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THE INTERNET

Facebook bans an Icelandic feminist

FILM

Why is everyone making movies in Iceland?

TRAVEL

We go out there on the ice...

MUSIC

Fact: OMAM are HUUUGE!

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A CHRISTMAS FEAST

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Editorial | Anna Andersen

Is Reykjavík The Best City To Spend Christmas? Anna's 19th Editorial

According to CNN it is. They have said so twice. In 2010 they placed Reykjavík at the top of their "Top 10 Places to Spend your Christmas" list and then in 2011, they put us in third on the same list, somehow deciding that we had become two spots less Christmassy over the year.

While CNN seems to have discontinued this tradition, Reykjavík will surely cling to the honour for years to come. Never mind that we didn't make it onto Forbes' "World's Top Christmas Destinations" list along with destinations like New York, Amsterdam, Cologne and Santa Claus, Indiana (not to be confused with the Santa Claus, Arizona or Santa Claus, Georgia).

But how are we ever going to compete with a city called Santa Claus anyway, a place that supposedly "celebrates the season 365 days a year"?

Perhaps we should start by rethinking "Smokey Bay." Just think how many more people would visit if we had a name that was really sexy. Perhaps we should one up Santa Claus with "Mrs. Santa Claus." Or perhaps we should think even bigger and name ourselves after whatever else we are trying to sell to the world, like "NorthernLightsAreHere." Or we

could even go all out with "NorthernLightsBjörkElf-GeysirNatureLand."

The Promote Iceland campaign urging people to submit a "new name for the island in the North" has already inspired some fantastic ideas. Ideas like "SpiritLand" and "MySunNeverSetsLand" and "KnitLand" and "LoveLand" and "WaterLand" and "SnowLand" and "EpicLand," "HeavenLand," "BjörkLand".... Yes, seriously.

(Before I go on, I feel obliged to make clear that, contrary to what USA TODAY might believe, the person who comes up with the best name won't actually get to rename the country. He or she will, however, win a trip to Iceland.)

If Reykjavík is really going to secure its spot as a top Christmas destination, to compete with the likes of Santa Claus, our marketing forces are going to have to cook up something really good. Even if, as CNN pointed out, Iceland has "not one but 13 Santas," we're going to have to do better.

Or we could just focus on keeping it real, trying to relax and having a nice holiday. Yeah, we should probably just do that. Happy holidays!



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

Þ þ Æ æ Ö ö

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

We like spelling things using Icelandic letters like 'æ' and 'þ' and also those crazy accents over the vowels. Like Icelandic'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 pronunciation 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 IcelandairInfo notes:

Music | Free



Morðingjarnir & Thorunn Antonia - Þú Komst Með Jólni Til Mín

Download for FREE at airwaves.grapevine.is

Christmas season has arrived in Reykjavík, which means, lots of jólabjör, plenty of holiday décor around the city and of course, CHRISTMAS TUNES.

This issue's track is a cover of a well-known Icelandic pop singer Björgvin Halldórsson (fun fact: he represented Iceland in the 1995 Eurovision Song Contest!).

This warm holiday song starts off with twinkling bells, followed by verses from rockers Morðingjarnir and Icelandic pop princess Thorunn Antonia before swelling into a guitar-heavy chorus.

This isn't your grandma's Christmas song! Listen to it while drinking a big glass of jólabjör at your favourite bar.

KO

FUN TRIVIA QUESTION!

Taken from the educational trivia game Instant Iceland

Q: There is no mention of Santa Claus in Icelandic folklore. Instead, Icelanders (at least some of them) believe in the "Yule Lads", a merry band of borderline psychopathic pranksters who reside in the mountains, but descend upon the populace around Christmastime, wreaking general havoc. How many Yule Lads are there?

- A) Three
- B) Thirteen
- C) Thirty

Turn to page 23 for the answer!

Here Is Your Kreisi Æcelandic Frase For Þis Issue!

"Fyrirgefðu, er þetta laufabrauð sykur-skert?"

(Fyr-ir-gev-thu, err th-edd-a, lau-v-ai-br-au-th seek-ursk-art?)

Pardon, is this leafbread low on sugar?

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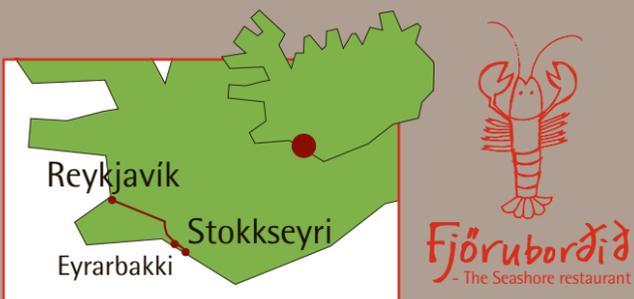


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Say your piece, voice your opinion, send your letters to: letters@grapevine.is

Sour grapes & stuff

Most Awesome Letter of the Issue

Hello

I'm going to visit Iceland with a freind from the 28. of december to the 4. of January.

Since I didn't find much information about the nightlife online, I hope you could help me out with some answers.

Are there any good clubs for guys under 20? (I'm 19) With good club I mean, few douchebags, not too much "mainstream" music and ravers that aren't ashamed to dance.

Is there a DnB culture in Iceland? Or where should I go to find a DnB or even a Dubstep party?

MOST AWESOME LETTER

TWO FREE PAIRS OF WOOLLEN SOCKS!!!!11!

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

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

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



You may want to try the bar Prikið. And, you may also want to read this: www.breakbeat.is/english.

I can't really think of anything similar to www.deadsouls.at/. But maybe this, www.dead.is/shop.html. You can probably find loads of stuff like <http://cxxvi.net/> But I'm not sure if that kind of stuff is specifically Icelandic.

Hope that helps. If all else fails, here's a freebie to make your trip worthwhile, and come again when you're 20!

And a question regarding the shopping. Are there local brands in the style of <http://www.deadsouls.at/> or <http://cxxvi.net/>?

Thank you for taking the timer to answer my questions. I look forward to your response.

Kind regards
Simon

Dear Simon,

Although you aren't technically allowed in any of the bars, it probably won't be a problem (unless you look really young).

On a recent visit to Iceland I read a copy of Grapevine and I was shocked by the article on abused women, "Nowhere Else To Turn". If it is true that one in four women claim to be victims of Sexual Abuse in Iceland that is a shameful stain on the men of Iceland. That means that a similar proportion of Icelandic men are guilty of this spousal abuse. Perhaps rather than build more shelters for abused women Iceland should build more prisons for the incarceration of the abusing men. I live in Scotland and I was equally shocked when the Scottish government released figures of spousal abuse of Scottish women, although the figure quoted for Scotland was about 1 in 8. What aspect of Icelandic culture causes Icelandic men to believe that they have a right to abuse Icelandic women? Is it some type of Viking sentimentality or the harsh weather conditions?. Men who abuse their partners are scum.

Neil Sinclair

*

I noticed that you chose not to publish my letter regarding abuse of Icelandic women, no doubt you calculated that a lot of the Icelandic men who are responsible for the abuse read Grapevine, so it does not make economic sense for Grapevine. Given the choice to read about SF or abuse of women most Grapevine readers would choose SF. Abuse of Icelandic women, as with Scottish women, is an Inconvenient truth which you Icelanders prefer not to read about let alone confront. Bless.

Neil Sinclair

*

I studied Psychology. If you want to know somebody's attitude on a subject do not observe what they say/write but observe their

behavior/what they do. Perhaps nearly 24% of Icelandic women being subject to abuse is not considered important in Iceland. Have a nice life.

Neil Sinclair

Dear Neil Sinclair,

Thank you for taking concern with the issue of domestic abuse in Iceland. It is indeed an incredibly important issue, which is why we recently sent our journalist Mark O'Brien to speak with the director of the women's shelter, and have printed numerous articles on the problems of domestic abuse, child abuse, sexual assault, and rape in the past. In this issue there is an article by Kári Túlinius about local feminist activist and occasional-Grapevine contributor Hildur Lilliendahl, who has been banned from Facebook for exposing the numerous threats of physical violence and death she's received. In fact, if you search the word 'abuse' on our website, it yields ten pages of articles and news briefs. This is unquestionably important to us and our track record supports this.

For the record, your letter didn't get printed because we have space constraints and word counts and other letters had been waiting longer to get printed, but to answer your original question, the root cause of abuse against women in Iceland is the same as in the rest of the world: patriarchal dominance and misogyny. These social constructs are global issues that have been largely internalised by people of all genders and will have to be systematically dismantled in order to eradicate domestic abuse. On an individual level, it's important to look for the warning signs in our loved ones and acquaintances such as isolation, manipulation, guilt-tripping, jealousy, and aggression. But you studied psychology so you should know all this, Neil Sinclair. Fight the power!

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Peter Kallo, photographer from Hungary. I would like to share with you an interesting initiative. If you find it worthwhile, please publish it on your webpage.

Thank you very much for your help in advance.

Share your moment!
12:12, 12.12.12

What was the world doing at 12:12 pm on the 12th day of the 12th month of 2012? Join our competition and share your moment with us, so that people all over the world can see creative photos of who was doing what at this unique point in time. This is not so much a competition as an experiment, a way to see what is happening to people from all walks of life at one given moment: 12:12 pm, 12.12.2012.

Last chance of this century!

Send a photo taken in your time zone at 12:12 pm, on the 12th day of the 12th month of 2012 to my Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/kallopeterphoto/>)!

Dear Peter Kallo,

What a fun idea! We are more than glad to share this with our readers. In fact, we've done you one better than the website: here it is in print. Boom. Good luck with the project and happy holidays!

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Seeing The Light

How do you predict a spontaneous natural phenomenon?

Words by Arit John. Photos by Natsha Nandabhiwat



Three Early Theories

From the thirteenth century Norwegian text 'Kongespeilet'

1. One suggested that fires surrounded oceans of a flat earth and the lights were flames reflected on the sky.
2. Another theory held that glaciers absorbed power and began to glow.
3. The third, and closest, belief was that the sun projected its beams into the night sky.

You've bathed in the murky waters of the Blue Lagoon, you've circled the Golden Circle and now you'd like to see the sky come alive with dancing green and red lights. Well, you're not alone. A recent survey conducted for the Iceland Tourist Board found that 16.1% of tourists who visited the country thought the aurora borealis were the most memorable part of their trip.

With support from the Ministry of Industry and Promote Iceland, the Icelandic Meteorological Office has begun forecasting the appearance and visibility of these northern lights, which will more than likely assist you in your planning.

"There are a lot of particles, protons and electrons, coming at very high speeds from the sun," says Dr. Þórður Arason, a geophysicist at the Met Office, of the aurora. "The magnetic field of the earth is bombarded by these particles." The particles, brought to earth by solar storms, interact with oxygen and nitrogen in the atmosphere, and electrons are drawn to the north and south poles. As this happens certain elements are illuminated—oxygen creates a great glow and nitrogen creates blue and purplish-red colours. In addition to measuring cloud cover and darkness (the presences of the moon) the Met Office's forecasts predict the strength of the storms originating off the face of the sun, also known as space weather.

Yes, space weather

On March 13, 1989, the residents of Quebec, Canada, lost electricity for nine hours when the province's power grid shut down. A few months later Toronto's stock market screeched to a halt for three hours when their computer system crashed. In both cases,

scientists blamed solar storms.

Due to instances such as these, predicting the frequency and intensity of these storms is done for practical purposes. "Most of this monitoring is not for measuring northern lights or an interest in predicting them," Þórður says. "It's because these things can influence power grids, satellites and all kinds of instruments." The Met Office, which doesn't have the equipment necessary to create their own space weather predictions, uses reports created by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, a US Federal Agency.

The Met Office uses a scale of zero to nine to rank the intensity of aurora

“About thirty percent of the time we have a cloud cover of half cloudy or less. Seventy percent of the nights are damaged by the clouds.”

displays based on these predictions, with one being "quiet," two being "low," and three being "moderate." The scale, however, does not accurately describe what goes on in the sky. A note on the Met Office website states that "even grade 2 (low activity) can be beautiful and grade 3 (moderate) can be dazzling."

Over the course of the monitoring, Þórður notes that there have been northern lights displays on nights with low readings, "but stronger readings would give more colourful, vivid

and dancing northern lights."

The most valuable and most accurate information the Met Office provides is the amount of cloud cover over Iceland. "About thirty percent of the time we have a cloud cover of half cloudy or less," Þórður says. "Seventy percent of the nights are damaged by the clouds."

Myth busting

Cloudiness and brightness are the biggest disruptors of any northern lights display. The middle of winter may be the darkest time of the year in Iceland, but according to Þórður, northern lights displays actually occur with

greater frequency around the spring and fall equinoxes in March and September, respectively.

However, the oddest misconception, as well as the most hotly contested one, is whether or not the northern lights make sounds. "It seems to be quite common that people think they can hear noise from the aurora," Þórður says. "The aurora are formed a hundred kilometres or higher above ground, and the air is so thin up there that it cannot create sound waves. Sound is not transmitted at that height." If sound could be transmitted from that level, he added, the electrons would make a faint hissing sound.

Unanimous agreement on the na-

ture of the northern lights evades the scientific community and the actual audibility of the aurora is still up for debate. While most scientists would agree that the aurora are a soundless

“I have often heard from people that you need to have a certain temperature in order to see the northern lights, which is wrong”



Approximately every 11 years, the length of one solar cycle, the number of sunspots on the outer layer of the sun reaches a maximum. With the maximum comes increased magnetic variation and more active space weather. The power outage

and computer system crash that hit Canada both occurred during the solar maximum of 1989. And while it could spell bad news for satellites, the good news for aurora fans is that 2013 is expected to bring a higher frequency of northern lights.

wonder, Unto Laine, a researcher at Aalto University in Finland, recorded this July a clapping sound in an area of high aurora activity, believed to be caused by the same particles causing the display in the sky.

Most northern lights misconceptions centre on when and where it's best to see them. While some intuitive knowledge on the subject is accurate (it's easier to see the aurora away from light pollution) there's a tendency to mistake coincidence for scientific fact.

"There are a lot of people who kind of 'know' intuitively that you need to have cold to see them," Þórður says. "I have often heard from people that you need to have a certain temperature in order to see the northern lights, which is wrong." If not for the constant presence of the sun during the summer months, it would be possible to see the lights in July.

As Þórður says "There is always something going on here in Iceland, if you can see through the clouds and it's dark, just wait." ☺



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» magazine.66north.is

So What's This Facebook Ban On Icelandic Feminists I Keep Hearing About?

Words

Kári Tulinius

Illustration

Inga María Brynjarsdóttir

Not all Icelandic feminists. Just one feminist: Hildur Lilliendahl Viggós-dóttir, who was recently honoured by Stígamót, the leading Icelandic organisation against sexual abuse and violence, as well as UN Women, a United Nations agency, for her activism against male on female violence. Since February, Facebook has banned her multiple times. Over the course of the year, the bans became more and more severe, starting with daylong bans and working their way up to a thirty-day ban.

Oh wow! A repeat feminist offender then. What did she do, threaten to castrate prominent members of society?

No, she took screen captures of internet comments disparaging women and collected them into a picture album on Facebook called Men Who Hate Women.. She limited herself to comments left by men who identified themselves by name in public forums, such as on newspaper articles, which often require Facebook logins.

Aren't all comments on news sites hate-speech towards women? That is, those comments that aren't hate-speech towards people who have a different skin colour, way of speaking, or number of toes.

People who spend a lot of time on the internet are well aware of the cesspool that is every comments section on newspaper sites. However, it is quite easy to go through life never seeing that kind of thing. So Hildur decided to demonstrate just how much hate-speech there is. The picture album outraged many people in Iceland.

How bad were these comments?

I have no interest in printing terrible things about women in this column, but I would like to inform my readers. So here is one of the comments, but trans-



posed from women to adorable animals: "Wait a second! Why did he attack the adorable fluffy kitten like that? ATTENTION: I am ABSOLUTELY NOT excusing violence! But I ask: Had the man been made so incredibly angry that he lost control? ALL men know that adorable fluffy kittens are geniuses at pushing our most sensitive buttons!" Here's another, from a comment to a news-story about a man who sent erotic letters to his wife's under-age niece: "This is just something he was not getting from his

Yes. A lot of the comments are so reprehensible that there is no way I will repeat them, no matter how many fluffy baby animals I shoehorn in. Threats of sexual violence are not a joking matter, even if they are aimed at koala cubs.

Keep your penis away from imaginary baby animals!

The harshness of the language and the viciousness of the sentiment shocked people, so Hildur's picture album was linked to and reposted all over Facebook. Many praised her for shining a light on the festering underbelly of Icelandic society while others felt that the charge of misogyny was too harsh for some of the comments, and a few responded by criticizing her looks and making violent threats against her. It caused such uproar in Iceland that she was interviewed at length in a prime time news show.

So she claimed society was rife with misogyny and in response she got violent threats. Well, that sure disproved her point.

She even got made fun of for not being styled properly—another way in which the fluffy animal analogy does not work. No one criticizes a baby bunny for not getting highlights in its ears. Now Hildur is the main bogeyman of anti-feminists. Whenever anything even remotely related to feminism is in the news, people will write disparaging things about her, an example of which brought on

the latest Facebook sanction. She took a screen capture of one of those remarks and posted it to her Facebook profile. For that Facebook gave her a thirty-day ban.

She was banned for reposting disparaging remarks about herself?

The man in question wrote on his public Facebook page, "If I 'accidentally' ran over Hildur, she is probably the only person on earth I would back up over, and leave the car on top of her with the hand brake on!!!) Put this in your 'men who hate Hildur' folder, Hildur Lilliendahl." Facebook seems to consider reposting a comment to be harassment and as such not allowed, but actually making said comment is free speech.

So men are free to be misogynist, but other people are banned for exposing their misogyny?

To be fair, Facebook is in a terrible situation. It is like being the teacher in a classroom with a billion kids, millions of whom are screaming and yelling. All they want is that everyone behaves nicely, so they just tell kids to shut up and sit down. Unfortunately they do that even when people are speaking out about the reprehensible behaviour of others. As far as Facebook is concerned, this would all be so much better if we all just sat quietly and shared pictures of adorable baby animals.

“
This is just something he was not getting from his adorable sea otter, why isn't the article about that, goddamn Icelandic Saint Bernard puppies!
”

adorable sea otter, why isn't the article about that, goddamn Icelandic Saint Bernard puppies!"

I'm guessing that at least some of the words you replaced were rather rude.



November started on an unfortunately grim note, as the commission in charge of investigating the Catholic Church over allegations of sexual abuse released its findings, and the news was anything but good. The most terrible matter to come to light concerned Landakotsskóli, a school that was run by the Catholic Church until 2005. Based on the testimony of numerous former students, it came to light that former headmaster Rev. Ágúst Georg and a former teacher, Margrét Muller, psychologically, physically and sexually abused several students over a period of years, if not decades. While current Catholic Bishop of Iceland Pétur Bürcher publicly apologised to the victims for the abuse they suffered, at least one victim said she has no intention of forgiving the attackers involved: "People talk about heaven and hell, and I'm pretty sure I know which one he [Ágúst] is in, and that gives me some peace."

Icelandic comedy took a turn for the bizarre when actor Pétur Jóhann Sigfússon brought his Asian caricature radio personality Tong Monitor to television, in a commercial for channel Stöð 2. For the role, Pétur spoke in a generalised "Asian" accent, had his eyes pulled back to affect epicanthic eye folds, and had his skin coloured yellow.



Numerous immigrant rights workers—among them a Japanese-Icelandic priest—as well as many Icelanders expressed bewilderment and anger at the caricature, arguing that it was backwards and racist. Pétur defended the Tong Monitor character, saying that he didn't intend to hurt anyone, and only meant to make people laugh. Not everyone is laughing.

On a lighter note, a spat erupted between Minister of the Interior Ógmundur Jónsson and television meteorologist Haraldur Ólafsson. It started when Ógmundur said in parliamentary session that "no warning had been given" for storms which downed

Continues over

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Are Icelanders Racist? *Not really, but some embarrassing stuff goes on*



Arit John is a UCLA graduate and a former Grapevine intern

I never intended to actually write this piece. It started off as a joke, in a bar, after a bizarre incident with an extremely drunk Icelander.

My group—a Brit, an Australian and two Americans—was sitting in the corner, minding our own business, when an elderly Icelandic man stumbled over to say hello, curious about our accents. "We're American," I said, not eager to get into specifics.

"Ah," he said, the mystery solved. "You know, all Americans are descendant of Europe."

I didn't want to get into the waves of immigration, voluntary or not, that made America one of the most diverse, least European places on Earth. But, I had to say something.

Not a descendant of Europe

"Actually, my parents are from Africa," I said.

I'd gotten his attention. He turned to me, pointed a pale, stubby finger at my face and said, "My sister married a black man, darker than you."

The four of us were a bit shocked by his rudeness and tried not to burst out laughing and in the ten minutes that followed he told us about his half black, gay, Christian, cross dressing, cult joining, suicidal nephew. And the whole thing might have just been filed away under interesting bar stories to tell my friends, except that one of my friends asked me if I thought what the man had said was racist.

No, I didn't think so. He was drunk after all, and he didn't mean anything by it. I wasn't hurt by it. But it reminded me of a similar drunken, not-meant-to-offend-me scenario at a certain bar for Iceland's "Jersey Shore" wannabes, when a random guy tried to take a picture with me.

"Have you never seen a black person before?" I asked.

"I've never been in a picture with a black person," he replied. Well now, somewhere on Facebook is a photo of the two of us, me looking slightly annoyed and him looking drunk, but pleased with himself. While I'm happy to help people cross items off their bucket



Alísa Kalyanova

“When you come to a homogenous place like Iceland, you worry about racism because you just want to feel accepted.”

list, it left a bad taste in my mouth. But again, he didn't mean anything about it (he even apologised later) and he was drunk. Plus, there are about a dozen other reasons I should never have set foot in that bar anyway.

Not the only one wary of racism

Also, I was enjoying my time in Iceland and hadn't worried about racism in the country since my preliminary "Are Icelanders racist?" Google search. If you're Icelandic, check it out, you might be surprised by the results. The responses ranged from "Icelandic people are very friendly and open" to "no more than any other country" to "I can understand why Icelanders wouldn't want black people ruining their genetic superiority." As I read blog post after blog post, it occurred to me that I was far from the only black person who was worried about how I'd be treated in Iceland.

Think about it: I come from the

same country as the KKK, "separate but equal," and the entire state of Alabama, and I was worried about visiting Iceland.

Now that I'm back home, I'll be one of those blog writers. Someone will Google "Are Icelanders accepting of black people" and this article will pop up. And my answer is... it depends.

If you're just visiting for a layover, then yes, unless you mind being teased about not knowing what a kilometre is.

If you're an African refugee trying to gain citizenship, probably not.

Not an exotic animal at the zoo

If you're visiting for a few months, then it depends. Those moments got on my nerves because I suddenly felt like an "other." Like I was different and exotic. Is darkness an indication of something? And is it okay to take pictures of people the way you might take pictures of an animal at the zoo?

That, I think, is why people get upset about things like the Tong Monitor commercial. It turns being Asian into a costume, a thing, an other (in this case not even a good costume—Pétur Jóhann Sigfússon's pulled back eyes didn't make him look Asian; they made him look cross-eyed). I agree, it's not as bad as whatever the opposite of casual racism is (regular racism? serious racism? go die in a gutter you dirty something, something racism?) but why is

it okay for something to be a little bit racist and make people feel a little bit uncomfortable?

When you come to a homogenous place like Iceland, you worry about racism because you just want to feel accepted. You don't want to worry about dealing with racism because it taints your opinion of the whole culture. And for so many people Iceland is like a safe haven, both metaphorically and literally. For me, my three months in the country were beautiful, and I hope the good moments will stay with me for the rest of my life. I don't want to think back on that guy in the one bar I won't name.

For the most part, Icelanders are good people. Kind, surprisingly trusting, generous and accepting. Fifty years ago my trip to Iceland would have made the front page of Fréttablaðið. Now no one even cares, except for that guy with the camera. But it wasn't just those incidents.

Not okay to think black face is okay

There was another bizarre incident, in a bar, with an extremely drunk Icelander. It was the weekend before Halloween, and I was out with more or less the same group of friends. I went as a medieval peasant, another girl went as a pumpkin, the same American as before went as the Easter Bunny and the drunken Icelander went as a black person. I wasn't angry, or at least I wasn't as angry as some people might be. Without even talking to him, I knew he didn't understand that blackface is an enduring legacy of minstrel characters and the negative black stereotypes they portray. So, I went up to him and shouted over the music that his costume, specifically black face, was offensive.

"Why is it offensive?" he asked.

Unfortunately, I wasn't sober enough to sit him down and explain why. He wouldn't have remembered, anyway. But that was the moment that this column went from a joke in a bar to a need to explain that there's no excuse for that kind of ignorance. People get tired of explaining over and over again why the same mistakes are wrong. 🍷



– Continued –

power lines and stranded sheep in north Iceland last September. Haraldur took issue with the remarks, and made a point during his broadcast the following night to show the weather maps that had been broadcast days before the storms. Ögmundur later apologised and said that he just meant that the Met Office had not contacted the Civil Protection and Emergency Management authorities. Lesson learned: don't cross the weather-man.

Iceland is not looking to change its name. Again: Iceland is not looking to change its name. Someone had better tell USA Today, which posted an inaccurate article implying that the Icelandic government was looking to "rebrand" itself with a new name. The misunderstanding is based on a contest launched by Promote Iceland, which asked tourists to come up with a new name for Iceland as a fun experiment to think of what the country means to them. Unfortunately, several other media outlets have since repeated the misunderstanding, citing USA Today as a source.



In more upbeat news, a woman with mismatched feet—the right foot a size 38 and the left foot a size 40—came up with the clever idea of finding her "mirror image" to go shoe shopping with. The hope was that she and her elusive mirror image could both save some money, instead of



having to buy two pairs at a time. Her story was featured on the front page of the newspaper Fréttablaðið, and the response was so overwhelming that she established a Facebook group for people with mismatched feet. Incidentally, 38 people have joined the group so far.

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Why Is Learning Icelandic So Damn Tough?

Words

Nic Cavell

Photo

Alisa Kalyanova

You're either angling for better work here, studying at the university, or have been wooed by the thick, thick skull and sodas of Egill Skallagrímsson. In any case, you're a foreigner learning Icelandic now and can't get past its toughness. Aside from the usual sympathies from Icelanders and platitudes about its challenge, how do expert speech pathologists assess its difficulty?

Brass grammar ticks

Assistant Professor of Speech Pathology at the University of Iceland Dr. Jóhanna Einarsdóttir says the basic components of a language are pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence-level grammar and pragmatics—or the ways in which context particularly contributes to meaning. Of these four, the lion's share of difficulties source from the grammar.

"The difficulty of different languages manifests at different stages," Jóhanna says. In Icelandic's case, taking that first crack at the grammar is daunting.

In Icelandic, verbs are conjugated variously for tense, mood, person, number and voice—active, passive or middle. Heavy inflection generates a staggering list of possible ways to say, in one well-known example, the numbers one through four. And although the Icelandic vocabulary has far fewer lexemes than that of a language like English, a single Icelandic word can have a phenomenal range of meanings depending on the particles with which it is used. Consider "halda," literally "to keep," which can become "halda fram" for "claim/maintain," "halda upp á" for "celebrate," "halda uppi" for "support" and so on.

There is also a tendency to compound Icelandic words, often extemporaneously, for a non-dictionary word brought to life for just a moment. These



include "augnablikssamsetningar," or "instant-compounds," which describes words with cake-mix convenience the words thus formed (itself another well-known example).

Thinking in strictly abacus terms, it's easy to feel intimidated by Icelandic's tallies for obliqueness and snowballing.

Consider the following case: when you drop a grain of salt into a supersaturated beaker, it crystallizes instantly in all directions, revealing structures previously invisible. So, too, with Icelandic: the grammar rules are confounding because there are so many of them, and it's tough to choose any one place to start because the framework is so strong.

Why, then, contrary to public opinion, do both Jóhanna and Dr. Elín Þórðardóttir, associate professor at McGill University's School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, dispute Icelandic's relative difficulty when compared to other languages?

Sound pollution

The grammar is a tough skull to crack,

“*...Icelanders themselves have what Elín describes as particularly “little patience” to listen as foreigners transmute the foibles and fortes of their native tongues into Icelandic.*”

but Icelandic is characterised by intuitive speech prosody. As Jóhanna points out, stress on syllables is predictable and clear in the form of stressed-unstressed. A language like Danish, conversely, has more elusive prosody, sometimes relying on tricks like laryngealisation. In terms of that fourth facet, pragmatics, both experts acknowledge the challenge of speaking in the same patterns as native Icelanders, but don't believe it's an issue separate from speaking many other languages.

They highlight the external factors instead. The history of foreigners coming to Iceland from abroad to learn the language is a short one—extending only back to the first post-war decades. Contrast that with the well-trodden paths toward fluent French or German, and well-funded institutions within each of those countries promoting that goal.

Even for motivated speakers, Iceland's language environment is studded with obstacles to frustrate immersion. Perhaps because it lacks this history of foreign language students, Icelanders themselves have what Elín describes as particularly “little patience” to listen as foreigners transmute the foibles and fortes of their native tongues into Icelandic. Furthermore, there is remarkably little difference in the accent spoken between different Icelanders, phonetically speaking, which creates friction when foreigners with their own accents try to assimilate.

English, meanwhile, is everywhere—on YouTube and TV shows, at concerts and summer camps, even in insidious

local English-language magazines. While the language has a reputation for simplicity, the speed with which it is learned internationally can be attributed in part to the ease with which one can rack the abacus up with “hours at task”—Elín's term—of attentive listening and immersion.

Practice makes perfect

“Count the amount of time you actively use Icelandic each week,” Elín says. “If you're studying, that can count, but how often are you on the street talking to people in Icelandic? If the answer is half an hour, you can see why you're not making real progress.”

Elín dismisses the easy portraits of language students here as lazy, or Icelanders as frigid guardians unwilling to part with their national treasure. Whatever the situation, she believes the mathematics of language learning in any form have already been proven.

“It's simply the number of hours at task,” she reiterates, noting too that the phenomenon of adults' brains hardening to language learning past a certain age is largely exaggerated.

“They have problems recreating sound, yes, but if I put an adult in a room next to a child and ask them to memorize vocabulary, the adult wins easily. The child can imitate sound better, but they only seem to move faster in general because they have years of ‘hours at task’ on the adults. Adults are just as capable, and progress in a language is a question of time spent.”

To that end, reams of shamelessness and Icelandic friends to make accountable for error correction and speaking practice will go far, as will education that puts a premium on ‘on task’ speaking and listening.

It's not until you start speaking and interacting that it suddenly all makes sense because of a process you arbitrarily set in motion with a heavy investment in time. Adequate language resources and an understanding of how you learn are critical, but with Icelandic, it's best to just dive in. 🍷

Mouldy Potatoes To You, Too! Learning A New Language On The Top Of The World, Part 1



Karen Pease is a computer programmer and card-carrying nerd who moved to Iceland in late April with nothing but the clothes on her back, a plane ticket, and of course the obligatory stuff like a few dozen large tropical plants, a 12-metre shipping crate, a plug-in hybrid car, and a talking parrot who refuses to learn Icelandic.

A year and a half since I first picked up a copy of ‘Teach Yourself Icelandic.’ A year since I realised I'd be moving here and started taking it seriously. Half a year of actually speaking Icelandic. It's been an interesting ride. And one that I take seriously indeed.

Assuming all goes well with permit renewals, I plan to live in Iceland for the rest of my life. I see it as my new language. My mindset is such that I feel extremely uncomfortable speaking English with people who speak

Icelandic, and I often don't know how to respond when someone tries; they usually get a delayed, awkward response in Icelandic or simply, ‘Ha?’ (“What?”).

I know that other immigrants I've talked to find this odd. Apparently immigrants are supposed to want to speak their native language when possible, for example amongst each other. But that's just not the case with me. In my mind, speaking English with people who speak Icelandic is firmly con-

nected with failure, and a person who starts speaking English with me is telling me, “you have failed at something you've been working hard at and is very important to you.” I not only need the practice, but I also like Icelandic and I prefer to speak Icelandic.

I used to make the occasional exception, but there are no longer any exceptions in my life. On the Day of the Icelandic Language (Dagur íslenskrar tungu), I even made a pledge not to speak, read, or write English (to the extent I could avoid) with anyone. I even told my family that if they wanted to talk with me on that day that they'd need to use Google Translate! But just because I always speak the language, whether at work, shopping, or out partying, doesn't mean that I'm anywhere near fluent. Without anyone to correct me when I mess up (a benefit to having

an Icelandic partner), I've had some very basic mistakes go uncorrected for long periods of time.

It was less than a month ago that I discovered that the reason nobody understood me at loud parties when I'd say “Ég get ekki heyrt þér, það er of hárt” (“I can't hear you, it's too loud”) was because it should be “Ég heyri ekki í þér, það er of mikill hávaði” (literally “I hear not in you, it is too much noise”). Recently I learned that an email that I sent out that contained the phrase, “Mér líður veik” (“I feel sick”) sounds funny in Icelandic, that a person just says “Ég er veik” (“I am sick.”) I anticipate it will be a long time before all of my English-style sentence structures work their way out.

The process of learning to say and understand everything right routinely leads to events that are extremely embarrassing at the time but are simply amusing in retrospect. At the Bræðslan music festival this summer, I was trying to tell someone that I eat lots of potatoes, which of course means declining the word for lots (“mikill”). It should have been “mikla,” but without having time to ensure that I did it right, I said that I eat “miklaða” potatoes. This came across as “myglaða” (“mouldy”)

potatoes! Several minutes of very confused conversation followed before the mistake was cleared up.

On the way to the festival I had hitched a ride with a bunch of nice guys who were incredibly impressed with how much Icelandic I could speak versus how short of a time I'd lived in Iceland. They called some of their friends who were already at the festival and talked about the great Icelandic I spoke. We pulled up and the first thing any of them said to me sounded like “góða tjalda.” ‘Tjalda’ means “camping,” and my mind analogized it with the phrases “góða ferð” (“have a good trip”), “góða helgi” (“have a good weekend”), etc. So I said “góða tjalda sömuleiðis!” (‘sömuleiðis’ = “like-wise”). Everyone in both cars started cracking up. He had actually asked me, “Góð að tjalda?” (“Are you good at camping?”) and I had replied “Are you good (feminine) at camping likewise!”

These sorts of things make you want to find a hole to hide in when they happen, but in retrospect, they just make you smile. 🍷



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Taxing Issue For Filmmakers In Iceland

Is the tax rebate for movie directors as big a draw as they say?

Words

Mark O'Brien

Photograph

Warner Bros.

"I'm afraid we'll have to keep this brief," says Einar Tómasson apologetically, as we meet by the reception of the Borgartún complex where the Film In Iceland agency resides. "It's a very busy day."

For Einar, Iceland's Film Commissioner and the man tasked with bringing the cream of the global filmmaking elite into the country to make their next motion pictures, it has been a typically busy summer.

Tom Cruise stayed over at the Hilton Nordica whilst in Iceland to film his upcoming sci-fi thriller 'Oblivion' alongside Morgan Freeman. Ben Stiller followed close behind, staking out locations for his next directorial project 'The Secret Life of Walter Mitty.' Then Russell Crowe and Emma Watson were amongst the stellar line-up for Darren Aronofsky's adaptation of the story of Noah's Ark, set to hit the big screen in 2014.

But Einar has been looking to the future. "I go to LA once or twice a year. Though when I travel I don't have to try and sell Iceland anymore. Filmmakers already know about us," he says.

One of the biggest draws of working with Film In Iceland, which in an arm of the government-backed Promote Iceland, is the 20% tax rebate offered to directors who produce their movies in Iceland. This fact is trumpeted in all caps across the cover of a glossy brochure featuring a shot of the Icelandic coast, which Einar hands me. Inside is a more detailed explanation of how filmmakers can claim back a fifth of their expenditure here in the country.

Complex rules

Like any part of the tax code, however, the rules are not quite as simple. Filmmakers must set up a company in Iceland, or establish an Icelandic branch of an existing EEA company, before submitting details about the film to the Ministry of Industry, including estimates of production costs and sources. Only when the production is finished is the 20% reimbursed and it's only on the eligible production costs that have been incurred in Iceland, not the wages for employees or contractors who pay tax in another country.

The system can be daunting at first. Heather Millard, for instance, who came to Iceland three years ago to produce a documentary film, 'The Future Of Hope,' didn't find the incentive immediately appealing. "The implications in cost of registering a new company and finding an accountant to help navigate the laws simply seemed far too costly given our realistic spend in the country," she said.

Now, however, as a producer also working as a sales agent with Anglo-South African company Spier Films, she is working with a number of Icelandic filmmakers to secure the available tax incentives. "I wouldn't think twice about doing it. I would however always recommend a strong co-production partner in Iceland to help navigate the system with you if you're from abroad."

The tax benefit does indeed continue to draw filmmakers to the country, Einar insists. "If it weren't for the tax incentive, people would be looking for new jobs," he says. And he maintains it is good for the country too: "The government has to gain more than it pays out if this is to work."

In the first six months of 2012 alone, the Icelandic government has already spent more than ever before on refunding film projects through the tax incentive: 392 million ISK on thirteen different projects, four of which are features that originated abroad.

Not the very best

Still, Iceland is by no means the only European country to offer the 20% rebate. In Ireland, for instance, up to 28% of expenditure may be reimbursed and the United Kingdom offers up to 80% tax relief on total qualifying costs. In other parts of the world, there are similar or even larger tax rebates and moreover the cost of living is significantly lower: South African-shot films are eligible for a 15% rebate, the Cayman Islands of-

“

It will be interesting to see if the interest in filming in Iceland remains this strong when the ISK begins to strengthen again.

”

fers a 30% reimbursement and in Fiji it's a 47% rebate on qualifying expenditures.

Heather says that Spier Films frequently forms co-production partnerships across different countries to take advantage of tax incentives. "It has to be said there are countries that offer much higher tax incentives, but this can be a grey area," Heather says. "If a production in South Africa, Canada or Australia isn't considered a 'South African,' 'Canadian' or 'Australian' production, then the tax rebate can be lower."

And Einar concedes, "No one comes just for the tax incentives. It's about everything that we offer," eulogising the natural landscape. "We have a different variety of spectacular, dramatic landscapes all within easy reach—glaciers, lakes, black beaches, waterfalls. It makes a perfect alien planet for an otherworldly sci-fi film."

Iceland's can-do spirit

Another vital factor, he argues, is the positive work ethic of the Icelanders with whom they work. Film In Iceland's promotional material is littered with quotes from the great and the good of Hollywood who have come to the country, including Clint Eastwood, who after working here on his 'Flags Of Our Fathers' said "I soon learned that Iceland also has friendly, hardworking people with a refreshing can-do spirit."

Heather Millard agrees there are many reasons why filmmakers come: "First and foremost it is down to their storyline. There is also the summer season—24-hour daylight gives the opportunity to work longer days, cutting down the number of days needed for filming." Institutional accessibility in Iceland is another positive: "Unlike the UK or USA where it can take weeks if not months to be granted filming permission, in Iceland you can film almost anywhere and permission is given much more rapidly."

Nonetheless Heather sounds a note of caution. "One other incentive is the favourable exchange rate that foreigners are now getting against the króna, which wasn't available before the crash. It will be interesting to see if the interest in filming in Iceland remains this strong when the ISK begins to strengthen again." 🇮🇸

Three Icelandic Places To Look Out For In The Movies:

Snæfellsnes

Perhaps best known as the place where Jules Verne's heroes start their 'Journey To The Centre Of The Earth,' or even as a preferred landing spot for UFOs (if you don't see them, don't worry, they are apparently invisible), it also features heavily in the Laxness novel 'Under The Glacier,' and film version thereof.



Vík í Mýrdal

It's fitting that Vík is a favourite location for Viking epics, as the Vikings themselves originally

derived their name from another Vík in Norway. With a lake, a glacier, black sands and an impressive waterfall,

it has served as the backdrop to not only 'The Raven Flies,' but also to the more recent 'Beowulf And Grendel,' starring Gerard Butler.



The Westfjords

From the sign on Látrabjarg on the westernmost corner telling you that you have reached the

end of Europe to the desolate Hornstrandir, abandoned decades ago, the Westfjords really do seem like the end of the world. They are used as such to illustrate the isolation of the outsider in 'Nói The Albino' and also as the destination of the escape from the old folks home in 'Children Of Nature.'



Icelandic Shorts Are Actually Really Good



Reporting from Berlin's International Short Film Festival

How is life like in Kazakhstan? Is it really a nation of old, wrinkled ladies with shawls and skinny dudes hoarding goats? I have no idea, but this is how I imagine it via the few Kazakh films I know. Cinema is every nation's postcard to the rest of the world; as anyone who's been on exchange in Montana or Connecticut will tell you, those cheerleaders and quarterbacks really exist. So when one of the biggest short film festivals in the world, Berlin's International Short Film Festival (Interfilm, for short), decided to focus on Icelandic short-form filmmaking for their 28th edition in November, the question of how Iceland would be perceived through its movies naturally arose.



“
I have heard people entertain the idea that films will be the next big cultural export of Iceland.
”

“We had already decided on an African focus and since we like having strong contrasts, Iceland seemed like a good choice. You are far away, you are a small country and people don't really know much about Iceland apart from its beautiful countryside and that there is a lot of creative power there. All the films we selected are really well done and not just films that want to be feature films but excellent shorts in their own right,” says Interfilm festival Director Heinz Hermanns on the reason for spotlighting Iceland.

Best of Iceland

So how does Iceland come off then? Pretty close to real life, I think. Heinz and his team have done a good job of programming; the selection was varied and not too concerned with novelty, making for a very nice selection of Icelandic shorts from 2001-2011, essentially a 'best of' spanning that decade. These films are not all set among hermits in misty valleys, under snow-covered mountains, or by volcanic beaches (although some are); they also detail life in Reykjavik for the young and old alike.

Take one of the highlights, 'BSÍ' (2001) by Þorgeir Guðmundsson. A teenage girl (played by a young Þórunn Antonia with braces!) wanders into the main bus station in Reykjavik at dawn where she encounters a man in his early thirties who has just escaped from the psychiatric ward. They establish a special bond without saying much, only sharing an elongated moment before the long weekend known as 'verslunarmannahelgin' kicks off. The film is not too concerned with plot but creates ample space for beautiful moments of subdued interaction to unfold between the two and others who hang around the bus terminal or work there, finally leaving one with the sense that no matter how many wrong turns you've taken, there are always new roads to be travelled, new buses to jump.

A bit depressing

'BSÍ' is a serious yet humorous film, a trait it shares with many other titles, like Ísold Uggadóttir's 'Góðir gestir' ("Family Reunion," 2006), 'Anna' by Helena Stefánsdóttir (2007) and most memorably 'Bræðrabylta' ("Wrestling," 2007) by Grímur Hákonarson which actually won the Best Short Award at Interfilm when it was in competition a few years ago. The latter is about two gay wrestlers who wrestle with love and one another in a remote Icelandic village. One is married and the other insists he leave his wife. As the Icelandic championship in wrestling approaches and they each endure personal tragedies, the need for closure becomes dire. 'Bræðrabylta' is full of beautiful compositions, quirky subplots and it manages to stay truly touching throughout its lengthy twenty-minute runtime without ever abandoning its humorous tone, often brought about by the traditional costume and ceremony of the sport.

Icelandic films remind Heinz a bit of Finnish cinema. "I like the black humour and often bizarre stories that are nevertheless close to reality. They often seem slightly depressive but usually have a good sense of laconic humour and great characters," he says. "These films are always entertaining and thus great for a general audience." Heinz's favourites include 'Bræðrabylta,' Christmas-comedy 'Klás' (2010) by Ragnar Snorrason, the absolutely hilarious political satire cum zombie-film 'Naglinn' ("The Nail," 2008) by Benedikt Erlingsson and feel good flick 'Epic Fail' (2009) by Ragnar Agnarsson. He also mentions 'Síðasti bærinn' ("The Last Farm," 2004) by Rúnar Rúnarsson, "a really tragic and a really great film."

The next big thing

Rúnar's 2008 film 'Smáfuglar' ("2 Birds") was also playing, and it felt just as devastating now as always. A timid teenage boy has a crush on a girl and we observe them hanging out with their friends, a much bolder couple. The four of them head for a sketchy party in the neighbourhood and soon end up unconscious after consuming ketamine. In the middle of the night, the boy witnesses a (very graphic) tragedy but is unable to act. Only in the early morning hours can he reverse what has been done. He absolves the victim by taking on the perpetrators' sins and recasting the deed as an act of love. The film is stunning on all levels and prompted comment from a Canadian filmmaker present who felt that most other work, including his own, seemed somewhat trivial in comparison.

I have heard people entertain the idea that films will be the next big cultural export of Iceland. We've had a good run with music and now it's time for cinema to set ablaze the hearts of people around the globe, the argument goes. Seeing this collection definitely made the prospect sound real and brought about more personal interest in the format.

Unfortunately, shorts are tragically inaccessible in Iceland, only seeing a festival screening or two (where half of the programme is unwatchable at best). Only the luckiest or most cunning filmmakers will secure a slot on national television and the boldest release DVDs that may or may not sell. However, this may be changing as pay-per-view and video-on-demand services become more accessible and new websites with video content pop up every day. Interfilm's programme was a healthy reminder that although Icelandic cinema may be young it is nevertheless developing fast. Local subjects seem to touch international audiences and there is obviously no shortage of talent up here.

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Sounds From The Kitchen

A new book combines sound, poetry and photography to form a unique portrait of a beloved space



“
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don't belong to our reality
anymore too, like a clock
ticking or the home phone
ringing.
”

It's been said that a person's home is their castle, but that may not be entirely true. In the words of Italian-American chef Mario Batali, “The kitchen really is the castle itself. This is where we spend our happiest moments and where we find the joy of being a family.”

Words

Kirsten O'Brien

Photo courtesy of
Björg Sveinbjörnsdóttir

Mario Batali may as well have had Guðjóna Albertsdóttir in mind. The undisputed queen of her kitchen castle, Guðjóna spent years recording daily life in her kitchen.

Nine years after her grandma's passing in 2000, Björg Sveinbjörnsdóttir began sifting through more than 60 hours of these sound recordings made by her grandmother between 1982 and 1990.

The product is an audio poetry book, 'Sounds From The Kitchen,' which gives people intimate access to a social centre of Suðureyri, a small fishing village in the Westfjords.

Björg moved away from Suðureyri at sixteen-years-old, but fondly recalls

spending time at her grandmother's house in her early years.

Her grandmother would just let the cassette recording run throughout the day, picking up chatter and conversations, sounds from the radio and the everyday hustle and bustle of life. Guðjóna used the recordings as a kind of diary too, often telling stories or talking about the weather or anything else that came to mind. In one particular recording, Guðjóna chatters to the recorder about putting up a new curtain earlier that day.

“I picked bits that I thought were poetic and sometimes really funny if you put them on the paper,” she says. “There are sounds that don't belong to our reality anymore too, like a clock ticking or the phone.”

Inside the kitchen

Guðjóna began recording sounds in her kitchen after she retired from working at a fish factory. She recorded

partly to leave something for her family, and partly to document the work of everyday women that often went unnoticed. Björg says she thought of her grandmother as an oral historian, who in many ways captured the experience of a working woman.

“I started thinking about it, the sounds were all from inside the kitchen. She was from an era of stereotypical gender roles, even though she worked hard as well,” Björg says. “Today we think of the kitchen and the home as something cosy and nice. But at this time, it was more of a workplace.”

Finding the funds

After Guðjóna passed away, the recordings almost did too. As her family members were sorting through her things, deciding what to do with her possessions, they came across the recordings. “My relatives said, ‘ah we should throw it away. It's just garbage,’” Björg says.

Björg, however, insisted on keeping the recordings, and when she began a master's programme in applied cultural analysis at the University of Iceland, she began thinking about how she could assemble the pieces to paint a picture not only of her grandmother, but also of everyday life in the fishing village.

Because of the project's unique nature, Björg wasn't sure where to get the work published. “It's sound and images and text so I thought it would be hard to get someone to publish it,” she says. “It's in a miscellaneous category. It has historical documents, but it's kind of personal. It fits in many categories.”

Then one day over coffee with Arnar Sugurðsson, who was at the time working on a start-up crowdfunding platform called Karolina Fund, it clicked. “She had this project that was already very far along, but she just needed the money to print the books,”

Arnar says. “She had heard about Karolina Fund from somebody, and then like two coffee cups later, she was very enthusiastic to go ahead with it.”

Björg set up a page for Sounds from the Kitchen on Karolina Fund and asked for 2,500 Euros to finish and print the books. The project stayed up on the Karolina Fund page for a month and garnered 2,653 Euros in donations. It was the first successful project supported by Karolina Fund, which launched in October.

Björg says many donors were people from the village, and a large portion of funding came from a Suðureyri women's association. Now with adequate funding, Björg says she plans to print around 150 copies of the book in the beginning of December, just in time for Christmas.

“I did it to finish something she started, even though she didn't plan to publish it,” Björg says. “It's in her spirit. She was a colourful character.”

Making the personal public

From the recordings themselves, to the assembling of the book, to the way it was funded through a community effort, everything about the project is “homemade.”

While some have expressed doubts about publishing something so personal, Björg says that she sees the project not only as a record of her own family history, but also as a valuable documentation of social and gender roles and the individuals that characterised the town, which is something not easily described in a history book.

“We have this fishing village and we have a lot of documents about which boats came and went, when roads were built, and the way society was made,” Björg says. “But what women did was something else. It occurred inside the homes, with no documentation. These issues are not as concrete, so we have to use different ways to relay them such as using art or ways where people can use their senses. It's not like concrete facts.”

The sounds—ranging from a choir of children singing to the clatter of pots and pans and the gentle static hum of the radio—are as charming as they are ordinary. The sounds of everyday life are universal.

“We can all kind of relate, when people listen to the recordings. People think of their own kitchen or their own experience,” Björg says.

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Words
Kirsten O'Brien

Photo
Karolina Fund

The year is 1945. After suffering defeat at the hands of the Allied powers, a secret fleet of Nazi Germans flee to the dark side of the moon, with plans to construct a giant fortress and an armada of spaceships, more powerful than anything they used in battle on Earth. They reorganise, regroup, and hatch a plan to return to Earth 70 years later, in 2018, where they will once again try to conquer the world.

Hold off on preparing an underground bomb shelter for a Nazi return: This is the plot of 'Iron Sky,' a Finnish-German-Australian film released in February 2012. The film was created not by a team of producers and directors, but rather by an entire online community of film enthusiasts. Anyone who was interested in the project could contribute an idea, and ultimately help shape the outcome of the film.

In Reykjavík, far away from Nazi German moon space fleets, the people behind the Karolina Fund are trying to do something similar. Ingi Rafn Sigurðsson and Arnar Sigurðsson, two of the fund's creators, used the 'Iron Sky' model of "participatory cinema" to create a similar crowdfunding platform for creative projects.

Just like Kickstarter or IndieGogo, Karolina Fund allows creators to pitch projects and seek investors, who can choose how much money they want to donate. Creators set a goal amount to reach and have a limited amount of time to raise funds. The website, which was launched in October of this year, currently has six projects users can fund. They range from a documentary film about Icelandic horses to a ten-part musical composition about a character in Icelandic folklore.

INTRODUCING THE PROJECTDOCK

Karolina Fund differs from other crowdfunding platforms, however, in that it has an integrated project management tool called ProjectDock, which adds transparency to a formally murky process.

"You get the choice to see what the plan is, and how it's supposed to go, and what happens after the project is being executed," Arnar says. "The idea is that everybody sees what the deal is and where the project is at using this simple project management system."

Their solution combats an all too common problem on other crowdfunding platforms: the lack of accountability and oversight to ensure projects actually get done. According to a study published in July 2012 by Ethan Mollick, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, 75 percent of technology and design-related projects on Kickstarter didn't finish on time. For the millions of people who have given more than \$274 million to 28,000 projects since 2009, this represents a huge waste of cash, and more importantly, decreased trust and credibility among crowdfunded projects.

"We thought about this way before the problems became as obvious as they are today," Ingi says. "Once we start hearing about these things and problems with these platforms, we became more confident that this could really be a good answer for these problems."

PLANS TO GO GLOBAL

The platform is still young, but ultimately Ingi and Arnar hope it evolves to host projects and connect investors worldwide. So far, Ingi says that 10 percent of all donations to current projects have come from somewhere outside of Iceland.

"I think it's already proven a good decision to not be completely limited in Iceland," Ingi says. "We don't have any boundaries to stop people from coming in. If they have the ability to present their project with a video and some pictures in a nice way, then we will host it."

Much like the 'Iron Sky' project, this platform allows people to feel more connected to the final result. The experience is different than walking into a store and buying something off a shelf because investors know they have had a direct hand in the final product, Arnar says.

"It's not just buying something. You are not just a consumer. You are a participant in something," Arnar says. "And we're not sure if current crowdfunding platforms are allowing this adequately, and that's why we'd like to develop it further."

The team behind Karolina Fund is still working out the kinks and taking user feedback and suggestions. Still, no word yet on whether they will start hosting projects from the dark side of the moon. 🐾



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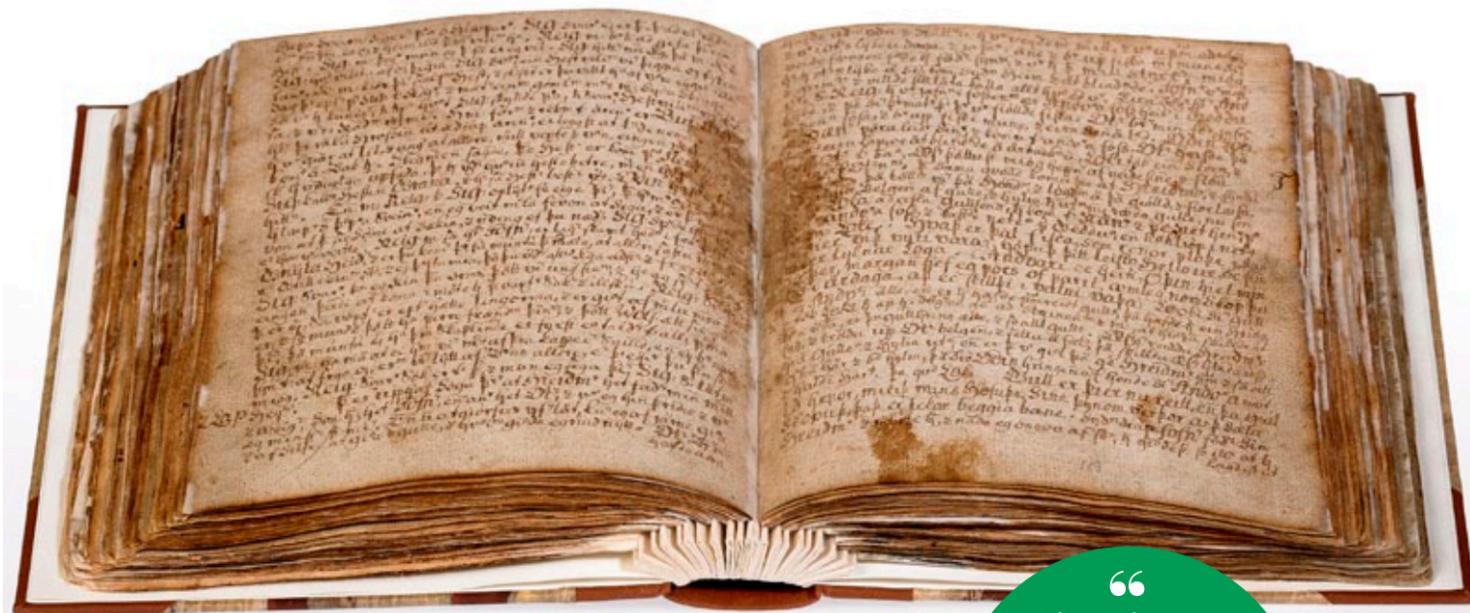
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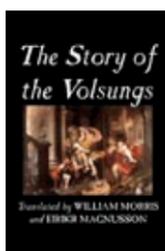
A Very Brief History Of Icelandic Literature

By Marc Vincenz

“It is a great fortune for an author to be born into a nation so steeped in centuries of poetry and literary tradition.” —Halldór Laxness, from his Nobel Prize acceptance speech



When he was at Leeds University in the 1920s, J.R.R. Tolkien formed a drinking club where he and his fellow students would recite Old Norse poetry and sing Icelandic folk songs. His ‘Lord of the Rings’ trilogy was directly inspired by the William Morris’ translation of Iceland’s ‘Völsungasaga.’ Tolkien’s work, in turn, has influenced generations of fantasy authors from Terry Pratchett to J.K. Rowling.



Although English and American literary buffs will have dipped into The Sagas of the Icelanders at some point, there’s a small chance they’ll have heard of Iceland’s only Nobel laureate, Halldór Laxness; it’s even less likely that they’ll have read the prolific Icelandic authors Gunnar Gunnarson (1889-1975) or Jón Trausti (penname of Guðmundur Magnússon 1873-1918) or Guðmundur G. Hagalín (1898-1985).

Gunnar Gunnarsson, who wrote primarily in Danish and published close to 40 works of literature in his lifetime, is highly regarded in Iceland, yet only a handful of his volumes were translated into English. Even though

Gunnar was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature four times, he remains out-of-print in English since the 1960s. Neither Jón Trausti, who wrote the definitive, 4-volume cycle, ‘Heiðarbylíð’ (“The Mountain Cot”) reflecting the stark life of pastoral Iceland, nor Guðmundur G. Hagalín who penned many works, including the well-received novel ‘Kristrún í Hamravík’ (“Kristrún in Hamravík”), have had their major volumes translated into English.

Translations long overdue

“New English translations of Gunnar Gunnarsson’s works are long overdue,” says Ólafur Jóhann Ólafsson, one of Iceland’s internationally best-known literary novelists (known as Ólaf Ólafsson in English). “Of course, you can’t forget that only 3% of the US publishing market is translated work.”

Ólafur, who has lived and worked in



New York for over 30 years, is the author of four novels: ‘The Journey Home,’ ‘Absolution,’ ‘Walking Into the Night,’ and the recently released, ‘Restoration,’

as well as the story collection, ‘Valentines.’

And, Ólafur has every reason to be optimistic about Icelandic literary ambitions. ‘Valentines’ is currently being made into a TV series on the US Sundance Channel, produced by none other than Robert Redford. Ólafur continues a family literary tradition that began with his father, Ólafur Jóhann Sigurðsson, the first Icelander to win The Nordic Council’s Literature Prize.

A literary wow factor

“Of course modern Icelandic literature has been influenced by The Sagas, but more than anything else it is a linguistic continuation of what began with The Sagas,” Ólafur says. Due to the country’s isolation and a protectionist language policy, Icelandic has changed relatively little in the last 900 years.

And yet, as Ólafur points out: “The modern Icelandic literary form did not really start to develop until the mid-1800s. Jón Thóroddsen (1818-1868) published the first Icelandic novel in 1850.”

In the early 1900s, several Icelandic authors started writing in Danish, which obviously gave access to a broader audience. Many of these writers were based out of Copenhagen, including Gunnar Gunnarsson and the

“The modern Icelandic literary form did not really start to develop until the mid-1800s. Jón Thóroddsen (1818-1868) published the first Icelandic novel in 1850.”

dramatists Guðmundur Kamban (1888-1945) and Jóhann Sigurjónsson (1880-1919). In the 1920s, the poet and scholar Sigurður Nordal (1886-1974)

led Iceland’s neoromantic movement, influencing a whole new crop of inspired poets and novelists. This movement, followed by the Second World War and Iceland’s independence in 1944, began to shape what is now loosely-termed Contemporary Icelandic Literature. (It is certainly no coincidence that one of Halldór’s most influential novels is entitled, ‘Independent People.’)

Echoes of the past

Writing in the Guardian, literary critic Ben Myers says “The Sagas still influence the way we read and tell stories today.” Yet according to the ‘Oxford Guide to Literature in Translation,’ William Herbert published the earliest accurate translation of Old Norse poetry into English in 1804. William Morris’ and Eiríkur Magnússon’s translation of the Völsungasaga that influenced Tolkien and his successors first appeared in 1870.

Milan Kundera has said that “(t)he glory of The Sagas is indisputable, yet their literary influence would have been much greater if they had been

written in the language of one of the major nations; and we would have regarded The Sagas as an anticipation or even the foundation of the European novel.” It wasn’t really until the Victorian era that the world became aware of Iceland’s rich literary heritage.

And a dialogue with the past still continues to this day. More recently, contemporary authors such as Sjón and Jón Kalman Stefánsson have explored Iceland’s grimmest ages in their inspiring works of lyrical fiction. Sjón’s recent novel, ‘Rökkurbýsnir’ (“From the Mouth of a Whale,” 2011), and Jón Kalman’s trilogy that begins with the novel ‘Himnaríki og helvíti’ (“Heaven and Hell,” 2011), are both examples of contemporary authors connecting with Iceland’s literary heritage as a means of reflecting upon its future.



A struggle for independence

On a much larger scale, since earliest inceptions (as Halldór clearly recognised), Icelandic literature has been about the struggle for independence, more recently about the establishment of a world-class literary voice. And although, in the last years, more and more Icelandic authors are making international waves, in truth, we English-language readers (and Icelandic translators) should be paying closer attention to the untapped wealth of contemporary Icelandic literature that has roots going back further than Columbus’ “discovery” of the New World.

It is the very nature of this age-old culture, indeed, its incredible linguistic history and its insularity, that makes its literature, new and old, ring undeniably true. As Ben Meyers points out, ‘The Sagas’ are “like some of today’s best fiction, unpretentious and unadorned.” He firmly believes that ‘The Sagas’ are “perhaps the most important work of the past thousand years. Possibly ever.”

I concur wholeheartedly—only, I should add: What ‘The Sagas’ gave birth to is certainly just as noteworthy. In reading these modern Icelandic authors, we may actually begin to reinterpret our own European literary roots in new and exciting ways. ☘

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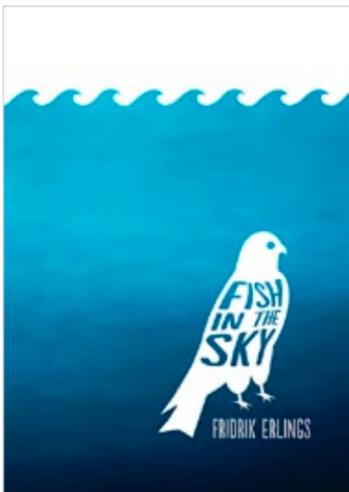
Fish In The Sky

Written and translated by Fridrik Erlings

“To actually cease being a child, that’s probably the greatest experience in life.” So thinks Josh Stephenson, the unusually sensitive and observant teen narrator of Fridrik Erling’s ‘Fish in the Sky,’ a recent English translation of Sveinn Ólafsson’s ‘Góða ferð, Sveinn Ólafsson.’ Josh has just turned thirteen and, according to his mother, is “one year closer to being considered a grown-up.” But getting older isn’t helping Josh make sense of life—it only seems to be complicating things.

Like most thirteen year olds, Josh occupies a purgatory somewhere between innocence and worldliness, regularly bouncing between pure joy and deep despair as he tries to navigate the seemingly insurmountable problems that crop up around him. First, there are his parents: his mostly-absent father who spends nearly all of his free time with his girlfriend or drinking buddies and his ardently religious mother who is too exhausted from working two jobs to pay much attention to his problems. Added to Josh’s list of worries are his rebellious older cousin—a girl—who moved in with Josh and his mom and is living in his closet, a vindictive math teacher, humiliating gym classes, the possibility that he has fallen in love, and the horrifying fact that he has started to get pubic hair. “I’m like a piece of bread in a toaster,” he thinks. “No matter which way I turn, all around me are the glowing iron threads that heat me up until I start to burn around the edges.”

Fridrik captures the profound extremes that characterize adolescence with a balance of poetical empathy and sly humour, all delivered through Josh’s sometimes wry and often perplexed observations. Of an irritating but popular classmate, Josh reflects that “It is unbearable how shameless and disgustingly free of low self-esteem he is.” While guiltily thumbing through a nude magazine he admits



to finding “...at least two really hot descriptions of copulation,” which he doesn’t entirely understand. There is self-awareness and self-depreciation in Josh’s flailing attempts to reconcile with the world around him that ring very true to the teenage experience.

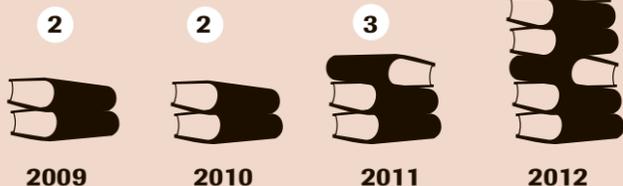
Although he spends most of the novel navel-gazing, Josh does undergo a significant transformation in discovering the simple truth that everyone has problems (many of which are more serious than his own), and everyone feels alone in them. The universality of this theme is further underscored by the fact that in the English translation, ‘Fish in the Sky’ has very few orienting details that identify it as occurring in a particular country or even a particular time period. It’s worth noting that Fridrik completed the English version himself with reference to a translation by the late, great translator Bernard Scudder, to whom he dedicated the book. All of the character names have been anglicised, and while certain small details may hint at the original version’s Icelandic origins, it stands as a story that could have happened anywhere, to any young person.

✎ - LARISSA KYZER

A Translation Boom in 2012

Over ten Icelandic novels have been translated into English in 2012, as compared with the seven Icelandic titles which were published in English in 2009, 2010, and 2011 combined. This boost in English translation reflects a renewed international interest in Iceland’s contemporary literary scene: in 2011, Iceland was the guest of honour at the Frank-

furt Book Fair and Reykjavík was named a UNESCO City of Literature—the first city awarded in which English is not the native language. In the same year, AmazonCrossing—the American retail giant’s new literature-in-translation press—committed to publishing 10 new Icelandic novels in English translation over the next few years.



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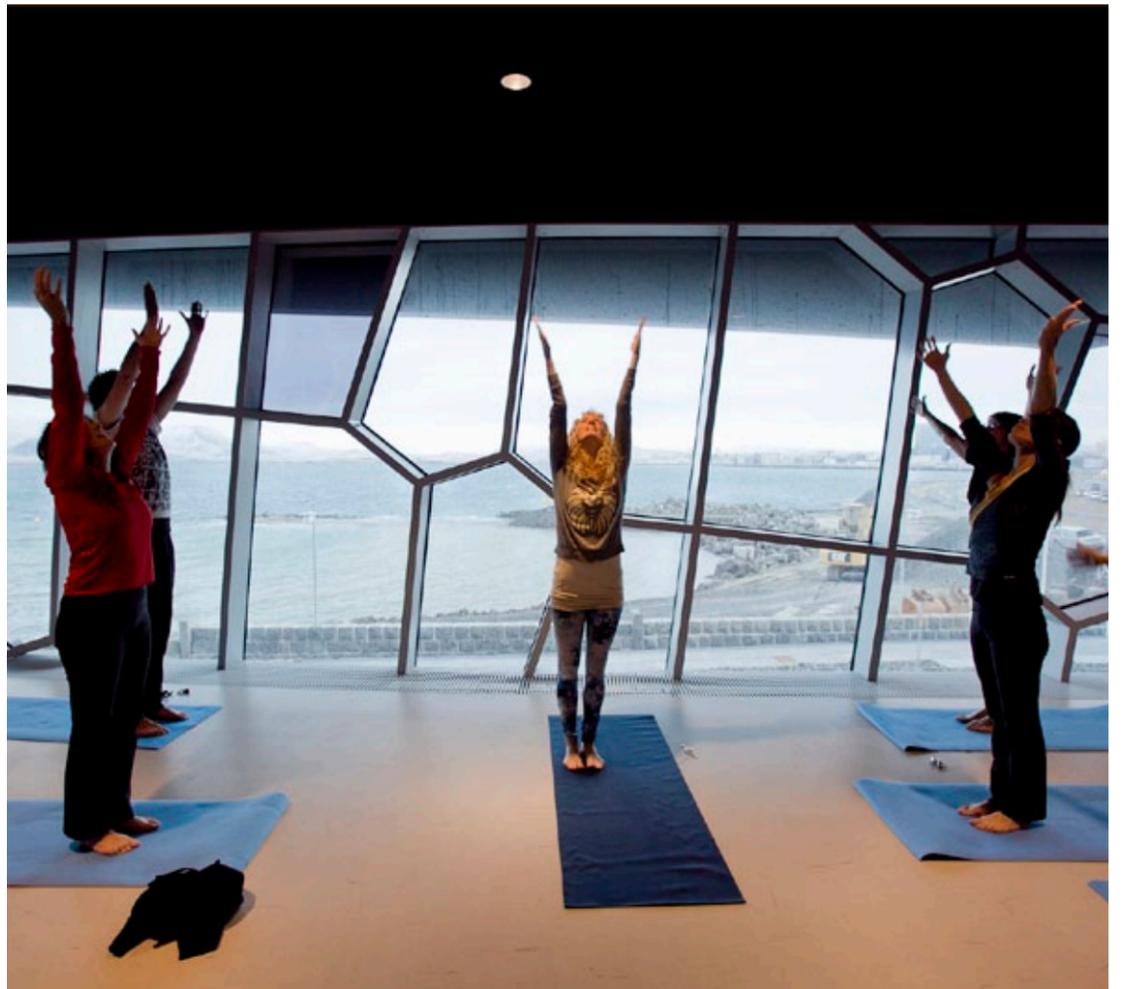
Go with the flow at Harpa's lunchtime yoga

Words

Thomas L. Moir

Photo

Alísa Kalyanova



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Feeling suitably limber after my first lunchtime yoga class at Harpa, I get up off the mat and wander over to thank instructor Ingibjörg for the class.

"This was a simple smooth Hatha yoga class to suit everyone, so beginners could come," she says. "It's all about yoga flow, the soft yoga flowing."

She turns and looks me directly in the eyes and asks sincerely, "Did you feel like it was a little flowing?"

Unsure of how to respond, I laugh nervously. "Ah absolutely, I flowed!"

She looks at me for a moment, as if doubting my commitment to the flow, before breaking into one of the warmest smiles I've ever had the pleasure of witnessing. "Yeah, you did! Woo-hooooo."

Yoga with a side of happiness

The thirty or so attendees of this first lunchtime yoga class ranged from mothers, to students, to kids, to people who actually looked like they were on their lunch break, one sporting jeans and another in a formal looking work dress.

"We just want to do something during these dark winter months to kind of brighten up your spirit and make you feel good about yourself," says Anna Margrét Björnsson, who has, along with Ingibjörg, been the driving force behind the lunchtime classes.

Given that the class was in Icelandic, I confess to them I spent most of the time craning my neck around to watch the girl next to me and mimicking her position.

"Oh I wish I would have known. I'm so used to teaching in English," Ingibjörg says. "Next time we'll ask people to raise their hands if they're English speakers," Anna adds.

From what I did understand, though, I mention I hadn't expected there to be such an emphasis on breathing. "Yoga is not just an exercise, it's so much more," Ingibjörg tells me. "It's really good for your mind too. That's the beauty of it."

"That's why after yoga, people usually feel so happy, because they've been breathing so deeply," she contin-

ues, matter-of-factly.

At this point Ingibjörg lowers her tone, almost as though she's confiding a secret to me. "And you know, people have this kind of glow to them after class. I've always wanted to take a before and after picture, because you can really tell the difference. It's really beautiful."

I look around the room, and it's true. Most of the participants are chatting jovially with one another. I'm not sure whether they know each other either. They just seem to have been in a damn good mood. I turn to admire the gorgeous view across the turbulent water towards Esja's snow-covered peaks and realise I'm feeling pretty chipper myself.

Don't even think about thinking!

I tell Ingibjörg I found the final five minutes of the class particularly calming when participants were instructed to lay on their backs, very still, to some pretty ambient music. "It's really important to let the body just relax after all the exercises. And it really makes a difference. Just five minutes of relaxation, it can really do wonders for you, if you do it with awareness," she says.

'Awareness. So you're meant to be thinking?' I ask.

"Don't even think about that," she replies with the air of a kung fu master. "If you think about thinking, you are just all over the place. Our mind is so powerful, there's so much going on, many TV channels. If you get thoughts, you shouldn't need to battle to let them go. You should embrace them, welcome them, all the thoughts, and then let them go."

While admission to the classes is free, there are donation tins from Unicef, which is putting the proceeds towards helping the children of Syria.

Both Anna and Ingibjörg are delighted with the day's turnout. "We're thinking of doing it every week now," Anna says. "If it goes as well as this, I think it's perfect. We'll see how it goes."

"I guess we'll just go with the flow," Ingibjörg adds. ☺

"People have this kind of glow to them after class. I've always wanted to take a before and after picture, because you can really tell the difference."



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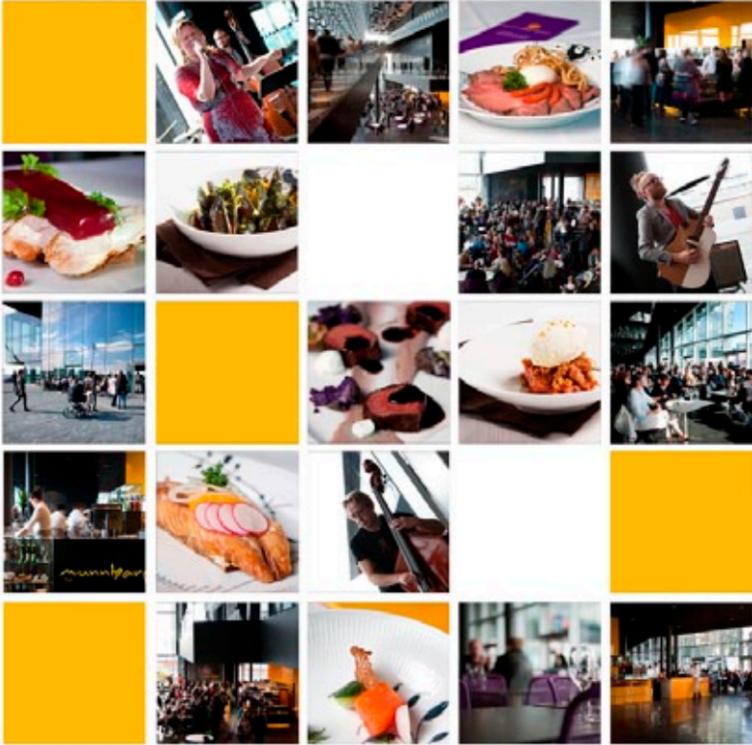


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Starts with a shot of Icelandic national spirit "Brennivín"

Place Ceviche

Dried maize, sweet potato, coriander, chili, passion sauce

Minke whale tataki

Fig jam, wakame, mushrooms, soy glaze

Icelandic Salmon roll

Salmon, avocado, asparagus, jalapeno mayo

Spotted cat fish "mojito style"

Grilled spotted cat fish, pea purée, bacon, mojito foam

Lamb ribs

Chili crumble, "Skyr" mint sauce, celeriac fries

Icelandic Skyr "Flan"

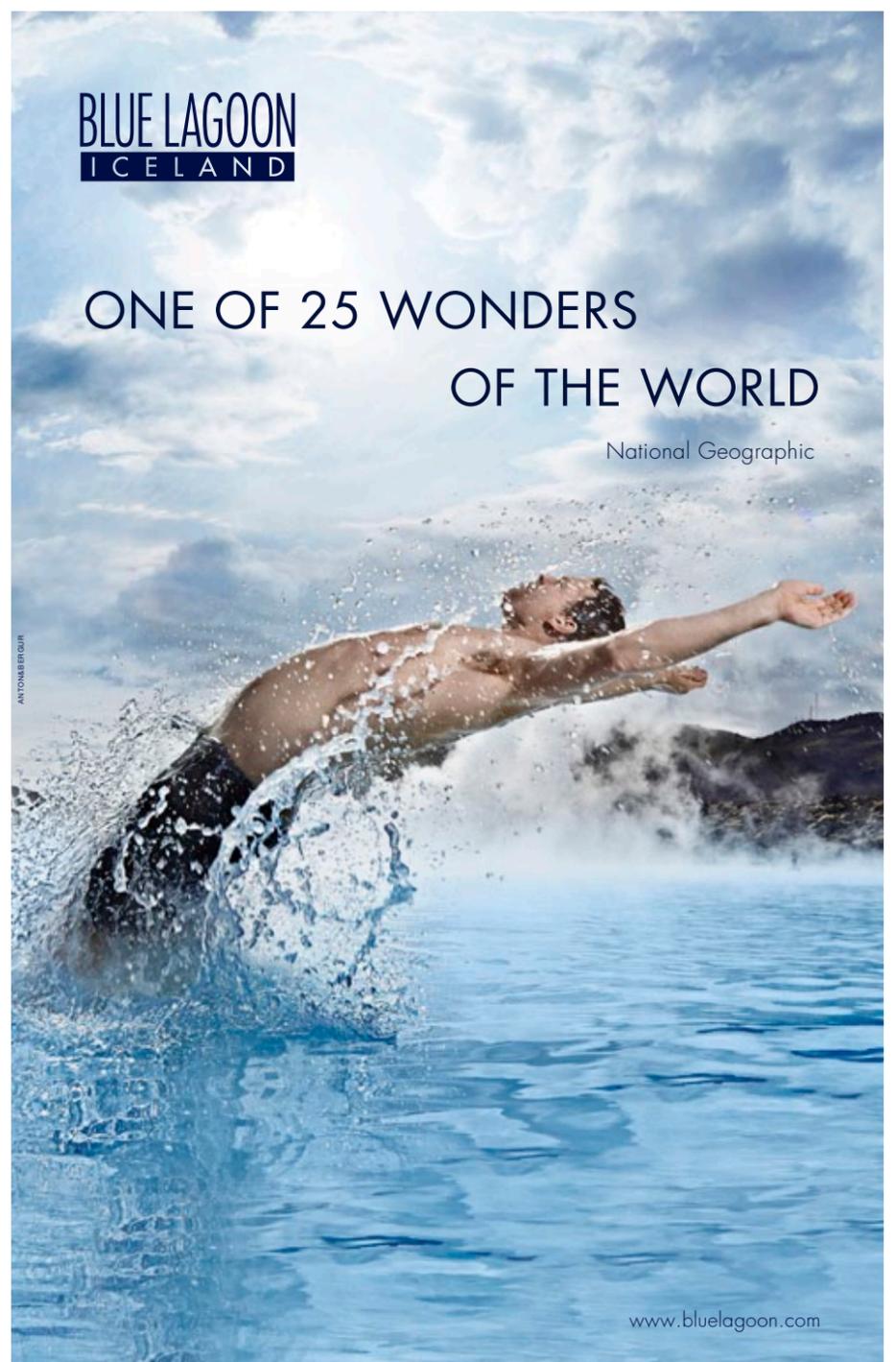
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Out There On The Ice

Glaciers, waterfalls and Icelandic meat soup in the South of Iceland



Words by Thomas L. Moir

Natsha Nandabhiwat

“This tour’s been a bit of a game-changer,” our guide Arnar says from the driver’s seat. “Its popularity has been unprecedented.”

Their most popular tour, ‘Take A Walk On The Ice Side,’ is an updated version of a previous tour, which also included a northern lights sight-seeing leg. “We can’t really promise the northern lights though, so now it’s kind of an added bonus if we see them,” Arnar says.

As I stumble out of the car and aboard the bus that I was supposed to be on, I’m warmly greeted by Védís, who says apologetically, “I think we must have left two minutes before you got there,” even though I’m sure it’s my fault. I turn to find a

seat and face a full bus of tourists staring my way. I consider announcing “Góðan daginn everybody,” but think better of it and instead proceed down the aisle, sheepishly nodding to each seat.

Bad at running away from volcanoes

On route to the glacier we drive through mostly agricultural areas. “And this is Selfoss; here there’s a slaughterhouse,” Védís says, deadpan. “I hear some people here commute daily to Reykjavík, and some even knit on the way,” she quips.

The volcano Hekla is our next drive-by sight. The last few eruptions have been what Védís calls “very friendly,” if such eruptions exist, poking fun at Icelanders’ attitudes towards volcanoes. “We aren’t very good at running away from volcanoes,” she informs us. “We’re more often running toward them to take photos.”

At around 14:00 we arrive at Sólheimajökull glacier, which translates to “Glacier of the Sun”: an ironic name given our guide tells us it rains here about two hundred days of the year. We are lucky to hit one of the nice days.

After having crampons fitted to our boots, we are each issued an ice axe. Slightly intimidated by their presence, I ask Arnar about the walk’s level of difficulty. “If you can manage to walk around town for two hours, you’ll be fine,” he says and later admits the axes are mostly for the photos.

Aesthetically, the glacier is nothing short of spectacular. Ice sculptures are scattered amongst sharp crests and deep crevices, some coated in a thin sheet of ash, like an ice labyrinth.

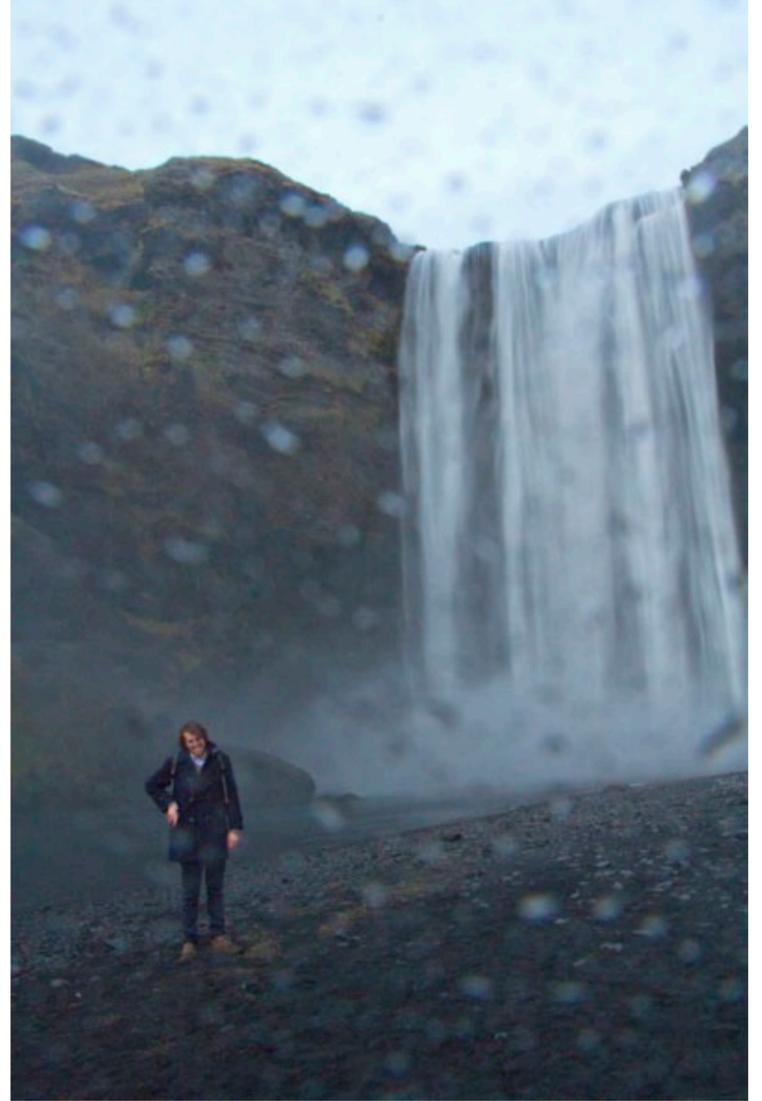
Like Mother Nature making a pizza

Sólheimajökull is a glacier tongue, extending down from its mother glacier, Mýrdalsjökull, which is Iceland’s fourth largest. Arnar explains the process of the glacier melting as if Mother Nature were making a pizza: first there’s the dough, the flat earth, and then there are the top-

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pings, layer upon delicious layer of ice stacked on top of each other. The weight of the ice pushes down on the layers below, which then melt and run out along the glacier tongue into a lake at the bottom. This explanation is both informative and mouth-watering.

As we continue traversing the glacier, I notice how clean it is, but it wasn't always this way. After Eyjafjallajökull erupted in 2010 and grounded flights across Europe, the entire glacier was black with ash.

Curiously, the ash we're seeing today isn't from Eyjafjallajökull; it's courtesy of Katla's last eruption, which blackened the glacier way back in 1918. Layers of ice froze over the top of the ash, holding it in place before being slowly released over the last 100 years as bits of ice melt. A collective 'whoa' encircles the group when we discover the ash is one hundred years old.

Despite the relative ease of the walk, it is not recommended to visit without a guide or group. Conditions can change the glacier overnight, disorienting even the most experienced mountaineers. Since his visit last week Arnar says the terrain of the tongue has changed dramatically.

We learn in days of yore, this shape-shifting landscape would bewilder neighbouring farmers. They feared the glacier, believing the ash heaps were trolls who would move about at night. Legend has it today that if you touch a troll you become blessed with seven years of good luck and fourteen years if you go so far as to kiss one.

The plunder remains until next time

On the way back to Reykjavík we stop off at a couple of waterfalls. The bigger of the two is Skógafoss, one of Iceland's largest.

Folklore has it an early settler of Iceland, Þrási Þórólfsón, hid a treasure chest at the bottom of the pond. His plunder is said to have been located, but never retrieved. Nearing the waterfall, we're sprayed from about forty metres away. We decide to take a raincheck on retrieving the treasure, and resolve instead to take some spray-speckled photos from a distance.

Next stop we refuel at Hótel Anna, a cosy little bed and breakfast on the road back to Reykjavík. We are served generous helpings of Icelandic lamb soup. I ask Védís if she's sick to death of the soup. "No, no, I actually love it," she says. "I had it for lunch as well." For dessert it's skyr with chocolate chips, which I devour despite my stomach being well over-capacity.

Night falls by the time we reach Seljalandsfoss, the second waterfall, of slightly less epic proportions to Skógafoss but no less picturesque.

Two huge floodlights bathe the waterfall in light. Védís escorts us along the slippery track behind the waterfall where there's a cave.

From here, reflections of our shadows shimmy across the back of the waterfall to extraordinary effect. As we continue around the waterfall, the American lady in front of me takes a tumble and slides like a penguin front first down the grass slope. She stands up unhurt, and decides not to sue, but it's a warning to potential night-time visitors to walk the track with caution.

We make regular stops on the bus ride back to Reykjavík to scope the sky for Northern Lights. By this point we don't particularly care whether we see them or not. We've seen more than enough highlights for one day. 🍷

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Graphics Follow Music Designer Goddur displays his collection of 29 posters

In person, Guðmundur Oddur Magnússon, professionally known as Goddur, doesn't strike you as the creator of quirky and colourful posters. Sporting an unruly white beard and dressed in a black shirt under a black vest, black pants, black boots and a black beanie, he is the type you would expect to cover his walls with posters for death metal concerts, not movies, art exhibits and spoken music festivals. But then, his sartorial choices may just be part of a minimalist aesthetic.



Alisa Kalyanova

terest in graphic design started when he was a teenager growing up in Akureyri, when the artwork on '70s vinyl records drew him in.

He was at the time actively creating posters for different student groups, posters protesting the Vietnam War and championing the student revolution. And while his grades in math and other courses suffered, his visual art grades were always high. Eventually Goddur dropped out altogether.

Second chances for dropouts

"It's usually the dropouts and the B students who do best in the field," Goddur tells me, speaking from both personal and general experience. "It is usually the people that have to fight for their existence, to make their careers, who do best."

In 1976, he began his formal education as a fine arts student at the Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts. There he studied mixed media art under members of the avant-garde art movement FLUXUS, including Dieter Roth and Herman Nitch. Years later, Goddur would be invited back to teach at the school, but in 1979, just short of graduation, he was kicked out "more or less for drinking," he says.

"I was drinking too much alcohol and smoking too much pot," Goddur says. "I was dreaming more and more about what I wanted to do and doing less and less."

It was through his efforts to sober up during the early '80s that he found his way into graphic design. "Part of my rehab was to get away from the bohemian life of the artist," he says.

He moved to Vancouver, Canada and began studying graphic design at Emily Carr University of Art and Design. It was the late '80s, and the old tools of the trade—a film grid for precision, an exacto knife for cutting and a wax for paste—were just being replaced by the Macintosh wave of the future. Goddur was part of the first generation of design students to use PageMaker, now Adobe InDesign and Adobe Illustrator, which he used to design all of his exhibit posters.

But ask Goddur about Vancouver and he'll tell you about the fireworks during the World Expo in the summer of 1986 when he arrived. Or he'll talk about the design portfolio and fifteen boxes of personal belongings he left there in 1990, after his three visas—student, work and tourist—expired. "Immigration told me 'get married or hit the road,'" he says. And while he returned to Iceland intending to head right back to Vancouver as an immigrant, he hasn't so much as visited once in the 22 years since he left.

He brings up the John Lennon quote: "Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans."

✦ - ARIT JOHN

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"Sometimes the best designers, the best artists, are the ones who do the most minimal things," he says. "Western people have a tendency to over-design."

His own office in the Iceland Academy of the Arts building is fairly simple—a couple of couches, a side table, a desk and a bookshelf. On the walls are three posters, all part of the 29-piece collection that will be on display at the Spark Design Space until January 15.

Art, design and Björk's coattails

The collection, which first debuted as Iceland's contribution to 2011's Beijing Design Week, has been exhibited in 12 cities around the world. However, this is the first time that the posters are formally exhibited together in Iceland.

His philosophy for making them is fairly simple. "The message must be conveyed quickly," he says. It happens in three layers: First, the poster must catch the viewer's attention. Then it

must convey what it is—an art exhibit, a film poster, etc. Finally, it must be clear who's advertising.

This, he says, is the difference between art and design. With art, you can spend months discovering the message, noticing different nuances with each viewing. This sort of delayed response doesn't work for promoting events, as you want people to know what your event is before it's passed.

"With design, the top three layers must be pretty clear, but behind them you can have more layers that are not as important, but closer to art."

At one point Goddur pulls up the oldest poster in the exhibit, an announcement for an art exhibit from 1996. The design is a collaboration with Bjarni H. Þorarinsson—Godgur received a pencil sketch from him and created what he called "a visual representation" of Bjarni's world. Angel whales float above a futuristic barn

house surrounded by tractors, both on the ground and in the sky.

Despite being sixteen years old, the poster doesn't seem dated. This is why Goddur prefers making posters to doing advertising work, which is meant to sell products in that moment.

As a professor, Goddur has been able to define the terms and number of layers of his own work. Over the last seventeen years he's taught art in Akureyri, at the Icelandic Academy of Arts and Crafts in Reykjavík, and at the Iceland Academy of the Arts, where he's currently employed. In this time Goddur says he has never had to apply

for a teaching position. "They always come to me," he says matter-of-factly.

In that time he's taught hundreds of students, many of whom now work in the design industry.

The international success of some of these students, as well as international interest in his own work, is in some ways a result of the popularity of Iceland's hit music groups. As Björk, Sigur Rós and other groups began selling albums abroad in the early 2000s, the artwork on the albums sparked an interest in the designers behind them. Or, as Goddur puts it, "the graphics followed the music."

This has, at least in Goddur's world, been going on for decades. His own in-

"I was dreaming more and more about what I wanted to do and doing less and less."

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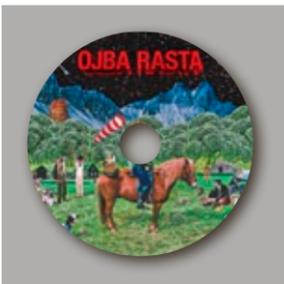
Album Reviews

Ojba Rasta

Ojba Rasta
2012

facebook.com/OjbaRasta

Successful in bringing people together and cementing their spot on your party playlist despite obvious shortcomings



+ There's an indecisive Icelandicness at work here. The production values, line-up of instruments (clarinet, melodica, euphonium) and vocals are all seemingly un-reggae. This simultaneously works for, and against, the band. This said Icelandicness gives Ojba Rasta an intriguing feel of "otherness," and there's an odd international flavour to the proceedings as well.

The band effortlessly tackles the musically upbeat numbers, which are contrasted by the more melancholic ones. In fact, there's a clear division between the two camps as the album starts very upbeat, but gradually becomes more moody, with an uplifting reprieve in "Jónsmessa."

The reserved vocal performances don't add much, and do little in way of leading the music save for the album's closer, "Í Ljósaskiptum," which features a guest performance by Forgotten Loes MC, Birkir B. The lyrics are interesting, but there is a marked lack of vocal swag and presence—key components of reggae music.

Ojba Rasta also has yet to attain the swagger to pull their dubbier tracks. They have their merits, but the "feel" isn't quite there. Maybe it's the studio environment, but the acid-y qualities of their live performance are left out and this robs the band of one of its prime elements.

The album 'Ojba Rasta' is a remarkable animal, playful and problematic, yet easily enjoyable. For an album that is so indecisive, its ability to swoon and engage is all the more interesting. **✂ - BIRKIR FJALAR VIÐARSSON**

Þórunn Antónía

Star Crossed
2012

facebook.com/Thorunnantonia

Enjoy with a pair of leg warmers and some shoulder pads



+ Ten years after the release of her debut record, Þórunn Antónía returns with the '80s throwback album 'Star Crossed.' Leaving ten years between album releases cannot be attributed to laziness though as Þórunn has kept herself busy with a variety of projects, most notably with the highly—albeit briefly—acclaimed UK-based psyche folk band Fields as well as a brief stint with Beck.

Considering those relatively left-of-centre accolades, 'Star Crossed' may surprise people. This is POP in the truest sense. Producer David Berndsen's obsession with the decade of decadence shines through here in all its unapologetic and bashful glory. Production is slick and measured, relying almost entirely on the four-on-the-floor/rhythmic synth bass approach. The result is ten dreamy and infectious pop tunes that are way more Kylie than I think Þórunn would like to admit.

"Too Late" and "Out of Touch" are so catchy that the only way of getting one of them out of your head is to listen to the other. "Electrify My Heartbeat" is a slow-paced pop ballad which would have made any microphone wielding, spandex-clad glitter doll proud twenty-five years ago, whilst "Time Difference" references an attempt to reach a distant loved one on a landline. It's all well and good, but I can't help feeling that 'Star Crossed' would have felt more relevant at a time when people actually used landlines. **✂ - ÁRNI ÁRNASON**

Brák

Tómhyggja
2012

facebook.com/cenumbdub

Jesus shitting Christ, this is great



+ Damn. Daaaaammnn. This here debut EP from Brák is really quite fantastic.

It is the work of one Þorsteinn Kári Guðmundsson who resides in Akureyri. As its title suggests, 'Tómhyggja' ("Nihilism") is a gloomy, mordant little chap that has been unleashed just in time for winter and the ever-encroaching dark. The title track introduces the EP with its ominous rise in tension before "Dá" gets things going properly. It is a fevered and dark post-punk rush into oblivion with Þorsteinn's anguished and urgent vocals riding atop the music's frenzied gallop. It is the highlight of the EP, but the other tracks are close behind.

Great as this EP is, there are things to be improved. The production values are all over the place, which means the EP doesn't sound as cohesive as it could. But by Þorsteinn's own admission (in an interview with Halifax Collect), 'Tómhyggja' is somewhat of a demo. There is a 12 song album due to be recorded sometime during the winter and if it realises the potential shown on this release, then it promises to be pretty damn special. **✂ - CLYDE BRADFORD**

Heavenly pizzas!

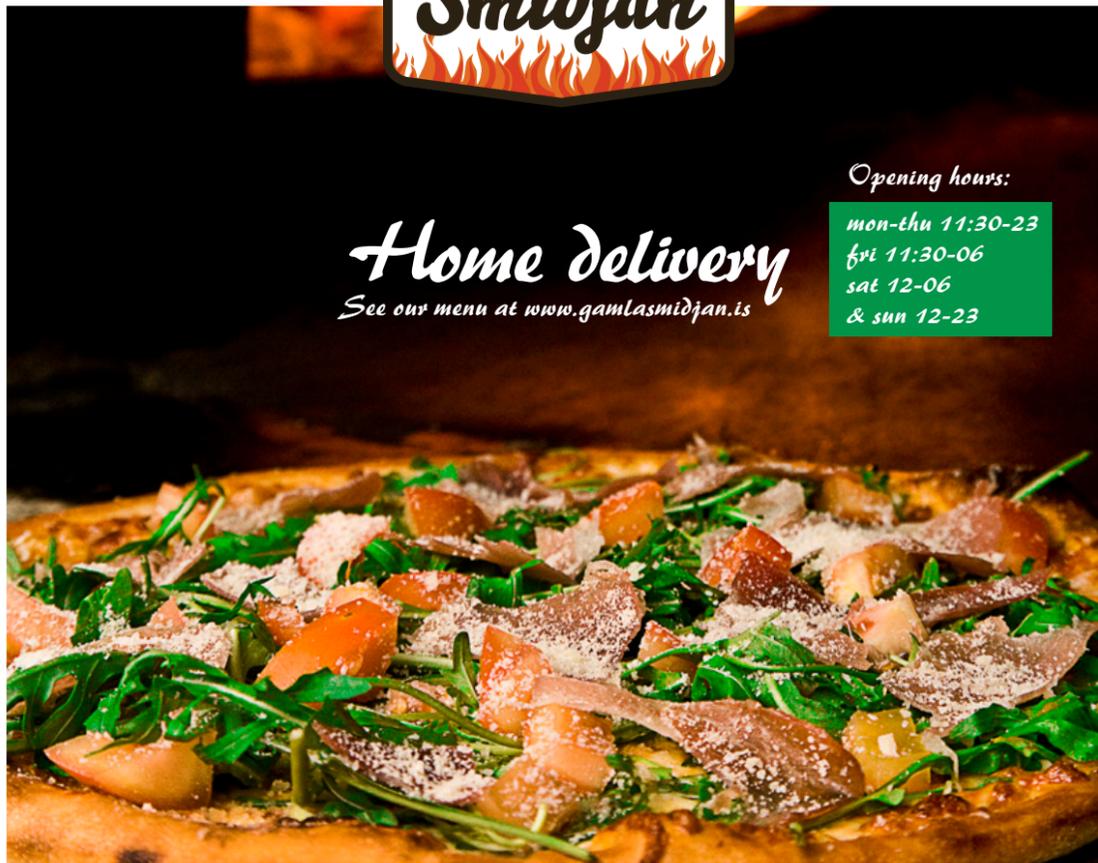


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The World Is Full Of Monsters Of Monsters and Men have changed the global face of Icelandic music. So what happens next?



“
I think the fact that they're Icelandic is very intriguing to their fans in the US
”



Among Icelandic acts, what Of Monsters and Men have accomplished is pretty much unheard of. Within the space of two years, they went from non-existent to world famous. And while Iceland clearly boasts its share of internationally renowned artists, none have emerged quite so quickly on the global stage.

Perhaps it's not worth questioning how this happened. After all, my first exposure to the band reveals its immediate impact. It was at Airwaves in 2011, and I walked in to NASA on the second-to-last song of their set. It was after midnight, I was exhausted, and I hadn't slept since leaving New York the night before. And yet, it only took about two minutes to catch on to how instantly irresistible this music was. A song and a half later, I was sold. It didn't take much.

So the fact that this same phenomenon replicated so quickly as more people heard the music isn't that surprising. Plus, not only did they have the tunes, but they also had a major label backing them almost from the outset. What is a bit odd, however, is the way they seemed to have skipped the usual path to this level of success, which involves winning over a small, devoted fanbase of hardcore music lovers, and then growing beyond that as word spreads.

Instead, Of Monsters and Men seem almost to have emerged as a fully formed headlining act, appealing to the broadest of audiences, most of whom had no idea

who they were a year ago—most of whom don't seem to have an idea where Iceland even is—and who are now hanging on every word of every song. At least, as far as the sing-alongs and singles go.

Teenagers, Wall Street types, a bevy of bros

When the band recently returned to NYC, it was already playing at one of the city's largest venues, Terminal 5. Not only that, but it had sold out two nights in a row there. Of course, this is a venue frowned upon by many serious music lovers, mostly because of the type of crowd it tends to bring out—teenagers, Wall Street types, a bevy of bros—the type of person who waits for the music to come to them, rather than actively seeking it out.

Then again, without appealing to this crowd, there's only so big a band can get. It's casual music fans that drive the market, and as long as you're making the music you love, you can't control who listens to it. The real problem with going from an unknown band to a band of this status so quickly is that you end up bypassing the stage where you build

up serious cred on the way. It makes it far too easy to fall really far, really fast, when your main support system is built on people who will have moved on to the next radio-friendly band long before your second album even comes out.

A less foreboding Iceland?

I spoke to a concertgoer, Weezie Yancey-Siegel, about the first of the two NYC shows, which was also her first time seeing the band. "I think the fact that they're Icelandic is very intriguing to their fans in the US," she said. "I heard a lot of the crowd talking about the fact that the band is Icelandic and how much they wanted to go to Iceland. My own brother, who attended the concert with me, is actually planning on going to Iceland during his gap year in the spring, because he was inspired by Of Monsters and Men and other Icelandic bands like Sigur Rós."

Which is an interesting point. Because while Sigur Rós and Björk have represented Icelandic music on a global scale for so long, neither one has ever been populist by nature, preferring to put art above all else. Per-

haps with Of Monsters and Men willingly creating music for the masses instead, it will help to change perceptions of what Iceland is to the rest of the world—to make it seem more welcoming, more open, less foreboding. Which, in turn, could continue to open the door for more Icelandic acts overseas.

Iceland represent

It's worth noting that the band has been bringing other Icelandic acts on tour with it as well. Last time it was in the states, Lay Low was in tow, and this time it's Sóley. It might be a bit misguided, as audiences hungry for Of Monsters and Men's boisterous sound frequently become impatient with more mellow, introspective openers, but it doesn't mean their intentions aren't good.

"The drum set actually had an Icelandic flag on it," said Weezie, "so I had the impression that they were proud of where they were from and of representing the music scene there. Where I was standing, there was even a crowd of Icelandic people who had moved to New York, and who had come out to see and support the band."

And really, when you think about it, one thing you can't deny is that, in the space of this unbelievably short time, Of Monsters and Men have already changed the status quo in term of what it means to be an Icelandic act on a global stage. This may not be a true boon for other acts whose music is more challenging or less ostentatious, as OMAM fans fail to find something they can grasp hold of as easily, but at least it means more people will be listening.

And then, of course, there's the challenge the band faces for itself. Will it fall into the trap of embracing the rapid success and simply self-replicating, as with Mumford & Sons before it? Or will it strive to push further and actually make new music that retains the spark of what made us all stop in our tracks the first time around?

Only time will tell.

✎ DOUG LEVY

Doug Levy is a New York-based freelance writer and Contributing Editor for Flavorpill.

FACT: OF MONSTERS AND MEN ARE HUUUUUGE!

*Their debut album, 'My Head Is An Animal' has received certified Platinum status in Canada and Ireland, Gold in Germany and the UK. It charted all over the place, reaching sixth place in the US for instance.



*According to the latest Nielsen SoundScan numbers, 'My Head Is An Animal' has shifted 485,408 copies in the U.S., which means they will likely go Gold there before the year is over.



*Amazon.com just released information that their users have ranked the album #1 on their Best Albums of 2012 list.



*The lead single 'Little Talks' has received certified platinum status in the following countries: Germany, Australia, Canada, Italy, Ireland and the U.S. (and probably Iceland too, if we did singles. And certifications). In fact, the single has been purchased a total of 1,162,223 times in the U.S. alone.

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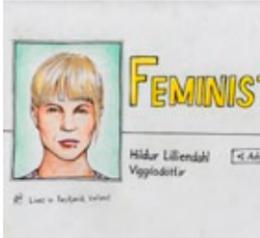


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Spór ehf.

P.8 “ Now Hildur is the main bogeyman of anti-feminists. Whenever anything even remotely related to feminism is in the news, people will write disparaging things about her, an example of which brought on the latest Facebook sanction. ”



Why does Facebook keep banning Iceland's most well-known feminist, Hildur Lillendahl Viggósdóttir?

P.12 “ Even for motivated speakers, Iceland's language environment is studded with obstacles to frustrate immersion. Perhaps because it lacks this history of foreign language students, Icelanders themselves have “little patience” to listen as foreigners transmute their native tongues into Icelandic. ”



The joys and sorrows of learning the Icelandic language explored.

P.22 “ People have this kind of glow to them after class. I've always wanted to take a before and after picture, because you can really tell the difference. It's really beautiful. ”



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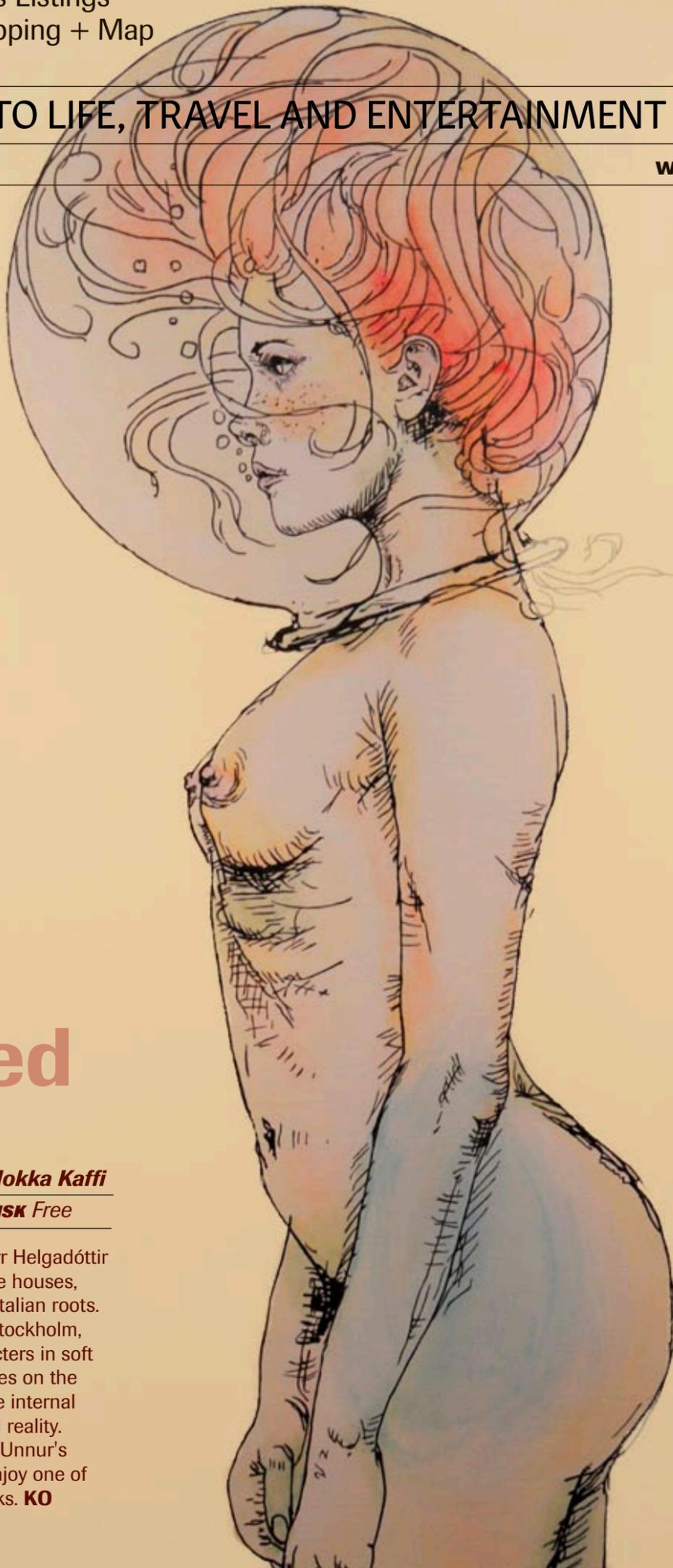
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"Dualism" by Unnur Ýrr Helgadóttir at Mokka Kaffi

Skólavörðustíg 3A | 🕒 Dec. 1 - Jan. 10 | **ISK Free**

The delightfully dreamy illustrations of Unnur Ýrr Helgadóttir are on display in one of Reykjavík's oldest coffee houses, which opened in 1958, and has kept true to its Italian roots. Unnur was born in Iceland but now resides in Stockholm, and her illustrations often feature female characters in soft pastel tones. For this particular show, she focuses on the relationship between the mind and the body, the internal and external, and the lines between fantasy and reality. The venue itself provides a quaint backdrop for Unnur's whimsical illustrations and visitors can dually enjoy one of Reykjavík's best coffees while browsing the works. **KO**



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Festive Menu

Starter

Oven baked salted cod

Salted cod, tomato chutney, dates, arugula, parmesan biscuit.

Main Course

Venison

Venison fillet, rosemary, potatoes, salsify, chocolate, gorgonzola.

Dessert

Italian Christmas dessert

Pannetone, vanilla icecream, cinnamon cream, strawberries.

6.500 kr.

Festive Menu with carefully selected beverages

11.990 kr.

Christmas Platter

Smoked duck, smoked lamb, caramelized red onion, apple, pickled vegetables, Grana padano, Ljótur cheese, grilled bread.

3.770 kr.

Happy Hour every day 17 – 19

UNO at Ingólfstorg
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MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

December

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 December 7

Artíma Gallerí
• 21:00 Housekell
• 21:45 Good Moon Deer
• 22:30 Captain Fufanu
Faktory
• 22:00 Dj Óli Dóri
Gamli Gaukurinn
• 22:00 Brain Police, Lára, Pétur Ben
Glaumbar
• 22:00 DJ Rikki G
Hemmi og Valdi
• 20:00 Captain Fufanu
Prikið
• 22:00 Glæpa Pub Quiz & Trapnight
Vegamót
• 23:00 Jói

Saturday December 8

Gamli Gaukurinn
• 22:00 SKálmöld
Glaumbar
• 22:00 DJ Yngvi Eysteins
Hemmi og Valdi
• 20:00 RVK Soundsystem
Hresso
• 22:00 Playmo
Faktory
• 22:00 Dj KGB & Raw Ham
• 23:00 Agent Fresco, Nóra & Jón Þór
Frikirkjan
• 21:00 Pascal Pinon release show
Kaffibarinn
• 21:00 Gunni Ewok & Karl Tryggvason
Prikið
• 00:00 DJ Pedro Pilatus
Vegamót
• 23:00 Gunni Stef

Sunday December 9

Hemmi og Valdi
• 20:00 SKúli Mennski
Faktory
• 21:00 Live Jazz
Kaffibarinn
• 22:00 Kristinn Pálsson
Prikið
• 22:00 Hangover Cinema: "The Nightmare Before Christmas"

Monday December 10

Kaffibarinn
• 22:00 DJ 22.5
Prikið
• 22:00 DJ Hús

Tuesday December 11

Kaffibarinn
• 22:00 Paul Evans
Prikið
• 22:00 Súr þriðjudagur with Berndsen

Wednesday December 12

Hemmi og Valdi
• 20:00 Pétur Pan
Kaffibarinn
• 22:00 Óli Dóri
Prikið
• 22:00 Dungeon Massive

Thursday December 13

Faktory
• 22:00 Muck, Oyama, Caterpillarmen & Just Another Snake Cult
Gamli Gaukurinn
• 22:00 Pearl Jam tribute
Glaumbar
• 22:00 DJ Yngvi Eysteins
Hemmi og Valdi
• 20:00 Boogie Trouble DJ-set
Hresso
• 22:00 Cairo Phthian
Kaffibarinn
• 21:00 Maggi Legó
Prikið
• 12:00 Lunch Beat Reykjavik

14
Dec



French Metals

Fjandinn Kice Metalfest

Gamli Gaukurinn

Tryggvagata 22 | Doors: 20:00 | 1500 ISK

Think of the least heavy metal country in Europe you can, seriously. Ok, say it on three. One, two, thr- FRANCE! Hey, mine too. Any French heavy metal band surely couldn't be taken seriously right? Wrong! Popular French metal festival, Fjandinn Kice Metalfest, is coming to Iceland. Two dates are planned: The first at Gamli Gaukurinn in Reykjavík on December 14, and then in Akureyri at Græni Hatturinn on the 15th. To see the likes of French legends L'Esprit Du Clan and Hangman's Chair, as well as local favourites, Momentum, Dimma and Angist among others, it's practically 'un vol' ('a steal' in French). Tickets can be purchased via midakaup.is Just remember, no baguettes, no berets, noooo dice. **TLM**

Vegamót
• 23:00 Gunni Stef

Friday December 14

Faktory
• 21:00 Record Records's Christmas swing ft. Mammút, Tilbury & Kiriya Family
Gamli Gaukurinn
• 22:00 Fjandinn Kice Metalfest
Glaumbar
• 22:00 DJ Seth
Hemmi og Valdi
• 20:00 Ívar Pétur
Hresso
• 22:00 Goðsögn
Kaffibarinn
• 23:00 Alfons X
Prikið
• 22:00 Húsbandið & DJ Danny Deluxe
Vegamót
• 23:00 Gorilla Funk

Saturday December 15

Faktory
• 21:00 Record Records's Christmas swing ft. Retro Stefson, Ojba Rasta & Moses Hightower
Gamli Gaukurinn
• 22:00 Bone China

Glaumbar
• 22:00 DJ Party Stússi
Hresso
• 22:00 Tandoori Johnsson
Kaffibarinn
• 23:00 CasaNova
Prikið
• 00:00 Trapnight
Vegamót
• 23:00 Benni B-ruff

Sunday December 16

Faktory
• 21:00 Live jazz
Kaffibarinn
• 22:00 Kristinn Pálsson
Prikið
• 22:00 Hangover Cinema: Christmas Vacation

Monday December 17

Kaffibarinn
• 22:00 Solaris Sun Glaze
Prikið
• 22:00 DJ Hús

Tuesday December 18

Kaffibarinn
• 22:00 DJ 2.25
Prikið
• 22:00 Leifur Ljósvaki



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Wednesday December 19

- Faktorý**
- 22:00 Þórir Georg release concert
- Hemmi og Valdi**
- 20:00 Fjólublátt Jólaljós Við Barinn
- Kaffibarinn**
- 22:00 Extreme Chill
- Prikið**
- 22:00 Berndsen

Thursday December 20

- Faktorý**
- 22:00 IMMO release concert
 - 23:00 Dj Logi Pedro
- Gamli Gaukurinn**
- 22:00 KIMI Records Christmas Party
- Glaubar**
- 22:00 Christmas Bingo
- Hemmi og Valdi**
- 20:00 Color Me
- Hresso**
- 22:00 Flass concert
- Kaffibarinn**
- 21:00 Alfons X
- Prikið**
- 22:00 DJ Krúsi
- Vegamót**
- 23:00 Gorilla Funk

Friday December 21

- Faktorý**
- 22:00 Ójba Rasta Christmas charity show
 - 23:00 Dj Benni B-Ruff
- Glaubar**
- 22:00 DJ Seth
- Hemmi og Valdi**
- 20:00 Musique
- Hresso**
- 22:00 Kongó útgáfutónleikar
- Kaffibarinn**
- 23:00 Simon FKNHNSM
- Prikið**
- 22:00 Húsbandið & DJ Danny Deluxe
- Vegamót**
- 23:00 Benni B-ruff

Saturday December 22

- Faktorý**
- 22:30 Boogie Trouble and friends
 - 00:30 Groove Box ft. Dj Shaft, Dj Ingvi & Dj Ymir
- Gamli Gaukurinn**
- 20:00 Housekell
- Glaubar**
- 22:00 DJ Yngvi Eysteins
- Hresso**
- 22:00 Haffi Haffw
- Kaffibarinn**
- 23:00 Kári
- Prikið**
- 00:00 DJ Benni B Ruff
- Vegamót**
- 23:00 Gunni Stef

Sunday December 23

- Harpa**
- 22:00 Bubbi Morthens
- Gamli Gaukurinn**
- 21:00 Blúshátíð Bjögga Gísla
- Kaffibarinn**
- 21:00 HalliValli
- Prikið**
- 22:00 DJ Árna Kocoon

Monday December 24

See our Christmas pull-out for holiday events and festivities.

Tuesday December 25

See our Christmas pull-out for holiday events and festivities.

Wednesday December 26

- Faktorý**
- 20:00 Dj KGB
- Gamli Gaukurinn**
- 22:00 Sign
- Kaffibarinn**
- 22:00 Gísli Galdur
- Prikið**
- 22:00 Emmsjé Gauti
- Vegamót**
- 23:00 Gunni Stef

Thursday December 27

- Faktorý**
- 20:00 Dj Housekell
- Gamli Gaukurinn**
- 22:00 Lockerbie, M-band, Nóra, Vigri and Ósk
- Glaubar**
- 22:00 DJ Yngvi Eysteins
- Hemmi og Valdi**
- 20:00 Pétur Pan
- Kaffibarinn**
- 21:00 Margeir
- Prikið**
- 22:00 Surprise show
- Vegamót**
- 23:00 Jói

Friday December 28

- Hemmi og Valdi**
- 20:00 Atli Viðar
- Faktorý**
- 23:00 Möller records showcase / Hugarástand
 - 00:00 Hugarástand from midnight
- Gamli Gaukurinn**
- 22:00 The Welfare Poets
- Glaubar**
- 22:00 DJ Cyppie
- Kaffibarinn**
- 22:00 Maggi Legó
- Prikið**
- 22:00 Pub Quiz
- Vegamót**
- 23:00 Gorilla Funk

Saturday December 29

- Hemmi og Valdi**
- 20:00 Solid Sound
- Faktorý**
- 23:00 Leaves. Breathe anniversary concert
 - 00:00 Dj Atli Kanill
- Glaubar**
- 22:00 DJ Rikki G
- Kaffibarinn**
- 23:00 Alfons X
- Prikið**
- 00:00 DJ Árni Kocoon
- Vegamót**
- 23:00 Hannes

Sunday December 30

- Faktorý**
- 21:30 Live Jazz
- Kaffibarinn**
- 22:00 KGB
- Prikið**
- 22:00 Hungover Cinema: Cigarettes

Monday December 31

- Faktorý**
- 00:00 Dj Logi Pedro
- Prikið**
- 22:00 ÁRAMÓTAGLEÐI PRIKSINS

Tuesday January 1

- Kaffibarinn**
- 22:00 HalliValli and DJ Pabbi

Wednesday January 2

- Faktorý**
- 22:00 Moses Hightower and Ómar Guðjónsson

Thursday January 3

- Faktorý**
- 22:00 Of Monsters and Men
- Kaffibarinn**
- 22:00 Funkpátturinn New Years Special

30
Dec



Going Retro Retro Stefson with Hermigervill

Vodafonehöllin | Doors: 20:00 | 2500 ISK

Afro-electro pop superstars Retro Stefson and chiptune master Hermigervill will help ring in the new year right. Retro Stefson's self-titled album, released this year, cemented the band's position as prominent local artists. Two of the album's singles, 'Queen' and 'Glow,' both reached #1 on the Icelandic Singles Chart. Hermigervill has released four albums, and is known for his quirky electronic covers of famous Icelandic songs. **KO**

Opening hours in december:

23.dec.....	11:00 - 01:00
24.dec.....	11:00 - 15:00
25.dec.....	CLOSED
26.dec.....	11:00 - 04:00
27.dec.....	11:00 - 01:00
28.dec.....	11:00 - 04:00
29.dec.....	11:00 - 04:00
30.dec.....	11:00 - 01:00
31.dec.....	11:00 - 05:00
01.jan	11:00 - 03:00

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i8

i8 Gallery
Tryggvagata 16
101 Reykjavík
Iceland
www.i8.is

EGGERT PÉTURSSON

1 November - 23 December 2012

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

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ÓLAFUR ELÍASSON	FINNBOGI PÉTURSSON
HREINN FRÍÐFINNSSON	RAGNA RÓBERTSDÓTTIR
KRISTJÁN GUÐMUNDSSON	EGILL SÆBJÖRNSSON
SIGURÐUR GUÐMUNDSSON	KARIN SANDER
ELÍN HANSDÓTTIR	HRAFNKELL SIGURÐSSON
RONI HORN	IGNACIO URIARTE
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ART

OPENINGS AND ONGOING

DECEMBER

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

Ongoing

ASÍ Art Museum

Brightdark Places

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

Runs until December 16.

The Culture House

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

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 Einar Jónsson Museum

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

On permanent view

Gerðuberg 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 Sveinsdóttir

Creativity, originality and endless inspiration as well as an interest in history characterise the work of Thorunn Elisabet Sveinsdóttir.

Runs until January 6

The Other Side

The works of Thuridur Ros Sigurthorsdóttir display a poetic take on everyday materials, uncovering the magic that can reside in innovative and well thought out installations.

Runs until January 6

i8 Gallery

B Eggert Pétursson - Paintings / Málverk

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

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



Frolic Through the Flowers

Paintings by Eggert Pétursson

i8 Gallery

Tryggvagata 16 | Runs until December 23, 2012

Upon first glance, Iceland's moonlike landscape may seem to be barren of all life, color and debatably, excitement. The works of artist Eggert Pétursson, however, reveal that assumption is far from the truth. His charming paintings reveal the depth and vibrancy of Iceland's fauna, each painting is a world unto itself. The more times spent with them, the more you begin to notice. This is Eggert's fourth show at the i8 Gallery, and features 12 new works. **KO**

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 layout.

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.

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 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

People on Þórgata

Photographs and drawings by Alda Lóa Leifsdóttir of houses and inhabitants of Þórgata in Reykjavík.

Runs until January 13

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

Trends in Sami modern art

GIERDU is showing artwork from the collection of RidduDuottarMuseat in Karasjok, Norway. The museum holds one of the most interesting collections of contemporary Sami art in Scandinavia. GIERDU has been on tour in northern Norway in 2009-2011 and has been exhibited at 16 locations. Many of the best Sami artists of Scandinavia are represented in this exhibition.

Runs until January 6

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 playwright's death, the Nordic House will coordinate a production of Death Dance, one of his most famous plays.

December 10

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 - Hafnarhúsið

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WHATS INSIDE

Reykjavík Map

Happy Hour Guide

Places we like

Best of Reykjavík

Practical Info

Reykjavík Area

December 7 - January 10

Keep it in your pocket

Five Weeks

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

GO

FESTIVE

Tinsel Town

7 FRI FILM Out of Arabia Saudi Arabian movie Wajda will have its world premiere at Bíó Paradís, in collaboration with UN Women in Iceland. The movie sheds light on the fate of women in Saudi Arabia today.

9 SUN FILM Black Sunday Bíó Paradís continues their 'Svartir Sunnudagar' ('Black Sunday') series. Catch a screening of creepy classic Carnival of Souls.

14 FRI MUSIC Known for Noise AMFJ and Kiasmos will perform at Harpa Kaldalón for free! Who needs Christmas carols when you've got experimental noise.

16 SUN THEATRE Into the Abyss For anyone who's ever wondered about the unknown, The Abyss is an experimental theatre production at the old Opera, Ingólfstræti 2a (Gamla Bíó). Go and get lost...

8 DEC

ALBUM RELEASE

All in the Family



Pascal Pinon
2000 ISK

Frikirkjan, Capital Area

© 21 :00

Ridiculously adorable twin sister duo Pascal Pinon will perform songs from their latest album, 'Twosomeness.' If that doesn't scream twee to you, I don't know what will! The album has a little something for everyone, featuring songs sung in English, Icelandic and Swedish. The sisters, Jófríði and Ásthildi Ákadætrum, worked closely with Alex Somers, who has previously worked on albums with Sin Fang, Úlfi, Jónsi and Sigur Rós. The duo released their first album when they were 14, and although the sisters have grown up with traditional songwriting and composition, 'Twosomeness' still retains the charm and nostalgic quality the band is known for. **KO**



Christmas Village at Hafnarfjörður

Free

Hafnarfjörður, 20 minutes outside of Reykjavík

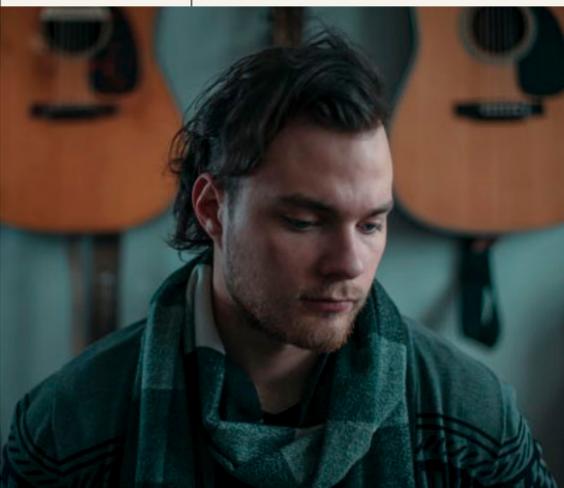
Every weekend from 13:00 - 18:00 until December 25

Now into its 10th year Hafnarfjörður's much-loved Christmas village is open for the festive season, and will be open every weekend until Christmas from 13:00-18:00 through November and then staying open until 22:00 each weekend in December. Attractions for the kids, or for those young at heart, include miniature Christmas houses, as well as plenty of arty and crafty gift ideas. And if you're less into the gift-giving side of Christmas and more into the food-eating side, don't despair there'll be delicious refreshments like hot cocoa, cookies and waffles. Everyone should be able to find something to their liking to celebrate the festive season with. **TLM**

14 DEC

CONCERT

Sweet Sounds



Moses Hightower and Ásgeir Trausti
3990 ISK

Háskólabíó at Hagatorg, 107 Reykjavík

© 20 :00

Cosy up for this show featuring Icelandic wunderkind Ásgeir Trausti and mellow crooners Moses Hightower. Ásgeir, who is only 20 years old, played shows for packed crowds earlier this year at Iceland Airwaves. His album 'Dyrd i daudathogn,' broke records earlier this year in September when it was released for digital presale. Moses Hightower, formed in 2007, began receiving national attention for their warm, bluesy album, 'Búum til börn' (Let's Make Babies). In 2010, the album was nominated for Best Album and Best Composition in the Icelandic Music Awards. **KO**

Den Danske Kro



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

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Restaurant Hornið - Hafnarstræti 10, 101 Reykjavík, t. 551 3340 - www.horni.is

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C

MAP

Places We Like

Food

1 Devitos

Laugavegur 126

Devitos Pizza by Hlemmur is the king of the Reykjavík slice. Their slices are always consistent in quality. Not surprisingly, they were the pioneers of pizza by the slice in this country, and they are still the best at it. As always, Devitos get bonus points for the delicious oils and spices on offer.

2 Íslenski barinn

Pósthússtræti 9

Íslenski barinn is not THE cheapest meal in town. You can for instance get a hot dog and a Coke from Bæjarins Beztu for 500 ISK, but that let's be honest, won't hold you over for long. Íslenski barinn this year offers hearty Icelandic dishes for a pretty reasonable 1200-1300 ISK and it's decidedly more upscale than other traditional Icelandic home cooking for a similar price.

3 VOX

Hilton Reykjavik Nordica

VOX simply put makes the best brunch. It's expensive, yes, but for 3,450 ISK, it's all you can eat so you'll probably consume more than enough for breakfast, lunch and dinner. They do everything. You can enjoy a wide variety of delicious food in a modern atmosphere and it's just a stone's throw away from Laugavegur. Note: it's only served on Saturdays and Sundays.

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 French courses.

5 Ghandi

Pósthússtræti 17

Relative newcomer Ghandi, with its emphasis on cuisine from India's Kerala region, is a favourite, with the fish dishes coming especially recommended. As our food critic noted in his review of the place, Ghandi adds a "delicious and welcome variety to the Icelandic restaurant flora," and for that we are thankful.

Drinking

6 KEX

Skúlagata 28

Located literally steps away from Reykjavik 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.

Useful numbers

Emergency number: **112**

Medical help: **1770**

Dental emergency: **575 0505**

Information: **118**

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

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Iceland Refund, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400

Tourist information

Arctic Adventures, Laugavegur 11,

tel: 562 7000

City Centre, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

Iceland Excursions - Grayline Iceland,



7 Ölsmiðjan

Lækjargötu 10

Hip young locals have been spotted flocking to Ölsmiðjan lately, likely drawn to the watery 590 ISK beers and one another's authentic company. "Not that I'd go there sober or anything," one reader remarked, "but Ölsmiðjan can be really fun with the right crowd, despite the horrible beer."

8 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

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

9 Faktory

Smíðjástígur 6

"This is one of my favourite places because you never know what kind of night you'll have," one of our nightlife enthusiasts noted. Faktory has samba, hip hop, and nineties nights." Word of caution: If you go out for a smoke, you'll have to go to the back of the queue, which can be terribly long after 2 AM.

Hafnarstræti 20, tel: 540 1313

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

Trip, Laugavegur 54, tel: 433 8747

Pharmacies

Lyf og heilsa, Egilsgata 3, tel: 563 1020

Lyfja, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045 and

Lágmúla 5, tel: 533-2300

Coach terminal

BSÍ, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10,

tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

Domestic airlines

Air Iceland, Reykjavíkflugvöllur,

tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

Eagle Air, Hótel Loftleiðir, tel: 562-4200

Public transport

The only public transport available in Reykjavik 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.

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D

New In Town



13 Piccolo Italia

Laugavegur 100

An authentic Italian eatery on the main drag with a warm, cosy atmosphere, reasonable prices and an already loyal local following. Like any good Italian restaurant, the pasta is fresh and the staff are warm-natured. The pasta arrives to your table in generous helpings served in large Icelandic ceramic bowls. And the location is central, easily within crawling distance in case you have a few too many limoncellos. If you're after a pasta fix, don't go past-a it!



Venue Finder Music & Entertainment

- Amsterdam**
Hafnarstræti 5 | D4
- Austur**
Austurstræti 7 | E4
- B5**
Bankastræti 5 | E4
- Babalú**
Skólavörðustígur 22 | F5
- Bar 11**
Hverfisgötu 18 | E5
- Bjarni Fel**
Austurstræti 20 | E4
- Boston**
Laugavegur 28b | F6
- Café Paris**
Austurstræti 14 | E4
- Celtic Cross**
Hverfisgata 26 | E5
- Den Danske Kro**
Ingólfsstræti 3 | F5
- Dillon**
Laugavegur 30 | F7
- Dolly**
Hafnarstræti 4 | D4
- Dubliner**
Hafnarstræti 1-3 | D4
- Esja**
Austurstræti 16 | E4
- English Pub**
Austurstræti 12 | E4
- Faktory**
Smiðjustígur 6 | E5
- Gamli Gaukurinn**
Tryggvagata 22 | D4
- Gay 46**
Hverfisgata 46 | E4
- Ölsmiðjan**
Lækjargata 10 | E6
- Hressó**
Austurstræti 20 | E4
- Mánabar**
Hverfisgata 20 | E5
- Kaffi Zimsen**
Hafnarstræti 18 | D4
- Kaffibarinn**
Bergstraðastræti 1 | E5
- Nýlenduvöruverzlun Hemma & Valda**
Laugavegur 21 | F5
- Næsti Bar**
Ingólfsstræti 1A | E5
- Östofan**
Vegamótastígur | F5
- Prikið**
Bankastræti | E5
- Rósenberg**
Klapparstígur 25 | E6
- Sólon**
Bankastræti 7A | E5
- Thorvaldsen**
Austurstræti 8 | E4
- Vegamót**
Vegamótastígur 4 | F6

Museums & Galleries

- ART67**
Laugavegur 67 | F7
Mon - Fri 12 - 18 / Sat 12 - 16
www.listasafn.is
- ASÍ Art Museum**
Freygata 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**
Eiríksgrata | G6
Tue-Sun 14-17
www.skulptur.is
- Galleri Ágúst**
Baldursgata 12 | G5
Wed-Sat 12-17
www.galleriagust.is
- Galleri Fold**
Rauðarástígur 14-16 | G8
Mon-Fri 10-18 / Sat 11-16 / Sun 14-16
www.myndlist.is
- Kaolin**
Skólavörðustígur 22 | E5
www.kaolingallery.com
- Galleri Kling & Bang**
Hverfisgata 42 | E6
Thurs-Sun from 14-18
this.is/klingogbang/
- Ásgrímur Jónsson Museum**
Bergstraðastræti 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**
Galleri Tukt
Pósthússtræti 3-5 | E4
www.hitthusid.is
- i8 Gallery**
Tryggvagata 16 | D3
Tue-Fri 11-17 / Sat 13-17 and by appointment www.i8.is
- Living Art Museum**
Skúlagata 28 | E7
Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17 / Thu 13-22. www.nylo.is
- Hafnarborg**
Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður
www.hafnarborg.is
- Mokka Kaffi**
Skólavörðustígur 3A | E5
www.mokka.is
- The National Gallery of Iceland**
- Frikkirkjuvegur 7 | F4**
Tue-Sun 11-17
www.listasafn.is
- The National Museum**
Suðurgata 41 | G2
Open daily 10-17
natmus.is
- The Nordic House**
Sturlugata 5
Tue-Sun 12-17
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 Museum composed of Hafnarhús**
Tryggvagata 17 | D3
Open 10-17
Thursday 10 - 20
- Kjarvalsstaðir**
Flókagata 24
Open 10 - 17
- Ásmundarsafn**
Sigtún
Open 10 - 17
More info on www.listasafnreykjavikur.is
- Reykjavík City Library**
Tryggvagata 15 | D3
Mon 10-21, Tue-Thu 10-19, Fri 11-19, Sat and Sun 13-17
www.sim.is/Index/Islen-ska/Artotek
- Reykjavík Maritime Museum**
Grandagarður 8 | B2
www.maritimemuseum.is
- Reykjavík Museum of Photography**
Tryggvagata 16 | D3
Weekdays 12-19 / Sat-Sun 13-17 - www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is
- Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**
Laugarnestangi 70
www.iso.is
- SÍM**
Hafnarstræti 16 | E4
Mon-Fri 10-16
- Skörin**
Aðalstræti 10
- Spark Design Space**
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www.sparkdesignspace.com

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Upcoming
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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 Mál og menning

Laugavegur 18

After several years of humiliation, Mál og menning seems to have finally gotten its shit together in a big way. Aside from building up a respectable (for Iceland) stock of literature and magazines and hosting various fine literary events, they have opened an art gallery on their top floor and generally seem in good spirits. This is great news for downtown Reykjavík!

12 Rauðhetta og úlfurinn

Skólavörðustígur 8

Rauðhetta og úlfurinn are an enduring favourite when it comes to supplying the good people of Reykjavík with their trendy haircuts—which is odd because trends keep changing and fashion is notoriously fickle. "I can always count on excellent service at Rauðhetta og úlfurinn, they make me look good every time," one reader noted.

Public phones

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

Internet Access

Most cafés offer free wireless internet access. Computers with internet connections are available to use at:
Ráðhúskaffi City Hall, Tjarnargata 11
Ground Zero, Frakkastígur 8, near Laugavegur 45
The Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagata 15

The National and University Library, Arngrímsgata 3

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

Swimming Pools

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

Public Toilets

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

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Best Of Reykjavík

Every year around the beginning of July, we make a BEST OF REYKJAVÍK ISSUE celebrating some of what makes Reykjavík-life worthwhile, posting some good entries into a hopefully never-ending discussion. The primary purpose of BEST OF REYKJAVÍK is celebration! It's about big-upping stuff, giving mad props to it and patting it on the shoulder. The following are some nice tips we culled from BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2012, which you can find in full at www.grapevine.is



BEST NOODLE PLACE: NOODLE STATION

The noodle wars have been raging for over two years now, with Skólavörðustígur serving as battle ground for two noodle bars that take turns topping one another in noodly deliciousness. Both Núðluskálin and Noodle Station are wonderful in their own right, but we decided to stage an election through our social media platforms. In the end, Noodle Station won the vote with 29 votes against Núðluskálin's 21. One fan summed up Noodle Station's appeal, saying: "Keep it good and simple, the way food should be."



Located at Skólavörðustígur 21a



BEST PLACE TO CHEER UP: THE POND



While it was a refreshing swim at Nauthólsvík last year, we decided on Reykjavík's pond "Tjörnin" this time. We thought: "What's a good all-year-round place to cheer up? People need to be able to cheer up in the winter too." And that ruled out swimming in Nauthólsvík. "But the pond!" someone exclaimed. "You can go ice skating there in the winter when it's a real wonderland, and then you can always feed the ducks." Seconding that, someone wrote us: "Feed the ducks at the pond because they're funny and there's always some over excited chubby cheeked kid to cheer you up."

Located next to Reykjavík City Hall



BEST BEER SELECTION: MICRO BAR

While most bars in Reykjavík are content to sell run of the mill "bjór," Micro Bar prides itself in having an excellent selection of exotic beers on draft and by the bottle. The place recently opened inside Center Hotel earlier this year and we're pretty into it. They carry all of Iceland's wonderful microbrews and import fine beer and liquor that you're not going to taste anywhere else in town.

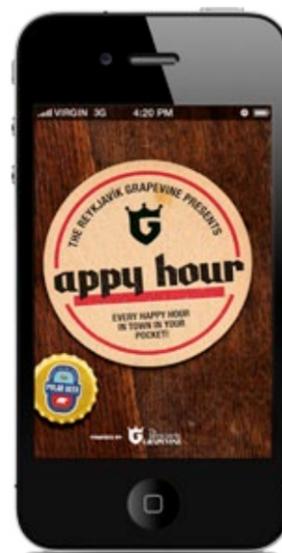


Located at Austurstræti 6

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**.
- Austur**
Every day from 20:00 to 00:00. Beer **495 ISK** and wine **550 ISK**.
- B5**
Every day from 16:00 to 22:00,
Beer **550 ISK**, cider **750 ISK**, wine **550 ISK**
- Bjarni Fel**
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00,
2 for 1 beer for **890 ISK**.
- Boston**
Every day from 16:00 to 22:00,
Beer **500 ISK** and wine **500 ISK**.
- Café Haiti**
Everyday from 16:00 to 22:00.
Beer for **500 ISK** and wine for **650 ISK**
- 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**.
- Dillon**
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00,
2 for 1 beer for **850 ISK**.
- Dolly**
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer for **500 ISK** and wine **500 ISK**.
- Dubliner**
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00,
2 for 1 beer for **1000 ISK**.
- Faktorý**
Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.
Beer for **550 ISK**.
- Fálkinn Bistro**
Everyday except Sunday from 17:00 to 22:00.
Beer for **500 ISK** and wine for **500 ISK**
- Hemmi og Valdi**
Every day from 12:00 to 20:00
Draft beer for **550 ISK** and wine for **700 ISK**.



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- Hilton Hotel Bar**
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00,
Beer for **500 ISK** and wine for **650 ISK**.
- Hótel 1919**
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00,
2 for 1 beer 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**.

- Íslenski Barinn**
Every day from 17:00 - 19:00.
2 for 1 on beer and wine.
- Kaffi Zimsen**
Sun - Thurs from 17:00 to 22:00,
2 for 1 beer for **800 ISK**.
- Kolbrautin**
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,
2 for 1 beer for **900 ISK** and wine for **1000 ISK**.
- Micro Bar**
Every day except Sat from 16:00 to 19:00,
500 ISK for a draft beer.
- Miðgarður Bistro bar**
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
50 percent off all drinks.
- Obladi Oblada**
Every day from 12:00 to 20:00
Beer **600 ISK**
- Prikið**
Weekdays from 16:00 to 20:00,
2 for 1 beer for **690 ISK**.
- Reykjavík Backpackers**
Every day from 17:00 - 20:00.
2 for 1 beer for **750 ISK**
- Roadhouse**
Friday & Saturday 22:00 - 23:00.
2 for 1 beer for **790 ISK** and wine for **790 ISK**.
- Slippbarinn**
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00,
50% off beer and wine.
- Stofan**
Every day from 17:00 to 20:00,
Beer for **500 ISK** and wine for **600 ISK**.
- Tapashouse**
Everyday from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer for **950 ISK** and wine for **1150 ISK**.
- Uno**
Everyday from 17:00 to 19:00.
50% off all drinks.
- Uppsafir - Bar & Café**
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
2 for 1 beer for **900 ISK**.
- Pingholtsbar**
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
Beer for **500 ISK**

ART ONGOING

– continued –

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-Kjvalsstaðir

Kjarval - Key Works

Reykjavík Art Museum draws on its extensive collection of works by Jóhannes S. Kjarval for ongoing exhibitions at Kjvalsstaðir. 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 Kjvalsstaðir 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

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

From Poverty to Abundance

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

On permanent view

The History of Sailing

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

On permanent view

The 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



We're Just Everyday People
The People on Þórsgata

National Museum of Iceland

Suðurgötu 41 | Runs until January 13, 2013

In this whimsical photo series, Alda Lóa Leifsdóttir photographs the residents of Þórsgata, a narrow street in the heart of 101 Reykjavík. Alda documents the everyday lives of the residents, exposing the beauty of family ties and the unique community that has developed and become a lively thread in the patchwork of the city. The photographs document each person's individual experience as well, preserving their existence in the city. "Every person is a world in him/herself – unique, and sacrosanct. When that person vanishes the world ends – a world that once existed, and will never return," she says. **KO**



Find all art listings online
listings.grapevine.is

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 Kárasón

Lúkas Kárasón 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 and grew up in Strandir, North-West Iceland.

On temporary view

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.

Runs until January 15, 2013

Vikingakráin

Let's Talk Iceland

A comedy show about Iceland's Viking history in English, performed in a pub mocked up as a Viking longhouse.

Every day at 20:00 at Vikingakráin

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

MATS 1956-1978

The exhibition Mats 1956-1978 focuses on Mats Wibe Lund's early career, when he travelled around Iceland, taking pictures of

whatever caught his attention. His photographs document Iceland and its people at a period of rapid development and high hopes in domestic production, and massive social change.

Runs until January 20, 2013

Trausti Ólafsson (1891-1961)

from Breiðavík to Copenhagen

The exhibit comprises about twenty photographs from a collection by Trausti Ólafsson. Most were taken between 1919 and 1928, in his home territory in the West Fjords, during his student years in Copenhagen, and in Klaksvík in the Faroe Islands, the home town of his wife.

Runs until January 20, 2013

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Thursdays 12-21
Closed on Tuesdays
www.hafnarborg.is

Þórunn Elisabet Sveinsdóttir
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edges - tacked down, pinned,
stitched here and there
Þuridur Rós Sigurþórsdóttir -
The Other Side



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F FOOD

FOR YOUR MIND, BODY AND SOUL

by Ragnar Egilsson



Loki Laufabrauðsson

There are four basic types of Icelandic cuisine: 1) The mythical historical revisionist food that is only really eaten once a year by the vast majority of Icelanders (pickled testicles, shark, head cheese) but was presented as a millennia old cultural institution about a hundred years ago; 2) the soul food of the older generation (greasy lamb sausages, fish balls, blood pudding), well represented by Mamma Steina a little further down from Café Loki; 3) the stuff that the younger generation eats (sushi, pasta, some of the old mainstays, the generic western hodgepodge diet); and 4) the style of New Nordic cuisine particular to Iceland, which uses local ingredients but few of the traditional techniques and is only really found in high end restaurants.

Café Loki

Lokastígur 28
101 Reykjavík
Tel: +354 466 2828
<http://www.textil.is/ENGLISH/>
Mon-Sat: 9am - 9pm
Sundays: 11am - 9pm

What we think

Solid grub, low in pretention and surprisingly high in quality. A little bland, but true to form

Flavour:

Icelandic farmer munch

Ambiance:

Plain and dull, but a good place to grab lunch

Service:

Basic café service, no complaints

Price for 2 (with drinks):

10-12.000 ISK



Café Loki takes a little from the first category and a little from the second one. This is a wise move, as Café Loki is ingeniously located right at the base of the tourist beacon, Hallgrímskirkja. Arts and crafts on the first floor and a café/restaurant serving traditional food on the second floor, how could they fail?

They don't. It's a simple place with a small selection consisting of a daily special, which is usually fish in some form or another or one of three other warm staples, the traditional Icelandic lamb stew ("kjötsúpa"), a fish stew ("plok-kfiskur") and a vegetarian plate (there's no specific term for it as Icelanders didn't start eating their vegetables until a couple of decades ago). Other than that, it's mostly open-face sandwiches served on flatbread or rye.

I ordered the vegetarian plate (1690 ISK), which consisted of lightly baked rutabaga and other root vegetables, served with quinoa, greens, feta and pumpkin seeds. It was too bland for my tastes, but seemed at least to be genuinely healthy. As a side, I picked some dung-smoked trout from Mývatnssveit, served on flatbread.

My partner in crime chose the Icelandic platter #1 (1990 ISK) with smoked trout on rye bread, fish stew on rye bread, head cheese, and an Icelandic style bean salad (peas in a white mystery sauce).

I repeat: This is very simple food, so don't expect any wild ideas or culinary epiphanies. Having said that, they do justice to the traditional dishes at Café Loki. The fish stew is the usual, creamy mess made with shredded fish, potatoes and onions. This wasn't quite the best plokfishur I've had in Iceland but definitely above par.

The trout was excellent. It was unusually subtle for a dung-smoked trout and much fresher than I'd dared to hope. Top marks for that.

But the real surprise was the flatbread and rye. It was quite simply the best I've had in Reykjavík, outside of a domestic kitchen. The rye bread was not as dense as I'm used to and more like a loaf of spice bread than the banana bread texture I'm used to, and it was light and not too sweet. The flatbread was even better. The slightly bitter flavour and overpowering taste of rye flour usually puts me off, but this one was not the usual dry, pock-marked, dark-brown slab and actually tasted of something other than sod roof frugality.

Due to the quality of the rye bread, I got my partner to brave the rye bread ice cream (640 ISK), which is a Café Loki's specialty heavily featured on their website. Most Icelanders will only be familiar with rye bread desserts in the form of "brauðsúpa," a traditional rye bread pudding made with sultanas,

sugar and water, served with whipped cream. Brauðsúpa is an acquired taste and one that I never managed to acquire, but this ice cream has made a believer out of me. It's served in a small cup with a dollop of whipped cream. It's obviously pretty chewy, but the texture is fun in small doses and the flavour is nothing like rye bread; it's closer to coconut and chocolate. Heartily recommended, although I must say that I would have liked to see them serve me a fresh scoop instead of something that had obviously been standing in the freezer for a day.

While it may not make the top ten of the best restaurants in Reykjavík, Café Loki does serve exactly the kind of food I recommend to tourists when they ask me about traditional Icelandic cuisine. Yes, they have that disgusting fermented shark and all the usual bells and whistles, but they also know how to please this little Icelander.

RAGNAR EGILSSON

ALÍSA KALYANOVA

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Christmas Buffets, Lunches & Offers

If you're hanging around town this year and looking to treat yourself to some fine holiday dining, here's a selection of places in town serving up Christmas dinners, lunches and buffets. Eat, drink and be merry! Go to grapevine.is for an extended list.

Argentina (Barónstígur 11a) Gourmet dinner buffet complete with American-style turkey. Thursday-Saturday 9.250 ISK, Sunday-Wednesday 7.950 ISK | **Geysir Bistro & Bar** (Aðalstræti 2) Christmas dinner including three appetisers, two kinds of meat, trimmings and dessert. Reservations required. 4.900 ISK | **Lækjarbrekka** (Bankastræti 2) Buffet offering gourmet hot and cold dishes as well as desserts. 7.200 ISK for dinner, 5.200 for lunch | **Satt** (Hotel Natura, Nauthólsvegur 52) Diverse holiday buffet of traditional and modern Nordic dishes. 8.800 ISK for dinner, 4.400 ISK for lunch, half price for children 6-12, free for children under 5



Plain Sailing

Skólavörðustígur has really come into its own lately as a bustling tourist street. It runs in a straight line down the hill from the church and is lined with design shops and hole-in-the-wall restaurants. Still, the Seafood Grill is the only restaurant proper that's offering full dinner service. It's located not far down from the last remaining fish monger in downtown Reykjavík and a few doors up from where the fashionable farmer's market Frú Lauga will be opening a new branch in an old stable.

Sjávargrillið (The Seafood Grill)

Sjávargrillið (The Seafood Grill)
Skólavörðustígur 14
101 Reykjavík
Tel: +354 571 1100
<http://www.sjavargrillid.is/en/>
Mon-Sun: 11am-11pm

What we think

Skilled kitchen making good food, using good ingredients, but relying too much on fat.

Flavour:

New Nordic Cuisine

Ambiance:

Comfortable

Service:

Professional & friendly

Price for 2 (with drinks):

25-30,000 ISK



The design of The Seafood Grill fits well into this discussion of new and old. Like The Fish Company, they've managed to strike a balance between the nostalgic farmstead look and a modern restaurant without getting too sentimental or naff. It's a bit reminiscent of an upscale ski chalet.

My friend ordered the three-course lobster feast (7300 ISK) and I ordered the smoked puffin, whale and cormorant as a

first course (2680 ISK) and the beef loin, oxtail and langoustine as a main course (6430 ISK). We split a small order of sushi and sashimi on the side (2480 ISK).

The lobster feast started with a grilled golden perch and langoustine with mussel sauce, sunchokes, apples and pearl onions. Perfectly cooked, expertly seasoned and low on the salt, it's definitely recommended.

My puffin and cormorant were similarly great but I generally like whale served warm after a sear. And cormorant (European Shag specifically) is a very rare treat in Iceland, but this was a cold platter and is up for debate. So far so good.

Here's where the missteps started. It seems a lot of the high-end places find it necessary to include sushi on a menu that otherwise features a completely different style of cuisine. It's probably to appease the insatiable hunger Icelanders have for sushi these days, but the sushi was a letdown and didn't belong on a menu that was otherwise resolutely New Nordic in style.

The main course in the lobster feast was a grilled langoustine and catfish with deep-fried langoustine, served with celeriac, barley and hollandaise. Each component was well-handled, the hollandaise was spot on and the fish was flaky and fresh. But the dish was far too busy with flavours and much too buttery. It's the kind of approach you'd expect at TGI Fridays, not a place like The Seafood Grill.

On my end, the beef loin was a lot better handled but the lobster was far too salty

(even taking into account my sensitivity to salt) and overall it could have used more subtlety. The cauliflower, mushroom and onion sides were delicious though.

For dessert, the lobster feast included the cinnamon crème brûlée with raspberry sorbet and caramel sauce. Individually everything was perfectly made but it didn't gel together. Or rather it gelled too much since the sorbet cooled down the top of the crème brûlée and gave it a rubbery consistency.

I chose the ginger and thyme cake concoction with ginger ice cream. The thyme was an interesting idea, but overall the flavours were drowned out by the sugars. It is no longer on the menu. Otherwise, there were a lot of interesting ideas in the dessert department and they deserve praise for that.

Overall we were fairly happy with the meal and the service was great, but we both got the impression that the chefs lacked faith in their own abilities. Each element was perfectly handled, the ingredients were clearly fresh and everything was cooked to perfection (with the exception of the sushi). But it was as if someone forgot to tell them that. They need to take it easy on the fatty sauces, simplify and not be afraid to venture outside their comfort zone. This is one of the youngest kitchens in Iceland and these are talented people. Life's too short for shortcuts.

✍ RAGNAR EGILSSON

📷 ALÍSA KALYANOVA



SNAPS

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