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

**DANCING SPORTS TRAVEL MUSIC CHOCOLATE** Awesome Yummy Prince Polo Drive these fjörds Do it during **NBA-rejects find** #airwaves12 is still the king! lunchtime! solace in Iceland! forever... moments!

A lot of Reykjavík is aptly described as "what happens when you let contractors design buildings and neighbourhoods."



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Cover by: Döðlu

Editorial | Anna Andersen

## Life 101

#### Anna's 18th Editorial

My existence in Reykjavík is almost entirely confined to 101, the downtown postal code where I live, work, eat, drink, sleep and hang out.

It's where I do practically everything except shop for nonedible items. Shopping in 101 is almost exclusively for people who like walking around in Timberland shoes, 66° North fleece sweaters and Cintamani jackets.

I may be exaggerating, but there is certainly a dearth of shops catering to the 15,733 people who actually live in 101. It doesn't really bother me, though. I don't do very much shopping in Iceland.

Icelanders just love going abroad to shop. Come Christmas-time you will be almost guaranteed to see news stories about Icelanders who paid for their flight with the money they saved on their shopping

I too like to get out of town every now and then, but as long as I'm in Reykjavík, I'm pretty content to spend my days in the city centre with the rest of the latte-sipping elites.

Much as rural Americans resent liberal city dwellers, people outside of Reykjavík tend to think that those who spend their time in 101 are lazy snobs. It probably doesn't help that Hallgrímur Helgason's 1996 novel '101 Reykjavík' so wonderfully captured the postal code through an unemployed 30-something-year-old man who lives in his

....and then I dreamt that I met

it's a bad omen. But

what does it all mean

what had thing coul

Possibly happer

my cloppedganger but it was sort of on the internet. You know they say

Mom's apartment and spends much of his time drinking at Kaffibarinn.

The novel and Baltasar Kormákur's 2000 film adaptation of it are worth checking out if you're interested in 101 culture. In the meantime, though, you should read Hallgrímur's entertaining page-16 feature about the hodgepodge of architecture—which he calls the skin of society—in the sprawling City

of Reykjavík.

"In only fifty years it went from being a lovely little harbour town to becoming a concrete monster tied up by motorways," Hallgrímur writes. "Reykjavík looks like Rönne på Bornholm surrounded by Los Angeles...

The nice thing about existing in 101, however, is that you don't really notice and furthermore you don't have to take part in the exhausting, car-heavy

There may be a lack of bike lanes and the misshapen sidewalks sometimes feel like uneven mountain trails littered in broken glass from debauchery of weekend nights, but I can-with the exception of a few snowy weeks a year—go everywhere I need to go by bicycle.

Living 101 Reykjavík can be so beautifully simple.

you could

possibly sit

all alone

during lunch.





Valgeir Sigurðsson - Big Reveal

Download for FREE at airwaves.grapevine.is

Wow! Oh boy do we really need to chill out around here. Airwaves just barely ended and we are back at work making a new issue. As you may remember, last month we went way off the deep end with our biggest compilation album yet, and it was awesome, but now we reeeeeally need to take it down a notch. So Mr. Bedroom Community himself, Valgeir Sigurðsson, has graced us with a nice smooth experimental track to calm down to. Well, okay, it's not quite that soothing, but it certainly does take the edge off. Get some cocoa, fire up the tealights and enjoy November, people.

#### **FUN TRIVIA QUESTION!**

Taken from the educational trivia game Instant Iceland

Q: Icelanders are seldom portrayed in Hollywood films, although a major exception is 1994's 'D2: The Mighty Ducks', where a humble American hockey team must face the unscrupulous and remarkably violent Icelandic national team. Danish actor Carsten Norgaard plays Icelandic brute Wolf "The Dentist" Stansson, but what Hollywood legend portrays idealistic US coach Gordon Bombay in the film?

A) Charlie Sheen

B) Emilio Estevez

C) Lou Diamond Phillips

Turn to page 23 for the answer!

## What's The Deal With Those Crazy Icelandic Letters Yo?

# ÞþÆæÖö

We thought we'd explain. We're ripping the idea off from the Icelandair magazine. Go read that magazine if you can. It's free.

We like spelling things using Icelandic letters like 'æ' and 'b' and also those crazy accents over the vowels. Like Icelandair's inflight magazine-IcelandairInfo-says, the Icelandic language can use accents on all of the vowels, making them look all unique, like this: á, é, í, ó, ú, ö, ý (the accent also changes the pronounciation of the letters. The á in "kjáni" sounds quite different from the a in "asni", for instance). We also have an additional three letters. As IcealandairInfo notes:

(often written as ae) is pronounced like

ð

(often written as d) is pronounced like

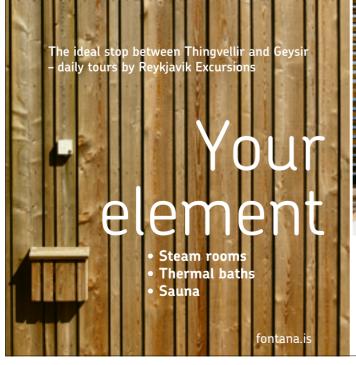
(often written as th) is pronounced like the th in think'

Here Is Your Kreisí Æcelandic Frase For Þis Issue!

skegginu."

**"Fyrirgefðu, en þú ert með skyr í** (Fyr-ir-gev-thu, n th-u a-rt m-eth ske-r e ske-jj-in-u)

Pardon, there seems to be some skyr in your beard.







Laugarvatn Fontana is composed of a series of interconnected outdoor mineral baths and steam rooms, built over natural hot spring that Icelanders have used for bathing since year 1929.

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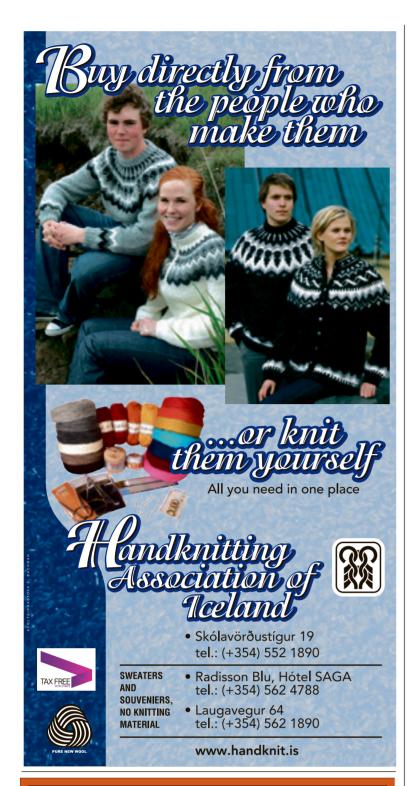


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20'

174





Say your piece, voice your opinion, send your letters to: letters@grapevine.is

# **Sour**



# **Most Awesome Letter** of the Issue

I am so irritated, furious, incensed, etc about something that I have to vent.

I am a former employee of one of the aluminum factories and I feel they are really screwing people over that are on medical leave. I needed to have surgery last year and was going to be off work for 3 months. That was no problem with my employer. When I was released to go back to work by my surgeon, my regular doctor decided that I needed to have physical therapy for 3 months. So, a total of 6 months off work on MEDICALLEAVE

Well, imagine my surprise, when my employer got the papers saying that I would be off a total of 6 months, they fired me. I was quite surprised and when I got the official letter from them, I took it to my work union and they said "Yes, they can do that." What??? It's illegal! I went to a specialist doctor at my one year checkup to be sure everything was 100%, which it is. He asked me about my job and I told him the situation. His reply? "That's against the law." I told him it was in our work union contract and he said that it still

I am a lifelong (50+ years) fan of Science

Fiction and tend to see things thru that

lens. When I visited Iceland (Rekjavik and

Westfjords) last month there were many,

many things that tugged at my SciFi bump:

the wickedly-clever use of volcanic depths to

heat water and buildings for the entire city

and outlying areas, and to generate electric-

ity, the excellent futuristic designs of build-

ings, both mundane (horse barn's beams

of curved laminated wood, a torus-shaped

apartment house, computer-controlled

greenhouses monitored/controlled over the

internet) and civic (the Harpa opera house,

stunning in concept and complexity, even

has variable-speed escalators. Geodesic

dome house in Isafjordur, part buried in a

hillside, the other half glazed for light/heat

gathering. The Rekjavik church that looks

like the Buran. stood on its tail. The hexago-

nally-arranged cylindrical municipal hot wa-

ter tanks with the geodesic dome restaurant,

As I drove northward, toward the Westf-

jords, houses became farther and farther

apart, some many miles from their near-

est neighbor. The abandoned-looking A-

frame hut at the midpoint of Road 608 in

the midst of barren fields covered with tiny

rocks (looking very much like the recent

fotos sent back by Curiosity). Thingvellir

and its history (human and geological) was

solemnly impressive. The witchcraft mu-

seum in Holmavik sent me solidly back in

Perlan, on top).

was not legal-he thought.

at letters@grapevine.is

I have asked several other people and they all agreed-yes, it's against the law to be fired when you are on medical leave. BUT, because the company and work union agreed on it and put it in the contract-that makes it legal and ok to do. Just because people agree on it and put it in writing doesn't make it legal!

YOUR PRIZE FOR THAT MOST

**HAMBURGER FACTORY** 

AWESOME LETTER OF YOURS IS: TWO FREE MEALS AT THE ICELANDIC

Dear reader. We love you very much, especially those of you that write us letters all the time. In fact we love you so much that we keep trying to reward you somehow for writing us those letters. They entertain us, and they keep us informed of what our readers think. That is a

Now. Whoever wrote this issue's **MOST AWESOME LETTER** gets a prize. And it's a pretty great one. Yes, not one but TWO delicious hamburger-style meals at the wondrous **ICELANDIC HAMBURGER FACTORY**, which is an Icelandic themed restaurant that specializes in huuuuuge and mouth-watering burgers to fit every occasion (we recommend the lamburger, unless you are a vegetarian. Lamb is not a vegetable). And if you for some reason didn't write this issue's MOST AWESOME LETTER don't panic. Their tasty burgers aren't that expensive, and you can always try for a MOST AWESOME letter later. Just write us

Is it worth my time to contact a lawyer? Apparently I'm not the only one this has happened to. The only good side of this? The HR person that sent me the letter got fired shortly after that for .... missing work.

I would sign my name to this, but I'm about 99% sure that I'm the only one in Iceland with this name. Repercussions are a worry.

Signed, Unemployed

#### Dear Unemployed,

This is astonishing and very upsetting. It doesn't seem like we've ever covered issues of union practices in our pages, so we got in touch with Halldór Oddsson at the Icelandic Labour Union (ASÍ). Here's what he told us:

"Under most labour union contracts, workers have to earn their medical leave, so depending on how long one has worked at their job it could be anywhere from two weeks to six months. This worker should contact their union again to make sure how much sick leave time they had earned, and if they were fired before it ran out, they should definitely contact a lawyer.

Our official opinion is that firing someone who has used up their sick leave it is not illegal, but it is unethical. Sickness is not grounds for termination. But you and I both know that even if the real reason is sickness, many companies will cite another reason for termination. This is absolutely not okay."

We are really sorry to hear you've had to put up with all this job nonsense on top of getting sick. Here's a nice meal, courtesy of us, that will hopefully elevate your spirits. Until justice is served, burgers are.

time, thinking how it must've been to be Jon Laerdi Gudmundsson, a genius of his time (1574-1658), nearly burnt alive because of his ideas [branching thought: true geniuses are born all over the planet, probably several per century, but most don't survive due to their human environment]. Isafjordur in summer appeared as if it was perpetually preparing for winter, and then it hit me: when humanity finally does set up colonies on other planets or satellites (Moon, Mars, Io. Aldebaran III. or Formalhaut IV), those will probably look very much like the isolated farms and Isafiordur itself does right now: small, sturdy houses painted bright, primary colors, siding of nailed-on corrugated galvanized sheeting, inhabitants tough enough to endure harsh climate variabilities, as well as psychological obstacles involving loneliness, insanity, group-task organization, personal focus, and dedication. Thriving, not just surviving, is the goal.

In conclusion, Icelanders, long may you wave! Please continue what you've been doing but attend to this old saying:

"The smart person learns from their mis-

takes.
The wise person learns from the mistakes of

others.'

Please, please, please learn from the stupidities of others who've bespoil't their environment in thought and deed. Here, for example, is a worthy goal: disconnect from petroleum. You already have electricity generation well in hand, and if you could move towards expansion of electric vehicles, especially the plug-in rechargeable ones for in-city use, you would be heading towards a wiser future and as a shining example for the rest of us to emulate. Emulate, I say! Not Emir-ate.

Best wishes,

#### Dear MI.

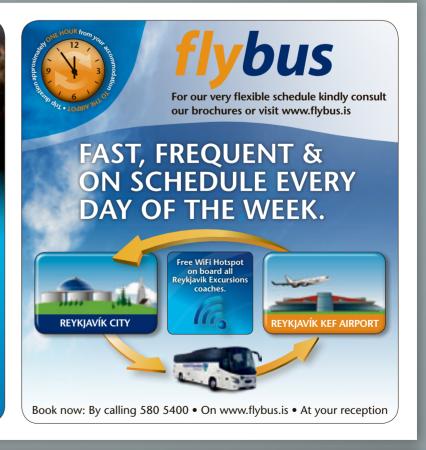
Well, this is awfully embarrassing. It seems someone at customs forgot to wave their memory-wiping wand over you before you boarded the plane (it looks just like a metal detector, cool decoy). And now you slipped out with our secret spaceperson knowledge! WE'VE MADE A HUGE MISTAKE!

Okay, I kid, but your ideas are intriguing and we wish to subscribe to your newsletter. I think the people of safjörður are far too pragmatic and self-deprecating to think of themselves as pioneers for space-age architecture, but who knows! Maybe you have convinced them. And who knows — maybe Hallgrímskírkja will rocket out of the ground on one of our New Year's fireworks displays! Keep watching the skies, MJ.











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**Iceland** | Chocolate

# **Still The Prince!** Prince Polo is still on top of the Icelandic confectionary heap after 50 years

Words by Thomas L. Moir. Photo by NAS.

I find myself sitting at one end of a large boardroom table with a sheet of questions and a stack of three Prince Polo bars in front of me. Sitting at the opposite end of the table are two burly Icelandic men: the kind you would sooner come across guarding the door of a club on Laugavegur than in a conference room. They both stare at me expectantly.

The man to the right is Arnar Ottesen, sales and marketing manager for Ásbjörn Ólafsson, the company that imports Prince Polo to Iceland. The man to my left is Guðmundur Björnsson, general manager of Ásbjörn Ólafsson and grandson of the man who brought Prince Polo to these shores more than 50 years ago.

When Guðmundur sees I still haven't tucked into one of the Prince Polo bars, he asks me directly, 'Have you had a Prince Polo before?' I assure him that I had tried my first Prince Polo the day before we meet, figuring I would be executed for meeting the men without knowing how the chocolate bar tastes.

The two men laugh heartily and Guðmundur adds, "Good, because the balcony is right there," pointing towards the window behind me, "and there's a pit full of reporters down there." The men's laughter erupts around the room.

Despite their intimidating presence, the two men are incredibly easy to talk to. They're funny, good-natured and above all very proud of their little Polish chocolate bar that has dominated the Icelandic confectionary market ever since its arrival in 1955.

#### The Prince Of Iceland

The story of how the confectionary first came to Iceland is a fabled one. It started with a trade exchange between Poland and Iceland. "The Poles were buying herring from us and we needed to buy something in return," Guðmundur explains. "So we bought vodka, timber, and Prince Polo."

At the time severe tariffs existed on importing chocolates from abroad to protect the Icelandic confectionary industry. Prince Polo however managed to avoid these tariffs by being imported as a biscuit as opposed to a confectionary.

"For people our age it was the first confectionary that was available on the market from abroad," Arnar explains. "Until 1980 we did not have Mars or Snickers or Cadbury products. Nothing. Prince Polo was almost the only thing on the confectionary shelves."

Arnar and Guðmundur agree that much of Prince Polo's enduring appeal can be attributed to the circumstances surrounding its arrival to Iceland. "I think because of how it came here it became very popular in early stages," Guðmundur says. "It became a very strong brand in people's minds."

At the peak of its popularity in the 1970s, each Icelander was on average consuming one kilogram of Prince Polo per year. These days, Prince Polo averages about half a kilogram per capita annually in Iceland, an enviable



statistic for any confectionary company. "[In the 70s] we were in a monopoly situation, but now we are in a huge jungle of competitors and still we keep up," Guðmundur explains modestly.

In addition to its homeland, Iceland is the only country where Prince Polo is sold. While most Icelanders acknowledge that it comes from Poland, it is considered by many to be Icelandic confectionary.

Guðmundur believes its popularity here has something to do with the collective Icelandic palate. "It wouldn't be so popular if it didn't suit our tastes," he says. "If you look at the market, it's very liquorice and chocolate driven. So there is this acquired taste that we have that is different from a lot of the other Scandinavian countries; they're not that into that."

The men find it difficult to pinpoint what exactly it is about the bar that appeals so much to Icelanders, but believe it's very much a taste you grow into. "When you went to your grandparents, they would have a box of it, and that would be your treat," says Arnar. "I think it connects people to their childhood," Guðmundur offers. The two men turn to each other at this point as if reflecting on their younger days and the part the chocolate bar played in it.

They tell me that some even consider—if jokingly—a Coca-Cola and Prince Polo to be the Icelandic national meal. In fact Prince Polo is one of just a handful of companies globally that Coca-Cola has advertised with, the conglomerate clearly sees the value in attaching itself to the chocolate bar. "It's a great combination," Guðmundur says of the 'national meal.' He and Arnar steal a guilty glance across at each other before looking down at their own bellies and breaking into simultaneous laughter.

#### Kats Out Of The Bag

I'm a bit nervous about the next part of our chat. The two men have won me over about the Prince Polo bar. They're so passionate about it and have so much of themselves tied up in its success that I feel terrible about mentioning that

66

Until 1980 we did not have Mars or Snickers or Cadbury products, nothing. Prince Polo was almost the only thing on the confectionary shelves.



Kit Kat outsold Prince Polo for the first time in 50 years last month.

When I finally ask, they each offer a calm, knowing smile in return. "We corrected that," Guðmundur assures. "It was a mistake."

Last month Icelandic news reported that Kit Kat had edged out Prince Polo by 0.4% for the first time in 50 years, according to a Capacent poll. When they read the news, neither of the men could understand it. "We get the same numbers and it didn't fit. We saw that there were errors," Arnar says.

In the period being looked at Prince Polo sold 1.5 million units, while Kit Kat had sold 970,000, which means that Prince Polo outsold them almost two-to-one. It turned out to be a calculation error from AC Nielsen.

So it was a big mistake then, I say. "It was a big, big, big mistake," Guðmundur replies.

On discovering that the numbers didn't add up, Prince Polo contacted the group and asked them to double check. "This was in the air for 24 hours. And we asked them to check, and it was an error. So it was removed. We decided not to shout too much about it," Arnar says coolly.

Guðmundur jumps in, "It was a nice dream they had, but not true," he laughs.

#### Not Too Sweet, Not Too Heavy

Despite the sense of tradition it has in Iceland, the men believe much of Prince Polo's appeal can be attributed to the sense of balance the bar has in contrast to its competitors.

"Too sweet," Guðmundur says of the competitor bars. "You're not overdosing with one Prince Polo but you could be overdosing with a competitor bar," he says. Arnar adds, "and because they're so sweet, you can maybe just eat one. But the Prince Polo, you could easily eat two," he says matter-of-factly.

They tell me about how studies and articles by health experts have talked about Prince Polo favourably. "For example I saw a doctor saying that if you have diabetes, and you need something sweet, it's good to have Prince Polo because it's not too much of a shock, it helps stabilise you," Guðmundur says, before quickly adding "but now I'm in a grey area. I don't want to say 'doctors recommend Prince Polo'" and the erupting laughter from the two resumes for a few seconds. "But we do have a lot of positive input from groups that are on diets."

Unsurprisingly, the chocolate bar itself has barely changed in the more than 50 years it's been on the market. The only real change in fact hasn't been to the chocolate, but to the packaging. In 1992, new EU regulations stipulated that each chocolate bar needed to be individually sealed, meaning they had to update the packaging from the previous open wrap design.

For such a seemingly minor change, it received a fiery reaction. "The angry ones, we still hear them saying, 'Why in the hell did you change Prince Polo?'" Guðmundur says. "Like it was up to us!" Arnar adds.

Guðmundur still remembers the day they announced the changes. "It got a lot of attention. People were trying to buy up old stock. It would be the Icelandic equivalent to when Coca Cola changed their recipe and everything went berserk," he says bemused.

"One guy even called me and said, 'What are you going to next, change our national flag?' So he put it into perspective," the men laugh.

# The Only Way Is Forward

How the Message of Obama's Re-election Campaign Aplies to Us Non-Americans



Hólmar Hólm

is a 22 years old student of Latin and Ancient Greek at the University of Iceland.

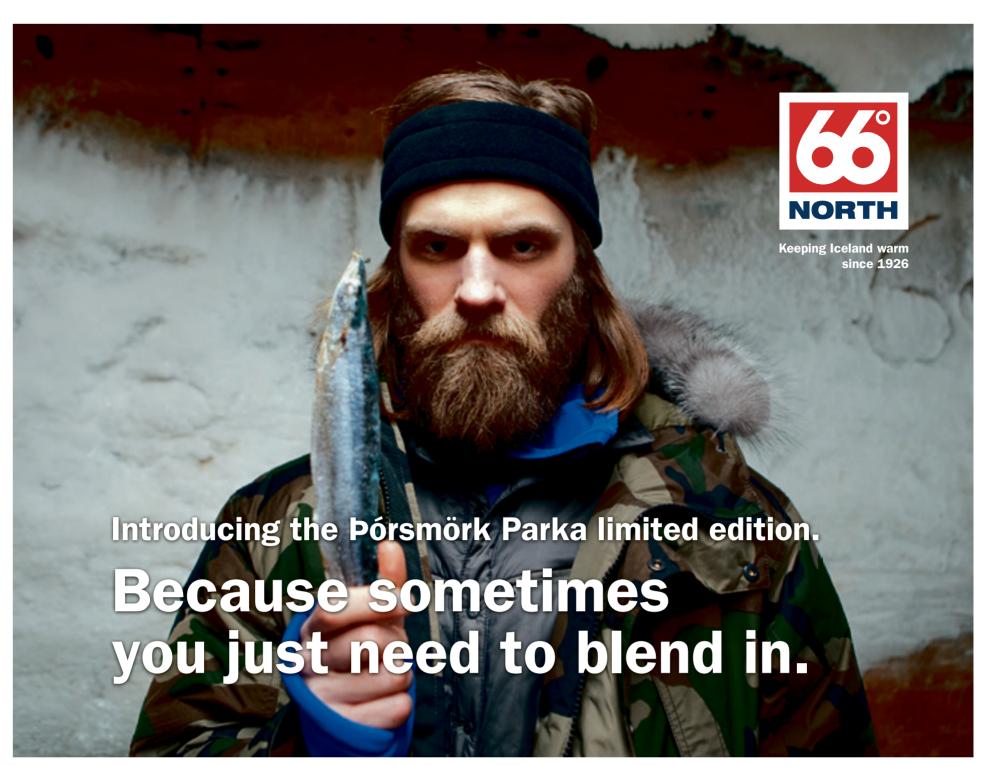
Here in Iceland interest in the American Presidential Election is considerable. As one of the world's leading nations, we look to America for our future. America's government not only affects America, but is also of great consequence to the rest of the world. Around 800 people gathered at the Hilton Reykjavík Nordica to watch the election results coverage at the invitation of the Embassy of the United States. Given our great concern with the election, which lessons can we as non-Americans draw from this event?

Most importantly, the results of the presidential election in the United States show us one thing: The Old White Wealthy Males no longer call the shots in the world. By re-electing President Obama, Americans have only affirmed this. As President of the United States. Obama is a symbol of unity, not just for America, but for the whole world to see. He is a symbol of hope for the future, a change in the world-a future of acceptance and cooperation among mankind. He is not the President of a select group of people; he is a president for all-black or white, rich or poor-a president for everyone and anyone.

Uniformity holds us back, while diversity ensures progress for all. This election has again shown the power of a diverse group of people gathering behind one man with one message. Obama's message of hope and change for a better world, free of prejudice and injustice, but full of acceptance and opportunities, is in the common interest of mankind. A diverse group of people have overcome the select few; the days of the Patriarchy are numbered, its influence dwindling. As the few lose their footing and the power slips through their fingers, the many continue to gain a foothold in the world. For that reason, we must learn from their mistakes of exclusion and strive for a better world by accepting our differences, by accepting ourselves.

As this election proves, minorities are the new majority. The minority does not seek success at the expense of another, but for itself and for society. Our society is built by minorities. Everyone plays a part in the works of the world. We are all equal. When people of all sorts come together they are stronger than any uniform body of people could ever be. Division is a thing of the past; to embrace the future, we must embrace each other, only then can we move forward

As we face the coming elections here in Iceland, we might take this realisation to heart: We will accomplish more if we work together than we ever could by constantly opposing each other. We have to stop dwelling on our differences and focus instead on what we can do together for the future. Equality means growth; equality is our future. Therefore, Obama's key word applies not only in America, but all over the world. Now is the time we must move forward!





# So What's This I Hear About Icelanders Voting To Make Christianity A State Religion?

#### Words

Kári Tulinius

#### Illustration

Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir

Last month there was a national referendum with six questions on a proposed new constitution for the Republic of Iceland. The first question was whether the proposal should be the basis of the future constitution, which passed overwhelmingly. The other five were on specific aspects of the proposed constitution considered especially controversial. On four of them, the electorate agreed with the proposal. With one, however, the electorate overruled the proposal. In the proposed constitution there was a provision meant to ensure a separation between church and state. The electorate voted to include a provision for a national church in the constitution, which in effect means that there will be a state church in

This is what I feared. Iceland is turning into Iran 2: Hydroelectric Boogaloo.

While revolutions have a way of being appropriated by reactionaries, this is not really what is going on. The Icelandic Lutheran Church is already state-run and has been since about 1550, back when Iceland was a Danish colony. That was a proper religious brouhaha, with Jón Arason, the bishop of the still Catholic northern diocese, rebelling against the Lutheran king of Denmark. It ended badly for him as he and two of his sons had their heads chopped off.

His sons? I guess that's what happens when your religion bans condoms.

Well, that was hardly the only Catholic doctrine he was flouting. After his death, Northerners went around Iceland hunting down and killing Danes, whether they had anything to do with the bishop's execution or not. It took



two Danish warships and a battalion of soldiers to subdue Iceland. The Lutheranisation of Iceland went so well, it seems, that the majority of the electorate decided to keep it as their state religion.

But I thought Icelanders didn't care about religion.

You would not be the only one. In a 2011 Gallup poll, sixty percent of Icelanders replied that religion was unimportant in their lives. In the past decade, member-



In addition to Iceland, both Denmark and England have state churches, and then Sweden and Finland are in an open relationship with their indigenous Lutheran churches with Finland banging the Finnish Orthodox Church on the side.



ship in the National Church of Iceland has fallen by ten percent. And as a rule, Icelanders rarely go to church. According to a 2004 Gallup poll, only ten percent go to church once a month or more, and forty-three percent never go, which happens to be the percentage of the electorate who voted against having a state church. Iceland hardly fits the profile of a nation of religious zealots.

# So all these bearded guys in downtown Reykjavík are just hipsters then?

Pretty much. The truth is that state churches are not uncommon in Northern Europe. In addition to Iceland, both Denmark and England have state churches, and then Sweden and Finland are in an open relationship with their indigenous Lutheran churches with Finland banging the Finnish Orthodox Church on the side.

# I imagine those onion domes gotta hurt.

It was a clumsy metaphor, but the point stands. Northern Europe remains a region where the state church is like a weird cactus in a windowsill. You can forget about it for months at a time without anything happening. It is lovely to look at even if it is kinda weird, and you warn your children not to get too close. So you keep it around, even when you move house, and when you die, one of your kids ends up taking it.

So Icelanders voted to keep the state church out of inertia?

Perhaps, but I think that it is a more salient explanation that the National Church of Iceland is better organised than people who want to make it go away. The church has hundreds, if not thousands, of employees and volunteers, from Agnes Sigurðardóttir, the Bishop of Iceland, to the guy who joined his local church choir to hit on ladies. That is a lot of people who have a stake in it. Couple that with the various social and pastoral activities it facilitates and performs, and it has a huge reservoir of goodwill.

## Who are the people who want to make it go away?

There are mainly two disparate social groups who would like a separation of church and state. The first is comprised of people who like to get into fights on the internet. The second is a collection of deeply principled activists for civil liberties and freedom of thought who like to get into fights on the internet. All joshing aside, the anti-state church activists just do not have the kind of organisational know-how that an established, entrenched church has.

# That's how the extremist priests take over. They bring out their congregations into the streets!

Say what you will about the National Church of Iceland, but it has mostly stayed out of the way in recent decades. That is if you ignore its shameful intransigence on gay rights and the sexual molestation accusations against various priests and even a former bishop. But many Icelanders, probably those sixty percent who told Gallup religion was unimportant to them, can go months without noticing that there even is a state church in Iceland. And in an election where only half the electorate turns up to vote, the oblivious are likelier than not to forget to show up.



The month of October began on a peaceful note with the LENNONONO Awards given in Reykjavík. These awards, which recognise efforts made for the cause of world peace, were this year presented to late peace activist Rachel Corrie, author John Perkins, noted anti-theist

Christopher Hitchens, Russian punk rock band Pussy Riot, and pop singer Lady Gaga. While some wondered how Hitchens—who was a prominent cheerleader for the invasion of Iraq—ended up receiving a peace award, the event was by all accounts joyously celebrated and it was followed by the lighting of Ono's "Peace Tower" on the island of Viðey.

A bit of an environmental scare took hold when hay near an aluminium smelter in northeast Iceland was found to have high levels of fluoride. Farmers were immedi-

ately informed
of the potential
contamination
and advised not
to feed the hay to
their animals until
it was deemed safe.

After a thorough examination, it was determined that levels of fluoride in the hay were far below what are considered dangerous levels, and the farmers were given the green light to give the fluoridated hay to their horse and sheep—all of whom are now reported to have beautiful smiles.

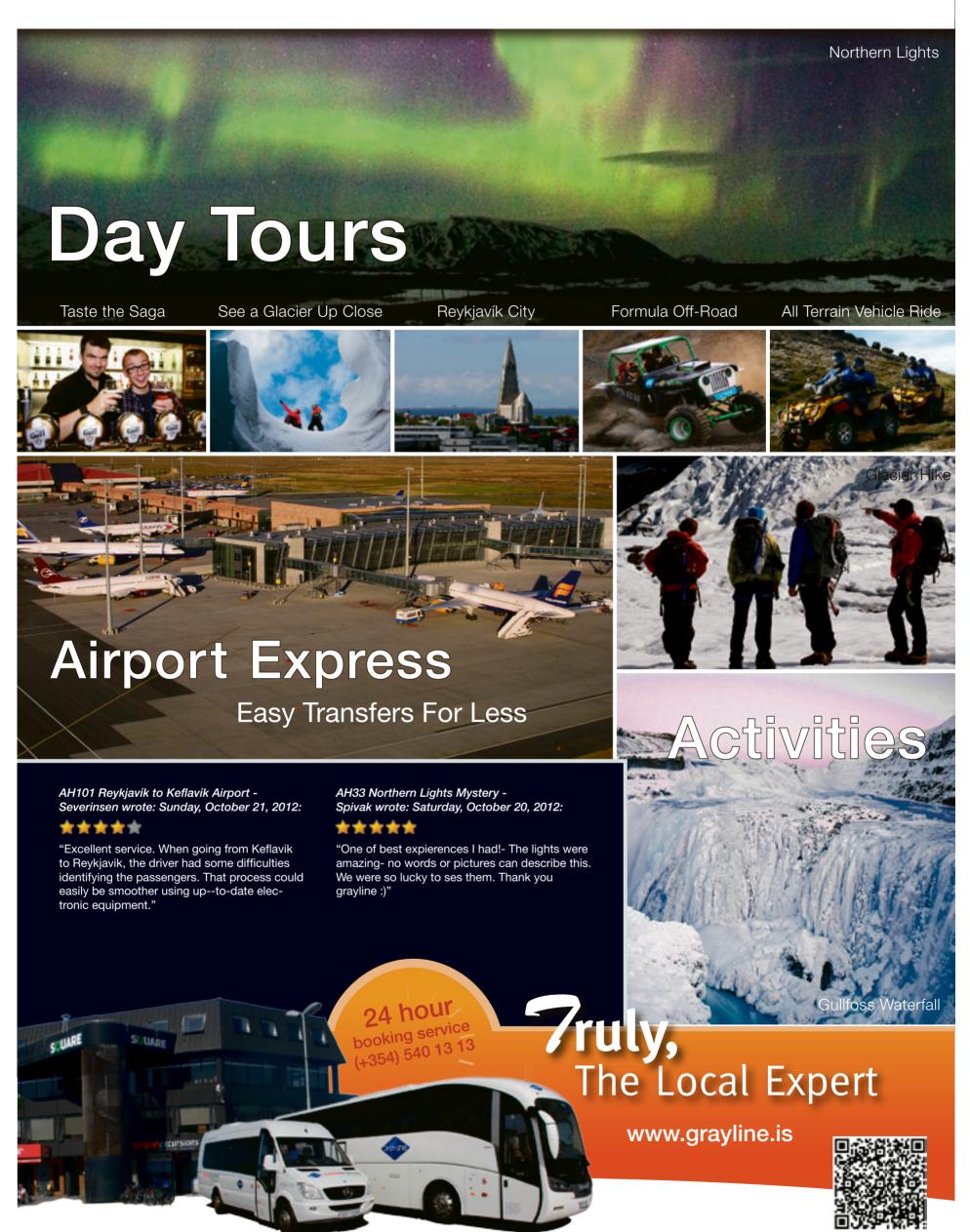
Speaking of animals that were almost poisoned, a dog show in Kópavogur was temporarily cancelled when pieces of liver sausage were found scattered around the area. Tests done at the University of Iceland revealed that the pieces did indeed contain high levels of rat poison. For the time being, there are no known suspects or motives, but

Continues over

police are still investigating.







Politics | Four years later

# Eva Joly: Iceland Should Be Proud Of Investigations *And should join EU*

Words

Jenna Gottlieb

**Photo** 

antony4

Norwegian-French magistrate Eva Joly delivered a compelling speech at Harpa on October 19, covering everything from Iceland's financial investigations post-crash to reaffirming her opinion that Iceland should join the EU.

Joly, who served as assistant to Iceland's Special Prosecutor after the 2008 banking collapse, was invited to speak by the University of Iceland's business department. It was her first trip to Iceland since 2010. "In two years time, so many positive things have happened," Joly said. "The prosecutions have started and the legal system is strong enough to handle the cases.

There are a number of investigations being carried out by the Special Prosecutor's Office, which was created in December 2008. For instance, charges have been brought against bankers at Glitnir Bank and Kaupthing.

Iceland was also the first nation to bring charges against a former leader. In March, Iceland's former Prime Minister, Geir Haarde, was charged with gross negligence related to the economic collapse. Haarde was eventually found guilty on one of four charges for not holding cabinet meetings on important issues, which was a minor offense that did not call for punishment.

Joly stressed that Icelanders should take pride in the investigations and that Iceland serves as a role model for other nations contemplating prosecutions. "You should be proud you invested in these investigations," Joly said. "But, there needs to be patience; it's only been three years since investigations began."

The larger picture, however, is whether the culture in the banks that brought about the collapse has changed. Joly is pessimistic. "Nothing has changed in the morality; banks operate in the same way," she said. "The greed issue is due to a loss of values; that money is the only value," she said. "But, we not only lost our values; we lost the distinction between right and wrong. This is why the judiciary is so important. There are rules for banks and when they don't follow the rules."



they will be prosecuted. They should be prosecuted every time."

Nations need to reconsider how they prosecute crime: "We are only prosecuting violent criminality, not environmental or economic criminality," she said.

#### Fanning the EU flames

Joly was unapologetically pro-EU throughout her speech, even citing the recent Nobel Peace Prize the body was awarded. "Looking back at what Europe has achieved over 60 years... it brought peace and prosperity," Joly said, amid snickers from the crowd.

During the Q&A session that followed her speech, discussion inevitably turned to whether Iceland should join the EU. Joly famously shocked many Icelanders when she said in 2010 that Iceland should join the European Union. "You are already living with the EU regulations because you are part of the EEA," she said. "You are living them, but not negotiating as an EU member."

Joly said that she does not believe that EU members would exploit Iceland's resources. On the contrary, she said she believes joining the EU would give Iceland even greater bargaining power. As a member of the EU, Iceland could negotiate for the protection of their natural resources and fishing waters. "Selling off the public good is a scandal," she said. "We don't want to sell away the islands in Greece to rich

oligarch Russians and we want your energy to stay Icelandic."

Fielding a question on the distrust of



As for small investors, you are the people being fooled all over the world. Life is built on trust, but you must choose whom to trust. You should invest in only what you understand.



Icelandic banks that lingers four years after the collapse, Joly urged caution: "As for small investors, you are the people being fooled all over the world. Life is built on trust, but you must choose whom to trust. You should invest in only what you understand."

#### Special Prosecutor's Office: Greatest Hits and Misses

#### Some facts

The office was created in December 2008 to investigate suspicions of criminal actions leading up to, and in the wake of the financial collapse. Eva Joly helped establish the office, serving as a special advisor for 18 months.

It's headed by Ólafur Hauksson, who was previously the Akranes District Commissioner

#### What has (and hasn't) been accomplished in four years time:

- Charges were brought against former
   Prime Minister Geir Haarde. He was eventually found guilty of one of four charges, which did not bring a penalty.
- Charges were brought against Lárus Welding, the former CEO of now-defunct Glitnir Bank. Another banker at Glitnir, Guðmundur Hjaltason, was brought up on charges.
- Charges were brought against Kaupþing Bank executives Hreiðar Már Sigurðsson, Sigurður Einarsson, Ólafur Ólafsson and Magnús Guðmundsson. Hreiðar Már and Sigurður were charged for breach of trust and market abuse, and Magnús and Ólafur for being accomplice to both.
- The headquarters of investment firm Arðvis in Kópavogur were raided. Some of the company's representatives were arrested and then released.
- Many of Iceland's business leaders remain under scrutiny, including: Jón Ásgeir Jóhannesson and Jóhannes Jónsson, the owners of the Baugur Group retail empire; Lýður Guðmundsson and Ágúst Guðmundsson, the frozen food investors who were in charge of Kaupthing; and Björgólfur Thor Björgólfsson and Björgólfur Guðmundsson, the brewing and shipping executives who owned Landsbanki.



- Continued -

Were you thinking of visiting Álftanes next year? Too bad! It won't exist anymore. Earlier this month, residents of Álftanes and Garðabær voted in a referendum in favour of merging their communities, which will take

effect next year. The new town is to be named, imaginatively enough, "Garðabær." One resident of the old Garðabæ

One resident of the old Garðabær complained that the referendum information packets were one-sidedly in favour of the merger between the relatively wealthy Garðabær and the debt-ridden Álftanes, but hey, all water under the bridge now!

n other news, Icelanders voted yes to a new constitution earlier this month in an advisory referendum made up of six questions. About 49% of eligible voters took part, with two-thirds of them voting in favour of parliament accepting the draft that the Constitutional Council has written. They also voted in favour of nationalising natural resources that hadn't already been privatised, creating a "one person = one vote" rule, and keeping a clause about a national church in the new constitution. Media sources the world over subsequently reported the constitution had been written by the nation as a whole via Facebook and Twitter.

Finally the most widely read story this month—thanks in part to Pee-Wee-Herman for sharing it—was the story of police breaking up a cat party in Suðurnes. Neigh-

bours of an
abandoned
house noticed
cats coming in
and out of an
open window

of the house and, naturally, they called the police. When the police showed up, they found no people in the house but they did find "two to three cats" snuggling on the couch. The cats were summarily evicted and the house was shut tight by the police thereafter. Whoever said cats have it easy clearly has never tried to be one in Suðurnes.



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- · Bjarnarhöfn, the shark museum where you can even taste the traditional fermented shark (admission included)
- The amazing Icelandic West, including the magical area around the glacier of Snæfellsjökull

NOTE: Short easy walks on the sites visited. Warm clothing recommended. The weather in Iceland can change in a matter of minutes. Dress accordingly to experience the cozy outdoors of the Icelandic winter.

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- · The fishing village of Grindavík
- The Blue Lagoon (admission not included) where you are given full two hours where you have the option of bathing in the milky blue water

NOTE: Short easy walks on the sites visited. It is our opinion that the Icelandic weather can be tamed by bringing along warm clothes just in case. Even though the outlook might be good you never know when the weather changes its mind.

7.500,- isk Starting time 13:00 | 6 hours | Two passenger minimum | Free pick up / drop off













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Reykjavík | Streets

## Where The Streets Have New Names...

# Residents of the Tún neighbourhood get a new postal address overnight

#### Words

Thomas L. Moir

#### **Photography**

Early morning in Reykjavík, I wade through the fog along a deserted street in the Tún neighbourhood, en route to work. The overnight chill has coated the road in a thin layer of invisible ice. At an intersection, I take a left. I walk this way every day and know it well. Today is different though; something is afoot. I pause, take three steps back, and turn my head to the street sign hanging feet above my head.

Today I see not one but two signs advertising the same street's name, one below the other: the higher reads Skúlagata, the lower reads Brietartún.

The absurdity of the sight isn't immediately obvious and most would pass by without noticing a thing. But for those with a keen eye, or those in need of direction, the new sign would only incite confusion.

#### **Moving house (sort of)**

Not everyone is happy about the change. Meet Sigurður Þór Guðjónsson. He lives in the Tún neighbourhood of Reykjavík with his two cats, where he runs a weather and climate blog from home. Last month Sigurður went from living at Skúlagata 68 to living at Bríetartún 24 overnight.

"I didn't know about it before I saw it on the news," he says, disgusted. "There was no information about it given to the people who live on the street."

Skúlagata is one of four streets in the neighbourhood that the Reykjavík City Council recently renamed to commemorate the first four women to sit on the City Council in 1908.

Sætún is now Guðrúnartún, after Guðrún Björnsdóttir; Höfðatún is now Katrínartún, after Katrín Magnússon;



Skúlatún has become Þórunnartún, after Þórunn Jónassen and Skúlagata east of Snorrabraut is now Bríetartún, after Bríet Biarnhéðinsdóttir.

The old street signs will remain alongside the new signs until 2014 to ensure a smooth transition, but official addresses have been changed.

The changes are particularly problematic to residents of Skúlagata who, like Sigurður, will not only have a new street name to get used to but also a new house number.

"As Skúlagata was cut in two halves through Snorrabraut, it is a very necessary change to give this part of Skúlagata a new name. So we also have to give it new numbers," says Jón Halldór Jónasson, a member of the Reykjavík City Council who was part of the planning committee behind the change.



I didn't know about my address changing before I saw it in the news. There was no information about it to the people who live in the street.



#### What's in a name?

Sigurður, who has lived on Skúlagata for over two decades, believes the change is completely unnecessary and that it destroys the identity of his street.

He sighs deeply over the phone, bemoaning his new address: "It's not the name; not the proper name." Sigurður can't understand how the council could alter the history of his home without so much as a word to residents. "It's one of the oldest streets in Reykjavik," he says desperately

Jón Halldór tells me the Tún area was chosen as it was under construction at the time the four women were elected. "It's a symbolic way to commemorate them," he says.

"The previous names of the streets. like Sætún, which means sea for example, were not of much significance," Jón Halldór says. "except for Skúlagata, which is named after Skúli Magnússon, and the biggest part of which will remain as Skúlagata of course."

Jón Halldór savs it has taken several years for the name changes to come into effect because some residents protested the decision. "The City of Reykjavík of course listened to them, but it can't take everything into consideration," he says. "We tried to minimise the problems as much as possible."

#### No big deal

Meanwhile, just down the street from Sigurður lives Guðmundur Rúnar Svansson, who is not too bothered by the changes. "I think it's such a small issue," he says bemused. "I don't understand why this is a big deal to the people who live here."

Not only does he not mind the change, he thinks it's a practical one, especially in the case of Skúlagata, which is already split into two sections. "It's two completely different streets and to me it makes sense they have a different name," he says.

"When giving people directions to my house they sometimes get lost, especially foreign guests," he laughs, hoping the name change will make directing people to his house easier.

Contrary to what Sigurður says, Guðmundur says residents were informed and given ample notice of the changes. "Obviously we knew about it. I think it's been about two or three years since they started talking about it. I mean. I read the news."

After the initial notification, a second letter to residents followed to inform them that the change had been postponed until all legal proceedings had been completed with those who wanted to file complaints.

"I remember one of my neighbours knocked on my door with a list asking for some sort of protest signature," Guðmundur says, "but I did not want to protest.'

Guðmundur has a positive attitude toward the change. Being self-employed, he says he will need to change his company's registration at the tax office, but he says it's a minor inconvenience. "I'm not going to be rushing to do it." he says.

"Even if I don't do it in the next two years it's not going to be any big deal, everybody's going to find the address," he says coolly. "I'm of the generation who does not really get much mail the old-fashioned way. It's just stuff from the bank anyway," he says cheekily.

# I Am Curious (Yellow)



Marvin Lee Dupree is doing a masters in philosophy at the University of Iceland

I recall reading an interesting tale from an old, crusty book a couple of years ago. The author was an Icelandic man who was lamenting the fact that he had seen Icelanders on display along with natives from Greenland. He was disgusted that Iceland's colonial masters had put them next to such wretched. destitute and backward creatures, although in the eyes of the Danish people I am quite sure that they were all the same.

This tale sprung to mind when I saw a recent sushi advertisement made by the Krónan grocery store. It featured the typical anthropomorphised yellow króna figure, except this time he was also a crass, hybrid Oriental figure with an insidious Fu Manchu moustache that has cultural connotations to stereotypical portrayals of Chinese men, but most notably villains or as foils to white heroes. The fact should not come as a surprise to any well-read person or individual with some knowledge of pop culture.

So being curious by nature and quite frankly a bit disgusted by this advertisement, especially since this was the second Krónan advertisement that I had seen with obvious racist undertones towards Asians. I decided to contact their customer service department. I received a courteous reply from a Krónan representative who relayed an explanation from the hired ad firm regarding the usage of the katana, pagoda and kasaalong with the Icelandic turf house in the background.

Apparently to Krónan these elements codified together represent Japan and thus are synonymous with sushi. Except for one problem: the Fu Manchu

moustache. This according to their explanation, or brush off, signifies Atsumu Watanabe. Interestingly enough, if you Google him you will notice his moustache, when he has one, is more akin to a dandy or hipsteresque moustache.

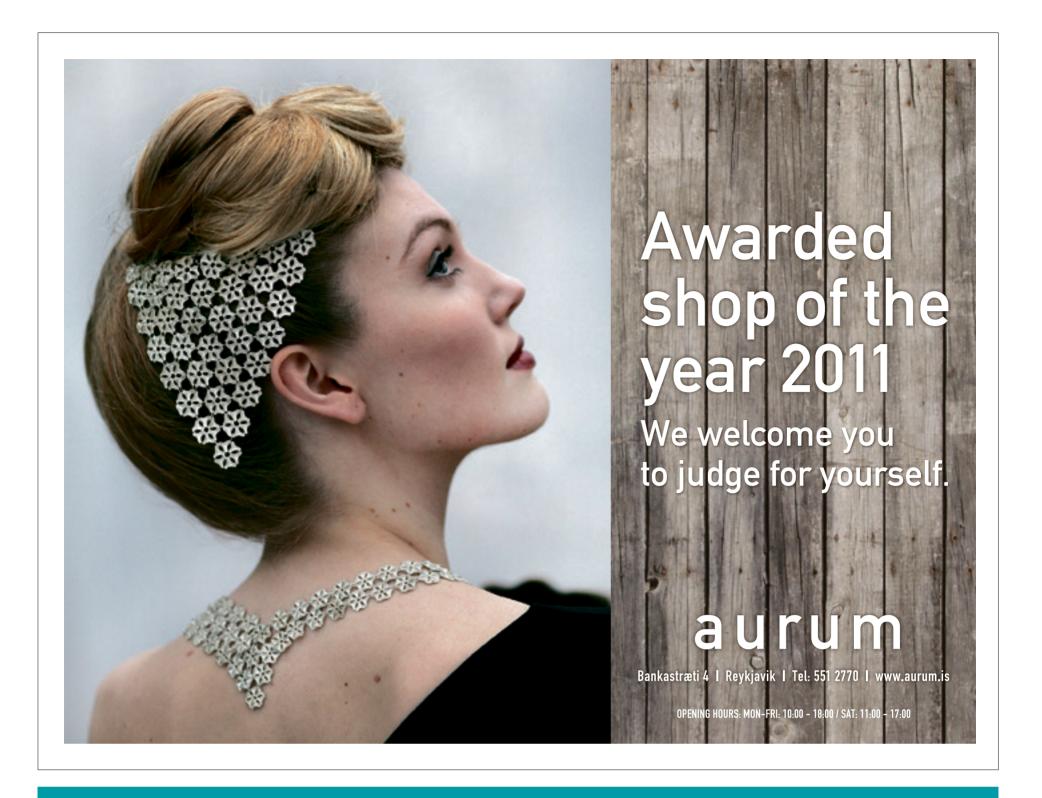
To clarify my point I sent Krónan a photo that I took of one of their ads in 2010. Lo and behold, it features Mr. Chink or Mr Jap, or excuse me. Mr Króna, with narrow eyes as opposed to his "traditional" round, cute eyes that are quite common in Western anthropomorphised figures.

Furthermore, in this advertisement from 2010, Mr Króna is carrying chopsticks and you can debate whether or not he is wearing a kasa on his head, but he certainly does have a Fu-Manchu moustache. Surprise! I never received a reply regarding the advertisement so I wonder if the Króna man is just an Atsumu Watanabe with freakishly narrow eyes and stereotypical Asian tropes. Or perhaps this could just be the result of a generation reared on Laddi repeatedly giving his impression of a Chinese man? YouTube search "Laddi Kokkur" and try not to cringe.

Of course many Icelanders become quite antsy when you point out racist connations and imagery. A very common response is: "This is not racist; we are



just playing around" or the more classic "This is political correctness gone mad!" Essentially, what this kind of thinking does is numb the mind and deter critical thinking, which is also the reason why I asked Krónan why it doesn't exhibit stereotypical images of Danish people when they have "Danish days"? And why doesn't Hagkaup have stereotypical images of Americans when they advertise "American days" in their stores? Perhaps it is just easier to mock others and stereotype the "otherness" of people if they look different from the Western concept of what a human should look like. All I know is that I am buying my sushi from people with more cultural sensitivity.



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**Iceland** | Refugess

# Justice Delayed, Justice Denied

# Refugees in Iceland face systematic and social harassment as they wait

#### Words

Snorri Páll Jónsson Úlfhildarson

#### **Photography**

Simon Steel

Why would people who have escaped their homelands to seek asylum in Iceland want to leave again? Didn't they come to live the good life? To enjoy Western freedom and the Nordic welfare system? In the last six months, a number of refugees have been arrested after illegally trying to leave the country by secretly boarding ships at Reykjavík's harbour and, in one case, an airplane at the Keflavík International Airport.

To better understand their situation, I took the bus to Reykjanesbær where 95 asylum seekers are currently waiting, not far from the aforementioned airport. Though Fit Hostel hosts both tourists and asylum seekers under the same roof, these two groups of visitors are clearly segregated in terms of political hospitality.

#### Don't Come To Iceland

In the shadow of expensive advertising campaigns encouraging foreigners to "come and be inspired by Iceland," the state operates a strict border policy when it comes to asylum seekers. Between 1996 and 2009, 13 people were granted asylum, 194 were denied asylum and 247 were deported. Under the current government, which took over in 2009, the same number-13 people-have been granted asylum in 2011 alone. Still, a greater average number of people are being deported each year. In 2011, 37 people were deported, compared to an average 19 people per year between 1996 and 2009.

The Icelandic state deports asylum seekers based on the Dublin Regulation, which allows Schengen states to deport refugees to the country they were in before seeking asylum. Lawyer Kári Hólmar Ragnarsson, whose Iraqi client Ahmed Kamil was recently deported to and denied asylum in Norway, criticises the policy. "The Icelandic authorities did not look into the situation in Baghdad, despite the international non-refoulement rule and Article



45 of Iceland's Act On Foreigners," he says. That article states that a foreign national may not be sent to a region where they face persecution or be sent to another country, which may send them back to aforementioned region.

Kári stresses the importance of the last point, as most of the states that refugees are deported to are either unable to cope with the large number of asylum seekers or have already denied the seeker's request for asylum. In both cases, refugees are likely to be sent back to the country from which they escaped.

#### Playing The Waiting Game

The refugees I meet at Fit Hostel this time around say the likelihood of being denied asylum is not, however, the worst part. Over a cup of tea in their living room, they explain to me that the long and seemingly never-ending wait is what drains their energy, leaving some of them feeling that they have no other choice than to attempt an escape.

Without an Icelandic ID number—and sometimes without any official documents—they are unable to get a job, which means that they pass their days in idleness. What's more, they don't know how long the wait will be as their application goes through the Directorate of Immigration (UTL). Some have been here for seven or eight

months, others up to a whole year. Finally, when a decision is delivered, the police immediately show up and arrest those who are to be deported. They



Most asylum seekers have never been to jail before," he continues, "but Iceland uses the opportunity to criminalise them.



then spend their last night at the police station, often denied a chance to properly bid their friends and partners farewell.

This was the case in mid September, when a Nigerian refugee was to be deported. "My client was allowed to see his girlfriend for three or four minutes under police surveillance," explains his lawyer Katrín Oddsdóttir, who took his case a few hours before the planned deportation. "It was a major problem for his girlfriend to get permission to meet him so that he could sign a paper stating that I would be his lawyer from that point on." At the last minute, Katrín appealed the deportation decision and today he is still waiting.

This combination of a long wait and

the short notice of leaving is what the refugees find most disturbing. "If they don't want to grant me asylum, they should let me know as soon as possible. I need to be able to make plans for my future," says one of them, a Ugandan who now has since been deported to Switzerland. "If they just give me my documents, I will leave on my own." UTL justifies this lengthy process by citing a lack of manpower, an argument that frustrates my interviewees. "They should go ahead and hire people," another Nigerian, who fled assassination attempts in his home country, says. "While justice is delayed, justice is de-

At UTL, lawyer Þorsteinn Gunnarsson tells me that the agency is about to hire two extra lawyers, which is still two less than what they say they need. Even so, it's not clear if UTL will receive money to keep the two lawyers employed for more than a couple of months. Additionally, UTL's director Kristín Völundardóttir recently told newspaper Fréttablaðið that Dublin cases are now a priority, suggesting that more deportations will be seen in the near future.

#### Subject To Harassment

At one point during our conversation, my interviewees tell me that the local bus drivers don't always stop for refugees and sometimes take alternate routes to avoid driving past them. Later during my visit, I take the bus into town with a few of them who now live at another house due to the overcrowded situation at Fit Hostel.

When the bus stops, they suggest it's because I am there. As we get in and take a seat, there is a sudden silence from our fellow passengers. On my way out I ask the driver if the story I had just heard was true. He says "no." As we continue walking from the bus stop, I ask them if they've told anybody about the bus drivers. "Tell whom," one responds. "The Social Services," I suggest, but they just laugh.

"Many of the inhabitants of Keflavík think that everyone at Fit is a criminal, a stereotype imposed upon refugees by the state," one of my Nigerian interviewees explains, referring to the judicial tradition of imprisoning refugees for using forged passports. Such sentencing goes against the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which states that refugees can be excluded from penalties for forgery. "Most asylum seekers have never been to jail before," he continues, "but Iceland uses the opportunity to criminalise them." They also tell me that they are harassed at local bars and accused of staring at Icelandic men's girlfriends at

After a wave of criticism late last year, Kristín stated on the UTL's website that the municipality of Reykjanesbær is "well prepared to accommodate asylum seekers," being a "multicultural" as well as a "versatile society, which protects the minority groups living there."

No Borders activist Jason Slade, who accompanied me to Fit, disagrees. While waiting for the bus back to Reykjavík, he tells me about his experience of walking around town with the refugees. "It's always different," he explains, "from staring to shouting and honking. But almost always, I witness some sort of harassment." Only a few minutes later, one of my interviewees, a Ghanaian, comes running. "The bus just passed by me," he says.

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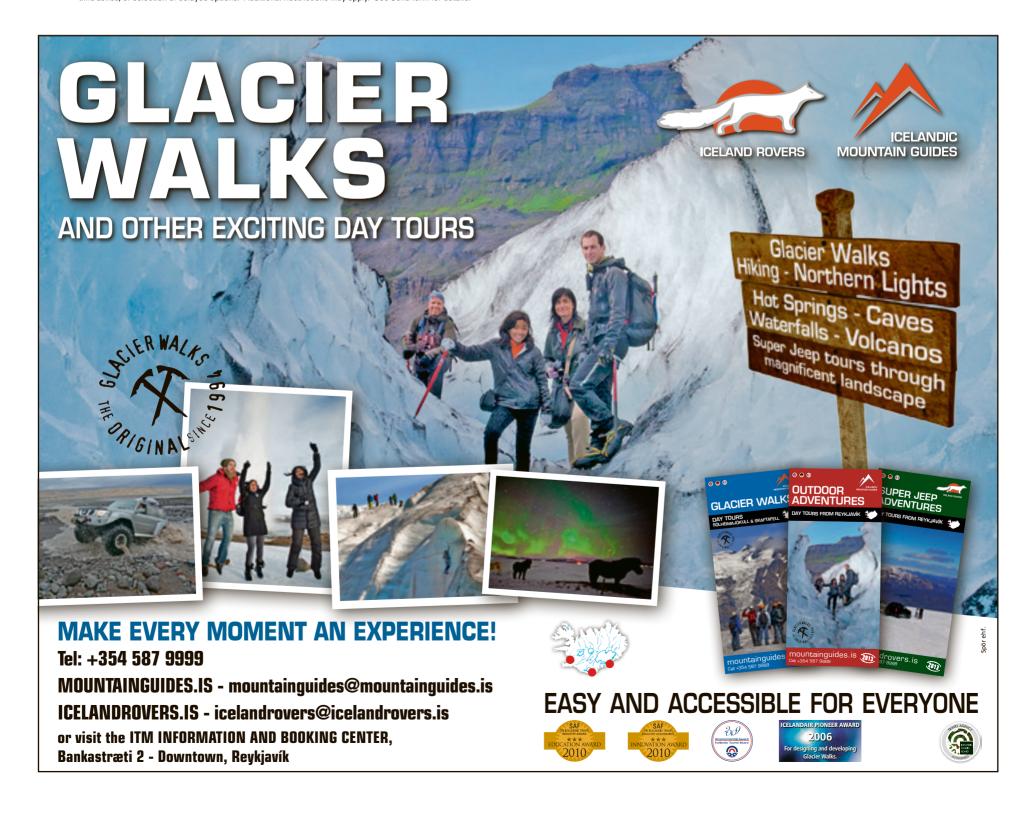
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#### Feature | Architecture



Back in June, Icelandic writer Hallgrímur Helgason was asked to give a speech at the outdoors opening of the architectural exhibition "New Nordic," that can be seen until November 4 at the Louisiana Art Museum in Humlebæk, Denmark. Hallgrímur grabbed the opportunity to speak about modern architecture, a matter of long-time concern for him. "It was a bit difficult thing to do, to deliver this speech in front of 500 top Nordic architects, all beautifully suntanned and handsomely happy with a glass of white wine in hand. The reaction was everything from evil eyes to happy handshakes." Grapevine got permission to print this speech. Here Hallgrímur speaks about the depressing surroundings of his childhood, the problem of "personal expression" in Icelandic architecture, the freak show of the Icelandic churches, "Lobbyism" as an architectural trend, the jealousy of architects towards artists and more...



It's like our architects decided to test God's love for us. "Yes, let's build him the ugliest house possible and see if he'll still love us."



Architecture is the skin of society. There is a tendency to forget it. And yes, there are body parts that you can say are more important, like the heart, the brain, the genitals... but still, you're not worth much without skin. Plus, the skin is the biggest organ, and most of us like to have good skin.

1.

As a young man, I had a slight skin disease. My face was covered in pimples. This was also the case with my country. Iceland suffered from a skin disease called Terrible Architecture or, as it has also been called: Architectural Acne. We got used to living with it. Actually we got so used to it, that when I took my pimples to Norway, for my first summer abroad, I felt kind of uncomfortable, for over there all the houses were so nice and beautiful. Even deep in the woods, the remotest Norwegian bondegård had this great Scandinavian look, the one that makes you feel so good: A classic wooden house with a steep "straw" roof, the walls painted red and the windows in white.

Ah, man, and those windows... They all had the same shape, all made of wood, all divided into many squares, and all based on the golden ratio—"det gyldne snit"—all steeped in the golden tradition of the Nordic farmhouse. Every time you opened The Scandinavian Window, you felt like you were being painted by Munch. You stuck your head into a painting. You had been framed by beauty. Back home in Iceland you could only open a small part of a very modern and rectangular window, plus you always had to wrestle with the wind for to open it. Life in Iceland has taught us that opening a whole window of your house is a bit like opening your car door at 90 kilometres per hour.

Even our architects know this much.

But they are still struggling with the other stuff. Icelandic architecture was OK when the Danes were in charge. They built the downtown area of Reykjavík, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and all our nicest villages are stacked with the wonderful "Norwegian houses." The first generations of Icelandic architects all learned their craft in Denmark, but after the World War II they went to study in Spain, The United States, Mexico and on the Moon. And this is where our problems started.

Our towns got infected with Architectural

2.

First there was the flat roof. It looked good in Guadalajara, but in super-rainy Reykjavík it gave every new house a free swimming pool on the roof. My childhood is filled with memories of my parents and their friends struggling with the everlasting problem of leaks.

Then came the bunker-like suburban villa, spread out on one floor hidden by garden bushes. In the land of incredible views, our architects designed houses that looked like a garage with a glass door: From your living room you could only see your bushes and the behind of the next garage.

I grew up in a neighbourhood that was brand new back then. The concrete was still wet when we moved in. And somehow I never man-

#### Feature | Architecture









aged to have warm feelings for this shiny white apartment block of four floors. It was so cold looking. It looked like a fridge with windows. As if Iceland wasn't cold enough. And the office buildings across the street, they all looked like stereo equipment. That was my childhood, stuck between Danfrost and Marantz.

3.

Another symptom was the raw unpainted concrete look, very popular in the seventies, as we didn't have enough of that in Iceland. Our land is so to speak one big unpainted rock. (And actually we're still dealing with things like that. In the past years we've for example been building many black buildings. Black buildings in the darkest corner of the world... It's not really the best idea.)

Then we also had the problem of "personal expression" in architecture. This is a truly great thing when an architect's name is, say, Alvar Aalto, but when he is called Guðbrandur Sigurfinsson, and he's not really an architect, but a "teknolog," you really don't want his "expression" to be too personal.

In our land, personal expression in architecture has mainly been reserved for the building of new churches. In the olden times we only had one type of church in Iceland. Now we have 167 types of churches and none of them look like a church at all. Instead we have "The Indian Tent," "The Half Cut Bread," "The Ski Jump," "The Summer House With a Cross on the Roof and Stained Glass Windows," and "The NASA Mobile Launch Platform That Accidentally Fell on the Ground After Liftoff of the Space Shuttle and Then Was Painted White."

It's like our architects decided to test God's love for us. "Yes, let's build him the ugliest house possible and see if he'll still love us."

So, if you're into strange architecture you should go to Iceland and take a tour of the modern Icelandic church. It's the most expensive freak show ever. All paid for by the state.

4.

But maybe the worst symptoms of our skin disease were the way we developed our only big city. In only fifty years it went from being a lovely little harbour town to becoming a concrete monster tied up by motorways. Copenhagen was based on Paris and still looks sort of like a Paris of red bricks, while Reykjavík looks like Rönne på Bornholm surrounded by Los Angeles. I'm not kidding. Reykjavík is the most spread out city on the planet. It's one of the major achievements of modern city planning how they managed to make people who live in a city of 100,000 spend on average one hour per day in their cars.

This happened because for the latter part of the twentieth century we made it a rule: There had to be a space of 30 metres between houses and 30 meters from door to street, 30 parking spaces for each apartment, and every neighbourhood surrounded by a freeway. Reykjavík is like one big car festival. It has more gas stations than cafés. The happiest guys in Reykjavík are all Asian, with names like Toyota, Hyundai,

Kia and Mitsubishi. And we were sort of happy about them, until suddenly now that half our salary goes into buying them drinks. So, today we dream of trading our car for a bike. But if Reykjavík is really to become a bike festival we need to speed up Global Warming, so we are all driving our cars like maniacs these days.

5.

And then we also have, like everyone else, suffered from "The Mall Invasion." Malls are pretty much like turtles from outer space. They're truly great for the ones inside but seen from the outside they're just... giant space turtles. Actually, the "personal expression"-thing would be needed here. For the architects of malls are so busy with the interiors that they totally forget the outer look of those monsters. Maybe because here they're designing for a blind God, called Mammon.

6.

Finally, we also had our share of the international craze in architecture called "lobbyism."

Lobbyism became really big in the eighties and nineties, and you can still see it at work in many places. It came into being when people wanted to update the old public library, the old art museum or change the old fish factory into a local museum. The old building was OK, it only needed some renovation, but the entrance was really horrible. You needed a new entrance, a new lobby, furnished with a counter, a cloak room, a shop and a small café. I don't know why, but our times seem to be all about entrances, making an entry, and first impressions. So you renovated the old fish factory and then added a new lobby to it, built of glass, steel and marble. You can spot it in every town: An old body of a building with a brand new glass cage at the front. In fact you can say that the rise of lobbyism in architecture went hand in hand with the rise of plastic surgery. Those renovated old buildings with fancy entrances often remind you of old ladies with silicone lips—a fancy entrance to a half-rotten body.

The National Gallery of Iceland is a classic case of lobbyism. Back in 1987 it moved into an old fish factory. The newspapers of the time complained a lot about the cost. The exhibition halls are quite plain but the lobby is a fiesta of white marble, glass and golden handrails, and came with the most luxurious elevator in the land. I think the explanation for this might be artistic envy. The architect envies the artist, this fucking bastard who never has to wake up in the morning but gets all the attention. So, when designing an art museum, the architect does all he can to steal the show from the artist: The examples are countless. If you have ever been to the Guggenheim in New York, the Guggenheim in Bilbao or "The Friendly Alien" Kunsthaus in Graz, you know what I mean. I have been to them all and from those trips I cannot remember a single artwork, only the 7.

Here at Louisiana you have quite the opposite, you can picture many exhibitions you've seen here, but not the building. Actually they don't even have a postcard here showing the building, because there is no building. (No wonder you have such a hard time finding this place the first time you arrive at Humlebæk.) All you can picture in your mind are long corridors of glass and a brick wall. So it's nice, except for that, as an Icelander, I have a small problem with brick walls. I just can't stand them. Why? Because they are built with such care and patience, brick by brick. And they are meant to stand for a thousand years. It's just so un-Icelandic, where we like to do things overnight and tear



The happiest guys in Reykjavík are all Asian, with names like Toyota, Hyundai, Kia and Mitsubishi. And we were sort of happy about them, until suddenly now that half our salary goes into buying them drinks.



them down the day after. The Swiss artist Dieter Roth said of Reykjavík, where he lived for a while: "It looks like a temporary town. It looks like people only want to stay here for a couple of years." He was spot on. Icelanders are always ready to leave. That is why we don't like beautiful and complete towns, careful building and brick walls.

In fact, we have grown so attached to ugly buildings and bad architecture in Iceland, that we simply get sick when we are faced with perfect harmony. I always get homesick after walking through the picture perfect towns of the Swedish Skärgård, and in the Faroe Islands I felt like being trapped inside one big Bygdemuseum. In Tórshavn all the houses are built in the traditional style, no matter if they are from 1955 or 2005. Icelanders simply get depressed in surroundings like that. We don't like it when things are too beautiful. We don't feel like we deserve it. We just don't feel right if we can't spot a small part of an ugly sports arena or the back of a hardware mall that was built to last two years. So after a week in the beautiful Oslofjord we all end up looking like 'The Scream' by Edvard Munch.

8.

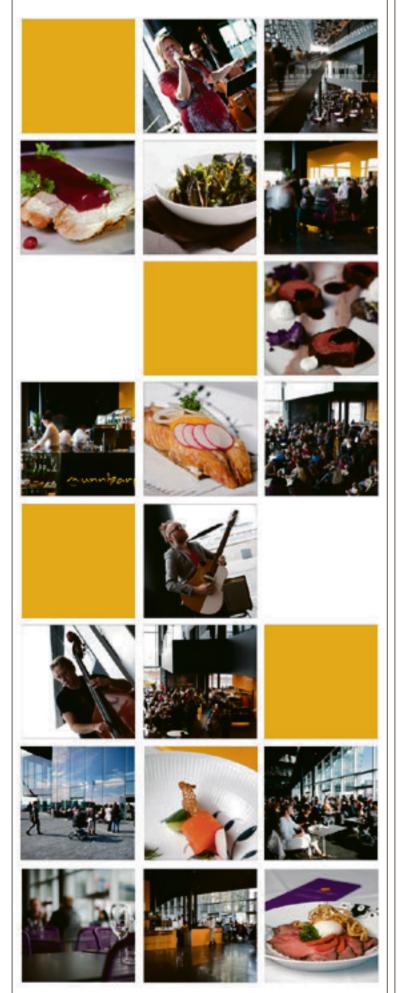
In the past years we have seen better times in our architecture. We grew up hating every new building that came along. That was when they looked like "stereo anlæg" with windows. But even though they're still doing that sometimes (a few years ago they built a very grand hotel in Reykjavík that looks like my good old Bang & Olufsen amplifier turned upright) the past years have given us buildings that people actually like, like the brand new concert hall Harpa, the Reykjavík City Hall, or the Supreme Court building—all featured in the exhibition here. Today we have better architects. But this of course doesn't solve our problems. The problem will always be the bad architects, and they will always outnumber the good ones. But at least we seem to have mastered the materials a bit. After playing with glass and steel for half a century we've managed to add a finer feeling to it, we now see more attention to detail. And though the roofs may still be flat, at least they're not leaking anymore.

I think that for this we can thank the recent Scandinavian influence. In my youth there was nothing cool about Fjällräven, Fleksnes or Kim Larsen. Back then Nordic was nerdic. We didn't want any influence from you guys. But then slowly Nordic became cool. And now we have Borgen and Noma, Larsson and Loreen. We've come a long way, over the hill and through the forest, into the city and now finally we have captured urban chic. The frequent flyer can easily tell you where he feels the slickest: It's landing at Gardemoen airport, for it has the coolest architecture and the most modern facilities. We used to feel like the country bumpkins of the world but today we're in a different position. Yet you still hear the old voices saying we're only a couple of small nations good for nothing, that nobody cares about us. But these people are forgetting that today size matters in the opposite sense, in today's world smaller is better. Four small nations and four micro ones are just the thing for a future full of iPods and nanotechnology. It's easier to get reorganised when you're small. In that sense Iceland will always move faster than China.

9.

A new kind of Nordic cool has been born. And now we only need to take it a bit further, out of the box. The roof doesn't always have to be flat; it can be streamlined for example. Organic and curved lines seem to be the thing that's coming. When time is travelling at the speed of 90 kilometres per hour this is exactly the thing we need. In the future all the houses will look like cars. And then you people can learn many things from us Icelanders. We really know how to build a city for cars, how to build throwaway houses, and how not to open the door at 90 km per hour.

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# **Lampooned Austerity & Mythological Madness**

New choreographies premiered at the Iceland Dance Company season opener

I have long held the view that here, as in many other places, dance is regarded as some niche misunderstood form of artistic expression that the masses have yet to embrace as a common thread in the cultural fabric. I might not go so far as to say that it's fully embraced, but I was wrong. As I took my seat in the nearly sold out hall of the Reykjavík City Theatre for the Iceland Dance Company's season premiere, it became clear that dance is very much accepted and appreciated here.





Reykjavík City Theatre



info at www.id.is/english



To hell with symbolism

infiltrate them The night began with the comically obtuse 'It is not a metaphor' by choreographer and company dancer Cameron Corbett, a direct and minimalist piece comprised of three dancers and pianist Tinna Porsteinsdóttir onstage performing John Cage

Dancers Aðalheiður Halldórsdóttir and Hannes Þór Egilsson were paired together in a taut, austere modernist pas-de-deux, performing rigidly calculated moves with stoic faces. Meanwhile, their severity kept getting interloped by Hjördís Lilja Örnólfsdóttir, who embodied a sort of gaping, enchanted outsider, whose subversion tactics were physically pushed away at every attempt to infiltrate the very serious duet.

As Hjördís' attempts to crack into Aðalheiður and Hannes' dance escalated, the more ludicrous and laughably repellent it got-after exiting stage right, she returned wildly humping a giant inflatable dolphin across the stage. The other dancers got fed up of being obstructed and finally abandoned her to sob for herself in the spotlight.

The blatant literalism of the show lived up to the title's mission statement, while still caching a layer of subtle criticism of the relationship between dance and the public: the separation of us and them, the viewer versus dancer and the notion that dance itself has an impenetrable force-field that must be decoded in order to engage with it; the widely heard yet poorly justified rationale that one can't like dance because one doesn't understand it. In the end, the piece's personification of the public gets what's coming: Tinna leaves the piano, gently puts her hand on Hjördís' shoulder, and shoves her into the dark.

#### **Symbolism from Hel**

As the intermission ended, a low guttural rumbling started up from some hidden source. (True story: I thought it was an earthquake and when I got home I found out there had incidentally been an earthquake.) These, however, were the birth-rattles of French choreographer Jérôme Delbey's Norse mythology-inspired piece, 'Let Hel hold what she has.' In contrast to the piece that preceded it, this much longer number was swaddled in heavy tapestries of metaphor and ambiguity, complex arrangement and character distribution and general grandeur.

Even before most of the audience had noticed the piece beginning, with Arna Sif Gunnarsdóttir as the snake-child of Loki slithering across the stage in front of the curtain, a tone of grimy harshness and bizarre

brutality was set. The curtain suddenly raised and exposed a scene that could have come from Game of Thrones BDSM/Otherkin

slash-fiction-Cameron Corbett playing Loki was being subjected to punishment by poison at the hands of a bare-chested raven-man, with the rest of the cast of gods and monsters frigidly holding court.

The piece unfolded in a sort of Lynchian translation of the Eddas, the setting resembling a Norse 'Black Lodge' with large, dark expanses of empty stage-space, grotesquely oversized props for dance partners (Steve Lorenz as Óðinn had his way with a conference table turned on its side), and the bleak absurdist scoring of Anna Þorvaldsdóttir. The majority cast of painfully beautiful and lithe performers were creepily bookended by the aged hermaphrodite Ýmir (Ingólfur Björn Sigurðsson) and child-god Baldur (Nökkvi Helgason), who kills the former after its manhood has been robbed and eaten.

Eleven dancers represented sixteen mythological characters, making it nearly impossible but also moot to keep track. The title character Hel (also performed by Arna Sif) ended up being fairly minor though and didn't really seem to hold anything to begin with. In fact, the piece felt primarily symbolic rather than story-based and given its overall beauty, it held its own just fine.

♥ - REBECCA LOUDER

#### Next Up On The Dance Stage

• The Iceland Dance Company will premiere their next show 'On New Ground' on November 22 at the Reykjavík City Theatre. It is a showcase of four fresh new pieces by first-time choreographers for the company:

#### • Til by Frank Fannar Pedersen

The piece depicts a woman struggling between love and loss, caught in the blur between the past and the present.

#### • Ótta by Ásgeir Helgi Magnússon, Hjördís Lilja Örnólfsdóttir and Unnur Elísabet Gunnarsdóttir

Based on an Old Icelandic word for the extremely early morning hours when few people are awake, the piece explores unrest, disquiet and how dreams replace realities.

#### And then never again by Steve Lorenz

Focused on transition and defining moments in life, this piece explores the changes that can never go back.

• Allegro con Brio by Karl Friðrik Hjaltason

It is a performance dealing with the struggle to accept eternity and the fluidity of time in relation to human emotion.

# Just My Type This isn't your grandfather's letterpress



It only took about 570 years for letterpress printing to be cool. What's the secret? Well, we're not talking about Johannes Gutenberg bibles here.

Born in the 1400s, letterpress printing has been undergoing a resurgence across the globe over the past decade, with studios popping up in the hipster havens of New York, for instance. And just two years ago, one such studio-Reykjavík Letterpress-opened in Reykjavík.

It is the brainchild of graphic designers Ólöf Birna Garðarsdóttir and Hildur Sigurðardóttir, who purchased equipment from a retiring local printer to open Reykjavík's first letterpress studio in 2010. "It's fun and different combining new and old art forms," Ólöf says.

#### A post-collapse business

Starting a new business is never an easy task, but starting a business against the backdrop of economic collapse is especially gutsy. Ólöf and Hildur were reduced to working 50% at their advertising jobs and had more time to think of creative projects.

"When you lose 50% of your job, you start to think am I just going to sit here and do nothing? It makes you think about other things you want to do," Ólöf says. "The business was created in some ways because of the crisis."

Before opening their studio, Ólöf and Hildur went to New York for research, visiting well-known studios including Greenwich Letterpress, Sesame Letterpress, and Moontree Letterpress. "We wanted to see what was there in terms of printing and learn as much as we could," Ólöf says.

#### **Producing something personal**

Upon entering the Reykjavík Letterpress studio, visitors are greeted by the main attraction: a beautiful Heidelberg press. The German-made press, which dates back to the early 20th century, is fired up a few times a week, printing everything from wedding invitations to holiday-themed napkins.

The pair reveals printed coasters featuring the sayings: "Glugg glug," "Rop," and "Hikk," as well as gift tags, wrapping paper and specially-designed travel journals printed

Wedding invitations are a big request for the studio and a favourite for the designers. "Iceland doesn't have the big wedding tradition that they have in the States where there are so many pieces to an invitation-the invitation, the "save the date," the thank you card, maybe the menu-but here in Iceland it's more personal," Ólöf says.

The designers love that personal aspect of the business, explaining what it's like to sit down with the couple and listen to what they want "It's so much fun to hear their plans and so many of them want to have something different. It's challenging and fun," Hildur says.

#### The sky's the limit

Reykjavík Letterpress's work has been recognised internationally, which is thrilling for such a young company. The studio's "Bit of a Mix" project, which features 10 business card-size pages with different printed handwriting and fonts, received a nomination from the Art Directors Club of Europe. "It was so great," Ólöf says. "It's been our favourite project so far and we were so excited about the nomination.'

Having recently celebrated their second anniversary, it seems the sky is the limit for the designers who recently hired a printer and an assistant to help with daily tasks. "We want to have more time designing and coming up with different projects." Hildur says.

They are also working towards opening their own market with a store and a workshop where they could teach others how to use the press and pass on the tradition of letterpress. "We are really proud that we are here," Ólöf







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# **Angeli Novi's Ticking Time Bomb In The Continuum Of History**

#### You Can't Stand In The Way Of Progress









historical structures There is a photograph by Richard Peter of a statue of an angel overlooking the ruins of German city Dresden which, during three days in February 1945, was annihilated by the allied forces using a new firestorm technique of simultaneously dropping bombs and incendiary devices onto the city.

#### Words

Snorri Páll Jónsson Úlfhildarson

#### Illustration

Steinunn Gunnlaugsdóttir and Ólafur Páll Sigurðsson

The photo resonates with philosopher Walter Benjamin's essay 'On the Concept of History,' in which he adds layers of meaning to a painting by Paul Klee titled Angelus Novus. Benjamin describes Klee's angel as 'The Angel of History' whose face is turned towards the past. "Where we see the appearance of a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe, which unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble and hurls it before his feet."

Wanting to "awaken the dead and to piece together what has been smashed," the Angel's wings are stretched out by a storm from Paradise, which "drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the rubble-heap before him

grows sky-high."

"That which we call progress," Benjamin concludes, "is this storm."

#### **CAN YOU STAND IN THE WAY OF PROGRESS?**

If the storm makes us unable to fix the ruins of the past, what about preventing the storm from blowing? According to art collective Angeli Novi, comprised of Steinunn Gunnlaugsdóttir and Ólafur Páll Sigurðsson, whose exhibition is currently showing at The Living Art Museum (Nýló), it would not be so simple.

Under a confrontational title-'You Can't Stand in the Way of Progress,' shaped as the 'Arbeit Macht Frei' sign of Auschwitz-Angeli Novi have greatly altered the museum's space with an installation of sculptures, soundscapes, smells and videos, including a 20-minute film of the same title as the exhibition. The film is a kaleidoscopic time machine, examining the plight of generations which become tools and puppets of economic and historical structures

In a well-cooked and stark manner-adjectives borrowed from Nýló's director Gunnhildur Hauksdóttir-the exhibition displays a dark image of Western civilization via manifestations of the horrors embedded in capitalism, industrialism, nationalism, religion, the dualistic and linear thought of occidental culture, and the individual's buried-alive position in society.

The metaphor is literal as the only visible body-parts of the film's thirty protagonists are their heads. The rest are buried under ground. Their chewing mouths fight over ceremonial ribbons carrying a collection of Western society's fundamental values and doctrines in a dynamic collision with a collage of significant images behind them-"the history of Western thought," as author Steinar Bragi points out. Towering over a coffin shaped as a baby's cot, located in a mausoleum at the museum's entrance, the same ribbons have been tied onto a funeral wreath. A single message, "From the Cradle to the Grave," hangs between the mouths of two children's heads that stick out of the black sand below the coffin. A smooth corporate female voice greets the visitors: "Welcome to our world!"

#### I SENSE. THEREFORE I THINK

"It's very pessimistic," Steinar Bragi says in a bunker-like room of Nýló. "The film shows us disembodied beasts, fighting over the phrases that our entire society is built upon. I always see the head as the rational approach to life, stuck in these dualistic pairs that are so far from reality as I experience it.'

Steinar and I agree that society is constantly simplified into Cartesian dualism-"I think, therefore I am"-the ground zero of Western thought. And while dualism doesn't necessarily reject sensibilities and emotions, Steinar maintains that it locates reason on a higher level. "Reason is expected to control, which it certainly does in a small and unglamorous context, but it's only an expression of what lies beneath."

#### **ENEMIES OF PROGRESS?**

It's clear that the core of this rationalism is simplification of how political and social conflicts tend to be reduced to a fight between alleged good and evil forces.

This not only brings us to the religious nature of the myth of progress, but also the power of Because language. "although they are hollow and empty and puppets of economic and repeatedly chewed on, these phrases are also very powerful," as literary scholar Benedikt Hjartarson points out. "They conduct the way society is shaped. They manifest the social and economic reality we

> As former director of US aluminium corporation Alcoa Alain Belda told the newspaper Morgunblaðið in March 2003: "Some people are against progress." He was referring to the opponents of the Kárahnjúkar dams, constructed in Iceland's highlands to create energy for Alcoa's smelter. "But fortunately," he continued, "the world is growing and people are requesting better lives."

live with."

Such an argument equals economic growth and people's welfare. portraying the megaproject's opponents as enemies of progress. At the same time it negates the destructive nature of progress, manifested for instance in the irreversible environmental destruction often associated with large-scale energy production, and how the lives of whole generations are wasted by wars waged for power and profit.

"We see this contradiction within modernity," Benedikt continues, "how the idea of progress thrives on destruction." But unlike the revolutionary aim and the aesthetic pleasure implied in the destruction encouraged by 19th Century anarchist philosopher Mikhail Bakunin-who stated, "the passion for destruction is a creative passion, too!"-the annihilation inherent to progress is used as a stimulus for an unaltered continuum of the status quo under the pretext of development. "The present is never here," Benedikt says, "it's always something we are aiming for."

#### **VIOLENCE INTRINSIC TO SOCIAL CONTRACTS**

The film displays great violence, which musician Teitur Magnússon sees as a strong reference to alienation. "One feels like it's somehow supernatural, like it's not the work of humanity but rather of a monster that's eating everything up, and we don't seem to have any control of it." Artist Bryndís Hrönn Ragnarsdóttir furthermore connects this brutality with authority. "As soon as someone is granted higher power, violence enters the picture." She maintains that violence is intrinsic to all simplifications-"all of society's attempts to try and settle upon something"-meaning a wide range of social contracts, from organised religion to written and unwritten rules regarding people's behaviour.

#### A LEAP INTO THE FUTURE

As Angeli Novi's subject is not only complex but also polarised-layered with our cultural history of construction and destruction, repression and revolt-the exhibition doesn't preach any simple solutions to the great problems it addresses. Such attempts are often just as contradictory as the myth of progress itself, or as philosopher Slavoj Žižek ironically sums up in his analysis of what he calls 'a decaf reality,' when the "very thing which causes damage should already be the medicine."

Thus, one cannot resist wondering if there actually is a way out of the horrors analysed in the exhibition. Or is humanity bound to be stuck in a premature burial while the seemingly unstoppable catastrophe witnessed by Benjamin's Angel of History keeps enlarging into eternity?

With images from and referring to the 1871 Paris Commune the forerunner of many of the 20th Century's revolutions Angeli Novi reject such a vision, suggesting instead a peculiarly creative approach to revolt. During the days of the Commune, clocks on church towers and palaces all over the French city were shot down and destroyed, signifying the urgent need to nullify predominant social structures and ideologies by putting an end to the time of the oppressors.

In continuum of this rebellious tradition of what philosopher Herbert Marcuse referred to as "arresting time," Angeli Novi transcend the antiauthoritarian demand for "all power to the soviets" with a giant leap into the future by granting wings to the mind and calling for all power to the imagination.





#### RetRoBot

Blackout

2012

facebook.com/retrobotmusic

Sign o' the times?



Músíktilraunir 2012 winners RetRoBot play electronic rock that's heavily indebted to the eighties, when I presume none of these guys were born. This is prevalent in terms of the drum machines (mostly 909-ish), almost metal-like guitars, new wave-y vocal delivery, and there's plenty of vocoder in here as well.

There's a sense that the '80s soundscapes weren't exploited to their fullest at the time, so I understand the appeal of the '80s revival (which has gone on much longer than the actual '80s), maybe to the point where RetRoBot's points of reference aren't the actual '80s, but styles like electroclash, that quote the '80s themselves. These sounds help locate RetRoBot in the 21st century (whereas bands like Kiriyama Family are pure pastiche).

"Generation" is by far the best thing on here, building slowly for almost two minutes before dropping straightforward beats, hard-hitting synths and... fucking awful guitars. In their bluesy, hairy metallicity, they never transcend kitsch and sound out of place in what is otherwise an impressive sound for a debut recording. This problem persists throughout the EP, the guitars pretty much ruining what could've been a decent Justice replica in the first minute of "Electric Wizard." Vocals are another problem. At times they work, like in the crooner intro of "Blackout," but often they feel forced, preoccupied with half-mocking new-wave, and void of authentic emotion, discernible character and memorable melody

'Blackout' unfortunately fulfils the prophecy set forward in the lyrics to "Generation," a sing-along where they complain about their generation being doomed to chaos and partying. What ensues is a chaotic bricolage of ideas that feels distasteful and, worse, hollow party music.

୯ - ATLI BOLLASON

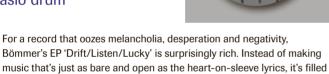


#### Bömmer

Drift/Listen/Lucky

gogoyoko.com/artist/bommer

#### Following the best of his own Casio drum



beautiful guitar work on the following track, "Listen." But this doesn't necessarily mean Bömmer can't venture down the valley of gothic minimalism without great success. In contrast to the up-beat characteristics of "Drift" and "Listen," the EP's closing track, "Lucky," has a crawling and patient backbeat. While Bömmer lacks layers of sound here, it captures the grandiosity

with textures like the woodblock rhythms at the end of opening track "Drift" or the

shown previously, using repetition and the human voice to great effect. Finally Bömmer may be tapping into a certain bygone era in music, but there's nothing to suggest regression or an attempt to capture something specific. This is instead a continuation in the gothic, post-punk tradition, not an attempt to reiterate

**<b>6** - DRU MORRISON

#### Cenum

2012





Given that many involved in Iceland's electronic music scene are old enough to remember the early days of rave, never mind the first days of dubstep, it's good to see some new blood breathing fresher sounds into

One such bright light is 20-year-old Reykjavík producer Cenum. Realising that the most important component in electronic music is BASS, he packs his debut self-titled EP with heaving low-end dubstep thrum (note: you are not going to get much action from listening to this on your laptop speakers). Rather than full on, melt your face Skrillex-wub, it features a more paranoid, moody bass environment, with dark ambient whispers, minimal beats and movie samples from 'The Mist' and

Although some of the tracks do feel a little same-y after a while (some more variety in the sounds and rhythms would work wonders), it's refreshing to hear local electronic music from fresh talent who seems more inspired by Rinse FM than NOVA TV.

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			10:00	10:00	10:00		
13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00
			14:00	14:00	14:00		
		17:00*	17:00	17:00	17:00	17:00*	
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# Seen & Heard At Iceland Airwaves 2012

# Hot gossip from the festival beat

Compiled by Rebecca Louder & Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir

Let's be honest-some of the best fun at this festival has nothing to do with bands, booze, partying or passing out in a gutter. It's about watching OTHER PEOPLE do all those things. And like everyone else in the Twittersphere, sometimes we latch onto a rumour or two. Here are a few highlights from our Airwaves 2k12 of things seen and overheard.

I saw a female festivalgoer projectile vomit outside Harpa, the bile caught a gnarly ride on a gust of wind and went right back onto her. I shit you not. She vomited right on herself as she was toppling over from the sea-swept winds. I couldn't look away. It was remarkable, repugnant and enthralling. New York Times would have given it 'Spew-tacular show of intestinal beauty!'

#### Chris D'Alessandro

Minutes after I was denied entrance to Iðnó on the grounds that it was full, Björk arrived with a posse of friends and was subsequently also denied entrance. She didn't think the bouncer has seen her purple VIP wristband properly, so she proceeded to wave it in his face until she was positive he'd seen it. Still he didn't budge. In fact he closed the door in her face. Only after someone else came by, tapped him on the shoulder and whispered something to him did he let her in. Employee of the month.

#### Thomas L. Moir

Middle-aged Icelandic lady: I mean, I like Jónsi

Other middle-aged Icelandic lady: I totally agree, I just don't like Sigur Rós.

#### Þórir Bogason

On Thursday night I was hanging at Amsterdam when I ran into an acquaintance who comes over for Airwaves regularly. She leaned across the dance floor and shouted that she had just spotted Robin Williams (star of Flubber and Jumanji) in the crowd at Iðnó. I began to text people furiously to confirm the rumour but instead received this text message in return from a fellow Grapevine team-member:

"I just saw Björk at the Art Museum. She tried to get in backstage and they WOULDN'T LET HER. Maybe Robin Williams was with her? That would be CRAZY. The headline of my review may very well be 'Björk: Godmother of Icelandic music, deemed not cool enough for Airwaves'. I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES."

And a little later on: "BREAKING NEWS: Björk is in.'

#### Rebecca Louder



I had a typical pan-European nonsense moment in the smoking cage in front of Faktorý. I was there casually smoking my cigarette with a friend and wondering who I could take if a cage fight broke out in this thing (conclusion: no one).

So, out of nowhere this German cat swims up to me smiling and staring at me and asks, "When will you start smoking?"

I'm not sure how to take it, "Eh...excuse me?"

"When will you start smoking?" he repeats. I kind of stare at him in disbelief before it dawns on me that he must want to know when I took up the habit.

'Well, I've been smoking on off for a while I guesshow about you?"

"Oh, I don't smoke..." he says, stopping midway for a puff.

"Alright then."

"...but I want to start smoking...because... sorry, my English is not so good...die flachenziegoobfhenallchen? Dreutzmachzuch?...You know, for meeting people"

"Ah... I see. You want to be a social smoker?"

"Man, you look like 28... you should not be smoking this shit will kill you."

"Yes. It is good for me'

"No, cigarettes are really bad for you"

#### "No they are not"

- "They are bad for you"
- "Yes zey are"

I look at my friend to see if he's listening to this conversation and when I look back the German with the piercing gaze is gone.

#### Ragnar Egilsson

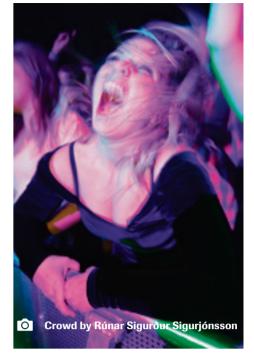
So Laugavegur was closed to pedestrians after a roof was blown off a building. People were clinging on to bollards and mothers clutching their children. Office workers were standing at the windows looking out in amusement and/or horror at the stricken tourists. A dad near me had his elasticated beanie hat whipped right off and it flew into the sky like a leaf. It was like the fucking Mayan apocalypse in Reykjavík."

#### **John Brainlove**

At an after party on Saturday night, I went into the host's kitchen to find a beer, but instead of beer I found a gentleman on his hands and knees under the table. He was trying to mop up a puddle of blood with a couple of paper towels, but he only succeeded in spreading it around into a big pink mess. He stood up and looked at me, and he had blood streaming down his face and onto his shirt. I asked him if he was okay, and he nodded. I looked over his shoulder and saw blood splattered on the wall and realised that he was far from okay. I still have no idea what happened, but I hope he's feeling better.

#### **Joel Hoard**

"I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starvin hysterical naked..." DJÓK! Well, I kind of saw that, but that party shouldn't be spoken of in public. I saw a lot of funny and interesting things at Airwaves 2K12: folks getting blown into the stratosphere, severely intoxicated persons crawling the streets on all fours to avoid being blown into the stratosphere and the usual explosive Airwaves romances blow up into everyone's faces (you start recognizing



a pattern after a while, it's fascinating). Aside from all those glorious little moments, I guess my favourite sight was likely Airwaves honcho Grímur Atlason at the back of a sparsely attended Faktorý DJ set, showing off a cell-phone photo of him posing with Mudhoney's Mark Arm, while the festival raged around him. That guy really loves his Mudhoney. Oh and I was also severely amused by Dikta's Livestrong concert advertisement wristband.

#### Haukur S. Magnússon

I played a show with my dress on backwards.... Which is about as exciting as it got during Airwaves. Harpa doesn't provide much room for spontaneous things.

#### Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir







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# **Guys! We Made It Through Another One!**

Once again, we got silly and decided to cover every show of Iceland Airwayes

by Haukur S. Magnússon



Regardless of having shifted slots on "the annual festival calendar" and lost one of its most beloved venues, the annual Iceland Airwaves festival seemed to ultimately do stellar this year (at least judging by the social media noise and multitude of glowing visitors observed wandering Reykjavík during the festival and at the airport immediately after).

In the end, it all went pretty well: Musicians performed! Drinks were Rós fly away with your imagination in Laugardalshöllin on Sunday? Step into a. rawlings' fairytale from that night and take off again. Every single night is there for you to relive, in words and images.

We had such a great crew working on this, and on behalf of the Grapevine, I would like to applaud every one of them.

Go to our special Airwaves Journal right now and read all those re-



were imbibed! Blood was bled! And fluids exchanged!

And, as we've been doing for longer than we care to remember, we wrote up every single note performed at the festival.

That's right. Despite the festival growing from featuring a few dozen acts in the early days of our coverage to its gargantuan monster eight million band line-up now, we've still managed to send people to every single show featured in the official festival schedule and publish reviews of all of them (we need more people to do that now).

Loved your night at Iðnó on Wednesday? Why not relive it through Line of Best Fit editor Paul Bridgewater's retelling of events? Rocked out at Amsterdam on Thursday? Maybe Christian Hoard from Rolling Stone magazine shared your assessment of the night. Did Sigur

drunk! Queues were formed! Pylsur views. Comment on those you disagree with, get a conversation going And "like" those that you, well, like.

> www.airwaves.grapevine.is is still very much the place.

See you at Airwaves 2K13, maybe?

**FUN TRIVIA QUESTION ANSWER FROM PAGE 2!** 

B) Emilio Estevez

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# **Proceed With Caution** 'Varúð' exhibit channels the airy non-gravity of the 'Valtari' cover art

The cover of Sigur Rós' 'Valtari' album features a photo of a large ship floating over a grass green ocean. There are no landmarks evident in the photo, which was shot off the coast of Grótta, a small island connected to Reykjavík by a narrow isthmus. It's not about the place, says Lilja Birgisdóttir, the photographer behind the photo. It's about the sea.

#### Varúð







Skúlagata 32, 101 Reykjavík Open 9-18



Lilja and her sister, artist and graphic designer Inga Birgisdóttir, were commissioned by the band to design the artwork earlier this year. Inga used Lilja's polaroids to create a collage for the cover. "We wanted it to be timeless and not connected to a specific location—just everywhere, everywhere and nowhere," Lilja says.

As Lilja and Inga, consistent collaborators since receiving their degrees in fine art from the Iceland Academy of the Arts, worked on the album, they were inspired to begin a number of other stand-alone art pieces. The results of that creative period—photos, videos and a sound-scape—will be presented in the Varúð exhibit opening on October 31.

#### The starting point

"Sometimes when you're working on an album cover or a video, as you go through the process you end up with all these side products. You go through all these ideas and cast some away and use one of them," Inga says. "So this is such a nice opportunity to show all the things that come about when you make a cover."

'Varúð' will feature videos by Inga, as well as several photographs, including original photos taken in an airplane and colourised images, created by Lilja. At one point during the interview she pulls out a sheet with two versions of the 'Valtari' image side by side—one in black and white, the other painted in with the yellows, greens and oranges of the album cover.

"It's really kind of important," Inga

says of album artwork. "I mean the image that goes on an album, it says so much about the music, because you see it before you hear the music. It kind of moulds your idea about the album before you listen to it."

The floating ship that adorns the 'Valtari' cover was inspired by the airy, light feeling Inga and Lilja sensed in the music. "With music you can't touch it, you can't see it, but you feel it," Lilja says. "Our job is to make something tangible out of it."

Some of the images that will be exhibited were colourised using a specialised oil painting technique, Lilja says. Rather than painting over the photograph, the paint adds colour to black and white images. "Instead of trying to resemble reality, I'm using the colours as a layer on top of the image to bring something surreal to it," Lilja says.

#### Varúð: caution, warning, danger

The videos, which will be played on loop during the exhibition, all either directly correspond to a 'Valtari' track or were shown during the band's live concerts. One of the videos is an animation of Inga's interpretation of the album's third track, after which the exhibit is named. The video was created for Sigur Rós' Valtari Mystery



Film Experiment, a series of short films inspired by the tracks on the album.

"We never meant our music to come with a pre-programmed emotional response," the Valtari Mystery Film Experiment homepage reads. "We don't want to tell anyone how to feel and what to take from it. With the films, we have literally no idea what the directors are going to come back with"

Unlike the other videos in the exhibit, such as the animation of the album artwork she created for "Ekki múkk," the "Varúð" video is meant to tell a story.

"Varúð means caution or warning so this image instantly came to my mind, someone making warning signs with a flashlight," Inga writes. "I wanted the 'Varúð' video to have a slow build up like the song and leave something for the viewers to imagine for themselves. We have no idea who they are or what they are warning us about"

Inga, whose other graphic design credits include album artwork for múm, sóley,

work for múm, sóley, Sin Fang and Jónsi's 2010 solo album

We wanted it to be 'Go,' used a postcard featimeless and not conturing a picture of the nected to a specific loca-Öxará river in Þingveltion—just everywhere, lir National everywhere and Park as the base of the nowhere Water and the

ocean appear several times throughout the exhibit, either directly or as a theme. The exhibit's soundscape consists of a hypnotic loop of ship horns. "Ship horns are a method for ships to communicate on sea, it's a language, and

In this sense, the name of the exhibit is both a title and a literal action, an audible warning heard by visitors. The soundscape starts with five long ship horn blasts, which signals a warning. "It's telling the audience that they have to be aware as they enter," Lilja says.

they all have a meaning," Lilja says.

♥ - ARIT JOHN

# Do You Want To Know Who Mo Yan Is?



Nic Cavell is a writer for hire and a refugee of love.

The night before this year's Nobel Prize for Literature was announced, I sat leafing through Haruki Murakami's 'The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle' on my beat leather couch. The bookies chose him at 6/4 odds to win the award, and the buzz was that Asia was due this year. I settled on this eventuality and took up his book to get familiar, even if Murakami's originality had previously struck me with all the force of a good cappuccino, and nothing more.

The next day, a funny thing happened. Murakami, champion of jazz and record stores and quirky futurescapes, was passed up for a Chinese author, Mo Yan. I made a few calls and no one I knew in Iceland had heard of the man. I put down the cappuccino, reserving judgment. Google searches slowly filled my mind instead with the



There is real anxiety in Iceland and the West about the cultural output of a country with heavy censorship and pervasive human rights violations.



stench of garlic and glittering seas of red sorghum.

In the States, a combine harvester shudders to life when an outlier wins the Nobel Prize, reprinting old translations, commissioning new ones and publicising the hell out of him ahead of the Christmas hysteria. In a country of so many million, there will be book sales. But what happens with translation in Iceland? What is the interest in Chinese culture, even?

#### WHAT IS WORTH 1000 WORDS?

I looked into it. Hjörleifur Sveinbjörnsson is perhaps the best potential translator of Mo Yan's work to Icelandic. In 2008, JPV published his 'Apakóngur á Silkiveginum' ("The Monkey King on the Silk Road"), an introduction to Chinese literature that won 2009's Icelandic Translation Award. In the collection, Hjörleifur writes in an even style evoking the original stories without the use of overwrought literary language.

Hjörleifur's introduction was groundbreaking in its accessibility. That was four years ago, and beside Hjörleifur, the number of Iceland's literary translators of Chinese can be counted on one hand. In a field where the pioneer work is still being done, a translation of Mo Yan in the near future is doubtful, and something, Hjörleifur says, that the publishing houses should figure out.

He is optimistic, however, because Chinese actually shares several tender similarities with Icelandic. Both languages have their roots in rich and abundant classical forms, some of which are fine approximations for each other. And both languages have maintained a deep relationship with the lives of farmers and fisherman from which they sprung and, until recently, were predominantly used by.

Where is Mo Yan in all of this? As part of the post-Mao 'root-seeking' movement, he re-twined literature with traditional folklore and aesthetics. His historical epics, which colourfully evade realism, cover topics like garlic

farming, mothering, drinking, drinking, and drinking. They are simply more workable in Icelandic than those of his avant-garde peers.

Mo Yan is technically translatable. But who cares?

#### **LET THEM EAT SORGHUM**

A week after the Nobel prize announcement, I edged my way into a room at the University of Iceland to see the film adaptation of Mo Yan's "Red Sorghum." The screening, hastily scheduled to buttress the news cycle, was sparsely attended.

And yet the film's rawness easily filled the room. Scenes of tense family drama quickly evolved into those depicting masculine shame, graphic violence, rape and even the forced skinning of a prisoner alive. In the startling closing scenes, it is the Japanese who play the aggressors, but the subtext grapples with the self-inflicted horrors the Chinese themselves committed during the Cultural Revolution.

Numbed by repeated violence, swollen with some astonishing significance, I left my seat in a head rush, eager to find English translations of Mo Yan's books. On my way out, I was surprised to hear, most immediately, negative criticism of the film: simplistic symbolism, shock value over substance, easy vilification of the Japanese—if this was all the Chinese had, it was disappointing.

#### **DIVIDED LOYALTIES**

I wonder if there's something more to this—something lurking beneath the real fact that the difficulty of a project like translating Mo Yan to Icelandic far outpaces the demand for it, something beside the innocent disregard for an acclaimed film.

There is real anxiety in Iceland and the West about the cultural output of a country with heavy censorship and pervasive human rights violations. Suggestions of scandal and corruption seem to follow wherever China places its foot.

I certainly read what makes it through the censors with a grain of salt. But sometimes there is a writer whose mind dances around "BAN" stamps and still unflinchingly portrays a nation's life, death and cannibalism. What's more, openness to the right cultural influences has combined with Icelandic talent for stunning results. To choose just one example, acclaimed author Sölvi Björn Sigurðsson has lit Dante's 'The Divine Comedy' up as kindle for his epic poem 'Gleðileikurinn djöfullegi' ("The Diabolical Comedy"). And he's remixed Murakami for the postmodern genre-bender 'Fljótandi heimur' ("Floating World").

It's not that everything that comes out of China should be treated with parity, nor its transgressions ignored. But Mo Yan's stuff is popping, man. For people who demand a new constitution after a crisis, who care enough about corruption to put the SIC Report at the top of the bestseller list, and consistently grapple with the dark reasons everything can go so fantastically wrong in a country, Mo Yan may have a lot to say.

#### **50 SHADES OF RED**

And do you really need an invitation to pick up books titled 'Happy Times,' 'The Republic of Wine,' and 'Big Breasts and Wide Hips'?





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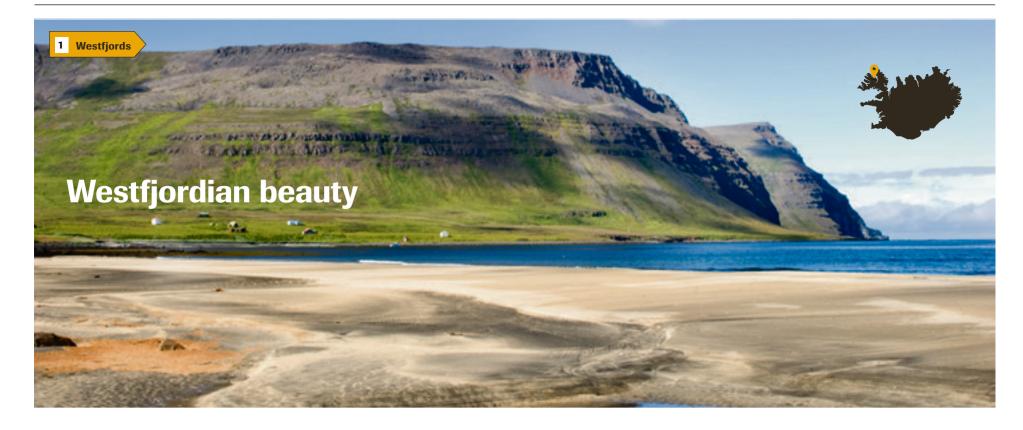
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Words by Hayley German Fisher



When I find myself in a place of incomprehensible loveliness, the kind that makes my eyes sting, I'm reminded of a line from the film American Beauty: "Sometimes there's so much beauty, I feel like I can't take it."

It was that way for us Yankees in the Westfjords. I can hardly do justice to the bright blue water and the gray-pink banded cliffs, majestic against the snow-white and gray striped "Snæfjallaströnd" mountain chain, all at the almost-endless latespring sunset.

#### BAM!

The Westfjords jut off into the North Atlantic like some misshapen lobster claw, isolated and ignored by the Ring Road. My husband Thayer and I knew it would be a trek, and a long one, as the road is paved in places and sometimes just gravel or dirt. But the real kicker is the length of the drive. The only real traversable road follows the coast in, and out, and in, and out of each fjord. So "the shortest distance between two points" is not, as they say, a straight line, but an unbelievably long meandering one.

The more it seemed no other travelers we encountered were making the Westfjords a part

of their trip, the more we wondered if we'd be wasting our time there. If it was beautiful like the rest of Iceland, would we be seeing anything new? Would it be worth the trip? We were not prepared

The Westfjords are that beautiful. It's as if, just when you think you've seen as much beauty as can possibly exist, the gods throw this in your face, like "BAM! You thought that was it? Get a load of the Westfjords."

#### IN SEARCH OF...

I don't know how Thayer managed to keep our Suzuki Swift from tumbling over the guardrailless mountain roads. His eyes—like mine—were glued to the water that glowed bright blue and gold, like it had swallowed the sun, maybe to bring itself closer to heaven. We pulled over just to stare, and the stinging in my eyes stretched down to squeeze my throat until, inevitably, my cheeks were streaked with tears.

Once we'd composed ourselves, we pressed on in search of lodging. We stopped in Dýrafjörður, where there were two guesthouses, but no one to be found at either of them. One—Hótel Núpur—was unlocked, so we snuck in and roamed the former schoolhouse, searching in vain for someone to give us a room but finding only deserted hallways filled with framed class pictures dating back to 1953.

It was a long time before we reached the next guesthouse, Hótel Látrabjarg, and when we arrived there was no one there, either. To be fair, it was 22:00, even though it felt like midday. Thayer found the cook in the backyard gardening, because why wouldn't the cook be gardening? At night? He didn't speak much English but he knew what we were after. He whipped out his phone, and soon the host pulled up in his truck and welcomed us in—a happy ending to a seemingly endless day. And yet, I don't think we'd have been upset if we'd had to continue driving along the fjords all night. Or forever.

#### "OH, HKBMFNVOSLD!"

The next day was another lengthy, stunning drive to the bird cliffs where, as you might imagine, there were many birds, including puffins. We also did some frolicking at the westernmost part of Iceland—and therefore Europe—at Bjargtangar.

In a small town on our way out of the fjords,

we stopped at an Icelandic handicrafts store and I bought a precious "lopapeysa" with short sleeves and a sheep pattern around the neck. After doing giddy jumpy-claps over my purchase, I discovered that the woman sitting nearby knitting was the one who made it. It's not often you get to meet the maker of the stuff you buy, and I wanted to hug her and the sheep that inspired her.

The woman and her daughter were kind enough to help us plot our route to Hellnar, but not before several minutes of language barrier over the pronunciation of "Hellnar." Over and over we said it, our repetition met only with their confused stares. Finally, we pointed to our map. "Oh, Hkbmfnvoslvd!" they said, or they may as well have for how much the Icelandic pronunciation sounds like "Hellnar."

#### **HEAVY HEARTS**

We left the Westfjords with heavy hearts—the good kind of heavy that can only come from being so full of love and happiness that your heart might actually split open at the next snow-tipped mountain or pristine reflection in still, silent water you see. The kind of heavy that returns in part with every recalled image long after you leave. The kind you can't wait to feel again, in all its crushing glory, when you return.



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Words by Arit John

Natsha Nandabhiwat

One of the first stories our tour guide Logi tells us as we leave the Akureyri airport is about the 1965 and 1967 NASA training missions at Mývatn. Located about an hour outside of Akureyri, Mývatn's barren and rocky landscapes were thought to be the closest thing to the moon. At least, that was the general consensus. Our guide, however, is convinced it was the eccentric nature of the local people who would have best prepared the astronauts for possible moon men.

He's joking, I think. Then again, it's too early in the morning to tell, and if it is a joke, no one laughs. As we drive further, Logi begins a running commentary on the area, weaving in the history and mythology of Iceland to fill the awkward silence left by our rag tag group of tourists—four Canadian guys, a young Japanese woman, a middle-aged English couple, a Grapevine photographer and me, the "American."

#### The real story of Santa Claus

LINE.

As we look through the window of our van, each moment is photo-worthy. Slowly we trade the quaint, brightly coloured houses of Akureyri for sprawling fields of grass littered with small white dots. Two weeks after an unseasonably early

snowstorm killed thousands of sheep in the area, the survivors graze here freely, which you can see and smell from all directions.

Soon we're near the pseudocraters, blackened concave holes in the hills bordering Lake Mývatn. We learn that the lake is only four metres deep, or two basketball players, as Logi explains to those of us not on the metric system. The name translates to "midge lake," due to the large number of biting flies that hang out here in the summer.

In mid-September, however, it's too cold for flies. And while the gloomy grey sky spares us from biting flies, it lacked the explosive colours of the maze-like forest of Dimmuborgir, formed on the cooled remains of an ancient volcanic eruption

Full of seafood soup and rye bread, we follow

Logi in a single file line through long iron gate at the park entrance.

This, he tells us, is the sort of place where adventurous tourists get lost, and it's easy to see why. Even in daylight one fiery red shrub looks like the next one. Each winding path lined with blueberry bushes looks like it could lead back to the entrance. Logi points out small landmarks, like the crack where the Eurasian and North American plates meet, or a rock face that resembles Homer Simpson.

No trip into Icelandic nature is complete without a conversation about elves and trolls, and Logi takes this time to tell us "the real story" of Santa Claus. Unlike "you Americans and your Coca-Cola Santa Claus," Logi says, Iceland actually has 13 Santa Clauses, each named after some naughty act. As we pass by brightly coloured shrubs and blueberry bushes, we learn about Door-Slammer and Skyr-Stealer and their horrifying troll mother.

At one point we reach a crossroads in the park where a person could supposedly become rich if they sat there on New Year's Eve and ignored any elves who walked by. I tried to imagine the park in winter, with four dim hours of sunlight casting shadows on dead shrubs, and decided I wouldn't be back to prove that legend.

#### Primordial soup

"If you're smart, you'll figure out what to do with these," Logi says as he hands each of us two plastic bags. We're approaching the Námafjall hot springs, which sound much cleaner than they actually are. The bags are to protect our shoes from the tan, sulphur-rich coloured mud covering the entire area.

Steam rises from the earth and only the designated paths are safe to walk on. At the end of one path is a tall pile of rocks covering a natural steam vent. It's easy to imagine this as a prehistoric land—young, hot and unstable. Spread throughout the area are giant "mud pots," metre wide craters filled with boiling murky mud. For me, at least, the plastic bags didn't help, and I was glad to get a chance to clean up at our last stop, the Mývatn nature baths.

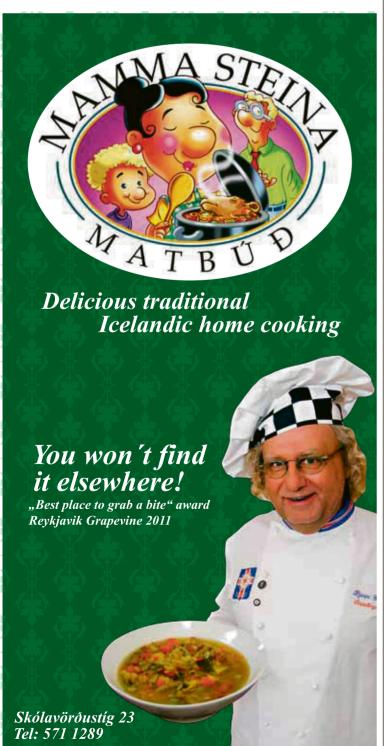
As we made our way back to Akureyri our conversation (because by now it really had become a conversation) shifted away from troll mothers and tenth century Swedish princes to Iceland's social welfare, women's rights and the environmental legislation. And suddenly it seems as if Logi's ramblings had a point. He told us about Iceland's history, guided us through the present and left us at the airport thinking about what it might be in the future.

# AIRICELAND.IS









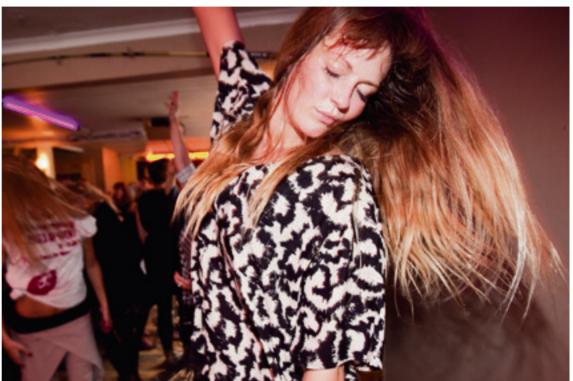
# **Dance Away Your Lunch Break**

## Reykjavík joins the international Lunch Beat party

Words

Arit John

**Photography** Alísa Kalyanova



DJ Margeir is spinning techno music. The dance floor is full to capacity—the windows are steaming up and with each beat the collective hop of the crowd sends a shudder through the building. Hemmi og Valdi, one of the more laidback bars on Laugavegur, isn't usually this lively, especially not at half past noon on a Thursday.

66

The rules are straight-

forward: if it's your first time,

you dancé. If it's your second,

Beat is 'a preferably drug free

environment.

The group is a mix of bartenders, middle-aged software developers, French expats, 20-somethings who happened to walk by and curious tourists popping in to take a quick video. The tourists are especially fun to watch-they will more than likely go home thinking Icelanders party at all hours of the day and night.

This is Lunch Beat Reykjavík, hosted by the newly founded Choreography Reykjavík. The bi-weekly dance party is a chance for people to get out of the office, get a cheap meal and dance until they're sweaty and exhaust-

#### THE ORIGINS OF LUNCH BEAT

Lunch Beat Reykjavík is one branch of a growing, international trend aimed at getting people to take their lunch breaks on the dance floor. Founded in June 2010 by Swede Molly Ränge, the movement has grown from fourteen people getting together in the basement of an office in Stockholm to cities as far spread as Prague, Istanbul, Seoul, Johannesburg and Oakland.

Any organisation can set up a Lunch Beat as long as the events are announced as public events, are hosted without profit and follow the organisation's ten-rule manifesto. The rules are straightforward: if it's your first time, you dance. If it's your second, third or fourth

time, you dance. If you'd rather not dance, feel free to eat your lunch somewhere else. There will always be a DJ set, free water and lunch provided and Lunch Beat is "a preferably drug free environment."

"We have two pretty basic goals: your lunch somewhere else. There to get people dancing together, will always be a DJ set, free water which is a different way of interactand lunch provided and Lunch ing with people than sitting around a lunch table, and also to feed people who are hungry," says Alexander Roberts, a co-founder of Choreography Reykiavík.

In addition to dancing, Lunch Beat Reykjavík offers an all-you-can-eat lunch spread for 350 ISK. Guests can grab muffins, apples, bananas, yogurt, crackers and sandwiches with all the fixings. In keeping with Lunch Beat's profit-free stipulation, Choreography Reykjavík make back just what they put in. With free use of the venue and the volunteer efforts of the DJs, the group has manage to host the event with no outside funding.

"The idea is that everyone who's contributing in some way pays nothing but also only gives their time or what they already have available," Alexander explains. "The



space gives their space and we give our time and the dancers give their dancing."

#### **TAKING OVER REYKJAVÍK**

The five founders of Choreography Reykjavík-Alexander, Ásgerður G. Gunnarsdóttir, Ásrún Magnúsdóttir, Clara Folenius and Hrafnhildur Benediktsdóttir-met in late August at the tenth annual Reykjavík Dance Festival.

"The idea was, after we met at Reykjavík Dance Festival this year, to get together and do a series of initiatives that would in some way strength-

en or expand choreography dance in Iceland," Alexander says. "So Lunch Beat is one in a number of events and inithird or fourth time, you dance. If

tiatives that we're going to be doing in the next year."

ou'd rather not dance, feel free to eat In addition to bringing Lunch Beat to Reykjavík, the group has plans to expand the archives and library of Dansverkstæðið and put on Work in Process nights for local choreographers to present incomplete works. Next month they plan on beginning a speaker series.

> As for Lunch Beat, the group will continue hosting the event through the end of the year, when they have a special Christmas event planned, and into 2013. And they will continue rotating venues and DJs-other Lunch Beats were held at Bakkus, Hemmi og Valdi, Harpa, the Blue Lagoon and Dansverkstæðið.

"We want to take over different spaces in the city," Alexander says. "Not even just bars—swimming pools and



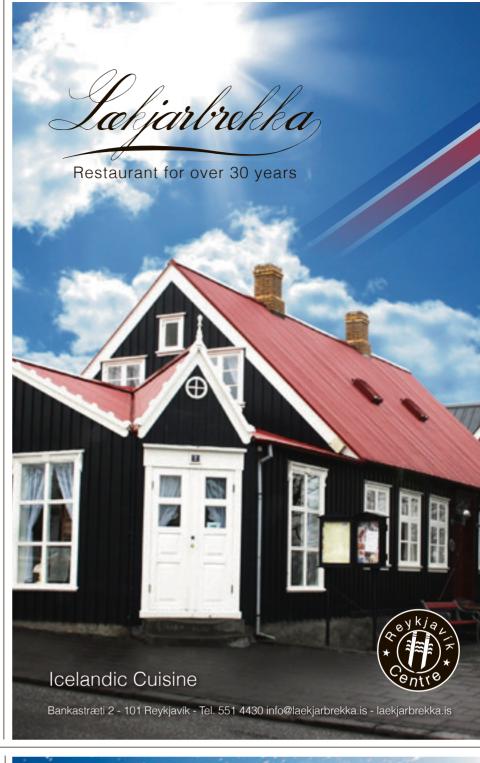
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Ticket sale at Hallgrimskirkja tel 510 1000

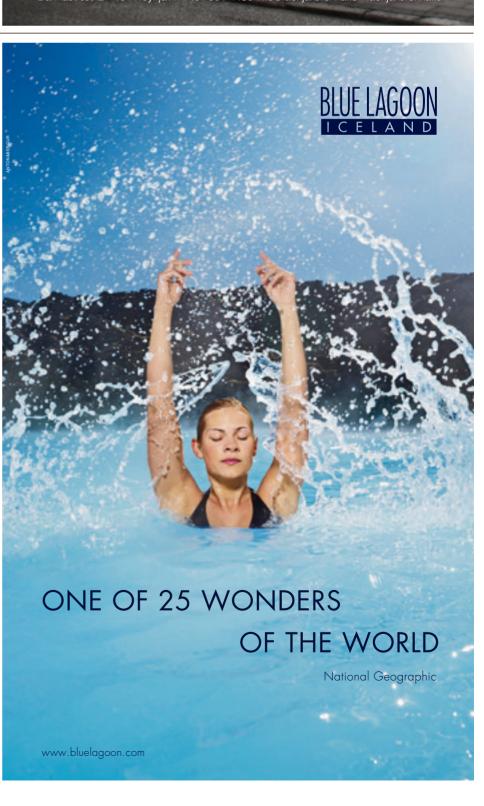
Admission: ISK 3.900

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# Hoops Exchange For Americans who don't make the NBA, playing overseas in Iceland might be the next best thing



D'Andre Williams\* has been in Iceland for a little over three weeks when we meet after a Thursday night practice at the Íþróttafélag Reykjavíkur (ÍR) basketball court at Seljaskóli. He's spent most of that time working out or practising-weight lifting for two hours around noon, hitting the court on his own around 14:00 and then practising with the team for an hour and a half.

There hasn't been time to explore many of the waterfalls or the famed nightlife that bring most people to the country. "It's alright," D'Andre says of Iceland. "I haven't really gone out and done anything yet. But as far as I can see, the only thing I don't like about it is it's freezing.'

Iceland will be his home for the next five months as ÍR plays 22 games against the other 11 teams in Iceland's semi-professional premier league, the most competitive level of play in the

For D'Andre, playing basketball is literally a full-time job. After graduating in May from University of Arkansas-Little Rock (UALR), a Division-1 school, D'Andre began the long process of finding an agent, impressing a team and being hired to play hoops overseas.

#### The road to Reykjavík

If someone had told ten-year-old D'Andre growing up in Amarillo, Texas that he'd become a professional basketball player, he might have been the only one to believe it. "I was looked at as an underdog," he says, "so I wanted to prove to everyone that, just because I'm short, I can still do it."

Twelve years later, he's still short. Maybe not by normal standards—he's 177 centimetres tall—but for a professional basketball player he could do with a few inches (the average height of his team is around 192 cm).

Jón Arnar Ingvarsson, ÍR's newly re-hired head, isn't worried about this. There are more foreign players who want to play than there are spots. Talent-as seen in highlight reels and playing statistics—is a big part of the recruiting process, as is character.

"Personality is, of course, something we really look at," Jón says. "We want good people."

For D'Andre, the ball started rolling last season, his senior year at UALR, when he averaged 34.3 minutes of playing time, 13.2 points per game and 3.9 rebounds and assists per game. Then the agent messages start coming in, D'Andre says, and it was a matter of finding someone who believed in him. D'Andre decided on Elliott Kay at

123 Podium Sport Agency, dan because he was a great an agency that specialises in overseas basketball. The Agency *If I have to sit on the* has, according to its website, bench for 40 minutes connections with more because the team is playing than 1,800 teams well, and cheer them on—as around the world, long as we're winning it Europe, across makes me look good North/South/Latin America, Asia & Oceania. Their other American clients have recently or

Lithuania, Sweden and Japan. By the end of July D'Andre had agreed to join IR as point guard, rejecting offers from teams in Denmark, Israel and a later offer from a team in Germany. After two months of paperwork—work authorisation/ immigration forms and FBI background checks—he arrived in Iceland on October 2.

are currently playing basketball in

Denmark, Mexico, Canada, Portugal,

#### No "I" in team, but there's a "me"

And how is IR doing this season? The optimism of mid-September has been replaced by the harsh realities of October and November—a decisive thrashing from Snæfell during the season opener, another defeat from Thor Thori during overtime and just one narrow, two-point victory against Njarðvík the day after our interview. Two more games against Skallagrímur and Grindavík left them 2:3. Things could definitely be going bet-

"As a team we haven't been playing the best that we know we can play. Some people need to step up and take a greater leadership role, which should be the players that are getting paid for it," D'Andre says. "But at the same time it's a team thing. If one person's doing something wrong then everybody's doing something wrong."

The focus on the team is essential

to European basketball, but it is not always found among Americans. In 2007, Jeremy Tyler made headlines for being the first American to leave high school early and play basketball overseas to improve his NBA draft chances. Soon afterwards he made headlines again, this time for his poor performance in Israel, both on and off

American basketball is characterised by stars and athletic showmanship. No one remembers Michael Jor-

> doesn't get Nike endorsement because he doesn't mind sitting on the bench. The world is not on a first name basis with Shaq or Kobe because of a jawdropping ability to set screens for lesser players

> passer. LeBron James

at the right moment. These players made names for themselves through slam-dunks, three-pointers and MVP titles.

And American players have a reputation for coming abroad thinking they'll fill their highlight reels with stunning moves and make their way to the next level. Helgi Más Magnússon, the head coach of ÍR's Reykjavík basketball rival Knattspyrnufélag Reykjavíkur (KR), has seen American ambition from both sides, as a player and coach in Iceland and as a student athlete at an American university, one of the main scouting grounds for the

"A lot of Americans look at Iceland as a launch pad to a bigger career," Helgi says. "And of course people should be ambitious, but at the same time a lot of those players try too hard to get their good stats instead of playing within the team concept and just sharing the ball."

This is D'Andre's first year abroad, and when I ask him about the "me" mentality of some American players, he prefaces with his inexperience before responding.

"But from what I can see so far, the players that win games are the players that move over. They go on and do better things. You can score 50 points a game and have the highlight reel, but if the team wins one game the whole season I don't think they go anywhere," D'Andre says. "If I have to sit on the bench for 40 minutes because the team is playing well, and cheer them on—as long as we're winning it makes me look good."

And looking good is what gets players to leagues abroad and then on to fully professional leagues. But while Iceland may lead players to more competitive and lucrative leagues in other countries, is it really a launch pad to the NBA Draft? And does anyone really expect it to be?

For D'Andre the future isn't so straightforward. He wants to be happy with his life, he says. He wants to be a role model, an inspiration for his three younger siblings back home. He wants to make his parents proud.

The million dollar contracts of the NBA aren't a top priority for him. He's enjoying experiencing different things and different cultures. "It's not so much about the money for me; it's about the experience," he says. "The most important thing to me is that I have my college education." At some point he hopes to go back to school to get his master's degree.

Then there's the one goal that hasn't changed since he was ten years old. "I want to play at a high level," he says. "I want to prove to everyone that I'm a small guy, but I can compete with the best.'

#### ៥ - ARIT JOHN

\* D'Andre returned to the States just before this issue went to print due to a family emergency. He may or

#### **Icelandic basketball Facts**

- The governing board of Iceland's basketball leagues is Körfuknattleikssamband Íslands (KKÍ), the Icelandic **Basketball Federation**
- KKÍ was founded in 1961. Its first president was Bogi Þorsteinsson
- · There are two basketball divisions in Iceland: the Division I league and the Domino's Premier league
- The Domino's Premier league consists of 12 teams. Their 22-game season lasts from early October to mid-March.
- · Each team is allowed to hire as many non-Icelandic citizens as they want, but only two can be on the court at any one time.
- Prior to the 2008 crash, American players made, on average, \$2,000 USD a month. It is less today.
- There are currently 24 Americans playing in the Premier league.



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#### **STUFFED WITH STUFF**

Issue 17 YOUR FREE COPY

Arnar and Guðmundur agree that much of Prince Polo's enduring appeal can be attrib-

uted to the circumstances surrounding its arrival to Iceland. "I think because of how it came here it became very popular



in early stages," Guðmundur says. "It became a very strong brand in people's minds."

Prince Polo is STILL Iceland's most popular chocolate bar.

Finally, when a decision is delivered, the police immediately show up and arrest



those who are to be deported. They then spend their last night at the police station, often denied a chance to properly bid their

friends and partners farewell.

Snorri Páll Jónsson Úlfhildarson explores the life of refugees in Iceland

Every time you opened The Scandinavian Window, you felt like you were being painted by Munch. Back home in Iceland you could only open a small



part of a very modern and rectangular window, plus you always had to wrestle with the wind for to open it. Life in Iceland has

taught us that opening a whole window of your house is a bit like opening your car door at 90 kilometres per hour

Hallgrímur Helgason takes on Iceland's tradition of dull and ugly architecture gets torn







# The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE



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

## YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL AND ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

Issue 17 - 2012 www.grapevine.is







og öryrkja

afsláttur

# MUSIC

#### **CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE**

#### November

**How to use the listings** Venues are listed alphabetically by day. For complete listings and detailed information on venues or to add your own listing, visit www.listings.grapevine.is

#### **Friday Novémber 9**

Café Rósenberg

• 22:00 Elvar Örn and Dusty Miller tribute band

**Den Danske Kro** 

• 19:00 Tryggvi • 21:00 Hjálmar & Dagur

Faktorý
• 23:00 DJ KGB

• 00:00 Drum Machine Disco with Árni Kristjáns and Hunk of A Man Gay 46

• 23:00 DJ Manny Prikið

• 00:00 Önnukvöld

Glaumbar
• 22:00 DJ Egill

Kaffibarinn
• 23:00 Viktor Birgiss & DJ JB Kjallarinn

• 23:30 DJ Bluescreen

Vegamót
• 23:00 DJ Símon

#### Saturday November 10

Café Rósenberg

• 22:00 Biggi Gun **Den Danske Kro** 

• 21:00 Ingi Valur

• 00:00 Biggi Faktorý

• 23:00 DJ Logi Pedro

• 00:00 Positive Vibrations **Gamli Gaukurinn** 

• 23:00 Einkasamkvæmi

Glaumbar

• 22:00 DJ Yngvi Eysteins

Kaffibarinn • 21:00 **FKNHNDSM** 

Kjallarinn

23:30 **DJ Milla** Prikið

• 00:00 **DJ Egill** 

Vegamót

23:00 DJ Benni B Ruff

#### Sunday November 11

**Den Danske Kro** 

• 22:00 Tryggvi

Hangover offer: beer for 700

Faktorý • 21:00 Live jazz

Kaffibarinn

• 22:00 Kristinn Pálsson

#### Monday **November 12**

Café Rósenberg

22:00 Óvíst

Den Danske Kro

• 22:00 Hjálmar & Dagur Kaffibarinn

• 22:00 **DJ 2.25** 

#### Tuesday November 13

Café Rósenberg

22:00 Academy of Cinema gradua-

• 22:00 Gunni

• 22:00 DJ Maggi Lego

#### Wednesday November 14

Café Rósenberg

• 22:00 Bókakonfekt Forlagsins Kaffibarinn

• 22:00 Atli Kanill

Prikið • 22:00 DJ Jeffe & Sensi

#### Thursday **November 15**

Café Rósenberg

• 22:00 Fuglabúrið

**Den Danske Kro** 

• 20:30 Beer Bingo

• 22:00 Magni Faktorý

• 22:00 DJ KGB

Glaumbar • 22:00 Trúbbakvöld með Lótus

Kaffibarinn

• 21:00 Árni Kristjánsson



#### **Ghost Busters Ghostigital & Friends**

#### Faktorý Upstairs

Smidjustig 6 | ⊗ 22:00 | **ISK** 1.000

Ghostigital are one part psych rock and one part hip hop, and their raucous and noisy shows are something akin to attending a cult-like ceremony. Curver Thoroddsen and Einar Örn Benediktsson, former Sugarcubes member, perform with charismatic intensity, and the show will be the duo's last in Reykjavík before heading to Mexico City for the Revolver Festival. Their newest record, 'Division of Culture and Tourism' released in April of this year will be available for sale at the show on vinyl. "It will be a massive gig," promises band member Curver. KO

Kjallarinn

• 22:00 DJ Kollster Prikið

• 22:00 DJ Krúsi

Vegamót
• 23:00 DJ Símon

#### Friday November 16

Café Rósenberg

• 22:00 Ljótu hálfvitarnir

Den Danske Kro

• 19:00 Ingi Valur

• 00:00 Gunni

Faktorý

• 23:00 DJ Pabbi

• 00:00 Lágtíðni 001

Gamli Gaukurinn

• 23:00 Live music **Gay 46** 

• 23:30 **DJ Veloci** 

Glaumbar

• 22:00 Skólakvöld with Atla

plötusnúð . Kaffibarinn

• 23:00 Maggi Legó

Kjallarinn

• 23:30 DJ Kidda

Prikið

• 22:00 Húsbandið and DJ Danni

**Deluxe** 

Vegamót

• 23:00 DJ Benni B Ruff

#### Saturday November 17

Café Rósenberg • 22:00 Ljótu hálfvitarnir

Den Danske Kro • 21:00 Tryggvi

• 00:00 Hjálmar & Dagur

Faktorý 22:00 Jón Jónson

• 23:00 Borg #4

• 00:00 DJ Benni B Ruff Gamli Gaukurinn

• 23:00 Dynfari, Hindurvættir, Auðn

Gay 46 • 23:30 DJ Kidda

Glaumbar
• 22:00 DJ Seth

Kaffibarinn

• 23:00 Alfons X Kjallarinn

• 23:30 DJ Manny Prikið

• 00:00 **DJ Pedro** 

Vegamót • 23:00 **G**unni

#### Sunday November 18

Café Rósenberg • 22:00 Lokað

Faktorý •21:30 Live jazz

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#### Kaffibarinn • 22:00 Kristinn Pálsson

#### Monday **November 19**

#### Café Rósenberg

• 22:00 Vanessa

**Den Danske Kro** 

• 22:00 Hjálmar & Dagur Prikið

• 22:00 DJ Hús

#### Tuesday November 20

Café Rósenberg
• 22:00 Dúettinn Mor – Margrét Eir og co

**Den Danske Kro** 

• 22:00 Danni

Prikið

• 22:00 Súrir þriðjudagar with Berndsen

#### Wednesday **November 21**

#### Café Rósenberg

• 22:00 Bókakonfekt Forlagsins

**Den Danske Kro** 

• 22:30 Pop Quiz with Hreimur Prikið

#### • 22:00 DJ Jeffe & Sensi

## Thursday November 22

#### Café Rósenberg

• 22:00 Djassband Auðar Guðjóns **Den Danske Kro** 

#### • 20:30 Beer Bingo

• 22:00 Magni

#### Glaumbar

• 22:00 DJ Yngvi Eysteins Gamli Gaukurinn

• 21:00 Bjaggi Gísli Bluesfest 1500 cover, wristband 2900kr

#### Kaffibarinn

• 21:00 Alfons X

Kjallarinn

#### • 22:00 DJ Dramatík

Prikið • 22:00 DJ Intro

#### Vegamót

• 23:00 DJ Gunni

#### Friday November 23

#### Café Rósenberg

• 22:00 Árstíðir

**Den Danske Kro** • 19:00 Tryggvi

• 00:00 Hjálmar & Dagur

#### Faktorý • 23:00 DJ Logi Pedri

• 00:00 Italodisco

#### **Gamli Gaukurinn**

• 21:00 Bjaggi Gísli Bluesfest

#### **Gay 46**

• 23:30 DJ Dramatík

#### Glaumbar

• 22:00 DJ Cyppie

#### Kjallarinn

• 23:30 DJ Manny

#### Prikið

• 00:00 DJ Danni Deluxe

#### Vegamót

• 23:00 DJ Benni B Ruff

#### Saturday November 24

#### Café Rósenberg • 22:00 KK and Maggi

**Den Danske Kro** 

#### • 21:00 Siddi • 00:00 Gunni

Faktorý • 23:00 RVK Soundsystem's Reggae

#### Night

Reggae, dub and dancehall all night! Hosted by Arnljótur, DJ Elvar, DJ Kári, Gnúsi Yones and Kalli Youze.

#### Gamli Gaukurinn

• 21:00 Bjaggi Gísli Bluesfest

#### Gay 46 • 23:30 DJ Veloci

Glaumbar • 22:00 DJ Seth

#### Kaffibarinn

• 21:00 Kári & KGB

#### Kiallarinn

23:30 DJ Dramatík

Prikið • 00:00 DJ Benni B Ruff

#### Vegamót • 22:00 DJ Símon

• 21:00 Live jazz

#### Gamli Gaukurinn

• 21:00 Blúshátíð Bjögga Gísla Kaffibarinn

Sunday November 25

#### • 22:00 Kristinn Pálsson

#### Monday **November 26**

#### Café Rósenberg

22:00 Óvíst

Den Danske Kro • 22:00 Hjálmar & Dagur

#### Kaffibarinn

• 22:00 Simon FKNHNDSM

#### Tuesday November 27

#### Café Rósenberg

• 22:00 Gleðisveit Guðlaugar **Den Danske Kro** 

• 22:00 Gunni

Prikið

• 22:00 DJ Gay Latino Man

#### Wednesday November 28

#### Café Rósenberg

• 22:00 Bókakonfekt Forlagsins

#### **Den Danske Kro** • 22:30 Pop Quiz with Hreimur

Prikið • 22:00 Dungeon Massive

## Thursday November 29

#### Café Rósenberg • 22:00 Benjamín and hljómsveit -

Bing Crosby jól Den Danske Kro

• 20:30 Beer Bingo

#### • 22:00 Magni Faktorý

• 22:00 DJ Solaris Sun Glaze

#### Gamli Gaukurinn • 23:00 KIMI Records

Glaumbar

• 22:00 DJ Yngvi Eysteins

#### Kaffibarinn • 21:00 DJ Pilsner

Prikið

• 22:00 Housekell Vegamót

#### • 23:00 DJ Símon

#### Friday November 30

#### Café Rósenberg • 22:00 Beggi and Mood

**Den Danske Kro** • 19:00 Tryggvi

#### • 00:00 Biggi

Faktorý • 23:00 DJ Housekell

Fríkirkjan

• 21:00 Jussanam - Rio / Reykjavik (Brazilian Jazz Concert) **Gamli Gaukurinn** 

• 23:00 Einkasamkvæmi

Den Danske Kro

• 19:00 Tryggvi • 00:00 Biggi

#### Glaumbar

• 22:00 Skólakvöld with Atla plö-

#### tusnúð

Kaffibarinn

• 23:00 Alfons X

#### Prikið

• 22:00 Húsbandið and DJ Egill

Vegamót
• 23:00 DJ Gunni

#### Saturday **December 1**

#### Café Rósenberg

• 22:00 Halli Reynis birthday show

#### **Den Danske Kro** • 21:00 **Gunni**

• 00:00 Hjálmar & Dagur

#### **Gamli Gaukurinn**

• 23:00 Steed Lord & Legend

Sunday **December 2** 

Gay 46 23:30 DJ Kollster

Glaumbar

#### • 00:00 Live DJ Kaffibarinn

21:00 Már & Níelsen Kjallarinn

#### 23:30 DJ Kollster

Café Rósenberg

• 22:00 Lokað

**Den Danske Kro** 22:00 Raggi

Kaffibarinn • 21:00 Kristinn Pálsson

#### Prikið • 22:00 DJ Hús

Monday **December 3** 

#### • 22:00 Hjálmar & Dagur

## Tuesday **December 4**

**Den Danske Kro** 

**Den Danske Kro** 

• 22:00 Danni Prikið

• 22:00 Súrir Þrijudagar with Berndsen

#### Wednesday **December 5**

#### **Den Danske Kro**

• 22:30 Pop Quiz with Hreimur Prikið

• 22:00 Dungeon Massive

#### Thursday **December 6**

#### Den Danske Kro

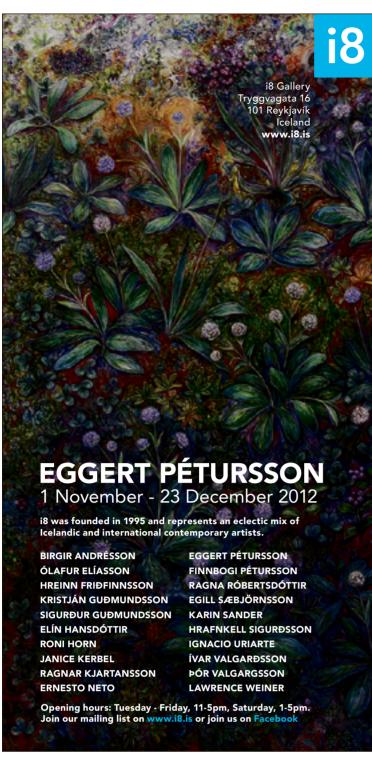
• 20:30 Beer Bingo • 22:00 Magni Glaumbar

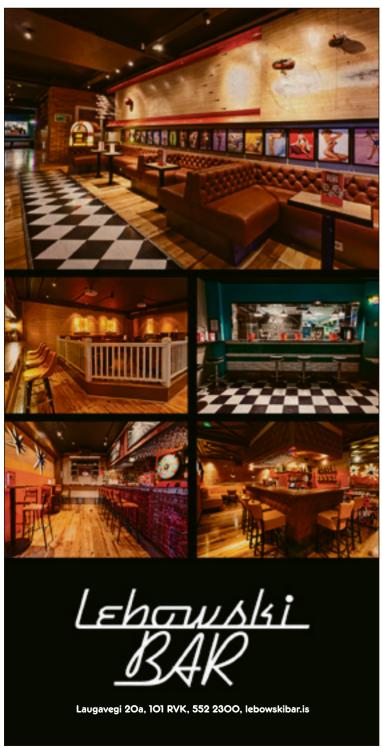
• 21:00 Trúbbakvöld Kjallarinn 22:00 DJ Dramatík

Prikið • 22:00 DJ Krúsi









# ART

#### **OPENINGS AND ONGOING**

#### **NOVEMBER**

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

Send us your listings: listings@ grapevine.is

#### Opening

#### **Gallery Kaolin**

Kolbrún Sigurdardottir - Pikknikk The artist shows paintings and ceramics, accompanied by a

Runs until November 29

#### Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

#### November 10 Wingbeats

An exhibition of oil paintings by Margrét Zóphóníasdóttir, depicting freedom in patterns and dreamy visions of nature.

Runs until January 13

#### Ilmvatnsáin has minni November 10

Davíð Örn Halldórsson decorates Gerðuberg, bringing into play his ideas about the cultural centre, which he has known since it was opened. His works show the influence of various contemporary media and movements such as cartoons, computer graphics and street art.

Runs until January 13

#### Kling & Bang November 10

Sigurður Guðjónsson: Distance Sigurður mixes images, music and sound and the overall picture is developed between the three. The exhibition focuses on the interaction

of images and sound with the environment. Sigurður holds a BA from the Academy of Arts and studied at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts from 2003 to 2004. Run until December 9

#### **National Museum of Iceland** Across Greenland, 1912 - 1913

This exhibit features photos taken by four explorers who traversed across Greenland for a year. The group also conducted research on Greenland's research, which paved the way for glaciological research in the Arctic today.

Opens November 10, runs until May 26, 2013

#### The People Þórsgata

Alda Loa Leifsdóttir documents the residents of Þórsgata through photographs over an eight year span. She aims to capture the beauty and individuality of the

Opens November 10, runs until May 26, 2013

#### **Ongoing**

#### **ASÍ Art Musum**

#### **Brightdark Places**

A collection of poetry, sound and paintings from three Icelandic artists.

Runs until December 16.

#### The Culture House

#### Edda Þórey - Freedom

Edda Þórey Kristfinnsdóttir shows oil paintings on canvas and paper along with two sculptures of fired clay, in the current exhibition in the Culture House Art Exhibition Series in the shop and café.

Runs until November 30

#### **Medieval Manuscripts Eddas** and Sagas

It includes principal medieval manuscripts, such as Codices Regii of the Poetic Edda, Prose Edda, law codices and Christian works, not forgetting the Icelandic Sagas. On permanent view

#### Child of Hope - Youth and Jón Sigurðsson .

Exploring the life of Icelandic national hero Jón Sigurðsson, 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

# New Age Design Posters – Goddur

#### Spark Design Space

Klapparstígur 33 | Runs until January 15

In the last two decades Goddur has designed dozens of promotional posters for events and films held throughout Iceland. But, until now, his posters have yet to be exhibited as a collection in Iceland. Spark Design Space has gathered twenty-nine of his designs from the last 16 years for this collection, most of which were also displayed at 2011's Beijing Design Week. Over the last twenty years Goddur has also taught graphic design at the Iceland College of Arts and Crafts and the Icelandic Academy of the Arts. He studied graphic design in Vancouver, Canada during the late 80s, as the design community shifted into the digital age. AJ

#### **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

#### The Éinar 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

## Gerõuberg Cultural Centre Ikons – A Window to Heaven

An exhibition of ikons in the traditional Byzantine style by Konstantínos Zaponidis, using egg tempera and acrylic media. Runs until January 13

The Beginning

An exhibition in the Boginn exhibition area of oil paintings of Icelandic landscapes and birds by Kolbrún Ingimarsdóttir. Runs until January 13

Hafnarborg

#### Somewhat loose around the edges: An exhibition by Thorunn **Elisabet Sveinsdottir**

Creativity, originality and endless inspiration as well as an interest in history characterise the work of Thorunn Elisabet Sveinsdottir. Runs until January 6

The Other Side

The works of Thuridur Ros Sigurthorsdottir display a poetic take on everyday materials, uncovering the magic that can out installations.

Runs until January 6

## i8 Gallery B Eggert Pétursson - Paintings /

An exhibition of new paintings by Eggert Pétursson. This will be the artist's fourth solo show at i8.

Runs until December 23 **Knitting Iceland** 

Málverk

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

On permanent view

#### Latin Dance Studio, Faxafen 12 **Guided Practica**

Argentine tango, Sundays from 17:30-19:30. Register by phone 821 6929 or email tangoadventure@ gmail.com, 500 ISK for students, 800 ISK for others. Six- week courses are also available. On permanent view

#### **The Living Art Museum** You Can't Stand In The Way Of

**Progress** Angeli Novi attempts to create a kaleidoscopic time machine, examining the plight of generations which, one after the other, become tools and puppets of economic and historical structures.

Runs until December 2 Museum of Design -

#### Hönnunarsafn Íslands Gísli B. - Five Decades of Graphic

Design This survey of Gísli B. Björnsson's

career features, among other things, work from his student days, magazines, book cover design and lavout.

Runs until March

#### The National Museum

**Drawing Across Time and Space** See sketches of Iceland from as

far back as 1789, when Scottish scientist John Baine took part in an expedition to Iceland, up to the present.

Runs until January 27 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

#### **Drawing - Traversing Time and** Technique

This exhibition presents drawings by four draughtspersons from dissimilar times, on the one hand the year of the French Revolution, 1789, and on the other the age of digital information technology, the 21st century.

Runs until January 7

#### Homecoming - Animated sound-stories from deserted Icelandic farms

Homecoming is a project run by KnitKnot, a small collective of artists and audio producers dedicated knitting and knotting stories from threads of disappearing reality. The aim of the project was to visit three deserted farms in Iceland and try to conjure up images of the people who had lived there.

Runs until November 25 Tvær í Einni/Two in One

#### Sverris Björnsson's photos capture

Iceland during its two most extreme seasons, summer and winter. Runs until January 27

#### 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 **August Strindberg** 

#### To honor the Swedish playwrite's death, the Nordic House will coordinate a production of Death Dance, one of his most famous

December 3 and 10

# IN YOUR POCKET

**INSIDE** 

Reykjavík Map

Happy Hour Guide

Places we like

Best of Reykjavík

Practical Info

Reykjavík Area

November 9 - December 6

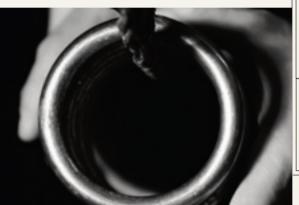
Keep it in your pocket

# Four **G** Weeks

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

60

The Distance Between Us



#### 'Frarlægð/Distance': Exhibition by Sigurður Guðjónsson

Kling & Bang, Hverfisgata 42 Runs until December 9

The measure of direction, the randomness of space and location. Eroded roads and the wear of the wind against the earth. Steel rings held together by wire and manipulated by hand. The new exhibit by video artist Sigurður Guðjónsson mingles with the properties of sound and image with a core emphasis on the perception of a physical experience, his works often focusing on the environment near us, abandoned space, movement and property. In this latest collection, his second solo show in Iceland this year, Sigurður's highly technical and personal works take the notions of distance and connections into unusual aesthetic territory. RL



**MUSIC** 

International Beats



#### **BIO/REYKJAVIK WYNYSSOF**



#### Rio/Reykjavík CD Release Concert

Fríkirkjan, Fríkirkjuvegur 5

On her newest album "Rio/Reykjavik" Brazilian born Jussanam celebrates both the country she was born in and the country she calls home. Jussanam was granted Icelandic citizenship in 2011 for her artistic abilities and contributions to Icelandic culture. The album, recorded and produced by Jussanam, features her own compositions as well as works from Scandinavian, American and Brazilian composers. Her latin-infused jazz is sure to spice up the night, or at least be the most exciting thing to happen in a church since Airwaves. 16 FRI MUSIC Get Jazzy Avant-garde jazz musician Wadada Leo Smith performs work from his 50 year career at Harpa Kaldalón. ISK 3800

17 SAT EAT Thanksgiving Dinner The Fulbright Commission will host a good ol' Thanksgiving dinner at Hilton Reykjavík Nordica. ISK 7900

22 THU MUSIC Goin' Solo Hreimur and his band have been performing rockin' pop songs for ever 10 years. Now he is performing his solo work at Austerbær. ISK 1500

**60** 

A Very Artsy Film Fest



#### **Bío: DOX Film Festival Prices Vary**

Bío Paradís, Hverfisgata 54 November 9 - 15

BÍO:DOX is a new documentary series beginning this winter. For the month of November, five films that give viewers insight into the lives of artists and their craft will be shown. The documentaries feature a wide range of artistic pursuits, from performance artists and musicians to masters of film and cuisine.

Films include Jiro Dreams of Sushi (2011), directed by director David Gelb; Wonder Women: The Untold Story of American SuperHero Ines (2012), directed by Kirsty Guevara-Flanagan; Marina Abramovich: The Artist is Present (2012) directed by Matthew Akers; Woody Allen: A Documentary (2012), directed by Robert B. Weide; and Seaching for Sugarman (2012), directed by Malik

There will also be various events associated with each film, including panel discussions and concerts. KO



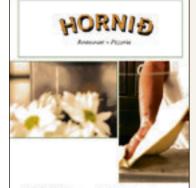


Reykjavik Museum of **Photography** 

Exhibitions all year round **ADMISSION FREE** 



**GRÓFARHÚS** 6th Floor Tryggvagata 15, 101 Reykjavik Opening Hours: Mon-Thu 12-19 Fridays 12-18, Weekends 13-17 www.photomuseum.is



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

Lunch offers every day.

Open every day from 11.00 to 23.30

A





HAFNARSTRÆTI 5 & SKÓLAVÖRÐUSTÍGUR 10

B





#### **Food**

#### 1 Roadhouse

Snorrabraut 56

Roadhouse serves authentic Caiun and Creole food - a.k.a good ol' Southern soul food. Roadhouse smokes its ribs on site. makes its own homemade French fries and otherwise serves customers in an authentic American diner style atmosphere. Don't miss the Empire State burger, which is piled high with a burger patty, onion rings, a grilled cheese and drizzled in barbeque

#### 2 Icelandic Fish & Chips

Tryggvagata 8

Not your average fish 'n' chips joint, this healthy restaurant uses only organic vegetables and quality fish products to serve their fancy take on a fast-food classic. The spiced 'Skyronnaise' sauce is a special treat, and their clean, casual location by the harbour is full of charm.

#### 3 Kebab Grill

Lækjargata 10

You'd never think people would argue about where to find the best kebab in Reykjavík, but the city's slowly growing kebab scene has people doing just that. Kebab Grill serves savoury kebabs wrapped in pita bread with or without French fries.

#### 4 Munnharpan

Austurbakki 2

Danish cuisine with the inherent French influence and a little more French sprinkled on top. Munnharpan is owned by the same people that run Jómfrúin, a long-standing favourite in the local scene. The meals are mostly suitable with plenty of light courses offering a selection of smørrebrød (Danish open faced sandwiches) mixed with classic

#### 5 Grái Kötturinn

Hverfisgata 16a

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

#### **Drinking**

#### 6 KEX

Skúlagata 28

**Useful numbers** 

Medical help: 1770

Information: 118

Emergency number: 112

**1** Tourist information

Dental emergency: 575 0505

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

Arctic Adventures, Laugavegur 11,

City Centre, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

Iceland Excursions - Grayline Iceland,

BSR: 561 0000

Iceland Refund, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400

Located literally steps away from Reykjavík harbour, with a gorgeous view of Esja, KEX Hostel is a popular hangout amongst Icelanders who go there to enjoy the restaurant and bar as well as tourists who go there to sleep (and enjoy the restaurant and bar). Close enough to the main drag downtown, but far enough away from weekend festivities, we recommend KEX Hostel as a nice hangout spot.

#### 7 Den Danske Kro

Hafnarstræti 20. tel: 540 1313

Trip, Laugavegur 54, tel: 433 8747

Lyfja, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045 and

2. tel: 522 4979

Pharmacies

**□** Coach terminal

Lágmúla 5, tel: 533-2300

BSÍ. Vatnsmýrarvegur 10.

tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

Air Iceland, Reykjavíkurflugvöllur,

Eagle Air, Hótel Loftleiðir, tel: 562-4200

tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

★ Domestic airlines

Ingólfsstræti 3

This Danish-themed bar is located on Ingólfsstræti, just off Laugavegur. They serve up Danish favourites, such as open faced smørrebrød sandwiches, Tuborg beer and Akavit schnapps. Their 'Happy Hour', every day between 16-19, is a great source of fun. How to ask for a large beer in Danish: "Hej, jeg vil gerne ha' en stor øl, tak".

The Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti

National

#### 8 Kaffibarinn

Harbour 🛲 🕯

Bergstaðastræti 1

National museum

University

of Iceland

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

Tjörnin

Hljómská Park

#### 9 Café Babalú

The Old

Harbour

Skólavörðustígur 22a

It's tough to miss the brightly colored Café Babalú walking up Skólavörðustígur. A cosy place for coffee and cake, the well-worn, homey ambience makes it difficult to leave. Check out their rooftop patio on sunny days

#### **O** 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

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**

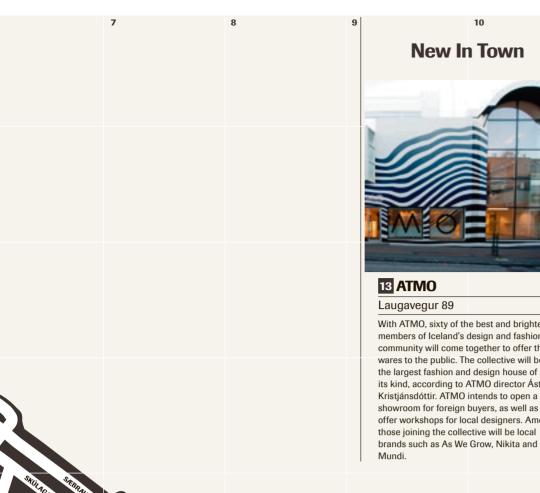
Post offices are located around the city. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5, open Mon.-Fri. 09:00-18:00. Stamps are also sold at bookstores, gas stations, tourist shops and some grocery stores.

# Tuborg Christmas Brew

All the Action and all the Games on 5 Big HD Screens. Live music every night!

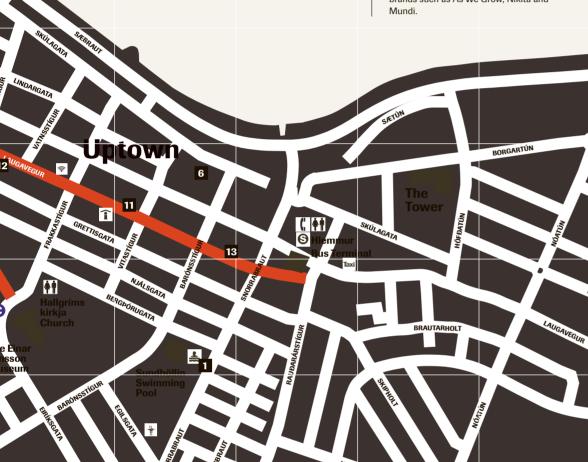






# With ATMO, sixty of the best and brightest members of Iceland's design and fashion community will come together to offer their wares to the public. The collective will be its kind, according to ATMO director Ásta offer workshops for local designers. Among Austurstræti 12 | E4 Faktorý Smiðjustígur 6 | E5





#### **Shopping**

#### 10 Handprjónasambandið

Skólavörðustígur 19

The Hand-knitting Association of Iceland's official store, Handprjónasambandið, sells wool products of uncompromising quality. The store features pullover sweaters, cardigans and other wool accessories.

#### 11 KronKron

Laugavegur 63b

Selling high-end fashion labels such as Mark Jacobs, Sonia Rykiel, Vivienne Westwood, not to forget Icelandic label Kron by KronKron, this shop is the local fusionist's candy-store, and is priced accordingly.

#### 12 Spúútnik

Laugavegur 28b

This super hip vintage shop in the heart of downtown is quintessential to Icelandic fashion trends. Ranging from classic, national pattern sweaters to some of the craziest throwback fashions from eras we thought we were glad to see gone, Spúútnik can make a pair of flowered, day-glow parachute pants seem like a smart buy.

#### ( Public phones

There aren't many public payphones in the city centre. The tourist information centre at Aðalstræti 2, City Hall, Kolaportið, entrance at Landsbankinn and in Lækjargata. Prepaid international phone cards are recommended for int'l callers

#### **☼ Internet Access**

Most cafés offer free wireless internet access. Computers with internet connections are available to use at:

Ráðhúskaffi City Hall, Tjarnargata 11 Ground Zero, Frakkastígur 8, near Laugavegur 45

The Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagata 15

The National and University Library, Arngrímsgata 3

Tourist Information Centre, Aðalstræti 2 Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti 2

Reykjavík Backpackers, Laugavegur 28 Swimming Pools

There are several swimming pools in Reykjavík. The one in 101 Reykjavík, Sundhöll Reykjavíkur, is an indoor one, located at Barónsstígur. That pool features a nice sunbathing area and some outdoor hot tubs. Opening hours: Monday to Thursday from 06:30-22:00, Friday from 06:30-20:00, Saturday from 08:00-16:00, and Sunday from 10:00-18:00.

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

#### **Museums & Galleries**

Laugavegur 67 | F7 Mon - Fri 12 - 18 / Sat

**ASÍ Art Museum** Freyugata 41 | **H6** Tue-Sun 13-17 www.listasafnasi.is

Árbæjarsafn Kistuhylur 4

The Culture House Hverfisgata 15 | E5 Open daily 11-17 www.thjodmenning.is

The Einar Jónsson Museum Eiriksgata | **G6** Tue-Sun 14-17

www.skulptur.is Gallerí Ágúst Baldursgata 12 | Wed-Sat 12-17

www.galleriagust.is Gallerí Fold Rauðarástígur 14-16

Mon-Fri 10-18 / Sat

11-16 / Sun 14-16 www.myndlist.is Kaolin Skólavörðustígur 22 | **E5** 

www.kaolingallery.com Gallerí Kling & Bang

Hverfisgata 42 | **E6** Thurs–Sun from 14–18

this.is/klingogbang/ Ásgrimur Jónsson Museum

Bergstaðastræti 74 Mon-Fri through Sept. 1 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 Thu 13-22. www.nylo.is Strandgata 34, Haf-

www.hafnarborg.is Mokka Kaffi Skólavörðustígur 3A | E5

www.mokka.is The National Gallery of Iceland

narfjörður

Fríkirkjuvegur 7 | Tue-Sun 11-17 www.listasafn.is

Vegamótastígur 4 | **F6** 

Vegamót

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

The Nordic House Sturlugata 5 Tue-Sun 12-17 www.nordice.is

Restaurant Reykjavík Vesturgata 2 | D3 www.restaurantreykjavik.is

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

Reykjavík Art Gallery Skúlagata 30 | **F9** Tuesday through Sunday 14-18

Reykjavík Art Mucomposed of . Hafnarhús

Tryggvagata 17 | **D3** Open 10-17 Thursday 10 - 20 Kjarvalsstaði 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/Islen-ska/Artotek

Reykjavík Maritime Museum Grandagarður 8 | **B2** www.maritimemuseum.

Reykjavík Museum of Photography Tryggvagata 16 | D3 Weekdays 12-19 /

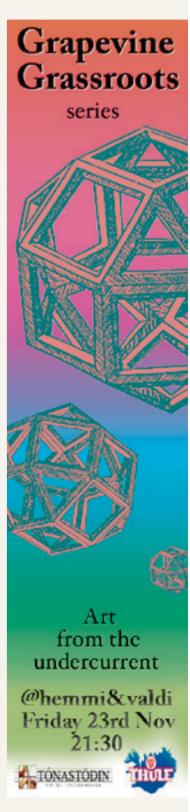
Sat-Sun 13-17 - www.

ljosmyndasafnreykja-Sigurjón Ólafsson Laugarnestangi 70

www.lso.is SÍM Hafnarstræti 16 | E4

Mon-Fri 10-16 Skörin

Spark Design Space Klapparstígur 33 | F5 www.sparkdesignspace com





# Gandhí Indían restaurant









Example from our menu:

#### Indian adventure

Let our chefs surprise you with fish, chicken and vegetarian courses accompanied with nan bread and raitha. + Indian dessert

ISK 4.900.-



Pósthússtræti 17; 101 Reykjavík ICELAND -Tel.: (+354) 511 1991

www.gandhi.is e-mail: gandhi@gandhi.is

# Best Of Reykjavík

Every year around the beginning of July, we make a BEST OF REYKJAVÍK ISSUE celebrating some of what makes Reykjavík-life worthwhile, posting some good entries into a hopefully neverending discussion. The primary purpose of BEST OF REYKJAVÍK is celebration! It's about big-upping stuff, giving mad props to it and patting it on the shoulder. The following are some nice tips we culled from BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2012, which you can find in full at www.grapevine.is



#### **BEST PLACE TO GO WITH** A GROUP OF FRIENDS:



After all these years, Tapas Bar is still the best place to go out with a group of friends in downtown Reykjavík. Their varied menu of authentic. sometimes-experimental, tapas offers something for even the most picky eater, and their serving style ensures that even those friends that are always late for everything will get to feast with the group (there are also plenty of moderately priced courses on offer for those on a budget). Furthermore, the ambiance is cheerful and inviting and will ensure you stay for extra rounds long after your meal is finished. Tapas Bar is located at Vesturgata 3b.



#### **BEST PLACE TO SPEND A RAINY DAY: BÍO PARADÍS**

It was a close race between the swimming pool/hot tub and Bíó Paradís, but after much back and forth we decided that the movie theatre is once again the place to be on a rainy day. Why? There are lots of movies. They have a huge area with tables and couches to hang out. They have games. They have beer. They have popcorn. And they don't just have movies. They tend to have a unique selection of films that you can't see at the chain theatres around town. We're also pretty happy that the art house cinema is still in business. Check out their documentary film festival series from November



Hrönn Sveinsdóttir is the the Managing Director of Bío Paradís.



#### **BEST RECORD STORE: LUCKY RECORDS**





Lucky Records offers scores of hardto-find vinyl and first editions of rare Icelandic and international LPs. "This is where I send my visiting music geek friends," remarked one reader while another noted that the store is "world class! I found a battered 7" of 'Kind Midas Touch' by The Hollies for 1 EUR and a pile of old electro boogie stuff."

Lucky Records is located at Hverfisgata 82.

# Funky, fresh and full of flavour!

Fresh local seafood





RUB23 | Aðalstræti 2 | 101 Reykjavík Phone: +354 553 5323 | reykjavik@rub23.is

RUB23 | Kaupvangsstræti 6 | 600 Akureyri Phone: +354 462 2223 | rub23@rub23.is

## **A GUIDE THAT FUCKS** YOU UP

A list of every Happy Hour in 101 Reykjavík

101 Hótel

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00, Beer for 450 ISK and wine for 645 ISK

Every day from 20:00 to 00:00. Beer 495 ISK

Every day from 16:00 to 22:00, Beer 550 ISK, cider 750 ISK, wine 550 ISK

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00, 2 for 1 beer for **890 ISK** 

Every day from 16:00 to 22:00,

**Celtic Cross** 

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

Den Danske Kro

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00, 2 for 1 beer for 900 ISK and wine for 900 ISK

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00, 2 for 1 beer for 850 ISK

Dolly Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00, 2 for 1 beer for 1000 ISK

Every day from 17:00 to 20:00. Beer **550 ISK**.

Hemmi og Valdi

Every day from 12:00 to 20:00 Draft beer for **550 ISK** and wine for **700 ISK** Hilton Hotel Bar

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00, Beer for 500 ISK and wine for 650 ISK.



#### **Download the FREE Grapevine Appy Hour app!**

Every happy hour in town in your pocket. Available in the App store and on the Android Market.

Hótel 1919

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00, er for 1000 ISK, wine for 1190 ISK.

**Hótel Holt Gallery Bar** 

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00, beer for 475 ISK, wine for 695 ISK, champagne and cocktails half off

Hótel Plaza Bar

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00, beer for 500 ISK

Kaffi Zimsen Sun - Thurs from 17:00 to 22:00, 2 for 1 beer for **800 ISK** Kolabrautin

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00, Beer for 500 ISK, wine for 700 ISK.

Lebowski Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00, 1 beer for 900 ISK and wine for 1000

Micro Bar

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Every day from 17:00 to 20:00, Beer for 500 ISK and wine for 600 ISK.

Uppsalir - Bar & Café

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. 2 for 1 beer for **900 ISK**.

Þingholtsbar

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer for **400 ISK**,

Íslenski barinn

Every day from 11:30 - 03:00. Beer for **500 ISK.** 

Reykjavík Backpackers

Every day from 17:00 - 20:00. 2 for 1 beer for **750 ISK** 

## ART **ONGOING**

– continued –

Dr. Dogood - a climate musical A children's play with a message about climate change.

#### November 17 at 14:00 and 16:00 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 - Graphic Art, 1949-2009 For the first time the general public are able to view Erró's graphic art spanning half a century. The exhibition is the result of three years' work researching and collating the artist's entire collection of graphic pieces undertaken by curator Danielle Kvaran.

#### Runs until August 25, 2013 HA – Sara Björnsdóttir

In this high concept installation, Sara Björnsdóttir fills the exhibition room with images of the room itself. Runs until January 6, 2013

#### News from the Island - Dan Perjovschi

Dan Perjovschi draws directly on walls and floors at different locations. His "indoor graffiti" criticizes all manner of popular opposites that flood the mass media. Runs until January 6, 2013

#### **The Power of Passage**

The passing of time is the subject of this collaborative installation. Runs until January 6, 2013

#### 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

#### **Please Touch Workshop**

The "Please Touch Workshop" for families at Kjarvalsstaðir focuses on a collection of different textures that resemble the works of Jóhannes S. Kjarval, the master of texture through pattern. Runs until January 3, 2013

#### 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, 1.100 ISK per adult, 650 ISK per person in groups (10+) and free for children 18

and under. On permanent view



#### **A Modern Man** Gísli B. – Five Decades of Graphic Design

#### Museum of Design - Hönnunarsafn Íslands

Garðatorg 1, Garðabær | Runs until March 3, 2013

Graphic designer Gísli B. Björnsson has the sort of long lasting, decade spanning career that most artists would kill for. After completing his design studies in Germany in 1961, Gísli returned to Iceland and began two projects: the first was an advertising agency and the second was the Iceland College of Arts and Craft's advertising illustration class, now the department of graphic design at the Iceland Academy of the Arts. Gísli's work is shaped both by his involvement in the commercial world and his early exposure to modernist art. AJ



#### Find all art listings online

listings.grapevine.is

#### On permanent view The Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn

This vessel sailed through all three Cod Wars and also served as a rescue ship to over 200 ships. On permanent view

#### From the Fishing Grounds to the **Market Stalls**

Photographs of salt fish production, from when the fish is caught to when it's sold in the market. Ongoing until December

#### Focus on the Sea

Focus holds regular photographic exhibitions, this time the theme is the sea. Focus was founded in 1999 and membership is open to all amateur photographers. The main aim of the association is to provide a platform for its members to pursue photography, hold competitions and give talks about the topic. On temporary view

#### The wood carvings of Lúkas Kárason

Lúkas Kárason uses driftwood from his childhood home, Strandir, in all his carvings. He manages to extract magnificent creatures from his material. Lúkas was born in 1931

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

Runs until December 31

#### 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 November 25

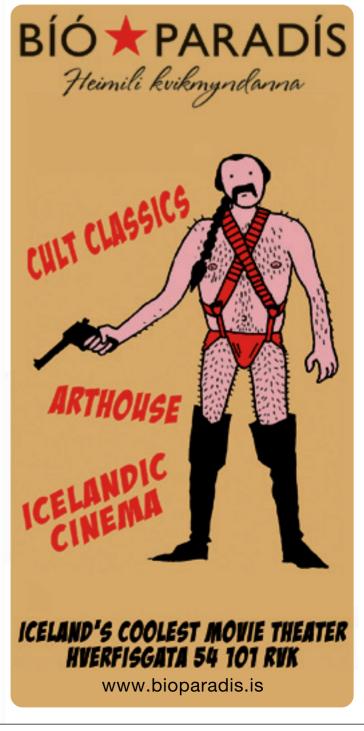
#### Spark Design Space

Posters by Goddur

Over the years Icelandic graphic design legend Goddur has created dozens of posters for various art exhibits, music events and films. Twenty-nine posters from the last 16 years will be on display.









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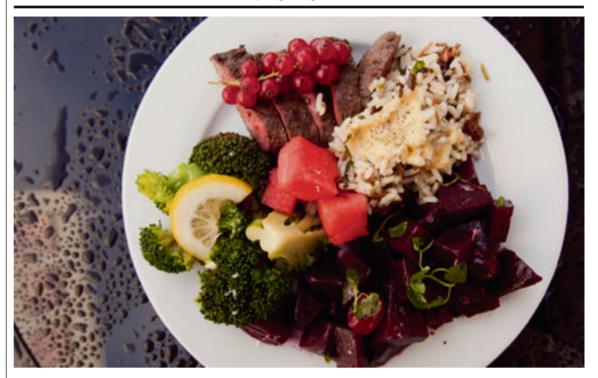






#### FOR YOUR MIND, BODY AND SOUL

by Ragnar Egilsson



# How To Lose Friends & Alienate People

Aldin is a newish restaurant that overlooks Lækjartorg in one of the best locations in downtown Reykjavík where the restaurant Happ once stood. Although its name, which is written in a font borrowed from the Danish chocolate company Anthon Berg, makes the place sound like a Turkish teahouse, Aldin is no such place. It offers simple, ready-made meals, served over the counter, with a focus on lunch service.

#### Aldin

Austurstræti 22, 101 Rvk Tel: +354 517 9777 www.facebook.com/ aldinrestaurant Mon- Sun: 8am-9pm

#### What we think

Some people swear by it. I don't.

#### Flavour:

Middle-eastern, Ottolenghi, vegetables

#### Ambiance:

Faux-rustic, barren, claustrophobic

Middling to bad

Price for 2 (with drinks): 1500-2500 ISK









It has vegetarian and vegan options and, based on what I saw on their Facebook page, they are enamoured by Yotam Ottolenghi, restaurateur and Guardian food columnist. I am usually highly suspicious of places that throw words like "healthy" and "honest" around as if those words hadn't been robbed of all meaning, but I had liked the old Happ and I love Ottolenghi and therefore decided to go in there with an open mind.

Upon entering, however, the place just felt wrong. Aldin has retained the same arrangement and decorations from the Happ days except now there's less of everything. It feels half-baked and manages to make you feel exposed and boxed in at the same time. The walls are bare, the colour scheme is dull and it feels a little like a cafeteria that's aiming for something else. The inspiration seems to be one of those nubeige UK hole-in-the-wall health bistros which delight Gwyneth Paltrow and horrify Jonathan Meades.

I am very impressed by the work that has been done in building up a community of sustainable agriculture and organic and free-range produce, but I am equally annoyed by how the ideals of that movement have been hijacked by the bland and the bourgeois and turned into a watered-down commodity.

Furthermore, the service was lousy on my first visit and unremarkable on the other occasions. The person behind the counter seemed to consider us an unpleasant surprise and couldn't squeeze out enough enthusiasm to

familiarise himself with what was on offer. Seeing as there were no menus, we had to rely on guesswork.

Finally, the food was nothing special. I could see a couple of clear Ottolenghian "inspirations" here and there: the aubergine with chilli yoghurt, except with skyr replacing the yoghurt; sweet potato wedges; salads with nuts and berries; tabouleh with a twist, etc. It was mostly seasonal and mostly imported over long distances.

They seem to be navigating by flavour rather than the perceived healthiness of the dishes, which is more than I had dared to hope, but its too bad they are sailing with a broken sextant.

None of the food is cooked to order and it is kept uncovered and just below room temperature. That includes baked salmon, béarnaise and hollandaise, roasted sweet potatoes, eggplants, roasted lamb and rice. The only warm items on the menu were the chicken and the soup. I should not have to explain why keeping béarnaise sauce uncovered next to the till for any amount of time is a terrible notion.

The salmon was well cooked, making me all the more annoyed that it was being served tepid. The eggplant was bitter and soggy and still haunts the ruins of my taste buds. The sweet potatoes were cold, overcooked and tasted like Gerber baby food. The best thing on the menu was the chestnut-dusted chicken, which was very well seasoned and served hot and on the bone. It tasted a bit like a cerkez tavugu and worked well with the coconut cream/mint sauce that was served with it.

During my first visit we risked a dessert. My wife chose a muffin that collapsed into a pile of sand like a mummified fart when exposed to a fork and tasted like nothing but globs of salted butter and frozen blueberries. I chose the walnut carrot cake, which was nuttier than a squirrel outhouse and tasted of the same salty butter.

It is also worth mentioning that Teapigs, the quaint artisan tea company which Aldin displays proudly on their shelves, was recently discovered to be wholly owned by the second-largest tea manufacturer in the world. Tata Global Beverages Limited (something Teapigs had tried hard to conceal).

This may have nothing to do with the flavour of the food, but it leaves a bad taste all the same. If Aldin was a band it would be Foster the People, an organised and cynical attempt made by people with a strong marketing background trying to cash in on an established fan base by masquerading as a quirky indie band.

RAGNAR EGILSSON 🗖 ALÍSA KALYANOVA





# **Cute Overload**

"I love tapas. They're like appetisers for a meal that never comes." -Marge Simpson

Tapashúsið is in a new building, built in the old corrugated iron style, located right by the old harbour. If you've been whale watching, sea angling or puffin strangling in Iceland then you will have walked by it. They serve tapas with a focus on fish and seafood. They offer nine tasting menus (last I checked) and Spanish/Latin-American-inspired cocktails. Iceland has a lot of high quality seafood and a long-standing relationship with Spain and it's surprising that we're only getting our second proper tapas place this late in the game.

#### **Tapashúsið**

Ægisgarður 2, 101 Rvk Tel: +354 512 8181 http://tapashusid.is Online reservations available Thu-Sat: 4pm-1am Sun-Wed: 4pm-12am

#### What we think

Like it quite a lot. Could take your aunt or your girlfriend here. **Flavour:** 

#### Upscale tapas, Spanish, seafood.

**Ambiance:** Cosy for a tapas bar, spacious, fun

#### bar.

Service:
Perfectly nice servers but the

timing needs some work.

Price for 2 (with drinks):

15-20.000 ISK



Tapashúsið is best defined by how it differs from the reigning king of Icelandic tapas, Tapasbarinn (The Tapas Bar). First of all, Tapashúsið is on two floors and you'll have space to stretch out after the meal whereas Tapasbarinn is crammed into a charming but claustrophobic basement.

Tapashúsið is also a little further from the downtown party gauntlet

and doesn't seem to get quite as loud and crazy on the weekends (although they've been at full capacity when I've been there). That's not to say that Tapashúsið is the grandma version of Tapasbarinn, but it's less hectic and you're less likely to be shoved into a "waiting nook" with 20 other people while the waiters use your reservation to wipe up the spill in aisle four.

The inside of Tapashúsið doesn't scream "Spanish" at you, being relatively generic and relying on a few tasteful flourishes here and there.

I started with a pair of mojitos as the occasion called for it and batted away the swarm of tiny dishes like King Kong with an eating disorder. The only problem I had with the service that night was that the cocktails arrived too slowly and the dishes arrived too fast—leaving us with no food by the time we got to our second glass. This is easily fixed.

The food is playful and definitely more ambitious than what you'd get at your bog standard tapas place in Benidorm.

This arrived in no particular order of course so here goes:

- Monkfish with carrot and coffee (1380 ISK). An inventive dish that was well put together, but I expected a little more.

- Pork belly with date, bacon and BBQ glaze (1250 ISK). I thought tapas were supposed to be 1–2 bites. These portions are easily 3–4. It was classic and

delicious.

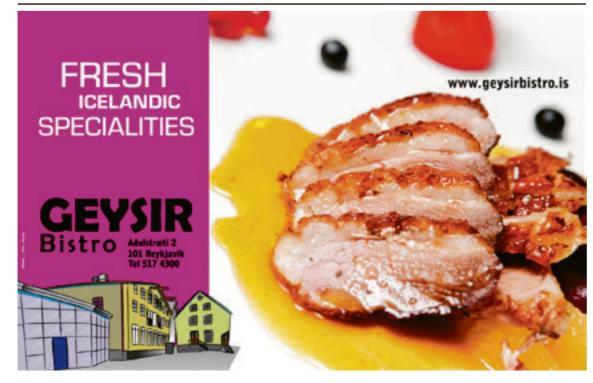
- Calamari with tomato, bell pepper and apple (1170). Great touch with the sides and the calamari was neither soggy nor rubbery. It was a solid dish.
- Beef Carpaccio with manchego (1050 ISK). Manchego was a nice touch, but the beef was a little too mild and lean in comparison.
- Piri piri duck with apples (1480 ISK). One of my favourite dishes that night, it was perfectly cooked and well balanced.
- Paella with seafood and chicken (1280 ISK). They offer a full-sized version of this dish as well but this was pretty damn sizeable for a tapas. Came in an adorable mini pan (a lot of the dishes were served with a heaping dollop of adorableness). Mini paella sounds like it would be a pain in the ass for the kitchen but they pulled it off.
- Spiced meatballs with tomato, basil and manchego (970 ISK). Recommended.
- Ribs burger with tarragon and cucumber (940 ISK). A gently-pickled cucumber with a hint of tarragon. Absolutely adorable too with a little Spanish flag and dainty fries.

I'm kind of beginning to think I like Tapashúsið better than Tapasbarinn. The offers don't seem to save you that much and any six courses should leave you more than full. I know I had to be rolled out of there like a beached whale.



# SNAPS BISTRO-BAR





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