



The
**REYKJAVÍK
 GRAPEVINE**

Reykjavík Grapevine
 Artfest special
 inside

Listahátíð
 í Reykjavík



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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

All Grown Up

From Rosebud to Nói Albínói to Virgin Mountain,
 we trace filmmaker Dagur Kári's advent into adulthood

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On the cover: Dagur Kári
 Photographer: Nicolai Hansen

Our Prime Minister ~~Looking At~~ Eating Things

Anna's (I stopped counting...) Editorial

The average Icelander probably doesn't find parliamentary debates all that exciting. This week, however, they've been all the buzz. Why is that? Because our prime minister, the esteemed Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson, left the parliament floor in the middle of debates—to grab the last piece of cake from the cafeteria.

"Did he go speak with the International Monetary Fund or the United Nations?" an upset MP asked the Speaker before going on to answer her question. "He left to have cake, esteemed Speaker. I must say that I find it absolutely incredible. I must ask the Speaker whether this can be considered acceptable behaviour in parliament."

Of course the media picked up the story: "PM leaves floor for cake, MPs outraged." Of course some media outlets dug deeper into what they dubbed #CAKEGATE. It was chocolate cake with whipped cream and braised pears, if you must know. And, of course, the internet laughed.

It occurred to me during this incident that it's uncanny how much has been reported about Sigmundur Davíð and food—food that he's eating, food that he likes to eat, food that he doesn't eat. Surely he must have seen this coming. Surely the man running our country must have realised that him going for a slice of cake would become big news.

Let's review: Four years ago, Sigmundur Davíð announced on his blog that he would be starting a diet: "Well, it's come to this," he wrote. "Tomorrow I'm going on a serious diet that should certainly be called 'the Icelandic diet', as it involves eating only Icelandic food."

He reasoned a) that a gastroenterologist told him that Icelandic food was the healthiest in the world and b) only half of the food consumed in Iceland is produced here, so if you only eat Icelandic food, you will



eat half as much. By increasing your intake of Icelandic food by 50%, you end up eating 75% of what you used to eat.

For some reason though, he didn't lose weight, and he abandoned the diet as was evident in an interview that appeared in Fréttatíminn just before he was elected prime minister. For that story, the editor took him on a drive to Þingvellir and he apparently asked to stop for ice cream multiple times. When they finally made that pit stop, the editor reports that he came back to the car with ice cream for everyone and a Mountain Dew for himself. "And I thought only teenage boys drank Mountain Dew," the editor wrote.

After he was elected Prime Minister, one of the first news stories about him was about how he stopped to buy waffle mix on his way to a meeting in the countryside with now Minister of Finance Bjarni Benediktsson to talk about forming a coalition government with the Independence Party. Interestingly enough, it was his assistant who divulged this fact to reporters, who were evidently really hungry for a story.

Then there were all of those articles about his views on foreign meat (if you google Sigmundur Davíð, second on the list of related searches is "Sigmundur Davíð kjöt"—"kjöt" is Icelandic for "meat"). When news broke that Costco was perhaps on its way to our shores, Sigmundur Davíð argued that eating the chain's foreign meat would get us Toxoplasmosis, which apparently affects a third of the world's population and can, according to Sigmundur logic, lead to all kinds of behaviour changes. Again, the internet laughed.

Considering how much Sigmundur Davíð has been picked on for his eating habits and views on food, surely he must have stopped to think before dashing off for cake. Considering that he is the least trusted politician leading one of the least popular political parties in Iceland, surely he would be more careful at this point not to provide the media and his opponents with this kind of fodder. Considering that only 5% of the nation thinks he is in touch with the average Icelander, surely the cake grab must have been a ploy to make himself seem more human. Surely he saw this as an opportunity to get people to put themselves in his shoes for once.

And surely he anticipated that it would work, too: "I see nothing wrong with this. I would do the same," someone commented on our news story. "I will not criticise. Cake is also my downfall," another person said. "I WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME," someone screamed. "That is to be fat at soul. I'd done the same. And if ever I couldn't get a piece of the cake, I would have been mad for the rest of the session," yet another person commented.

Someone even saw it as an act of modesty: "I'd have sent my chauffeur to Sandholt to buy me a whole new cake with the state's credit card."

Food for thought?

TRACK OF THE ISSUE : AND – GOOD MOON DEER



Good Moon Deer

"And"

Dot

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Good Moon Deer is the project of one Guðmundur Úlfarsson, a solo artist who makes a propulsive, glitchy, ever-evolving brand of improvised electronica. Live, and in his artwork and videos, the music is accompanied by slick visuals that hint at Guðmundur's day job as one of the figures behind Icelandic design company Or Type, whose typefaces have been used in The New York Times and WIRE magazine.

Guðmundur applies a similarly crisp aesthetic to his sonic work, which is all about mechanical-sounding loops, neatly clipped samples and minimalistic sound collage. Pinning down his intentionally scattershot, ever-evolving sound in studio recordings has taken quite a while, but the debut album 'Dot' was worth the wait.

Head to grapevine.is to download the opening track on our website, go check out the album at www.goodmoondeer.com. It'll be available for MP3 (free) or WAV (paid) download.

Enjoy!

Comic | Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir





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Holuhraun Has Stopped Erupting, But Is It Still Dangerous?



Words by *Hildur María Friðriksdóttir*
Photos by *Matthew Eisman*

The Holuhraun eruption finally ended on February 27 of this year after six months, leaving behind a lava field that is 85 km² and reaches a hefty volume of 1.4 km³. Now that the eruption has ended, people might be wondering about what consequences the eruption has had on Iceland, or even further afield. Did it affect the ecosystem in any way, and has the pollution ceased along with the eruption? Can tourists finally stop Golden Circle-jerking and go explore the new lava field? Don't despair; Grapevine's in-house geophysicist is here to answer your questions....

No ash, just gas

As Iceland is a highly volcanically active country, we, the Icelandic geoscientists, are always preparing for the next eruption. However, this last eruption caught us off guard, as we had been expecting an eruption similar to recent ones such as Eyjafjallajökull in 2010 and Grímsvötn in 2011, where we had flash floods and airspace-disrupting ash plumes. Instead, what we got was a white gaseous plume containing high concentrations of gas and almost no ash at all. Due to our expectations for what the next eruption would look like, a lot of work had been put into models for predicting where volcanic ash would go. Fortunately though, with a few tweaks, it was possible to make use of some of the preparatory work and create a gas forecast model that could predict where potentially dangerous levels of gas were to be expected in the next 48 hours (pictured).

For six months, 20,000-60,000 tons of sulfur dioxide (not to be confused with carbon dioxide, the pollutant most infamous for its association with the burning of fossil fuels and climate change) were emitted from the eruption site every single day. Compared to the 14,000 tons that the entire European Union releases per day, this was a massive amount of gas. Sulfur dioxide can cause breathing problems, and prolonged or highly concentrated exposure to the gas can cause respiratory illnesses and may even be fatal. The gas plume managed to reach most of Iceland and, at times, pollution levels in Akureyri and Höfn went over the legal safety limit. Despite this, no known serious health problems were reported due to the eruption

(but sales of asthma medications went up!).

Even though all this gas sounds pretty bad, the pollution from Holuhraun was still nothing compared to Laki in 1783-1784, an eruption that ended up affecting the entire northern hemisphere and causing crop failure and famine in most of Europe. The smaller global effect from Holuhraun was mostly due to the low intensity and height of the plume, which caused the pollution to mostly stay in the vicinity of the eruption itself. High gas concentrations were briefly detected outside of Iceland, in countries in mainland Europe such as France, England, Sweden and Austria, but pollution levels there peaked in September and have barely been seen since. It's highly unlikely that more pollution from the eruption will be detected now, after its end.

The season matters

Sulfur dioxide can form sulfuric acid, a chemical that has negative impacts on plant life and as such could damage Iceland's ecosystem. Because of the time of year, a lot of the pollutants (including the sulfur dioxide) were bound in the snow rather than being released straight into the environment. As a result of this, a large sudden melt of snow would release all of these pollutants at once, with greater effects than if they had been released more gradually. So for once we can be thankful for the horrible spring we've had this year, as the pollution has been released at a slower rate than expected. Additionally, most of the pollution has probably already cleared at the lower altitudes of

Iceland, though some could still remain at higher altitudes, such as up on the glaciers.

Another fortunate bit of season-related luck is that the timing of the eruption didn't coincide with the growing period of plants, and there weren't a lot of birds around either. So, animal and plant life was spared. Had the eruption happened during summer, the consequences could have been a lot worse.

But can we go see it and is it safe now?

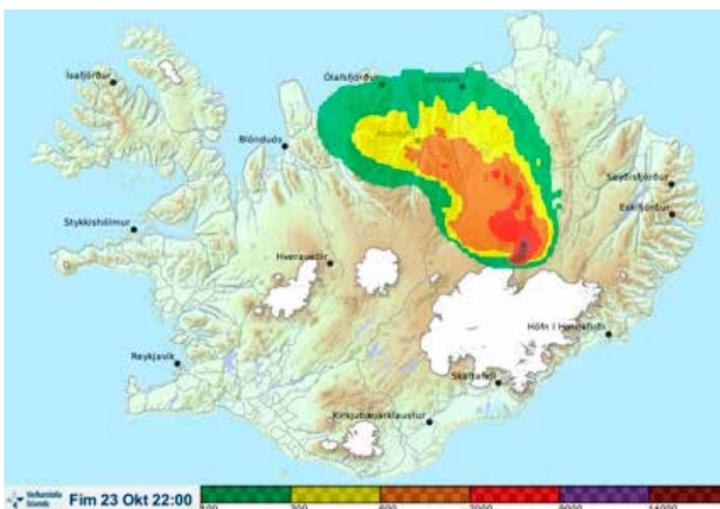
During the first scientific field trip to the lava site after the eruption ended in late February, life-threatening gas levels were still being measured above the lava field. The area has been slowly degassing ever since and levels of pollution should be much lower at this point. The aviation colour code for Bárðarbunga has been changed back to green, meaning that "volcanic activity is considered to have ceased, and the volcano has reverted to its normal, non-eruptive state." The current risk of an eruption happening in Bárðarbunga has become very slim, as earthquakes in the area have gone down in number and ground measurements don't suggest that any new magma is being added to the Bárðarbunga volcanic system.

The area has finally become relatively safe from eruption hazards, but that also means that people planning to go there will have a lot less to see. There are

no big, glowing and bubbling lava lakes anymore, nor rivers and waterfalls with smoke coming out of them. At the time of the eruption, the risks of flash floods in the area were simply too high for it to be safe for people other than scientists in the field for civic defensive purposes, as Iceland has a no-tolerance policy for avoidable deaths from natural disasters.

However, there is a new and massive black rock field spreading over 85 km². The large exclusion zone around the eruption site has decreased to mainly just the lava field itself (pictured) so for those interested, it is possible to get a view of the new lava field by driving a super jeep or snowmobile to the area and doing a bit of hiking. There's still a lot of snow in the highlands and it's a generally dangerous and barren place to be in, so if people are planning on going there they need to bring someone with experience of the area. When travelling, caution must be taken, and always make sure someone knows where you will be travelling, what paths you are planning to take and how long you plan on being gone, as Iceland's a beautiful but dangerous place.

"So for once we can be thankful for the horrible spring we've had this year, as the pollution has been released at a slower rate than expected."



NEWS IN BRIEF

By *Paul Fontaine*



As per hallowed Icelandic media tradition, Grapevine joined in the fun of kicking off the month of April with **fake news**. In fact, all our news on April Fool's was fake, except for one story. In this case, that the government was auctioning off old diplomatic cars. That actually happened, in case you were certain this was fake news and thereby missed your chance to buy a used Benz.



The **Interior Ministry leak scandal** has nearly wound to a close. Tony Omos received a settlement from former Minister of Interior assistant Gísli Freyr Valdórsson for an undisclosed amount, and former Minister of Interior Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir has returned to Parliament. In her first interview since her resignation last November, she conceded that she should have resigned sooner from her post. Meanwhile, Tony is still in Italy, separated from Evelyn Glory Joseph and their child, who remain in Iceland.



No story in April inspired quite as much outrage from our readers as that of Chilean artist Marco Evaristi, who **poured red dye into the geyser Strokkur** with the effect of turning its eruptions pink. Police have charged with him breaking the Nature Conservation Act, issuing a fine of 100,000 ISK, which he says he will fight in court. While the artist contends the dye he used was perfectly harmless, and that he was trying to make a point about environmentalism, the anger from the general public has been allegedly so severe that he says he has received death threats.



It's collective bargaining seasoning again, and this time, **labour unions are fed up**. Two major union umbrella groups—the Federation of General and Special Workers in Iceland (SGS) and Flóabandalagið—have already begun a series of work stoppages, likely to culminate in a **general strike** near the end of May. The primary demand on the table where SGS is concerned is to raise the minimum wage for their workers to 300,000 ISK per month—a demand supported, according to a Gallup poll, by **more than 90% of the population**. A total of 56,000 workers could strike by the end of May.

Continues Over...



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So What're These Badly Behaved Seafood Companies I Keep Hearing About?

Words by Kári Tulinius @Kattullus

Illustration by Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir

Along with tourism, seafood is the biggest industry in Iceland. For many towns along the coast, it is the reason for their existence. The salaries paid to locals by seafood companies fuel the village economy. Therefore it is very important that seafood companies behave responsibly.

I certainly hope there's no fishy business. I'd apologise for the pun, but I'm not sorry.

The particulars of how Icelandic seafood companies can behave irresponsibly comes down to the specifics of Icelandic fishing laws. Fishing is regulated according to a system called Individual Transferable Quota. The government sets an annual maximum for how many tons of a certain species can be caught. Companies can purchase a share in the total allowable catch which they retain from year to year.

If there's something that never has any unintended consequences, it's a simple system for the regulation of a complex industry.

The way the system was designed meant that people could make quite a lot of money from selling their fishing quota. Not as much as they would from actually catching and selling the fish. On the other hand they would not have to pay the costs of maintaining ships and running factories, or pay anyone their salary. Quite a few businesspeople closed their companies, sold the quota rights to businesses based elsewhere, and left their villages economically fucked.

Running a company that sustains a town is nothing compared to the joy of being rich enough to make a golden replica of your penis.

No need to be such a cynic, some of those businesspeople have vaginas. The issue is not that they are captains of indickustry, though there are some

pricks among them. The point is that as an effect of how the system is designed, people who own quota rights have almost godlike power over coastal villages. Instead of controlling the rain and whether the harvest fails, they control which village gets fish. If no fish comes, people will have to move away.

A sensible system. If history has taught us anything, it's that humans with power always behave responsibly.

To take one example, the village of Flateyri in the Westfjords had a fairly stable population of over 300 people. Then the owners of the local seafood company decided to sell their quota in 2007 and shut down the business. Now the population is down to about 200. Before the quota system was established, a seafood company's assets were mainly its ships, factories and other equipment. These are difficult to sell. But a non-physical asset, like the percentage of the total amount of fishing in a year, is just a document that can be sold online. Under the quota system, you can destroy the economy of an Icelandic coastal village by sending an e-mail.

It can't be that simple. You must at least need to send a few e-mails.

Okay, maybe even more than a few. And make formal contracts and so on. But it is still frighteningly easy for a village with a healthy economy and vibrant community to become financially devastated on the whim of a few individuals. Which is why Icelanders are both angry about the quota system and fearful of the people who own quota rights.

Will you now tell me about those cocktaints of industry?

There are too many to go through all of them now, so let me limit myself to Kristján Loftsson. He is the Chairman of HB Grandi, one of Iceland's largest seafood companies. He and his company have been in the news lately for paying over 18 million euros to shareholders and increasing the compensation of the board of directors by a princely 33%. Meanwhile their employees were offered a measly 3.3% salary increase in contract negotiations.

The old "nyah nyah nyah, you can't have what I have" negotiating tactic.

It did not so much throw fuel on the fire as throw TNT on the volcano. To further enrage everyone but himself, Kristján Loftsson went on television and defended the decision with all the tact of a Dickens villain. He even did a

comic impression of an old union leader being perpetually ungrateful for his salary increase.

No one is as funny as a rich man making fun of working-class people.

Incidentally, Kristján Loftsson uses the profits he gets from HB Grandi to fund his other, not very profitable business: Hunting fin whales, an endangered species. If he were not already cartoonish enough, his hobby is the oceanic equivalent of industrial elephant killing. And because of the quota system, it is very easy for his company to cash out, shut down the factories, and give him enough money to buy a golden harpoon shaped like his penis. But bigger.

The sage advice to pack clothes for any weather condition when visiting Iceland is especially applicable this year, as meteorologists are making long-term predictions that **this summer will be cloudy and cold**. So, pretty much like last summer. And the one before that. On the bright side, weather predictions beyond the five-day range are a real roll of the dice, so who knows? Maybe the glory days of the summer of 2012 will visit us again.



Pirate Party captain Birgitta Jónsdóttir told reporters that if she were prime minister, she would grant NSA whistle-blower Edward Snowden asylum in Iceland. The declaration may even be prescient, as the latest Gallup poll shows the party now at 30.1%—the largest in the country—and a new poll from MMR shows their support is greater than that of the two parties in the ruling coalition combined. Whether that momentum will carry over the next two years until new elections (presuming the wildly unpopular current government finishes its term) remains to be seen.

Tourism is a booming industry in Iceland, and its effects were demonstrable all month long. A tour guide has bemoaned the **lack of outdoor toilets** in parts of the countryside, as apparently not enough buses are outfitted with toilets of their own. A poll conducted for the City of Reykjavík showed that most Icelanders are finding it **increasingly difficult to get a table** at their favourite restaurants and cafés, laying the blame squarely on tourists for the lack of seating. However, opportunities abound, as there are so many tourism-related jobs opening up that there aren't enough Icelanders to staff them all, and so **foreigners are needed** to apply. Your chance to work in a guesthouse in the countryside awaits!



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I Want My Amazon TV



Words by Gabrielle Motola

Photo by Gabrielle Motola

I should probably begin by explaining the title to those of you who were born to a different generation. It's a reference to a slogan used by MTV in the 1980s. If you love American culture you'd be considered a philistine not to look this up. Until today I felt like I was living (temporarily) in the most liberal modernised country in the world. The rules seemed to be fair and based on common sense, decency, and intelligence. They were administered by people of equal merit. I was impressed. Then I had a run-in with Icelandic customs law. Olympus, a company I am an Ambassador for, sent me some equipment to try out. Despite my employers labelling the shipments with "demonstration purposes only" and "not for resale" and "no commercial value," the goods were held by customs until a tariff of 78,000 ISK was paid.

After quite a lot of talking on the phone to various intelligent, friendly people, and several emails thereafter, I managed to get the tariff lowered by 18,000 and a temporary levy was placed on the goods, which meant I could get the money refunded once I exited the country. What, you guys don't take a cheque? Escrow? Faberge eggs? You see, a credit card billing cycle is normally something like 30 days, but this incident falls in the middle of mine, so I will be forced to pay this amount off before then or be charged interest. My only other option was to put the tariff on my debit card and be charged 2.5% plus a £1 foreign transaction fee and not have access to that money for a month. For all I can see this is at best a hostage situation to prevent the goods from staying in the country and selling at a lower price, at worst it is a song and dance. Please note that everyone in this experience was delightful to deal with.

I arrive at DHL to recover the goods and pay the tariff, but the amounts on the invoices haven't been changed to reflect the new "low" price of 60,000 ISK. My ride waits patiently

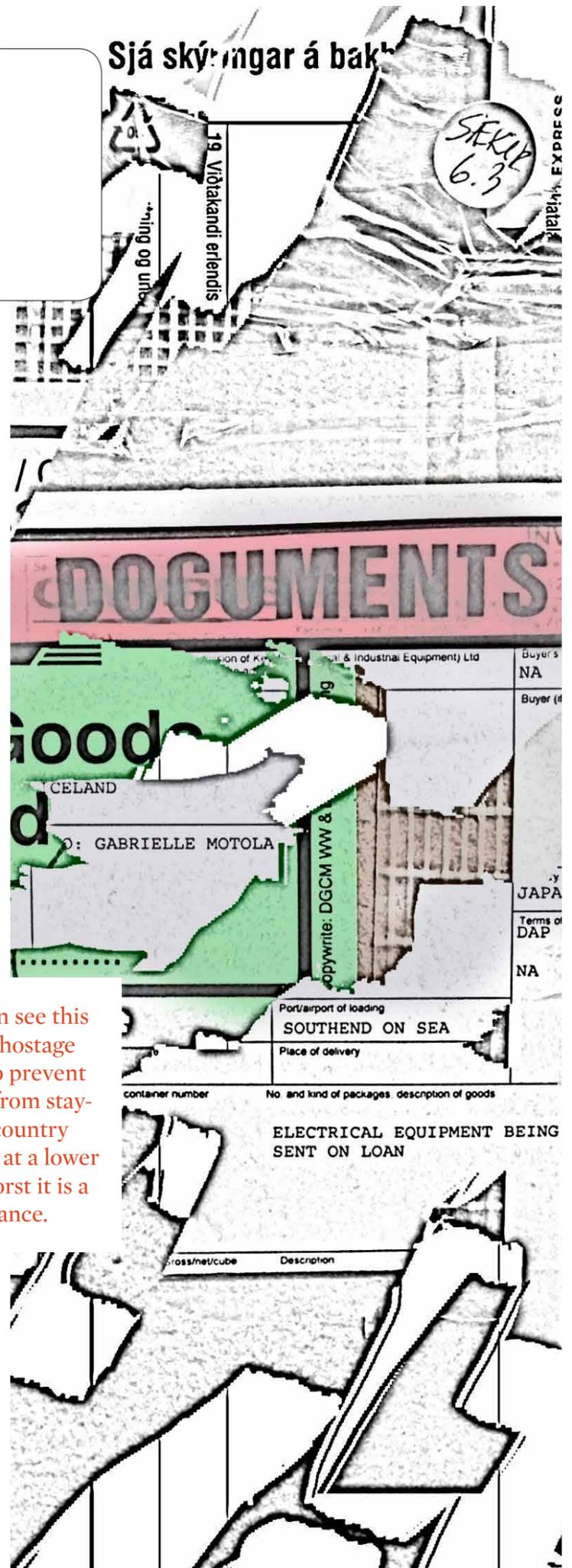
for me as yet another nice human being helps to remedy this paperwork scramble. About ten minutes later I am charging my English credit card, I am handed an E14 form in Icelandic (thankfully I have made friends with some locals for translation) and told that I can recuperate these funds at the airport when I leave Iceland. In a month. Bring the items for serial number verification please, thank you. As I walk out, I think about how this pedantry concerning the importation of goods must, with every taxed krona, generate a hostile feeling which feeds back into society.

These rules, and many more like them abroad, set up by our governments and businesses to regulate trade and labour alike, pave the way not only for more hostility and stress in a society but goad unruly citizens into the very criminal behaviour that governments go to great lengths to prevent. I'm certain there are a lot of other effects that we could research, pull into focus groups, and draw out on graph paper and pie charts. But why should we?

Most of us inherently sense the

limitations to a restrictive system. I wonder how much it costs to administer and enforce this customs process compared to what it brings in terms of government revenue. Really, how is this system benefiting society given its restrictive nature and the all too often negative impact on people it is intended to serve? Because if it makes sense, financial sense at least, then I can work the logic. But if it doesn't, shouldn't it be criminal? I mull this over as I consider what life would be like living in Iceland full-time: taking the bus to Elko in the blizzard to buy a television, to wile away winter's edge because I can't simply order one on Amazon and have it delivered.

For all I can see this is at best a hostage situation to prevent the goods from staying in the country and selling at a lower price, at worst it is a song and dance.



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INTERVIEW

Is The Future Bright For Iceland's Bright Future Party?

Words by Elliott Brandsma | Photo by Art Bicnick



Info

Guðmundur Steingrímsson is the chair of the Bright Future party.

Before founding the party in 2012, he was a member of both the Social Democratic Alliance and the Progressive Party.

He used to be the vocalist and keyboard player in the Icelandic band Ske.

He has worked as a journalist, TV presenter and writer.

He could see himself being a carpenter post-politics.

It's a chilly winter afternoon when I check into the front desk of the parliament building in downtown Reykjavík. After warming up in the lobby for a few minutes, I am greeted by a tall, bearded man dressed in a tailored blazer and jeans, who somehow exudes the poise of an experienced politician and the casual ease of a rock star. He escorts me to his office across the street and asks me to take a seat on his blue, L-shaped sofa while he pours me a glass of water to drink. I can't help but notice the acoustic guitar lying beside me on the couch as I prepare my notes for the interview, cluing me in that I was here for more than just a routine conversation about Icelandic current events and party politics.

This musician-turned-politician is Guðmundur Steingrímsson, the leader of the Bright Future Party—one of the most unconventional political movements in Iceland's recent history. Tracing its origins partly to the satirical and surreal Best Party, formed by former Reykjavík mayor Jón Gnarr, the Bright Future movement campaigned its way into parliament in 2013, gaining 8.4% of the vote and six members. Some maintain that the Best Party was more like a lifestyle or a philosophy, while Bright Future is a party organized around that philosophy. The Best Party famously pledged to break all their promises; the Bright Future movement simply didn't make any.

Using politeness and an unconventional way of speaking, Guðmundur and his colleagues have spent their tenure in Alþingi championing a variety of environmental, economic, and human rights causes, all while showing Icelanders just how absurd traditional party politics can be. However, the movement—though comedic and lighthearted—is no joke. The party holds firm policy positions, a comprehensive platform, and a distinctive vision for Iceland's economic future. Regardless, recent polls from the Market and Media Research Center and Gallup have shown that their positive message has lost support among Icelanders, pushing the party into a state of crisis.

Can this fledgling political movement, which is built on such a satirical premise, maintain its momentum and remain relevant in future elections? Optimistic and determined, Guðmundur readily shares his ideas for moving the party forward and transforming Iceland's political conventions and discourse, which he believes are in desperate need of reform.

Doing politics differently

"The Best Party and the Bright Future Party started as a sort of joyful revolution against old party politics," Guðmundur explains, reclining in his office chair. "We shared the goal of doing politics more reasonably and positively, of being more constructive than destructive." From the moment it was founded, the party's membership grew rapidly: "When we first started, our email accounts exploded with letters from people interested in joining. Icelanders who never before took part in public affairs were suddenly engaged in political discussions."

Since assuming the Bright Future Party's chairmanship, Guðmundur has drawn upon lessons he learned as a musician to inform his party's unique approach to policy-making. "In my band Ske, we always emphasized the importance of working together, which came naturally. Everything was a collaboration," he says. "In families, for example, people settle their differences and work together to find rational solutions... I find it interesting how we collaborate to solve problems outside of politics all the time, but the minute we enter the political arena, we forget about finding workable solutions. Why in the realm of politics do we forget that this diversity of opinion is something beautiful, something valuable?"

He also explains the reasoning behind his party's unusual approach to public relations, an approach characterized by its frankness and honesty. "In our platform, we listed everything as a goal, not a promise, so that people would better understand the reality of our situation... When setting goals,

people always say in real life 'I would like to...' or 'let's try to...' Too many politicians make grand promises they know they cannot keep... We realize that reaching consensus and accomplishing goals in politics is complicated, so we mean to be forthcoming as a way of building trust with our constituents and doing politics more responsibly."

Guðmundur and his colleagues also have a wealth of ideas for reducing toxic rhetoric in parliament and improving the way Icelanders debate controversial issues. "I would like to see us sit more at roundtables to have discussions instead of standing so much behind a podium and cutting each other down on live television. The way we do politics now seems to inhibit productive discussions and prevent unity among the parties."

Moving forward

In May 2014, the Social Democrats swept into power at the municipal level, ending the Best Party's four-year reign in Reykjavík's city council. The newly merged Best and Bright Future parties retained only two seats, down from the six places they held under their previous name. Undeterred, Guðmundur actually views these results as a promising victory for the movement: "It's typical to consider the mayoral election results a loss, but Bright Future is not the same as the Best Party and we never expected to gain the same momentum in Reykjavík as the Best Party did in 2010. For Bright Future to get between 15 and 20% of the vote in the largest municipalities in Iceland is exceptionally good. We gained eleven members in local governments all around the country, and are now taking part in majorities in Reykjavík, Hafnarfjörður, Kópavogur and Akranes, which re-

ally gives us an opportunity to show what we are made of."

However, recent polling dampens Guðmundur's optimistic outlook. A group of newly released public opinion surveys

named the Pirate Party the largest, most-trusted political movement in Iceland; Bright Future even secured last place in some of these polls. When confronted with these gloomy statistics, Guðmundur stands behind the work he and his colleagues have done and continue to do nationwide: "We don't have any plans of action other than to keep doing a good job in parliament and the municipalities, get our agenda heard, and I think we've done a good job of that. We've been professional, tackled politics with great depth and sincerity, not been swayed by private interests but kept public interests at heart and looked at the bigger picture—that's been our guiding light."

In fact, Guðmundur and his fellow Bright Future parliamentarians are hard at work building a platform that appeals to a broader range of constituencies. "Right at the beginning, we realized the need to increase variety in our industries and focus on creating jobs that are suitable for young people... Polls among young Icelanders show that they are considering moving abroad, which is of great concern to us." In light of these troubling statistics, the Bright Future Party has fought to fund more research and development, the green economy, and the creative industry—things they consider of great importance to Iceland's younger population.

Far from a passive, one-issue party, the Bright Future movement has also taken some more contentious policy positions on key issues, supporting EU membership and staunchly opposing the majority coalition's mortgage bailout. "Politics is a funny place to be in," he notes. "One party is successful if 80% of the people are against it. To gain support, a party must simply seek out those who agree with it and try to enlarge that group. There will always

"While the Best Party famously pledged to break all their promises, the Bright Future movement simply didn't make any."

be people who vote for the most populist, irresponsible party there is, the one that promises big results quickly... However, we are not a populist party; we try to base our policies on facts and sound statistics.

This means also that we will always fight against prejudices, including those kinds of nationalistic movements that are growing in Europe and that we might be starting to see here. We reject politics that are based on ignorance. We embrace variety and peace."

Guðmundur's bright future

After discussing and debating politics for almost two hours, I finally ask Guðmundur what a "bright future" for himself might look like. "Well, I would like to accomplish a lot of things in politics, but perhaps I will quit public life someday and work full-time as a carpenter," he says, smiling and stroking his beard pensively. "I would like to lead a happy life with my wife and kids in our house, which we are currently renovating. I also write novels and have an open document on my computer at all times with stories and thoughts... I would, of course, like to perform more music [Guðmundur is an accomplished accordion player] and just enjoy the moment... oh, and hopefully not contract any ugly or deadly disease." We laugh.

Realizing the time, I gather up my notes, and Guðmundur walks back toward the parliament building with me, cracking jokes along the way. We say goodbye and part ways, but I ponder our discussion long into the afternoon and evening. It remains to be seen if the Bright Future movement's influence is here to stay or simply a flash in the pan. For now, Guðmundur and the party he chairs are the clear underdogs, holding fast to the idea that even something as bitter and brutal as politics can still be done with civility, positivity, and a dose of good humour.

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The Pink Geyser: A Work Of Art Or Not?

Words by York Underwood

Photo by Marco Evaristti

Strokkur reminds us that nature is boss. Millions of tourists have taken the Golden Circle tour to see boiling water explode from the earth—witnessing the raw beauty and power of the Icelandic landscape. What would your reaction be to seeing this geyser burst from the bowels of the earth in a bright pink hue? Would the clash of the natural and unnatural create an aesthetic experience worth having? You most certainly will have a reaction. The syrupy illusion of a pink geyser would not pass by anyone unnoticed, but is it art?

In the early morning of April 24, Marco Evaristti poured pink food colouring into Strokkur. The effect lasted only four hours, but the reaction has been ongoing. Over the years, artists have incorporated nature into their work—to varying degrees of success or acclaim. Marco, however, seems to be dismissed outright by comments online.

“Did I steal from the needy? Did I murder someone? Did I cause some stress from what I did?” asked Marco. “I simply used food colouring to colour a geyser. It doesn’t last forever. They criminalize the act, but governments will put fluoride and other things in water, which some consider to be poison. Who is doing the right thing by anyone?”

An act of love or an affront to natural beauty?

Marco claims that the food colouring he used is completely harmless to nature. The environmental friendliness of the colouring aside, what is the meaning behind it? In the 1990s, Heinz Ketchup came out with purple and green ketch-

up. There was a big reaction, but it didn’t bring attention to the over-processing and corporatization of food (well, maybe inadvertently). There was no intended statement to spinning the colour wheel of the staple condiment. Marco, also, seems to have no message.

“I don’t have any statement I’m trying to make,” said Marco. “I’m just decorating what I love most, which is nature and my children. I give all that I have to my children, morally and economically. I also love nature, and the way I give my love to nature is through decorating. I don’t think it belongs to anybody. I don’t have to get permission to do something that isn’t going to damage nature. It comes from a place of love. I know the reaction is going to be sometimes positive and sometimes negative.”

People do own land. It’s one of the primary functions of a state to distinguish land and property into governmentally and privately owned. The people of Iceland pay taxes for the upkeep of the land and tourists add to the revenue. Anyone who’s lived with another person knows the folly of decorating in shared space: the reaction can be volatile.



“Even though it’s harmless to nature, in a way it seems like an affront to natural beauty,” said Þorvarður Árnason, director and specialist in environmental issues and aesthetics at the University of Iceland’s Research Centre in Hornafjörður.

“It doesn’t respect the seriousness of beauty. One of the problems we have in Iceland is that people don’t take natural beauty seriously. They see it as emotional or totally subjective. Something that is always subservient to some real practical value. They overlook the fact that we are aesthetic beings. When we have an aesthetic experience in nature it’s perhaps the most powerful way we communicate with nature. So doing something like this is meaningless and sounds like a publicity stunt. I don’t like unthinking art. If you try and make something political or meaningful after the fact, it strikes me as being as sham.”

Does it have a purpose and is it art?

Does art have to have a purpose? Originally, in Ancient Greece, Art and Craft were the same thing. Craft made artefacts or, more poetically, art arose from craft. The lack of craft in Marco’s work doesn’t negate it from being art. But without intention or purpose, is anything you call “art,” art?

“I cannot say it’s art, though I think that it is,” said Marco. “I can put this another way. When Michelle Duchamp

made the Pisswa in 1917, nobody thought it was an art piece, but today it’s an icon piece. What you people consider or object to today is not relevant. Time will tell. Artists should be ahead of everyone.”

Marco has had a reaction and started a discussion, which might be the most important thing he’s done.

“I don’t think he has damaged anything,” said artist Erling Klingenberg.

“As to whether it’s art or not... why not? If he says it’s art, it’s art. It is kind of strange if his work gets more attention than the environmental issues that he set out to draw attention to, if that was his

goal, but if he just wanted to get a rise out of people, then I think he was successful.”

Iceland is not a stranger to controversy in matters of art and nature. Two years ago, the words “Cave” and “Crater” were spray-painted on a cave and crater. This caused a reaction amongst environmentalists and artists alike: where’s the line in art, when does it become vandalism? Intention seems to be the most important factor when judging spectacles of this kind.

“He would have to tell what the point is with his shit,” said Marco when talking about the artist who spray-painted the cave and crater. “After that I would use my intellect to deduce if for me it’s an art piece or not an art piece. I would have to know the concept of the piece.”

I agree with Marco.

Why Is Everyone So Angry About That Pink Geyser?



Words by Dr. Gunni

Last week, Marco Evaristti made the geyser Strokkur erupt in pink, and the general population of Iceland went nuts. Even though the food colouring he used had completely evaporated four hours after the offending act, the Chilean artist was subject to a barrage of hate from a veritable army of internet-connected Icelanders and Icelandophiles (sample comments: “You are not an artists, you’re just stupid criminal,” and: “Six words: Get the fuck out of here!!!”)

Interestingly enough, the Icelandic/Danish artist Ólafur Eliásson has gotten up to similar antics in the past—tainting various rivers and streams with food colouring in the name of art—without anyone telling him to go to hell. If success is measured in shame, Marco is a greater artist than Ólafur. And if fame is measured in hatred, Marco is surely Iceland’s most famous artist at present.

Indeed, the kind of vitriol he has inspired of late is often desirable in the world of art, where the name of the game is not only to innovate and inspire, but also to shock and attract attention. I well remember another of Marco’s pieces, ‘Helena’, in which he installed ten blenders filled with goldfish, which the viewer had the option to pulverize at the push of a button.

This is Marco’s art. He has put food colouring in a frozen Norwegian waterfall, and he has fried meatballs in his own fat, canned the results and put them up for display. He constructed a scale model of the Auschwitz/Birkenau gates from the gold teeth of Jews. And then some. As an artist, Marco Evaristti is hugely challenging, and actually rather clever. At a time where the public is very rarely shocked by art, Marco seems to have mastered the form.

I have to admit that I don’t quite understand the nationwide fury over the temporary Pink Strokkur piece. Is Strokkur a sort of national clitoris that the artist brutally abused? Why the outrage?

If people are so concerned about Iceland’s nature—if they object so harshly to foreigners who come here to have their way with our “Lady of the Mountain”—I recommend that they join Landvernd and stop voting for parties that prioritize heavy industry with all sorts of terrible consequences.

But of course it is easier to talk out of one’s asshole through the keyboard. And then vote once more for whatever corrupt idiot who promises to give everyone free money in the next election.

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Filmmaker Dagur Kári is a political
refugee, and he wants to touch you

Words by Haukur S. Magnússon | Photos by Nicolai Hansen



When news came through late one Sunday night in April that filmmaker Dagur Kári Pétursson's latest film 'Fúsi' (AKA 'Virgin Mountain') had triumphed at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York, winning three of the main awards (best original screenplay, best narrative film and best leading actor), we of course tried calling him up for a quote or two, to include in a news story about the momentous occasion. We figured he could well take a break from partying with Robert De Niro to gloat in the media, even though it was the middle of the night.

When he finally answered, he seemed groggy and out of it, like he was just waking up. "Oh, what? No, I'm back home in Denmark," he said, still half asleep. "I didn't stay for the awards ceremony, I figured we didn't stand a chance of winning anything."

And this is telling. Arguably one of Iceland's most prolific and successful young artists, Dagur Kári maintains a humble, unassuming stance, content to let his work speak for itself.

We start by discussing 'Fúsi', which I had viewed on my laptop shortly before our chat. I tell him that I liked it a lot, but that I would have enjoyed a chance to see it in the cinema....

How is it for a director? Do you like to see everything at the cinema? Or do you take in films on your TV, computer or smartphone, like the rest of us?

It differs [sighs]. I rarely have time to go to the movies these days, with a full time job and three children, so a trip to the theatre is a bit of a luxury. Because of this, I can't really trust my judgement when it comes to films these days. I so rarely glimpse the big screen that I'll erupt in goosebumps as soon as a Coca Cola ad starts running—so everything I see at the movies now is just great. I

get the chills just from the adverts and previews.

I've always loved going to the movies. At one point, I'd go so often that I got extremely judgemental. I'd walk out after ten minutes if I didn't like how things were going. Nowadays, I'm thankful just to catch a glimpse of the screen.

What drew you to the cinema to begin with?

I'd go with my parents as a kid, and later by myself. It was always an experience, but I suppose a certain turning point occurred when I was sixteen years old, at the 1989 Reykjavík Film Festival. I was completely enthralled with the whole roster and got sucked into it all. I'd buy a ticket to the three PM screening, and then hide out in the bathroom between films—I'd blag my way into the five, seven and nine PM screenings, spending entire days at the cinema. I'd see three or four movies every day; I think I saw everything at that festival. It was mainly stuff like Jim Jarmusch's 'Down By Law', Wim Wenders' 'Der Himmel über Berlin' and Aki Kaurismäki's 'Match Factory Girl'. There were a lot of good films showing, but those three are the ones that stick out in my mind.

That was the first time I saw filmmaking as a feasible path. I realized that it unified everything that I was interested in. I was playing in rock bands, I had been dabbling in writing, and I had gone through a whole photography phase... and I hadn't quite determined what I wanted to bet on for the future. Then I had this revelation, that it all came together in film.

And that's when you started furiously attending the movie theatre?

Yeah. It was the time for that, too. When you're in your late teens, between sixteen and twenty, you're kind of like a sponge. You suck in all this information, everything you get your hands on, building a stockpile. I'd read and watch and listen to everything I got my hands.

That ecstatic feeling

I first encountered you through the music of Slowblow in the mid nineties, and have consequently always considered you a torchbearer for a certain lo-fi aesthetic, a more understated approach to art that stands in

contrast with the IMAX school of high definition explosions. Is this something you connect with or have connected with?

Yeah, for sure. But, you know, being lo-fi has never been a specific goal. For me, the aesthetic maybe just evolved from having no money. Orri [Jónsson, Slowblow's other half] and I recorded our first album on a four track tape machine and a single microphone... by the time we made the next one, we'd invested in an eight track recorder and a slightly more expensive microphone... whenever we had any money, we'd spend it on new equipment.

Truth be told, I've always had a bit of a gear fetish. I revere that ecstatic feeling you get when turning on an old guitar amp, that purring sound a camera makes when the film starts rolling... It's that urge to create meeting that techno-fetishism. That was sort of a dealbreaker for me, and perhaps the main reason I didn't take to writing as a profession—it wasn't technical enough. I need to have my finger on some buttons, to experience this ecstatic feeling I relate to technology—especially vintage technology. Old machines, analogue, tube amplifiers and ancient instruments. Trying to charm the soul out of these old, weird machines, with their buzzing and the static and the clicks. We never tried to filter that out for our albums, we rather tried milking those sounds out of the equipment. They became the basis of our soundscapes. What others sought to filter out, we would emphasize that.

And are there any parallels to how you approach filmmaking, what kind of equipment you choose to work with... is there a texture you're seeking with your

films that maybe mirrors your approach to music?

Ehrm. Yeah. I've always been infatuated with the texture of film, and I'm rather sad that its era seems to be coming to an end, because it has this texture and depth that you don't find in digital, a depth and character. I feel digital formats document light, but film, it kind of interprets it, there's this interpretative element that's lost when you move to digital.

Impossible dreams

Making a film must be really difficult. There are so many people involved in the process, and it seems like so many factors need to be taken into consideration. It's hard to imagine taking that first step. Did you ever think you'd get to do it?

I signed up for film school harbouring a dream that seemed so distant and absurd. I remember thinking that getting to make a film would be tantamount to winning the lottery ten times in a row... it just seemed crazy, you know, even the act of daring to imagine it could ever work out.

Then, for my graduation project, I made a film called 'Lost Weekend', which had a bit of success. It was surprisingly well received and made the festival rounds all over the world, winning a bunch of prizes. Which in turn helped me make my debut feature...

Continues on P.18

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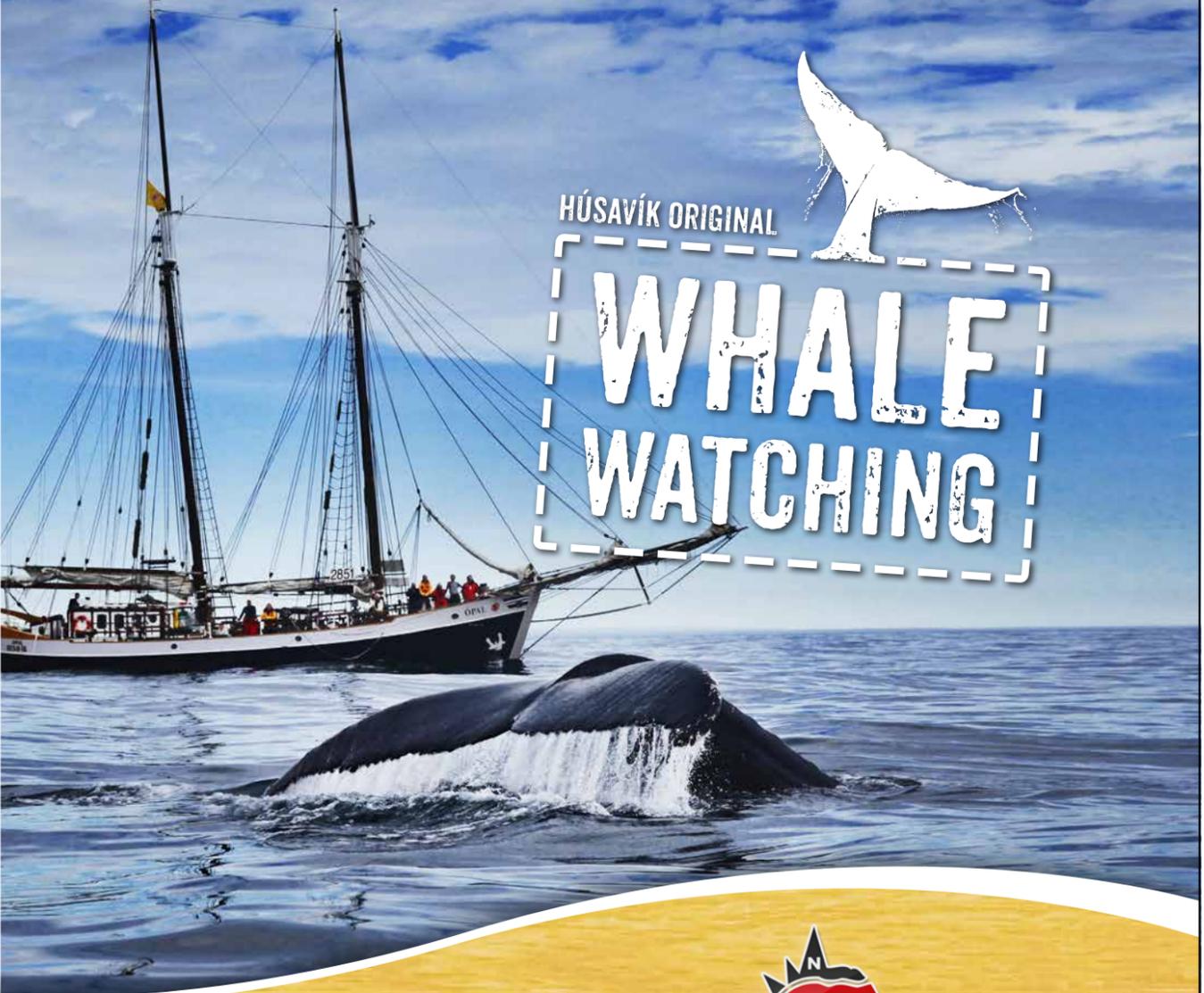
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So because of 'Lost Weekend's success, you could convince people to invest in 'Nói Albínóí' and have faith in you to make it?

Indeed, it was a major turning point, paving the way for various opportunities, enabling me to meet and get to know all kinds of people who then helped me realize 'Nói Albínóí'. The source material for Nói was something I'd carried around since I was sixteen... I already had a load of scenes and situations, so when I knew I had a real shot at making it, completing the script didn't take long.

Wait, you started writing 'Nói Albínóí' at age sixteen?

Just this character, Nói. He'd been with me for years. He was kind of a fantasy figure, a bit of an alter ego... well, not an alter ego, rather the opposite of myself, the opposite of who I was in my junior college years, at least. There were a lot of things I wanted to do at the time, or wished I could do, but didn't have the courage to, so I relegated certain sides of myself into this character I called Nói. He predates any ideas I had of being a filmmaker—he could have turned into anything; a comic strip, a cartoon or a short story... Little by little, I amassed a bunch of situations and events connected to this character that I then used for the script.

So it's a very personal film?

Yes, it's a kind of a testament to what was going on in my head at that time, growing up and beyond.

The film gods

'Nói' was filmed in the northern Westfjords, where I hail from, in Ísafjörður and Bolungarvík. Watching the film, I felt few

works of art better describe what it feels to grow up on the edge of nowhere. Was the location important to the film?

Yes. The isolation was important, and that feeling that you're on the edge of the world. And all that snow. It was very important for the film, that everything be covered in snow.

I actually had no experience of small towns like that prior to making 'Nói'. In fact, I had never been to the Westfjords before we filmed it. It was pure luck that we wound up there. We filmed it over one of those rare Icelandic winters where it barely snows at all. So we sort of made a bet, we counted on that if it would snow anywhere, it would be in the Westfjords. We made our decision to shoot there based solely on that assumption.

And then it turned out to fit so well...

We showed up and I instantly fell for the place. For the fjords and... it was kind of like it had been written specifically for that environment. Down to specific locations that the script described in detail, and I didn't envision ever coming across... I thought we'd have to build some of them in a studio. And then, we repeatedly just... encountered them. It happened time and time again, we would just walk right into the world that I had written.

It really felt like the film gods were on our team for that one. Indeed, it hadn't snowed at all in the Westfjords that winter, so we were sort of blindly stepping into it. We just booked a camera crew and hoped for the best. The day we landed in Ísafjörður, it started snowing and it kept snowing constantly

for the two weeks we were shooting the outdoor scenes. And that was the only snow we had in Iceland that winter. In a way, it felt meant to be.

I felt it was so nice how respectfully you depicted the small towns and its people, it steered clear of that grotesque, skewed image you'll often come across when filmmakers tackle small-town Iceland. Very human. That's maybe something that's recurring in your art, this kind of respect or care for humans. Are you into people like that?

I quite enjoy studying people. The components that make up a character. I can't deny it.

Falling in love with Gussi

So 'Nói Albínóí' was about Nói, this fantasy side to yourself. Then, 'Fúsi' is also named after its main character. However, he's far removed from Nói. Does he perhaps represent a different side to you? How did he come to be?

The making of Fúsi, the character, was a process that's both complicated and simple. It started with me falling in love with Gussi [actor Gunnar Jónsson] when I saw him in [celebrated Icelandic skit show] 'Fóstbræður'. I immediately had the sense that he was a total genius—he has this on-screen presence that's just completely unique.

So, I fantasized about seeing him in something beyond just serving as a sidekick in a comedy show, I wanted to see him doing a massive leading role in

a dramatic film. This has been on my mind for years. In the meanwhile, after Nói, I made films in Denmark and New York. After the latter, 'The Good Heart', I kind of burned out for a while. I just lost all desire to make movies.

I was planning to do something else. While attempting to explore different avenues, I found myself in Keflavík, waiting for a plane. And I'm sort of looking out the window, and I see these small vehicles skirting around the airplanes, bringing the luggage or whatever. They have these tiny cars that kind of look like toy cars, and in my mind an image just pops out, Gussi riding one of those. And that becomes the core metaphor for the film, the story of an adult that hasn't quite cut the umbilical cord and left the world of childhood.

As I awaited the plane, a simple version of the story lined up in my mind. So you could say it just came to me. But, then, it's complicated, because a character or a story doesn't just come from one direction. For me, they are an interplay of everything I've thought and pondered for years, all kinds of ideas I've had aligning and turning into something new.

You assume many roles as a filmmaker, from writing the script and then directing it, to creating the score. You're basically realizing an idea that starts off in your head, bringing it to life...

Well, directors are very different, but for me it's always been about the whole package. What drew me to film in the first place was how the art form combines everything I'm interested in. For me, the screenwriting process is just as important as... you know, the shooting, and then the editing... and then, making the music. They all form equal parts of the whole.

Scoring the films is actually one of

my favourite things about the process, it's kind of like enjoying dessert after a good meal. Everything's ready, but you can sort of use the music to amplify emotions and moods that are already present. The film is basically ready, the stress is over, and you get to play around with it and have some fun.

You make the music with your partner Orri from Slowblow, right? So what, do you two just sit down with some guitars and beer and roll the film through, jamming over it?

No. We work separately, we never write together. I usually start writing while I'm in the editing process, I think it's fun to do those two together, so the music can also affect how I edit the movie. We're not making music for a film that's been locked, we sort of meld our tunes to the film.

That seems like a fun process. Do you think you'll make more records as Slowblow?

Well, we haven't made pop music in more than a decade. We've just made film music, mainly for my movies, but also for a few other projects. Sitting down with the intent of writing verses and choruses has been a distant idea. But it'll probably come back at some point. We'll make some horrible middle-aged record when we're pushing fifty, I'm sure. Something totally dated and hopeless. I'm certain it will happen.

Emotional

Are you saying old people can't make good music? Is that different with film?

No, I don't think so. I've often thought about it. You know, considering how powerful a medium pop music is, it's



odd that it's usually made by these twenty-year old buffoons. Artists generally don't peak until they reach forty, that's when they've had a bit of experience and attained some depth, when they should be able to say something worthwhile.

I think pop music and film, they're really rather banal art forms that still have an incredible access to people's emotional life. Yet they operate by these formulas. A pop song is always just a chorus, verse, chorus verse, and then the c-part in the middle, then the chorus is repeated twice and the song is over.

And film is a little like that, too, you have the three acts, and then at some points there will be these turning points in the plot. You're basically always listening to the same song, watching the same movie, yet the possibilities seem endless and they're, like, directly linked to people's emotional life.

This emotional connection seems important to you. Is that your main reason for making films and music?

Yes, I think so. What I find fascinating about music is how it bypasses the brain and sort of has a direct passage to the heart and the emotions. And, then, what I think is unique to film is how it can engage a viewer in both a humorous and melancholic way.

In all my movies, I'm basically trying to fine-tune this cocktail of laughter and sadness. I think it's really fascinating, being able to go to the movies and both laugh your ass off and at the same time be deeply moved.

These days, I find that films are all too often either/or. The market calls for a pure division: either you go to the movies to laugh, or to cry. It's rare that the two go together. And that's the combination I find fascinating. When you get people laughing, they've opened up and bared themselves in a way, which then grants direct access to their core.

This division, is it a recent development? As an art form, film has been optimized through the years, with investors seeking maximum bang for their buck.

Has that ability to meld and mutate been bred out of filmmaking in your opinion? Is there less room for experimentation and exploration?

Yes, I think that's absolutely been the case. The call for standardization and compartmentalization grows stronger by the day. However, this is a trend that will at some point hit a wall, and hopefully shatter. It already seems to be happening in television.

As an art form, TV has always been looked down upon, as a kind of banal and cheap version of cinema, but now it's become the main driver. It's where all the innovation is happening. It has managed to break free, and it's maybe even influencing filmmaking in a way. By now, TV has reached a point where it can operate in a similar way to a novel, which cinema has never managed; mastering this multilayered, multi-voiced, complex approach to storytelling.

Cinema is so limited. You basically have 90-120 minutes to tell a story, and, again, the form works like a pop song. If the chorus or the guitar solo comes in at the wrong time, you sense that there's something wrong. A film's plot has to follow a certain curve that TV series have managed to dissolve. All of the sudden, you have sixty some hours to observe characters grow and operate. And I find that incredibly fascinating.

What are you watching at the moment?

I haven't really sunk myself into these dramatic series, like 'Breaking Bad'. I've made a few attempts, and I always sort of shy away. With TV, I find humour is so important, and if it's not there, I get a little impatient. So I mostly watch sitcoms... That whole sitcom format—where you're stuck in the same environment with the same characters, and nobody learns from their mistakes, and no matter what goes on you're always at the starting point in the next episode—that really appeals to me.

When I think about it, what's influenced me most are sitcoms like The Simpsons and Cheers and Seinfeld...

In a way, I find my movies have more to do with sitcoms than most modern cinema, even though I'm working within the cinematic structure. With me, it's not the plot that matters so much as the characters and the situations they are faced with. When I think about it, what's influenced me most are sitcoms like The Simpsons and Cheers and Seinfeld...

Nothing makes sense

Your first film was in Icelandic, then the next one was in Danish and the one after that was in English, and now you're back to Icelandic. Is there a difference?

I really enjoy language in general, studying the nuances of how people interact in different languages. In many ways, it's easier for me to work in the context of a foreign language, because it grants that outsider's perspective, allowing me to spot things that native speakers are maybe blind to.

However, the main difference between working in these different places lies in the energy and the organization. You'll find quite a different energy in Iceland than in, say, Denmark or the States. For instance, there's a lot more organization in Denmark than in Iceland... actually, most places are more organized than Iceland. But the energy levels balance it out.

Iceland has that... what's unique about Icelanders and what everyone keeps trying to explain, without ever succeeding, is that there's this sort of boundless creative energy. In a country where nothing makes sense, you feel like everything's possible. And in Denmark, it's quite the reverse. The creative energy sort

Continues on P.20

A Dark Horse With A Good Heart

FILM REVIEW: 'Fúsi' ("Virgin Mountain")



Words by Valur Gunnarsson

Icelandic cinema seems to be doing rather well with upwards of twelve premieres expected this year. For those who worried that all the Hollywood work coming to these shores lately would keep everyone too busy to make their own movies, the reverse actually seems to be the case. Icelandic filmmakers will have to step up their game, though, if they want to make a better film this year than Dagur Kári's 'Virgin Mountain' (no, it's not a 'Game of Thrones' prequel starring that bodybuilder guy), or as it's called in Icelandic, 'Fúsi'.

Dagur Kári first made his mark in 2003 with 'Nói Albinói', still widely considered one of the best Icelandic films of the century. He then went to Denmark, where he had gotten his film degree, to make 'Voksne mennesker' ("Dark Horse") starring, among others, Nicolas Bro. Then he headed to the States to make 'The Good Heart', starring Paul Dano and the great Brian Cox (stepping in for Tom Waits, who had previously been attached to the project). While both films were competent and charming in their way, it is with his recent film that he seems set to establish himself as a truly great Icelandic filmmaker.

In defence of weirdoes and child molesters?

The titular Mountain (no, again, not that one) is played by Gunnar Hansson, a bit part actor in Hrafn Gunnlaugsson's Viking films, who here comes into his own as a leading man, if an unconventional one. You see, even if all sensible people know to respect people irrespective of their gender, race or creed, it still seems strangely okay to fear strange, middle-aged lonely guys who still live with their mothers. Fúsi is duly harassed by his co-workers as all 40-something virgins must be, and who knows if he might be a paedophile too?

Of course, the man-mountain-child-guy is entirely harmless. His one hobby is recreating the battle of El Alamein with a male friend of the same age who somehow has managed to get (and stay) married. The scene in which his friend's son comes in and asks if he is allowed to play with his dad's toy soldiers, and is told that they are not for children, is priceless. Child abuse became a staple of Nordic cinema with Thomas Vinterberg's 'Festen' in 1998, but that same Vinterberg led the counter charge in 2012 with 'Jagten', a drama about a teacher wrongly suspected of molesting his students.

The backlash is evident in Icelandic films today. In last year's wildly

popular 'Vonarstræti' ("Life in a Fish-bowl"), a drunken poet with a heart of gold is driven away from a playground he passes every day by over-zealous staff. More bizarrely, in 'Austur', which came out last month, the protagonist is saved by a paedophile whom we are led to believe is probably guilty of previous crimes. And here, Fúsi gets arrested, but the mistake is cleared up when it comes to light just how harmless he is. This is not an Icelandic 'Jagten', then, but merely one of many misadventures that come Fúsi's way.

Naturally there is a love interest, Sjöfn, who is named after the goddess of sensuality and is beautifully played by Ilmur Kristjánsdóttir. But this is no Hollywood tripe where the lonely guy gets the perfect girl despite his flaws. Sjöfn has problems of her own, switching between manic and depressive, looking for a friend or pushing people away depending on her state. Their relationship is one of the more tender ones depicted in cinema in recent years.

A refreshing thought for us mortals

Icelandic films often fall into the trap of belabouring their point. It seems that in a culture that has only been making movies for 35 years, local directors still don't entirely trust the audience to get the point without spelling it out. But what sets Dagur Kári apart as a first rate director is precisely how much he can say with just an expression on the face of his characters, or the gaps between the words.

None of the people here are really bad, not the girl who rejects Fúsi, the father who denounces him or even the workmates who torment him. Everyone is busy in their own world and fear or ignorance, not cruelty, is the root of all problems. Ultimately, it just seems to be very hard for people to reach out to one another. Except, of course, over a re-creation of the Battle of El Alamein.

As the film draws to a close, one starts to fear that Dagur will mess it up in the Icelandic way, but he manages to cling to a perfect palette right up to the end. Fúsi eventually prevails, even if just a little bit, not by winning all his battles but simply by having a good heart. In the age of superheroes, that's a refreshing thought for us mortals.

'Virgin Mountain' can be seen at *Bío Paradís* with English subtitles. See www.bioparadis.is for more information.



Dagur Kári: Filmography

By Valur Gunnarsson

Dagur first made a name for himself around the year 2000 with shorts like 'Old Spice' (not about Spice Girls's father), 'Lost Weekend' (not about vampires) and 'Líkið í lestinni' ("The Body On The Train"—actually about a dead body in the backseat), a segment of the anthology 'Villiljós', which is inexplicably known as 'Dramarama' in English. But it was his first feature that was to firmly place him on Iceland's movie map.

'Nói Albínói' (*'Nói The Albino'*—2003)

One of the most impressive debuts in Icelandic film history. More than that, it could be credited for rejuvenating Icelandic cinema for a new century, which went through a rather meagre '90s after a flying start in the '80s). Dagur seems to (re) discover a particularly Icelandic way of telling a story on screen, the Westfjords' landscape serving as the main character along with the films titular albino. Everyone here dreams of running off to Reykjavík—an oft repeated theme in Icelandic cinema—while unbeknownst to them, everyone in Reykjavík dreams of running off to Copenhagen. Or New York. Or somewhere.

'Voksne mennesker' (*'Dark Horse'*—2005)

Having made a uniquely Icelandic film, Dagur's next logical step was to go to Denmark to make a particularly Danish film. The director had gotten his film degree over there, and he was able to get top line actors such as Jacob Cedergren (later seen in Vinterberg's 'Submarino') and Nicholas Bro to star in this story of refusing to grow up and choosing friendship over love (sort of like a bromance take on 'Frozen'). But this is really only a good Danish movie rather than a great Icelandic one. Bro's character reminds one of a younger Fúsi though, an indicator of things to come.

'The Good Heart' (2009)

Having conquered our old colonial capital, Dagur headed off to the world city of New York and made a film set in a local institution, the neighbourhood bar. Dagur's band Slowblow is very inspired by Tom Waits at times, who was originally set to star in 'The Good Heart', and perhaps this was meant as a live action version of a Waits song. Brian Cox works well as Tom's replacement bartender, while Paul Dano holds up his end of things. However, the end result is charming in parts rather than a truly great whole. Couldn't this have been set in a bar in the Westfjords instead?

'Fúsi' (*'Virgin Mountain'*—2015)

Dagur was now finally ready to make an Icelandic film again, and it's a treat. The titular character is an instantly classic persona, that guy you sometimes see in the background as the butt of a joke but is here given his own film. The story is told with sensitivity as well as humour, with each performance wonderfully understated. By now, we know most of the constituent parts of the Dagur-verse. Bonds between men tend to be the strongest while relationships with women are fleeting, everyone dreams of getting away to somewhere and growing up is hard to do. Dagur himself is by now a fully mature filmmaker, and has never been better.

of dies as it passes through the organizational structure. At the same time, though, you at least get paid for every hour you work.

The Danes' realist outlook perhaps forces you to be organized, but at the same time prevents you from aiming as high as you would...

Exactly. It would be fun you could somehow join these qualities, if they could meet in the middle, but instead there are extremes in each direction.

Iceland as prostitute

People seem really worried about Icelandic filmmaking at the moment, due to funding cuts and whatnot... what are your thoughts on this?

The environment is a little too unstable. It's too dependent on whim, who's running the country at a given time, and that's not a very good environment for an industry to operate within. There needs to be some stability, some sort of base understanding that this is important and that—for it to keep afloat—there needs to be a certain support that is not subject to fancy, that can't be diminished without notice.

When the support for the industry goes down forty to seventy percent in a year, it creates an absurd working environment. Nobody imagines that the National Theatre can in one year stage a single play, and then fourteen in the next.

Is there such a thing as "Icelandic filmmaking?" How would you describe it?

Yes and no. There are a lot of great filmmakers working in Iceland at the moment, each with their own strengths, and the films they make are very different in style and emphasis. Of course, there are certain elements that tie their different projects together, mostly that they are being made in this country, by this nation.

The country itself has been sold to international filmmakers—to Hollywood—in a kind of exploitative way in recent years. Iceland's landscapes and sceneries seem to be popping up in every other blockbuster... Do you have an opinion?

Well, I don't know. I can't really say I have an opinion one way or the other. But in general, Icelanders have this tendency to sell themselves short.

Yeah. Iceland is a bit of a whore. At the same time, it's like, Miss Universe. This is perhaps best displayed in how we've sold our energy through the years, to heavy industry megacorporations,

and this is reflected maybe in other areas... It's kind of like Miss World saying, you know, "I just had to resort to prostitution, because I couldn't think of anything else."

I think it's kind of stuck to Iceland, this idea that we're ready to sell for really cheap, to the lowest bidder. We should strive to be more selective in choosing our bedfellows, and, you know, we shouldn't always sell to the lowest bidder. Maybe we should start believing that the quality of what we have to offer should enable us to charge a higher price... Maybe I'm on thin ice here...

This is certainly a topic worthy of discussion, and perhaps something we are about to have to deal with, or should be dealing with in any case. The consequences of how we're treating the environment and how we're operating with regards to tourism and the like. As editor of a tourist publication, I'm painfully aware of how we're marketing ourselves, and who we're marketing ourselves to...

Exactly. Instead of shaping a policy and determining how we want things to evolve, we're always ready to swallow whatever's on offer, whatever's handed to us. Icelanders have always been this way, if someone offers us five hundred krónur today, we don't care that means we'll get a bill for five thousand krónur at the end of the week.

That's the kind of shortsightedness I'm talking about, this lack of foresight, and pride. It's absurd that we're not taking a moment to define how we want to go on about things.

Perhaps it's connected to the fact that we've usually had to get while the getting's good, because nature is so unpredictable?

Yeah, it's kind of like that. This tendency to fill the pantry while we can. This sentiment runs very deep in Icelanders, this shortsightedness, but it also has its positive aspects. Planning three moves ahead, we'd never make a single movie in Iceland. There is a certain energy there, just going for it and dealing with the problems later.

A horrid situation

You currently head the Director's Programme at your old school, The National Film School of Denmark. How did that come about?

Well, I'm good friends with the dean. And he got in touch and offered me the job, and it came about at a time where I felt ready to try new things and a new environment. Living in Iceland had gotten a little heavy, and the idea of trying something new for a while felt liberat-

ing, so I jumped at the opportunity. And yeah, it's been very educational, returning as a teacher.

How exactly did living in Iceland get heavy?

Well, it's that... you know, there's a really sort of horrid situation in Iceland, especially in politics.

Are you a political refugee, then?

Well, no. I suppose I'm some sort of a refugee. One of the benefits of living in a foreign country is that you can allow yourself a certain irresponsibility... I don't follow politics here at all. I just read the two back pages of the newspapers, you know, the gossip and culture, that's it. And that's a rather comfortable position to be in.

Do you consider yourself a political artist?

No, in no way. Politics have never been part of my creative process. I am first and foremost concerned with people and the circumstances they find themselves in. And if something political or some level of social commentary slides in with what I make, that's happening on a purely subconscious level.

What about your career? Where do you see yourself taking it? Would you be into tackling a huge Hollywood blockbuster?

I can't say that's been a goal of mine. However, I must admit, I'm in my forties now, and shit broke. So, for the first time in my life, I feel like I could be into doing some sell-out project.

Have you gotten any tempting offers?

Well, there's a little heat after the film won all these awards at Tribeca. Agents and producers have been getting in touch and whatnot. There's a little buzz going around at the moment, which might turn into something. Then again, it might fizzle out, as it tends to.

Plain, sincere

Speaking of Tribeca, you received three award there, for best original screenplay, best narrative film and then Gunnar won best lead actor. Did you go into the festival expecting such accolades?

No. I have to admit, I was completely taken aback by all those awards. To be honest, I hadn't even entertained the possibility of us winning anything at all. I didn't bother looking into what kinds of awards they were giving out, or who would be on the jury or anything. I went to New York to open the film, basically to have a bit of fun and enjoy the city. 'Fúsi' is kind of sincere and plain, you

know, and I was certain it wasn't the type of film that could catch the eyes of a jury. So it was a pleasant surprise, that they would deem it good enough to win all these awards.

You weren't there to accept any of them, though?

No, unfortunately I'd gone home by the time they were given out. Like I said, I didn't expect anything to come of it, other than a fun trip to New York. So I missed my chance to accept an award from Robert De Niro, which I must admit would have been thrilling. I sent a little thank you video instead.

That same week, the film was also awarded at a Danish film festival...

Yes, we got the audience award at CPH PIX in Copenhagen... it was a good week.

Is getting awards like these important?

Yeah, it can be very beneficial for a film, especially in cases like these, when we get three big awards at the same festival. It has an exponential effect with regards to attention, which in turn helps getting it out there. The good thing about Tribeca, we're hoping that it will raise attention in the US, which is a notoriously hard market to penetrate. So we're crossing our fingers that we might score a distribution deal over there.

Lord of vomit

Anyway. Are you going to see the new Avengers movie?

Nope.

Don't like superheroes, huh?

Nope. There are two things that I absolutely loathe in film: realism and fantasy.

How does that work out?

For me, the magic lies somewhere between the two. Stuff like 'Lord Of The Rings' just makes me vomit. I just can't. It's same with films that are hyper-realistic. Those are also really off-putting to me. There's... I hate using the word 'poetic', but there's something there... you can lift reality to a higher plane without going all the way towards fantasy. That is where I like to position myself.

Who do you make your films for?

Uhm... an audience? See, I can't get up and give a speech, I can't really tell a joke, but through films and other artistic ventures, I can have a venue to make people laugh, and to touch them.

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Reykjavík (BSÍ Bus Terminal)	08:00	16:00	19:30
Hveragerði (N1 Gas Station)	08:40	16:40	20:20
Selfoss (Campsite)	08:55	16:55	20:25
Selfoss (N1 Gas Station)	09:00	17:00	20:30
Hella (Campsite)	09:35	17:25	20:55
Hella (Kjarval Supermarket)	09:40	17:30	21:00
Hvolsvöllur (N1 Gas Station)	10:15	18:00	21:10
Seljalandsfoss (Waterfall)	10:45	18:30	21:30 & 21:40
Þórsmörk (Húsadalur)	12:00 & 12:30	19:40	22:55
Stakkholtsgjá Canyon	12:45		
Þórsmörk (Básar)	13:10 & 15:00		
Þórsmörk (Langidalur)	15:15 & 15:20		
Stakkholtsgjá Canyon	15:35		
Þórsmörk (Húsadalur)	15:50		

* Morning departure from Básar and Langidalur has to be booked at the mountain hut's supervisor before 21:00 the evening before.

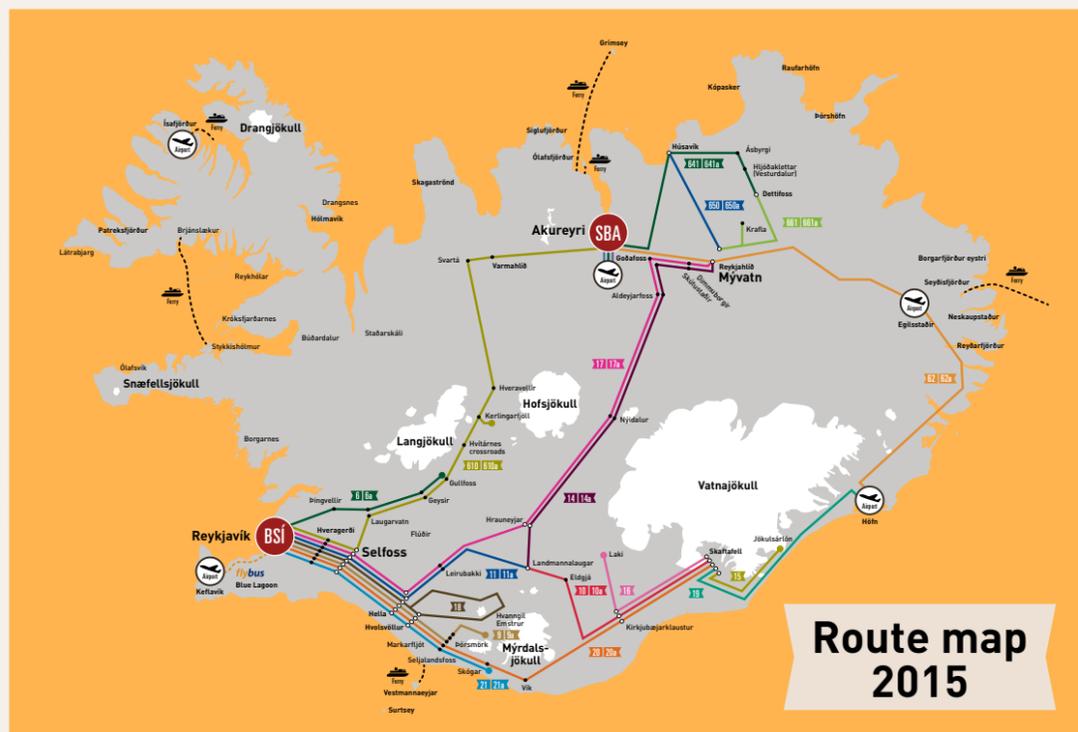
9a - Valid 1 May - 15 October

FROM	DAILY 14/6 - 31/8	DAILY 1/5 - 15/10**	DAILY 13/6 - 31/8
Þórsmörk (Básar)	07:20*	15:00***	20:00
Þórsmörk (Langidalur)	07:30*	15:15 & 15:20***	20:10
Stakkholtsgjá Canyon		15:35***	
Þórsmörk (Húsadalur)	08:00	16:00	20:40
Seljalandsfoss (Waterfall)	09:00	17:15	21:40**
Hvolsvöllur (N1 Gas Station)	09:30	17:45	22:00 & 22:10
Hella (Kjarval Supermarket)	09:35	17:55	22:20
Hella (Campsite)	09:40	18:00	22:25
Selfoss (Campsite)	10:05	18:25	22:50
Selfoss (N1 Gas Station)	10:10	18:30	22:55
Hveragerði (N1 Gas Station)	10:20	18:40	23:05
Reykjavík (BSÍ Bus Terminal)	11:15	19:35	23:45

• Arrival • Departure

** Road & weather conditions determine when highland roads are accessible.

*** Between 1 May - 13 June and 1 September - 15 October departures from these locations need to be booked at the mountain hut's supervisor before noon.



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KYNNISFERÐIR

Kaleo Are Privileged And Fortunate, Play The Blues, Have Escaped Iceland

Words

Scott Shigeoka

Photos

Yasmin Nowak

In just three years, Kaleo went from playing small venues in Reykjavík to signing with Atlantic Records, legendary home to artists such as Ray Charles, Led Zeppelin and Alvin and The Chipmunks. As part of this development, the four-piece rock-and-blues band have packed up and moved to Austin, Texas, where vocalist Jökull “JJ” Júlíusson says they’ll live “for good.”

“We’re taking it all in, but I think living here might just improve and emphasise what we are already inspired by,” JJ tells me. “We haven’t been here long but we can hear a lot of blues out here and a lot of new inspiration.”

With a vibrant local music scene, Austin is one of cities in the American South where blues music has thrived, a genre that JJ says Kaleo is deeply inspired by. In Austin, the group is living in a house together like “one big family.” Their upcoming debut US tour kicked off with the largest showcase festival in the world: South by Southwest (SXSW).

Get in the van!

“SXSW was pretty intense but it was really great,” JJ says. “It was definitely different from anything we’ve ever played before.”

When JJ and I caught up after SXSW, his voice and demeanor were noticeably exhausted. His tiredness was understandable, though: Kaleo had just ground through eight shows over five days. Though the shows were “awesome,” he says they were going non-stop and “kind of just driving back and forward between shows and doing radio stuff.”

Nowadays, Kaleo’s schedule is fully booked. Their tour, plus finding time to record their upcoming EP and fitting back-to-back media interviews—he had to pause our call for a minute so he could order lunch—all while acclimating to their first-ever transatlantic move doesn’t give them much time to take a breath and reflect on the sensational yet dramatic changes that have happened to their lives in the last few months.

“To be honest,” JJ says of his experience at SXSW, “I didn’t really have that much time to check out shows as much as I would have wanted.”

After all, that was one of the reasons they moved to the United States and the South in particular: to connect to the local music and immerse themselves in blues music and culture. But JJ assured me that they would carve out the time to go to shows, jam with local musicians and experience the culture.

Change

Like most bands, Kaleo has humble roots. Growing up, JJ and his friend Daníel “Danny” Kristjánsson (the group’s bassist) jammed on guitars together in their families’ Mosfellsbær homes. Exploring the artform, the two listened to thousands of tracks together—finding particular joy in classic rock, oldies and American blues—and spent hundreds of hours jumping down the Internet’s rabbit holes, learning more about music history and genres like the blues.

Once Davíð Antonsson (the group’s drummer) joined their jam sessions, they quickly transformed into a three-piece band, playing gigs all across Reykjavík. They performed everything from troubadour sets at small bars to cover songs at company parties.

“We took every opportunity we could,” JJ says.

In 2012, they made the decision to focus on their own music and picked up guitarist Rubín Pollock. They played together as Kaleo for the very first time at an Iceland Airwaves off-venue show.

They couldn’t have known what would unfold in the following three years. Their debut release, “Rock N Roller,” helped them garner a modest following, but it was a recorded cover of Icelandic campfire staple “Vor í Vaglaskógi,” for unsigned band radio showcase Skúririnn (“The Garage”) at Icelandic State Radio’s Rás 2, that propelled them into the country’s national spotlight.

“Everything went crazy,” JJ says. “They videotaped [the performance] and it went viral.”

They recorded a studio version of the song, which went live in June 2013, along with a music video that earned nearly half a million views on YouTube. Sena, Iceland’s largest record label, latched onto

their growth and produced Kaleo’s full-length debut album in an almost impossible time span of six weeks.

Iceland: It’s such a small market

By 2014, Kaleo had rocketed onto larger stages in Iceland and played at festivals around the country and even abroad. During all of these exciting developments, JJ says he took trips out into nature to “zone out and find peace.”

“The nature in Iceland is beautiful,” he says. “And you don’t have to drive far.”

His favourite spot was a summerhouse near Laugarvatn, an hour east of Mosfellsbær, which is where he wrote the visceral and emotional track “All The Pretty Girls.”

“It’s just such a summer sound,” JJ says of the song, which became the crucial turning point in Kaleo’s journey after the song went viral online, racking up more than two million plays on Spotify alone.

“We were absolutely not thinking we were going to get that response from ‘All the Pretty Girls,’ it was a huge surprise,” he says. “You’ll never know which song is going to take you there.”

After the track’s release, managers, labels and publishers outside of Iceland took notice of their growing popularity and started reaching out to negotiate deals. “We didn’t know which way to look,” JJ says. “We didn’t even know the difference between a publishing company and a management company because Iceland is such a small market.”

Over the next few months, Kaleo’s then-manager Sindri Ástmarsson would enter negotiations with Atlantic Records, one of the biggest record labels in the world, home to legendary artists such as the Rolling Stones.

“It was a crazy roller coaster ride,” JJ says.

Finding their formula

After signing with Atlantic Records and exploring U.S. markets like Nashville, JJ says the band collectively decided on Austin to be their new home. Their current manager Bruce Kalmick operates out of the city, and JJ says they liked Austin’s music scene and history.

“It’s so easy to be inspired now that we’re in the land of where it all happened,” JJ says, referencing the history of American blues music. “We are in the roots.”

Just six days after arriving to Austin in February, they played their debut US show at Lamberts, a local venue that focuses primarily on blues music.

“We’re huge fans of Delta blues from the 1930s and all those great artists like Son House, Robert Johnson and Lead Belly,” JJ says. “They’ve been recording in some of the prisons even—it’s fantastic.”

JJ also showed his respect to Alan Lomax, who recorded many of the Delta blues artists in the 1930s and 40s with his father John. In his memoir, ‘The Land Where the Blues Began’, Lomax linked the birth of blues music to segregation and slavery, two themes that also provided inspiration for Kaleo’s track “Broken Bones,” JJ says.

“Broken Bones” starts off with sharp lyrics: “The devil’s gonna make me a free man / the devil’s gonna set me free.” Forty seconds into the song, a tambourine emulates the rattling of chains that many slaves were shackled by. The track cuts right through the flesh—down to the bone—with an authentic blues sound, which is surprising considering Kaleo formed more than 6,000 kilometres from the birthplace of American blues.

JJ says that with the advent of the Internet, it was easy to listen to and learn about music styles that existed outside of Iceland.

“If you look at it, we’re just a blues band at the end,” JJ says. “The same formula but with a different kind of vibe to it.”

Privileged, fortunate

Johnny Cash—also from the American South—famously sang the line: “Get rhythm when you get the blues,” which

was quoted by Bob Dylan in his MusiCares speech this February: “Very few rock ‘n’ roll bands today play with rhythm. They don’t know what it is.”

Arguably, Kaleo is one of the exceptions to Dylan’s statement, as their rhythmic rock sound inspired by the blues was present throughout their debut record. It’s this raw talent that likely caught the ears of the many American labels who reached out.

Kaleo hopes to showcase who they are as a group with the release of their upcoming EP, which JJ says is expected to drop this summer. This is a particularly exciting record for the group since they’re collaborating with Mike Crossey, the same producer behind the Arctic Monkeys’ first three albums. Even before arriving to Austin, they spent a few weeks in Crossey’s studio in London, JJ says.

“We’re fortunate enough to work with some great people,” he says. “We’re going to also find some time to just keep making music and hopefully get further and further,” he says.

Perhaps Kaleo, whose name means “sound” in the Hawaiian language, will make it as far as Hawaii. “We’d love to tour there,” he says.

Definitely on the list for them this year, though, is the now-distant land of Germany, and JJ says they are “crossing our fingers to be able to come to Iceland for a few days this summer.”

“Kind of a shame to miss out on the Iceland summer,” he says. “I would love to at least come home and get a little taste.”

During the interview, JJ reflected back to his early days in Iceland, before the birth of Kaleo, in those simpler times when JJ and Danny just spent hours listening to American blues music. There’s so much that has changed since those beginnings, and though he says they’re excited about it all, he acknowledges it has been a wild ride. There’s still so much ahead of them, he says.

“We are very privileged and fortunate,” he adds. “We are just going to keep developing as a band, trying to get better in the studio and play as many shows as we can. That’s what it’s all about, right?”



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Album Reviews



The Foghorns

The Sun's Gotta Shine...

www.thefoghorns.com

It's the blues, Jim,
but not as we know it



+ In numerous ways this is a pure blues/rock album, but the lyrics throughout are sharp, witty and personal/political. It's easy to pull out any number of Bart Cameron's pithy phrases: "You wanted a fight, alright you got a fight / But this machine don't kill fascists so I brought dynamite" ("Sons And Daughters Of The Molly Maguires"); "If I had \$400, I would buy me a freezer full of steak / What do you do with the money you make? You show me your arm. You spent \$400 on a picture of a snake" ("400 Dollars"); the entire story of "If You Can't Get Lucky Please Get Up."

This to-the-bone realism is framed brilliantly by crunchy blues guitars and great arrangements that include a top-class, sad-eyed bass clarinet, accordion,

harmonica and even "pots and pans." Make no mistake, this is a very well-constructed set of songs by a group on top form. And the surprises keep coming. Just when it looks like the band's about to sign off with the fairly straightforward, poetic blues of "This Murder Won't Hurt You," they throw a major curveball with the psychedelic odd loveliness of "Alfred the Elephant." In one dimension, it's a kind of love song between a disembodied pachyderm and his followers. Another interpretation is that the elephant is the narrator's depression. Either way, there ought to be more songs about elephants. Elephants are fucking great.

And this record is too.
✂ - JOE SHOOMAN

Ottoman

Heretic EP

Blood, power,
drudge, buzzheart



+ A man woke up from dreams of flying to find the grey skies had finally, irrevocably and godlessly fallen; a dense, muggy, sick, slow-oozing fog squelched and squeezed at the roof tiles of the world, sprawling in a dazed deception, proof at last that over our heads there were no dreams. A sad, gut-burnt laugh of defeat bubbled to the man's parched lips.

Yes, he knew it all along: above the clouds there were never angels. And there never would be. What is there to do? Really?

This fudge of tainted protoplasm is a self-suppurating mess of blue bruises, black scars and monosyllabic internal shouts, he thought. If only there were a way to express this extra-gravitational

mass pushing down on the shoulders of the soul. If only there were a mode of—not release, that wasn't the right word—a mode of—not escape—just a mode. No, it was deeper than that.

He picked up the nearest object. It turned out to be a smashed-up guitar, welded forever into a fuzz of griminess. The man's clawing, desperate hands moved of their own accord. And there, finally, in a frequency just underneath the scraping emptiness of finality, there it was. He called it a riff. And it begat more; and the clouds parted, and the sky was full of fire, motorcycles and alternating Sabbath riffery and Zep-esque 70s rock.

The man was glad he had woken that day, and vowed never to dream again.

✂ - JOE SHOOMAN

Auðn

Auðn

www.facebook.com/audnofficial

It is flawless.



+ From the anguished beauty of the bittersweet melodies and the dark, atmospheric, aura, to the stellar sound production and the vicious throat-tearing vocal delivery, Auðn's self-titled debut album is altogether flawless.

Black metal has no right to be this beautiful.

It is also bleakly grim. At times, it is blasting and brutal, yet perfectly balanced and never straying a solitary note away from the mesmerizing ethereal soundscape projected throughout.

The lyrics are bellowed in a harshly

rasped croon, echoing olden phrases in the mother tongue, speaking drab tales of blasphemy, desolation and despair. All over a doom-laden soundtrack fully befitting a Kaurismäki drama.

This album is like a major-label effort from a seasoned artist producing blackened high art by the informed decision of some elitist kvlt committee of the dark satanic overlords at the helm of the Norwegian inner circle.

✂ - BOGI BJARNASON

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Vagina (dot) Love



Straumur



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www.straumur.is

Words

Óli Dóri & Davíð Roach

One of our favourite Icelandic musicians, **Sin Fang**, is playing a show at Húrra on May 26. The warm-up band caught our attention with their name, **Vagina Boys**, and we look forward to seeing them for the first time.

They have one original song on their Soundcloud page, **“Elskan af því bara”** (“Baby, just because”). It’s a wonderfully bittersweet r’n’b slow jam painted with old sounding drum machines and warm synth pads. But the icing on the 80s cake are the vocals, which have layers upon layers of autotune and vocoder effects piled on them and tweaked in all sorts of unexpected ways. They also have an interesting cover of Jai Paul’s excellent BTSU and a remix of the aforementioned “Elskan af því bara.” Their page has no information about the band members, but it was definitely the find of the month for us.

The following day, at the same venue, a release show will take place for a new album by the Icelandic musician **Helgi Valur Ásgeirsson**. His third and most personal record to date, **‘Notes from the Underground’** is about an inner struggle between sanity and madness. The album’s highlight is the epic closure **“Love Love Love Love.”** Clocking in at over 13 minutes, this Lou Reed-esque gem will take you on a love-fuelled journey.

The first album by Guðmundur Úlfarsson aka **Good Moon Deer** will see the light of day later this month. On the album, **‘Dot,’** Guðmundur

mixes all kinds of modern electronic music styles together and uses sampling, sequencing and tweaking heavily. The outcome is some of the freshest electronica coming out of Reykjavík this year and bears a striking resemblance to the best from the likes of Four Tet and Caribou. Head to grapevine.is to download the opening track!



Straumur has been active since last summer, with writers **Óli Dóri** and **Davíð Roach** documenting the local music scene and helping people discover new music at straumur.is. It is associated with the radio show **Straumur** on X977, which airs every Monday evening at 23:00.

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INTER
VIEW

A New Look At Iceland's Visual Heritage

Markús Þór Andrússon on curating
'Points of View' at the Culture House

Words

Lani Yamamoto

Photo

Matthew Eisman

The Culture House (Safnahúsið) may have just been restored to its original 1906 name, but it has reopened to new life and purpose with the inspired and inspiring exhibition 'Points of View'.

An exploration of Icelandic visual heritage, 'Points of View' brings together widely diverse objects from six major cultural institutions, with the fresh eye and sensibility of a contemporary art installation. The wonderful result is an impeccably arranged treasure trove waiting to be discovered in the nooks and crannies of one of the country's most beautiful houses. It is the grand-scale equivalent of a rummage through your grandmother's attic (if in addition to family photos and embroidered pillows your grandmother also collected contemporary art, stuffed falcons, religious statues, illuminated manuscripts, plant specimens, and diagrams of various beard styles through the ages).

Blissfully free of academic explanations and contextualising, the exhibition instead loosely groups its pieces according to Icelanders' perspectives of themselves and their world, establishing a refreshingly human orientation in which an object's significance is determined in equal parts through the creative expression of its maker and the experience of the viewer. (There is one indisputable national treasure also on display. I won't give it away here, but it is worth the trip in and of itself.)

'Points of View' is beautifully and intelligently conceived, but it is also full of heart and humour. On the day after the opening, the Culture House is filled with at least two generations of adults laughing and reminiscing while children play in the many irresistible discovery areas. The exhibition's tone seems to come directly from its curator, Markús Þór Andrússon, an energetic young contemporary art specialist with a dress sense circa 1900. Trained at Bard College, Markús's curatorial credits include the Sequences Art Festival (2013); 'Without Destination' at the Reykjavík Art Museum (2011); and (with Dorothee Kirch) Ragnar Kjartansson's 'The End' at the Venice Biennale (2009).

Markús walks me through the exhibition and tells me more about his fascinating, if unlikely, collaboration with the National Museum, the National History Museum, the National Art Gallery, the National Archive, the National and University Library, and the Árni Magnússon Institute.

There are no signs, no descriptions, and no explanations...

Just the basics. If there is a title or a year or a self-description, or if the artist is known, we have that. I thought it was very important that people be able to experience a show like this—just visually—to make connections between the pieces without knowing too much about them.

There's a simple sentence a curator I admire once said: "You don't go to a concert to learn about music, it's just to enjoy the music." The same goes for visual experience. You don't go to learn about it, you just want to enjoy it.

Wasn't that a controversial approach?

Yes, it was very much debated. People want to educate people. That's basically what many of these institutions are obliged to do. But there are many ways to do that.

I was campaigning for a kind of active experience, to have to compare and contrast and look around. Not just to be told. It's not a new thing anywhere else, but here in Iceland you don't necessarily invite people to discover things on their own. We usually just mediate an exhibition that's been done in an institution and then present it. But the result is that people feel like the institution is speaking to them from above, that they just have to listen and learn.

It's a totally different experience to claim ownership, to know that this is your heritage and you know it as well as anybody else. The people who made these works of art were not necessarily specialists in their fields. They are maybe amateurs, or just trying to express themselves. We're trying to focus on this visual language that everyone should be able to engage with. For those who want to go deeper into things, there are also the options of walking through with an audio guide, reading the catalogue, or making use of one of the study rooms.

I'm really intrigued how you got away with it! I would think the museums had very specific ideas about the importance of certain pieces...

There were a lot of discussions. Every institution has some sort of thoughts about their pieces like that. Of course, there are pieces here that are important

Points Of View



Tuesday – Sunday:
10:00 – 17:00



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facebook.com/safnahusid



canonised pieces, but in some cases, I had to persuade my collaborators in the committee that my personal interest was also of value, even if what I found curious was insignificant in the context of the institution. Like with the manuscripts. The law books are their least favorite objects because there are so many of them. It's always more or less the same text so there's nothing new in the 300 law books they have, but the one Edda they have from that period is immensely significant. But it's just text. It's not fun to look at. In their canon it might be the most important piece, but I was not interested in it in this particular context. I just wanted the law books because they are pretty. And they thought, "But these are not important! Why don't you want the good stuff?"

You were trained as a contemporary art curator...

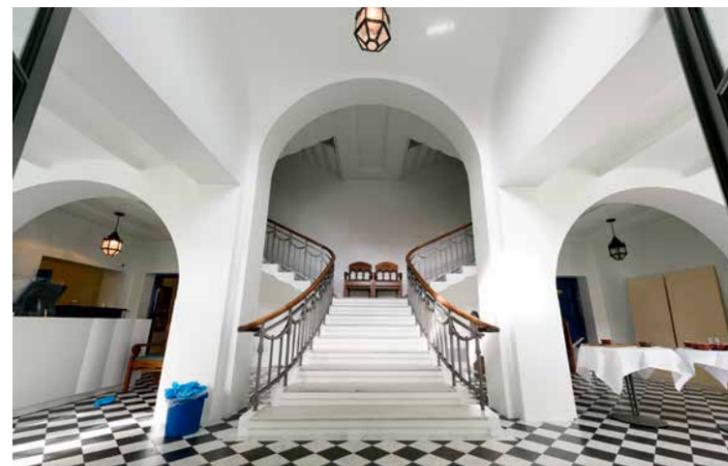
Art since the 1960s was the focus of the programme.

Was your curatorial approach inspired by any particular movement in contemporary art?

There's this tendency (like in the last Biennale and the last Documenta), where within the traditional art context you would stumble across some curious visual items made by scientists, researchers, outsider artists, and the like. It made the viewing experience all the more rich and enjoyable. It's also very close to many artists' practices. Here, you have Unnur Örn's shows. He's an artist who creates his book works, installations, and exhibitions by bringing found objects together.

Through the process of just grouping or categorising them?

Yes, exactly. And there is a series of exhibitions that the artist Einar Garibaldi has curated. He did a show years ago that I was always really impressed by called 'Flying over Hekla' where he looked at



Info

Built in 1908, The Culture House was designed by Danish architect Johannes Magdahl Nielsen at the request of Iceland's first prime minister, Hannes Hafstein. Since then, the building has been home to several important institutions, including the National Library, the National Archives of Iceland, the National Museum of Iceland and the Museum of Natural History, before becoming the Culture House. In 2013, the National Museum took over management, and last month, the space opened anew with an exhibition of Icelandic art.

together?

It was surprising to me to see how rich the story was. I was very much afraid that we might end up with a show with just a lot of church pieces and some manuscripts. I was ignorant of what we had, like I guess most people are. So, that was a big surprise for me, the range of interesting stuff that we just don't see displayed.

Somebody told me at the opening that they were so grateful, that they hadn't realized we had an art history in Iceland. People feel like it's their own and are realizing something about themselves. That's a beautiful reaction. The literature scene had that experience years ago

the idea of Hekla as a mountain and as a cultural concept within different historical contexts. He brought together all sorts of things like research material and documents and geographical field research and art. He also did a show about the picture of Þingvellir—how Þingvellir has been created as an image through art rather than as a natural experience or a landscape in itself. So, I've always been very fascinated by this sort of approach.

Did anything surprise you in the process of putting the show

when everyone just thought about the Eddas and the Sagas, and then, Laxness. Just those two pillars with nothing in between. But in the 1950s and 60s, they discovered that 17th, 18th, and 19th century literature is interesting. There are no peaks—no sagas or Laxness—but there is a really rich unbroken thread going through. I guess it's this picture we need to introduce in our visual culture as well.

Final thoughts?

Maybe by putting things together the way we are doing in this exhibition, it opens up a new way of researching these things; coming to some kind of a conclusion about them, or knowing more about them. But it's also the case in art as in language. If you lose the language but still have books in that language it's just scribbling that you can't access in any way. It has to be kept alive somehow. I have the same feeling toward these objects. You have to keep them alive and you do that only by thinking about them and putting them in a new context. The artist had a certain intention. With the church pieces you know the intention was obviously to hang them in a church to serve a religious purpose, but then they become pieces of art in a gallery and are looked upon as such. So, although the intention may have already been broken in most of these pieces, there is still some kind of respect you can pay towards them by trying to keep them alive.



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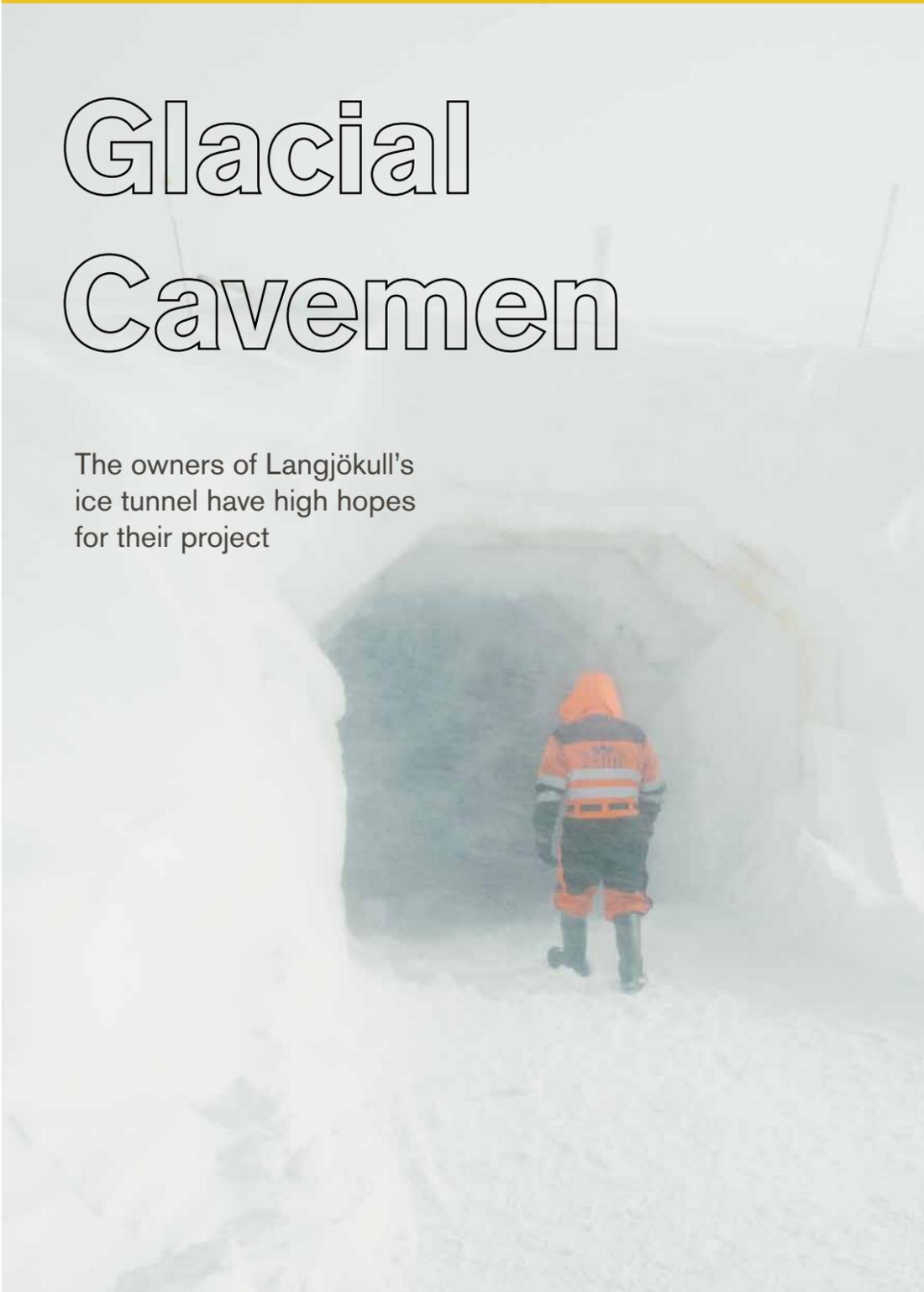
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Langjökull

How to get there: Drive through the Hvalfjörður tunnel and turn right just before the Borgarnes bridge and head to Húsafell. More info there.

Glacial Cavemen

The owners of Langjökull's ice tunnel have high hopes for their project



Words John Rogers

Photos Axel Sigurðarson

Just outside of Reykjavík, past the snowy bulge of Úlfarsfell and the small satellite town of Mosfellsbær, lies the way to the northern reaches of Iceland. The road passes the hiking trails at the feet of mount Esja before arcing up past Akranes and plunging through the 5.7-kilometre Hvalfjörður tunnel, emerging amongst beautiful flat-topped mountains and open farmland of Borgarfjörður. Right before the land bridge that connects the south of Iceland to the town of Borgarnes, there's an unassuming turning that veers inland from the coast—one of many small roads that keen-eyed northbound travellers eye with curiosity, wondering what lies towards the country's interior.

This particular road leads to Húsafell, a 100-square kilometre area of farmland and largely untouched countryside that acts as a hub for outdoor activities and forays onto the nearby glaciers of Langjökull and Eiríksjökull. In the summer it becomes a popular base for Icelanders and tourists to explore the area's lava fields, birch woods, caves and sights such as Hraunfossar, a series of waterfall in which bright blue meltwater pours from the edge of a lava field over a distance of 900 metres.

But during winter, the area gets quiet. With the camping grounds and golf course snowed in, local Icelanders who've come to rely on tourism suffer accordingly. "Extending the tourist season" has become a kind of mantra in these parts, and as such, the area is under development. As we approach the local information centre, a crane peers out from above the birch trees—a 48-room hotel is under construction, aiming to draw people into the area all year round. Specifically, they're hoping to fill the hotel with people coming to look at a brand new attraction—a circular 500-metre ice tunnel that's currently being excavated high up in the Langjökull glacier.

Addi's monsters

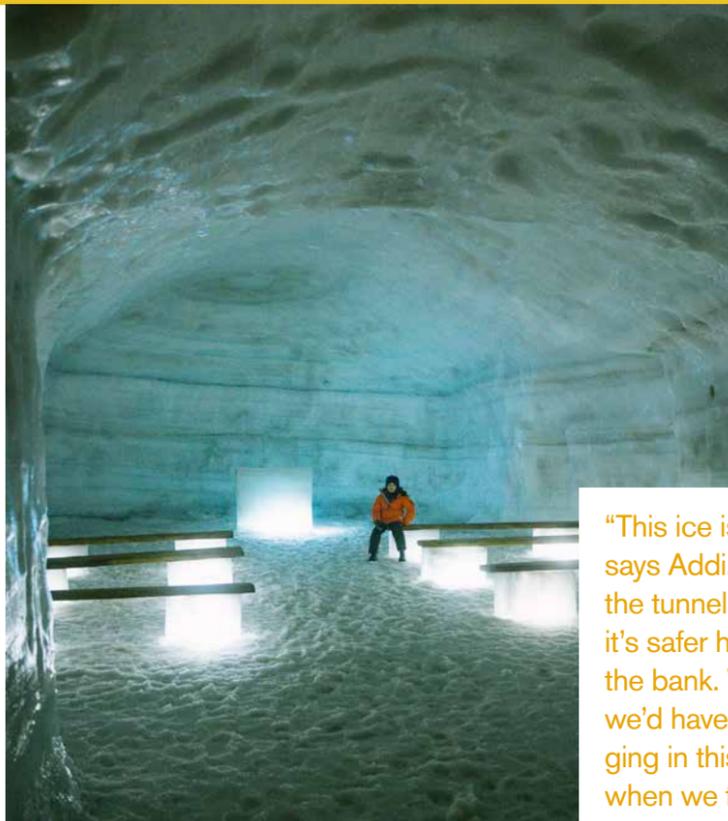
At Húsafell we meet our guide for a press tour of the under-construction ice tunnel, the rotund and beaming Addi, who'll drive us there in a huge truck that's been customised to traverse the glacial landscape. Addi explains how he and his two sons—a geologist/engineer and a mechanic—have spent five years making the project a reality, with some heavy investment backing them up.

Addi beams with pride over his two customised MAN trucks, which can house 10-45 passengers in their heated cabins, offering a 360-degree view of the surrounding scenery. He talks at length about the tyre pressure system, which can inflate and deflate whilst driving, making the 20-tonne vehicle glide improbably over loose snow. We strap in tightly as the engine starts to roar, and begin our long crawl towards the cave.

Before long we reach the highlands on a wide plateau, 500 metres above sea level. As the truck ploughs through deep banks of fresh snow with ease, the white light becomes blinding, with breathtaking mountain and glacier views in all directions. But at the base of Langjökull, the truck starts to labour,



Distance from Reykjavík
Around 130 km



“This ice is money,” says Addi, knocking on the tunnel wall, “and it’s safer here than in the bank. We thought we’d have to stop digging in this direction when we found this, but it’s actually a great attraction.” He pauses, grinning rapaciously as he scans the high ceiling. “This here is a million dollar crevice.”

slowing to three miles per hour as it powers through deep, powdery drifts.

Eventually, we pull up. “This is going to take a while,” says Addi. “I have the Snowcat on call as a backup. You guys go ahead, and I’ll meet you at the top.” We transfer into a claustrophobic passenger box pulled by a lighter, smaller blue vehicle with track-belt wheels. The windows of the tiny cabin are snowed in, blocking our view. As we rumble further up the glacier, the adventure starts to feel more like a troop deployment than a tourist trip, and the group falls silent.

The ice miners

Eventually we come to a halt and the doors are flung open. We stagger out into a ferocious, roaring blizzard. An orange-clad workman waves us towards the entrance—a raw, gaping hole with struts bolted in to keep it open. The cold is intense, stinging any exposed

skin. We stumble into the dripping tunnel, stepping carefully across the uneven, slushy floor and following a string of fairy lights into the glacier.

A couple of dirty-faced workmen appear suddenly out of the murk, carrying their heavy tools like ice miners. They show us the way, and we walk deeper, sheltered finally from the frigid

winds. A faint glow starts emanating from patches of the ice around us. We’re told lights have been embedded into the tunnel’s walls and floors using a steam drill, and that the seams in the glacier wall can be read like the rings inside a tree. Black seams punctuate the bright blue, each dirty streak indicating a layer of eruption ash held in



safety aspect, and the technical stuff like drainage and ventilation. People were unanimously supportive.”

I mention that a common question about the project is whether the tunnel is harmful to the glacier itself. “No, it’s not damaging to the glacier,” Hallgrímur says. “Langjökull is over 500 metres thick, and we don’t go any deeper than

the ice.

One of Addi’s sons, Hallgrímur, is the geologist and engineer who conceived of the tunnel. “We did a lot of consultations on the project,” he explains. “It’s been a long process of four years. We talked to people at The University of Iceland and the Meteorological Association, and spent a long time planning the

30 metres. Glacier ice has rifts and crevices that close naturally over time, due to the pressure from above. The expected lifespan of this tunnel is only ten to fifteen years—we’ll need to monitor the tunnels, and do continuous excavation.”

Scandinavian pain

Addi finally rejoins the group, having crawled up to the cave in the truck. He shows us around the tunnel’s features, which include a non-denominational chapel space with a glowing ice-block altar, and a crampon that was found deep in the ice during the excavation. We get a whistle-stop explanation of how continual snow is crushed under its own weight to form the dense blue ice, and the importance of glaciers to both the global ecosystem and Iceland’s nature and industry.

But as we trudge around the dripping tunnels, I’m overcome by a sud-

den feeling of sadness. There are many ways to experience the excitement and glory of Iceland’s glaciers—whether flying over Eyjafjallajökull in a small propeller plane, hiking over Sólheimajökull with crampons, or exploring the stunning naturally formed “crystal caves” of Vatnajökull. And despite Hallgrímur’s reassurances, carving a man-made tunnel out of the ever-shrinking glacier just feels irreverent.

We finish the tour by looking at a large, narrow natural crevice that was discovered during the dig—an impressive space draped in icicles that gleam under Addi’s powerful torchlight. “This ice is money,” says Addi, knocking on the tunnel wall, “and it’s safer here than in the bank. We thought we’d have to stop digging in this direction when we found this, but it’s actually a great attraction.” He pauses, grinning rapaciously as he scans the high ceiling. “This here is a million dollar crevice.”

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The Twelve People You Meet On Tinder

What to expect when swiping in the capital

Words

Susanna Lam

Illustrations

Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir

“So how does Tender work?” my friend Brynja asked as I nonchalantly went through pictures of random strangers on my phone. “It’s called Tinder—” I barely responded before she dived across the dinner table grabbing my phone from my hands. “I know him! Say yes!” she exclaimed, pressing the little green heart at the bottom right hand corner of my screen. I soon discovered that almost every tenth person was a friend of Brynja’s. “Did I just make friends with Iceland’s Miss Congeniality or is Reykjavík really that small?” I remember wondering. This all happened during my first week in Reykjavík and I had no idea what the social scene was like. How do people make new friends? What is dating like? Do Icelanders even use Tinder or do they all think it’s called Tender? And as for those who do use Tinder, what do they use it for?

People use Tinder for a variety of reasons. Some dream of finding true love, others crave an easy casual hook up. There are also those who find joy in lengthy and pointless conversations with strangers whom they never intend to hang out with and then there are the trolls who use it to make fun of people. And then there’s me: a clueless foreigner hoping to meet cool people in a new city. After months of tireless swiping, I finally managed to compile a list of the thirteen types of people I met on Tinder in Reykjavík.

The One-Night Stand Wannabe

It is four in the morning on a Saturday in Reykjavík and I receive a Tinder message from a match I’ve never spoken to before saying, “Just got back from a party downtown. I live in Kópavogur. Come over. I have lots of space for a party.” I thought to myself, “Firstly, I have no idea who you are. Secondly, you were drinking downtown and didn’t even bother to try to see me in person for five seconds before inviting me over to your house. I’m not expecting to be taken on a date with a bouquet of red roses or anything but perhaps you could have tried to meet up in any non-creepy public space in 101 Reykjavík, like Húrra, for instance, where I happened to be for pretty much the entire night. And seriously? Kópavogur? I wouldn’t even pay for that cab ride to see my husband, let alone a Tinder match who might be a serial killer for all I know.”

I came to Iceland slightly before the Grapevine ran its feature on dating and very quickly became acquainted with the dating culture (or lack thereof) in this country. You get drunk and hook up with someone you meet at a bar while severely intoxicated and possibly get into a relationship after repeated drunken late night encounters with the same person. The recent popularity of Tinder in Reykjavík, however, just brings the whole Icelandic hook-up culture to a new extreme. Icelanders can now send out mass booty calls in the middle of the night without having to leave the comfort of their warm, cosy and lonely beds. They don’t have to invest time, face possible public rejection and ridicule or even

craft an intelligent message. As one of my Icelandic Tinder matches once very eloquently said, “Drunk. Horny.”

The Co-Worker

If you work in Reykjavík, chances are that you’ll probably run into your entire office on Tinder. It’s even happened multiple times within the Grapevine office. Yes, you can message your Tinder matches sitting in the office pantry to bring the snacks over.

The One You Won’t Stop Running Into

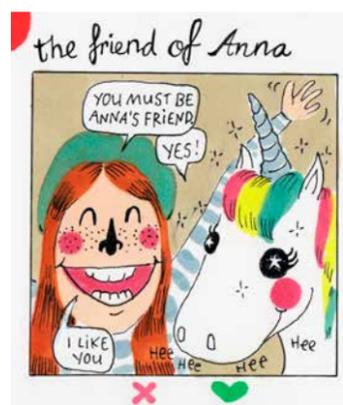
Just as I was about to call it a night, I turned around at the sound of my name to see an unfamiliar face smiling at me amidst the crowd at Húrra. The petite blonde ran over and threw her arms around my shoulders as though we were long-lost sisters who had just been reunited after ten years of separation. Upon seeing my discombobulated facial expression, she took a step back and introduced herself. “We matched on Tinder,” she saw the need to clarify, noticing that I was still struggling to put the pieces together. “Oh,” I answered, slightly embarrassed but relieved that I hadn’t actually failed to recognise one of my best friends or anything like that. After a short conversation, I politely excused myself and began the excruciating walk back home, hoping for no more unexpected encounters with my Tinder matches. On my way home, I stopped to say hi to my neighbour, whom I only met because he had previously been out on a Tinder date with one of my best friends. He made me a grilled cheese sandwich, which I devoured as he went through my Tinder matches on my phone. I received a new message from yet another match. “I think I saw you earlier at Húrra?” it said. So more than one of my Tinder matches had seen me at Húrra. My neighbour, who was one of the above-mentioned Tinder trolls, sent a few messages poking fun at this Tinder match of mine, as well as some others who went on to unmatch me. I was appalled for a second but decided that it didn’t matter since I would probably never have

to interact with these people in real life. Wrong. The first person I ran into on the street the next day was none other than the guy who said he saw me at Húrra. The moral of the story: you might want to think twice before you let your neighbours send weird messages to your Tinder matches, because chances are you’ll run into them the next day and have some explaining to do.



The Beard

Reykjavík is a beardy city and beards are great. They not only keep your face warm during the stormy winter months but also help to conceal all your flaws in your Tinder profile pictures. Throw on a stylish pair of sunglasses and a hat or beanie and your entire face is hidden. No one can tell you apart from a supermodel now.



The Friend Of Anna’s

Recent studies suggest that despite the availability of various apps and websites, the best way to successfully meet new people is still through a mutual friend. Thankfully for those of us in Reykjavík, the two means of building new relationships are far from mutually exclusive. Anyone who has friends in this city will know that every other person is a friend of a friend. This allows Tinder users here to find potential matches while proudly announcing they met through a mutual friend, rather than on Tinder. We, at the Grapevine, tried this out by exclusively looking on Tinder for friends of our lovely editor, Anna Andersen. “So how do you know Anna?” might have become one of the most unlikely common conversation starters on Tinder, but it led to a variety of successful dates, inside jokes, group hangout sessions with Anna, and new friendships. Regardless of the outcome, the best Tinder matches were always those I had mutual friends with. Go on and look for Anna’s friends on Tinder—or maybe just friends of your own friends that you trust.

The Family Member

Due to the country’s tiny population of roughly 330,000, Icelanders have an extremely limited dating pool and face the possibility of accidentally hooking up with a distant relative. A few years ago, a couple of software-engineering students created an incest-prevention app called IsendingaApp. Users of the app simply have to bump their phones together in order to find out if they are related. However, thanks to the increasing popularity of Tinder in Reykjavík, Icelandic smart phones can kiss their cockblocker status goodbye. Unfortunately, the terribly uncomfortable feeling of running into awkward drunk cousins desperately hitting on random people at Kaffibarinn on a Saturday night just becomes a part of our daily lives. Now you don’t even have to leave your apartment to see their seductive profile pictures and topless Tinder moments. Who knows? Maybe you’ll even unknowingly fall for a distant relative and increase the likelihood of awkward interactions at family gatherings.

The Cheater

We’re all familiar with The Cheater—the one who sleeps around while in a relationship with the only person in the whole country who is oblivious to the whole situation. When it takes just a couple of hours to swipe through all of Reykjavík on Tinder, catching The Cheater just can’t get any easier. Do they really think we wouldn’t find their profiles and send screenshots to their significant others?

The Basic Bitch

The male specimen has shaved sides and a tuft of hair in the middle of his head. While swiping through his photos, you will see a gym mirror selfie, a suited up selfie, a close-up selfie, a high school graduation picture and a group photo of a night out with the boys (possibly taken with a selfie stick). The female has straightened platinum blond hair, a slightly tangerine-coloured spray tan and fake painted eyebrows. Her profile pictures consist of a collection of selfies taken from different angles. If you want to interact with them in real life, check out the crowd standing along Bankastræti on a Friday night.



The Fish

Don’t worry about your failed romances. There are plenty of fish in the sea. Oh, wait! All the fish have been removed from the ocean and now serve as props for Tinder profile pictures. Catches from all over the world try their luck at reeling in Tinder dates with attractive pictures of themselves proudly holding onto the slimy carcasses of cold-blooded aquatic vertebrates. What makes the situation in Iceland unique is how often you actually come across the fish guy. The fisheries sector in Iceland, yielding a catch of over a million tonnes of fish a year, is directly responsible for the employment of approximately 9,000 Icelanders! This outstanding number refers to Icelanders who work in fishing and fish processing and doesn’t include the other 20,000 Icelanders who in one way or another rely on the ocean cluster for their livelihood. This allows at least a fifth of Iceland’s population to have access to a daily Tinder photo shoot with fish! One of my colleagues even received an interestingly flirtatious Tinder message from a waitress at a local fish restaurant frequented by us Grapeviners, asking “Do you like my fish?” We never really got to the bottom of that but for the sake of all the fish people on Tinder, let’s just hope that everyone in Reykjavík likes their fish.



Don't Ask Nanna:

About Icelandic Hipster Chicks

Dear Nanna,

What's with Icelandic girls and thrift store shopping? I'm seeing this girl on and off and it's all 80s prom dresses and frumpy leather jackets with her—blergh it's like dating an extra from 'Pretty in Pink'. I'm dying to ask "why not buy something new?" but I suspect it would come off rude.

Tired of Hipster Chicks

Dear Tired of Hipster Chicks

I've heard about some disgusting fuck buddies in my time but a girl who wears secondhand clothing? That's really gross, I mean, like really, really gross. Some of those clothes might have belonged to dead people!

Who do they think they're dressing for? Themselves? Whatever happened to appealing to the male gaze, I ask you? Those were the days.

You have no choice, lose her number and add "no thrift store tramps" to your Tinder profile.

Good luck, Nanna

Dear Nanna,

What is your favourite restaurant in Iceland?

Foodie

Dear Foodie,
My dad's fridge.
Always full, always free.

Best, Nanna

Hi Nanna,
I have been reading up on deCODE Genetics and saw that they tried to get Icelanders to give up DNA information in exchange for a t-shirt.

I'm a little surprised at how outraged Icelanders were about that given that people have basically given up all their personal information to Google and Facebook and every e-commerce site they've ever shopped on.

What's a little DNA?
Gene The Genome

Hey Gene The Genome!

Who do you work for? Did deCODE hire you? The t-shirt lobbyists? Don't contact me again!

Nanna

the dog trick



The Dog Trick

Dogs have been technically banned from Reykjavík since 1924, requiring Icelanders to possess a special permit to have their fluffy canine friends around town. Nevertheless, the cumbersome and expensive process of obtaining a licence to own a dog does not seem to stop people from getting a bunch of puppies and posting a photo series on Tinder. In a cheesy Swedish romantic comedy called 'The Dog Trick', a sleazy young flirt played by Alexander Skarsgård before he became hot informs the hopeless-romantic protagonist that the way to get a girl to fall in love with him is to get a cute puppy. Judging from the Tinder pool in Reykjavík, The Dog Trick has evidently been working. Women have definitely been swiping right to men in the hopes of getting a chance to snuggle not with the man himself but with the man's best friend. To avoid future disappointment, just remember that your potential match is the human, not the dog.

The Tourist

Whether you love or hate them, tourists are everywhere. You can't avoid them. You're going to see them in your favourite indoor pool, outdoor pool and now your Tinder pool. Solo tourists looking for a free tour guide send a message to each of their Tinder matches saying, "Travelling alone. Can you show me around?" Would the tourism industry be doing so well if people agreed to this? Probably not.

The One That Doesn't Even Go Here

Recently, Tinder launched a "Passport" feature that allows users to look for matches in any city, rather than within the previous 160km radius from their current location. This new function allows us to get bizarre texts from people all over the world. Unfortunately, if we think Kópavogur is far, we're unlikely to respond to booty calls from Mississippi.

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INTERVIEW



Jón Símon Gíslason:

The face of the fastest-growing sport in Iceland

Words
Bogi Bjarnason

Photo
Art Bicnick

Disc Golf burst onto the Icelandic scene with a bang last summer, after a few years of slow but steady growth.

The explosion of the sport in the country saw the total count of ready-made courses jump from nine to nineteen in 2014 alone, with disc sales multiplying by a factor of five and sales of beginner sets exceeding five hundred. The capital area currently hosts one full eighteen-hole course at Gufunes, and six nine-hole set-ups in locations as varied as Klambatrún, Mosfellsbær, Laugardalur, Breiðholt, Víðistaðatún in Hafnarfjörður and—the crowd favourite—Fossvogur. This year yet another course has been approved in the Seljahverfi neighbourhood of Breiðholt, and additional courses have been proposed for Akureyri, Húsavík, Bolungarvík and Höfn.

The increase in players last season was exponential—with members of the Icelandic Disc Golf community page hovering around the 700 mark—and hordes more are expected to flex their throwing arms come summer, as the ÍFS tournament circuit has over 30 events planned for the season. The sport comes with a low price tag, both in terms of

equipment and facilities, and is available to people of any age and gender year round.

The Grapevine played a couple of rounds at Klambatrún with 2013 Icelandic Disc Golf Champion Jón Símon Gíslason, who gave us the 411 on the budding local scene.

Humble beginnings

How long have you been doing this?

I've been playing since around late summer 2010. When I started there were only three or four courses and we mainly just played in Gufunes...

And there were not many of you?

No, we were around ten regular players, but in 2011 when the Klambatrún course was built, the number of regular players grew to maybe thirty or forty and there were probably a thousand to fifteen hundred players who tried it out that summer. Then there was a major

explosion in the number of courses in 2014 and what's to come in the future will be even greater.

We're here at the tee for the first hole at Klambatrún and it's unacceptably muddy. What's your view on the disc golf association's policy of quantity over quality?

Well, I think it's fine, per se, to make more courses, if possible, but I think it's crucial to keep up the maintenance on the old courses, or the ones that came before, and tend to this and that, and I know it's on the agenda, for Gufunes at least.

Pave the tees and such?

Yeah, that seems to work better than Astroturf.

The tactics of the lay up

We're at hole 4 now, the easiest hole on the course. Or do you agree?

It's the easiest hole in the country!

So which hole is your favourite?

That is...probably hole number 8 in Gufunes. A long and technical hole from the top of a hill.

You're gonna use the putter for this one?

Yeah, just like the last one.

What do you consider the most important aspect of the game?

The most important aspect of the game, as in most other sports, is the mind game. If you don't have that then you're never gonna get any results, as simple as that.

Any funny stories you can tell me from playing the sport?

The funniest and most memorable thing I remember from disc golf has to be my "stunning" achievement on hole 12 at the European Championships in Switzerland last summer. Instead of throwing the disc into a more safe zone for the basket approach, I decided to be strong-headed and throw the disc out of bounds nine or ten times until I hit the island green of the course, 'cuz obviously I'm not gonna throw safe! Safe is for mama's boys! After that hole I thought back to a picture hanging on my colleague's wall that fit well with my attitude when playing the hole. "I'm trying to think like you, but I can't get my head that far up my ass!"

Sizing up the opposition

Who's your toughest opponent?

That would be Þorri... Þorvaldur [Þórarinnsson, reigning and multiple national champion]. He always shows up with his A-game. He just never plays badly. He's always solid, and he can be insanely good.

He putts well in the clinch.

I usually play pretty solid as well. I usually come out in the top three in competitions.

Maybe I'll have one or two off tournaments, but if you look at last summer I'm always in the top three.

Here's the longest hole at Klambatrún (hole 6). You're not throwing the putter again, are you?

No, a fairway driver or a driver.

[Jón Símon proceeds to crush his drive up the entire 97-metre fairway for an easy birdie put, pulling a stroke ahead of the reporter.]

You've played abroad at the European championships and such. How have you fared and what is the opposition like at that level?

There's a pretty big difference in level of play. Maybe not worthy of comparison as we played far below our general skill level over there. Stress was probably to blame for that.

What are they doing over there that puts them a class above us? Better consistency perhaps?

Yeah, and they've probably been playing for much longer than we have.

Maybe they adapt to new courses faster?

Yeah, they've got more choices and access to coaches and such, but it's all coming along nicely over here. We will get there. There are promising players coming up the ranks and we just need to instil the proper mindset in them.

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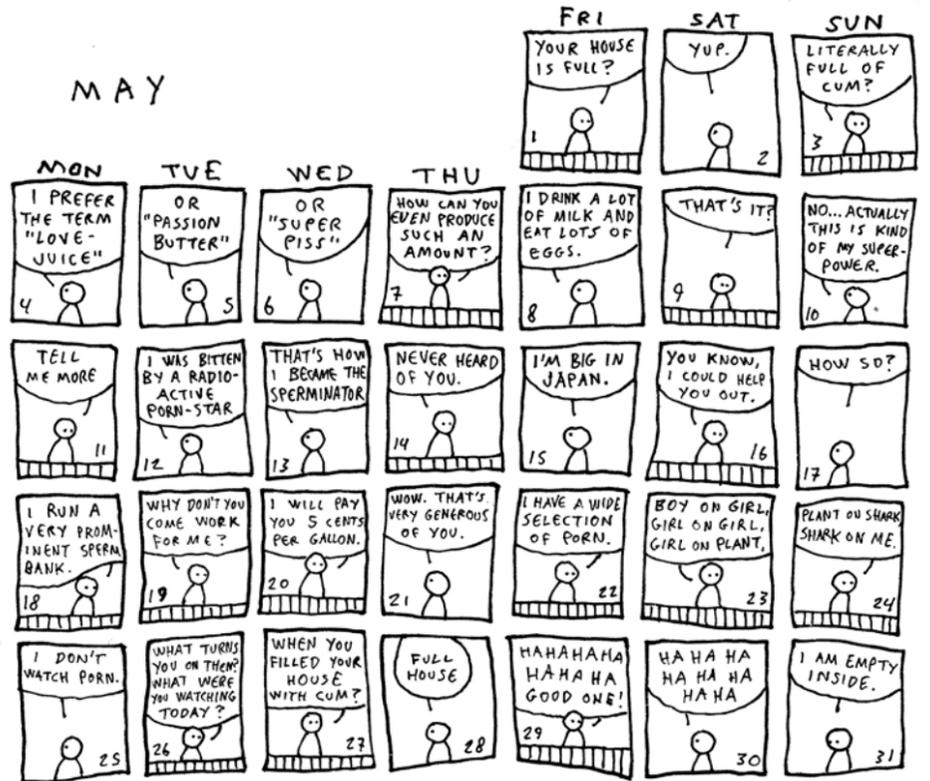
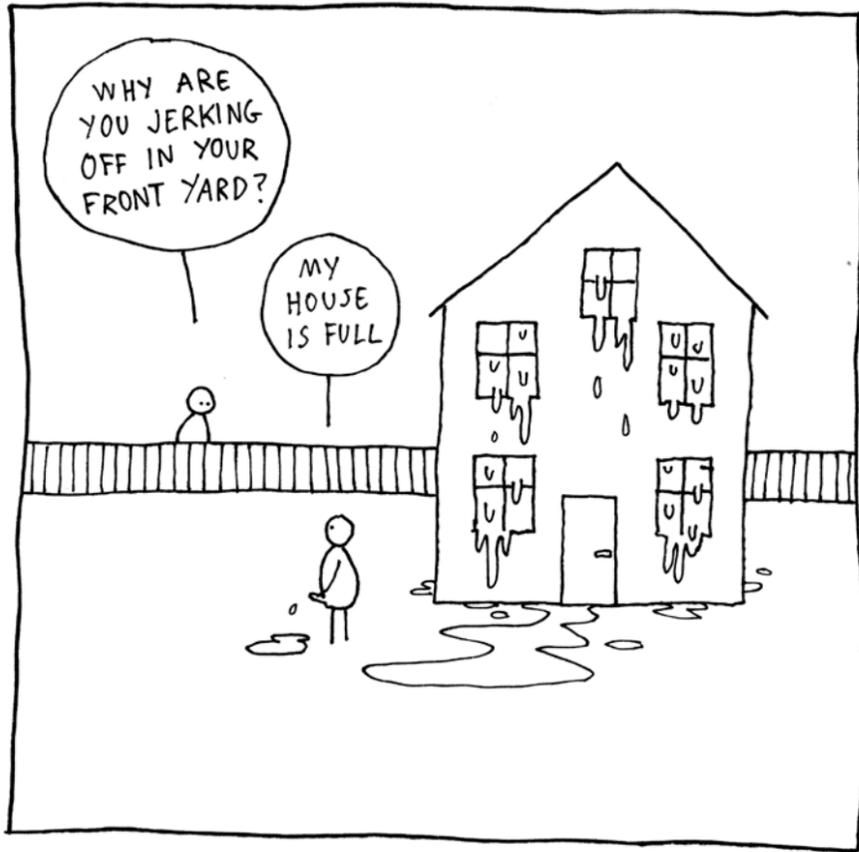
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“A Most Involuntary Intemperance”

Fine dining in Iceland in 1809

Words

Vera Illugadóttir and William Hooker

Photo

Provided by Lemúrinn

In the summer of 1809, a young British botanist, William Hooker, visited Iceland on the first botanical expedition of what was to become a distinguished career. Hooker chose Iceland on the suggestion of his older colleague Joseph Banks, one of Britain's most prominent naturalists. Banks, a veteran of Cook's first expedition to the South Pacific, was also a great “friend of Iceland,” having toured the country in 1772.

Like most foreign visitors over this period, Hooker was shocked by the poverty and extreme hardships faced by the Icelandic people.

Banks instructed Hooker to visit an old friend of his, former governor Ólafur Stephensen, at his home on Viðey island. Hooker went accompanied by the British soap merchant Samuel Phelps and the Dane Jørgen Jørgensen, who had come to Iceland on the same ship as he, and would go on to stage a short-lived and improbable revolution in Iceland later that summer.

Ólafur, then 78 years old, greeted the threesome dressed in the magnificent governor's uniform—a coat

of “scarlet cloth, turned up with green, and ornamented with gold lace,” gold-trimmed blue pantaloons, and a three-cornered hat with gold tassels and trimmings and a long white feather—and proceeded to treat them (or perhaps force is a more appropriate word) to a multi-course dinner, which surely amounts to one of the most extravagant feasts in recorded Icelandic history.

From Hooker's travelogue, *Journal of a Tour in Iceland in the Summer of 1809*, published in 1811:

The dishes are brought in singly: our first was a large tureen of soup, which is a favorite addition to the dinners of the

richer people, and is made of sago, claret and raisins, boiled so as to become almost a mucilage. We were helped to two soup-plates full of this, which we ate without knowing if anything more was to come.

No sooner, however, was the soup removed, than two large salmon, boiled and cut in slices, were brought on, and, with them, melted butter, looking like oil, mixed with vinegar and pepper: this, likewise, was very good, and, when we had with some difficulty cleared our plates, we hoped we had finished our dinners.

Not so, for there was then introduced a tureen full of the eggs of the cree, or great tern, boiled hard, of which a dozen were put upon each of our plates; and, for sauce, we had a large basin of cream, mixed with sugar, in which were four spoons, so that we all ate out of the same bowl, placed in the middle of the table.

We petitioned hard to be excused from eating the whole of the eggs upon our plates, but we petitioned in vain. "You are my guests," said he, "and this is the first time you have done me the honor of a visit, therefore you must do as I would have you; in future, when you come to see me, you may do as

you like." In his own excuse, he pleaded his age for not following our example, to which we could make no reply.

*We devoured with difficulty our eggs and cream; but had no sooner dismissed our plates, than half a sheep, well roasted, came on, with a mess of sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), called by the Danes scurvy-grass, boiled, meshed, and sweetened with sugar. It was to no purpose we assured our host that we had already eaten more than would do us good: he filled our plates with the mutton and sauce, and made us get through it as well as we could; although any one of the dishes, of which we had before partaken, was sufficient for the dinner of a moderate man.*

However, even this was not all; for a large dish of waffles, as they are here called, that is to say, a sort of pancake, made of wheat-flour, flat, and roasted in a mould, which forms a number of squares on the top, succeeded the mutton. They were not more than half an inch thick, and about the size of an octavo book. The Stiftsamptman said he would be satisfied if each of us would eat two of them, and, with these moderate terms we were forced to comply.

For bread, Norway biscuit and loaves made of rye, were served up; for our drink, we had nothing but claret, of which we were all compelled to empty the bottle that stood by us, and this, too, out of tumblers, rather than wine glasses.

It is not the custom in this country to sit after dinner over the wine, but we had, instead of it, to drink just as much coffee as the Stiftsamptman thought proper to give us. The coffee was certainly extremely good, and, we trusted it would terminate the feast.

But all was not yet over; for a huge bowl of rum punch was brought in, and handed round in large glasses pretty freely, and to every glass a toast was given. If at any time we flagged in drinking, "Baron Banks" was always the signal for emptying our glasses, in order that we might have them filled with bumpers, to drink to his health. [...]

We were threatened with still another bowl, after we should have drained this, and accordingly another came, which we were with difficulty allowed to refuse to empty entirely; nor could this be done, but by ordering our people to get the boat ready for our departure, when, having concluded this extraordinary feast by three cups of tea each, we took our leave, and reached [Reykjavík] about ten o'clock; but did not for some time recover the effects of this most involuntary intemperance.

If at any time we flagged in drinking, "Baron Banks" was always the signal for emptying our glasses, in order that we might have them filled with bumpers, to drink to his health.

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P.6

"Can tourists finally stop Golden Circle-jerking and go explore the new lava field?"

Our in-house geophysicist brings you a post-eruption update.



P.12

"Well, I would like to accomplish a lot of things in politics, but perhaps I will quit public life someday and work full-time as a carpenter."

We spoke to Bright Future Chair Guðmundur Steingrímsson...



P.22

"We are very privileged and fortunate," he adds. "We are just going to keep developing as a band, trying to get better in the studio and play as many shows as we can. That's what it's all about, right?"

Kaleo played SXSW and have left Iceland, possibly for good.



P.31

"People use Tinder for a variety of reasons. Some dream of finding true love, others crave an easy casual hook up. There are also those who find joy in lengthy and pointless conversations with strangers whom they never intend to hang out with and then there are the trolls who use it to make fun of people."

The author of this article did extensive research in Reykjavik last summer...



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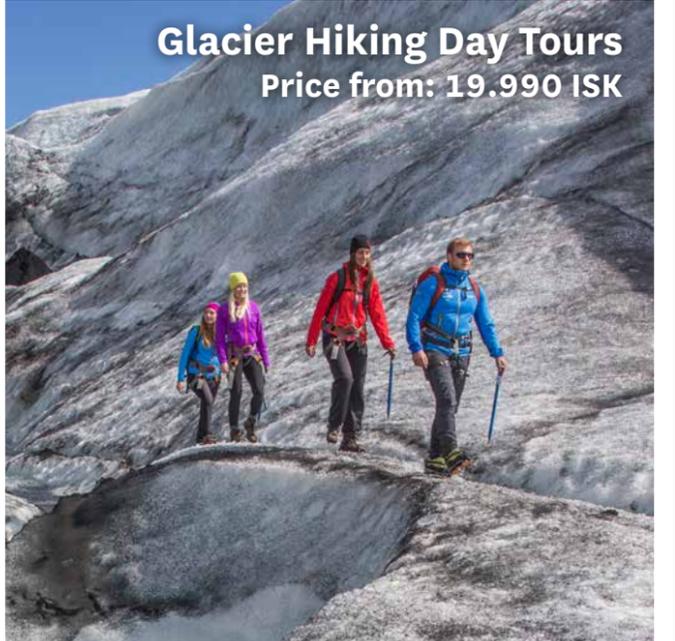
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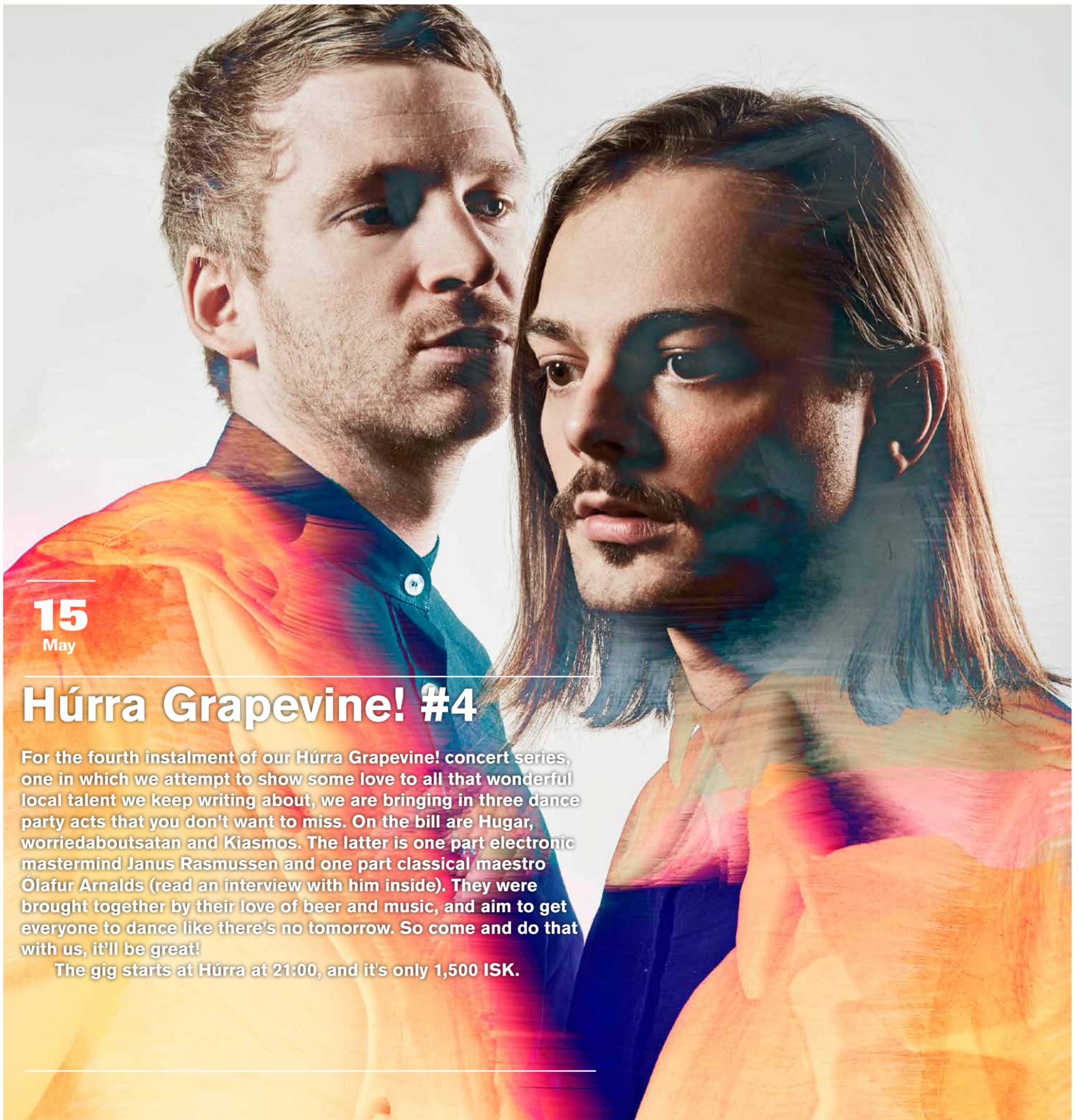
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MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

May 8 - May 21

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

Friday May 8

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Davíð / DJ Pétur B5
22:00 DJ JO

Bar Ananas
22:00 DJ Doodlepops

Bravó
22:00 DJ Sunna Ben

Boston
22:00 DJ Sura

Café Rosenberg
22:00 Raven

Dillon
22:00 Electric Elephant

Dubliner
20:00 Troubadour Ellert

English Pub
22:00 Troubadours Alexander & Guðmann / Eiki & Steini

Frederiksen Ale House
22:00 Flexi / Dagbjört / Himbrimi

Gaukurinn
22:00 Wago, Vio, and Dj Ívar Pétur

Harpa
17:00 WonderWagon
19:30 Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Charlie Chaplin - Modern Times
21:00 Borealis Band

Húrra
21:00 Valdimar / DJ Styrmir Dansson

Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Gísli Galdur

Lebowski Bar
22:00 DJ Halli Einarss / DJ Anna Brá

Lucky Records
18:00 Teitur Magnússon Vinyl Release Party

Mengi
13:00 Jakob Bro
20:00 Jakob Bro
22:00 Jakob Bro

Paloma
22:00 Rix & Kerr Ladyboy Records
Release Party: DJ Harry Knuckles / Jóhann Eiríksson / O|S|E| / Nicolas Kunysz

Prikið
22:00 DJ Suspect-B / Árni Kocoon

Stúdentakjallarinn
16:00 SummerPreParty: DJ Jónas Óli

Saturday May 9

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Siggí Þorbergs / DJ Pétur

B5
22:00 DJ JO

Bar 11
22:30 The Roulette / Fjöltengi

Bar Ananas
22:00 DJ Pabbi

Boston
22:00 DJ Styrmir Dansson

Bravó
22:00 DJ Ísar Logi

Café Haiti
19:00 Owls of the Swamp / Scott Mertz

Café Rosenberg
22:00 Foreign Land

Dillon
22:00 Alchemia

Dubliner
20:00 Troubadour Kjartan



Charlie Chaplin Felt Your Technology Repellent Pain
Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Charlie Chaplin's 'Modern Times'

Harpa

Austurbakka 2 (C4) | May 8 🕒 19:30 | May 9 🕒 15:00 | 2,400-4,700 ISK

Do you just not get Tinder? Does your computer ever inexplicably refuse to do the same task it did yesterday? Have you ever accidentally wiped an entire hard drive in an attempt to save a simple document? You are not alone. People have been struggling through technological improvements since a cave man tried to convince his friend that the wheel really does make things easier if you learn how to operate it properly. In the 1936 silent film **'Modern Times'**, **Charlie Chaplin** bumbles through an industrialised world to a score he composed himself. Stop thinking about prospective "accidents" that could befall your work computer and take a break to come see the film accompanied by the **Iceland Symphony Orchestra**. **AM**



Rock Rookies And Veterans
Dikta / Rythmatik

Húrra

Naustin (D3) | 🕒 21:00 | 1,500 ISK

At this year's **Músiktilraunir**, the ultimate Icelandic battle of the bands, rookie rockers **Rythmatik** dominated the competition. Now they are teaming up with **Músiktilraunir** veterans **Dikta** for some good old-fashioned rock 'n' roll. This event is NOT the musical equivalent of Stephen Curry playing one-on-one with Larry Bird, which sounds cool until you see Stephen running circles over your childhood hero who's now pushing 60. Both of these bands rock, we'll just have to wait and see who's running circles around whom. **AM**



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MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

English Pub

22:00 Troubadours Arnar & Ingunn / Ingi Valur & Tryggvi

Frederiksen Ale House

22:00 DJ Hrönn / Flexi

Gamla Bíó

18:00 Reykjavík Women's Choir

Gaukurinn

22:00 Toneron / DJ Paxton

Harpa

15:00 Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Charlie Chaplin - Modern Times

16:00 20th Anniversary of The Female Choir Léttsveit Reykjavíkur

Húrra

22:00 DJ Ívar Pétur

Kaffibarinn

22:00 DJ Margeir

Lebowski Bar

22:00 Sandala Gústala / DJ Jesús

Mengi

21:00 Kevin Verwijmeren

Paloma

23:00 Good Moon Deer Album Release Party / Solaris Sun Glaze

24:00 RVK Soundsystem Reggae Night

Prikið

22:00 DJs SUNSURA

Salurinn í Kópavogi

20:30 Komdu í Kvöld: Jón Sigurðsson Concert

Sunday May 10

Adventist Church

16:00 Mosfellsbær Men's Choir Spring Concert

American Bar

22:00 Troubadour Alexander

Bravó

21:00 Viktor Birgiss

Dubliner

22:00 Troubadour Garðar

English Pub

21:00 Troubadour Danni

Hljóðberg

15:00 Concert With Coffee: Anna Jónsdóttir, Þóra Passauer & Brynhildur Ásgeirsdóttir

Húrra

21:00 Lowercase nights

Kaffibarinn

21:00 DJ Vector

KEX Hostel

21:00 Owls of the Swamp / Scott Mertz

Lebowski Bar

21:00 DJ Halli Einarss

Salurinn í Kópavogi

14:00 Iceland Academy of the Arts Graduation Concert: Axel Ingi Arnason & Zakarías H. Gunnarsson

20:00 Iceland Academy of the Arts Graduation Concert: Einar Bjarni Björnsson

Tjarnarbió

20:00 Samkór Reykjavíkur Choir Concert

Monday May 11

American Bar

22:00 Troubadour Roland

Café Rosenberg

21:00 Brynhildur Björnsdóttir: Kurt Weill Tribute Concert

Dubliner

22:00 Troubadour Andri

English Pub

21:00 Troubadours Ingi Valur & Tryggvi

Húrra

21:00 Monjazz

Lebowski Bar

21:00 DJ Anna Brá

Prikið

21:00 DJ Danny Ledon / DJ XQS

Stúdentakjallarinn

20:00 FÍH Jazz Big Band

Tuesday May 12

American Bar

22:00 Troubadour Ellert

Bravó

21:00 Futuregrapher

Café Rosenberg

21:00 Sigga

Dansverkstæðið

20:00 No Lights No Lycra Dance Party

Dubliner

22:00 Troubadour Garðar

English Pub

21:00 Troubadour Arnar

Húrra

20:00 Teitur Magnússon Vinyl Night

Kaffibarinn

21:00 DJ Óli Dóri

KEX Hostel

20:30 KEXJazz

Lebowski Bar

22:00 DJ Halli Dude

Mengi

21:00 Sigrún Jónsdóttir

Prikið

21:00 DJ Volante



Artistic Ride Through Reykjavík

WonderWagon

Harpa

Austurbakki 2 (C4) | May 8-29 🕒 17:00-18:30 | 6,000 ISK

The **WonderWagon** is an old bus made new. Now equipped with a crystal chandelier and a grand piano, it's filled with music and entertainment. On a tour through Reykjavík's art and music scene, it will stop at some interesting places and offer its passengers the chance to personally get to know local authors, painters and musicians as they present their works and host workshops. The tour starts out from the entrance of **Harpa** on Friday afternoons and lasts for one and a half hours. You can buy tickets online from **Harpa's website**. **RÓG**



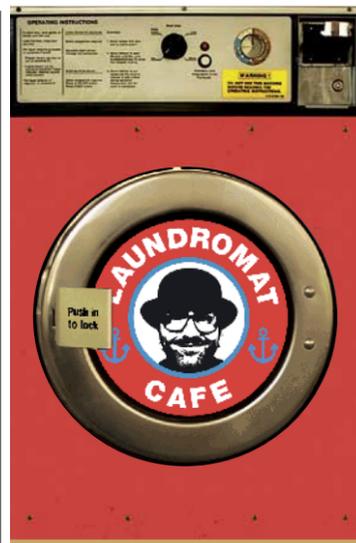
Long Awaited Album Release Celebration

Good Moon Deer Album Release Party / Solaris Sun Glaze

Paloma

Naustin (D3) | 🕒 23:00 | Free!

Good Moon Deer is an electronic music project that has been gaining popularity fast since its appearance in off-venue shows during Iceland Airwaves 2011. The project is the brain-child of **Guðmundur Ingi Úlfarsson** (Good Moon Deer is a simplification of his unpronounceable Icelandic name), who is sometimes joined by drummer **Ívar Pétur Kjartansson**. They are finally releasing their first album 'Dot', which will be downloadable for free online on May 7, and to mark the occasion, they're throwing a party at Paloma where they will also be joined by disco/house DJ **Solaris Sun Glaze**, the alter ego of self-proclaimed hipster **Atli Bollason**. **RÓG**



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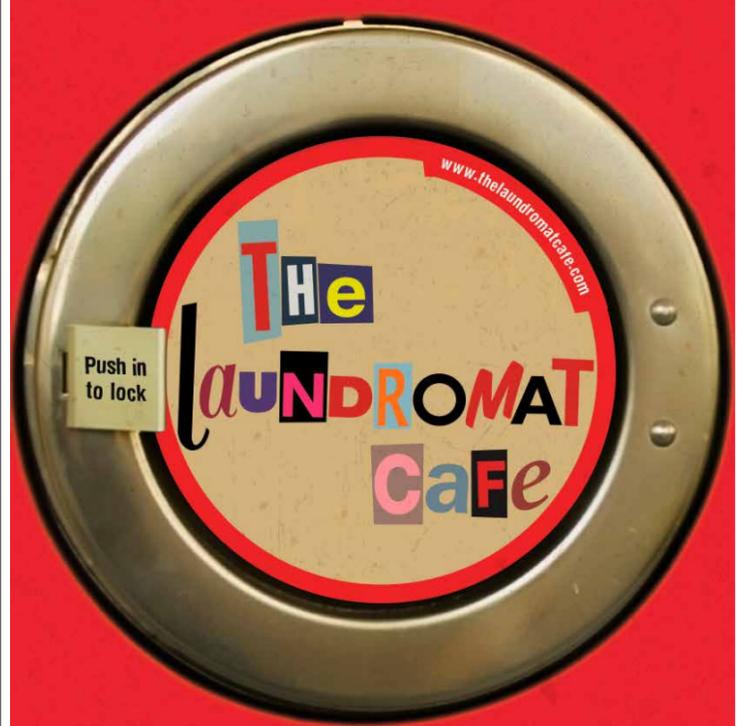
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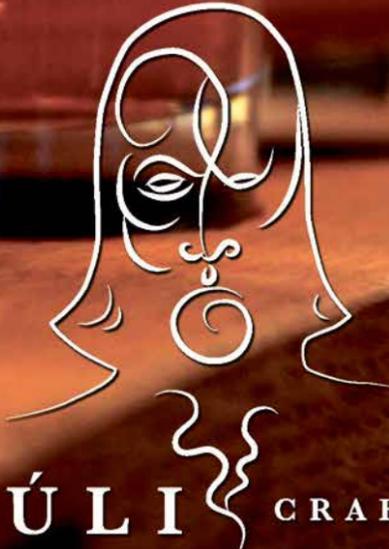
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MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

Salurinn í Kópavogi
18:00 Iceland Academy of the Arts
Graduation Concert: Hlöðver
Sigurðsson
20:00 Iceland Academy of the
Arts Graduation Concert: Sigrún
Jónsdóttir

Wednesday May 13

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Siggí Þorbergs /
DJ Yngvi
Bar Ananas
21:00 DJ Óli Dóri
Boston
21:00 DJ Herr Gott
Bravó
21:00 Futuregrapher
Café Rosenberg
21:00 Hinemoa
Dillon
21:30 World Narcosis / Mannvirki /
Grit Teeth
Dubliner
22:00 Troubadour Roland
English Pub
21:00 Troubadours Magnús & Ívar
Frederiksen Ale House
21:00 DJ Milla
Gaukurinn
21:00 Pearl Jam Tribute Concert
Harpa
19:30 Iceland Symphony Orchestra:
Romeo and Juliet
21:00 Múlinn-Jazz Club: Jimmy
Nyborg "Nordklang"
Húrra
21:00 Dikta / Rythmatik / DJ Atli
Kaniill
Kaffibarinn
21:00 DJ Símon FKNHNSM
Lebowski Bar
22:00 DJ Jesús
Mengi
21:00 Parallax
Prikið
21:00 DJ Sakana
Salurinn
18:00 Iceland Academy of the Arts
Graduation Concert: Hlöðver
Sigurðsson
20:00 Iceland Academy of the
Arts Graduation Concert: Sigrún
Jónsdóttir

Thursday May 14

American Bar
22:00 Troubadour Hreimur
B5
21:00 DJ Vignir & The Boys
Bar Ananas
21:00 DJ Feast of the Ascension
Boston
21:00 DJ MoonShine
Bravó
21:00 DJ Ísar Logi
Café Rosenberg
21:00 Ösp Eldjárn Anniversary
Concert
Dillon
21:00 Pungsig
Dubliner
22:00 Troubadour Kjartan
English Pub
21:00 Troubadours Eiki & Steini
Frederiksen Ale House
21:00 DJ Hrönn
Hlemmur Square
21:00 Jón Þór
Hljóðberg
20:00 Spinning Concerts:
Kristjana Stefánsdóttir & Kjartan
Valdemarsson
Húrra
20:00 Klikk / ITCOM / Conflitions



DYNFARI
VEGFERÐ TÍMANS

16
May

Music That Sounds Like Music
Dynfari Album Release Party / Draugsól

Gaukurinn

Tryggvagata 22 (D3) | 🕒 22:00 | 1,000 ISK

With the increasingly "alternative" sounds of contemporary music, it's very easy to fall into the trap of commenting on the stimulating or dynamic feel of a friend's song choice before realising it's just their cell phone vibrating. **Dynfari** is not one of those bands, and they are celebrating the release of their third album '**Vegferð Tímans**' ("Journey of Time") at Gaukurinn. Like with any real metal band, Dynfari's music is often full of screaming and fast tempos, while mixing in some atmospheric and chilling sounds. As a refreshing (and comforting) respite from "cool" Reykjavík music, each track on Dynfari's album has an actual melody, and is distinctly different from the last. **AM**

Kaffibarinn

21:00 Ben Frost DJ Set
Lebowski Bar
21:00 DJ Smutty Smiff
Lucky Records
16:00 World Narcosis / Antimony /
Qualia
Mengi
21:00 Jimmy Nyborg, Tore T.
Sandbakken & Richard Andersson
Paloma
21:00 Slumman: Lukka & Siggó
Prikið
21:00 DJ Gervisykur

Friday May 15

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Roland / DJ Pétur
B5
22:00 DJ JO
Bar 11
22:30 Joy Division Tribute Band
Bar Ananas
22:00 DJ BadMotherFucker
Boston
22:00 DJ Hunk of a Man
Bravó
22:00 DJ Styrmir Dansson

Café Rosenberg

22:00 Helter Skelter Beatles Tribute
Band Performs 'Abbey Road'
Dillon
22:00 Dorian Gray
Dubliner
21:00 Snake Eyes
English Pub
22:00 Troubadours Siggí Þorbergs &
Birkir / Troubadour Biggi
Frederiksen Ale House
22:00 Eyþór Ingi & VÍO / DJ Dagbjört
Gaukurinn
21:00 Snakebite: Whitesnake Tribute
Concert
Harpa
17:00 WonderWagon
20:30 The Folkmusic Group of
Akranes: Voices that will never be
silent
Húrra
22:00 Húrra Grapevine! #4: Kiasmos
/ worriedaboutsatan / Hugar / DJ
Óli Dóri
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Alfons X
Lebowski Bar
22:00 DJ Halli Einarss / DJ Anna Brá
Mengi
22:00 Atli Heimir Sveinsson



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

Food is served from 10 until 22 every day.
On Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights,
after the kitchen closes Hressó heats up with
live music. Weekends, **DJs** keep the party going
until morning, with no cover charge

MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

Paloma
22:00 DJ Nina Kraviz / Blawan / Exos / Bjarki
Prikið
22:00 DJ Gangreen / DJ GLM

Saturday May 16

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Birgir / DJ Yngvi
B5
22:00 DJ JO
Bar 11
23:30 Brött Brekka & Others
Bar Ananas
22:00 DJ Atli Kanill
Boston
22:00 DJ Sunna Ben
Bravó
22:00 DJ KGB
Café Rosenberg
22:00 Slow Train: Dylan Tribute Band
Dillon
22:00 Black Desert Sun
Dubliner
00:00 Snake Eyes
English Pub
22:00 Troubadours Arnar & Ingunn / Eiki & Steini
Frederiksen Ale House
22:00 Different Turns / DJ Hrönn
Gamla Bíó
21:15 Lóa DJ Night: Blokk / Tetriz / Plúto / Yamaha
Gaukurinn
22:20 Dynfari Album Release Party / Draugsól
Harpa
19:30 Jesus Christ Superstar
Húrra
21:00 Amaba Dama & Rvk Soundsystem
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Kári
KEX Hostel
21:00 Magnús Leifur / worriedaboutsatan
Lebowski Bar
22:00 DJ Smutty Smiff / DJ Raggi / DJ Anna Brá
Mengi
21:00 Aisha Orzabayeva
Paloma
22:00 Biggi Veira DJ Set / Cosmic Bullshitter / Mr Silla
Prikið
22:00 DJ Logi Pedro

Sunday May 17

American Bar
22:00 Troubadour Siggí Þorbergs
Bravó
21:00 DJ Teksole
Dubliner
22:00 Troubadour Garðar
English Pub
21:00 Troubadour Danni
Kaffibarinn
21:00 DJ Krystal Carma
Lebowski Bar
21:00 DJ Halli Einarss
Mengi
21:00 Geirþrúður Ása & Chris Ladd
Paloma
21:00 Sunnudagsklúbburinn

Monday May 18

American Bar
22:00 Troubadour Ellert
Café Rosenberg
21:00 Mamiko
Dubliner
22:00 Troubadour Andri
English Pub
21:00 Troubadours Ingi Valur & Tryggvi
Húrra
21:00 Monjazz
Kaffibarinn
21:00 DJ Steindór Jónsson
Lebowski Bar
21:00 DJ Anna Brá
Prikið
21:00 Drink & Draw Vol. 3

Tuesday May 19

American Bar
22:00 Troubadour Roland
Bravó
21:00 Björn Teitsson
Café Rosenberg
21:00 Bræðrabandið
Dansverkstæðið
20:00 No Lights No Lycra Dance Party
Dubliner
22:00 Troubadour Garðar
English Pub
21:00 Troubadour Andri P
Hljóðberg
20:00 And Then Came The War Concert
Húrra
21:00 DJ Finnur Pind
Kaffibarinn
21:00 DJ John Brnlv
KEX Hostel
20:30 KEXJazz



21
May

Loud And Angry, But In A Calming Way
World Narcosis Album Release Party / Kælan Mikla / Godchilla / Seint

Húrra

Naustin (D3) | 🕒 20:00 | 1,500 ISK

It has been said that **World Narcosis** “spits insightful shots of disillusionment” and that “the pessimism and abandonment of the lyrics fit the spastic heaviness perfectly,” but that’s all a bit too much. This is the kind of music that teenagers blast from their bedrooms after being overlooked by their crush, that miserable employees listen to before eventually rethinking physically assaulting their managers, and that yuppies play for friends while talking about their more reckless days. Come for a night of loud, angry rock music as World Narcosis celebrates their new album ‘**World Coda**’ with **Kælan Mikla**, **Godchilla**, and **Seint**. You might just feel a bit better by the end of the night. **AM**

Lebowski Bar
21:00 DJ Jesús
The National Theatre
19:30 Damien Rice

Wednesday May 20

American Bar
22:00 Troubadour Alexander
Bravó
21:00 DJ Jónbjörn Finnbogason
Café Rosenberg
21:00 Tom Hanney
Dubliner
22:00 Troubadour Roland
English Pub
21:00 Troubadours Ellert & Roland
Harpa
21:00 Múlinn-Jazz Club: Young Miles
Kaffibarinn
21:00 DJ Formaðurinn Kynnir: Hin Hliðin
Lebowski Bar
21:00 DJ Jesús
Paloma
21:00 DJ Creature of the Night
Prikið
21:00 Vinyl Wednesday: DJ Housekell

Bar Ananas
21:00 DJ Berndsen

Boston
22:00 DJ Api Pabbi
Bravó
21:00 DJ Intro Beats
Dillon
21:00 Sveinn Guðmundsson / Adda / Slowsteps
Dubliner
22:00 Troubadour Kjartan
English Pub
21:00 Troubadours Hjálmar & Dagur
Frederiksen Ale House
21:00 DJ C-Frets
Hlemmur Square
21:00 CeaseTone
Hljóðberg
20:00 And Then Came The War Concert
Húrra
20:00 World Narcosis Album Release Party / Kælan Mikla / Godchilla / Seint
Kaffibarinn
21:00 HúsDJús: Rulefinn (NO)
Lebowski Bar
21:00 DJ Vala
Paloma
21:00 DJ Baldur plays electronica
Prikið
21:00 DJ MAÍs Í BRAUÐFORMI

Thursday May 21

American Bar
22:00 Troubadour Hreimur
B5
21:00 DJ Vignir & The Boys

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ART PHOTOGRAPHY

Þjórsárver: *Disappearing From View*



rísa

Runs until May 10

Reykjavík

Words Gabriel Benjamin

Photo Anna Domnick

When photographer Anna Domnick first experienced Icelandic nature in 2012 on a working trip, she said she was awestruck by what she saw: magnificent untouched open spaces that have been preserved due to Iceland's conservation laws. Anna explains over the phone from Berlin how she threw herself into research on the subject when she got back home to Germany, only to find herself dismayed when she discovered how much land had already been irreversibly damaged. Instead of writing angry opinion pieces or joining the ranks of environmental activists like Saving Iceland, Anna returned to Iceland the following year and set out on a mission of her own, to take part in the discussion through her project, 'rísa' ("rise").

Paradise on a fast track to getting lost

Iceland is blessed with an abundance of renewable energy sources, namely hydro- and geothermal energy. Harnessing this energy, however, often grievously damages the local ecosystem that has established itself over the past few centuries. To balance the economic benefits of energy harnessing with the protection of nature, the State established Rammaáætlun, or "The Icelandic Master Plan for conservation of nature and utilization of energy," which details which areas are and aren't viable for damming. Since its creation in 1999, the Master Plan has been periodically updated, notably increasing protection for more vulnerable locations in 2013, only to have some of those recent changes reversed by the new centre-right government, much to the ire of environmentalists.

Anna's project 'rísa' focuses on the Þjórsárver wetlands, a 140-square-kilometre area in the centre of Iceland that is on the conservation list but encompasses parts now listed as dammable. According to the Environment Agency of Iceland, it is breeding ground to nu-

merous kinds of birds and home to 167 types of highland plants, and 244 insect and arachnid species. Yet for all of its biodiversity, the area is mostly inaccessible to humans, leaving it a distant idea in the minds of the vast majority of Icelanders. Anna set out to change that.

Fanning the winds of change

Ad campaigns to protect the highlands seem to lean heavily on consumer-friendly photo and video media focusing on green fields getting flooded and vulnerable creatures displaced. But with 'rísa', Anna instead presents images of snow-capped peaks and white landscapes, which more accurately portray what the wetlands look like for the majority of the year.

The images are faint, with only a few specks of shrubbery, sand and black rocks visible to differentiate the snowy ground from the grey skies. Anna says this calmness is intentional, that "the photographs emphasize Þjórsárver's vastness and highlight its fragility. It is both about the virtue of this natural spot for mankind, and the virtue of the pristine nature in itself."

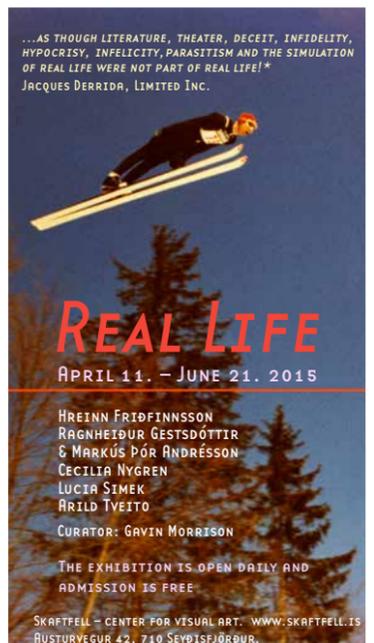
The conceptual installation is presented on five billboards spread out over the central Reykjavík area, each five by four metres large, mounted on wooden frames. The photographs are purposefully presented without any description or title, thus provoking the viewer into investigating what the images signify, hopefully leading to them finding out exactly how vulnerable Þjórsárver is to human interference.

The pieces were unveiled one after the other over a period of eight days and will remain visible until May 10. Although Anna stresses that 'rísa' was not commissioned by any agency or part of an environmental campaign, she did get financial support from the Iceland Nature Conservation Association, which allowed the installation to be fully realised.

You can find Anna Domnick's photographs displayed at the following locations: Skólavörðustígur 1a, Tryggvagata 11, Hverfisgata 59, Seljavegur 32 and Grettisgata 3

1011

On the go



MUSIC

CONCERT



Kiasmos

May 15

Húrra, Naustin 101

Admission: 1,500 ISK

Ólafur Arnalds On The Icelandic Music Scene And The Dance Project That Accidentally Happened

Words Gabriel Benjamin

Photo Marino Thorlacius

Although he may be young in years, 28-year-old Ólafur Arnalds is no stranger to the lime-light. He first stepped onto the stage as a drummer for hardcore bands Celestine and Fighting Shit. He then forged a career for himself as a classical music composer, releasing three well-received albums. He followed that up by writing the score for British TV series 'Broadchurch', for which he was awarded a BAFTA in 2014. He's also teamed up with Alice Sara Ott to make 'The Chopin Project', reimagining the historic composer's works, and with Bloodgroup's Janus Rasmussen to make Kiasmos, a dance project, which will be part of our upcoming Húrra Grapevine concert on May 15! With a few days to go until his gig, we caught up with Ólafur over the phone as he was in between studio sessions to talk about all of the above and more.

In your time as a musician, you've tackled a lot of different genres. Although you are best known for your classical piano music and soundtracks, when you were younger you were a drummer for Celestine and Fighting Shit. How much of your enthusiasm and inspiration do you still carry with you from those early years?

I feel like it's all the same feelings for me. The emotions may be communicated differently through different forms of expression, but they all come from the same place—love and anger have the same origin, whether you're 18 or 28.

And how much have those youth projects bled into the "respectable and grown-up Ólafur Arnalds" I'm currently speaking to?

Oh, they have a lot, because everything you've done is part of who you are today. You get a lot of experience playing music, touring, and being in the scene, and it influences what you create now. I've also felt that I've carried a lot of my punk style into what I do now, even if I'm operating in the classical music world, as it leaves me unafraid of breaking all the rules. Even my melodic elements and song structures are based on things that got stuck in my head from an early age.

I heard that one of your classical songs, "Poland," was inspired by a particularly nasty hangover. Is that true?

Yeah (laughs), that's very anecdotal, but it's a true story, and I think it's more common in the scene than you'd think. What I'm maybe doing is cutting through the precocity associated with composing this kind of music, the idea that everything needs to come from high-flying ideals. But really, it doesn't matter what genre of music you're creating, the ideas just spring from how you're feeling when

you're feeling creative. It can be all sorts of influences, not just highbrow ones.

I don't know if this has been your experience, but I personally felt like Icelanders didn't have a clue who you were up until you won your BAFTA last year, even though you'd been producing music and soundtracks for a good while before that. Is this something you noticed as well? And what do you think this says about Icelanders' ability to see talent in their own midst?

Yes (laughs), this is something I've clearly noticed myself. And it's not just true of the BAFTAs, but my whole career. No newspaper or Icelandic festival wanted to talk to me until I had made something internationally. It's so strange, how a band can send out a press release that they nailed some gig in a London pub to a crowd of 50, and suddenly everyone hails them for "making it" in the outside world. It was more like that five or ten years ago, but I'd been doing my thing, making my music, and wasn't invited to any festivals until I had toured extensively outside of Iceland. Then when The Guardian wrote about me, I suddenly got a call from Icelandic Music Export asking who I was and what I was doing (laughs). I needed a full page in The Guardian before Morgunblaðið ever tried calling me!

I think it's really strange, how it's like Icelanders don't consider anything important until foreigners have given it recognition and approved it. This held especially true when I won the BAFTA and took the large step from occasionally being mentioned in Fréttablaðið to getting blasted in all the big media and becoming a famous household item. But I guess that's what happens when you win a big award like that, you're on the front page everywhere for a few weeks. But a few years ago, the Icelandic music scene wasn't really giving credit to Icelanders

where it was due.

And how did Janus and you decide to collaborate?

We had been friends since he moved to Iceland, about seven years ago, and started making music together back in 2009. We'd meet every other weekend, hang out, have a beer, and create some techno together. We released a few singles, and weren't planning on doing anything more, but then a year later when we sent a demo to my label, they told me we had to make an album (laughs). They said we'd end up making it on our own anyway, but this way people would at least get to hear it.

Wasn't it a difficult decision with your busy schedule to commit to another big project?

No, it wasn't really ever supposed to be big. I was scheduled to write the score for a film last year, but it fell through so I was left with two months free, so we decided to come together and give Kiasmos the attention it deserved. We went to the studio and were there for six or seven weeks, but we didn't plan on touring that much. Then, all of the sudden, it caught fire and now we've been touring non-stop.

What can people expect at your gig on May 15? Will there be audience participation like we've grown used to with your classical piano concerts?

No, I suspect people will just have to dance (laughs). Or wait, isn't that audience participation?

I'd like to think so!

It's going to be quite a rocked-out show. We've been practising and evolving our set, and it'll be a dance-friendly affair that starts off slow before building up to become a massive party.

ART WALK IN KÓPAVOGUR 2015

MAY 16TH FROM 9-17

Open studios and galleries

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- A: Kársnesbraut 102- Open studio-Bjarni og Ragga
- B: Gerðasafn- Art exhibition
- C: Anarkía- Art exhibition
- D: Art 11- Open studio- 13 artists
- E: Normx, Auðbrekka 6- Open studios 18 artists
- F: Art exhibition Auðbrekka 28-30- 20 artists
- G: Smiðjuvegur 74- Open studios- 4 artists
- H: Gallerý Dalvegur 16 C- Art exhibition- 4 artists



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ART OPENINGS



Modern Dance Meets Icelandic Poetry
'Black Feathers' by Sigríður Soffía Nielsdóttir

National Theatre of Iceland

Hverfisgata 19 (E5) | May 13-31 ☺ 19:00 | 4,950 ISK

'Black Feathers' refers to the name of a 1919 poetry collection by Davíð Stefánsson from Fagraskógur, one of Iceland's most beloved 20th century poets. His works are the basis for **Sigríður Soffía Nielsdóttir's** performance, in which she combines song, theatre and dance. The movements are based on the rules of verse and reflect metrical patterns, resulting in a dynamic and diverse piece of art. Dancers, actors, musicians and live doves interpret Davíð's poems of loneliness, love and patriotism through theatrical performance, modern dance and music (and dove coo?). **RÓG**

May 8 - May 21

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

Opening

ASÍ Art Gallery 'The Vixen And The Victim'

Throughout the history of Western art, women were nameless models used by men as muses rather than subject matter. In 2015, women are celebrating the centennial of the right to vote in Iceland and ASÍ is celebrating by showcasing a gallery that focuses on women. Artists of all ages and methods present works that deal with the idea that women are always seen as either the 'vixen' or 'victim'.

Opens May 14
Runs until June 30

Kópavogur Art Museum Gerðarsafn 'Illumination'

This exhibition displays the works of contemporary female artists who have drawn inspiration from the stained-glass windows designed by Gerður Helgadóttir (1928-1975). Her designs can be found in various places, such as Skálholt Cathedral and Kópavogur Church. The contemporary artists are Guðrún Kristjánsdóttir (b. 1950), Erla Þórarinsdóttir (b. 1955),

Guðrún Benónýsdóttir (b. 1969), Hekla Dögg Jónsdóttir (b. 1969), Dodda Maggý (b. 1981), Lilja Birgisdóttir (b. 1983), Katrin Agnes Klar (b. 1985) and Ingibjörg Sigurjónsdóttir (b. 1985).

Opens May 15
Runs until August 2

'Dorion' by Dodda Maggý with the Katla Women's Choir

This 40 minute piece was written specifically for Kópavogur Church and is Dodda Maggý's attempt to create a dialogue between vocal range and the colour palette in the church's stained-glass windows which is the focus point of the 'Illumination' exhibition.

Runs on May 15 at 9:00 & May 16 at 16:00

Harbinger

'There Are Two In A Couple' by Barbara Amalie Skovmand Thomsen

An installation that features music, videos, sculptures and photography, in which this Danish artist explores love, lust and relationships. Opens on May 14 at 14:00 with a music performance by the artist and beatboxer Kristinn Ágústsson.

Open May 14
Runs until June 7

Harpa

'Fount - Vocal VII' by Rúrí

This exhibit is a part of series of works where artist Rúrí explores the many aspects of water. This large-scale artwork brings together installation, multi-channel video, original music, movement, text, and voices.

Runs May 16 at 20:00

Icelandic Printmaker's Association

'ÓRÓ' by Magdalena Margrét Kjartansdóttir

Magdalena Margrét's work deals with women and the feminine body with a focus on childhood, maternity, mentality, and sexuality. This exhibition showcases some of her large hand-printed paperworks of big, bold and beautiful women.

Opens May 14
Runs until May 25

The Living Art Museum

'Spring Task' by Kristín Helga Káradóttir

Kristín's new art exhibit explores the theme of early spring and the longing for better conditions through a dreamy-realistic setting. There is a special artist talk on May 30 at 15:00.

Opens May 14
Runs until June 12

Loft Hostel

Up-cycling Workshop

In this free recycling workshop participants will learn to turn old garments into cool handbags, and juice containers into fashionable wallets. The workshop also involves working with paper scraps and creating something new and beautiful out of them.

Runs on May 12 from 17:00

Mokka Kaffi

'Mánagata Lobster Choreography'

This exhibit features a series of paintings surreally depicting a langoustine posed to perform various tasks around the house.

Opens May 14
Runs until June 24

The National Museum of Iceland 'Bundled Up In Blue'

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

Opens May 9
Runs until Dec 31

The National Theatre of Iceland 'Black Feathers' by Sigríður Soffía Nielsdóttir

Sigríður Soffía Nielsdóttir is a choreographer who has made a system of movements based on the rules of verse, combining dance and poetry. She uses the poetry of Davíð Stefánsson, one of Iceland's most beloved 20th century poets, as a basis for 'Black Feathers'—a reference to Davíð's first poetry collection—and has enlisted dancers, actors, musicians and live doves to create a unique dance piece where Icelandic poetry meets modern dance.

Opens May 13
Runs until May 31

Nordic House

The Vatnsmyri Festival

The Nordic House's Vatnsmyri Festival is a family-friendly affair with various activities taking place in the surrounding Vatnsmyri moorland.

Runs May 9 from 13:00

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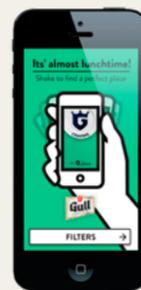
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WHAT'S INSIDE

Reykjavík Map

Happy Hour Guide

Places We Like

Best Of Reykjavík

Practical Info

Reykjavík

May 8 - May 21

Keep it in your pocket

TWO WEEKS

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

1-29
May

Art

Glowing Gown of Freedom



'Freedom from Inside' by Lukka Sigurðardóttir

Better Weather Window Gallery (F6) | 🕒 24 hours

In this site-specific mixed-media installation, artist **Lukka Sigurðardóttir** explores the untouchable inner freedom found in the form of an internally lit bridal gown which was co-designed by fashion and costume designer **Alexander Kirchner**. Lukka, who graduated from the visual arts department of the Iceland Academy of the Arts in 2014, often concerns herself with the everyday happenstances and objects that people know and can relate to, but tend not to scrutinise in depth. She often works with time-related media, installations and sculptures. In addition, she's the artistic director of the Secret Solstice Festival 2015.

RÓG

Tuesdays

DANCING TO NO MOONLIGHT With the sun hovering in the sky for longer each day, night is becoming short in supply, and bouncing between bars threatens to be a sobering experience, so why not head to **Dansverkstæðið** where the **No Lights, No Lycra Dance Party** is held each **Tuesday**? The premise is simple: You pay a token fee, enter into a completely blacked out and crowded room and dance away to solid (and camp) songs for as long as you can. It's great!

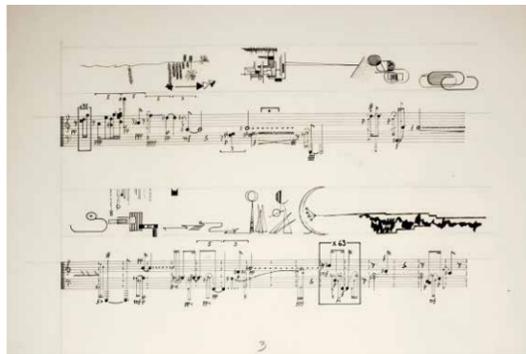
May 16

SHAKE IT, SHAKE IT GOOD It's been a while since **AmabAdamA**, one of Iceland's handful of reggae bands, released their sophomore album, but they've kept themselves busy in the meanwhile and invite fans (and other people that need more warmth in their life) to celebrate the coming of summer, end of exams and the release of their new single with a party at **Húrra** with their jolly friends from **Rvk Soundsystem**, so be sure not to be late. Doors open at 21:00, **2,000 ISK** admission.

15
May

Music

Atli Heimir Sveinsson



An Unappreciated Master

Mengi (F5) | 🕒 21:00 | 2,000 ISK

Mengi and the Iceland Academy of the Arts present the first of a series of combination concerts-lectures on the Icelandic composer **Atli Heimir Sveinsson**. Born in 1938, Atli Heimir is one of the Iceland's most prolific classical composers, and yet much of his work was never recorded or performed a second time after its premiere. This series aims to look at his less appreciated works and to give a better picture of an Icelandic master. In this first concert-lecture, **Arngunnur Árnadóttir** (clarinet), **Melkorka Ólafsdóttir** (flute), **Michael Kaulartz** (bassoon) and **Örn Magnússon** (reader) will perform six works, followed by a lecture by **Þráinn Hjálmarsson**. **AM**

14-7
May-June

Art

Love And Lust In Mixed Media



'There are two in a couple' by Barbara Amalie Skovmand Thomsen

Harbinger (G5) | 🕒 Th-F 14-18, Sa 14-17 | Free!

Danish artist **Barbara Amalie Skovmand Thomsen** explores love relations, lust and longing in a colourful and dynamic installation that features music, videos, sculptures and photography. In tune with the title, this is a partner exhibition to Barbara's exhibition in Copenhagen. It provides a multi-faceted insight into this most powerful human emotion, laced with sensuality, melancholic romance and humour. There is a special opening event on May 14 at 14:00, where Barbara is joined by beatboxer **Kristinn Ágústsson** and invites the audience to sing along, karaoke-style. **RÓG**



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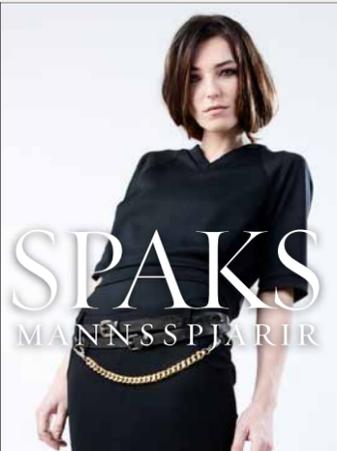
ANIMAL PARK



RESCUE (112)

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2. Reykjavík Kringlan shopping mall.
3. Akureyri Hotel Kea ground floor.



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A

MAP

Places We Like

Eating

1 The Cocoo's Nest

Grandagarður 23

Nestled in an old fishing hut in the flourishing area of Grandi is a new Californian deli with an Italian twist. What is a Californian deli? You'll have to pay them a visit to find out. The owners, Íris and Lucas, have put much thought and work into every square inch of the place, creating a cosy and warm atmosphere. If you are in that part of town, head over to get your brunch or lunch fill of the day.

2 Argentina

Barónsstígur 11a

Argentina is the best place in the world for a red meat-loving person to have a special celebration. One of the oldest steak houses in town, it has worked hard to earn its name and has never wavered from its red meat loving stature.

3 Kryddlegin Hjörtu

Hverfisgata 33

Kryddlegin Hjörtu is a cosy restaurant that offers plenty of healthy options, including a salad and soup buffet. Swing by if you're starting to feel guilty for all of those hot dogs and want more wholesome and nutritious food. Make sure not to miss out on their on-location baked bread.

4 Krua Thai

Tryggvagata 14

For quick, tasty and sizably-portioned Thai food, stop by this family run restaurant for reliably good and invigorating meals. Their cute harbour-adjacent location is both intimate and communal at once. Stay and enjoy the vibe or take your food to go, it will be delicious either way.

5 Snaps

Óðinstorg, Þórgata 1

This recent addition to Reykjavík dining has quickly become a popular spot for folks with a fine palate and a modest budget, offering a small menu drawn from local produce and a carefully selected wine list. It's also a cool hangout for artists and musicians. Make sure to get there early—they take reservations until 18:30, but after that it's a free-for-all!

Drinking

6 Bravó

Laugavegur 22

Bravó is your regular run-of-the-mill bar that serves decent drinks and doesn't try to be anything that it's not. The bar plays good music at a comfortable volume that allows for conversation, and provides good seating options even during late nights, when most bars have removed their tables to make room for a dancefloor.

Useful Numbers

Emergency number: **112**

Medical help: **1770**

Dental emergency: **575 0505**

Information: **1818**

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

BSR: **561 0000**

Tax-Free Refund

Iceland Refund, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400

Tourist Information

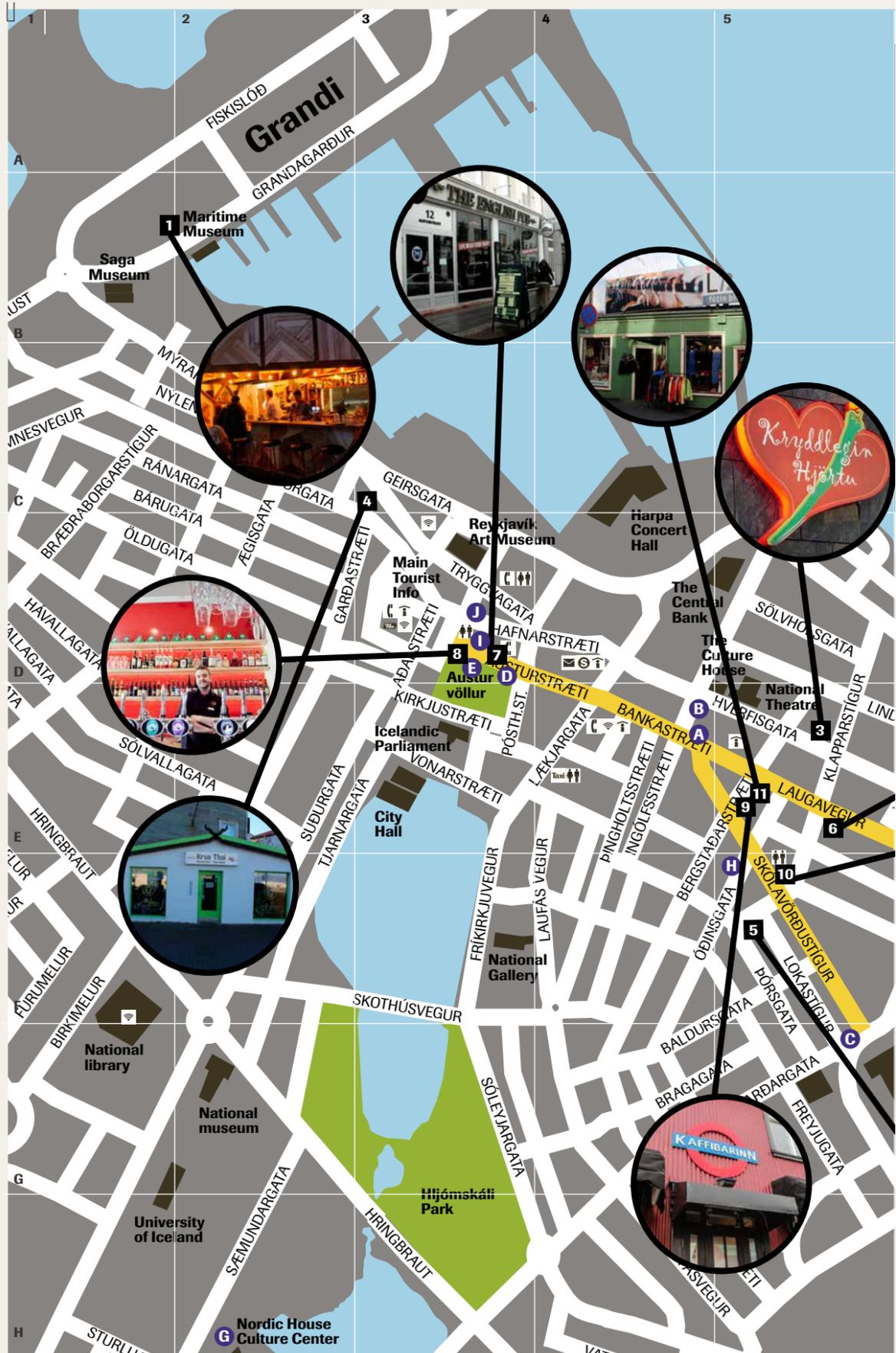
Arctic Adventures, Laugavegur 11,

tel: 562 7000

Tourist Info Centre, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

Iceland Excursions – Grayline Iceland,

Hafnarstræti 20, tel: 540 1300



7 English Pub

Austurstræti 12

True to its name, the English Pub offers many different kinds of lager on tap and a whiff of that genuine UK feel. Try the famous "wheel of fortune" where one can win up to a metre of beer with a single spin while a steady team of troubadours engage the crowd in classic sing-alongs every night.

8 Micro Bar

Austurstræti 6

Micro Bar sits snugged up behind the lobby of City Center Hotel and offers Reykjavík's best selection of microbrew beers, served by knowledgeable and polite staff. This is one of the few bars in Reykjavík where you can have a conversation with your mates without having to shout over live bands or loud music.

9 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

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

Café Loki in front of Hallgrímskirkja



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Trip, Laugavegur 54, tel: 433 8747

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Lyfja, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045 and Lág-
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BSÍ, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10,

tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

Domestic Airlines

Air Iceland, Reykjavíkflugvöllur,

tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

Eagle Air, Hótel Loftleiðir, tel: 562 4200

Public Transport

The only public transport available in Reykjavík is the bus. Most buses run every 20-30 minutes (the wait may be longer on weekends) and the price per fare is 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 04:30 on weekends.

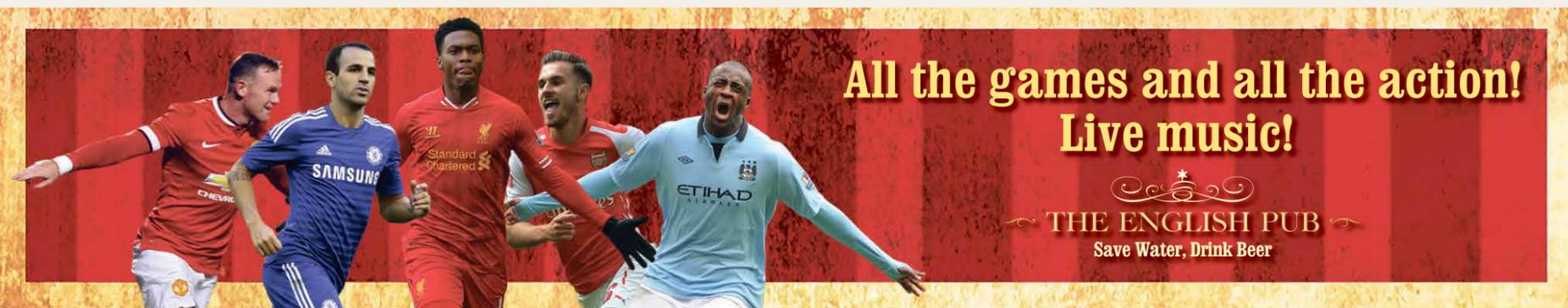
Shops: Mon-Fri 10:00-18:00, Sat 10:00-16:00, Sun closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

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

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

Post Offices

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



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EL-01 / EL-02 / EL-03									
Jan-Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov-Dec
	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	
				10:00	10:00	10:00			
13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00
			17:00*	14:00	14:00	14:00			
				17:00	17:00	17:00	17:00*		
				20:30**	20:30				

* From 15 May to 15 September
** From 15 June to 31 July

Other adventures
Sea Angling daily at 11:00 and 15:30 from 1 May to 31 August
Puffin Watching daily at 9:30, 12:00 and 15:00 from 15 May to 15 August




www.elding.is

Best Of Reykjavík

Every year around the beginning of July, we make a BEST OF REYKJAVÍK ISSUE celebrating some of what makes Reykjavík-life worthwhile, posting some good entries into a hopefully 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 pulled from BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2014 which you can read in full at www.grapevine.is.



BEST BEST PIZZA: HVERFIGATA 12



In an era when everyone is obsessed with visibility and self-promotion, it may come as a surprise that Hverfisgata 12 wins our best pizza award. The place doesn't advertise, the house isn't marked "PIZZA" in big tourist-trapping letters and it doesn't even have a Facebook page! As far as we can tell, people only know about it through word of mouth, which can be pulled off because Hverfisgata 12 offers the kind of pizzas you are unlikely to have tried before, with inventive toppings such as barbecue sauce, shredded pork, pears, roasted seeds and horseradish cream. The attached bar is also properly decked out and staff are well versed at making cocktails, in case you fancy having a nightcap before heading home.



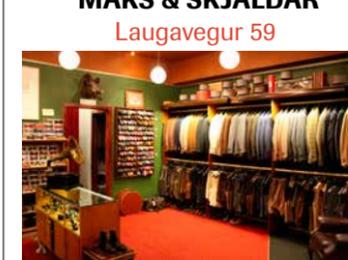
BEST BEST ROMANTIC WALK: GRÓTTA



For the third year in a row, our panellists deemed Gróttan the best romantic walk. Although we don't know how many of them have actually taken their significant others to Gróttan, it's easy to see why it keeps taking the cake. Gróttan is an island at the tip of Seltjarnarnes, which features a picturesque lighthouse. If your timing is good, the tide will be low and you can stroll over hand-in-hand, take a seat on the rocks and look out across the ocean whilst dreaming about what's on your horizon. Do note, however, that the island is off limits during nesting season.



BEST HABERDASHERY: HERRAFATAVERZLUN KORMÁKS & SKJALDAR



Tucked under the Bónus on Laugavegur is a classy gentleman's heaven. Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar sells everything for an elegant man's wardrobe, from leather shoes and top hats to tailored suits and bowties. The store carries many great brands such as Barbour, Loake, Hackett and Filson. There is also a great barber who'll give you a stylish haircut and beard trim.

Viðey Island

“Really hidden treasure off Reykjavik. Well worth a visit.”
Biffajk taken from TripAdvisor



Summer Schedule 15 May - 30 September

From Elding (Ægisgarður) to Viðey									
	11.50							14.50	
From Harpa to Viðey									
		12.00						15.00	
From Skarfabakki to Viðey									
10.15	11.15	12.15	13.15	14.15	15.15	16.15	17.15		
From Viðey to Skarfabakki									
		12.30	13.30	14.30	15.30	16.30	17.30	18.30	
From Viðey to Harpa and Elding (Ægisgarður)									
	11.30				14.30			17.30	

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City of Reykjavík
VIDEYJARSTOFA Restaurant
Elding adventure at sea

A GUIDE THAT FUCKS YOU UP

A list of every Happy Hour in 101 Reykjavík

- American Bar**
Fridays and Saturdays from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.
- B5**
Every day from 16:00 to 22:00.
Beer 550 ISK, Cider 700 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.
- Bar 7**
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 350 ISK, Shot 450 ISK
- Bar 11**
Thursday from 21:00 to 01:00. Beer 450 ISK
Friday to Saturday from 21:00 to 00:00.
Beer 500 ISK
- Bjarni Fel**
Monday to Friday from 21:00 to 23:00. 2 for 1
Beer 990 ISK, single with mixer 1,300 ISK.
- Boston**
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 650 ISK.
- Bravó**
Every day from 17:00 to 21:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.
- Brooklyn Bistro & Bar**
Every day from 14:00 to 19:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.
- Bunk Bar**
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.
- Cafe Haiti**
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.
- Dillon**
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00. Beer 550 ISK,
Wine for 700 ISK, Whiskey 550 ISK.
- Dolly**
Wednesday to Thursday from 20:00 to 22:00,
Friday to Saturday from 20:00 to 23:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 600 ISK.
- Dubliner**
Every day from 16:00 until 22:00.
Tuborg 600 ISK, 2 for 1 Wine 1,000 ISK.
- Einar Ben**
Every day from 17:30 to 20:00. Small Beer 500
ISK, Big Beer 700 ISK, Wine 800 ISK



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

- English Pub**
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 850 ISK.
- Frederiksen Ale House**
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
2 for 1 Beer 1,000 ISK and Wine 1,100 ISK
- Gaukurinn**
Sunday to Thursday 19:00 to 22:00. Friday to
Saturday 21:00 to 22:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 700 ISK. Shots 500 ISK
- Glaumbar**
Thursday to Saturday from 20:00 to 00:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Shot 390 ISK.
- Hótel Plaza Bar**
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.
- Húrra**
Every day from 18:00 to 21:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

- Íslenski Barinn**
Everyday from 16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 700 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.
- Ísafold Bistro**
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.
- Kaffibarinn**
Every day from 15:00 to 20:00. Beer 650 ISK.
- Kiki Queer Bar**
Thursday from 21:00 to 01:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Shots 500 ISK.
- Kitchen & Wine Bar @ 101 Hótel**
Every day from 16:00-18:00. Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK, Cocktail of the day 1,500 ISK
- Klaustur Bar**
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.
- Kolabrautin**
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00. Beer 450 ISK,
Wine 500 ISK, Cocktails 1,000 ISK.
- Lebowski Bar**
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
2 for 1 Beer and Wine 1,100 ISK.
- Loft Hostel Bar**
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.
- Matur og Drykkur**
Thursday to Sunday, 21:00-22:00. Beer 500
ISK, Wine 500 ISK, cocktails for half price.
- Micro Bar**
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 700 ISK.
- Miðgarður Bistro bar**
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 500 ISK,
Wine 600 ISK, all drinks half price.
- Mímisbar**
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. Beer 500 ISK,
Wine 650 ISK, Cocktail of the day 1,100 ISK,
Shot + Beer 1,000 ISK.
- Prikið**
Monday to Friday from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 500 ISK.
- SKY Bar & Lounge**
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
Beer 700 ISK, Wine 1,000 ISK.
- Skúli Craft Bar**
Every day from 14:00 to 19:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.
- Slippbarinn**
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00. Beer 500 ISK,
Wine 450 ISK, selected Cocktails 1,000 ISK.
- Thorvaldsen Bar**
Monday to Saturday from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 600 ISK.
- Tíu Dropar**
Every day from 18:00 to 21:00. 2 for 1 Wine for
1,000 ISK and Beer 1,000 ISK.
- Vinsmakkarinn**
Monday to Sunday from 17:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

ART

OPENINGS & ONGOING

Reykjavik Art Museum: Ásmundarsafn

'Artistic Inclination' by Ásmundur Sveinsson

Works that span the entire career of sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson (1893-1982) from when he was a student at the Sate Academy in Sweden to abstract pieces created towards the end of his life. His work is inspired by nature, literature and the Icelandic people.

Opens May 9
Runs until Oct 4

Reykjavik Art Museum: Hafnarhús

'Áfangar' by Richard Serra

Richard Serra unveiled his environmental art installation on Viðey Island 25 years ago. In honour of the anniversary, Hafnarhús presents an exhibition of Richard's drawings and graphic works as well as film and photographs from 'Áfangar' on Viðey.

Opens May 21
Runs until Sep 20

'bears; truths...' by Kathy Clark

Using teddy bears discarded by Reykjavik children, Kathy develops a narrative about life's journey. Throughout her career, she has shown work in Iceland and the United States, and is the founder of two window galleries in downtown Reykjavik.

Opens May 21
Runs until Oct 18

Reykjavik City Theatre

'Blæði: Obsidian Pieces' by Damien Jalet

Iceland Dance Company presents four works by Belgian choreographer Damien Jalet. He chose the name 'Obsidian Pieces' because like the stone, each piece is both dark and reflective. Erna Ómarsdóttir created the piece 'Black Marrow' with Damien in Australia in 2009 as the second part of a performance premiered in Iceland at that time.

Opens May 19
Runs until May 28

Tjarnarbió

Multicultural Day

Celebrating Reykjavik's Multicultural Day, there is a varied entertainment programme booked in Tjarnarbió, featuring acts including the Icelandic circus, Lithuanian and Turkish song performances, Vietnamese, Polish and Balkan dance acts, and a theatrical performance by the Women's Story Circle which is a project between Reykjavik City Library and W.O.M.E.N in Iceland (organisation of women of foreign origins in Iceland).

Runs on May 9, 14:30-17:00

'The Border' by Jo Strømgren Kompani

This dance performance by acclaimed Norwegian dance company Jo Strømgren Kompani was premiered in 2011 and has since been performed all over the world. It's about a male and female co-worker who secretly wage a war in the office, which starts out being a battle for territory, but then evolving into something much more.

Runs on May 18 and 19

Tveir Hrafnar Gallery

'Cliffs, sunshine, heroes, sky, sea and birds' by Hulda Hákon

With texts, paintings wall reliefs and sculptures, renowned Icelandic artist Hulda Hákon transforms small everyday feats into heroic victories.

Opens May 14
Runs until June 20



Who Cares About Her Smile, What's Mona Lisa's Name? 'The Vixen And The Victim'

The ASÍ Art Gallery

Freyjugata 41 (G5) | May 14-June 13 ☺ 13-17 Tues-Sun | Free!

Throughout history, female subjects in artwork have usually been depicted in a way that's interchangeable with a bowl of fruit. With the exception of art and renaissance historians, most people only don't know much about the Mona Lisa beyond the name (of the painting, not of subject Lisa del Giocondo) and that it was painted by Leonardo da Vinci. This is a common theme: nameless models known more for the men who painted them. This year marks 100 years since women were granted suffrage in Iceland, and in honour of the celebration ASÍ is curating an exhibition that focuses on women as more than just a vixen or a victim. Some of the contributing artists are **Anna Hallin, Eirún Jónsdóttir, Eva Ísleifsdóttir, Kristín Jónsdóttir, Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir, Magdalena Margrét Kjartansdóttir, Rakel MacMahon** and **Valgerður Guðlaugsdóttir. AM**

Ongoing

12 Tónar

'Piece For A Blue Wall' by Lyla Marsol

The Swiss artist Lyla Marsol is exhibiting twenty paintings made on wood and silver in 12 Tónar.

Runs until May 31

Anarkía

'Webs' by Ragnheiður Guðmundsdóttir

Ragnheiður Guðmundsdóttir uses mixed media on plywood and paper to convey how emotions affect physical state and how art serves as a healing power for the artist and their environment.

Runs until May 24

'Shadows and light of understanding' by Ólöf Björg Björnsdóttir

Ólöf often paints figures on canvas in strong colours to explore the human kind's search for itself. In this exhibition she shows new paintings with a fresh approach that is lighter and simpler than her usual works but still displaying the strong characteristics of her vivid colour palette.

Runs until May 24

ART67

Pálmar Örn Guðmundsson Exhibition

ART67's May artist of the month is Pálmar Örn Guðmundsson, who hails from the fishing village of Grindavík in the Reykjanes peninsula. He says he draws inspiration for his figurative acrylics paintings from his surroundings. This is his sixth solo exhibition at ART67.

Runs until May 31

Ásgrímur Jónsson Collection

'In The Light Of The Days' by Ásgrímur Jónsson

The works of the late Ásgrímur Jónsson cover huge swaths of the history of Iceland. The interpretation of the seen and the unseen, landscape and oral tradition were some of his main topics throughout his career which spanned the first half of the twentieth century. His paintings and drawings reflect sincere love for the country and the nation, and the works chosen for this exhibition reflect the scope of the artist's themes.

Runs until September 15

Better Weather Window Gallery

'Freedom from Inside' by Lukka Sigurðardóttir

Lukka Sigurðardóttir's new window gallery display is concerned with the concept

Route 40 takes you to

Experience Icelandic Art and Design

on your way to the Blue Lagoon

— — — [Route 40] — — —

Illumination

Exhibition of Works by Contemporary Icelandic Artists

Doríon

Dodda Maggý, Video- & Music Performance by Dodda Maggý with the Katla Women's Choir

Ámundi

Graphic Designer

Un peu plus

Drawings and sketches by fashion designer Helga Björnsson

Cairns

Jónína Guðnadóttir

MENN

Curver Thoroddsen
Finnur Arnar Arnarson
Hlynur Hallsson
Kristinn G. Harðarson

Gerðarsafn -

Kópavogur Art Museum

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

Hönnunarsafn Íslands

/ Museum of Design and Applied Art

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

Hafnarborg

/ The Hafnarfjörður Centre of Culture and Fine Art

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



ÞJÓÐMINJASAFN ÍSLANDS
National Museum of Iceland

OPEN

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Summer (1. May-15. September)
Daily 10-5

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COMPRISING 5 TOP MUSEUMS:



Árbær Open Air Museum



The Settlement Exhibition



Reykjavik Maritime Museum



Viðey Island



Reykjavik Museum of Photography



More information in the Museums & Galleries section.



ART

ONGOING

16
May



It's Outside 101 But Just Hear Me Out
Kópavogur's 60-Year Anniversary

Around Kópavogur

Shuttle stops at Harpa (C4) | 🕒 every 30 minutes from 9:00 | Free!

At the Grapevine, we completely understand the disinclination to venture outside the safety of central 101 Rvk, and why would you? All the great museums, restaurants and nightlife are within walking distance, and it's all corporate buildings and suburbia outside the cul de sac. Nope! With exorbitant rents downtown, many artists have been moving their studios to Kópavogur—the one with the penis shaped mall you pass on the way to IKEA. As part of the town's 60-year-birthday, 40 local artists such as **Bjarni Sigurbjörnsson** and **Ragnheiður Guðmundsdóttir** open their studios, and local museums (like Anarkía, ART 11 and Gerðarsafn) open their doors to the public to show exactly what Kópavogur has to offer. There are free bus rides from Harpa every 30 minutes, and between participating venues every 15 minutes. **AM**

of freedom, presented as glowing lights erupting from inside of a bridal gown.

Runs until May 29

The Einar Jónsson Museum

The museum contains close to 300 artworks including a beautiful garden with 26 bronze casts of the artist's sculptures.

On permanent view

Gallery Bakarí

'Eyefume' By Kristinn Már Pálmason

Using acrylic and ink in his work, Kristinn Már Pálmason has been developing an international symbolic language with both abstract images as well as archetypal and mythological images. Describing his creative working process as an "artistic self-psychoanalysis," Kristinn's mental stage from day to day affects his approach to art and the results.

Runs until May 11

'Oaxaca' by Ásdís Ásgeirsdóttir

Press photographer Ásdís Ásgeirsdóttir travelled to the Mexican city Oaxaca and took a lot of photos under the tutelage of famous photographer Mary Ellen Mark. These photos are now on display at Gallery Bakarí as a part of Ásdís's master's degree

project in journalism.

Runs until May 18

Gallerí Gróttá

'April is the cruellest month' by Tryggvi Þórhallsson

With the title of the exhibition referring to T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land', Tryggvi explores the changing of seasons in his watercolour works.

Runs until May 8

Gallery Tukt

'Exhibition by Students at Breiðholt College'

This selection of works by students is based on the concepts of autonomy and independence, presented in multiple mediums.

Runs until July 7

'Visual Art Student Exhibition'

Students from the Reykjavik School of Visual Art present an exhibit with diverse themes, presented through paintings and drawings of various styles.

Runs until May 9

Hafnarborg

'MEN'

The exhibition focuses on the status of men

at the beginning of the 21st century and how it's changed with women's increased rights and participation in the workforce. On display are works by Curver Thoroddsen, Finnur Arnar Arnarson, Hlynur Hallsson, and Kristinn G. Harðarson.

Runs until May 10

'Cairns' by Jónína Guðnadóttir

This exhibition is artist Jónína Guðnadóttir's attempt to reflect on her youth, growing up in Iceland in the middle of the last century. On display are sculptures and wall works that combine diverse materials such as concrete, glass and ceramics.

Runs until May 10

Héðinsvöllur Playground

Old toys from days gone by will be on exhibit at Héðinsvöllur Playground on Hringbraut. A great way to revisit your childhood, maybe learn something new and make memories with your family.

Runs until Sept 1

Hornið

'Take Two' by Jóhann Vilhjálmsson

Part artist, part musician, and part chef, Jóhann is a true jack-of-all-trades. His mediums are pastels and ink, and he gravitates towards bold, bright colours. His subjects range from people, to landscapes, scenes and more, but all have a surrealist quality in common. One could look at these paintings a hundred times and still find something new.

On permanent view

is Gallery

'Form Regained' by Alexandra Navratil, Erin Shirreff & Lara Viana

The exhibition brings together a selection of works by three artists: Alexandra Navratil, Erin Shirreff and Lara Viana, that build on fragmenting and re-shaping archives and memory. The work investigates issues of reproduction and the layering effects of media from multiple perspectives of personal and public territories. Lapses in time and scale telescope through transposing processes and techniques, and manifest in slide projections, paintings and video.

Runs until May 30

The Icelandic Phallogical Museum

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

On permanent view

Knitting Iceland

Whether you are a beginner or pro, you can come knit at Laugavegur 25, third floor, every Thursday, 14:00 - 18:00.

On permanent view

Kópavogur Art Museum

Gerðarsafn

MA Degree Show

MA graduates of design and fine arts from the Iceland Academy of the Arts will be showcasing their works in a special graduation exhibition.

Runs until May 10

Mokka-Kaffi

'One painting a week' by Sæþór Ásmundsson

Sæþór Ásmundsson started his project 'One painting a week' last year in which he painted one piece of art per week. There are around 40 of the paintings on display.

Runs until June 13



COME MEET THE VIKINGS

The Saga Museum brings the Viking age to life. There you'll walk among some of Iceland's most famous heroes and infamous villains portrayed in their defining moments; the Viking settlement in 874, Leif the Lucky's discovery of America, the founding of the world's first parliament and the epic clan feuds that marked the settlement. **This is as close as you'll ever get to meeting Vikings in the flesh.**



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www.sagamuseum.is

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ART

ONGOING

Museum of Design and Applied Art

'Ámundi' by Ámundi Sigurðsson
Ámundi Sigurðsson has spent the last 30 years working as a graphic designer and creating work across a wide range of mediums.

Runs until May 31

'UN PEU PLUS' by Helga Björnsson
Fashion designer Helga Björnsson has created couture designs in Paris and costumes for Icelandic theaters. Her original drawings and sketches are on display.

Runs until May 31

The National Gallery
'Carnegie Art Award 2014' by A Kassen

Christian Bretton-Meyer, Morten Steen Hebsgaard, Søren Petersen and Tommy Petersen make up the art group, A Kassen. They won third prize in the 2014 Carnegie Art Awards and have toured their work since.

Runs until May 10

'Influential Women Of Icelandic Art'
In honour of women's centennial anniversary of getting the right to vote, this exhibit features various works of art relating to influential women in Iceland.

Runs until May 10

The National Museum of Iceland
'On A Wayless Sea' by Kristinn E. Hrafnsson

An installation by visual artist Kristinn E. Hrafnsson on the history of sailing and navigation. Works by the artist intermingle with items from the museum collection relating to the exhibition's theme.

Runs until May 10

'The Making Of A Nation'

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

On permanent view

'Houses in the town' by Kristinn Guðmundsson

This photography exhibit features pictures of houses from downtown Reykjavík ca. 1875-85 by photographer Kristinn. The photos are meant to show the spirit of the times, and the formation of contemporary Reykjavík.

Runs until May 17

'Where, Who, What?'

In this exhibition, unlabelled works from the archives of the Icelandic Photography Museum is put on display in the hopes that visitors can help identify them.

Runs until May 17

The Old Harbour

Iceland Expo Pavillion

Every day from 10:00 to 22:00, Saga Films projects a film of Icelandic scenery inside their Iceland Expo Pavillion which provides a unique 360 degree movie experience.

On permanent view

Reykjavik Art Museum:

Hafnarhús

'Erró and Art History'

The exhibition provides an insight into the work of the Icelandic painter Erró. He maintains a style that fluctuates between surrealism and pop art, integrating elements of comics and science fiction. This exhibition presents works in which he has borrowed images and fragments of pictures by some of the leading artists in history, such as Picasso and Léger.

Runs until September 27

Kunstschlager Chamber

The art initiative Kunstschlager has moved all of its activities into the upper level of Hafnarhús. This offers visitors the opportunity to walk around, pause and experience the ambiance of Kunstschlager. The space is devoted to audio and video works, two- and three-dimensional pieces, as well as specially-designed Kunstschlager furniture, on which guests can comfortably relax.

Runs until September 30

BA Degree Show in Design, Architecture and Fine Art

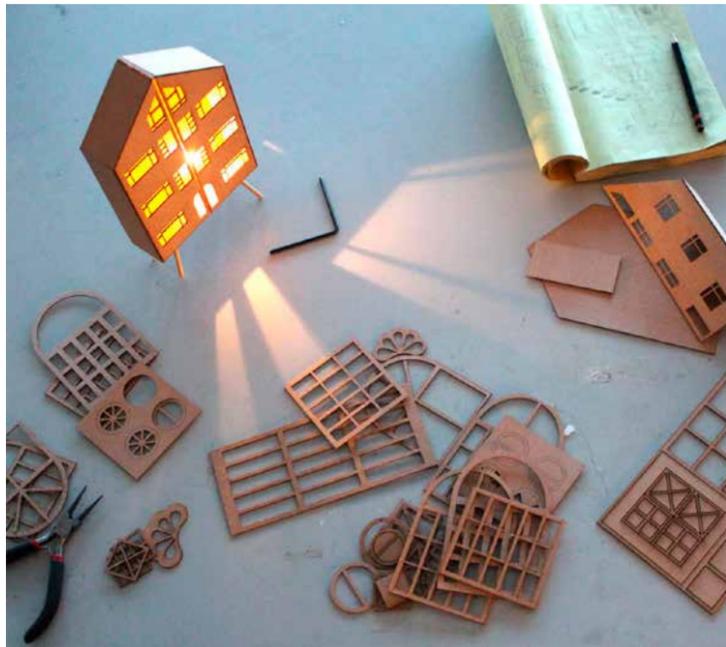
BA graduates of design, architecture and fine arts from the Iceland Academy of the Arts are showcasing their works.

Runs until May 10

Reykjavik Art Museum - Kjarvalsstaðir

'Just Painted 2'

Nýmálað 2 (Just Painted 2) is the second instalment of a large art exhibition. The first instalment, Nýmálað 1, opened in Hafnarhúsið last February. This overview of contemporary paintings features the works of 60 artists. Never before has such an extensive showcasing of Icelandic art taken place.



Find Your Inner Child
'One by eighteen' by Halla Kristín Hannesdóttir and Auður Ösp Guðmundsdóttir

Spark Design Space

Klapparstígur 33 (E5) | until May 31 ☺ 10-18 M-F, 12-16 Sa | Free!

Product designers **Halla Kristín Hannesdóttir** and **Auður Ösp Guðmundsdóttir** took their lead from this year's DesignMarch's theme, which was "Play," and what says "play" better than dollhouses? They have fascinated children and adults alike for hundreds of years; they're places where one's imagination can roam free, create unique worlds and stories, as well as being collectors' items. In our age of technical evolution and digital reality, the old-fashioned dollhouse is both a breath of fresh air and a breeze of nostalgia for simpler times. **RÓG**

Runs until June 6

Reykjavik City Library, Spöng Student Exhibition

Art students of Borgarholtsskóli junior college exhibit their works from the semester. These students have mostly specialised in graphic designs but the exhibition features among other things photography, books, and videos.

Runs until May 30

Reykjavik City Museum - The Settlement Exhibition
Reykjavik 871 +/- 2

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

On permanent view

'Settlement Sagas - Accounts from manuscripts'

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

On permanent view

Reykjavik 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 that showcases the growth of the Reykjavik Harbour.

On permanent view

The Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn

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

On permanent view

The Reykjavik Museum of Photography

'Iceland Defence Force' by Bragi Þór Jósefsson

Bragi Þór exhibits a photo series he took after the US naval base base closed in 2006, showing the abandoned military base amid Icelandic lava fields. Few Icelanders had any experience of life on the base, and in the photographs it is seen abandoned, and unambiguously foreign.

Runs until May 10

'What I See' by Laura Andrés Esteban

Exploring the difference between what is real and what is seen, Spanish multi-media artist Laura Andrés Esteban uses photography and illustrations to communicate her vision and make people smile.

Runs until June 2

'The Workshop' by Bára Kristinsdóttir

A new display is opening in the Cube in the Reykjavik Museum of Photography. It's a combination of photos and video works in which we get to know two elderly men and their nylon coating business. Theirs is a story about old vs. new and tradition vs. progress and how time changes everything.

Runs until June 26

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum
'Interplay' - thinking across sculpture and design

This exhibition focuses on the relationship between the Danish architect Finn Juhl (1912-1989) and the Icelandic sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson in the years of 1940 to 1945. Both were pioneers, each in his field, and both went unexplored paths in their experiments with form and material.

Runs until August 30

SÍM Gallery

'Wonderland II' by Lóa Björk

Lóa Björk uses abstract paintings to represent the forces of nature. With acrylics and watercolour, she explores the movement and metamorphosis of the ever-changing landscape. Lóa is an important figure in the art scene in East Iceland, both as an artist, art teacher and a board member of SAMfélagið, a grass root organisation centring on the creative arts in East Iceland.

Runs until May 26

Spark Design Space

'One by Eighteen' by Halla Kristín Hannesdóttir and Auður Ösp Guðmundsdóttir

Designers Halla Kristín Hannesdóttir and Auður Ösp Guðmundsdóttir have designed dollhouses which will be displayed at Spark Design Space. Dollhouses are worlds of their own where anything can happen and imagination is the only real limit.

Runs until May 31

Wind and Weather Gallery

'Collection/Samansafn' by Ragnhildur Jóhann

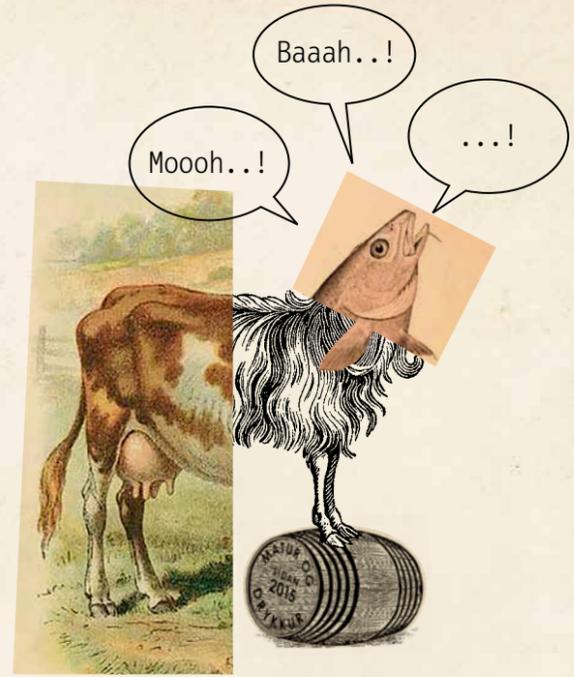
Ragnhildur is both a visual artist and a poet, and much of her work shows her love of both art forms through mix media pieces that make use of pages from old books.

Runs until June 29

Volcano House

The exhibition gives a brief overview of Iceland's geological history and volcanic systems with superb photographs of volcanic eruptions and other magnificent aspects of Icelandic nature.

On permanent view



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FOOD

FOR THE SOUL

Would You Like Donuts With That?

American food chain Dunkin' Donuts
is poised to appear around Iceland



Words John Rogers

Illustration DonutGal

Stepping out onto the main street of most European capitals these days, it would be plain odd not to see a Starbucks or a McDonald's. American food chains have become widespread to the point of ubiquity over the last few decades by offering the popular combination of convenient locations, familiar recipes, standardised quality and cheap prices. Starbucks, once something Europeans only saw in American TV shows, now has 1,527 locations in Europe, and McDonald's has 7,860 restaurants in Europe alone.

But Reykjavík has a noticeable scarcity of international food chains. McDonald's famously canned their sole Icelandic location after the financial crash—Iceland's biggest hamburger chain is the home-grown Hamborgarabúllan, which has a whopping seven locations, just one fewer than KFC. But now, American coffee house Dunkin' Donuts is poised to enter the fray.

Árni Pétur Jónsson, the CEO of 10-11, is the man in charge of Dunkin' Donuts' Icelandic incursion. "I got the news that Dunkin' was looking at Iceland as a potential market in 2013," says Árni. "I got in contact with them and found out they'd been looking for potential partners. We talked and immediately clicked, and so they joined with 10-11. There was a question of feasibility in coming into a small market like Iceland, of course. But after having looked at it, they decided it had potential."

American expats' burning questions answered

Dunkin' Donuts will reportedly open 16 Icelandic branches in total, from a flagship store down to smaller concessions in 10-11 branches. The announcement proved exciting news for donut-loving US expatriates who commented on the news with questions about whether their breakfast menu would be available, and if the various ingredients of their favourites would be imported especially.

"Yes, they can relax!" smiles Árni. "The stand-alone flagship store more

or less has the full menu. If we can find the right location, it'll be a large coffee house with seating and a full menu. In Dunkin' we have branches from 50 square metres to 250 square metres. The smallest is more or less self-service, so some of them will be that size."

Dunkin' Donuts will be using their regular ingredients, and only Fair Trade coffee beans, as they have done since 2004. "The dough will be imported," says Árni. "Some stuff will possibly come from the States, but Dunkin' has factories in Spain and Germany, so some things will come from Europe, too."

Local coffee chains find the competition healthy

The majority of Reykjavík's current coffee house culture is made up of independently owned small businesses, perhaps appealingly to tourists in search of something different from home. Te og Kaffi, with its twelve locations in Iceland, including six in downtown Reykjavík, could soon be surpassed as the country's largest homegrown coffee house chain. Manager Halldór Guðmundsson doesn't seem worried, though.

"There has always a lot of competition in downtown Reykjavík," he says. "We see it as a good thing. It keeps us on our toes, and we have to be ready for anything. First and foremost we think about ourselves and our own business. It's more competition of course, but we just have to be ready, and do what we do, better than ever."

Nevertheless, Halldór was surprised that Dunkin' Donuts would come to Iceland. "I wouldn't have expected a big American chain to look here, as the market is so small," he says. "We've had franchises here in the past, of course. Some work, and some don't. So it's all about who is running the company, that's the most important thing."

Tourists to thank for Dunkin' Donuts?

Iceland's single Taco Bell and its handful of KFCs and Ruby Tuesdays are all outside of 101 Reykjavík, suggesting that they're aimed more at locals than incomers. And yet tourist foot traffic was an important factor for Dunkin' Donuts.

"Tourism made the decision easier for them," says Árni. "It helped a lot. But we did some market research, and of course Dunkin' did as well. Having been selling coffee-to-go, baked goods and light meals at 10-11, we knew a lot about the market, so we are quite well prepared."

With the ball now rolling on the Icelandic Dunkin' Donuts franchise, Árni will be hoping to pick up regulars. "We'll start by opening our flagship," he says, "and then we might open up to two more this year. We'll see how the Icelandic market receives the concept, and go from there."

FOOD

FOR THE SOUL

Mmmm, Forbidden Donut

Our Food Editor reflects on the coming of Dunkin' Donuts



Words Ragnar Egilsson

I love donuts. My favourite donut place is probably Peter Pan in Greenpoint, Brooklyn (google "Peter Pan Bakery: A Documentary Film" to see why. Donuts can lay a better claim to the status of primary all-American pastry tradition than any other pastry that springs to mind. Definitely more than the patriotic apple pie that was so omnipresent in Europe that it was brought to America from three distinct culinary traditions. Speaking of culinary traditions, why shouldn't we import American donuts? We've got Thai folks selling noodles and Turks flinging kebabs—let the Yanks serve their donuts.

So how do I feel about Dunkin' Donuts?

I have yearned to be able to buy a dozen assorted donuts in a pink box since I first saw it on 'The Simpsons'. 'The Simpsons' taught me:

- to question authority,
- to embrace my inner sloth,
- who Darryl Strawberry was, and
- to crave donuts.

How do I feel about American companies coming here?

They've been coming here for ages. We probably got the first one with the American occupying force. The first American chain restaurant would have been KFC in Hafnarfjörður in 1980 (this historical monument is still there, although now it's a combo place with Taco Bell). Pizza Hut was probably second to open in Iceland, sometime in the mid-1980s.

Is it a good thing?

I don't have a say in it—it's basic supply and demand—but personally, I almost always prefer small local operations over international chains, as the quality of the food is higher, the service is often more personal and they can take on character

and charm in a way that a international chain can't compete with.

Occasionally I will prefer an international chain over a local chain (how is Dunkin' Donuts worse than local Starbucks clone chain Te og Kaffi?), and some international chains are better than others. For example, I find Dunkin' massively superior to Starbucks, at least in the States. Because Dunkin' is a moderately-priced no-frills chain that does the job of offering massive containers of regular black coffee with half-and-half and a decent pastry to an army of over-worked, sleep-deprived wage slaves.

Are people going to be happy?

Read any travelogue written after 1703, the year coffee was introduced to Iceland, and you will see that Icelandic history is fuelled by two things: coffee and sugar. Coffee has traditionally been served before, during, and after meals—morning, noon, and night. And no table was complete without a jar of sugar: we drizzle it over blood sausage, turnip mash, pancakes, whatever we get our hands on. Still to this day we are some of the most unrepentant sugar addicts in Europe and attempts to tax our love away were an abysmal failure.

So a joint that serves sweet pastries and coffee should do well here. It's true that the bakery tradition is stronger in Iceland than it is in your average American city and the quality of the baked goods are relatively high here, but I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR 20 FUCKING YEARS FOR A BAKERY TO START SELLING MY PINK BOX WITH A DOZEN ASSORTED DONUTS. Homer Simpson made me a promise. Icelandic bakeries had their chance. They failed. Bring it, Dunkin'.

Do I care?

As you can see, I care about stuff like this way more than I should.

This Month In Food

May 2015

Words Ragnar Egilsson

Iceland's two most popular shawarma places have gone to war. Owners of shawarma joint Ali Baba are pressing charges against the owners of next-door kebab-slingers Mandi. The owners were formerly in business together but have now gone into competition with nothing but a wall separating them.

Despite that, the month's strangest story has to be that local R&B sensation Friðrik Dór and neoclassical composer Ólafur Arnalds are opening a restaurant selling nothing but Belgian french fries. We are still waiting for the punch line.

Jón Pálmar and the rest of the kids at Bar Paloma are testing out a new taco wagon in their backyard. High time that Reykjavík picks up on the bar + taco truck combo, for all of those high times.

Fans of British produce and artisanal kitchenware mourn as Pipar og Salt, Iceland's only place to get Walkers shortbread and whiskey marmalade, closes up shop after 28 years in downtown Reykjavík.

The Yotam Ottolenghi-inspired Bergsson Mathús has branched out from brunching to offer full dinner service with the new Bergsson RE in the ever-popular Grandi neighbourhood.

WeStjford company True West came out with an all-natural, sustainable cold press fish oil called Dropi (www.truewestfjords.is). Is this the first real competition for Lýsi?

Gastropub Public House opens minutes after the Reykjavík Grapevine publishes a pedantic prick's guide to getting a gastropub right (www.publichouse.is/). They seem to have gotten some things right.

Breakfast

Brunch

Lunch

Happy Hour

Dinner

K-Bar is a gastro pub with a Korean, Japanese, Icelandic inspired kitchen and quirky cocktails. We have eight Icelandic craft beers on tap and over 100 types in bottles. Open all day from breakfast to late night snacks. K-Bar is located at Laugavegur 74. Ask your reception how to find us or find us on [facebook.com/kbarreykjavik](https://www.facebook.com/kbarreykjavik)

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FOOD

FOR YOUR MIND BODY AND SOUL



Where The Fish Is King

Restó

Rauðarárstígur 27, 105 Reykjavík

What We Think:

Flavourful, savoury, fresh.

Flavour:

New Scandinavian-French take on good produce.

Ambiance:

Domestic, kind of cosy.

Service:

Relaxed, homely.

Price for 2 (no drinks):

10-14,000 ISK (very moderate).



It is considered fairly common knowledge amongst locals in downtown Reykjavík that the quintessential restaurant for enjoying some of the best fish courses ever prepared in this country was in the cellar of Ostabúðin, a gourmet shop for cheeses and dry meats. During the working week a mysterious genius went to work behind the curtains to prepare a fish course of the day and more—for surprisingly low prices. It was the best deal in town. For 12 years!

As the year 2014 came to a close that mysterious genius decided that it was finally time to go into business on his own. Along with his wife, Ragnheiður Helena Eðvarðsdóttir, chef Jóhann Helgi Jóhannesson opened up a new restaurant, Restó, in the bodily remains of an old steakhouse in the vicinity of central bus station Hlemmur—a part of central

Reykjavík that looks as if it is just about to flourish. Restó could be a part of that success story, as it certainly has the food to claim the part.

Restó offers both lunch and dinner. The former has already garnered attention among foodies in Reykjavík, which comes as no surprise at all. And the prices are ridiculous, with the fish course at 1,700 ISK and the soup at 750 ISK.

My companion and I, however, decided to take full advantage of the dinner menu, both ordering a three-course spread. My companion started off with citrus marinated raw fish with a salad of cucumbers and sautéed seaweed (1,900 ISK). The “fish” in this case, ling, was light, flaky and fresh—perfectly cooked in the citrus juices as a form of ceviche. The cucumber salad was complementary to the fish, a nice palate cleanser contrasting the citrus. The seaweed added crunch, saltiness and nice texture. All in all, it was a very impressive starter. I chose the Fish Soup à la Restó (1,800 ISK) with chili and cognac. There was certainly plenty of fish in the soup, cod and salmon in this case, and it was creamy and flavourful, although I was expecting more heat with “chili” in the dish’s name. A fine soup, not spectacular.

For a main course, my companion, a meat lover, ordered the only mammal on the menu, a garlic and thyme-marinated fillet of lamb with red wine sauce (4,800 ISK). It was served with potatoes fried in butter, and root vegetables, carrots and celeriac. The fillet was perfectly cooked, showing off a lovely maillard-effect on the outside and a lovely medium-rare pink on the inside. The sauce was savoury and of a nice consistency. As far as lamb goes, which is—honestly—not the most original

dish in Iceland, this was spot on.

I went for the chef’s speciality—a sautéed ling with ginger, chili and wild mushroom sauce (3,100 ISK). I must admit, the sound of ginger and chill mixed together with anything other than garlic and soy seemed a bit odd. I was, however, confident that the chef knew what he was doing, and there was not a hint of regret for doing so. To me, this was the standout dish of the night. The fish was beautifully prepared—butter-fried with a slight wheat crust to golden brown perfection, yet flaky on the inside, as it should be. The accompaniments were all spot on—baked savoury root vegetables, a mix of sweet potato/potato mash and a lovely wild mushroom sauce that brought every element together. This dish is recommended to all.

For dessert, my companion had a panna cotta with cherry sauce (1,100 ISK), while I chose figs in balsamic syrup with vanilla cream cheese (1,300 ISK). Both of our desserts were very delicious, although the cream a touch heavy, especially with the figs. The cream cheese was undoubtedly mixed with Icelandic skyr, which was the culprit, for sure.

Make no mistake, my companion and I had a far beyond average meal. The service was good and the wine list is adequate. The standouts, however, are the seafood dishes. This guy in the kitchen simply has no match in his area of expertise. For one of the best seafood experiences in the country, Restó is the place.

✍ BJÖRN TEITSSON
📷 ALISA KALYANOVA



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FOOD

FOR YOUR MIND BODY AND SOUL



An African Affair To Remember

Teni

Skúlagata 17, 101 Reykjavík

What We Think:

Bottle that berbere sauce and replace that funky grocery store feta with some fresh Aybe.

Flavour:

Ethiopian classics.

Ambiance:

Casual.

Service:

Knowledgeable and friendly.

Price for 2 (no drinks):

6-10,000 ISK



I was an Ethiopian food virgin until Teni. Reykjavík may boast of many restaurants serving authentic regional cuisine but true culinary maturity is seldom achieved these days unless your town has an Ethiopian joint. So I suppose we are heading in the right direction.

My partner and I have dined at Teni a few times now. The place, which is run by sisters Liya and Tsiga Behaga, features simple colour schemes without any of that kitschy decor forcefully thrust upon the diner. There is no pre-plated froufrou or bothersome cutlery here. It seems to be all about breaking bread together, literally.

For one of our first experiences, we went for the vegetarian lunch offer, which consists of Misir Wot (red lentils/masoor dal cooked in a spicy berbere base) with an assortment of vegetables, including

Fasolia (green beans, as in string beans, not Icelandic baunir, and carrots sautéed with onions), and Atkilt Wot (cabbage, potatoes and carrots cooked with turmeric) This platter is a good choice to try multiple dishes for 1,990 ISK.

At the heart of Ethiopian cuisine is the berbere spice mix, a blend of sun-dried chilies, ginger, garlic, cardamom, nutmeg, cloves, cumin, coriander and other spices. In his memoir, 'Yes, Chef', Marcus Samuelsson, an Ethiopian-Swedish chef, described berbere as "both masculine and feminine, shouting for attention and whispering at me to come closer. In one sniff it was bright and crisp; in the next, earthy and slow."

The Misir Wot lentils, which were spicy in a way I wasn't prepared for, were cooked perfectly—soft, yielding to pressure, but still with a texture that was not gummy, a sign the chefs know how to cook this underrated, overkilled protein. The vegetables in the Atkilt Wot were fresh, lightly sautéed in turmeric and onions—they didn't need much else to make them shine. Together, they made for a very satisfying meal.

On other occasions, we have tried the Doro Wot (2,990 ISK), a succulent bone-in chicken, slow cooked in a melange of tomatoes, onions and spicy berbere. Familiar yet exotic, this remains a firm favourite of ours. I see it becoming a comfort food favourite for those cold, gloomy days, which we have a lot on the island.

We also tried the Sambusa (1,290 ISK), deep-fried pockets of thin dough stuffed with mildly spiced, fragrant lamb mince. It definitely did not need the salsa sauce that was served alongside. I see myself going back for those meaty morsels. The

beef tartare, Kitbo (3,990 ISK), was a nuanced dish with hand-cut chunks of beef (no sinew or fat), tossed in warm chili powder and clarified butter, served with Aybe (an Ethiopian fresh cottage cheese). The hot clarified butter seems to flash cook the meat ever so slightly. A must try for tartare lovers for a regional variation outside of the French classic version.

All the dishes come with the staple accompaniment, Injera. A fermented teff pancake-crepe with a pronounced sour-dough taste, Injera looks like a dark buckwheat crepe and tastes like, well, Injera. Don't be put off by the sourness, it pairs beautifully with the various accompaniments, soaks up any sauce like a dream, and balances the flavours overall. (Note: The restaurant currently uses a blend of grains with teff, and plans to go all-teff shortly, which is good news for those with Celiac!).

It is heartening to see the presence of international cuisine in Reykjavík. And from what I can tell, Teni isn't really toning things down to suit the local palate, which is always a good thing when offering authenticity. The restaurant has 20% off menu items during weekday lunches. They also offer an Ethiopian coffee service, which we are told is not to be missed. The service is very good and thoughtful touches like the warm towels after the meal are little details that one takes home. Portions are big, so bring an appetite or a friend or two. Grab a table at Teni, and you will discover a whole new world of flavours, and culture, all on one plate.

✍ SHRUTHI BASAPPA
📷 ALÍSA KALYANOVA



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VÍKING



REYKJAVÍK ARTS FESTIVAL SPECIAL

Reykjavík

Goes Art

Words by John Rogers
Photo by Guerrilla Girls

Much like the arrival of the golden-feathered plover, the annual Reykjavík Arts Festival is a welcome sign that spring is finally here. Since 1970, the festival has offered Reykjavík's populace an excuse to step out into the light for a month of multitudinous open-air performances, exhibition openings, dance productions and cross-disciplinary art events, hosted all around the city.

But as with any such urban festival, if you blink, you could miss it. With that in mind, we've created the guide that you're holding in your hands, in order to flag some must-see events and to look a little deeper into the festival's programme.

In the following pages we talk to Hanna Styrnisdóttir, the artistic director of the festival, about this year's focus subject, namely the work of women, and the conjoined issues of censorship and the struggle for rights. As Iceland reaches the centenary of the women's vote, Hanna has some fascinating things to say about the troubling realities that lie beneath Iceland's ostensibly world-leading record on gender equality, particularly in the arts.

We also talk to some of the people be-

hind this year's major productions. From the attention-grabbing feminist collective Guerrilla Girls, to works from the Iceland Dance Company and aerial dance troupe BANDALOOP, to the groundbreaking gender-bending opera Magnus María, and more—there's a lot here to get excited about.

Finally, we got in touch with some of the women who make Reykjavík's arts scene tick to hear their ground-level experience of the issues at hand, and to talk about what the Reykjavík Arts Festival means for the city's cultural life.

So please, get stuck into the following pages, head out to as many events as you can, and most of all, have a happy festival!

The Change We Promised Ourselves

The 2015 Reykjavik Art Festival looks at gender, censorship and rights struggle in the arts

Words by John Rogers
Photo by Eyþór Árnason



Sitting in the Reykjavík Arts Festival's sunny downtown white-cube offices, Hanna Styrmissdóttir, the festival's artistic director, is in a relaxed and confident mood. The 2015 festival is bearing down, and she's recounting a story from an interview earlier in the day.

"I got a surprising question from a UK-based journalist," Hanna says. "She asked whether I was afraid that this year's theme—in particular, focusing on the work of women—would affect our box office. She said, women will go to films directed by women, whereas men generally won't, while both women and men will go to male-directed films."

She pauses, frowning expressively and letting the question hang in the air. "And I have to say, I have no idea why that might be," she continues. "It is baffling. My answer to the journalist was no—I didn't think about that at all. It hadn't even occurred to me that the excellent work of women that we're presenting this year would affect our box office."

This festival's theme—of gender, censorship and rights struggle in the arts—has been on Hanna's mind since she first took over the role. She has a long-standing interest in both art by women, and the surrounding issues—two facets that touched on the feminist performance art of the 60s and 70s.

"That work was very radical in a way we don't see now," she explains. "We don't really see that radicalism from women artists here, or in Icelandic art in general, for that matter. It's understandable in a way, because it's such a small society—there's not much distance between people. Perhaps in bigger countries you need to be more radical to make your voice heard."

Beneath the gender stats

The year 2015 marks the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in Iceland, but while today's Iceland regularly tops international charts on quality of life for women, a closer look reveals a different picture than the stats might suggest. From company boardrooms, to the number of women in Parliament, to equal pay or opportunities in the arts, the situation in Iceland is still a long way off gender parity.

"There's probably more equality in Iceland than in lots of other parts of the world," says Hanna. "But looking at the

statistics, things are not what they seem here. Looking at the festival from 1970-2012, we found that writing is the only discipline in which women are in the majority—55% of authors presented have been women. In the visual arts the ratio is 30/70; in world and pop music solo artists, the ratio is 40/60. And in music groups, it was just 7/93."

It's a trend that continues throughout art organisations in Iceland, both historically and in the modern day.

And despite the now familiar and widely accepted idea of a "hidden history" of female art, it's surprising to find that even in these supposedly enlightened times, the problem is ongoing.

"After our festival, we started to look at other organisations," says Hanna. "This included museum acquisitions, which are very important with regards to creating a history of our times. Over the last three years, major artworks by women have simply not been collected to the same extent as those by men. There are many modest pieces entering collections, but I question whether the acquisitions over the last few years really reflect the significant role of women on the Icelandic art scene."

[censored]

The festival's programme, as well as simply presenting plenty of new work by female artists, will present a range of work that explores the connected issues of censorship and rights struggles in general. The self-styled "conscience of the art world," The Guerilla Girls, will present a new billboard work, possibly riffing on the subject of museum collections like their famous meme that asked, "Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum? Only 5% of the artists in the Modern Art section are women, but 85% of the nudes are female." A new opera called 'Magnus-Maria' tells

the 300-year-old story of a woman who cross-dressed to be able to progress as a professional musician, with dramatic consequences.

"Then there's 'Peter Grimes' by Benjamin Britten," says Hanna, "which has not been performed in Iceland before. Like most of Benjamin's opera work, the story tells us what he was going through. It's the story of an outcast. He was gay, and until 1967 homosexuality was illegal in Britain and punishable by law. When you start looking at the programme, you start realising these things are connected."

"Knowing that pursuing your dreams, whatever they may be, is a viable option—that you can be an artist and be judged on your work and not on your gender—that's an extremely important place to reach. And I don't think we have yet."

There's also an exhibition by Dorothy Iannone, an American artist who spent the last 30 years in Europe, and has been censored in various ways since 1959. "Many of Dorothy's paintings are very explicit," says Hanna, "with a strong focus on female sexuality. It's only in the last five to ten years that there

is real interest in her work, and people are prepared to discuss it or show it, and really look at the importance of it."

The long haul

It can seem disheartening to learn that the actuality of gender equality is still so far behind the rhetoric of the day. Even with equal pay laws passed in the wake of the famous 1975 "Women's Day Off" protest, during which 20,000 women went on strike from homes and workplaces, pay parity is still estimated by recent studies at around 80%.

"It's one thing to make a decision to put into law that we want to be equal, but it's another thing to actually do something about it," says Hanna. "Unless it happens through concentrated and fully aware effort to bring about 'this change that we promised ourselves.' Looking at people between fifteen and thirty in Iceland, I feel like girls have actually lost ground in Iceland. It's like there's been an anti-feminist wave, as if feminism is something bad. But feminism is what brought us here—without it I would not be sitting at this table, and that is absolutely clear. So why has feminism become perceived as aggressive and nega-

tive, when it's really about how we fulfil this promise we made to ourselves—to live in an equal society?"

But as recent events such as Free The Nipple and the online spat between feminist rap collective Reykjavíkurdætur and the (largely white/male) Icelandic hip-hop establishment have proven, feminism is very much a going concern in Iceland's youth culture.

"It's true," says Hanna. "Even in the last five years, it feels that the tide of anti-feminism is being turned. History tells us that change doesn't always move in positive directions and that ground that has been won can also be lost. So it's a very important time to be vocal about what kind of world we want to live in."

Which begs the question: should art institutions have gender quotas, to redress the balance? "Well, in the end it's about the work, always," says Hanna, philosophically. "But if we live in a society that claims to be equal, we need to make sure that making work, showing work, getting work out there is a viable option for everyone."

Good conduct

One recent touchstone for feminists in the arts is the emergence of an increasing number of female conductors into a traditionally male-dominated field.

"There have been a lot of articles in UK newspapers about women conductors lately," says Hanna. "In one of them, Barbara Hannigan, a female conductor and soprano, said she'd been conducting on television, and her friend was watching with her young daughter. The daughter said, 'Mom, I didn't even know women were allowed to conduct!'"

The story resonated with Hanna personally. "It was actually only this March when I saw a woman conduct the Iceland Symphony Orchestra for the first time," she recalls. "I remember the feeling. It was a realisation that, yes, this is possible. It's not this far-off genius activity, but it's also for people that I identify with, who are like me. Something happened then—I realised there was an attitude there that this was so extraordinary that it was beyond the means of mere females. And now, that feeling is completely changed. Knowing that pursuing your dreams, whatever they may be, is a viable option—that you can be an artist and be judged on your work and not on your gender—that's an extremely important place to reach. And I don't think we have yet."

Reykjavik Arts Festival ESSENTIAL PICKS

Words by John Rogers

As well as the events highlighted in our interviews, we thought we'd flag a few events that leapt out of this year's festival programme. From a Benjamin Britten opera to a gorilla-masked performance troupe, make sure you head along to these (note: some of these events are ticketed, so take a look at artfest.is for more info).



Dorothy Iannone

May 13, 18:00 (exhibition opening)
Gamma Gallery, Garðastræti 37

A presentation of the oft-censored American artist Dorothy Iannone (b. 1933), who champions free love and female sexual autonomy in her paintings and drawings. Iannone lived in Iceland in the 60s and 70s, and is a famous food lover—recipes from her cookbook will be made in the show throughout the festival period. Runs May 14-August 6.



Ruri "Fount – Vocal VII"

May 16, 16:00
Harpa, Norðurljós

Esteemed Icelandic sound artist Ruri combines with the Nýló Choir to create a large-scale, site-specific artwork that encompasses installation, video, music, movement, text and voices.



'Peter Grimes'

May 22, 19:30
Harpa, Eldborg

Benjamin Britten's tragi-comic tale of outsiderism and exclusion is brought to Iceland's shores for the first time by the Reykjavík Symphony Orchestra and the Reykjavík Opera. Conducted by Daniel Bjarnason.



Bára Gísladóttir

May 23, 21:00
Mengi

Bára Gísladóttir, a young Icelandic cellist currently studying composition in Milan, will present six works at Mengi with the help of the Náttý pop-up chamber ensemble.

The Right Gender

Composer Karólína Eiríksdóttir on making 'Magnus-Maria'

Words by Nathan Hall
Photo from Magnus-Maria



Magnus Maria June 3 at 19:30 Þjóðleikhúsið

'Magnus-Maria', a progressive new opera from Icelandic composer Karólína Eiríksdóttir and Swedish director Suzanne Osten, will make its Iceland debut at the Reykjavík Arts Festival. The opera tells the true story of Swedish-born Maria Johansdotter, who was born female but lived much of her life as Magnus Johansson in order to be an independent person and a musician in the early 1700s. Though set in the 18th century, the opera could not seem timelier, given today's resurgent interest in gender rights issues throughout the world, and emphasis on pursuits of freedom of expression for all.

The idea for 'Magnus-Maria' came about from a group of creatives from the Åland Islands, who asked the composer if she would like to write an opera on the subject. Somehow by the first meeting, all the other pieces for a production fell into place—the director, the designers, the dramaturg. Karólína then went about setting the libretto to music. Tracing the musician's life through personal and professional scenes, erotic intrigue, and

inquisition, the text of the opera reads like a gripping thriller. When asked by a judge if she is a woman or a man, Magnus Maria answers "Both, however more of a man." The audience will likely find it comforting to know that Magnus Maria's life doesn't end in complete and gruesome tragedy like that of many operas' leading characters. Nevertheless, Karólína says that the intensity and diversity of emotional content of the

scenes was both challenging and inspiring; she scored the piece for a small ensemble of string players and percussion to underscore and deepen the drama on stage.

Karólína's music is known for its avant-garde vocabulary. Her chamber music and orchestral pieces include thorny dissonances that contrast with moments of refined and beautiful clarity. This is not the accessible chamber pop of some contemporary Icelandic musicians. The composer is reluctant to describe her own musical style too much, preferring to leave audiences to judge for themselves. "I think every listener has to find his or her own way to connect to it," she says. Yet every project makes Karólína evaluate her musical approach. "Since Magnus Maria was a folk musician, I did make myself familiar with folk music from the area and used a folk tune in one scene. There is also a reference to church music, and in one place I could not resist quoting Mozart.

Other than that this is just my own musical language, which tries to adapt to the story as it goes along."

The genre of opera goes back centuries, stemming from long, historical productions with elaborate costumes and fixed forms like arias and spoken recitative. Opera was also a world dominated by men. But modern operas, like all musical styles, are evolving. Karólína enjoys the chance to explore a genre she loves, while also breaking away from tradition and showing contemporary significance. "Magnus-Maria' is about a subject which is relevant today," Karólína says. "It is about human rights, it is about the right to be yourself, choose your own gender, choose your own line of work. It is about getting free from the ideas and roles society expects from you. It also tells you that human nature was just the same three hundred years ago as it is today. I think opera can be a very important genre today and have just as important weight as other art forms. All art

forms have to evolve and change if they are to have any meaning for their time."

Magnus Maria lived during a time when it was illegal to live a life dressed as the opposite gender, let alone flirt with women and perform music. In today's Iceland, we can hardly imagine that kind of moral opposition. Still, struggles remain. Magnus Maria may not have intended to be a role model or have even known that his/her life would be passed down through history, but lucky for us we can witness this story. Through Karólína Eiríksdóttir's musical lens, 'Magnus-Maria' is as much a production about "the right gender" as it is about the unwavering human spirit.



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Reykjavík Arts Festival Programme

FYRRI HLUTI / PART I

Wednesday 13 May

Guerrilla Girls
@ East wall of The Customs house, Tryggvagata 19

BANDALOOOP
@ Ingólfstorg, Aðalstræti 6
5:30 PM

Dorothy Iannone
@ Gallery GAMMA
6:00 PM opening

Svartar Fjaðrir
Black Feathers
@ National Theatre of Iceland
7:30 PM premiere

Thursday 14 May

Frenjur og fórnarlömb
The Vixen and the Victim
@ ASÍ Art Museum
noon opening

Furðuveröld Lísu
OPERATION ALICE
@ Einar Jónsson Museum
1:00 PM opening

Björg, sólskin, hetjur, himinn, haf og fuglar
Cliffs, Sunshine, Heroes, Sky, Sea and Birds
@ Tveir Hrafnar
1:00 PM opening

Alexandra Navratil
@ Mengi
2:00 PM opening

There are two in a couple
@ Harbinger
2:00 PM opening and performance

Holning / Physique
@ Týsgallerí
2:00 PM opening

Í tíma og ótíma
Time in & Time out
@ Þingholtsstæti 27, 2nd floor
3:00 PM opening

100 Kápur ...
Icelandic Suffragettes
@ Frakkastígur 9,
3:00 PM opening

Misty Rain
@ Hverfisgallerí
4:00 PM opening

Vorverk / Spring Task
@ Living Art Museum
6:00 PM opening

Endatafl
Endgame
@ Tjarnarbíó
8:00 PM special Festival performance

Friday 15 May

Caregivers
@ Bíó Paradís
5:00 & 5:30 PM

Suspension of Disbelief
@ Bíó Paradís
6:00 & 6:30 PM

Svartar Fjaðrir
Black Feathers
@ National Theatre of Iceland
7:30 PM

Birting
Illumination
@ Kópavogur Art Museum
8:00 PM opening & performance

Dórion: vídeó- og tónlistargjörningur
Dorion: video and music performance
@ Kópavogur Church
9:00 PM

Saturday 16 May

OG
AND
@ Living Art Museum
1:00 PM performance

GEYMAR
CONTAINERS
Árnesinga
2:00 PM opening

Dórion: vídeó- og tónlistargjörningur
Dorion: video and music performance
@ Kópavogur Church
4:00 PM

Verksummerki
Traces of Life
@ Reykjavík Museum of Photography
5:00 PM opening

Lindur – Vocal VII
Fount – Vocal VII
@ Harpa, Norðurljós
6:00 PM

Aisha Orzabayeva
@ Mengi
9:00 PM

Sunday 17 May

Nýjabrum í stofunni
Novelty in the Living Room
@ Óðinsgata 7
4:00 PM

Endatafl
Endgame
@ Tjarnarbíó
8:00 PM special Festival performance

Tuesday 19 May

BLÆÐI: obsidian pieces
@ Reykjavík City Theatre
8:00 PM premiere

Wednesday 20 May

Svartar Fjaðrir
Black Feathers
@ National Theatre of Iceland
7:30 PM

Thursday 21 May

Áfangar
@ Reykjavík Art Museum, Hafnarhús
5:00 PM opening

Friday 22 May

Hvirfill
Swirl
@ Týsgallerí
5:00 PM opening

SAGA
@ National Gallery of Iceland
6:00 PM opening

Peter Grimes
@ Harpa, Eldborg
7:30 PM

Saturday 23 May

Bára Gísladóttir
@ Mengi
9:00 PM

Sunday 24 May

Ólík þök
Different Rooftops
@ Library of Water, Stykkishólmur
8:00 PM

Monday 25 May

BLÆÐI: obsidian pieces
@ Reykjavík City Theatre
8:00 PM

Tuesday 26 May

Ingram
@ Hallgrímskirkja Church
noon

Ósómalið eftir Þorvald Þorsteinsson
Songs of Discontent by Þorvaldur Þorsteinsson
@ Gamla Bíó
8:00 PM

Wednesday 27 May

Ingram
@ Hallgrímskirkja Church
noon

Hávamál
@ Tjarnarbíó
8:00 PM frumsýning premiere

Thursday 28 May

BLÆÐI: obsidian pieces
@ Reykjavík City Theatre
8:00 PM

Friday 29 May

Solid Hologram
@ Harpa, Norðurljós
8:00 PM

Saturday 30 May

Mannlegt landslag
Human Landscape
@ Akureyri Art Museum, Ketilhús
4:00 PM performance

Furðuveröld Lísu
OPERATION ALICE
@ Einar Jónsson Museum
5:00 PM concert

Svartar Fjaðrir
Black Feathers
@ National Theatre of Iceland
7:30 PM

Both Sitting Duet & Body Not Fit For Purpose – Reykjavík Dance Festival
@ Tjarnarbíó
8:00 PM

Maya Dunietz
@ Mengi
9:00 PM

Sunday 31 May

Lokkur
Lock
@ Árbær Open Air Museum
2:00 & 4:00 PM performance

Hávamál
@ Tjarnarbíó
4:00 PM

Svartar Fjaðrir
Black Feathers
@ National Theatre of Iceland
7:30 PM

Og þökk sé margri morgunbjartri svípstund
And Thanks to Countless Instants, Lit by Morning
@ Harpa, Norðurljós
8:00 PM

Hávamál
@ Tjarnarbíó
8:00 PM

Tuesday 2 June

Shantala Shivalingappa
@ Reykjavík City Theatre
8:00 PM

Wednesday 3 June

MagnusMaria
@ National Theatre of Iceland
8:00 PM

Thursday 4 June

Jan Lundgren Trio
@ Harpa, Silfurberg
8:00 PM

Saturday 6 June

Guerrilla Girls
@ Bíó Paradís
2:00 – 4:00 PM presentation

Gyða Valtýsdóttir
@ Mengi
9:00 PM

Saturday 7 June

Lokkur
Lock
@ Árbær Open Air Museum
2:00 & 4:00 PM performance

Julia Migenes
@ Harpa, Eldborg
8:00 PM



BANDALOOOP
@ Ingólfstorg, Aðalstræti 6 – 13 May, 5:30 PM



Novelty in the Living Room – 4 new works by 3 Icelandic composers
@ Óðinsgata 7 – 17 May, 4:00 PM – KR. 3.900



BLÆÐI: obsidian pieces
@ Reykjavík City Theatre – 3 performances – KR. 4.500



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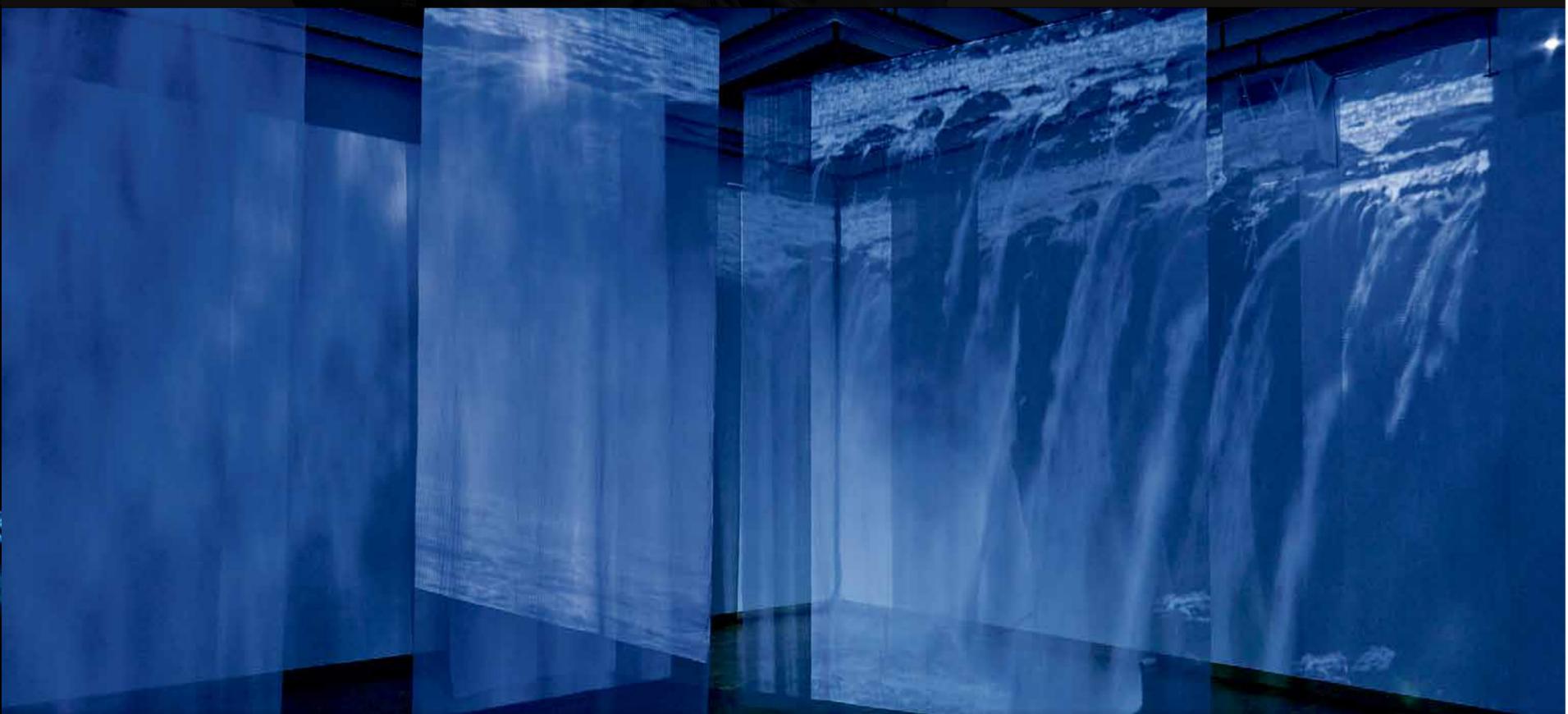


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Fount – Vocal VII – A new performance by Rúrí
@ Harpa, Norðurljós – 16 May, 6:00 PM – KR. 2.900

How Many Gorillas Does It Take To Change A Light Bulb In A Museum?

Guerrilla Girls cast light on inequality and corruption in the art world

Words by RX Beckett
Photos by Guerrilla Girls

Frida Kahlo and Käthe Kollwitz want to make sure I can't see them. The disembodied voices of the women who assume these dead artists' names repeatedly confirm that I can only see the angry gorilla face in their Skype window. No one knows the real identities of the people who make up Guerrilla Girls, except the other sixty women who have been in and out of the group over the past thirty years, and maybe a couple of their moms. While their anonymity has drawn much attention to the group, even more attention is due to their bluntly sardonic approach to subverting the practices of the art world, primarily the underrepresentation of women and artists of colour in major museums and galleries. Through their tough, outrageous and humorous approach, the group have more recently broadened their targets to such issues as economic inequality and corruption.

I understand you're coming right from an event. What did you have happening?

Frida: We did an unannounced projection on the Whitney Museum last night, which was a little letter explaining that we really understand that art is so expensive and why people who buy art can't pay their employees living wages. We have this new campaign about the super-rich who control a lot of art in the United States, both by buying it and by influencing museums because they sit on the boards and donate money.

Was the goal to bring to light and criticise the fact that they can build these expensive new buildings but not pay their interns, for example?

Frida: All the employees, really. At least in the United States, art has become a luxury commodity. It's become this investment tool of the top 1% of the 1% and they present it to us as "our culture." We want to ask some big questions about that. Isn't there a problem with that?

Kathe: We're talking about the incredible income inequality in the United States where the rich get richer and the middle class is left way behind. This is something everyone here is concerned about but not enough people are rising up to do something about it.

Frida: Especially in the art world. Everyone wants to think that they're progressive, but they play into this system because it's the system of the

economy under which they live.

That economic discrepancy is very real for artists since the vast majority of them live right on or under the poverty line, but there's this small elite that make huge amounts of money. Meanwhile it seems like funding for the arts is getting slashed across the board.

Kathe: We don't really have much funding in the US now for artists. But the world of artists is great. Artists will always make their work, luckily. We'd have no culture otherwise. The art world right now is just really problematic and it basically sucks. In the US most artists have always had some kind of day job. Now the real problem is that not only are artists in that situation but people working everywhere are in that situation, including all the people who work in areas of culture. They're not getting paid enough to have a decent life.

Frida: We were involved in a demonstration at the Guggenheim Museum on Friday about the dead-bondage under which the labourers in Abu Dhabi are working on the new branch of the Guggenheim in the Emirates. There are lots of deceptive labour practices under which these people are building this museum. And in the process of protesting here in New York we discovered that the guards at the museum are paid as little as ten dollars an hour, which is poverty. That is to protect precious, priceless works of art. It is scandalous that there is this triangulated system where some people at the top have so much and so many people at the bottom have nothing.



Guerrilla Girls

June 6, 14:00

Bío Paradís

www.listahatid.is



You've both been in the group since the beginning and you say that things are hugely problematic in the art world now. How does it compare to when you first began?

Kathe: The system is always changing and we're always trying to deepen our critique of it. In terms of galleries and museums, they are now, at least at the entry level, showing more women and artists of colour... But! It's not that much. Many if not most museums of modern and contemporary art still have less than 10% women in their collection and it's the rare museum that has 30%, and it never really goes above that. The museums that have 30% have really been trying to do better.

Frida: There is also the issue of tokenism. When you show one or two women artists or one or two artists of colour and think the problem is taken care of, isn't that just as bad as exclusion in the first place?

Kathe: Cultural institutions have to cast a wider net because we want museums to contain the real story of culture today. If they're missing whole segments of the population in every country then they don't have the real story. The artists are all out there. They need to be collected, they need to be appreciated and they need to be able to get on with their work and have it preserved for the future.

How did the term "guerrilla" come into creating that approach and what significance does it have now?

Frida: The art world is such a clubby little well-mannered upper-class place. We decided we wanted to be guerrilla, free-

dom fighters, because it's so tantalizing to make the art world imagine that there were guerrilla fighters in their midst. We wanted to team it up with "girls" not only because it sounds so great, but also we wanted to reclaim that word that had so long been used to belittle women. Now the gorilla mask is another layer on top of that. We were trying to find a disguise because guerrillas are always anonymous, and we were really bad spellers! One of our early members spelled "guerrilla" as "gorilla" and we said "wouldn't that be interesting?"

What have been some of the advantages and drawbacks of concealing your identities?

Frida: An advantage is that we can speak our mind without fear of reprisal. Put a gorilla mask on and see what it does to you. You'd be surprised what comes out of your mouth when your identity is protected. It's also really good because we can depersonalise the issue. The issues are not about what we do and don't have in our real lives. We are speaking for a condition. One disadvantage is going to an opening as yourself, and someone asks you what you've been doing and you just say, "Oh, I've been really busy!" "Doing what?" "Oh, a lot. Stuff." (Both laugh)

Have there been any specific actions you've taken over the course of the 30 years that have stood out to you as particularly successful or effective for questioning the system?

Kathe: I would say that, without question, the work of ours that has changed the most minds is our poster "Do women have to be naked to get into the Met Mu-

seum?" We update it every so often and the statistics are still bad but what I think is great about that is that if you actually look at that poster and you read it, enjoy it and think about it, you can never go into a museum the same way again. You have to look at what's on the walls, who's on the floor and who is there and who is not there. In a way, the Guerrilla Girls function as an artist, even though we're different people all the time, but in a way that [billboard] is kind of the essence of what we wish we did every time. It's a game-changing piece of work.

On your site there's a recent version of it, targeting the ratio of female-to-male nudity in music videos. Was there a reason for shifting the focus to that medium?

Frida: Well (chuckles), we were invited by Pharrell Williams to be in an exhibition that he curated at a very fancy gallery in Paris and I suspect it was because his "Blurred Lines" video got a lot of trashing from feminists and women all over the world. It was a problematic invitation so we decided the only way we could accept it was if we were critical of the gallery and also of the music video business. That's when we got the idea to recycle that and ask the question, "Do women have to get naked to be in music videos while 99% of the men are fully dressed?" The female figure that we plastered over it was actually from "Blurred Lines." Anyway, we ended up declining the invitation. We actually didn't ever hear anything back from Pharrell, did we?

From The Blue Lagoon To "Black Marrow"

Choreographer Damien Jalet on making 'BLÆDI: obsidian pieces'

Words by Anna Manning
Photo by Anna Manning



BLÆDI

May 19, 25, 28 at 20:00

Borgarleikhúsið

This month, Iceland Dance Company will present 'BLÆDI: obsidian pieces' as part of the Reykjavík Arts Festival. The show is a combination of four works by Belgian choreographer Damien Jalet, conceived both independently and with the help of collaborating choreographers Erna Ómarsdóttir and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui.

Damien has done a lot of work in France, Belgium, Australia and Iceland, both as a dancer and choreographer. Much of his work is done in collaboration with other choreographers, as well as with visual artists and musicians.

As he switched gears from dancer to choreographer he started collaborating with different artists, but mainly Erna Ómarsdóttir, now the artistic director of Iceland Dance Company. "Immediately when we met each other there was a very organic artistic fusion," he says about working with Erna.

"Transaquania" and onwards

Together, Damien and Erna created two sequential works entitled "Transaquania – Out of the Blue" and "Black Marrow," the latter of which is set to be the headlining piece for 'BLÆDI: obsidian pieces'.

"Transaquania" premiered in 2009, marking arguably one of the most significant events in Icelandic contemporary dance. During the performance, both the dancers and audience were immersed in the Blue Lagoon.

"It was about creating a kind of mythology for the place," explains

Damien, describing how Iceland is full of stories connected to the landscape, but as the Blue Lagoon is a recent man-made body of water, it has no such mythology. With "Transaquania," they attempted to create one by making the water a representation of the cradle of life out of which civilisation rises.

The motivation behind "Transaquania" is characteristic of much of Damien's work. "Lately I've been really interested in combining this cultural aspect of dance to its function as contemporary ritual," he tells me. Indeed, there is something distinctly ritualistic about his choreography—not in a 'Rite of Spring'-esque sacrifice type of way, but rather there is something very raw and primal about his pieces.

As the piece was very well received in Iceland, Damien and Erna went on to Australia to create "Black Marrow" with the opposite concept on the opposite side of the Earth. Damien explains that Australia was the ideal choice because it is similar to Iceland in terms of treacherous nature and sparsely populated interiors, but is also the opposite when it comes to climate and the age of the landmass.

Whereas "Transaquania" is about what came before civilisation, "Black Marrow" is about the decay of it. So, in the way that the waters of the Blue

Lagoon became the cradle of life for the first dance, he and Erna were interested in finding a new liquid to signify the apocalypse in the second. They decided on oil, as it has an apocalyptic feel. Damien goes on to tell me that they were interested in how the organic liquid is created from the remains of ancient life, how it spurred the industrial revolution and thereby rapid population growth, and how it radically changed our interaction with the environment.

A crude oil apocalypse was a particularly thought-provoking topic in Australia because of the aboriginal belief that the gods are in the landscape. "They believe that if you dig a mine to extract things you basically create a little apocalypse, or even the end of the world itself—the end of their world," Damien explains.

He and Erna wanted to portray a sense of addiction with a strong connection to primal rites. The piece was constructed in a way that Damien calls "toxic and suffocating," with repetitive movements and the impression of an animalistic, transformative state. It was meant to imply that the human body is somehow made of oil, and will one day become the oil of civilisations in the distant future. Like with the Blue Lagoon, the aim was to create a mythological story, this time about oil.

Damien tells me that the piece is about the dancer being constantly transformed, rather than a patronising narrative about fossil fuels. "Some people consider oil like the balm of God, and other people consider it like the shit of the devil, and I think it's both," he says.

Six years later...

This month, "Black Marrow" will be performed in Iceland for the first time. "We did this piece six years ago, and we were always dreaming to bring it here," says Damien. He thinks it will be especially interesting for those who saw "Transaquania" to see the how the two pieces are both very similar and radically different.

He tells me that when Erna became the artistic director of Iceland Dance Company she called to ask if he wanted to come and readapt "Black Marrow" to show in Iceland. They have diverged from the original piece in a few ways, but were careful to remain true to their initial impulses. The biggest difference is that rather than having two theatrical roles played by actors, they have recast the piece for eight dancers, giving it a more physical emphasis.

"We wanted to be careful in 'Black Marrow' to keep the essence of why we created it originally," says Damien, describing how it is difficult to resist the tendency to change and update old works, rather than to adapt them for a new environment. At the same time, as Damien puts it, it shouldn't look like the dancers are wearing someone else's clothes.

Additionally, Erna asked him to present three other short works. First, there will be a trio called "Les Médusés," originally performed in the courtyard of the Louvre Museum, where dancers are constantly being frozen into statues as if petrified by Medusa's gaze. The second two are from 'Babel(words)', a collaboration Damien did with Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui: one is a visceral and animalistic

duet about the primal differentiation between men and women, and the other is a repetitive and spiritual piece inspired by the Sufi ritual of dhikr.

Unfortunately, Damien had already committed to a residency programme in Japan before Erna approached him about 'BLÆDI: obsidian pieces', so he is missing the last four weeks of rehearsals before the premiere. However, he indicates no anxieties about leaving before opening night, and tells me the whole show would be blocked for the stage before he leaves—an astounding feat, considering it is not uncommon for choreographers to continue tweaking their work up until the day before opening. "But I feel terrible," he adds, looking disappointed, "I'm not going to see the show."

'Obsidian Pieces'

Damien tells me he chose the title 'Obsidian Pieces' because like the stone—commonly found in Iceland—the pieces are "dark and reflective." This is certainly true, but I would add that they are also entertaining and accessible. Rather than making modern dance even more difficult to appreciate by adding obscure motivations and conceptions on top of an art form not known for widespread popularity, Damien's work tells a story that can be enjoyed by both the life-long dance enthusiast and his reluctant date.

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