agitation. But they didn't.

The horses are modern-day descendants of the Scandinavian ponies, which settlers brought to Iceland in the ninth and tenth centuries. They have been famous for their placid characters ever since, almost never argumentative or grumpy. And they will probably remain this way, as Icelandic law has forbidden the importation of other types of horses onto the island since 935, Flo said.



The horses are modern-day descendants of the Scandinavian ponies, which settlers brought to Iceland in the ninth and tenth centuries

## STEAM, HOOVES, FOG AND HOT RIVERS

As we rode up the hill, the horses showed us another one of their typical traits: not only do they walk, trot and gallop like other horses, but they also 'tölt'. Unlike the bumpy trot, the tölt is a comfortable and smooth ride, which allows us to sit back and relax.

The smell of sulphur grew stronger as we got closer to our lunch-break destination, the hot river. The foggy landscape around us looked more and more like something out of a Lord of the Rings film—I wouldn't have been surprised to see Gollum come out behind one of the hills.

While the rain turned into hail, the beauty of the landscape was not compromised. On a regular day, swimming in the hot river would have been perfect, but that day the idea of getting out of the river and changing in the rain was enough to keep me from taking a dip.

## FORESTS, CAKE AND TEA

After having warmed up a bit, we tölted back to the stables, crossing a protected forest area, which Flo explained is a rare sight in Iceland. The island, she said, is facing erosion because many centuries ago settlers heavily exploited the trees for firewood and the sheep they brought ate all the remaining saplings.

Finally, after dismounting and saying emotional goodbyes to our horses, we had a well-deserved cup of tea and a slice of cake in the hotel next to the stables. Exhausted soaked yet happy, we drove back to Reykjavík. 🐾

## Words

Sarah Pepin

## Photography

Sarah Pepin

AIRICELAND.IS



LINE.

# A New Journey To The Centre Of The Earth



Snæfellsjökull—which Professor Lidenbrock, his nephew Axel and their guide Hans descend into in Jules Verne's "Journey to the Centre of the Earth"—is probably one of the most well known volcanoes on earth. In the 1864 science fiction classic, Li-

denbrock and his team face hazardous conditions, including encounters with prehistoric creatures, on their way to their destination, before the Earth eventually throws them out again through the Stromboli volcano in southern Italy.

In April 2012, the rugged shoreline of Snæfellsnes National Park was the scene of another extraordinary event. As if the volcano had spit out a creature from Jules Verne's novel, one of the most fascinating and mysterious ocean creatures of our times could be found and marvelled at in close proximity to the attractively incandescent volcano. The carcass of a male sperm whale had washed

ashore along the rugged coastline, at the foot of Snæfellsjökull.

Male sperm whales can grow up to twenty metres in length and weigh more than 55 tonnes. Their species is the largest living toothed animal and the deepest diving mammal on earth. On their hunts, which can take sperm whales on dives as deep as three kilometres, they are primarily after squids, including giant and colossal squids whose existence had long been considered a myth. White scars on many sperm whales' heads are believed to be the result of fights with some of these large deep-sea dwellers.

The clicking vocalisations of these whales are by far the loudest sound produced by any animal and although sperm whales are rather abundant and their range covers all world oceans, their anatomy and behaviour still hold many secrets. The reason for the enormous size of their heads compared to the lower jaw, for example, is not yet well understood.

Regardless of what led to the end of this whale's journey, visitors to the Snæfellsnes Peninsula this spring were given the rare opportunity to have a close look at a magnificent ocean creature, right by the entrance to the centre of the Earth. 🇮🇸

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## Words

[Sander Jain](#)

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## Photography

[Sander Jain](#)

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# The Destruction Of An Icelandic National Treasure



From the Vikings' landing in 871 to the modern day, the sheep permeates Icelandic culture. The wool is known throughout the world for being one of the most luscious, luminescent, lovely fibres available to work with. To a fibre-nut, Iceland is a sort of Mecca for wool.

As the Icelandic sheep is a national treasure, the health of the flock is of prime importance. Animal import laws make it extremely difficult to bring in livestock because of the isolated, disease-free nature of the island's animal populations. The vast majority of wool shorn in Iceland is processed in one main spinning mill, Ístex. This mill buys up nearly 100% of the wool generated in Iceland, and processes it into a line of yarns ranging from very lightweight to bulky.

From the outset, the wool processing procedure is questionable. Because a premium is paid for white wool, the mill actually selects out genetic diversity in the sheep population. As the mill selects for white, genetic diversity drops, but this is "nothing to worry about" in the company's opinion. Once the wool is purchased, it is scoured in Blönduós before being dyed.

After being scoured, the wool is carded and dyed. Ístex provides both natural and mixed colours. According to Hulda Hákonardóttir, a marketing manager at Ístex whom I spoke with, the natural colours produced by the mill are only dyed "a little bit." This includes dyeing blacks and greys. Yes, they are dyeing the wool a natural colour so that the mill can sell wool in 'natural colours.' It is understandable to dye white wool to make magenta, blue, yellow, green, or purple, but to dye nat-

ural colours?

Hulda tells me that they dye the wool in order to be able to produce consistent colours among the different batches of yarn. Perhaps on the surface this makes sense. Consider that Icelandic wool comes in spectacular whites, greys, browns and blacks. To over-dye

*"Quit hiding behind empty claims of small business challenges and processes that damage a national treasure"*

these colours with chemical dyes damages the integrity of the fibres, and ruins the natural variety that exists in wool.

Ístex emphasises that it wants to keep the process as 'green' as possible, yet they continue to take a spectacular natural product, with wonderful natural variation, and use European chemical dyes and an energy-expensive process (dyeing occurs at high temperatures) to make a more uniform, lower quality product. Thinking about the luxury products that can be found on markets across the world, it is clear that knitters everywhere are always on the lookout for the unique, natural, back-to-basics, exotic yarn. Before the dyeing process, this is exactly what Ístex has. Instead of marketing an authentic, glorious product, they ruin it in the name of consistency.

Ístex explains, "The market for Icelandic wool is very small and for a little

spinning factory like ours, it would be too expensive to produce quality like this for the market. Like all producers we concentrate on production for the majority." It is important to remember that this mill that has a near-complete monopoly on a product in international demand. Change is never easy, but such shallow-minded dismissal is an insult to Icelandic wool, its history and the artists around the globe that use it.

To change and use un-dyed natural coloured wool would not only lead to more revenue for the company, but also a more environmentally friendly, farmer-supporting, Icelandic heritage-perpetuating process. Iceland's sheep have always been multicolour, knitters have always worked with diverse greys, whites, peat reds and blacks; lopi-lovers always prefer non-scratchy sweaters.

Quit hiding behind empty claims of small business challenges and processes that damage a national treasure, Ístex. Stop being satisfied with a sub-par product that is a laughable excuse for Icelandic wool, fibre enthusiasts. ENOUGH with contentment for the way things have always been! Get with the program and start celebrating Icelandic wool and the way it was meant to be! 🇮🇸

✉ ALÍSA KALYANOVA

# Lopapeysa For Everyone!

*Searching for the perfect Icelandic sweater*



**It's hard not to miss the Icelandic sweater or 'lopapeysa' on your visit to the country. This wool is not only so resistant because it comes from arguably the best sheep in the world, but also because it is not spun, which makes it light but solid. Made from Icelandic wool, or 'lopi', it is perfect for Icelandic weather conditions, keeping you both warm and dry.**

While you might guess that the lopapeysa has been around for hundreds of years as it seems to be such a traditional and practical garment, the Icelandic sweater only dates back to around the middle of the last century.

Some believe that the design was inspired by the traditional costumes worn in Greenland, Bryndís Eiríksdóttir from the Handknitting Association of Iceland tells me, while others believe that the pattern is related to designs from southern Sweden. "You would think that because the sweaters only date back to the 1940s that somebody would remember how they developed, but nobody is sure," Bryndís says.

The traditional shades in which the lopapeysa is knitted are brown, black, grey, white and beige as those are the natural colours of the sheep. But you can find wool in any colour imaginable. "We mostly sell sweaters to foreigners, as Icelanders still like to knit their sweaters themselves," Bryndís explains. "Tourists have been buying a lot of wool too though, and we have been selling much more to them since the crash and the fall of the króna."

Sweaters at the Handknitting Association of Iceland are handmade, and you can get them in the traditional or more colourful shades. They come in different styles, such as jackets with a zipper, hoodies and sleeveless vest ponchos. Prices range from 20,000 to 35,000 ISK.

If your budget is limited, however, you can go to the weekend flea market, Kolapor-

tið. Apart from the second-hand sweaters you can find on offer in lots of the booths, Soffía Jónsdóttir sells new handmade sweaters for around 13,000 ISK. She and three other women knit the sweaters during the week

*"The Icelandic sweater only dates back to around the middle of the last century."*

and then come to Reykjavík to sell them over the weekend. One of the ladies still knits at the remarkable age of 102.

Soffía Jónsdóttir explains that there are a variety of patterns that come from different traditions. She heard that it was Iceland's esteemed writer Halldór Laxness and his wife who travelled to Greenland and brought back the typical design featured on sweaters nowadays, but nobody is entirely sure.

Another cheaper option is the Red Cross second-hand shop on Laugavegur. They always have some Icelandic sweaters for sale, at reasonable prices starting at 4,000 ISK.

If you are in Iceland for an extended time, you can also get your sweater knitted according to your wishes. Jóhanna Gunnlaugsdóttir, who learnt to knit when she was five years old, is so passionate about knitting them that she only charges for material used. You can get in touch with her via Facebook ([www.facebook.com/prjona.skjona](https://www.facebook.com/prjona.skjona)).

In any case, whether you buy the sweater new, used or specially ordered, the lopapeysa is a piece of clothing that lasts for a very long time, as it is not only robust but also timeless. 🇮🇸

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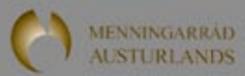
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**PAGE 18**

"I have been a newscaster for thirty years. You know that in a live broadcast 'shit happens' as they say, but it's important how you deal with it. If you panic, then the audience panics."

Bogi Ágústsson uses the word 'shit' on record, and we delve into the need for and slow progress of the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative.

**PAGE 26**

"Though she was dressed head to foot in sparkling sequins and beads, there was no diva in her. It was just two old friends, playing to a crowd."

It was all midsummer sunshine, birds and synchronicity when Ólöf Arnalds and Skúli Sverrisson played Grasagarðurinn.

**PAGE 30**

"In black and white, you see no difference. You take the colour away and it becomes timeless. It can be whenever."

Ari Sigvaldason, owner of the unique Fótógrafi on Skólavörðustígur, has been in love with Reykjavík for over two decades.

**PAGE 38**

"Feeling the sharp, numbing waves of panic start to lap over my upper neck and temples, I close my eyes and try to think about anything other than the reality of the situation."

We sent our Journalist into the heart of a dormant volcano. She came back alive.

**PAGE 34**

"What their desperation reveals is a rather painful, but all too recognisable truth—that in love we often seek an accomplice to our self-deceit: someone willing to nurse our wounds even while pretending they aren't there."

Shit gets grotesque in the latest Vesturport production, 'Bastard', at Borgarleikhúsið

**PAGE 8**

"The constitution is like an egg, you're afraid to carry it because you might break it. We're afraid of losing it all, and having to start all over again."

Iceland is a trendsetter. Many in Greenland and the Faeroe Islands also want independence from Denmark, including Gunvør Balle, member of the Faeroese left wing party Tjóðveldi.

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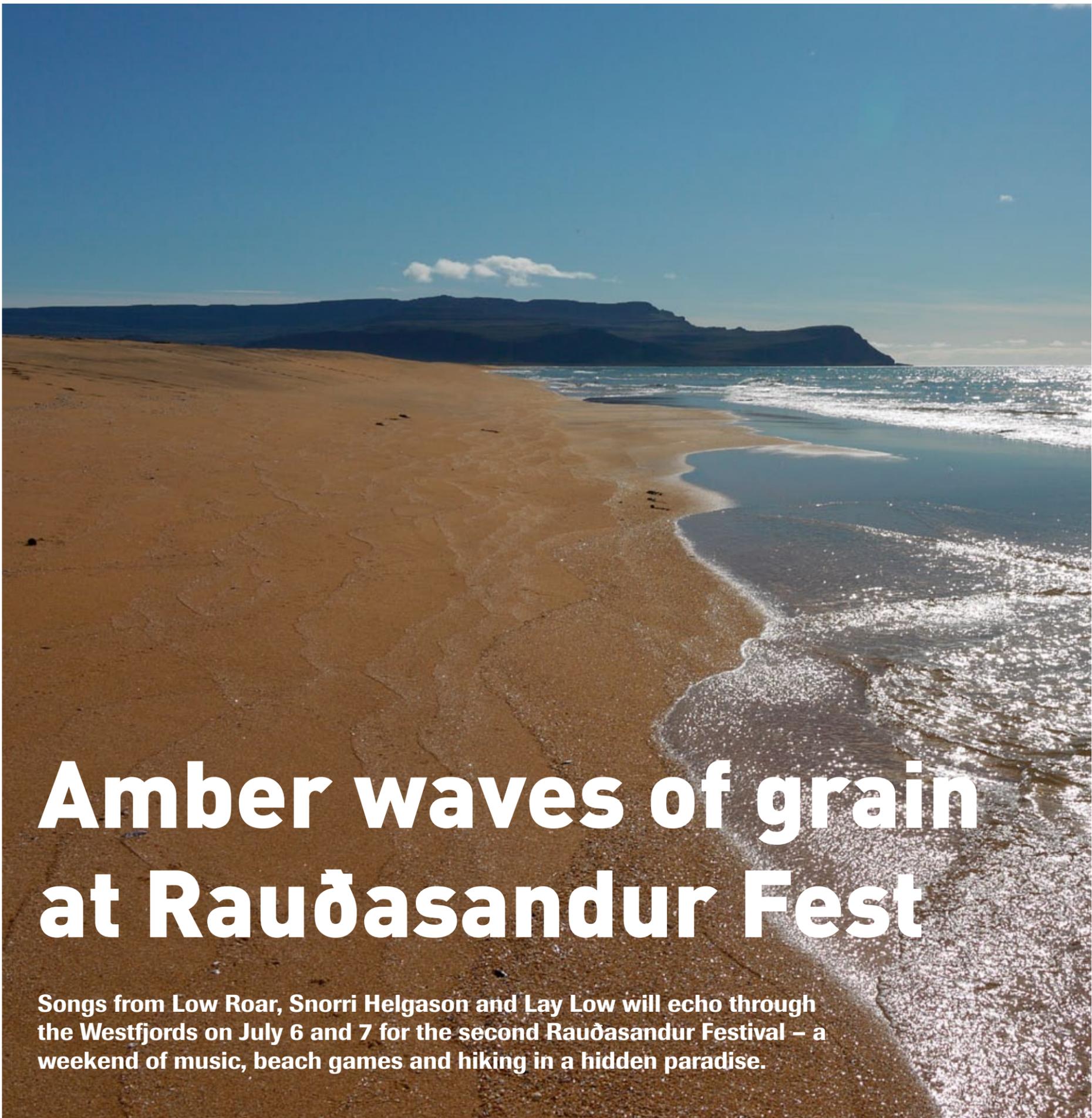


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### B5

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### Bar 46

18:00 Pub Quiz

00:00 DJ

### Boston

22:00 DJ CasaNova

### Café Rósenberg

21:00 Carpenters tribute -Regína Ósk

### Den Danske Kro

21:00 Live music

### Dillon

23:00 DJ Andrea Jónsdóttir

### English Pub

22:00 Live music

### Faktorý

23:00 DJ Housekell

### Gamli Gaukurinn

22:00 Heavy metal concert with  
Dyrfara and more

### Glaumbar

22:00 Egill

### Hemmi Og Valdi

22:00 DJ Elvar (RVK  
Soundsystem)

### Hressó

21:00 Stuðkvarter Gunna Óla  
from Skítamóráll

### Kaffibarinn

23:00 Alfons X

### Kaffi Zimsen

23:00 DJ Narly

### Prikið

23:00 House Band and DJ Danni  
Deluxe

### Thorvaldsen

22:00 DJ night

### Vegamót

23:00 DJ Gunni Stef

## 30 SAT

### Amsterdam

01:00 DJ Skúli

### B5

00:00 DJ Jay-O

### Bakkus

23:00 DJ Hashi

### Bar 46

00:00 DJ

### Bar 11

21:00 Saytan and Caterpillarmen  
+ live DJ

### Boston

23:00 DJ Benni

### Café Haíti

21:30 Jazz Quartet: Busy Doing  
Nothing

### Café Rósenberg

21:00 Carpenters tribute - Regína Ósk

### Den Danske Kro

21:00 Live music

### English Pub

22:00 Live music

### Faktorý

22:00 DJ Danni Deluxe

### Gamli Gaukurinn

22:00 Amy Winehouse tribute

### Glaumbar

22:00 DJ Seth

### Hallgrímskirkja

12:00 Björn Steinar Sólbergsson

### Harpa - Kaldalón

17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song



## Tilbury Flying High

*Kex Hostel*

July 12, 20:00

1.500 ISK

It's been a pretty good year for Tilbury. Their debut album 'Exorcise,' released in May, has been averaging four-star reviews and making several radio stations top-five lists. They have been playing all over town for the past few months, including a solid performance at the legendary NASA for the Reykjavík Music Mess.

As one of the up-and-coming musical gems of the city - they describe themselves as 'dramatic folk pop' - they're composed of members from the bands Sin Fang, Amiina and Valdimar. Þormóður Dagsson initially started a solo project entitled Formaður Dagsbrúnar in 2010, but then subsequently gathered keyboarder Kristinn Evertsson, bassist Guðmundur Óskar Guðmundsson and drummer Magnús Tryggvason Eliassen to form the quartet. Grapevine's own Cory Weinberg has described them as "displaying a versatile mix of breezy tunes made for relaxing on a patio."

Your next chance to catch them live is at Kex Hostel on July 12, as part of the Gogoyoko Wireless concert series. Now, we really like Kex (we gave them five stars in our bar guide, oh-oh!) and we like good music. This event combines both! What more could you ask for? Get your tickets at [www.midi.is](http://www.midi.is) or at the door on the night. **SP**

### Hemmi Og Valdi

22:00 DJ Benson Is Fantastic

### Hressó

21:00 Spútnik

### Kaffibarinn

22:00 President Bongo & Casa-  
Nova

### Kaffi Zimsen

23:00 DJ Narly

### Prikið

22:00 DJ Hunk Of A Man with old  
school hip hop

### Thorvaldsen

00:00 DJ night

### Vegamót

21:00 DJ Jay-O

## 01 SUN

### Den Danske Kro

21:00 Live music

### English Pub

21:00 Live music

### Faktorý

21:30 Live jazz session

### Hallgrímskirkja

17:00 Björn Steinar Sólbergsson

### Harpa - Kaldalón

17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song

### ObLaDi ObLaDa

16:00 DJ Andrea Jónsdóttir



## Pipe Dreams At Hallgrímskirkja

*Hallgrímskirkja*

Saturdays at 12:00 & Sundays at 17:00

1.500/2.500 ISK

If you've spent even a day in Reykjavík, chances are you've seen the glimmering, immense Klais organ at Hallgrímskirkja. It is, after all, the largest musical instrument in Iceland. But have you heard it? The International Organ Summer has just begun for this season and this year is particularly special as it marks the organ's twentieth anniversary.

Hallgrímskirkja's organist Björn Steinar Sólbergsson will play the pipes on June 30 and July 1, selecting pieces by J.S. Bach, Karg-Elert, Páll Ísólfsson and Jón Nordal.

The following weekend, on July 7 and July 8, James David Christie, an internationally acclaimed musician and organist for the Boston Symphony Orchestra will play pieces by Guilment, Barié and Duparc. **EJP**

# MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN JULY



## Eistnaflug—Summer Party For Heavy Metal

Neskaupstaður

July 12 -14

Presale tickets 8.500 ISK; 9.500 at the door

Once again, the metal asylum will let loose in northeastern Iceland. On July 12 begins a three day death metal festival, Eistnaflug, which will see wailing and drunken moshing reverberate around Neskaupstaður—a much-loved national holiday for the country's rock heavy metal devotees.

At Eistnaflug, music is a contact sport.

This year's festival, held for its eighth consecutive year, in Neskaupstaður, features 42 bands, including metal favorites Sólstafr and hardcore rockers I Adapt. There's also Muck, Innvortis and Severed Crotch. Festival organizer Stefán 'Stebbi' Magnússon said signing the alternative band Botnleðja to play was also a highlight. "I've been trying for two or three years to get them and come and play," Stefán said. "I was really excited for them to come."

Neskaupstaður, home to around 1,400 people, is roughly a 700-kilometre roadtrip from Reykjavík, but you may well need those 10 hours to mentally prepare for a musical thrashing. An estimated 1,200 people are expected to swarm the isolated fjord, piling into two camping sites—the "party camp" and the "family camp." Music goes into the morning's wee hours, and includes a closing set by DJ Töfri that goes on until 5:00 on Sunday.

The festival also offers Iceland's budding rock bands a shot to impress the country's biggest metal fans. "Eistnaflug is giving a typical metal band in Iceland the thought of: 'If we go and practice a lot, we can play Eistnaflug,'" Stefán said. "This is the one thing every year where bands can come play for lots of people. You could maybe do it in Reykjavik somewhere, somehow, but it would never happen like this."

Presale tickets for the whole festival are 8.500 ISK, and they're 9.500 ISK at the door. A day pass is 5.000 ISK. Attendees must be at least 18 years old. **CW**

### 02 MON

#### Café Rósenberg

21:00 KK and Maggi Eiríks

#### English Pub

21:00 Live music

#### Harpa - Kaldalón

17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song

#### Kaffibarinn

22:00 Skúli Agnarr

### 03 TUE

#### Bakkus

22:00 Katla

#### English Pub

22:00 Live music

#### Kaffibarinn

22:00 DJ Pilsner

#### KEX Hostel

20:30 Live Jazz

### 04 WED

#### Bakkus

22:00 Einar Sonic

#### Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live music

#### English Pub

22:00 Live music

#### Hallgrímskirkja

12:00 Schola Cantorum

#### Kaffibarinn

22:00 Paul Evans

#### Thorvaldsen

22:00 R&B night

### 05 THU

#### Bakkus

22:00 DJ Discoczech

#### Bar 11

21:00 Reykjavík! and Why Not Jack

#### Café Haíti

20:30 Kyle Harrington

#### Den Danske Kro

21:00 Live music

#### English Pub

22:00 Live music

#### Hallgrímskirkja

21:00 Kári Allansson

#### Kaffibarinn

21:00 HúsDjúS – Alfons X

#### Kaffi Zimsen

21:00 Live music

#### KEX Hostel

19:00 Barber and Beer

#### Lebowski Bar

22:00 Lebowski House Band

#### Thorvaldsen

20:00 Salsa lesson followed by Salsa Night

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		18:00	18:00	18:00		



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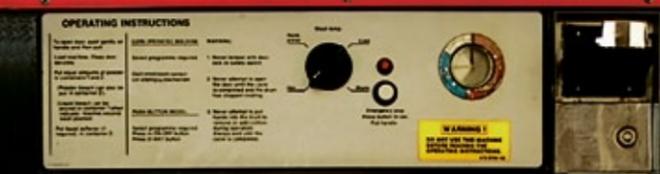


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# MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN JUNE



## Monster Mash!

Hljómskálagarðurinn

July 7, Doors at 18:00

Free

Yeah, you read that right, folk-pop sensation Of Monsters And Men are playing a free outdoor show in Hljómskálagarðurinn by the pond. Whether you defend the hype and love them, or are a bit sceptical like our music reviewer Bob Cluness, it's hard to pass up this opportunity to catch the chart-topping band in their homeland. According to the band's Facebook it'll cost you "nothing but a smile on your lips."

Of Monsters And Men first gained national fame after winning Iceland's battle of the bands in 2010. After their album 'My Head Is An Animal' was released worldwide this past spring, they've become international sensations, topping charts in Europe and the US.

They've yet to play a show in Iceland this year, and are about to hit the festival circuit for the summer. Their next scheduled performance here isn't until Iceland Airwaves late in the Autumn. But they weren't about to set out on a world tour without giving a free concert to the country which raised and supported them. And if you can't catch the event in person, you can tune into a live broadcast on the radio station Bylgjan, starting at 20:00. **EJP**



## Retro Stefson and Muck Combine Forces

Faktory

July 5, 22:30

1.500 ISK, tickets available on [midi.is](http://midi.is) and at the door (if there are any left)

Put European electronic disco, South American rhythm, African beats and North American funk into a glass full of North Atlantic ice cold cool, whiz in a machine and you'll get a fresh smoothie in the tasty form of Retro Stefson. Young, good-looking and fun, this band is a must see if you're in love with Iceland's music scene. Singing in Icelandic, English, French and Portuguese, they remind those of us who have oft frequented hostels of much loved Manu Chao's warm, engaging lyrics in languages that we wish we understood and probably will (at least a little) by the time we've got their catchy tunes out of our heads. Anyone who manages to dress up in a stripey multi-coloured leotard, play a tambourine like a ukulele to make grumpy gymnasts dance must be deserving of a listen. In a truly eccentric pairing, somebody decided to make hardcore kids Muck their warm up act. Self described "evil hardcore," Muck are baby faced punk. If you've ever seen the scene with the lead singer from Sjálsfróun (Masturbation) in the film Rock in Reykjavík you'll know that a button nose doesn't necessarily make you harmless. Head to Faktory for an unmissably good time. **ÁG**

**Vegamót**  
 22:00 DJ Gunní Stef

## 06 FRI

**Amsterdam**  
 01:00 DJ Tommi  
**Bakkus**  
 23:00 DJ KGB  
**Bar 11**  
 21:00 Trust The Lies  
**Bar 46**  
 18:00 Pub Quiz  
 00:00 DJ night  
**Den Danske Kro**  
 21:00 Live music  
**Dillon**  
 23:00 DJ Andrea Jónsdóttir  
**English Pub**  
 21:00 Live music  
**Faktory**  
 22:00 Legend Album Release Concert  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 23:00 Frimann & Sean Danke  
**Kaffi Zimsen**  
 23:00 DJ Seth  
**Lebowski Bar**  
 23:00 DJ Anna Brá  
**Thorvaldsen**  
 00:00 DJ night  
**Vegamót**  
 22:00 DJ Jay-O

## 07 SAT

**Amsterdam**  
 01:00 DJ Sesar  
**Bakkus**  
 22:00 DJ Pilsner  
**Bar 46**  
 00:00 DJ night  
**Den Danske Kro**  
 21:00 Live music  
**Dillon**  
 23:00 DJ Andrea Jónsdóttir  
**English Pub**  
 21:00 Live music  
**Hallgrímskirkja**  
 12:00 James David Christie  
**Harpa**  
 17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song  
**Hljómskálagarðurinn**  
 18:00 Of Monsters and Men  
**Kaffi Zimsen**  
 21:00 DJ Seth  
**Lebowski Bar**  
 23:00 DJ Anna Brá  
**Thorvaldsen**  
 00:00 DJ night  
**Vegamót**  
 22:00 DJ Benni B Ruff

## 08 SUN

**English Pub**  
 22:00 Live music  
**Den Danske Kro**  
 22:00 Live music

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# MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN JUNE

**Hallgrímskirkja**  
12:00 & 17:00 Concert  
**Harpa**  
17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song  
**ObLaDi ObLaDa**  
23:00 Brostnar Vonir

## 09 MON

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live music  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live music  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Símon FKNHNSM

## 10 TUE

**Bakkus**  
22:00 DJ Katla  
**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live music  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live music  
**Harpa**  
17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song  
20:00 Don Giovanni  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Óli Dóri

**KEX Hostel**  
22:00 Live jazz

## 11 WED

**Bakkus**  
22:00 DJ Alexander Jean  
**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live music  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live music  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 These Fists  
**Thorvaldsen**  
22:00 R&B night

## 12 THU

**Bakkus**  
22:00 DJ Disco Robot  
**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live music  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Live music  
**Hallgrímskirkja**  
12:00 Concert  
**Harpa**  
17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song

**Kaffibarinn**  
23:00 HúsDJús – Gísli Galdur  
**Kaffi Zimsen**  
21:00 Live music  
**KEX Hostel**  
22:00 Barber and Beer  
**Lebowski Bar**  
22:00 Lebowski House Band  
**Thorvaldsen**  
20:00 Salsa Lesson followed by Salsa Night  
**Vegamót**  
22:00 DJ Jónas



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**Den Danske Kro**  
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**Dillon**  
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**Dubliner**  
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**Esja**  
Weekdays from 19:00 to 22:00, from 17:00 to 19:00 on Fridays and Saturdays, all drinks half price: beer for 425 ISK, wine for 495 ISK.

**Hilton Hotel Bar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00, 2 for 1 beer for 950 ISK and wine for 150 ISK.

**Hótel Holt Gallery Bar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00, beer for 475 ISK, wine for 575 ISK, champagne and cocktails half off.

**Kaffi Zimsen**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00, large beer and shot for 500 ISK.

**Kolabrautin**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00, Beer for 450 ISK, wine for 525 ISK.

**Lebowski Bar**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00, 2 for 1 beer for 850 ISK and wine for 900 ISK.

**Ob-La-Di Ob-La-Da**  
Every day from 12-20, 500 ISK beers, 600 ISK shots and 800 ISK single + mixer.

**Prikið**  
Weekdays from 16:00 to 20:00, 2 for 1 beer for 690 ISK.

**Pingholtsbar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. All drinks are half off, all drinks half off: beer for 400 ISK, wine for 550 ISK

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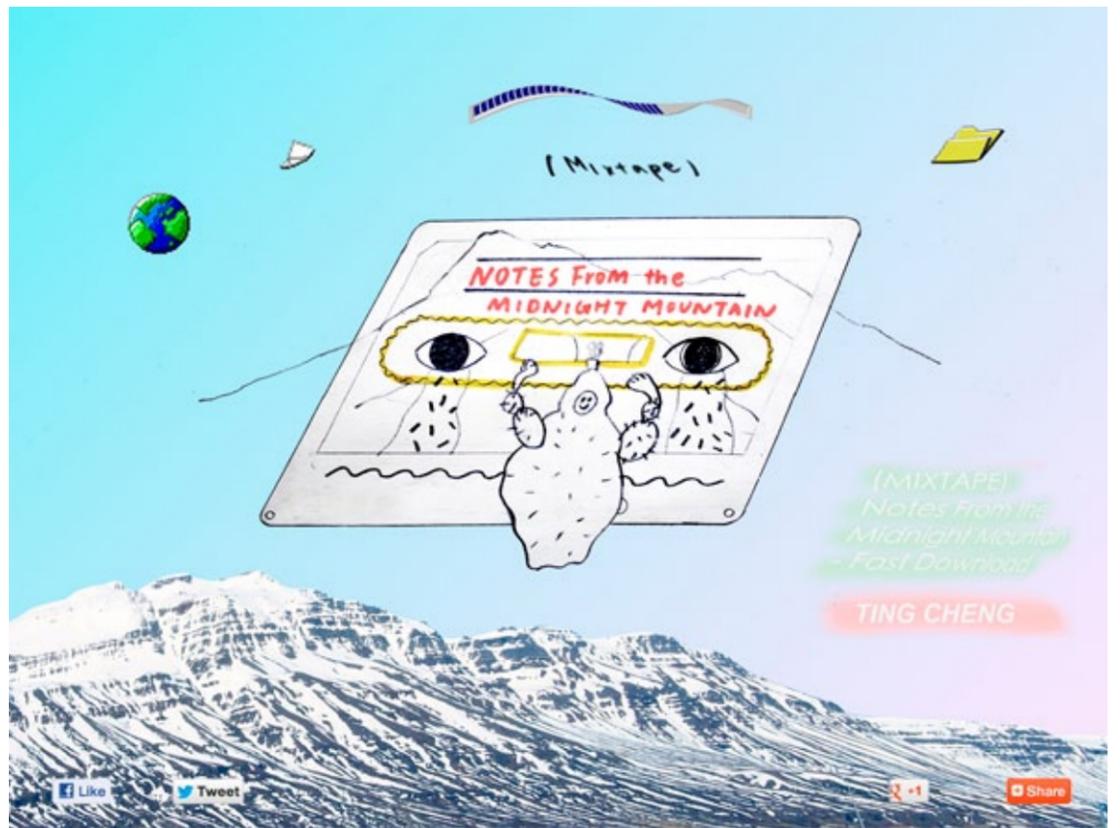
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# ART

## IN JUNE



### 'Reaction Intermediate' At Skaffell

Skaffell – Center for Visual Art

Various artists

Free

The Skaffell – Center for Visual Art in Seyðisfjörður has recently opened their new summer exhibition, entitled 'Reaction Intermediate'. It is composed of events such as performances, exhibitions and video screenings and draws together work from some of Skaffell's artists in residence. This residency has artists from all over the world come over to Iceland to live and work in Seyðisfjörður for a while. Two of these artists, Anna Anders and Takeshi Moro, have kicked off the 'Reaction Intermediate' already. From July 7 until July 22, Ting Cheng, a London based Taiwanese artist, will be exhibiting her otherworldly photographs in the West Wall gallery. Her exposition is supposedly 'a mixtape of a conversation between Ting and the mountains'. Intrigued yet? There's more. Konrad Korabiewski, a Danish/Polish media artist will be performing a show called 'Art Book Orchestra' on July 6 at 18:00 in the Bookshop-project space. 'Reaction Intermediate' is bringing together several artistic and cultural understandings, thereby creating a beautiful hub of summerly creativity in Seyðisfjörður. Get inspired! **SP**

More information on [www.skaffell.is](http://www.skaffell.is)

### COCKTAIL PLEASURES AND VISUAL STIMULATION

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

## OPENINGS

**Living Art Museum**  
July 3, 20:00 **Volumes for Sound - Stilluppsteypa (Helgi Þórsósson & Sigtryggur Berg Sigmarsson)**

**Reykjavík Art Museum, Hafnarhús**  
July 5, 17:00 **The Demented Diamond of Kling & Bang's Confectured Video Archive**  
The Confectured Video Archive comprises video works, performance documentations and films by more than 60 artists. These are woven into a "mild delirium with lucid intervals" - the Demented Diamond and put on display. Artist Ragnar Helgi Ólafsson takes over the Demented Diamond, adding his own solo project to the madness.

**Mokka-Kaffi**  
June 29 **Democratic Moment by Katrín Agnes Klar**  
"Democratic Moment" is an expanding series of hundreds of mobile phone photographs taken by Katrín Agnes Klar, the prints of which show the mirrored sun in various house windows in cities such as Reykjavík, Berlin and St. Petersburg.  
Runs until August 9

## ONGOING

**The Culture House**  
**Medieval Manuscripts Eddas and Sagas**  
It includes principal medieval manuscripts, such as Codices Regii of the Poetic Edda, Prosaic Edda, law codices and Christian works, not forgetting the Icelandic Sagas.  
On permanent view

**Child of Hope - Youth and Jón Sigurósson**  
Exploring the life of Icelandic national hero Jón Sigurjónsson, made especially accessible to children, families and school groups.  
On permanent view

**Millennium - phase one**  
A selection of pieces from the collection of the National Gallery displaying a variety of works by Icelandic artists in the last two centuries.  
On permanent view

**The Library Room**  
The old reading room of the National Library displays books of Icelandic cultural history dating from the 16th century to the present day. Works include the oldest published versions of the Sagas, Edda Poems and more.  
On permanent view

**Watercolours by Olivier Manoury**  
Olivier Manoury's watercolours are on display in the Culture House's shop and café. The painter traveled Iceland and captured his impressions in aquarelle paintings. The works are for sale.  
Runs until September 1

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

**Gallerí Ágúst**  
The current exhibition displays works by David Örn, Helgi Thorsson and Sigtryggur Berg. Internationally renowned,

the artists have all exhibited abroad. The focus lies on painting, but the eclectic exhibition also includes drawings and sculptures. The exhibition is vibrant in terms of colour, but also in its use of media and its presentation.  
Runs until July 1

**Galleri List**  
**Hestar (Horses)**  
An exhibit of Bjarni Þór's watercolour paintings of horses.  
Runs until July 5.

**Hafnarborg**  
**House Project, Second House and Third House**  
This exhibition by Icelandic artist Hreinn Friðfinnsson compiles his older and his newer work. The focus is on the history of an old house in the lava fields south of Hafnarfjörður.  
Runs until August 19

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# ART

## IN JUNE



### OLLE & STEPHAN

Runs through August 4

Spark Design Space

Free

IKEA is great and all, but machine-made parts that you have to build yourself can be just so... jejeune. Fortunately for those looking for compassion in their furniture, OLLE & STEPHAN present design accented with artistic dedication. The Swedish designers believe that "a home should be a peaceful place filled with warmth and love," and they clearly have this in mind when they make their furniture.

The pair confess to finding much of their inspiration in the furniture workshop itself, so much so that one work in the exhibit features a wooden lamp with a wooden lampshade. "The word craft may have different meaning to different people," they say. "For us it represents knowledge, experience and curiosity. In our opinion this is what it takes to make good and long-lasting design. We seek knowledge in old techniques and apply it in a contemporary context."

The pair have been working together since graduating from the Carl Malmsten School of Furniture Design, and though their works may seem innocuous in their simplicity, the emphasis on the labour and forethought is plain to see.

During the exhibit, video work by Gunnar Jónsson will also be shown in the gallery. **BW**

### Art | Venue finder

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12 - 16

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Freygata 41 | H6  
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**Árbæjarsafn**  
Kistuhylur 4

**The Culture House**  
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Open daily 11-17  
www.thjodmenning.is

**The Einar Jónsson Museum**  
Eiríksgata | G6  
Tue-Sun 14-17  
www.skulptur.is

**Gallerí Ágúst**  
Baldursgata 12 | G5  
Wed-Sat 12-17  
www.galleriagust.is

**Gallerí Fold**  
Rauðarástígur 14-16 | G8  
Mon-Fri 10-18 / Sat 11-16 / Sun  
14-16  
www.myndlist.is

**Kaolin**  
Ingólfsstræti 8 | F4

**Gallerí Kling & Bang**  
Hverfisgata 42 | E6  
Thurs-Sun from 14-18  
this.is/klingogbang/

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

**Hitt Húsið**  
- Gallery Tukt  
Pósthússtræti 3-5 | E4  
www.hitthusid.is

**i8 Gallery**  
Tryggvagata 16 | D3  
Tue-Fri 11-17 / Sat 13-17 and by  
appointment. www.i8.is

**Living Art Museum**  
Skúlagata 28 | E7  
Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17 / Thu 13-22.  
www.nyto.is

**Hafnarborg**  
Strandgata 34,  
Hafnarfjörður

**Mokka Kaffi**  
Skólavörðustígur 3A | E5

**The National Gallery of Iceland**  
Frikirkjuvegur 7 | F4  
Tue-Sun 11-17  
www.listasafn.is

**The National Museum**  
Suðurgata 41 | G2  
Open daily 10-17  
natmus.is

**The Nordic House**  
Sturlugata 5  
Tue-Sun 12-17

**Restaurant Reykjavík**  
Vesturgata 2 | D3

**Reykjavík 871+/-2**  
Aðalstræti 17 | E3  
Open daily 10-17

**Reykjavík Art Gallery**  
Tryggvagata 17 | D3  
Tuesday through Sunday 14-18

**Reykjavík Art Museum**  
composed of

**Hafnarhús**  
Tryggvagata 17 | D3  
Open 10-17  
Thursday 10 - 20

**Kjarvalsstaðir**  
Flókagata 24  
Open 10 - 17

**Ásmundarsafn**  
Sigtún  
Open 10 - 17  
More info on  
www.listasafnreykjavikur.is

**Reykjavík City Library**  
Tryggvagata 15 | D3  
Mon 10-21, Tue-Thu 10-19, Fri  
11-19, Sat and Sun 13-17  
www.sim.is/Index/Isenska/Artotek

**Reykjavík Maritime Museum**  
Grandagarður 8 | B2

**Reykjavík Museum of Photog-  
raphy**  
Tryggvagata 16 | D3  
Weekdays 12-19 / Sat-Sun 13-17 -  
www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is

**Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**  
Laugarnestangi 70

**SÍM, The Association of Icelan-  
dic Artists**  
Mon-Fri 10-16  
Hafnarstræti 16 | E4

**Spark, Design Space**  
Klappargata 33 | F5  
www.sparkdesignspace.com



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Aðalstræti 27 • Ísafjörður • 456 5552  
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Lunch offers every day.  
Open every day from 11.00 to 23.30  
For reservations call 551-3340

Restaurant Hornið - Hafnarstræti 20, 101 Reykjavík, t. 551 3340 - www.horni.is

A

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HAFNARSTRÆTI 5 & SKÓLAVÖRÐUSTÍGUR 10

B

**Café Loki**  
in front of  
**Hallgrímskirkja**



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C

Raggi from the band **Árstíðir** is the unstoppable...  
**HUMAN JUKEBOX**  
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wednesday night  
from ten o'clock

# MAP

## Places We Like

### 1 Hressó

Austurstræti 20

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

### 2 Ali Baba

Veltusund 3b

Ali Baba's Middle-Eastern menu is short and straight-forward: a handful of kebab portions (a döner spinning in the back of the desk), falafel, hummus and the eternal fries and a burger. Cheap, delicious, fast, Ali Baba is a favourite for a quick bite.

### 3 Gamla Smiðjan

Lækjargata 8

This welcomed addition to Reykjavík's pizza palette has been steadily winning over fans since they opened for business, and with good reason. Gamla smiðjan seems to handle every single order with care, love and respect. As the dining area is sparse, locals usually opt for take-out.

### 4 Ghandi

Pósthússtræti 17

If you think Iceland has nothing to offer in the way of Indian food, then you'd be pleasantly surprised to know about Gandhi, Reykjavík's premiere South Indian restaurant. The menu is made up of different masala, tikka and tandoori dishes and also various seafood curries.

### 5 Den Danske Kro

Ingólfsstræti 3

The Danish Bar is located on Ingólfsstræti, just off Laugavegur where Q Bar once stood. The bar serves up Danish favourites, such as open-face smørrebrød sandwiches, Danish Tuborg beer and Aquavit schnapps. How to ask for a large beer in Danish: "Hej, jeg vil gerne have en stor øl, tak".

### 6 Þingholt Bar

Þingholtsstræti 5

Located in CenterHotel Þingholt, Þingholt bar is tucked away just outside of the mayhem that is Laugavegur on a weekend night. For a quieter evening, Þingholtsbar is definitely worth a closer look. Show up between 17-19 for the daily happy hour.

### Useful numbers

Emergency number: **112**

Medical help: **1770**

Dental emergency: **575 0505**

Information: **118**

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

BSR: **561 0000**

### Tax Free Refund

Iceland Refund, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400

### Tourist information

Arctic Adventures, Laugavegur 11,

tel: 562 7000

City Centre, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

Iceland Excursions - Grayline Iceland,



### 7 Café d'Haiti

Geirsgata 7b/Verbúð 2

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

Hafnarstræti 20, tel: 540 1313

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

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

### Pharmacies

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

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

### Coach terminal

**BSÍ**, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10,

tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

### Domestic airlines

**Air Iceland**, Reykjavíkflugvöllur,

tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

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

### 8 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

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

### Public transport

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

### Opening Hours

**Bars and clubs:** According to regulations, bars can stay open until 01:00 on weekdays and 05:30 on weekends.

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

### 9 Brynja

Laugavegur 29

In business for more than 90 years now (and with good reason), this Laugavegur hardware store offers everything you need to fix up your house, and compliments it with some helpful and knowledgeable clerks that can even guide you through simple repairs.

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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D



i8

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Tryggvagata 16  
101 Reykjavík  
Iceland  
info@i8.is

T: +354 551 3666  
www.i8.is



i8 was founded in 1995 and represents an eclectic mix of Icelandic and international contemporary artists.

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Opening hours: Tuesday - Friday, 11-5pm, Saturday, 1-5pm.  
Join our mailing list on [www.i8.is](http://www.i8.is) or join us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/i8.is).

# ART

## IN JULY

### The Last Abstraction

The exhibition of abstract paintings celebrates the wide-ranging work of one of Iceland's earliest modernists, Eiríkur Smith.

Runs until August 19

### Harpa

#### How to Become Icelandic in 60 Minutes

Join for a comical theatre performance about all kinds of aspects of Icelandic culture. If you're sick of feeling like a tourist everywhere you go, this show is for you. Tickets are 2000 ISK and Harpa hosts two to three shows per week in the Kaldalón or Norðurljós halls.

Runs until June 29

### i8 Gallery

#### Silvia Baechli & Margrét H. Blöndal - Open; Wait

Open; Wait is a multi-part conversation that begins between the sculptures of Margrét H. Blöndal and the drawings of Silvia Baechli. Minimal gestures accumulate to form an installation that gently manipulates the territory in front of us.

Runs until June 30

### The Icelandic Printmakers Association

#### Continous Story of Deception

Diana Hrafnisdóttir's inspiration comes from the 2008 financial crash. She explores ideas of protest in the face of deception and disappointment.

Runs until July 8

### Knitting Iceland

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

On permanent view

### Latin Dance Studio, Faxafen 12

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

Register by phone 821 6929 or email [tangoadventure@gmail.com](mailto:tangoadventure@gmail.com), 500 ISK for students, 800 ISK for others. Six-week courses are also available.

On permanent view

### Museum of Design - Hönnunar-safn Íslands

#### Something To Write Home About

The emerging changes in Icelandic design are on display to highlight how product designers are embracing more collaboration.

Runs until October 14

### National Gallery of Iceland

#### Hypnotized by Iceland

Works by artists inspired by Iceland's



### Need designer furniture? Why not Iceland?

Icelandic Museum of Design and Art

Runs until Oct. 14, 12:00-17:00

Free July 8; all other days 500 ISK; 250 ISK for senior citizens; free for those under 18

When people think of Iceland, typically they think of Eyjafjallajökull (the volcano that shat on Europe, disrupting air travel for thousands), fjords and maybe Vikings. What's likely not on their mind is furniture design.

But an exhibit at Icelandic Museum of Design and Applied Art titled 'Something to Write Home About' features the work of Icelandic furniture designers over the past decade or so. No longer should the design of Icelandic artists go overlooked. Works include both those meant for function and form, including chairs and end tables but also decorative works.

Curated by Hlín Helga Guðlaugsdóttir, the works offer an insightful look at the changes the Icelandic furniture design community has undergone in the past years, and also influences from other cultures and design media. Unlike other places with perhaps longer histories in the design industry, Iceland is sometimes considered a novel place for such endeavours. Regardless, the works featured display a singularity about them that reveals a truly Icelandic notion of design.

Products on exhibit reflect the imprint of their creators in Icelandic design society, and also at large, with an eye for new designers hoping to leave their mark on product design in the future. The exhibit inspires introspection and retrospection, but also beckons for a look to the future of Icelandic design culture. **BW**

powerful, dangerous and endangered waterfalls.

Runs until November 4

#### Inspired by Iceland

This exhibit explores visually the non-verbal, non-narrative beauty of Iceland's natural landscapes.

Runs until November 4

#### Archive - Endangered Waters

An interactive installation by Icelandic artist Rúrí, which features 52

photographs of waterfalls around the country, developed on transparent film, mounted on sliding plates in a large archive. When pulled out from the archive, the particular sound of each waterfall plays, as recorded by Rúrí at the location.

Runs until December 31

### The National Museum

Advent in the Highlands  
Photographer Sigurjón Pétursson took his inspiration for this collection

# Reykjavík

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### Splashing On Layers Of Nostalgia

Nordic House

Runs until Aug. 12, Tues-Sun, 12:00-17:00

Free

Watercolour, the notoriously capricious medium is made to look easy by Sweden's Lars Lerin. His work explores shadows whilst being awash with light and refined with detail. Masterfully playful, the artist uses watercolours, etchings and writing amongst other techniques to create a layered sense of space that is at once inviting and enclosing. Dramatically lit rooms, which stretch perspective and extend into the horizon are juxtaposed with flat, gritty landscapes that give an eerie sense of light which spills onto the scene. Lerin's brush paints a sympathetic portrait of working life interwoven with a reverent sense of the natural world. The canvas soaks in the cold winter sun which is inspired by the artist's travels to Iceland and his home province, Värmland. At once nostalgic and heart-achingly present, Lars wears his heart on his sleeve, and explores life's turbulent nature through his stunning work.

The exhibit is in both of the exhibition rooms of the Nordic House and is showing until August 12. **ÁG**

# ART IN JULY

of work from the novella 'Aðventa' by Gunnar Gunnarsson. Sigurjón's pictures are drawn from 120 passages from the book. The result is a series of photographs capturing the still beauty of the highlands near Mývatn.

*Runs until September*

## The Making of a Nation - Heritage and History in Iceland

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

*On permanent view*

## The Nordic House

### The Library

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

*On permanent view*

## Watercolours by

### Lars Lerin

Swedish artist Lars Lerin contrasts the sheer grandeur of the natural world against the bleakness of human life on the Norwegian Lofoten Islands in a series of watercolor paintings.

*Runs until August 12*

## Reykjavík Art Museum- Ásmundarsafn

### The Fire Within

A collection of sculptures by Ásmundur Sveinsson housed in his former home. The pieces explore three major themes: the woman as lover, the brutality of war and the unknown frontier of outer space.

*Runs until April 14 2013*

## Reykjavík Art Museum- Hafnarhús

### Erró- Drawings from 1944-2012

The exhibition consists of more than 200 drawings Erró has done since 1944 until the present day.

*Runs until August 19*

## (I)ndependent People - Collaborations and Artists Initiatives

(I)ndependent People asks if and how collaboration can operate in negotiation with contesting ideas and desires, and yet allow for unplanned action. This large-scale collaboration takes place at a cluster of museums, galleries, artist-run spaces and institutions in the capital area. Focusing on visual art from the Nordic region, the exhibitions are conceived as an opportunity to establish and instigate a discussion around the relationships between international and Nordic networks from the perspective of collaborative and artist-initiated processes.

*Runs until Sept. 2*

## Reykjavík Art Museum- Kjavalsstaðir

### Kjarval - Key Works

Reykjavík Art Museum draws on its extensive collection of works by Jóhannes S. Kjarval for ongoing exhibitions at Kjarvalsstaðir. The current exhibition in the Kjarval Gallery features key works of Kjarval's oeuvre and offers a unique and powerful retrospective from Iceland's most beloved painter.

*Permanent exhibition*

## Hangman's Rock - The Delirium of a Vision

Work by painter Jóhannes Kjarval and

other artists like Finnur Jónsson look to dissolve borders between external and internal reality, with works that depict lava fields and the paradoxes of visual perception.

*Runs through Aug. 26*

## Reykjavík City Museum

### Reykjavík 871 +/- 2

### The Settlement Exhibition

Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre, open daily 10:00-17:00, 600 ISK per adult, 300 ISK for children (children under 12, free) and 450 ISK per person in groups (10+).

*On permanent view*

## Reykjavík Maritime Museum

### From Poverty to Abundance

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

*On permanent view*

### The History of Sailing

Iceland's maritime history and the growth of the Reykjavík Harbour.

*On permanent view*

### The Call of Sagas

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

*On permanent view*

## The Watercolours of Ólafur Thorlacius

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

*On permanent view*

## Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

### Milestones: Sigurjón Ólafsson's Key Sculptures

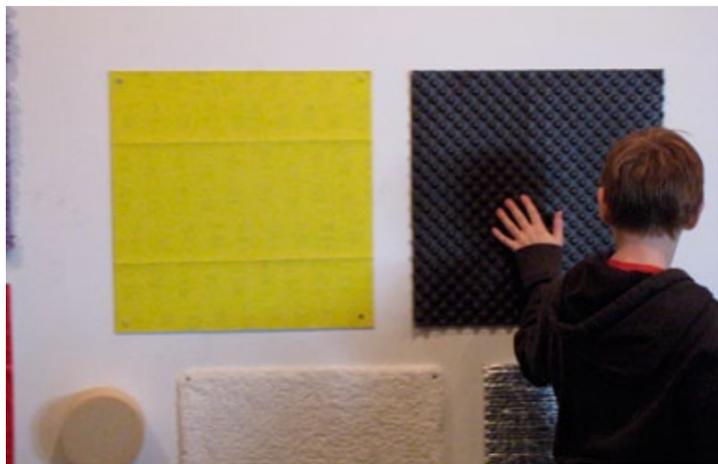
An exhibition with some of Sigurjón Ólafsson's key works from different periods of his prolific career as a sculptor. The earliest work on the exhibition is a newly acquired relief of two sisters which he made at his first year at the Royal Academy of Art in Copenhagen. This relief has not been exhibited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

*Runs until October 1*

## Spark Design Space

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

*Spark is open during the transformation.*



## Please DO Touch

June 23 13:00-17:00

Reykjavík Art Museum: Kjarvalsstaðir

Free

"Please do not touch" is a rule way too common in museums. While the Reykjavík Art Museum has its fair share of exhibits not meant for touching, its current Please-Touch Workshop serves as a place for people of all ages to break the verbal museum law.

Admittedly an exhibit aimed primarily at children and families, guests are allowed to touch all manner of media: various cloths, sponge, sandpaper, plastic, flooring and several others. There's chalk on the walls and texts that try to enlighten children into the artistic process. The exhibit features a work by Jóhannes Sveinsson Kjarvals that shows a single lava field in Garðahraun that the artist painted over many years. According to Klara Þórhallsdóttir, education manager at the museum, the exhibit intends to show guests how differently the paintings look though it's the same location, same subject; and also how light, seasons and artists' moods can affect the final work.

Þórhallsdóttir says the the original idea was for the exhibit to be in a dialogue with "Image, Body, Pathos," paintings by Catalan artist Antoni Tàpies. Tàpies was known for using things like sand, cement, granite dust and other everyday objects, so the Please Touch Workshop embraces a similar spirit in exploring how expansive the world of art can really be. **BW**

# Experience Icelandic Art and Design



## Kópavogur Art Museum- Gerðarsafn

Hamraborg 4, Kópavogur

Tel. +354 570 0440

Open 11-17

Closed on Mondays

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

Gerður Helgadóttir and Svava Björnsdóttir Summer '74



## Hafnarborg The Hafnarfjörður Centre of Culture and Fine Art

Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður

Tel. +354 585 5790

Open 12-17

Thursdays 12-21

Closed on Tuesdays

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

Eiríkur Smith The Last Abstraction Hreinn Friðfinnsson House

ROUTE 40



## Hönnunarsafn Íslands Museum of Design and Applied Art

Garðatorg 1, Garðabær

Tel. +354 512 1525

Open 12-17

Closed on Mondays

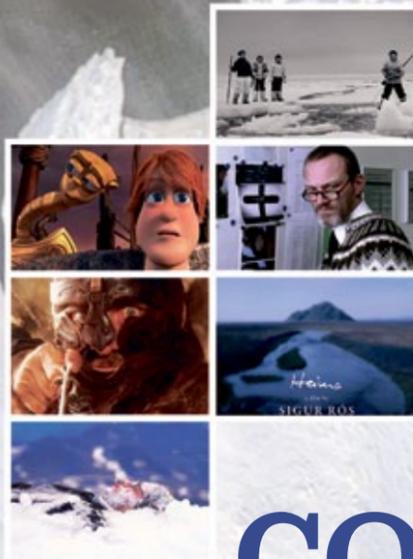
[www.honnunarsafn.is](http://www.honnunarsafn.is)

Product designers Something to write home about

To the Blue Lagoon

JUNE 13th - AUGUST 30th - DAILY -

6pm  
8pm  
10pm



# COOL CUTS

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LEGENDS OF VALHALLA: THOR Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu at 6pm  
JAR CITY Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu at 8pm  
LAST DAYS OF THE ARCTIC Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu at 10pm

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[WWW.BIOPARADIS.IS/COOLCUTS](http://WWW.BIOPARADIS.IS/COOLCUTS)

# Viðey Island

Viðey is an island situated just few minutes from Reykjavík city by ferry. The island is the perfect place for individuals, friends and families wanting to enjoy a relaxing but also adventurous getaway from the city life.

## Ferry schedule

Summer (daily from 15 May to 15 Sept.)							
From Skarfabakki to Viðey	11:15	12:15	13:15	14:15	15:15	16:15	17:15
From Viðey to Skarfabakki	11:30	12:30	13:30	14:30	15:30	16:30	17:30
From Reykjavík Old Harbour to Viðey	12:00						
From Viðey to Reykjavík Old Harbour				15:30			
Winter (on Sat. and Sun. from 16 Sept. to 14 May)							
From Skarfabakki to Viðey			13:15	14:15	15:15		
From Viðey to Skarfabakki			13:30	14:30	15:30	16:30	

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Full programm on [www.videy.com](http://www.videy.com)



ENNEAM / SIA / NNA-6099

## Numismatic Museum



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

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

# OUTSIDE

REYKJAVÍK IN JULY



### Site Specific

Frystiklefinn in Rif, Snæfellsnes

July 7 - July 31

Free

What happens when international artists and small-town Iceland collide? The art festival Æringur seeks to answer this, bringing thinkers and artists from Iceland, Sweden, Norway, England, Finland and Germany to Rif on Snæfellsnes to transform this small fishing town into a site-specific work of art. They come from a broad range of fields, both artistic and intellectual: visual artists, photographers, theatre and dance artists and even an archaeologist! For ten days the participants will engage in conversation and collaboration with each other, the local community and the natural landscape around the town.

Then on July 7, the festival officially opens for viewing with a party at Cafe Blakkát. This party promises to please: there will be a bar built entirely of found materials, free hot dogs and live music. Boogie Trouble, Iceland's own disco band, will definitely get all your limbs boogying. Then DJ Flugvél og geimskip will be spinning their tunes to get the party thumping. Also on opening night, Alexander Roberts, Sigurður Arent Jónsson and Aude Busson will put on their live piece 'Assassinating the Foreigner' about the immigrant experience in Iceland.

The festival will run until the end of July with various events occurring throughout the month. On July 8, the film 'A Poetic Documentary,' which follows indie rock band Sudden Weather Change, will be screened. The band will play a concert later in July. Make sure to check back on the festival's website ([www.aeringur.com](http://www.aeringur.com)) to hear about other events that will occur throughout the month! EJP

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## OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK

### North Iceland

#### Akureyri

**Akureyri Church**  
Summer concerts every Sunday

July 1 - July 29, 17:00  
Talented classical musicians every Sunday for a month.

**Akureyri Golf Club**  
The Arctic Open

June 28 - June 30  
This northernmost golf course will host this international event, which draws participants from all over the world every year, amongst the North Atlantic cultures of Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Svalbard.  
Runs until July 1

**Græni Hatturinn**  
Tangó

July 4, 21:00

**Melchoir**

July 5, 21:00

**Ojba Rasta**, one of Iceland's few rasta acts, perform.

July 6, 22:00

**KK & Maggi Eiríks**

July 7, 22:00

**Wilhelm and the Dancing Animals**

July 12, 21:00

Prices vary

**Everything Everywhere in Akureyri**

Here + There + Everywhere = Everything

June 23 - September 3

Art explodes into the community, celebrating Akureyri's 150th birthday. 71 artists take part in a radical exploration of public art, weaving an intricate story into new spaces. The only place that this exhibition will not take place is at the local art museum. An adventurous way to explore creativity.

#### Dalvík

**Varying Locations**

**Walking Week**

June 23 - July 1

**Waterfall Walk in Sælulandi, 6 hours**

June 29, 10:00

Walk through mountains along the River Sæluá to a beautiful waterfall. End with a beautiful view of Skíðadal.

**Little ones walk for little feet by**

**Holtsá, 2 hours**

June 29, 16:00

Walk from Fjárúsahvefi Holtsá. Family picnic in the beautiful Hvammur.

**Coastal Walk at Árskógsströnd, 2 hours**

June 30, 10:00

The coastal walk will begin in the yard of Árskógsströnd at Hella to see the area's diverse birdlife and beautiful natural vegetation. After visiting the coast, the walk will head toward Árskógsstrand.

**Solar Mountains (Sólarfjöll), 7-8 hours**

June 30, 19:00

Live the mountain bathed in midnight sun. A comfortable walk with some hills, worth it for the beautiful sunlit scenes.

**Hiking and Birds, 2 hours**

July 1, 13:00

The hike begins in the city of Húsabakka in the Svarfaðardalur valley. Ideally more than 35 kinds of bird will be seen, and also a beautiful river, Svarfaðardalsá. The walk ends back at Húsabakka where there will be a buffet.

**Berg Culture House**

**Valgerður Hafstað Art Exhibit**

July 7, 14:00

A retrospective of the late artist, Valgerður Hafstað's colourful work. The exhibition will show a selection of her pieces but will concentrate on her abstract period. Her paintings have a particular sensitivity for the aesthetics of light and atmosphere.

#### Glerárdalur

**The Glerárdalur Circle**

July 7 - 8

Walk along seven mountain peaks in the north of Iceland. Depart from Fynnastaðir in Eyjafjörður and walk up Lambábotn glacier to Mt. Kerling, known as the Old Hag (1538 m). From there the walk will take you into the glacier and across the mountains with beautiful views, a unique way to experience Iceland's nature in the summer. Book by July 4 to avoid disappointment. 15,000 ISK

#### Siglufjörður

**Folk Music Festival**

July 4 - 8

A music festival featuring Svavar Knútur, songs from the Sami people of Finland, Bulgarian dancing and Icelandic folk songs.

#### East Iceland

#### Egilsstaðir

**JEA Jazz Festival**

June 27 - June 30

The oldest jazz festival in the country boasts a selection of Iceland's best jazz musicians and a great atmosphere.

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# OUTSIDE

## REYKJAVÍK IN JULY

### Sálgæslan

June 29, 21:00  
Raggi Bjarna and the Jón Ólafsson band

June 30, 21:00  
2-3,000 ISK each event. Festival pass at 5,000 ISK

### Seyðisfjörður

#### Skaftfell – Center for Visual Art

In collaboration with the Icelandic Centre for Ethnology and Folklore, Skaftfell is showing a collection of short videos. This was to collect narratives from all the inhabitants of Seyðisfjörður in 2011 and 2012 to give a bigger picture of the community.  
*Ongoing*

### Art Book Orchestra

July 6, 18:00  
Danish multimedia artist Konrad Korabiewski will perform a concert of sound-pieces on 10 of his art-books, electronic musical instruments which take the shape of books.

### South Iceland

#### Grímsnes

##### Bridge to the City (Brú Til Borgar)

June 30 – July 1  
Historians, archaeologists, musicians and citizens collectively celebrate Icelandic history and tradition at this annual festival.

#### Mosfellsbær

##### Laxness Museum

##### Concert Lounge

July 1  
Concert with Andrés Þór Gunnlaugsson on guitar and Sigurður Flosason on saxophone.

July 8  
Concert with Kristín Bergsdóttir, on vocals, Steingrímur Karl Teague, on piano and Ómar Guðjónsson on guitar and bass

July 15  
Violinist Ari Þór Vilhjálmsson is joined by singer, Hrönn Þráinsdóttir.  
All concerts are 1,000 ISK

### Vestmannaeyjar

#### Pompeii of the North, Westman Islands

Excavations project at the site of a 1973 volcanic eruption on the island of Heimaey.  
*Ongoing*

### West Iceland

#### Borgarnes

##### The Icelandic Settlement Centre

Settlement & Egils Saga Exhibition  
Daily, 10:00-21:00  
The two exhibitions tell the saga of Icelandic's settlement and most famous viking and first poet: Egill Skallagrímsson. Cost is 2400 ISK for adults, 1800 ISK for children, seniors and students.

### Reykholt

#### Reykhólar and Dalabyggð

##### Commune

##### Project Valleys and Hills

##### Exhibition Project

June 30 – July 29  
Ferð (A Journey) is an exhibition project which uses abandoned houses and open spaces at eclectic sites in western Iceland.

#### Snorrastofa

##### Snorri Sturluson and his time

Daily, 10:00-21:00  
An exhibit at Snorrastofa explores the life and times of famed Icelandic poet, historian and politician Snorri Sturluson. Cost is 1000 ISK for adults, 800 ISK for seniors and students, and children under 16 get in free.

### West Fjords

#### Suðureyri

##### All over town

##### July 12-14

##### Sæluhelgin

A family festival with a whole host of activities, including fishing competitions, sea jumping and singing late into the night.

#### Flateyri

##### Vagninn

##### Boogie Trouble

##### June 29, 23:00

Boogie Trouble performs, disco style with face paint, hot dogs, boogieing and balloons.



### Iceland's Got '90s Fever!

#### Gaddstaðaflatir near Hella

##### July 5-8

##### Tickets are 10,500 until July 1

As we reach July, the peak of Iceland's summer, we also reach the peak of Iceland's outdoor festival season. The third Besta Útihátíðin (literally, 'the Best Festival') will go down near Hella from July 5 through July 8. Bring your tent or camper (electricity will be provided for RVs and campers) to Gaddstaðaflatir and camp out for a few days to catch the Icelandic legends who will be playing this year's festival.

If you're feeling nostalgic for the '90s (the Icelandic '90s, that is), this year's headliners are perfect for you. Rock'n'rollers Botnleðja, recently back from their hiatus, will simultaneously rock and roll. Also headlining are Sóldögg and 200.000 Naglbítar, two other '90s rock bands. The fourth headliner is Iceland's iconic electronic artists, GusGus, who, though they've been around since the '90s, have been keeping things modern, releasing albums fairly consistently since their inception in 1995. If this isn't enough throwback for you, or if you swing another way, Páll Óskar, former Eurovision contestant, pop star and gay icon will bring his glitter and glam to the stage.

But plenty of new musicians will also be playing. Among these, the beloved Agent Fresco, returning from their European tour. And mixed in with these Icelandic artists, Los Angeles-based DJ collective Droog (pictured above) will bring their groove to the campsite. More information about artists and camping at [www.bestautihatidin.is](http://www.bestautihatidin.is). **EJP**



# SNAPS

BISTRO - BAR



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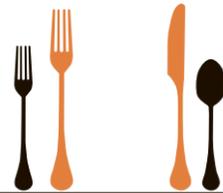
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## SITUATION NORMAL, ALL PACKED 'N STUFFED

### Snaps bistro bar

Pórgata 1, 101 Reykjavík



**What We Think:** Delicious and light bistro dishes. Great service. Affordable. Great, except for the steak, which was a farce.

**Flavour:** French-Spanish with Danish open-faced sandwiches on the sideline. Simple, but precise. A Francophile's comfort food

**Ambiance:** Lively, a good pick for a light meal on a Saturday night

**Service:** They will swaddle you like a newborn

**Price for 2 (with drinks):** 10-12.000 ISK (more if you have several drinks...as you should)

I never had a chance to visit Brauðbær, which was a restaurant that preceded Snaps. Things change fast in this business, and in the blink of an eye several places could occupy the same space. This is why I really hope Snaps is here to stay since, as far as I know, it is offering the best bistro experience in Reykjavík.

There are a lot of great places for a quick lunch in this city and Kex Hostel, Forréttabarin and Slipp Bar at the Marina Hotel are all excellent places for grabbing a drink and a small bite to eat. But if you want the honest-to-god French bistro then Snaps takes the cake. The menu is simple although a little

on the larger side for a bistro, the wine selection is excellent (even the house wines are above average), the atmosphere is laid back, service is fast and the prices are bizarrely low. A month after opening, the place had already become a favoured hang-out for a late bite and tittle for the down-town rats, hip professionals and the usual mixed group of tourists.

As seems to have become a trend with those crazy restaurant guys and gals, Snaps likes mixing it up with a little Danish smørrebrød (open-faced sandwiches).

They were out of the slow-cooked pork with pears and hazelnuts so I picked the hot-smoked duck smørrebrød with beets and horseradish (1,500 ISK). My date had the Caesar salad (2,200 ISK). The waitress tried to warn us that the portions were large and filling but we thought we knew better. Although it's possible to piece together a comfortable three-course menu at Snaps, I would recommend that you start with one to two light courses and see how you're doing at the end of it because the waitress was absolutely right.

Personally, I'm not sure how I feel about duck as a cold cut, it always seemed to me like the kind of meat best served warm (and Snaps does serve a confit de canard and I immediately regretted not having it when I saw the dish). But the sandwich was well made and carefully balanced.

The Caesar salad...my God it was good. Big flakes of quality Parmesan, big chunks of juicy chicken thighs, crisp romaine. Best I've had in Iceland and it was sad to hear they were planning on

taking it off the menu.

The main course was a steak and béarnaise (3,200 ISK) for me and a "Baccala provincial" (2,800 ISK), a dish I had never heard of, but was described as a lightly salted cod with tomatoes, capers and olives, for my date. Although I am not sure what makes it "provincial" the baccalao was out-of-this world. A flaky, light cod steeped in a deep, flavourful marinara sauce. Absolutely spot on.

This makes it all the more regrettable that the steak turned out to be as bad. In some sense I have myself to blame because I had a choice between beef and lamb and made the rookie mistake of going with the beef, which is absolutely not a safe choice in Iceland. The béarnaise was great, the fries were great, but the steak was over-cooked and had the consistency of boiled leather. Steer clear.

For dessert we split a portion of profiterole (950 ISK), which I must admit I had never heard of. Turns out it was what I have always known as "choux à la crème" ("cream puff" in English and "vatnsdeigsbollur" in Icelandic). The ice cream was excellent, but the pastry itself was a little dry.

Overall, Snaps is an excellent place to hang out and it really is the best bistro that I've been to in Reykjavík. The steak was a big let down during my last visit, but I am willing to look past it because Snaps does so many things right. The service is excellent, the wine is good, the price is right, certain dishes are fantastic and...well...it just feels like a bistro.

RAGNAR EGILSSON  
 ALÍSA KALYANOVA

Reykjavík **871 ±2** Landnámssýningin  
The Settlement Exhibition

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Experience Viking-Age Reykjavík at the new Settlement Exhibition. The focus of the exhibition is an excavated longhouse site which dates from the 10th century AD. It includes relics of human habitation from about 871, the oldest such site found in Iceland.

Multimedia techniques bring Reykjavík's past to life, providing visitors with insights into how people lived in the Viking Age, and what the Reykjavík environment looked like to the first settlers.

Reykjavík City Museum

# REVIEWS



## RUB-A-DUB-DUB

### Rub23

Aðalstræti 2, 101 Reykjavík



**What We Think:** If you feel that sushi places should be allowed to fry and fuse with impunity then you will probably find little to object to. Sticklers may groan.

**Flavour:** Pick-your-own-rub meat and fish along with a full sushi menu.

**Ambiance:** Quiet and romantic the first time around, loud and Eurovisiony the second time around.

**Service:** Excellent

**Price for 2 (with drinks):** 15-20,000 ISK

The Seafood Cellar closed its doors earlier this year and in its place we have Rub23 from Akureyri, opening its second location in Iceland. The Seafood Cellar was one of the best and most progressive restaurants in Iceland, so I think it's fair to say that the people at Rub23 have their work cut out for them. The comparison is in many ways an unfair one, as the two places set out with completely different aims, but it is also inevitable for fans of the old place to want to see how they measure up.

I have been to Rub23 more than once now, and I feel I have a pretty good idea of what they're about and have had a chance to try most of what they have on offer. Rub23 is a high concept restaurant. It is a sushi-meat-fish-Japanese-fusion using Icelandic ingredients and the menu is roughly divided into a) sushi/Japanese and b) a variety of fish and meat with accompanying sides and a choice of

your own spice rub (such as Arabian, Indian, Creola and Smoked BBQ). Thank God they also offer set menus—a mystery menu and a few fixed sushi platters.

Last time I went there, I picked the mystery menu (7,990 ISK), but this time around I wanted to swim with the sushi. My date and I picked out the following dishes to share: Sushi pizza tempura (1,990 ISK), Rub23 Best Seller (3,790 ISK), Ten Ten Three Tempura Maki (2,290 ISK), a spicy tuna roll (2,290 ISK) and some eel nigiri (690 ISK for two pieces).

Let's start with the sushi pizza, which from what I gather, hails from Montreal and, much like poutine, there is something about the idea of it that makes me want to bash my brains out with a jar of mayo. But this may be entirely down to my personal, strong-held, traditionalist opinions on sushi and I will try my best to take Rub23 at face value. A sushi pizza is basically a fried maki "patty" topped with some sushiesque delectables. The toppings were a mystery, but I'm pretty sure I tasted salmon and some kind of vegetable. It was actually far tastier than it had any right to be (although I had to take a long, hot shower afterwards).

The Rub23 Best Seller was a pretty standard 14-piece selection although I found the portions a little on the small side. The fish was fresh as is usually the case in Iceland but some of the pieces had too much going on for me to be able to properly enjoy the freshness.

The Ten Ten Three Tempura Maki and the eel nigiri were the stand-out, a very decent tamagoyaki and a tasty tempura lobster and the eel nigiri was one of the best I have had.

Deep-fried maki rolls with mayo may be a pretty distant relation to the subtle spirit of Japanese cuisine, but the re-

sults are undeniably pleasing. Similarly, the cooked items such as the lamb and catfish are terrific. The main problem is that there is too much concept getting in the way and most of the plates would benefit from being simplified. To me it feels like they are taking too many liberties—and not always creative liberties. Bottom line: they do the cooked bits well but the raw bits are so-and-so.

To be fair, people were having a great time at the surrounding tables and seemed to be enjoying their meal. In fact the group of eight at the table next to us were having so much fun belting out Eurovision songs that I nearly forgot I was in a restaurant at all. It got to be a bit much and next time I would appreciate if the staff could advise them to do like the seafood and shut their clams. Other than that I have no complaints about the service staff—they were very helpful and clearly know their menus (and that's no small feat at Rub23).

Rub23 is an ambitious concept and I noticed that they had retained some of the people from The Seafood Cellar, but other than that the two places are simply not in the same league. The variety is refreshing but ultimately I feel it weighs the place down, as does the overwrought concept. Where the Cellar strode confidently, Rub23 feels like an over-eager teenage boy at a school dance trying to show off all his best moves at the same time. You can easily pick out a great three-course meal at Rub23; it's just too bad you have to pick your way past all those flailing, enthusiastic limbs.

✍ RAGNAR EGILSSON  
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# KORMÁKUR & SKJÖLDUR

→ A GENTLEMANS NEWSLETTER ←

Vol. MMXII

Reykjavík, Summer 2012

No. 1

## Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar was opened just before Christmas in 1996 by Kormákur Geirharðsson, drummer and Skjöldur Sigurjónsson, chef.

They were both particularly broke before Christmas in 1996, yet they decided to open a store so they would be able to afford a Christmas present for their fiancés. Business went fine, although the first customer of the store, a well known actor in Iceland paid for the clothes he bought with a check that bounced the day after.



The first spot of the store was at Hverfisgata 26. It got a fair amount of attention. They wanted to raise the stakes to be able to attract more customers, therefore they moved to Skólavörðustígur 15. That would be the location of the store for the years to come. What was fresh about the store was that it handled only second hand clothing for men. The products came from all around, although mostly from the Netherlands and the US. The American clothes were extravagant and lively, however in comparison, that did not fit the atmosphere amongst the locals. During this time, a few men were getting wealthier in result of the technical revolution, or the '.com' era. In such times, men were not captivated by the idea of purchasing used items, it simply was not everyone's cup of tea.

The store has been very fortunate with their employees from the beginning. The first member of staff was the artist Ragnar Kjartansson. Ragnar worked with them whilst finishing his degree at the School of Household in Reykjavík, the first man to do so. Þorlákur Einarsson, historian, was to be hired. He then went on to become the store manager for many years to come. Life itself meant everything in running the business and was highlighted every year by having a show at the National Theater club, where genuine gentlemen around Reykjavík were performing as 'models' for the store.

Business was acceptable, yet it didn't get anyone rich. Kormákur & Skjöldur's brainstorming led them to look for new opportunities and in 2001 they decided to take a break from the store. They sold the location at Skólavörðustígur to

fine young men that ran a record store, it's still present today. But Kormákur & Skjöldur had the blood of a merchant, in result of that they soon knew that their strength was what they had been doing. They decided to open a pub named "Ölstofa Kormáks & Skjaldar". This started to grow a vast amount in popularity from day one. Customers were not afraid of frequently having a talk with the owners and stated that they regret the closing of the store.



The request of these men was soon to be answered and often it's fate that comes in. In 2006, a few promising boys from the band Sigur Rós let Kormákur & Skjöldur know that their favorite store; Bertie Wooster on Fulham Road in London, was to be sold. Þorlákur, the former store manager, was studying in London during that time. He decided to explore the sale of Bertie Wooster and with a surprisingly short way,

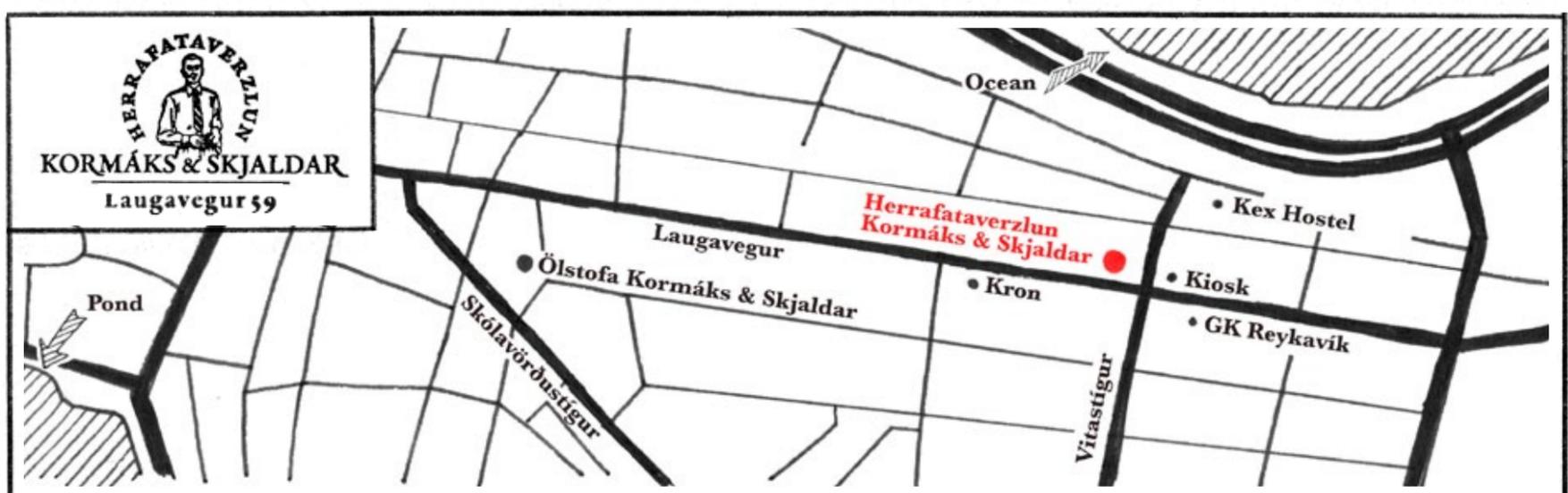
they had bought the store. A week later it was on its way to Iceland. Only the best of the best would do it now. 'Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar' re-opened in Kjörgarður, one of the oldest shopping centers in Reykjavík. The selection of garments was primarily inspired by traditional British clothing, emphasizing on thick and high quality woolen material and attire that suits on outdoor and leisure activities on northern soil.

Since the store opened in 2006, it has been developed and expanded to be able to access more products. In the far corner of the store there is a barber. It has proved to have been a delightful addition to the store as well as insuring that the staff are always neat.



As mentioned before, the main emphasis was traditional British clothing, meticulous and classy. With the stock from Bertie Wooster consisted mostly of used clothes, made by tailors on the highly rated Savile Row in London. The significance on British clothing has not been modified, however the used clothes have found new owners and therefore only brand new garments are sold in Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar.

The primary factor of the store has always been a commonly decorative mood from the owners and their staff's belief that each person deserves to be treated in a personal and gentle manner.



## KORMÁKUR & SKJÖLDUR



### BEN SHERMAN

Born Arthur Benjamin Sugarman in Brighton in 1925. At just 20 years of age Arthur left a post-war torn Britain for America where he saw a land of hope and promise; he was full of drive and ambition. In 1963, Ben Sherman came back from America with the idea of making a button-down shirt. Taking inspiration from his Fathers work as a tailor, he created an icon and this practical, yet stylish garment was soon adopted by a set of style leaders back in England.



### STETSON

John B. Stetson was the son of a successful hatter and so he learned the trade as a child. While shearching for gold, roughing it in the wilderness, he used primitive felting techniques to create the first hat to protect him from the elements. This was the original "Boss of the Plains", made from thick beaver felt. A cowboy is said to have seen John B. Stetson and his unusual hat, rode up, tried the hat on for himself, and paid for it with a five dollar gold piece, riding off with the first western Stetson hat on his head.



### Barbour

They first appeared on the scene back in the late 1800's when John Barbour started out as a traveling Draper. This then led to the supplying of oilskins for seafarers and other outdoor workmen who needed protection from the wet, unforgiving weather. By the beginning of the next century, Barbour's durable Beacon Oilskins were becoming legendary. Today their classic wax jackets are still manufactured by hand in the factory in Simonside and their heritage and lifestyle clothing brand produces clothing that is designed for a full lifestyle wardrobe but still it remains true to its core.

## KORMÁKUR & SKJÖLDUR

**Harris Tweed**



From time immemorial, the islanders of Lewis, Harris, Uist and Barra on the Outer Hebrides of Scotland have woven a luxury cloth entirely by hand and have long been known for the excellence of their weaving. It's the cloth the world knows simply as Harris Tweed. It's a cloth that rises above fad and fashion as age-old skills are passed on from one generation to the next. It will always be made by local artisans in this, one of the most remote places in the world.



## SEBAGO

**"The home of the handsewn roamers"**

Founded in 1946 by three New England natives Sebago is a company in which "handmade" actually means something. Where cobblers still make shoes by hand, not only out of tradition, but out of a desire to maintain a level of craftsmanship that makes Sebago the finest shoes on both land and water.

A gentleman once entered the store. He told the staff that he had bought a piano, an instruction book, and started to learn how to play. He wore an old jacket but one that seemed to have had very good care. He was fearless, gentle and sympathetic. He walked around while a fierce unearthly light burned constantly in his pale blue eyes. He didn't really have anything more to say, he just could not bring himself to say goodbye. Who he was, where he came from and what he wanted are questions which may never be answered.



**FILSON**  
Since 1897

"TO OUR CUSTOMERS: if a man is going North, he should come to us for his outfit, because we have obtained our ideas of what is best to wear in that country from the experience of the man from the North -- not merely one -- but hundreds of them. Our materials are the very best obtainable, for we know that the best is none too good and that quality is of vital importance. YOU CAN DEPEND ABSOLUTELY UPON OUR GOODS BOTH AS TO MATERIAL AND WORKMANSHIP."

-- C.C. Filson, 1914 Catalog

## THE MYSTERIOUS HATTER

I remember very clearly the day I bought my first Dermot cap. I was simply trying to find something to keep my head warm on a very cold winter day in December 2007. Guðmundur Jörundsson now head of design at "Kormákur & Skjöldur" but a salesman at the time, showed me a beautiful woolen eight piece from James Dermot Hatters. One of the things that sold me that cap was the story he told me about a mysterious man who, at a time when e-mails had taken over as the main way of communicating, only took orders through old fashioned mail by post. And of course a key factor was that it was hand made in the UK.

A couple of years later I had started working at "Kormákur & Skjöldur" and when the opportunity arose to visit Mr. Dermot I was excited. We agreed to meet at the train station in Manchester and he told me that I couldn't miss him because he was the best looking man in the train station, wearing a light colored linen jacket. I had brought my girlfriend along and once we met him he had charmed us both within a few moments with his funny remarks and a few compliments about her looks.



James Dermot is a second generation hatter. He is a man of many stories, wisdom about the industry and the English clothing legacy. He took over his family's business after working for his father from a young age and he produces high quality caps in which he only uses variations of the best fabrics. They come in Linen, Pure Wool and Cashmere. That is of course what he and his family stand for along with the old handcraft, the love and passion for each item. He works out of his cottage and he is an extreme romantic who sees the world go too fast and is a little bit worried about the important handcraft and how good tailoring is very slowly disappearing from the modern society. Although there is

a slight change of thought, more and more people want things that are built to last. His generation has the knowledge and skills to be able to pass it on to the next.



## REYKJAVÍK'S FIRST TWEED RUN

Reykjavík's first tweed run took place recently. The event was first held in London in 2009. The Tweed Run is a group bicycle ride in which the cyclists are expected to



dress in traditional British cycling attire, particularly tweed. The run in Reykjavík was organized by two tweed aficionados, Alexander Schepsky & Jón Gunnar Tynes Ólason. A group of 60 participants were immaculately dressed while riding their bikes through town on a very nice summer day. Bystanders watched in awe, taking out their cameras for pictures as the group slowly rode past them. An elegantly dressed cyclist is now a days a rare but comforting sight. Awards were given for the best dressed chap, the best dressed dame and the nicest bicycle, all decided by people's vote. The event was a raving success and it's fair to assume that Reykjavík Tweed Run will be held annually from this moment on.



## FINDING THE RIGHT SHOES

When it comes to picking the right shoes, it is critical to take some time to make comparisons. The shoe department at our store has indeed a vast amount of different styles. It is important to characterize your needs. If a person needs dress shoes, for a festive occasion or a ball, with more elegant attire, it is reasonable to treasure a pair of shoes that is suitable to your appearance.

The colour of the shoes is important to be able to adapt with the appropriate clothing. However, if looking for shoes for

daily use, for example, during wintertime, it is not a suitable choice to wear leather soled dress shoes. You should then consider a practical, yet classy, warmer pair of shoes that handles Nordic weather. It is good to narrow your options down to the two available styles of shoes that you fancy the most. These two styles should then be fitted until the correct size is found. After that you stroll around the store, wearing the shoes to get to know them better. During the stroll, it is critical to see yourself in the mirror to be able to distinguish whether the shoes fit your personality. By taking some time when purchasing the shoes, it is less likely that you have made a mistake with your investment. Finally, it is essential not to put a shoe on the wrong foot. There is a difference between your right foot and left foot which has been taken into account when constructing the shoes.

# KORMÁKUR & SKJÖLDUR

## REYKJAVÍK MMX

In 2010, Kormákur & Skjöldur established their own clothing brand in collaboration with fashion designer Guðmundur Jörundsson. The brand is known for their twisted vision of traditional tailoring, an idea and atmosphere that has evolved from the menswear store to the clothing brand.



Last march, Kormákur & Skjöldur premiered their 3rd collection for Autumn/Winter 2012, at the Reykjavík Fashion Festival. The Collection; 'dress their flesh' is a



Hats & Caps from:

**STETSON**  
MADE OF AMERICA™



*Borsalino*®