

The REYKJAVÍK  GRAPEVINE



Also in this issue:

Being Bárá

Meet the #KlausturFökk whistleblower

Art's Leading Man

Ragnar Kjartansson's latest theatrical intervention

Glacial Secrets

M. Jackson's feminist glaciology

R.I.P. Hverfisgata 12

Systir are doing it for themselves

Plus: 11 pages of glaciers!

& much more

ICELAND THAWS

ICELAND'S GLACIERS ARE MELTING.

WHAT DOES DEGLACIATION

MEAN FOR ICELANDERS,

AND CAN ANYTHING BE DONE?



ON THE COVER:
Sólheimajökull, a rapidly melting glacier tongue of Mýrdalsjökull in south Iceland

COVER PHOTO BY:
Timothée Lambrecq

STORY BY:
John Rogers

ABOUT THE PICTURE:
We sought a different angle from the norm for our glacier issue cover. Rather than depicting the glaciers as strong, proud and towering, Timothée went for a visual vocabulary to match words like 'fragile' and 'diminishing,' resulting in this striking underwater shot.

First



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Sólheimajökull currently recedes by up to and over 100m annually

The Third World War Is Now

EDITORIAL



of disappearing by 2170. Some—like Okjökull—have already melted away. My grandchildren will grow up on a completely different island than I did. They will never feel the mystical power of the glaciers. They will not have the same fearful respect for them, like myself and my forefathers. They will be the last generation, for the foreseeable future, to step on a glacier.

But they will live to see more volcanic eruptions than my generation will ever see. They will have a less plentiful water supply than us. Their prospects of living will not be as free or as

optimistic as ours, when it comes to the natural environment. The sun will be stronger. The ocean will be higher. The storms will be devastating.

Perhaps, the year 2170 seems far in the future for some. It's 151 year until then. But keep in mind that 150 years ago in the year 1869, Mohandas Gandhi was born. His ideas still echo through our times and are more relevant today than ever before.

Winston Churchill was born 145 years ago. The same man that had a significant role in saving Europe from the devastation of the Nazis in the 1940s. The human race promised afterwards that nothing like this could ever happen again.

But here we are, on the brink of the third world war, still debating if global warming is real or

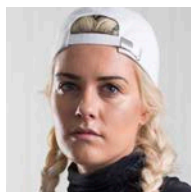
not. We are too preoccupied with the idea of war as an exchange of fire to understand that this time the enemy is climate change. Unlike other wars, this foe is not trying to gain land, oil or power. This enemy has no opinions about ethnicity, religion or democracy. It doesn't care about your money.

When my grandchildren look up my generation in the history books, I want them to find the Gandhi of the 21st century. I want them to find the leader that realised the threat of climate change, just as Churchill realised that there was no negotiating with the Nazis. I want them to find the leader that took the hard decision to sacrifice everything, so future generations—our grandchildren—can live free. **VG**

You can read our feature about the future of Iceland's glaciers on page 19.



Elin Elisabet is an illustrator and cartoonist born and raised in Borgarnes. At the tender age of 15, Elin moved to Reykjavik and hasn't looked back, except for the annual springtime impulse to move someplace quiet and keep chickens. Elin likes folk music, stationery, seal videos, the country of Ireland, and eggs.



Hannah Jane Cohen is based out of Iceland by way of New York. An alumni of Columbia University, Hannah has lived on five continents and speaks three languages fluently, which is very impressive. Her visionary work is known for expanding the definitions of emotion, introspection, and above all else, taste.



John Rogers is an Englishman who first joined us as a music writer, later graduating to Managing Editor. A constant traveller, a lover of art, culture, food and nightlife, he edits our Best of Reykjavik, Best of Iceland and Iceland Airways sister publications. His first book, "Real Life," was published in 2014.



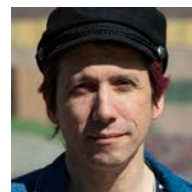
Art Bicnick is a man of mystery, moving like the wind through the parties, soirées, openings and social events of Reykjavik. Sometimes he can be seen abroad in the countryside, braving the spray of a waterfall or the frozen glacier air. Always, he will have a camera, documenting the moves of his writer companion.



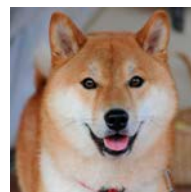
Sveinbjörn Pálsson is Grapevine's Art Director. When he isn't poring over fonts and obscure house music in the better coffee houses of Reykjavik, he can be found advising cats and helping old ladies carry their shopping. He is a proud resident of Laugardalur (adjacent).



Kolbeinn Arnaldur Dalrymple is Grapevine's business reporter, contributing to daily news and print issues alike. He is also the chairman of the Equal Rights Youth Association, and lives in beautiful downtown Hafnarfjörður.



Andie Fontaine has lived in Iceland since 1999 and has been reporting since 2003. They were the first foreign-born member of the Icelandic Parliament, in 2007-08, an experience they recommend for anyone who wants to experience a workplace where colleagues work tirelessly to undermine each other.



Timothée Lambrecq is a French freelance photographer and filmmaker who can be found exploring Iceland's nature, small towns and 101 music scene. He's going to Japan soon to seek his shiba and matcha-filled best life. Good luck Timothée, we love you! May the force be with you... always.



Lóa Hlín Hjalmtýsdóttir is a national treasure. One of Iceland's leading illustrators, when she's not drawing she's the frontwoman of Icelandic electro-pop supergroup FM Belfast. Her comic strip Lóabratórium appears every issue on page eight, and is also available as a daily dose on her Twitter.

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The usual suspects

What Are Icelanders Talking About?

The topics that keep the replies coming

Words: **Andie Fontaine** Photo: **Grapevine Archives**

NEWS Things heated up mid-January when former foreign minister and ambassador **Jón Baldvín Hannibalsson** made the news again, as four women came forward detailing **sexual harassment** they endured from him. Some of these incidents date back to the 1960s, but some happened as recently as last summer. In addition, in a closed Facebook group, numerous women working in the service industry have detailed inappropriate behaviour he exhibited towards them. Amazingly, this is not the first time he has been in the news for this behaviour, as this was last brought to light in 2012. And like back then, it doesn't seem as though any consequences are forthcoming, and he denies all the allegations against him.

A report on **whaling** from the Institute of Economic Studies raised a number of eyebrows, primarily due to its conclusions that directly contradicted a lot of things we know about whaling and its effects—in particular its profitability and impact on fish stocks. People were quick to point out that the main researcher for the report is Dr. Oddgeir Á. Ottesen, who was also an alternate MP for the Independence Party, which has always been pro-whaling. Complicating matters further was the report's contention that it consulted with whale watching groups as part of the research, while Rannveig Grétarsdóttir, chair

of the Icelandic Whale Watching Association, has gone on record saying that no member of the group was ever contacted.

Finally, **Klausturgate** has reached new levels of absurdity. While the appellate court has dismissed the demands of the four

MPs trying to take legal action against whistleblower Bára Halldórsdóttir, two of them—Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson and Bergþór Ólason—suddenly returned to work. Their co-workers were less than pleased, and Gunnar Bragi himself was caught in a spectacular lie after he contended he was in the midst of a 36-hour blackout when he spoke abusively about his female colleagues at a local bar. Not only did a doctor point out that a blackout of this length would indicate severe brain damage, Gunnar Bragi had previously stated on tape that he did in fact remember the night in question. At the time of this writing, they are still working in Parliament. 🍷



ELÍN ELÍSABET



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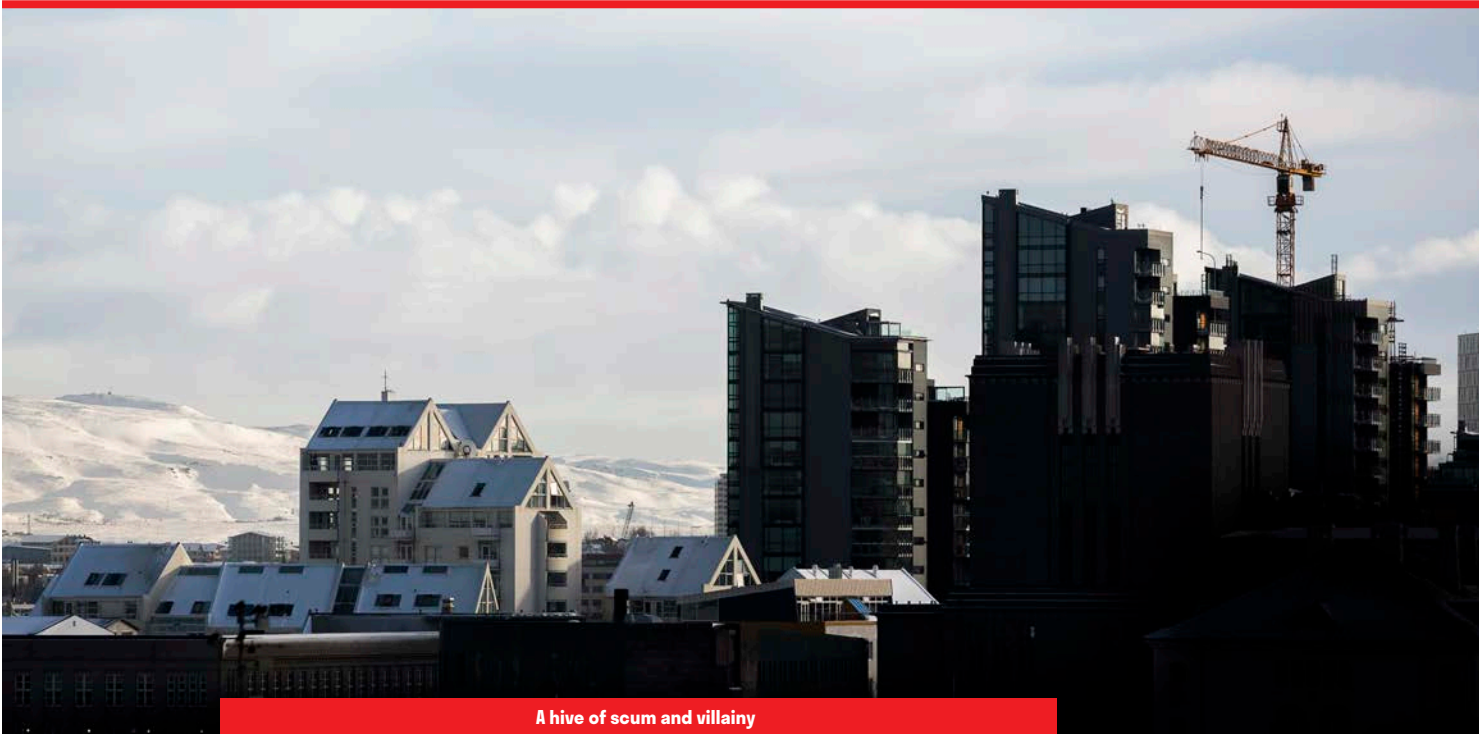


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A hive of scum and villainy

ASKA
Philosopher

Q: What Led To The 2008 Crash?



Words: **Andie Fontaine**
Photo: **Timothée Lambrecq**

Rotten Apples

Iceland is still the most corrupt Nordic country. Why?

'No strategic action'

In addition, a 2018 report from the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO), “called for Iceland to strengthen its systems to limit risks of corruption and improper conduct in government functions and law enforcement agencies,” noting that “the government established in 2014 an anti-corruption steering group. It is striking that in the above context, no strategic action or dedicated overarching policy was elaborated by the group to promote integrity in State institutions.”

GRECO has recommended “more robust and consistent rules of conduct, for instance in relation to gifts and other benefits and contacts with third parties seeking to influence government work, including lobbyists. Additional measures also need to be taken concerning revolving doors and parallel activities.”

NEWS

Public perception of corruption in Icelandic society continues to increase, according to the latest data from Transparency International.

Words: **Andie Fontaine**

Photo: **Art Bicnick**

Iceland is currently in a three-way tie for 14th place—with Hong Kong and Austria—in the organisation’s annual corruption ranking of 180 countries, putting it far below all other Nordic nations. Denmark is ranked first, and is therefore the least corrupt according to TI’s index, with Finland and Sweden tied for 3rd and Norway in 7th. Iceland has fallen one place from last year.

Perception matters

Public perception of corruption, a separate index with a score from 0 (thoroughly corrupt) to 100 (corruption-free), continues its increasing trend. Iceland is currently at a 76 on that scale, down from 77 the year previous and 79 in 2015.

Numerous factors likely come into play when it comes to public perceptions of corruption. Nepotism and a lack of transparency, especially when it comes to conflict of interest between politicians and business, are both well-known phenomena in Iceland.

As we look back on the 10th anniversary of the post-crash protests that brought down the Icelandic government, the root causes of the collapse were philosophical as much as they were financial. So we contacted doctorate student of philosophy Sævar Finnbogason to ask: What are the philosophical aspects of Icelandic culture that contributed to the 2008 financial collapse?

“If asked to name a single aspect of Icelandic culture that contributed to the financial collapse, I think it would be naivety. At the time, Iceland was a nation of less than 300,000 people and such small societies tends to be more cohesive and trusting. We should also remember that, in the space of a few decades, Iceland had transitioned from being one of the poorest nations in Europe, with a simple resource-based economy, to an open free-market economy, and, in 1994, a part of the European common market. After this, Iceland’s small and unsophisticated domestic financial sector grew to ten-times the size of the national GDP in just a decade, comparatively bigger than Switzerland or the UK.

“It is a well-known witticism in Iceland that we took to banking with the same ferocity as the fishermen who risk their lives to catch as much fish as they could before the next storm hit— fish as much as you can while the going is good. You never know what the weather will be like tomorrow. There might be more to this witticism than we like to admit. Icelanders learned to manage their fish stocks, let’s hope we have also learned from the financial collapse of 2008.”

FOOD OF ICELAND

Lamb Hearts



Icelanders are known for their resourcefulness when it comes to available foodstuffs; a trait borne from times when not wasting anything was a matter of survival. A prime example of this would be the infamous Icelandic svið (singled sheep

face), but less known are lamb hearts.

Lamb hearts are sold seasonally, in packs of four, and are usually dirt cheap, with over a kilo of meat amounting to little more than a few hundred krónur. But wait, you say, it’s still

lamb meat; why is it so much cheaper?

Well for one, it is surprisingly easy to overcook hearts. As the hardest-working muscle in any mammal, hearts are going to be tough and chewy, even when cooked properly. They are also surprisingly fatty, which is definitely not in fashion these days. Moreover, lamb hearts are traditionally associated with poverty and hardship. For many Icelanders, it

is shameful to buy them. Putting lamb hearts in your shopping cart is tantamount to announcing to everyone that you are poor.

All that said, lamb hearts are an affordable alternative to steak for those who still want red meat in their diet, and they tend to go well with red wine sauce. Just be sure not to cook them too long, and ignore the stares in the check-out line. **AF**

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Food Olympians always get to have a dessert

Iceland 4eva

The competition entailed preparing a three-course dinner for 110 people. Deciding upon a cod starter, lamb entrée, and skyr for dessert, the all-star team served up what is essentially the most Icelandic meal ever created that doesn't include a Prince Polo or Brennivín.

Under the leadership of president Björn Bragi Bragason, the team was composed of a diverse group of culinary artists deriving from such eateries as Fiskfélagið and Jamie's Italian. "We are incredibly pleased with this result, as we have been preparing for this for 18 months," Björn said in a statement after the team's big win. "Despite some unexpected events that arose, we have proven here today that the Icelandic national culinary team is amongst the best in the world."

Culinary controversy

The unexpected events Björn is referring to amount to a minor culinary scandal. Only months before the competition, the team discovered that one of their sponsors was Arnarlax, a fish farming company. Many chefs, understandably, were morally opposed to the ecologically devastating practise and fourteen chefs promptly resigned from the team.

Eventually, though, the club ended their relationship with Arnarlax and calm was restored. And thank Cod for that. 🐟

Valhalla's Kitchen

Could it be an act of cod?

WHAT HAVE WE WON?

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen

Photo: Einar Bárðarson

On November 26th, Iceland proved to the world once and for all that their cuisine is way more than just fermented shark and firm yoghurt. With one hot

meal, the country shook the world, wowing tastebuds internationally and grabbing the gold medal at the 2018 Culinary World Cup. Suck it, Denmark.

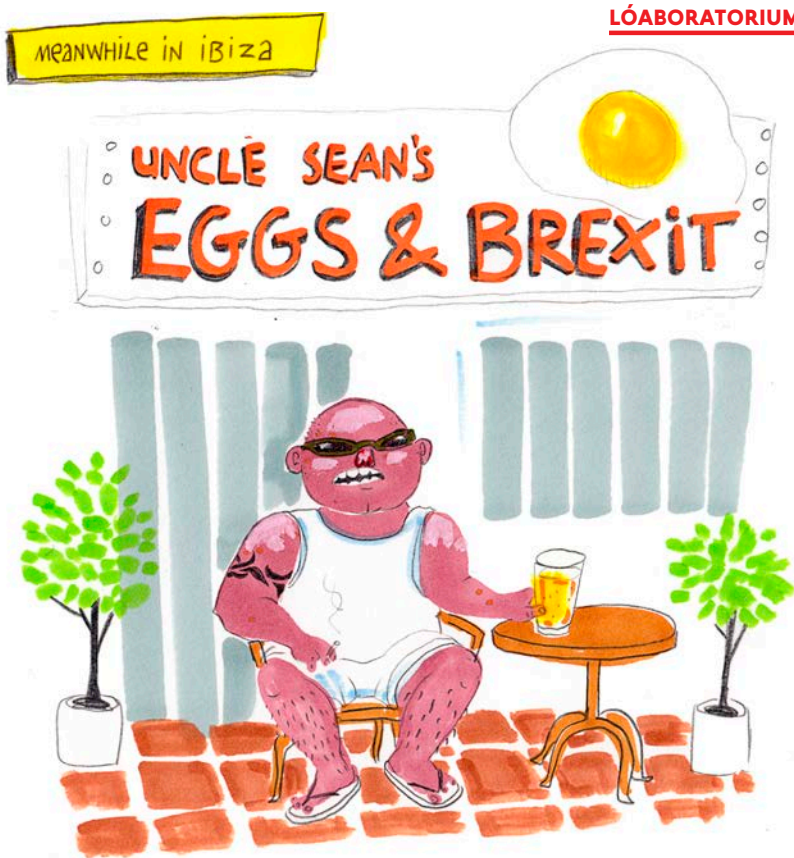
WORD OF THE ISSUE



Hálfurök

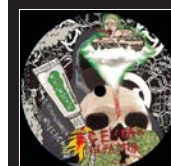
Throughout Iceland's wintertime weather reports, you will frequently see the word "hálfurök." This refers to the icy conditions, usually brought on by freezing rain, that will cover sidewalks and roads in Iceland. Travelling by foot or car over hálfurök is likely to result in slipping, falling, veering off the road and crashing: disastrous results all around.

Hálfurök is a compound word using hálfurök and "rök", the Icelandic word for logic or reasoning. Therefore, hálfurök is the Icelandic word for a slippery slope argument; responding to one thing by implying the danger of a bigger, more harmful thing will naturally follow (e.g., "Ban fireworks? What's next, banning Christmas and dancing?"). It's an interesting and particularly Icelandic translation of an internationally-known phenomenon, and that's what makes it the word of the issue. AF



LÓABORATORIUM

Tinslit - Hvítur Köttur
The first single by this mysterious and romantic electronic pop group is a beautiful, swirly waltz full of analogue synths, cello and a deep melancholic male voice. Featuring the dreamy voice of JFDR as accent in the latter half, the tune is sweeping, enchanting and transports the listener into other worlds, both large and small. RX



Kuldaboli - Ég elska þig eilífa stríð
Translating as "I love you, endless war," this



Une Misère - Damages
Since their formation in 2016, Une Misère have been unstoppable. Not only did they play the biggest metal festival in the world, but the band was also recently signed to Nuclear Blast, one of the most renowned labels in metal. Their new single displays their groovy hardcore-infused heaviness while leaving a slight aftertaste of "I've heard that before." PW

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A woman with her eyes closed and a joyful smile is partially submerged in clear, vibrant blue water. The water is splashing around her, and the background shows a hazy, mountainous landscape under a soft, overcast sky. The word "Welcome" is written in a large, white, brushstroke-style font across the upper portion of the image.

Welcome

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BLUE LAGOON
ICELAND



Chinese Year Of The Smiter

As we settle into the new year, it's all going off like a firework display at Camp Smite

FOOTBALL

Words:
Greig Robertsson

Illustration:
Lóa Hlin
Hjálmtyýsdóttir

New Year, same old smite. Our warriors-in-waiting are currently nursing their blisters after a Christmas visit to their training camp on the surface of the sun. After returning to terra firma energised and refreshed with powerful heavenly energy, Gylfi's one-man smite train has remained on course, even as his manager de-rails; battle-scarred

veteran Eiður Smári is back in the fold; and much, much more. Here's what our boys had to say as we enter the Chinese Year of the Smiter.

Glorious homecoming for brave pups

A pack of ravenous Icelandic pups

secured their places in national folklore by thwarting old (sort-of) Nordic foes Estonia and Sweden at a pair of unfriendly match-ups in Qatar. Erik Hamrén will take heart from the matches, which ended 0-0 and 2-2, respectively. Perhaps he'll remember them as some of his best results to date, in light of last year's omnishambolic Nations League campaign. 21-year-old Mjällby forward Óttar Magnús Karlsson added a second goal to his international tally in the game against the Swedes, while 20-year-old Vendsyssel midfielder Jón Dagur Þorsteinsson opened his scoring account for Iceland. There's life in the old dog's lukewarm management tenure yet.

Cardiff longboat taking on water

After Neil Warnock said "we'll be far better out of the bloody thing" when asked about his opinions on Britain's membership of the EU, it seems his squad misinterpreted the message as being about Cardiff's stint in the Premier League. Aron Gunnarsson looked on as the Bluebirds plunged into the relegation zone, taking a 3-0 spanking from fellow stragglers Newcastle United. Warnock will be looking to add some firepower to the Cardiff ranks to boost his side's survival hopes as Transfer Deadline Day looms.

Gylfi smites, even in defeat

Week by week, Everton manager Marco Silva's reputation crumbles like the British defences during the Viking invasion in 867 AD. Pressure continued to mount on the Portuguese manager, who previously held the reins at Hull City and Watford before his current stint with Everton, after a 2-1 loss against the resurgent Southampton. Gylfi Sigurðsson slotted home a composed consolation goal for the Toffees, taking his tally to nine for the season. While this will stand him in good stead when a new coach arrives, Silva is pining for the fjörd with a move to China and a stab at the Dakar Rally on the cards.

Your defence is terrified, Finnbo's (still) on fire

"The Arctic Fox in the Box," Alfreð Finnbogason, takes his white-hot goal-scoring form into the New Year, remaining behind only super-sub freak Paco Alcácer in the race for the much-coveted best minutes-per-goal ratio in the Bundesliga. Finnbo has been on target seven times in just 11 league games this

"The pillars of Iceland's golden footballing age will be phased out over the coming years—now is the time for a new generation of snow leopards to leap forth."

season, accounting for over a quarter of Augsburg's goals. That statistic perhaps explains their lowly league position—they currently sit only four points above the relegation zone. But the Fuggerstädter faithful needn't fear—a fit and firing Finnbo all but guarantees their safety.

Eiður "The Glaciator" rejoins Team Iceland

Our boys' all-time record goalscorer, Eiður Guðjohnsen, is back in the national fold as U21 coach Arnar Þór Viðarsson's assistant. The duo are charged with developing the next crop of Viking warriors, some of whom could be unleashed at the World Cup in 2022. Inevitably, the pillars of Iceland's recent golden footballing age will be phased out over the coming years—and now is the time for the next generation of snow leopards to take up the mantle. With Eiður on board, the new pack surely won't be short of goals. Expect them to be piking opposition heads very soon. ☘

Follow our live-tweets on match-days on Twitter at @rvkgrapevine. Iceland's indomitable and unstoppable march to the Euro 2020 trophy will continue throughout 2019, as Aron, Gylfi, Jóhann Berg and the boys smite their way through all the continents of the world, laying waste to any team foolish enough to step into their terrible path to glory.



BREAKFAST FROM 7
LUNCH FROM 12

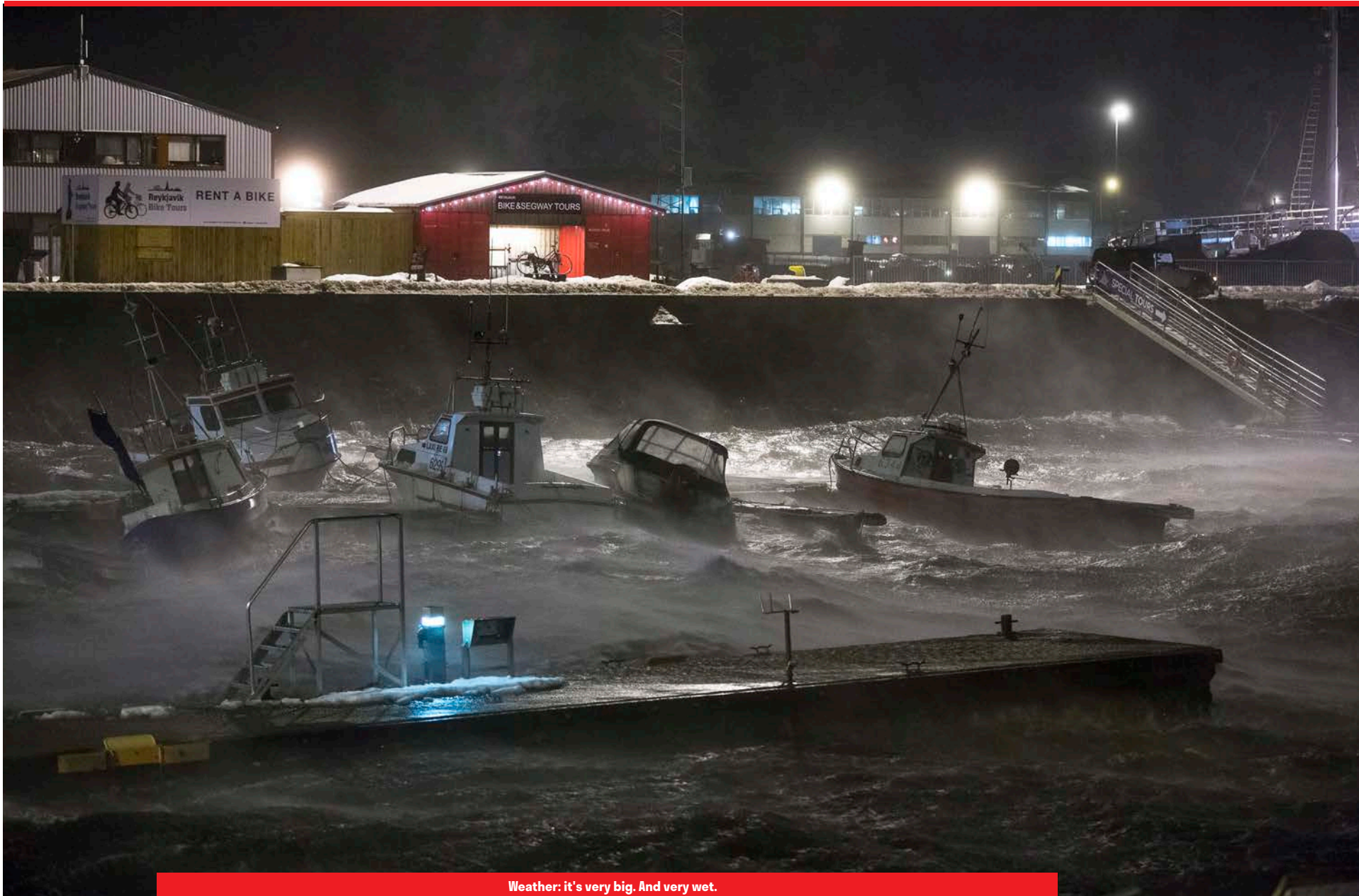
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Weather: it's very big. And very wet.

Weathering the Climate

Iceland's economic challenges in the era of global warming

Words:
**Kolbeinn Arnaldur
Dalrymple**

Photo:
Art Bicnick

Iceland's weather over the last year has been strange, to put it mildly. It has essentially been one long season—winter—with 2018 being the cloudiest and wettest on record. These odd conditions and an alarming report from the United Nations' InterGovernmental Panel on Climate Change have added difficult questions to the contentious debate around the environment and natural resources in Iceland. Fisheries, tourism and power plants have been debated ad nauseam in Iceland, and climate change is adding a difficult and urgent dimension to the debate.

Heat Storm

This winter has been unusually mild, with nearly the same temperatures and precipitation patterns as the cold summer months that preceded it. Lightning struck downtown Reykjavik in December, which is a rare event, even in summer. There has been such little snowfall that ski slopes were closed well into January. The workers and companies went without income. In addition to skiing, snowfall also replenishes glaciers which are a big draw for tourists. Many tourists hope for a winter wonderland when booking a trip to Iceland, especially around Christmas. This year though, they were treated to grey skies during the few daily hours of daylight. It was not unusual to see Icelanders in light summer clothing next to bundled up travellers. We are used to being comparatively under-dressed in the summer but we like to

hide our Christmas kilos under sweaters, too.

This strange season coincided with the IPCC's latest report on climate change, containing projections so dire they should make you sweat—even in inclement weather.

Growing Pains

The changing climate is adding to the strained tourism environment. The number of tourists to Iceland has quadrupled in less than a decade, but the state has failed to regulate and invest in infrastructure, and industry has little coordination or long-term planning. Sensitive ecosystems have been damaged, garbage piles up, and tourists die needlessly. The state and industry have been debating who should be responsible for providing garbage and toilet facilities. Sensitive mosses and safe hiking trails are not always properly marked, resulting in damage that takes decades to recover.

Growth in tourist numbers has slowed significantly over the last year, which could be an opportunity for the infrastructure to catch up. The coalition government formed in 2017 promised to conduct studies and laid out broad goals. The coalition agreement foresees investment in infrastructure, sustainability, and a focus on the distribution of tourists throughout the country. Grants have been made to rural communities and the VAT increase delayed.

Under the Glacier

Glacial retreat is more than an aesthetic loss. Their mass is so great that they reduce volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. In addition to inflicting local damage, increased eruptions would release more greenhouse gasses. In 2010, the Eyjafjallajökull eruption disrupted flights in Europe for weeks. That eruption planted the idea of visiting Iceland in many travellers' minds, but another similar eruption could cut the island off from tourists and the economic boost they bring to the country.

As glaciers retreat, eruptions are more likely to occur. Scientists believe all glaciers could gone in less than two hundred years. Glaciers are the source of freshwater for Iceland's rivers, and their disappearance would impact fishing, and other recreational activities.

Furthermore, Iceland produces most of its power from hydroelectric and geothermal power stations. Melting glaciers could lower water levels in reservoirs and disrupt geothermal vents through earthquakes.

Thanks for all the fish

Another potential economic victim of climate change is one of Iceland's historically major industries: fisheries.

After a series unilateral extensions to its exclusive economic zone—Google “cod wars”—Iceland controlled some of lucrative fisheries in the world. These were mismanaged for decades and nearly collapsed, but are now run in a more sustainable manner and serve as a model to other countries.

Warmer waters have historically meant an increase in fish stocks, but the temperatures increasing in tandem with marine pollution and acidification is destroying maritime ecosystems.

The current government is emphasising sustainable quotas, a fair share of revenue for the state, and investments in research and technology that will make the fishing fleet carbon neutral.

Opportunity Cost

Not everyone sees climate change as a lose-lose scenario for Iceland. Pundits and politicians have floated the idea of the country being a shipping hub for emerging trade routes across the Arctic Ocean.

The ruling coalition has generally been reluctant to take bold action but has made some moves on environmental and tourist issues. The state will transition to electric vehicles in its next order, and is making strides to accelerate reforestation programmes. But the cabinet has only been in office for little over a year, and Iceland's parliament has in recent years earned a reputation as a revolving door. This disrupts complex policies, which can take years to formulate and enact.

The current minister of environment is a lifelong activist, and spoke forcefully about the need for bold action at a recent environmental conference in Poland. But how the Minister's intent will translate into policy remains to be seen. The complexities of Iceland's coalition government system have stopped good intentions many times before. ♣

“The changing climate is adding to the strained tourism environment.”

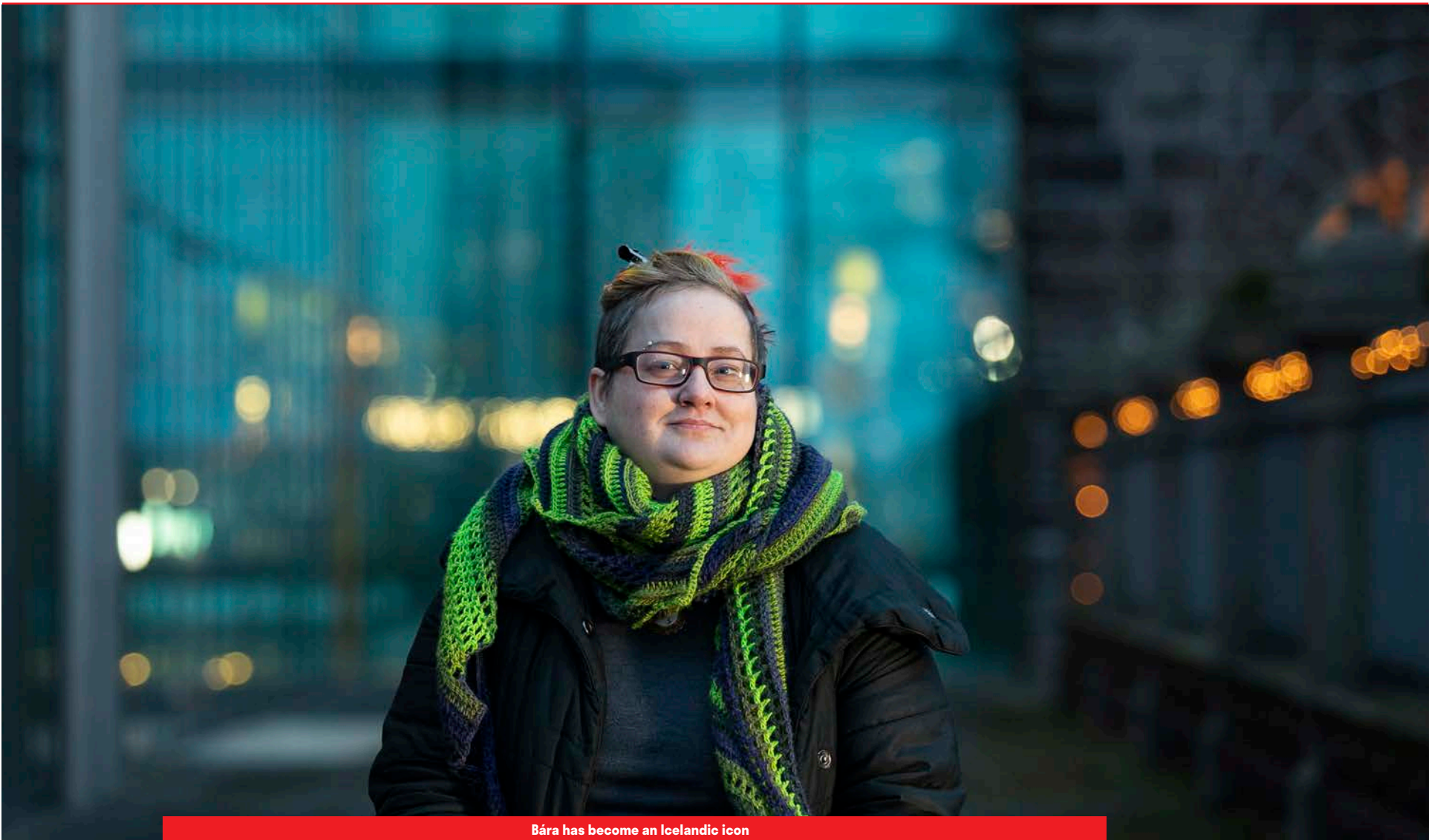
HLJÓMAHÖLL 15. FEB. 2019

LOUIS COLE

A black and white close-up portrait of Louis Cole, looking slightly to the left. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of his hair and the contours of his face.

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Bára has become an Icelandic icon

The Power Of Accountability

An interview with whistleblower Bárá Halldórsdóttir

Words:
Andie Fontaine

Photo:
Art Bicnick

Bára Halldórsdóttir, a queer disabled woman who has long advocated for the rights of the chronically ill, found herself in the spotlight last November when it was revealed she had recorded the six parliamentarians implicated in the so-called Klausturgate scandal, subsequently sending the recordings to the media. Since then, four of the MPs have tried, without success, to silence her through the court system. No matter what vitriol these MPs and their supporters may send her way—and to be fair, she says the overwhelming response directed her way has been support—she remains unflappable. In fact, the entire affair happened by pure chance.

"I don't remember having a moment where I decided I needed to get my phone out and start recording," said Bárá. "It just kind of happened. I knew they were politicians, being quite rude and quite loud. In that moment of disbelief I thought, 'I have to let my wife hear this when she gets home.' So I started recording. But then it started getting uglier and uglier, so I stayed."

Leaving it to the professionals

Bára knew that at least some of the things she recorded were possibly newsworthy, but felt it would be wise to send copies of the recordings to media outlets she trusted, for them to decide, rather than upload the entire thing to Soundcloud and put the MPs on blast. "At some point in the conversation, I realised they were talking about things that were official stuff," she recounts. "I couldn't always hear clearly what they

were saying, nor knew who everyone in the conversation was. That's when I started thinking that I needed to get this to somebody. I wasn't sure, and I didn't really know, how to work with the stuff in the recording, and didn't have the energy to go through all of it, either. I kind of just knew [my media contacts] would know what was news and what wasn't; what you're allowed to publish and what not. It took me about three or four days to decide."

Bára speculated that Centre Party MP Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson's drunken bragging about a possible quid pro quo deal for an ambassadorship would be the only newsworthy thing to come out of these recordings, but the MPs' abusive language about female colleagues also made headlines. Even so, Bárá says that many of the articles written about the recordings "came out of the blue" to her.

All "apologies"

The irony of some of the parliamentarians involved issuing apologies but then taking her to court isn't lost on Bárá.

"I think it definitely casts a shadow on their apologies," she says. "You don't just say, 'Oh, I'm so sorry, and by the way, I'm going to go after the disabled woman who recorded me.' It feels very insincere that they'd go through that process. It's a strange thing. Maybe they're making a point so that other people won't be so willing to record them or maybe they

"What I really would love to see is one Icelandic politician say, 'I really ruined things, so now I'm going to step down, and take some real responsibility for once in my life.'"

just really do think that they have been wronged. Maybe they're trying to say, 'if you do something like this, we'll come for you,' but I don't know."

She also dismisses some of the wilder conspiracy theories that some of these MPs have put forward, such as the idea that she coordinated the entire thing as a kind of sting operation.

"People have pointed out that it's kind of impossible that I could have planned this," she says. "It just doesn't work that way that I'd think, 'A ha! At that point in time, they will be saying horrible things and I shall be recording them!' I do not have such powers—even though I do read Tarot cards for Rauða skáldahúsið—I'm not that powerful that

I can induce people to speak at my will. I'd be very rich if I were that good."

Is this who we are?

One of the more common responses to some of the things revealed in the recordings is that none of this should be surprising; that the politicians involved probably say even worse things in private. Bárá believes this raises questions that Icelanders need to ask themselves.

"Is that a nice thing? Are we really happy about that happening?" Bárá tells us. "That's basically what this is about. That this is the way they talk behind closed doors, and do we like that? We have to have a few cases of these people doing things wrong, so that we can recalibrate."

What we can learn

Ultimately, Bárá hopes that the case doesn't just become some flash-in-the-pan scandal; she hopes that it will lead to real material change in Iceland's socio-political landscape.

"What I really would love to see is one Icelandic politician say, 'I really ruined things, so now I'm going to step down and take some real responsibility for once in my life,'" she says. "I would also like to see this discussion continue, because what I saw from this is a lot of female strength and a lot of ally strength, too. There are a lot of people who finally got a voice, and who were very strong in their responses. I like that. I also hope that, in some way, this makes clearer the rules about whistleblowers and informers in Iceland. My interpretation of this whole case is that there were public people talking publicly in a public place, which makes it OK to record and send it out. My inner compass says this, if it's something that has value for the national conversation, which I think this has, it has both legal and ethical ramifications that are very important." ❧



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The Protests That Brought Down The Government

Have we learned anything since?

Words:
Andie Fontaine

Photo:
Grapevine Archives

In October 2008, Iceland became the focus of international attention when its entire financial system collapsed. Part of the cause was undoubtedly connected to Iceland's tiny currency being especially vulnerable to shock-waves from the devastated real estate market in the US, but the lion's share of the blame fell squarely upon the unethical and illegal practices of Iceland's own investment class, many of whom controlled the banks that were privatised only five years earlier.

The catalyst for the protests was arguably one man: Independence Party MP Sigurður Kári Kristjánsson. The Monday after the crash, as the nation waited with bated breath to see how Parliament would respond, Sigurður's first order of business was to call for

the sale of alcohol to be permitted in private shops. This obvious disconnect from reality sent many Icelanders to the lawn of Parliament, and the protests began.

The ruling coalition at the time, comprised of the Independence Party and the Social Democrats, continued to stall, even as protester numbers grew. The lack of initiative only stoked the anger of the protesters, and swelled their numbers. It was only a matter of time before the whole thing reached critical mass.

The wind-up

These protests became popularly known in the international press as the Pots and Pans Revolution, a translation of

the Icelandic term, búsahaldabyltingin. It would be difficult to classify the public response as a revolution, at least not at first. The early protests were characterised largely by rallies, speeches and song. Popular public figures assumed the helm, calling for reform rather than revolution. That began to change quickly, however, as autumn turned to winter.

In November 2008, activist Haukur Hilmarsson climbed onto the roof of Parliament and hoisted the flag of the Bónus supermarket chain. While Haukur regarded the act as a light-hearted stunt, it was also very poignant: with a single image of a corporate logo flying high above Iceland's legislative body, the iconic image was created of Iceland's political class in collusion with the capitalist class. The following month, nine people—later to be called the Reykjavik Nine—attempted to push their way past security at Parliament to enter the main hall.

“When, not if, another crash washes over Iceland, it's difficult to say how the people will respond. But at least there's a precedent we can look towards and learn from.”

Both of these events set the stage for police escalation, and heightened anger amongst the Icelandic citizenry.

New year, old anger

As January 2009 rolled around, the government went from seeming negligent to being downright irresponsible. Prime Minister Geir H. Haarde, of the Independence Party, had hired private bodyguards, but apart from that, no visible response to the protest was made. That would change as the month wore on.

On January 20th of that year, direct physical confrontations with the police had begun. Arrests were ramping up, along with the use of pepper spray and tear gas, while protester numbers continued to grow. The political fallout also began to take its toll, as ministers began to resign or announce that they would not run for office again. By January 26th, it was all over: the government resigned, an emergency coalition was formed, and new elections were scheduled for later that spring.

But did we learn anything?

Yes, some bankers went to jail. And no, the government took over the banks rather than bail them out. This much is true. Beyond that, pretty much nothing has changed.

The government that was to follow, Iceland's first left-wing government ever, lasted a single term of four years. During this time, they tightened the austerity belt, pissed off the entire country again during the Icesave debacle, called for a constitutional referendum and then promptly ignored it.

When 2013 rolled around, Iceland chose the Independence Party and the Progressive Party—the same two parties that paved the way for the crash—to lead the country again.

Today, there is even talk of privatising the banks again, as if the five years spanning 2003 to 2008 never happened. While the tourism boom is not really comparable to

the pre-crash financial situation, the economy is still running hot. When, not if, another crash washes over Iceland, it's difficult to say how the people will respond. But at least there's a precedent we can look back at and learn from. 🍷

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Iceland Thaws

All around the country, the glaciers are rapidly melting. What would deglaciation mean for Iceland's future?

Words: John Rogers Photos: Timothée Lambrecq



The Okjökull glacier died in 2014.

It wasn't the first Icelandic glacier to pass away. Some estimates say that up to ten named bodies of ice have previously expired, along with countless more that were unnamed. But Okjökull was the biggest, so far.

Over a period of years, Okjökull melted faster than snowfall could accumulate into new ice. The glacier became thinner each year until, eventually, the ice in the bowl of the shield volcano stopped moving. No longer shifting under its own weight to create glacial currents, Okjökull became still—a once-living mass that glaciologists refer to as “dead ice.”

The “jökull” was stripped from its name accordingly—today, the 1200m peak in Borgarfjörður is now known simply as “Ok.”

Standing at the foot of the snow-bound mountain as the sun starts to set on a freezing January evening, I turn and scan the landscape. In the distance, some of Ok's surviving siblings can be seen. The dizzying protrusion of Eiríksjökull mingles with the clouds way up at 1672m, glowing bright against the amber sky. Closer by, the graceful 1360m sweep of Langjökull blushes pink in the sunset as it slides away to the horizon like a giant frozen wall.

In the frigid midwinter, these peaks seem unassailable. It's hard to imagine that such vast bodies of ice could melt away entirely, becoming seabound meltwater rivers, revealing the gnarled and naked rock beneath. But that's exactly what the scientific community tells us is already happening. It's also, I think to myself, what people probably once thought about Ok.

NOT OK

Iceland has 269 named glaciers, from the vast ice cap of Vatnajökull with its many tongues and outlets, to the towering, famously volcanic Eyjafjallajökull overlooking the south coast, and the much-admired snow-hooded Snæfellsjökull, perched on the western Snæfellsnes peninsula. They're studied and monitored by a variety of organisations who funnel their data to the Icelandic Met Office, Veðurstofa.

Tómas Jóhannesson is the head of Veðurstofa's glacier group and one of the people who collates the flood of information, and examines the complex ramifications. “Ok is the largest named glacier to officially disap-

pear,” he says, in his Reykjavik office. “Some snow patches remain, but a glacier is by definition a mass of ice so heavy that it flows under its own weight, and has some dynamics. The patches around Ok have become so thin that they sit there without movement, and therefore no longer qualify as a glacier.”

Since the mid 1990s, rapid thinning has been a near universal trend in Iceland's glaciers, with 95-100% of Iceland's glaciers decreasing in volume annually. One of the most well known cases is Sólheimajökull, a long and serpentine glacier tongue of Mýrdalsjökull that winds its way down to within a few kilometres of Route One.

“The overall retreat there is 1.5km, and this is a typical variation,” says Tómas. “Iceland's total glacier-covered area has shrunk by roughly 2000 square kilometres since the end of the 19th Century. We lose about 40 square kilometres annually, which is quite a remarkable area to become deglaciated each year.”

I remark that it sounds like Sólheimajökull could be headed for the same fate as Ok. “It's a part of the larger Mýrdalsjökull ice cap,” says Tómas. “So the outlet will retreat to higher elevations, where the accumulation area is. But this entire valley will be ice-free, in the end.”

SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES

Iceland's glaciers have always been through periods of accumulation—when snowfall adds new ice to the glacier—and ablation, when the rate of melt and downwasting exceeds the production of new ice. The measurement of accumulation against ablation to determine a glacier's size is known as mass balance, which fluctuates naturally.

“The history of Iceland shows alternating cool and warm periods,” says Tómas. “This has always been the case. But anthropogenic, man-made global warming is now of such a magnitude that it's pulling our climate outside of the natural variations. We've had ice ages, and warmer periods than now, which demonstrates that the Earth's climate goes through large changes. We know that Iceland was completely ice covered during the ice age. We know roughly the causes that led to the ice age, and what forcing in

the energy of the sun was required to create an ice age, or an ice-free earth. The forcings that humans are creating through climate emissions are of a similar magnitude. And so, we expect similar results. We can expect very serious consequences from our serious disruption of the climate.”

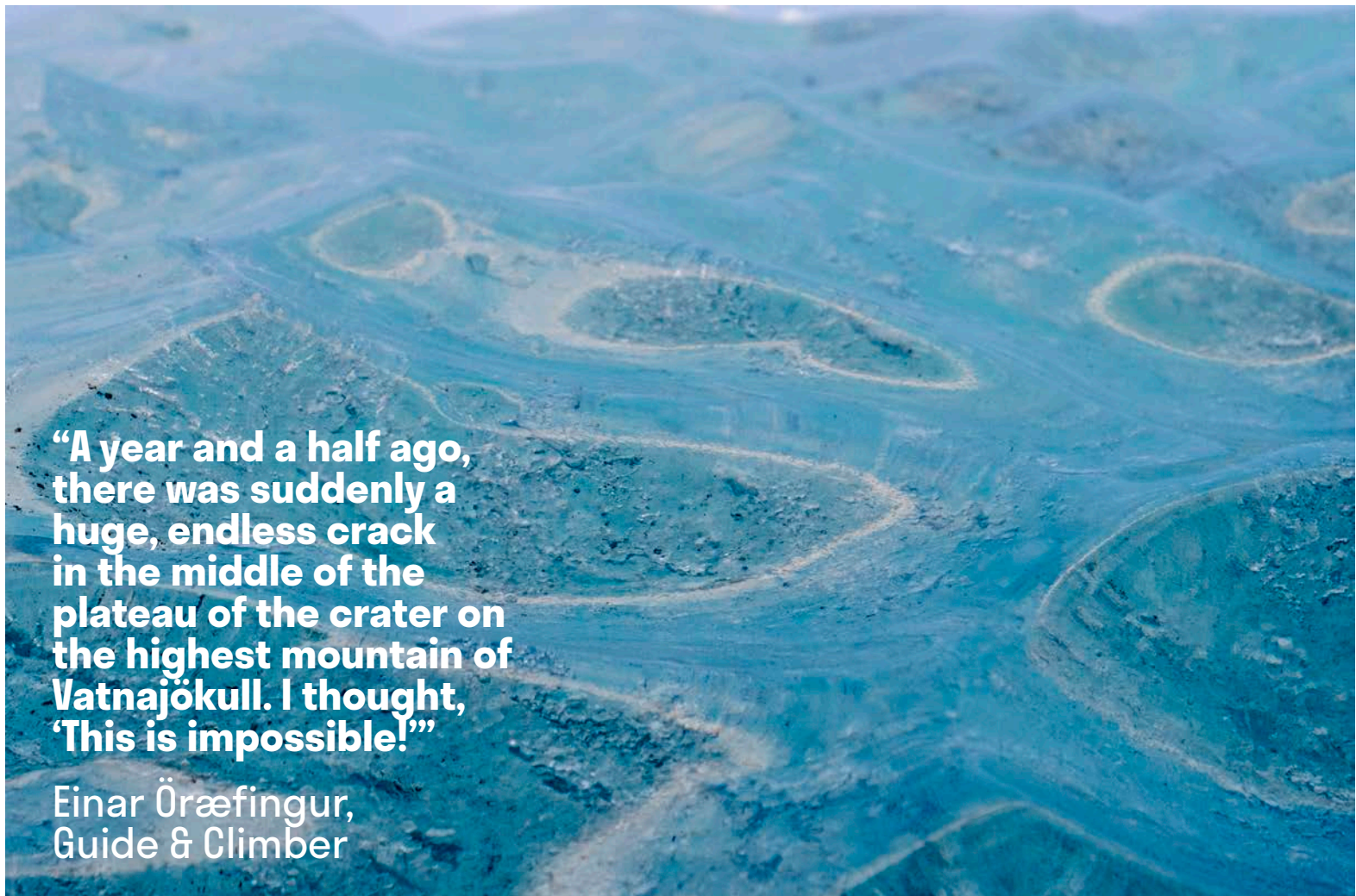
RISING LAND

The list of projected consequences includes isostasy—a process whereby reduced ice removes weight from the earth’s crust, causing the land to slowly rise. Around Vatnajökull, this will have considerable consequences for local people.

“We can already see a substantial rise in the land around Höfn,” says Tómas. “It’s rising by one or two centimetres a year. Over a whole century this rise is substantial—a metre, or even several. This means the harbour becomes worse as the coast becomes shallower. In most countries, people are worried about sea level rise, but in this region, the land is rising faster than the ocean, so the sea is retreating away.”

ERUPTIONS FOR ALL

Deglaciation can also lead to increased seismic and volcanic activity, which is expected to result in more earthquakes, eruptions, unpredictably changing river paths and floods. “When the weight of ice is reduced, there’s a change in the melting point of magma in the lower crust, and a somewhat increased production of magma,” says Tómas. “In the end, this will increase the volume of lava that comes to the surface. We expect that the reduction of glaciers will lead to a noticeable increase in the eruption of Icelandic volcanoes. You’d never expect this, but people driving



“A year and a half ago, there was suddenly a huge, endless crack in the middle of the plateau of the crater on the highest mountain of Vatnajökull. I thought, ‘This is impossible!’”

Einar Öræfingur,
Guide & Climber

CRYSTALLINE BOULDERS

A few days later, I crunch up the icy path into the Sólheimajökull valley with a couple of companions. Cresting the hill over a bed of ashen snow, I’m taken aback by the view. Since my last visit, just a couple of years ago, the gentle ice slope up towards the jagged blue snout of the glacier has been replaced by a

rapher Ragnar Axelsson, also known as Rax, who recently published a book of glacier pictures entitled, simply, “JÖKULL.”

He was brought up in the foothills of Vatnajökull. “I grew up for six years near glaciers in the South East of Iceland, and fell in love with the glaciers from the minute I saw them,” he recalls. “I always enjoyed walking on the glacier. We would go into the valleys and mountains inside the glacier to collect sheep, and go into the ice caves.”

farms. I took pictures of it from the beach, and you can compare them to now, and see how much lower the glaciers are today.”

THE MELTING BOOK

Icelanders haven’t always thought of glaciers as something to treasure and protect. Just a generation or two ago, they were seen as a threatening, invasive presence. “People certainly used to think of the glaciers as hostile,” says Ragnar. “They didn’t go there, and didn’t want to. When they first climbed Snæfellsjökull, they took breathing apparatus because it looked so high. It was the same in Greenland: I was once sledding past a tall mountain and I asked my hunter friend: ‘Have you been up there?’ He replied: ‘Why should I? There is nothing there.’”

“I don’t think anyone in old times thought glaciers would be an attraction in the future. But today, glaciers are a huge part of the beauty of this country.”

There’s also irreplaceable information in the ice, says Ragnar. “When there is ash in the glacier, we can tell what eruption it was from. There is history in the glaciers. When you drill into the ice, you can get information about weather patterns over the centuries. The glacier is like a book full of information—and we are losing pages every year. This book is melting.”



Tómas Jóhannsson

“When you drill into the ice, you can get information about weather patterns over the centuries. The glacier is like a book full of information—and the book is melting.” - Rax, Photographer



RAX



cars could indirectly lead to an increase of volcanic eruptions in Iceland.”

If the projections hold true, these effects will intensify over the coming decades and centuries.

“It’s safe to say that if things continue as they are now,” says Tómas, “the glaciers will be mostly gone in a couple of hundred years. I view the current reduction in size as a sign of a much bigger problem. So in that sense, it’s something that should wake people up.”

wide, iceberg-strewn meltwater lagoon.

We wander along the shore to the base of the ice, where giant, viscerally blue glacier fragments stand dripping in black sand. Embedded in a solid surface at ground level, it’s safe to mill around between the shards. A welcome, familiar feeling returns as my initial shock is replaced by wonder at the sheer sensory overload of the arterial blue ice. Beyond their rhythmically rippled surfaces, endless seams and patterns vanish into the depths of each crystalline boulder.

A well known appreciator and mentor of glaciers is renowned photog-

FACES IN THE ICE

Ragnar found early inspiration in the ice that continues to this day. “I would look for faces and figures in the ice,” he says. “It changed the way I think. You don’t know what you’re learning as you grow up, but it stays with you and informs how you think about nature and the world.”

Rax has first-hand memories of the shifting glaciers. “The ice came down much farther back then,” he says. “We had to walk over it to get between

SOLID GROUND AGAIN

Einar Öræfingur is a mountain climber and tour guide who grew up not far from Rax. He was the first guide to take people into the ice caves of Vatnajökull, and spends much of his life on the ice. His work has led him to summit Hvannadalshnúkur—Iceland’s highest mountain, and the peak of the Vatna-



Einar Öræfingur

jökull glacier—over 300 times.

We meet Einar in his café, in the shadow of the glacier. He was born on the next farm over. “The glacier was just there when I was a boy,” he says. “I remember the feeling when I first dared to walk on it a little: I felt like it was going to swallow me whole. Somehow it was not normal to be walking on a glacier. Soon after, I started guiding people on the glacier, but today I still have the feeling when I step off the ice of coming back from the sea onto dry land, onto solid ground again.”

THE ENDLESS CRACK

Einar says that he’s still continually learning to respect the glaciers. Even after decades of venturing onto the ice many times a week in all kinds of conditions, Vatnajökull is full of surprises.

“A year and a half ago, in October, there was suddenly a huge, endless crack in the middle of the plateau of the crater on the highest mountain of Vatnajökull,” he recalls. “I thought, ‘This is impossible! There can’t be a crevasse here, on the flat ground.’ I stood looking down into it, and my stomach rolled. It had happened because of volcanic activity: suddenly there was a depression, and the crack opened up, going down maybe 500 metres into the caldera. In a whiteout, it would have put me in danger. Things like that teach you to always show respect for the glaciers.”

A FOREST UNDER ICE

For Einar, the glaciers have always been a fact of life. His knowledge and experience of them runs generations deep. Seeing the hulking mass of Europe’s largest glacier on a day-to-day basis gives him a local perspective of the wider questions surrounding the glaciers.

“I have homegrown theories,” he says. “I’m no Donald Trump, but there was climate change before human influence. Iceland has been a barometer of climate change for centuries. When I go to the ice cave behind Jökulsárlón, we drive past the homestead of the first settler of southern Iceland, Hrollaugur of Fell. At the time he lived there, this whole area was covered with trees and vegetation—it was a first called Breiðamörk, or ‘big forest.’ Today it’s all barren riverbeds and moss, and it’s called Sandur.”

FOSSIL TREASURE

Based on the name of the Breiðamerkjökull glacier, Einar has long been telling his guests that there used to be a forest where Jökulsárlón is now. “Two years ago, I started going to an ice cave on the east side of Jökulsárlón that I call the Treasure Island cave—because I found a treasure there,” he says. “I found a piece of old tree that’s actually from the time when it was a forest. Now, instead of just saying ‘This used to be forest,’ I have proof. We sent it for carbon dating, and it was 3,000 years old.”

He brings out the chunk of fossilised wood. It feels as light as air. “So back then, the glacier was much smaller than it is today, and it grew over the forest,” he says, carefully turning the log over in his hands. “That’s the situation my forefathers came to live in, in the year 900. These farmers would be shocked to see how much ice there is today, and how little vegetation. I take a little comfort in that—knowing that although the glaciers are getting smaller, they’re so much bigger than they used to be.”

Einar does, however, remain open to the idea of anthropogenic climate change. “I do worry that we might tip the balance with our human pollution,” he finishes. “We should do what we can do, even if the pollution from big eruptions is much larger in scale. It’s something new we’re adding to the equation. It’s not good for people to live with pollution anyway, like the cities in India where people are dying just from being there. It’s not about saving the whole planet, but just trying to think about what kind of place we want to live in.”

ARE GLACIERS ALIVE?

US geographer and glaciologist M Jackson has been visiting Iceland and the Vatnajökull region for almost a decade. Her recently released book, “The Secret Lives of Glaciers,” mixes climate science with an examination of what glaciers mean to us as individuals, communities, and as a species.

The research proved to be an interesting challenge. M designed her methodology as she went, coming back to Höfn for repeat visits and forming close connections with the community. “I started showing up and spent two summers getting my feet on the ground, learning a bit of Icelandic and understanding the geography of this place,” she says. “I tested different methods to see if they were appropriate. A lot of them weren’t. Glaciers don’t push back if you measure them, but when you speak to people, a typical analytical approach isn’t going to work. You need to have a series of open ended conversations. It’s long term, slow-as-ice research. But I love it.”

M spent several long periods in Iceland, the longest of which was nine months. Her careful approach allowed for some surprising viewpoints to emerge by combining physical and human geography. “There’s immense complexity in ice and how people relate to ice,” she says. “That’s what I wanted to show—the different ways that Icelanders think about ice. There’s no one way. There’s no right.”

SHORT TERM BENEFITS

One thing that struck her is that the people of Höfn are, in the short term, benefitting from the shrinking glaciers. “Outside of Iceland, people are having this conversation that the glaciers are melting, and that’s the very worst thing,” she says. “That’s the global narrative. But in Iceland, something that struck me as gold is that you can have real conversations about what’s happening, which includes short-term advantages.”

One example of this is the increase in glacier-related tourism. “People are coming to see this ice before it’s gone,” M continues. “Ten years ago, living in Höfn was a pretty hard time. There weren’t a lot of jobs, or kids. It didn’t feel prosperous. Every year I’d go back to the glaciers and be stunned by the change—but where you don’t see a lot of success with the ice, you see a lot of success in society.”

M also discovered diverse opinions between age groups. “Older people had longer memories of the ice—generational memories,” says M. “They’d say, ‘I’ll miss the glaciers, but I’ll be kind of glad they’re gone. They’re no longer gonna destroy our farms, our families, our future.’ On the other hand, young Icelanders say that they’re losing their landscape and identity. So you get this very authentic complexity. Too often we tend to reduce things into one simple narrative.”



SMELLS LIKE GLACIER

In addition to recording the thoughts of others, M had time to deepen her own relationship with the glacier tongues of Vatnajökull. She spent time working on glaciers like Breiðamerkurjökull, Heinabergsjökull and Skálafellsjökull, finding that each glacier has distinctive characteristics.

“Glaciers are so vastly different from one another,” she says. “They each respond differently to the stresses of changing climate. But it’s more than that—they’ve created their own landscapes, and responded in different ways; they have different sediments, and different movements, and they move around mountains differently. They have different sounds. You know when you’re on Breiðamerkurjökull: it has a whole different sound set and smell set than if you’re in the enclosed space of Fláajökull. Over time I’ve gotten to know them and become friends with them. I know we’re not supposed to say that in science—but these glaciers flow down into our lives in really amazing ways, and it enriches who we are.”

THIS IS WHAT MATTERS

New glacier technologies are also emerging that could possibly be put to good use, were the will there to explore them. “In Pakistan there’s technology to breed and make glaciers,” says M. “But

that doesn’t fit with the Western scientific model of how we think about ice. We could take this indigenous glacier-making ability to drought-stricken regions of the world. But we’re not having those conversations.”

M’s enthusiasm is infectious. We finish by discussing Iceland’s climate policy—which includes the aim of becoming a carbon neutral country by 2040—and whether anything can be done to preserve the glaciers, and our symbiotic relationship with them.

Even as a small country, Iceland’s climate policy is worth celebrating, according to M. “Iceland creating and enacting a climate policy is not necessarily about Iceland,” she says. “So to have a small country say ‘This is what’s important

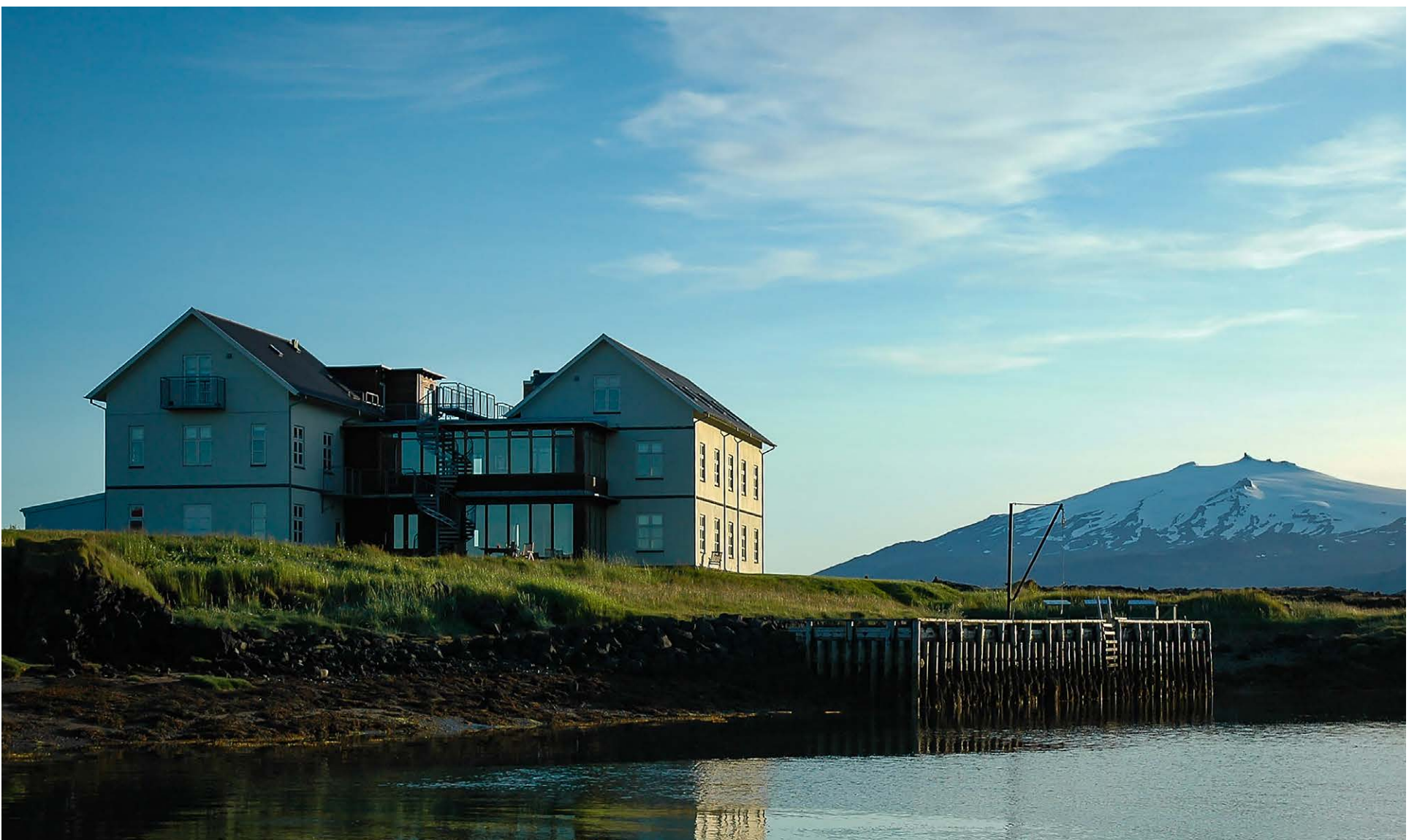
to us, these are our values, and this is what future we want to move into’ is actually a message to the world. That goes around the globe. Iceland creating a policy about climate that puts a real strong emphasis on how we engage with those big issues is a way forward for everyone. Iceland can be a leader here. It’s a chance to say to the world: ‘This is what matters.’”

“Iceland creating a policy about climate can be a way forward for the world. It’s a chance to say to the world: ‘This is what matters.’”

- M Jackson, Glaciologist & Author



M. Jackson



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Happening

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Be S.A.D. If You Want To

S.A.D. Festival

Feb. 1st - 21:00 - Paloma - Free!

If you ever, in any way, wanted to experience the Icelandic rap scene in Reykjavik's dirtiest basement surrounded by people looking to assuage their seasonal depression with substance abuse, put on your best reflective pants, sis. The supergroup lineup of the #sadfestival includes kef LAVÍK, CYBER, Floni, Elli Grill, ALVIA, and more. Maybe, if you're lucky, Ja Rule will show up with pieces of bread and cheese. **HJC**



Light 'Em Up

Winter Lights Festival 2019

Feb. 8th - Various Times & Locations

Brighten up these darkest days of Reykjavik by taking part in the (mostly) free admission Winter Lights Festival. There's free museum and pool visits, six light installations around the city, concerts, lectures, parties, and the strong of heart can participate in the 5K Northern Lights Run. There's also, for some reason, a Fortnite dance class. Good frugal times! **AF**



Iceland vs. LA

From The Edge Of The World

Feb. 2nd-16th - Ekkisens - Free!

Iceland meets LA this month at the vibrant basement arts space Ekkisens. Curated by Freyja Eilif and Max Presneill, the artworks come from two different "edge of the world" locations: Iceland's black coastline, and the Pacific metropolis of Los Angeles. Works by Alison Woods, Carlos Beltran Arechiga, Davíð Órn Halldórsson, the two curators and more will be on show. Throw on some sunblock and your parka and roller skate to Bergstaðastræti 25B to check it out. **JR**

CULTURE NEWS

Festival

The last two days of the Dark Music Days festival are on February 1st and 2nd. You can check out the programme online at www.darkmusicdays.is/



Get your dark on, experimental weirdos... of the NIGHT

The Call Of The Night

In 2019, Dark Music Days is traveling back to its roots

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen

Photo: Jana Černá

The Dark Music Days festival started unassumingly in 1980, but in the 38 years since, it has taken the contemporary Icelandic composition world by storm, becoming a well known festival of unusual and inventive Icelandic and international composers. This year, it's bigger than ever, presenting everything from new works by former Grapevine cover star Daníel Bjarnason to experimental sound masses.

Exploratory origins

"The festival started out as a way for the Society of Icelandic Composers to

present the music of its members," explains Gunnar Karel Másson, the artistic director of the festival. "It's always been embedded into the musical life here because the big ensembles, the symphony orchestra and the chamber orchestra, have all been a part of Dark Music Days since the beginning."

While the festival was originally a two- to three-week affair, the last few years have seen it moved to Harpa for a more concise three-day extravaganza. For the 2019 iteration, Gunnar decided

"It's a good step forward to go backwards."

to journey back to the festival's roots, adding off-venue shows at Mengi, IDNÓ, Húrra and more, and extending the celebration over one week.

"It's a good step forward to go backwards," he says of the shift. "You have to have time to contemplate what you've heard. When it was only three days, you were running between concerts and you didn't have the time to really know what you were listening to." He pauses. "There will be some hectic moments, of course, particularly on Friday and Saturday night, but it's more relaxed now."

Finding new footing

While Dark Music Days might have started as a somewhat niche soirée, it has since gained an international presence in the contemporary scene, with composers from all over Europe flying in to present their works, as well as an increasing amount of Icelandic artists vying for spots.

"See, in the beginning, the composer society was probably one third of what it is today," Gunnar explains. "But now we are seeing younger generations go into composition, which I'd connect to the Iceland Academy Of The Arts offering composition classes. It's a huge boon for the festival, but that's only the tip of the iceberg."

The rest of the iceberg, Gunnar reiterates, comes from Iceland's unique geographical position. "Iceland is a meeting place between Europe and North America and we should capitalise on this." But, that said, Gunnar emphasises that, for him, the joy of the festival is still about musical innovation.

He gives a small smile when asked about this year's programme. "Well," he teases, "you'll never know what to expect here." 🍷

ELECTRIC DREAMS

Info:

Listen to 'Juice Menu, Vol. 1' on Spotify, and follow ClubDub on Instagram at @klubbasigur. ClubDub will perform at Sónar Reykjavík 2019.



Clubbed Up

Cross-genre electronica duo ClubDub's refreshing musical menu

Words: Alexander Jean de Fontenay

Photo: Svanhildur Gréta

ClubDub are an intriguing duo whose star rose quickly last summer with the release of their first album "Juice Menu, Vol. 1". Each song thereon is a refreshing beverage for listeners to enjoy. Get it?

Aron Kristinn Jónasson and Brynjar Barkarson's music marries

elements of hip hop and R'n'B with electro pop and trance sounds on hit tracks like 'Clubbed Up' and 'C-3PO.' Collaborations with Aron Can and Auður followed, and the duo have also cemented their live reputation by playing numerous concerts around Iceland.

Aron and Brynjar met in high school and collaborated on humorous, often tongue-in-cheek, videos and songs at "12:00," the school's audiovisual club and comedy show. "We were lucky to get first hand experience of performing live, and our songs and videos became very popular," Brynjar explains. "Now we focus on making music as ClubDub in collaboration with our beat-making brothers in Ratio."

"We've set out to fill a gap in the Icelandic party music scene," says Aron. Their songs are aimed firmly at lighting up the dancefloor, with a faster BPM than many of their contemporaries. "We initially wanted to go in a rap and R'n'B direction," says Aron. "But we decided in the studio to go for faster beats with more bass and clearer lyrics. We like to dance and party so it seems like the perfect fit for us." Brynjar agrees: "Electronic music is the best! It hits you hard, and makes you dance and forget your worries."

ClubDub have secured a slot at Sónar Reykjavík 2019 this coming April, with a number of things on their plate in the meantime. "In January we're releasing a documentary about finding our place in the Icelandic music scene," says Aron. "After that we'll go into album mode."

"Every day above ground is a great day, remember that!" concludes Brynjar. 🍷



This man likes your screensaver

Clichés From Civilization

Ragnar Kjartansson on screensavers, and a lifelong obsession

Words: Alexander Jean de Fontenay Photos: Art Bicnick

the gallery's neighbours a chance to experience the piece. "There is a certain presence in the streets which I find interesting," Ragnar says. "This way I can offer two different viewing experiences of the piece. Each scene represents a day in the week, so viewing it actually takes a whole week."

A nihilistic twist

The scenes depict people wearing white lab coats, walking around in epic landscapes. It was initially going to be situated within the mundane reality of hospital life. "The Danish Building and Property Agency for the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Copenhagen commissioned me



Exhibition
See 'Figures in Landscape', which is ongoing 24/7, at i8 gallery from January 31st to March 16th.

For nearly two decades Ragnar Kjartansson has worked within various realms of art. His most recent piece—'Figures in Landscape'—is a video installation and a sort of clock that presents an alternate perception of time. It's his most high-tech endeavour to date, but during the challenging process of putting it together, Ragnar never lost his sense of irony and made showing up for work fun.

A natural condition

Throughout his career, Ragnar has made us question what being an artist really means—leaving some unsure how to interpret his expression. "I sincerely believe in the concept of duality," he states. "I think beauty and irony can exist simultaneously. It's a combination I enjoy."

Ragnar considers Halldór Kiljan Laxness—Iceland's most-loved writer and poet—as an inspiration, and a

supreme example of this sort of duality. "He wrote the most beautiful sentences the Icelandic language has seen," the artist explains. "Yet, I envision him grinning as he wrote them. He was a modernist, way ahead of his time, playing around with romanticism."

In Ragnar's opinion, irony is a natural condition that makes life enjoyable. "Sincere and serious conversations always have a dash of irony," he says. "Even when it's something close to your heart, irony lurks."

The title of Ragnar's most recent exhibition could be considered ironic in its straight-forwardness. "It references art history directly and has a rhythm similar to classical Greek poetry," he explains. "In Icelandic ['Fígúrir í landslagi'] it sounds like something Jóhannes Kjarval [one of Iceland's most important painters] could have uttered."

Figures in landscape

'Figures in Landscape' is the artist's fourth solo show with i8 Gallery, and features seven 24-hour scenes playing simultaneously on as many screens. "I wanted to work with the concept of time and the nature of painting," he states. "Each scene resembles a painting where nothing really happens. Long moments that turn into days."

A projection in the window of the gallery will also give pedestrians and

to create a signature artwork for their Maersk Tower," the artist explains. "I immediately had a vision of a video-piece being shown in narrow corridors where staff is making the rounds. At first they'll notice the mundane existence of the people in the white lab coats and then the epic Gone With The Wind-style backdrops they live in."

Ragnar was inspired by the idea of medical science and human prog-



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A figure in a landscape

ress, and the visual propaganda that has glamorized it throughout art history. “I am referencing preachy artworks like the Soviet bas reliefs and Diego Rivera’s Ford Motor Company murals,” he says. “The figures in the white lab coats represent logic, science and human progress that roam a man-made landscape. When a person puts on a white lab coat it instantly represents the nobility of man. It’s science and prosperity with a modern nihilistic twist.”

Real-life screensavers

‘Figures in Landscape’ was inspired by the screensavers people are subjected to every day. “I find it interesting that in our everyday life we still manage to be surrounded by epic landscape on our computer desktops and TV screens,” the artist explains. “The scenes in my new piece are clichés of the world and resemble screensavers. There is some movement, but to a completely disjointed extent. It’s life floating by, and a screensaver for the whole building.”

Ragnar’s video installations have become more elaborate with each passing year. “This is my most technically complex piece to date,” he admits. “The technology exists to make it happen, but doing it is quite unprecedented. It’s been a tricky process. I find it a bit funny that this piece looks effortless, graceful and lo-fi at first glance but is actually quite high-tech. It reminds me of how a ballerina has to

appear graceful, but goes through pure hell to be that way.”

A lifelong obsession

As a child, Ragnar got to know the theatre world through his parents, who were both actors. “I was always fascinated by those old hand-painted theatre backdrops,” he explains. “I got the chance to catch the final wave of the theatre productions with romantic and naturalistic set designs.”

“I remember hearing people criticise this classic way of set design,” he continues. “People found it too fake and began using conceptual and more minimal set-design instead.” Young Ragnar then thought to himself: “This is in no way less fake than the old backdrops.”

One day he went with his mother—who was working on a play about Reykjavík’s theatre history at the time—to the attic of the National Theatre. “I will never forget seeing these old, rolled up backdrops on the floor and unrolling them,” he recalls.

The backdrops were made around a century earlier by Sigurður Guðmundsson, an early pioneer of Iceland’s theatre and arts heritage. “Seeing them gave

me a life-long obsession,” Ragnar admits. “It was like unravelling a great mystery. They were the coolest things I had ever seen.”

Future influence

An aesthetic influence from the world of theatre can be found in numerous works by Ragnar, as

early as his art-school graduation piece ‘The Opera’ (2001) and now in ‘Figures in Landscape.’

“In the summer of 2018, we constructed and painted these immense film-sets for each scene at the Reykjavík City

Theatre,” he explains. “I have a terrific team of set designers I’ve gotten familiar working with from my most recent works.”

Ragnar managed to create a unique Icelandic workplace while filming the scenes. “I felt it was significant to have the figures represent civilization itself,” he says. “So we hired a lot of people from all corners of the world to create a proper workplace environment. I felt inclined to take it all the way. It was a grand scale production of people walking around the painted backdrops for days. Showing up for work was so much fun!”

“In our everyday life we still manage to be surrounded by epic landscapes on our computer desktops and TV screens.”



Noble scientists

HARD ROCKING HOURS

15:00 - 18:00



SPECIAL HARD ROCKING HOURS MENU





Bleak Midwinter Haunts

A spooky winter city

Words: Rex Beckett & Hannah Jane Cohen Photos: Art Bicnick

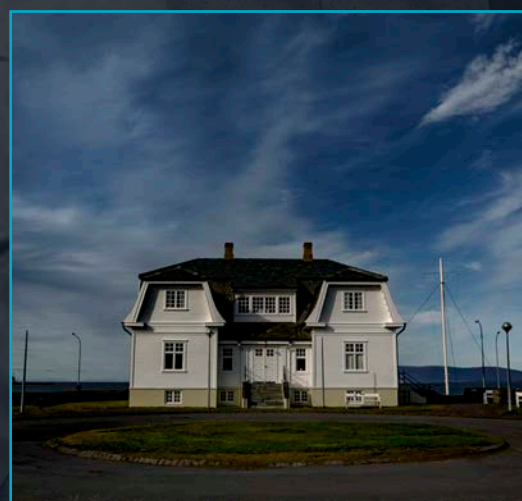
Reykjavík is a creepy ass place. From the weather-beaten houses, to the ancient and decrepit graveyard, to the industrially extended shoreline of downtown, there are all kinds of souls-without-flesh-prisons strolling around

these parts. Although the end of October is when our veil between the physical and ethereal is thinnest, the constant winter darkness sure does make for some supernatural encounters.

Cry Little Sister: Höfði

Borgartún 105

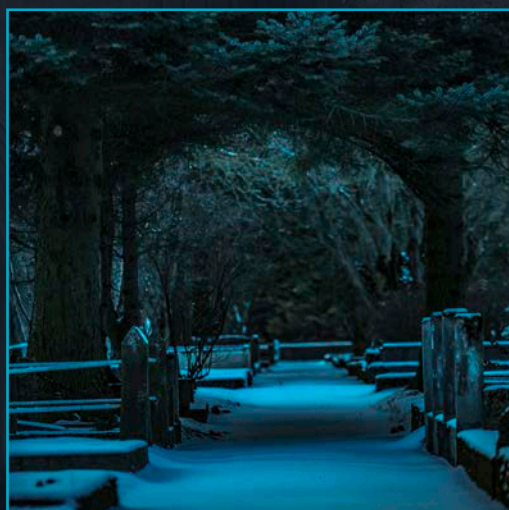
The most notorious haunted house in Iceland, Höfði, is best known abroad for being the meeting place of Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, an instrumental moment leading to the end of the Cold War. That said, this house has hosted its own cold war for far longer. The earliest occupant, judge and poet Einar Benediktsson, claimed it was haunted by the ghost of a young woman, Sólborg Jónsdóttir, who poisoned herself after Einar's verdict on a notorious assault case. At Höfði, she would appear to him at night, pleading and crying. This claim was further substantiated by a British Ambassador who resided at Höfði in 1952, who demanded that Britain sell the house because of what he called, 'bumps in the night.' Since then, it has remained uninhabited and owned by the state. But is it really haunted? Is Sólberg there? Or are these bumps merely the work of a time traveller from the future, super addled by the end of communism? Find out for yourself.



Dig Up Her Bones: Austurvöllur Graves

Alþingi

The square in front of Parliament has recently been a hot topic for ghoulish-lovers and history conservationists alike, as an ancient burial ground was unearthed during the early stages of foundation work for a new hotel being built on the site. When first uncovered, staff in the previously standing building looked out of their windows directly onto open graves containing intact skeletons, possibly of their own ancestors. The burial site is now covered, but the park is still unsettling. If you feel too rattled, dip into Skúli Craft Bar on Aðalstræti—on the edges of this burial site—and they'll ease your nerves with good beers. They also have tables perfectly sized for your Ouija Board.



Trapped On The Shore: The Húrra Ghost

Naustin

This famous nightlife hotspot is built where Reykjavík's former shoreline landed, and a portion of the city's original foundation wall is still exposed in the basement of the bar. Staff in the bar have reported seeing strange shadows along the wall, and feeling random cold chills and sudden nauseating waves in the far staircase, particularly earlier in the day and when the bar is sparsely filled. Theories have suggested that it is the spirit of a young man lost at sea—either overboard or by choice—and that he is lonely and sad. Join him, if you desire, in his sorrows, with a couple shots of Fernet.



Hallowed Ground: Hólavallagarður Cemetery

Suðurgata

Of course, it is essential to mention the wonderful old cemetery on the west side of Reykjavík, just a hop from downtown. With some of the oldest graves in the city, where locals can truly go trace back their family history, this consecrated square is less ghoulish than a spiritual playground with every kind of energy flowing freely, like a high school cafeteria. There are also a lot of cats. For an extra beautiful spooky night, go late and stroll when it is snowing while listening to Hilmar Örn Hilmarsson's original score to 'Children of Nature.' When you finally get home, and the nightmares come, let them.



BEST OF REYKJAVÍK

Best Happy Hour

Kaffi Brennslan

Laugavegur 21

As the day wanes and the caffeine jitters kick in, this cool coffee house does the job of transitioning you into beer-land with their very nice happy hour deals. "I always find myself going there because it's just comfortable and nice," one panellist said. Located right smack in the centre of town so you can easily pop in for a quick one on your way home, or stay and drink the evening away, it's just a cool, casual, calm place with friendly staff, good beers and tasty snacks. There's also a great patio for when the weather is nice.

Runners-up:



Bravó

Laugavegur 22

It's pretty hard to be unhappy when happy hour literally lasts all day long! From opening at 11am until 8pm you can get beers and wine at discount prices and sip them in warm cosy comfort whilst people-watching the downtown riff raff passing by. Bravo, Bravo!



Bryggjan Brugghús

Grandagarður 8

This massive bistro and micro-brewery boasts a gorgeous selection of beers that you can see being brewed on location, and serve up their own IPA for just 500 ISK during happy hour. It's right on the gateway to Grandi—a rapidly booming hot spot in town—so it's the perfect place to start before catching some culture.

February 1st—February 28th

In Your Pocket

Reykjavík Map

Places We Like

Best Of Reykjavík

Perfect Day

A face of the downtown scene tells us how to spend a perfect day in Reykjavík



“I’d buy one night at a museum, preferably Þjóðminjasafnið, to have them be open until 4:30, the same as party hours.”

Photo: Timothée Lambrecq

Anna Gyða Sigurgísladóttir

Anna Gyða Sigurgísladóttir is a radio host at RÚV. This is how she’d spend her perfect day in Reykjavík.

First thing in the morning

I would start the day off by meeting my best friends at **Reykjavík Roasters**—the old one on Kárástígur. We do this thing on Tuesdays where we meet at 8:00 sharp—which is extremely early for us—but we’ve found it’s the best way to start the day. We laugh so much and it changes the whole day. Those days are my favourite.

Mid-Morning

I’d go swimming at **Sundhöllin**. There, I’d spend two hours laying in the children’s pool, doing nothing, closing my eyes, and hopefully not

meeting anyone I know, which is hard in Reykjavík. I’ve become very introverted with time and always go to the same places, so I’d stop at **Snaps** for lunch, and order the duck.

Afternoon

After lunch, I’d head to **Góði Hirðirinn**. I love when I can go there with all the time in the world. It’s such a big open space with so many colours and people flowing around you that if you’re in a rush, it can become the worst place in the world... but if you have the time to explore, it’s so peaceful. My goal there is always books. They often have new English books that aren’t for sale in Icelandic book stores. I’ve found most of my favourite books there. I also go there for inspiration, to find new artists and theorists. With the book I found in

Góði Hirðirinn, I’d head to the floor of **Borgarbókasafnið** where they have the hammocks. It’s quiet and cosy and it’s really nice to read around people.

Dinner

For dinner, I’d stop by **Fiskbúðin** and **Frú Lauga** in Laugaveigar to get loads of fresh things. Then, I’d try making room for a four hour meditative cooking session; make really good food and invite friends or family for dinner. The perfect day criteria means I can do whatever I want right? I’d ask **Þjóðminjasafnið** if they’d open their doors until 4:30 AM, the same as party hours. I would love more things to be open in the off hours, because I typically have such little time to do daylight things. Finally, I would go home and binge ‘Six Feet Under’ until I fall asleep. 🍷

Vital Info



Useful Numbers

Emergency: 112
On-call doctors: 1770
Dental emergency: 575 0505
Taxi: Hreyfill: 588 5522 - BSR: 561 0000

Post Offices

The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5, open Mon-Fri 09:00-18:00.

Pharmacies

Lyf og heilsa, Egilsgata 3, tel: 563 1020
Lyfja, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045
and Lágmúli 5, tel: 533 2300

Opening Hours - Bars & Clubs

Bars can stay open until 01:00 on weekdays and 04:30 on weekends.

Opening Hours - Shops & Banks

Most shops: Mon-Fri 10-18, Sat 10-16, Sun closed. Banks: Mon-Fri 09-16

Swimming Pools

Sundhöllin, the downtown pool at Barónsstígur, is an indoor swimming pool with hot tubs and a diving board. More pools: gpv.is/swim
Open: Mon-Thu from 06:30-22. Fri from 06:30-20. Sat from 08-16. Sun from 10-18.

Public Toilets

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

Public Transport

Most buses run every 20-30 min
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Venue Finder

Venues

The numbers on the right (i.e. E4) tell you position on the map on the next page

Austur	Austurstræti 7	D3	lónó	Vonarstræti 3	E3
American Bar	Austurstræti 8	D3	Kex Hostel	Skúlagata 28	E7
Andrými	Bergþórugata 20	G6	Kaffibarinn	Bergstaðastræti 1	E4
B5	Bankastræti 5	E4	Kaffi Vinyl	Hverfisgatur 76	E6
Bar Ananas	Klappastígur 28	E5	Kiki Queer Bar	Laugavegur 22	E5
Bió Paradís	Hverfisgata 54	E5	Loft	Bankastræti 7	E4
Bjarni Fel	Austurstræti 20	E4	Mengi	Oðinsgata 2	F5
Bravó	Laugavegur 22	E5	Nordic House	Sturlagata 5	H2
Boston	Laugavegur 28b	E5	Paloma	Naustin	D3
Dillon	Laugavegur 30	E5	Prikjö	Bankastræti 12	E4
Dubliner	Naustin 1-3	D3	R6013	Ingólfsstræti 20	E4
English Pub	Austurstræti 12	D3	Reykjavík Roasters	Kárástígur 1	F5
Gaukurinn	Tryggvagata 22	D3	Stofan Café	Vesturgata 3	D3
Hard Rock Café	Lækjargata 2a	D3	Ölsmíðjan	Lækjargata 10	E3
Hressó	Austurstræti 20	D3	Tivoli bar	Hafnarstræti 4	D3
Húrra	Naustin	D3	Tjarnarbró	Tjarnargata 12	E3
ART67	Laugavegur 67	F7	ASÍ Art Gallery	Freyjugata 41	G6
Aurora Reykjavík	Grandagarður 2	B1	Asgrímur Jónsson Museum	Bergstaðastr. 74	G4
Berg Contemporary	Klappastígur 16	E5	Berg Contemporary	Ingólfsstræti 20	E5
The Culture House	Hverfisgata 15	E5	The Culture House	Hverfisgata 15	E5
The Einar Jónsson Museum	Eiríksgröta 1	G5	The Einar Jónsson Museum	Eiríksgröta 1	G5
Ekkisens	Bergstaðast. 25b	F4	Galleri List	Skipholt 50A	H10
Hafnarborg	Strandgata 34, 220	D3	Hitt Húsið	Pósthússtræti 3-5	D4
Hverfisgalleri	Hverfisgata 4	D4	i8 Gallery	Tryggvagata 16	D3

Museums & Galleries

The Penis Museum	Laugavegur 116	F8	Ásmundarsafn	Sigtún	D3
Kirsuþrátt	Vesturgata 4	D3	Reykjavík City Library	Tryggvagata 15	D3
Kling & Bang	Grandagarður 20	A4	Árbæjarsafn	Kistuhylur 4	D3
Listastofan	Hringbraut 119	F3	The Settlement	Abalstræti 16	D3
Living Art Museum	Grandagarður 20	A4	Reykjavík Museum of Photography	Tryggvagata 15	D3
Mokka Kaffi	Skólavörðustígur 3A	E5	Saga Museum	Grandagarður 2	B2
Museum Of Design and Applied Art	Garðatorg 1	D3	Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum	Laugarnestangi 70	D3
The National Gallery of Iceland	Frikkjuvegur 7	F3	SÍM	Hafnarstræti 16	D3
The National Museum	Sudurgata 41	G2	Tveir Hrafnar	Baldursgata 12	G4
The Nordic House	Sturlagata 5	H2	Wind & Weather Window Gallery	Hverfisgata 37	E5
Hafnarhús	Tryggvagata 17	D3			
Kjarvalsstaðir	Flokkagata 24	H8			

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The Map

Get the bigger, more detailed version of The Reykjavík Grapevine City Map at your nearest hotel or guesthouse, with selections from our Best-Of awards, vital info, downtown bus stops and a wider view of the city.

Dining

1. Snaps

Pórsgrata 1

Snaps is a beloved casual-chic bistro with a forget-you're-in-Reykjavík vibe thanks to its lush greenery and warm lighting. On a grey day, nothing beats sitting by the greenhouse walls with their excellent moules frites. Did we mention they make a stellar creme brûlée as well? A true keeper.

2. Block Burger

Skólavörðustígur 8

Block Burger is an office favourite. You can see their white paper to-go bags stacked on writers' desks. Modelled heavily on the American chain Shake Shack in presentation, Block is reasonably priced (for Reykjavík) and has quick service. It's a lunchtime spot worth checking out.

3. Ísbúðin Valdís

Grandagarður 21

Valdis is perhaps Reykjavík's most beloved ice cream parlour. All their ice cream is made in-house every morning. If you like liquorice, try their Turkish Pepper flavour: it looks like liquid cement, but it's one of their most popular offerings. Valdis doesn't have much seating, so get your ice cream to go and enjoy it in a parked car – Icelandic style.

4. Hannesarholt

Grundarstígur 10

Hannesarholt was officially opened to the public in 2013, and it serves as a reminder of what Iceland used to be. The beautiful building hosts exhibits, concerts, and a fabulous vegan-friendly menu that uses local produce. Don't miss the salmon either—it's cooked to perfection.

5. Brauð & Co.

Frakkastígur 16

Brauð & Co. burst onto the bakery scene in 101 Reykjavík. Regulars swear by their "snuður"—cinnamon bread rolls smothered with a sugary glaze. They take it a step further and stuff the classics with blueberries and whatnot, eliciting inappropriate satisfied moans. Get there early to snatch a warm one.

6. Dill

Hverfisgata 12

If you're a gourmand looking for a memorable meal when in Reykjavík,

Dill has to top your list. Dill showcases the best of Iceland with seasonal menus, paying homage to the island's bounty, executed with all the tweezer precision of modern cuisine. Don't even think twice about splurging for the seven-course menu—it's the only way to do it.

7. Hverfisgata 12

Hverfisgata 12

The "Nameless Pizza Place" at Hverfisgata 12 has been pushing that doughy envelope with topping combinations that'll leave you scratching your head at first and rubbing your belly later. Try the beetroot pizza or the soya mushroom, sausage and pickled chilli number, and make a night of it with some excellent cocktails from the bar.

8. Ramen Momo

Tryggvagata 16

Iceland's first and only Ramen bar has upped their broth game with a silky slick Tonkotsu. They have a choice of noodles and broths catering to food intolerances and fads, and a popular 'Ramen of the Month'. We suggest getting the Ramen Tonkotsu with their perfectly cooked soy cured eggs.

9. The Fish Company

Vesturgata 2a

Fiskfélagið has been steadfastly dishing out some of the best seafood in Iceland. Don't try too hard to make sense of the ingredient/country mashup—just focus on the food. Our former food editor described it as "fish so buttery, it must be on laxatives." Yum.

10. Ali Baba

Veltusund 3b

This spot has often been awarded Grapevine's "Best Late Night Bite." Needless to say, it's the perfect place to satisfy pregnancy cravings, splitting hangovers and midnight binges. We recommend the lamb kofte wrap: it's to die for.

Drinking

11. Dillon Whiskey Bar

Laugavegur 30

A mix between grunge and classy, Dillon Whiskey Bar dominates their little stretch of Laugavegur. Crammed most nights with rockers, metalheads and tourists looking for a place to mumble AC/DC songs

into their beer, Dillon boasts a wide selection of over 100 whiskeys and hosts some of Iceland's best hard rock bands on the weekends.

12. Kiki Queer Bar

Laugavegur 22

If you're looking for Kiki, walk until you see the building that is entirely rainbow. The only dedicated queer bar in Iceland, Kiki is beloved by all the local gays, lesbians and in-betweens. There, find drag shows, queer concerts, and hot sweaty dance floors every weekend night. They also have glitter shots for 500 ISK.

13. Stofan

Vesturgata 3

When the name of the place literally translates to "the living room," it's pretty much expected to be a very cosy place to kick back with some late-afternoon, early-evening drinks. All their beers and wines on happy hour from 4pm until 8pm, and it's a lovely central location with a dim basement and an airy first floor.

14. Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

With a saloon-like atmosphere in the daytime, when dogs and kids run around amongst the diehard local crowd and groups of confused tourists, Kaffibarinn turns into an all-out party during the small hours of the weekend. Whether you're holiday day-drinking or getting messy, it never fails to amuse.

15. Gaukurinn

Tryggvagata 22

If you prefer your music grungy, raw and weird, then Gaukurinn is your place. With dim lights, leather sofas and a gender neutral bathroom, it's become the perfect hangout for the unorthodox Reykjavíkingar, so if you're looking for like-minded peeps to drink with, here you go.

16. Mikkeller & Friends

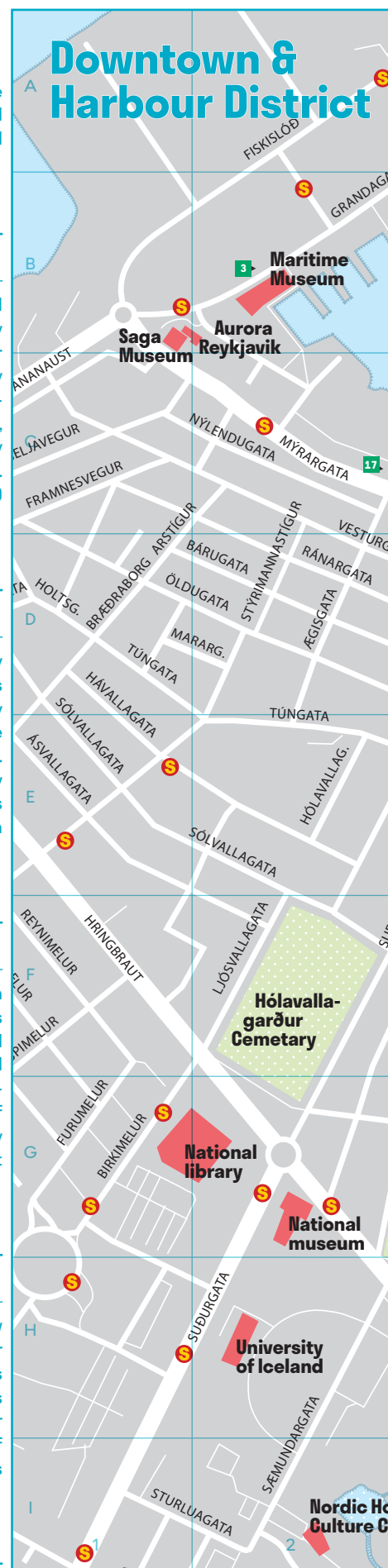
Hverfisgata 12

Another great spot for beer-tasting, this place has a unique and constantly rotating selection of beers from Mikkeller and other carefully picked craft breweries, knowledgeable bartenders, antique-chic décor, and it's located upstairs from Hverfisgata 12, so you get good weekend DJs, fancy bar snacks and pizzas.

17. Slippbarinn

Mýrargata 2

This standard go-to bar for cocktails holds its own as far as the mixing game goes, with a unique menu and highly skilled bartenders to shake them up. The bar itself is a beautifully designed space with a gorgeous view, right in the Old Harbour.



18. The Pedersen Suite

Ingólfsstræti 7A

This rooftop bar is located on the top of the cavernous Gamla Bíó theatre. It has loads of seating with soft furniture to luxuriate on, a view across the harbour, cocktails, and all the sun you could wish for.

Shopping

19. Kolaportið

Tryggvagata 19

Kolaportið is a huge indoor flea market that takes place on weekends. It's filled with stalls selling bric-a-brac, secondhand clothes,

E

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J

Grandi Mathöll is Reykjavik's only street food hall, located in an old fish factory!

← it's over there!



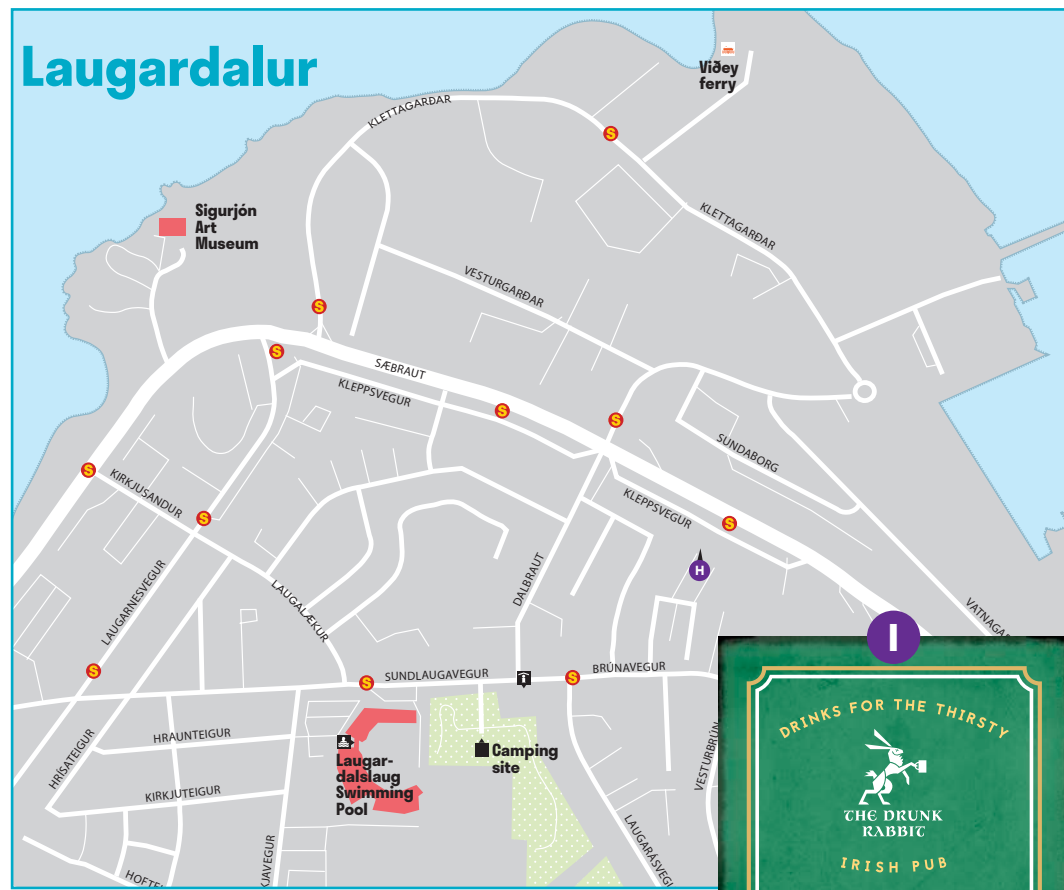
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New In Town



Kaktus Espresso bar
Vítastígur 12

If it's getting too difficult to lap-top in peace at your favourite coffee spot without a bunch of tourists honking down your neck, rejoice. The Kaktus Espresso bar is a smart new café in Reykjavik, with espresso made from imported Italian beans, soup of the day for under 1000 ISK, tasty sandwiches, and ample table space. There's plenty of seating and power sockets for 101's wandering freelance desk jockeys, and you can even buy a cactus or house plant to go. JR

unusual foods, antique postcards, lóppapeysur, and the occasional religious booth filled with literature and pamphlets.

20. Omnom Chocolate

Hólmaslóð 4
You can see the whole process by which Omnom's chocolate bars are made here, from when they receive the cocoa beans to when they wrap them in their beautiful packing. Then you can buy some for the trip home.

21. Mál og Menning

Laugavegur 18
Mál og Menning has three levels with great curated displays of the

latest titles, and for visitors there's an area dedicated to selling recent and classic Icelandic literature in English. The café is a haunt of local writers, and it hosts occasional book launches and readings, too.

22. Lucky Records

Rauðarárstígur 10
Lucky Records is probably the biggest record shop in Iceland, with shelves upon shelves of new and used vinyl and CDs on offer. They have a small stage where local and visiting bands sometimes perform, and expert staff that can always help you find what you're looking for.

23. Farmers And Friends

Hólmaslóð 2 & Laugavegur 37

If you want to pick up an Icelandic sweater, peruse the Farmers Market outlet. Their wares combine Nordic style with a fresh aesthetic, providing you with a modern take on traditional pieces.

24. Tulipop

Skólavörðustígur 43
Tulipop serves up everything from lamps to wallets all covered in the cutest monsters you'll ever see. The Icelandic brand's flagship store is an explosion of pastels and neons. Stop here for gifts, souvenirs, or just a little adorable pick-me-up.

25. Fjällräven

Laugavegur 67

Swedish outdoor brand Fjällräven's classic rucksack is so durable that they've been known to become family heirlooms, passed down to kids by parents who, presumably, grew up and got briefcases and fancy handbags instead. You'll see their duds adorning the backs of many Reykjavik-ites today.

26. Rauðhetta & Úlfurinn

Skólavörðustígur 8
In a sense Rauðhetta & Úlfurinn is a Reykjavik classic. It's been around for over a decade, and the service is congenial without being overbearing. People are loyal to their favourite hairdresser, meaning some of them have long waiting lists, but pop in and try your luck.

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01. Dark Music Days

11pm 1.500 ISK at tix.is
1am **DJ KGB** – Free entry

02. Dark Music Days

11pm 1.500 ISK at tix.is
1am **DJ ÓLI DÓRI** – Free entry

04. Mánudjass

9pm Monday Night Jazz
Free entry

06. DJ. Silja Glommi

10pm Free entry

08. Bagdad Brothers

8pm Concert – Free entry

09. DJ. Motherfunker

11pm Free entry

11. Mánudjass

9pm Monday Night Jazz
Free entry

13. Z – DJ. set

10pm Free entry

14. Icetralia

8pm Live Podcast – 2.000 ISK at door
11pm **TWO NON BLONDES : KARAOKE**
Free entry

15. Svartidauði

10pm Concert – Tickets at tix.is
00am **DJ Símon FKNHNSM** – Free entry

16. Burlesque

9pm W/ Ladies and Gentleman – tix.is
00am **DJ ÓLI DÓRI** – Free entry

18. Mánudjass

9pm Monday Night Jazz
Free entry

20. DJ. Milljón

9pm Free entry

21. HAHA voða fyndið

9pm 1500 ISK at door

22. DJ. Davíð Roach

9pm Concert TBA – Tickets at tix.is
11pm **DJ DAVID ROACH** – Free entry

25. Mánudjass

9pm Monday Night Jazz
Free entry

26. Ping-Pong

9pm Tournament – Free entry



“We had some whacked-out ideas like trying to recreate a recording of a real party with just us two.”



Drexler and Pu\$\$whip in the bright lights

TRACK BY TRACK

‘Psychoplasemics’ By Psychoplasemics

Dark boom-bap meets dolphins in one psycho release

Words: Lord Pu\$\$whip & Hannah Jane Cohen
Photo: Magnus Andersen

Psychoplasemics is the collaborative project of Lord Pu\$\$whip and Alfreð Drexler. Their first song, ‘101 Reykjavik,’ came out in 2014, and they’ve finally followed it up with a long-awaited eponymous debut album. Here, the two take us through the album track by track.

107 RVK

This one is definitely one of the strongest songs on the album. It’s a sort of sequel to our first song, ‘101 Reykjavik,’ which is very personal as 101 and 107 are our postal codes in Reykjavik. We made this completely off our tits in Alfreð’s apartment and it was literally willed into being. We also had some whacked-out ideas like trying to recreate a recording of a real party with just us two, inspired by the intro of Marvin Gaye’s ‘What’s Going On.’

Miranda

The samples in ‘Miranda’ are from all over the place—bits from the soundtracks of an old Czech film, an old British horror film, the Icelandic rapper Gísli Pálmi, and a lot more elements. It’s probably the most sonically maximal track on the album. It’s a good taste of our style.

De Pijp/Erdbeermund

We made these in hazy sessions on vacation in Amsterdam with our friend BNGRBOY, arguably the biggest producer in the country, who’s worked with everyone from Icelandic rappers to Ólafur Arnalds. He really shows his talents on these two tracks, especially ‘De Pijp.’

Wavy Friday

This was the last song we made for the album. It was a late Berlin night, and we chopped up an ill Japanese pop sample, recorded acoustic guitar on top of it and added a bunch of stuff. It’s a good example of the nostalgic, bittersweet vibe our beats often have.

Dolphin’s Delight

On this song, we wanted to go all out in saccharine smoothness, with psychedelic yacht rock vibes. We got our friend Indriði to shred electric guitar while Nnamdi Umez plays electric bass. Dolphin’s Delight is a type of truffle in Amsterdam and the cheezy idyllic picture of dolphins jumping in the ocean on the canister fit the vibe perfectly. We also used some recordings from an echo

chamber in the abandoned radio tower Teufelsberg in Berlin.

Interlude ft. Jon Riverjey

Here, Pusswhip’s dad, legendary Icelandic television personality Jón Ársæll, does an introduction to ‘Side B’ of the album. It’s supposed to add to the immersive vibe of the album, ending in a field recording of a car ride, which hints to the type of fleeting cinematic trip we want the album to sound like.

Kriminelt

‘Kriminelt’ has a dark boom-bap beat with cult Icelandic rapper TY of Geimfarar, which was an older group of similarly-minded guys who preceded our generation of forward-thinking hip-hop in Iceland. The beat is a tribute to the ‘90s, with samples from Stretch & Bobbito’s old radio show and sounds from the L.A. Riots, while TY raps absurdist & sardonic rhymes in Icelandic.

Gullhamar

One of the hottest young Icelandic rap stars, Birnir, mixes classic bad boy bully rap with seductive lines for the ladies over a Nintendo-esque beat. It’s our futuristic twist on classic ‘90s R&B.

Berlin Nights

‘Berlin Nights’ was our take on ‘90s house from Chicago and Detroit, mixing an eerie, down-pitched piano sample with sounds from broken toys and 808s, as well as a funky bass-line on a down-pitched electric guitar. ♪

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Music



Communing with the trows: Orkadian húlfólk

Release The Trows

Arnljótur communes with the Orkadian fairies as Kraftigalli

Words: Tara Njála Ingvarsdóttir Photos: Timothée Lambreq

EP & Concert

Kraftigalli will perform on February 8th at 18:15 at Kópavogskirkja with a visual performance in the volcanic rocks; he also plays at Mengi on February 14th. Get the 'Trítill' EP via smitrecords.bandcamp.com.

Trows rockin' and rollin', joking and telling stories, oh my! Icelandic micro-label Smit Records released Kraftigalli's adventurous three track EP 'Trítill' on vinyl last autumn. Trítlar, or trows, are mysterious, mischievous fairies or spirits from the folklore of the Orkney Islands. They're small and shy, only leaving their habitats at night to enter people's homes as they sleep. There are tales of them kidnapping musicians, or luring them into their dens. It seems like multi-tasking artist and musician Arnljótur Sigurðsson is certainly one of those lured, and he shares this adventure on his 'Trítill' EP, made under the pseudonym Kraftigalli.

Wall wormhole

Arnljótur is a well-known musical mastermind, and has been delving into trows since he was visited by some, who climbed into his subconscious. "I dreamt there were trows coming out of a wall in a procession," he recounts, his eyes glimmering. "They were neither happy nor upset, and waved their hands to say hello."

"At the time I was making sound-poetry and wordplay, which are sort of wormholes in language," he continues. "I felt like it fit nicely with the trows. They love to sing, dance, drink and party, and they appeared to me through some kind of a wormhole."

Hold the door

Arnljótur felt a duty to document

gpv.is/music
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their visit, and the result is the 'Trítill' EP and a collection of drawings. "I had to document it," he says. "If I hadn't they might not have stuck around." He channeled the trows when making the music. They seem like playful and dionysian beings. The EP begins with them rockin' and rollin', then they start to play with words before a hip-hop-happening storytime finale.

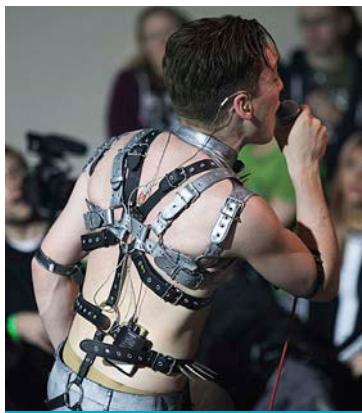
Arnljótur's live performance of the songs is an ethnological journey that brings the trows' presence full circle. It tells the tale of their arrival, revealing where they come from and how they act and play. He essentially gives them a gateway to us, too. That is perhaps how the doorway between trows and people has remained open over time.

Drawn portal

Icelandic nature and its mythical creatures (elves, trolls, et cetera) are often credited as an inspiration for Icelandic music. "I've written poetry about nature, but I haven't felt it inspiring my musical ventures per se," smiles Arnljótur. "But, to my own surprise, I'm now making music about the trows."

Arnljótur's depiction of the trows is certainly a fun ride. With 'Trítill,' he invites us to joke with them, party and dance with them, and get a glimpse of our world through their eyes. His drawings of the creatures are another portal between our world and theirs. "People can get a couple of trows to hang up in their homes," he says. "Then they can appear from their walls just as they appeared to me. I also make sure to feed them—maybe I give them Smarties, landi, pilsner and such. Once I gave them tuna salad and peppermint oil, which I thought would be a strange combination."

"It's important to keep the trows on your good side," he finishes. "When they visit a place they need a bit of food in their bellies so they won't get mad, or hit you on the head, giving you a bald spot." 🐉



Hatari: Future Eurovision champs?

MUSIC NEWS Iceland has some interesting prospects vying to represent the country at Eurovision this year.

Skaði is a trans singer whose entry, 'Jeijó, keyrum alla leið', is a collaboration with **Elli Grill** and **Glymur**. Gothic techno troupe **Hatari** have entered a track called "Hatrið mun sigra," or "Hate Will Prevail." Their entry could prove controversial given the context—when it was first announced that Eurovision would be held in Israel, 17,000 Icelanders signed a petition calling for a boycott. RÚV considered the petition, but pressed ahead. In any case, semi-finals will be held on February 9th and 16th, with the final decider on March 2nd.



Gyða: eyes on the prize

Two Icelandic artists have made the longlist for this year's **Nordic Music Prize**. Acronymic twins **GYÐA** and **GDRN** are both up for the award, which will be presented at the Norwegian music industry by: Larm Festival on February 28th. GYÐA's "Evolution" is an album with a mesmerising cello-and-voice sound, and GDRN's stylish R'n'B also made waves on her home turf. To win, the Icelanders will have to best Swedish greats Robyn and Jenny Wilson, and artists from Norway, Finland and Denmark. Norway have won three years running, and the last Icelandic artist to win was Jónsi in 2011.



Dj. flugvél og geimskip's fish friend

Dj. flugvél og geimskip has released a new album, "Our Atlantis," via Dutch label Geertruida Records. Having previously explored the themes of space travel and the ocean floor, the artist says Atlantis was the logical next step. As always, her music is a bold and unusual mixture of "influences from all over; Syria, India and South America, 90's drum and bass, Bollywood, and punk." Dj. flugvél og geimskip will tour Europe with veteran noise-rock outfit **Lightning Bolt** to promote the release—a tour on which "the music is very different, but what the bands have in common is releasing a computer game." JR

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- 2/2 THRILL OF CONFUSION ALBUM RELEASE SUPPORT BY DRULLA, INZEROS
- 6/2 POETRY & PROSE NIGHT
- 8/2 "HANS & JACKIE: THE WORLD TOUR" DRAG SHOW BY HANS AND JACKIE MOON
- 9/2 REYKJAVÍK GOTH NIGHT: VOMITO NEGRO & DADA POGROM
- 14/2 NÚMER NÚLL + SUPPORT
- 15/2 DRAG-SÚGUR QUEER VARIETY SHOW
- 16/2 EXILE ALBUM RELEASE SUPPORT BY PREMIUM, PALADIN
- 17/2 SINGER/SONGWRITER NIGHT
- 23/2 MIGHTY BEAR, INZEROS AND MORE
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Our Picks



★ dj. flugvél og geimskip & Axis Dancehall

February 20th - 20:00 - IDNÓ - 500 ISK

IDNÓ is fast becoming the new centre of Reykjavík's music scene, with a constant flow of exciting concerts, fresh collaborations and gigs from Iceland's established and up and coming musicians. On February 20th, dj. flugvél og geimskip will take to the concert hall's grand stage to celebrate the release

of her new album, 'Our Atlantis,' which picks up where her last LP, 'Midnight On The Bottom Of The Ocean,' left off. Expect strange encounters with deep sea creatures and mythical beings set to deeply eccentric electronica, with no shortage of bubbles, smoke and lasers, and an ocean's worth of charm. Support comes from Axis Dancehall, a vaunted emerging electronica duo who've also been making waves in recent months. **JR**



★ Munstur

Feb. 1st - 21:00 - Kvartýra N°49

With a laid back summer vibe, this electronic pop band is infectious. Please, infect us. Free admission! **HJC**



★ Sæunn Þorsteinsdóttir

Feb. 20th - 20:00 - Ásmundarsalur - 3,200 ISK

Cellist Sæunn Þorsteinsdóttir's newest effort consists of four works by Icelandic composers. Together, they form a stark reveal of Sæunn's view on the current zeitgeist in Icelandic music. Each work is an intimate monologue and a celebration of the cello. **HJC**



★ bagdad brothers

Feb. 8th - 20:30 - Húrra - Free!

The Best Live Band at the Grapevine Music Awards 2019 takes the stage. Need we say more? **HJC**



★ 'If I Think Of Germany At Night' & Plútó Double Feature

Feb. 9th - 20:00 - Bíó Paradís - 500-1,400 ISK

Start your night with a screening of 'If I Think Of Germany At Night', a documentary that profiles five pioneers of electronic music as they entertain the sweaty masses worldwide. Afterwards, see Reykjavík's premiere DJ collective Plútó pay tribute. Bow down. **HJC**

February 1st—February 28th

Concerts & Nightlife

Events listed are all live performances and DJs. Venues are listed by day. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit grapevine.is/happening. Send your listings to: listings@grapevine.is.

Friday February 1st

Dark Music Days 2019: Caput Ensemble
19:00 Harpa
Dark Music Days 2019: Yrkja IV
12:00 Harpa
Dark Music Days 2019: Heiða Árnadóttir
17:00 Mengi
Dark Music Days 2019: SiGRÚN & Allenheimer
23:30 Húrra
Dark Music Days 2019: Leifur Ríkissambandsins
20:30 IDNÓ
After Work Garage House Party: DJ Tommi White
17:05 Orangeesspressobar
Múlinn Jazz Club: Múlinn Sextet
21:00 Harpa
★ **Munstur**
21:00 Kvartýra N°49
DJ KGB
23:00 Húrra
DJ Jenni's Diva Night
21:00 Stúdentakjallarinn
DJ Elsa Bje
22:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
★ **Red Bull Music: S.A.D. Festival**
21:00 Paloma

Saturday February 2nd

Dark Music Days 2019: Myrkrabörn
14:00 Harpa
Dark Music Days 2019: Sound Mass
18:00 Harpa
Dark Music Days 2019: Reykjavik Chamber Orchestra
21:00 Harpa
Dark Music Days 2019: Arma Agharta & DJ Motherfunker
23:30 Húrra
Inga Björk Album Release Concert
20:00 Fríkirkjan
Trill Of Confusion / Drulla / InZeros
22:30 Gaukurinn
Russian Red
19:00 IDNÓ

Sunday February 3rd

Sunday Jazz: Ingi Bjarni Trio
20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
The Chamber Music Society 2018-19
16:00 Harpa

Monday February 4th

MonJazz
21:00 Húrra

Tuesday February 5th

Karaoke Party!
21:00 Gaukurinn

Wednesday February 6th

Múlinn Jazz Club: Old School
21:00 Harpa
Don Lockwood Band
21:00 Slippbarinn
Party Karaoke With Þórunn Antonía
21:00 Sæta Svinið
DJ Silja Glommi
22:00 Húrra
Warmland
20:00 IDNÓ

Thursday February 7th

Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Open Rehearsal
9:30 Harpa
Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Prokofiev & Brahms
19:30 Harpa
ADHD
18:30, 21:00 Mengi
Hofi & Gunnar
21:00 Petersen svítan
Ilona Meija & Dzintra Eriha
20:00 Nordic House
Hausar Drum & Bass Night
21:00 Paloma
Birthday Boy Records Concert
21:00 BarAnanas

Friday February 8th

Kira Kira: Live Soundscape
20:00 Ásmundarsafn
Skúli Sverris
19:00 Hafnarhús
Ben Frost
21:00 Mengi
★ **bagdad brothers: Album Release Show**
20:30 Húrra
After Work Garage House Party: DJ Tommi White
17:05 Orangeesspressobar
DJ Stymir

23:00 Húrra
Landaboí\$ & Sprite Zero Klan
22:00 Stúdentakjallarinn
DJ Margrét Maack
22:00 Bryggjan Brugghús

Saturday February 9th

Reykjavik Goth Night: Vomito Negro & Dada Pogrom
21:00 Gaukurinn
★ **'If I Think Of Germany At Night' & Plútó**
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Ólöf Arnalds
21:00 Mengi
DJ Motherfunker
23:00 Húrra
DJ Óli Dóri
22:30 Bryggjan Brugghús

Sunday February 10th

The Reykjavik Big Band: Icelandic Women
20:00 Harpa
Sunday Jazz
20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
Welcome Home - Jazz!:
Ingi Bjarni Skúlason Piano Trio
20:00 Harpa
Classical Sundays: Kordo String Quartet
16:00 Harpa

Monday February 11th

MonJazz
21:00 Húrra

Tuesday February 12th

Karaoke Party!
21:00 Gaukurinn

Wednesday February 13th

Múlinn Jazz Club: Gammar
21:00 Harpa
Don Lockwood Band
21:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
Party Karaoke With Þórunn Antonía
21:00 Sæta Svinið
DJ Z
22:00 Húrra
Iceland University Of The Arts: Lunch Concert - Valentines Day
12:15 Kjarvalsstaðir

Thursday February 14th

Númer Núll
21:00 Gaukurinn
Arnlfótur Kraftgalli Trimpilrútur
21:00 Mengi
Valentine's Day Concert
21:00 Petersen svítan

Friday February 15th

Pink Iceland Queer Friday: Trilogia
19:00 Pink Iceland
After Work Garage House Party:

DJ Tommi White
17:05 Orangeesspressobar
Heiða Árnadóttir
21:00 Mengi
DJ Símon fknhdsm
23:00 Húrra
DJ Stymir Dansson
22:00 Bryggjan Brugghús

Saturday February 16th

JFDR
21:00 Mengi
Jóhanna Guðrún Sings Celine Dion
20:00 Salurinn
Peter And The Wolf
14:00, 16:00 Harpa
Svavar Knútur
13:00 Spöngin Culture House
DJ Óli Dóri
23:00 Húrra
EXILE Album Release Concert
22:00 Gaukurinn
DJ Katla
22:00 Bryggjan Brugghús

Sunday February 17th

Sunday Jazz
20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
Singer/Songwriter Night
20:00 Gaukurinn

Monday February 18th

MonJazz
21:00 Húrra

Tuesday February 19th

Karaoke Party!
21:00 Gaukurinn

Wednesday February 20th

★ **dj flugvél og geimskip & Axis Dancehall**
20:00 IDNÓ
Múlinn Jazz Club: Sigmar Þór 'Aurora'
21:00 Harpa
Classics In The Moorland: On The Wings Of Song
20:00 Nordic House
Don Lockwood Band
21:00 Slippbarinn
Party Karaoke With Þórunn Antonía
21:00 Sæta Svinið
DJ Milljón
22:00 Húrra
★ **Sæunn Þorsteinsdóttir 'Vernacular' Pre-Release Show**
20:00 Ásmundarsalur

Thursday February 21st

Grimur
20:00 Harpa
Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Open Rehearsal
9:30 Harpa
Iceland Symphony Orchestra: The Rite Of Spring

19:30 Harpa
Katrin Arndisardóttir: Classic Icelandic Songs
21:00 Petersen svítan

Friday February 22nd

After Work Garage House Party: DJ Tommi White
17:05 Orangeesspressobar
sóley
21:00 Mengi
DJ Davið Roach
23:00 Húrra
DJ Óli Dóri
22:00 Bryggjan Brugghús

Saturday February 23rd

Mighty Bear / InZeros & More
22:00 Gaukurinn
DJ KGB
23:00 Húrra
DJ Stymir Dansson
22:00 Bryggjan Brugghús

Sunday February 24th

The Chamber Music Society 2018-19
16:00 Harpa
Sunday Jazz
20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús

Monday February 25th

MonJazz
21:00 Húrra

Tuesday February 26th

Karaoke Party!
21:00 Gaukurinn

Wednesday February 27th

Culture Wednesdays: Brahms & Icelandic Melodies
12:15 Salurinn
Múlinn Jazz Club: Samuel Jon Samuelsson Big Band
21:00 Harpa
Iceland University Of The Arts: Lunch Concert - Feminist Music
12:15 Kjarvalsstaðir
Don Lockwood Band
21:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
Party Karaoke With Þórunn Antonía
21:00 Sæta Svinið

Thursday February 28th

Pálmi Sigurhjártarson & Valgerður Þorsteinsdóttir
21:00 Petersen svítan
Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Open Rehearsal
9:30 Harpa
Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Brantelid Plays Elgar
19:30 Harpa
An Evening Of Improvised Music
21:00 Mengi

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Music



Take me to the Black Lodge where you live

Some Other Kind Of Void

Disappearing into the world of aYia

Words: Rex Beckett Photos: Art Bicnick & Julie Rowland

Album & Concert

aYia's self-titled debut album is out now. They'll play Berlin's Kantine am Berghain on May 19th.

After their live debut at the Secret Solstice festival in 2016, enigmatic trio aYia became an overnight buzz-band, inciting powerful energy and excitement around their spacious, chilly, electronic pop music. To see them perform live evokes the true power of the trio. Multi-instrumentalist producers Kristinn Roach Gunnarsson and Kári Einarsson stand wide apart at the front of the stage, with poetess vocalist Ásta Fanny Sigurðardóttir lurking in the shadows between. They're at once detached from each other, but also deeply interconnected. This subtle physicality enhances the tense silences and booming drops of their music, capturing the audience in a hypnotic swirl.

aYia formed three years ago. More precisely, the members intentionally congealed into a new entity. "The image of the band was supposed to be super secret," says Kristinn, "because the whole vibe of the band is completely different from our personalities."

Trying to feel nothing

This distinction between their real-life selves and their group presence is accentuated by their aesthetic, which features masks, hoods and hidden faces, skirting the line

between presence and disappearance. Their performances have a sense of lingering mystery; they're distant, but not cold or removed. "I try to become nothing," says Kári. "Just the void. I try to be by myself, with the gear—just trying to feel nothing."

"But of course you don't become nothing," continues Ásta. "You just go beyond yourself, playing this role as this character. It's more like the feeling of leaving yourself and everything that is part of your earthly life and going into some other kind of void." Kristinn con-



tinues: "I like the idea of it being a hive-mind. It's something that connects us—it's powerful, but we're not blasting it out there."

Just be there

What allows them to enter this intentional void state is showing

up to write and perform as equal partners. "Everything is connected via the music," says Kristinn. "It's like the connection has been made beforehand so we just have to be there."

Their music contains dichotomous elements of airy, featherlight vocals and tense silences contrasted against massive synth sounds and pounding beats. "The music is full of space and quiet," says Kristinn. "There's power behind it—but it's not showing all the time."

Ásta adds: "It's really like you're trying to weave and this thing you're working with is so delicate, so you have to do it really precisely so it will work together."

Everything is happening

aYia's first single, "Water Plant," was released in October 2016, and their self-titled debut album took over two years to complete due, in part, to the detailed precision

required to create their sound. "The final touches always take the longest," says Kristinn.

"It was really just polishing," Ásta continues, "because there's so much emphasis on the mix and getting it really near perfection."

They had some mixing help from Icelandic super-producer Valgeir Sigurðsson, whose work made everything "so much more," according to the band. The record was released via Valgeir's Bedroom Community label, and it's an evocative collection that transports the

listener to places both wonderful and strange.

"There's a lot of fear, but when it's covered with these massive sounds it becomes such a contrast... you feel so much in your spectrum that everything is happening," says Ásta. "You're like, whoa, what trip are you taking me on?"

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Hearts Of Lead

Kaleikr's ambitious debut album is original, heavy and complex

Words: Phil Uwe Widiger Photos: Timothée Lambrecq

Album

Kaleikr's debut album "Heart of Lead" will be released on February 15th. Preorder the album on their Bandcamp.

In recent years, the Icelandic black metal scene has been flourishing. Bands such as Mispírmíng, Svar-tíðauði, Sinmara and Almyrkvi (to name just a few) have put Iceland on the map for dissonant metal, straight from the darkest depths of hell.

From the backbone of this scene, a new star is rising: Kaleikr. Evading easy classification, their debut album, "Heart of Lead," is a swirling nightmare of psychedelic guitar melodies, neck-breaking riffs and proggy rhythms, delivered with emotional intensity and a dense musical concept.

Feel music

"The whole album is like a journey with ups and downs, but so are the songs in themselves, and even the various sections within the songs," says vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Maximilian Klimko.

"We want people to come back to the music and experience a new layer of it that they didn't catch before," adds Kjartan Harðarson, who completes the duo on the drums. "Our goal was always to make 'feel music.'"

Both Maximilian and Kjartan

Checking the boxes

Kaleikr recorded "Heart of Lead" at Studio Emissary with producer Stephen Lockhart. It was one of the goals they set themselves at the very beginning. Another goal was to get renowned graphic design studio Metastasis—which has also done work for Alcest, Lamb of God and Sólstafir—to create their album artwork.

"We had a vision for a broader spectrum of music. We wanted to explore."

"The last thing we needed was a label," Maximilian recalls. "That just magically fell into our laps through our connection with Stephen. It was insane. We feel really lucky, even though it was also a lot of work." After recording the album, the band was signed by Debemur

Morti Productions, which represents bands such as Blut aus Nord and Archgoat.

had been co-founders of the band Draugsól, which released its critically-acclaimed debut album "Volaða Land" in 2017. Seizing on their musical chemistry, they set out to do something new and different as Kaleikr. "We were basically looking for more professionalism in the music making," says Kjartan. "We had a vision for a broader spectrum of music. We wanted to explore."

A sonic concept

The result is an impressive mixture, somewhere between black, progressive, doom and death metal. "The themes come from the music," says Maximilian. "The lyrics were formed from the inspiration that came from the music itself; the mood that it gives."

The songs are technically demanding to play, and they also take their toll emotionally. "I would say if you listen to this album twice in a row, then you have some mental strength," Maximilian chuckles. "I've had people tell me there's so much in it that they get mental fatigue from listening to it. And that's funny: because that's the theme of the album."

Ascension

Kaleikr will make their live debut at Ascension Festival in June this year with a full live band. Three years in the making, "Heart of Lead" will be released on February 15th, which would make it a perfect Valentine's Day gift. Right?

"It has the right colours, and there is a big heart on the cover," Kjartan sniggers. Adds Maximilian: "You can hide it in a flower bouquet. I don't know what kind of message you'd be sending to give this to someone on Valentine's Day, though. It's called "Heart of Lead." You're heavy, you're a burden, and you're poisoning... here you go. Happy Valentine's Day." 🐐

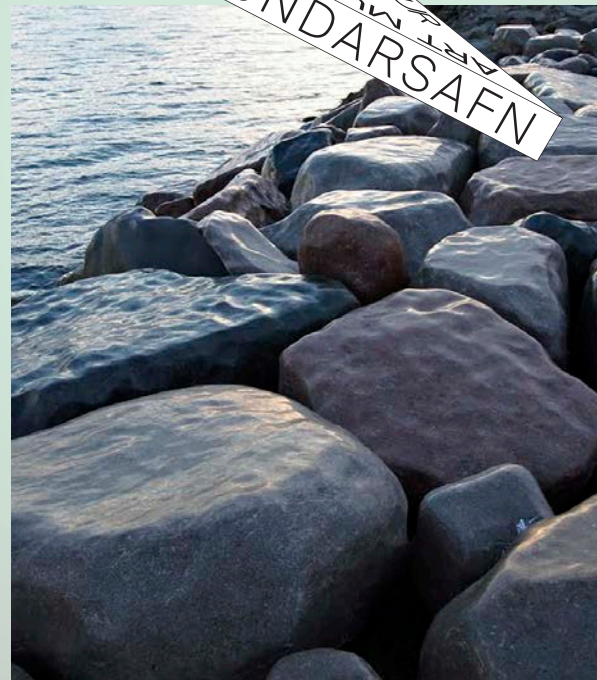
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These people want to take you to strange places

Versatile Uprising

Peek into The Wind and Weather Window Gallery
to see another world

Words: **Tara Njála Ingvarsdóttir** Photo: **Timothee Lambreq**

Info

Visit *Versatile Uprising* at
Hverfisgata 37 until February 26th.
The piece is turned on between
10:00 and 04:00, and the sound is on
until 21:00.

Artists Claire Paugam and Raphaël Alexandre recently opened an intriguing interactive exhibiton entitled 'Versatile Uprising' at the Wind and Weather Window Gallery on Hverfisgata. Made up of ethereal sculptures, the work speaks to by-passers through an ever-changing light and soundscape; when you touch the hand on the window, the lights turn white, and the music changes its tone. It's left to you to decide what qualities your presence added to the landscape.

After graduating with an MFA from the Iceland University of Arts in 2016, Claire met Raphaël through the Listastofan arts space. The two have since joined the board of the eclectic arts collective Weird Kids, which creates space for international and Icelandic artists to collaborate on multidisciplinary events.

Borders of reality and the ethereal

The Wind and Weather Window Gallery at Hverfisgata 27 is a very literal window into Reykjavík's con-

temporary art scene. Accessibility to the public was always an important factor in their work. "Our original intention was to make a diorama, like you'd see in a natural history museum," says Claire. Dioramas are often merely an informative representation of past realities. With 'Versatile Uprising,' Claire and Raphaël make a diorama of a different kind of scene.

"This landscape doesn't refer to anything specific on earth," Claire explains. "It was important for us to move this diorama to the street.

They are usually inside a museum, or a cinema. We thought a lot about street art, there's a common ground between street art and what we have made. If you are walking down Hverfisgata you have to see it. It's just in front of your eyes."

To Claire, the window is a border between reality and fiction. "When it's located on the street like this, it creates a moment of communication between the two," she says. "We wanted to have it open to everyone as a space ready to be integrated into our reality."

Reactive light

Claire invited Raphaël to join her in proposing a show for the Wind and Weather Window Gallery not long before they started working with Weird Kids. The two come from different backgrounds: Claire has established her practice in the fine arts, while Raphaël has a background in computer science engineering that he's been evolving into a technology-based arts practise.

Their first collaboration was a set design for a Weird Kids party at Mengi in August 2018, which featured Special-K, Madonna + Child and SiGRÚN. Their contribution could have been a rehearsal for 'Versatile Uprising,' as they created a reactive light installation.

The horizon

The two artists are still buzzing from opening their show, and even after this short period of collaboration, they already finish each other's sentences. They worked intensely on this piece for six months. "We

"The window is the main border between reality and fiction—when it's on the street, it creates a moment of communication between the two."

are just not allowed to speak about our work now," laughs Raphaël. We're taking a break from talking about art for two weeks." The two giggle, however, already thinking about the next steps for their exciting budding collaboration.

'Versatile Uprising' is a window into a mysterious landscape. It's a memorable experience,

and whether you're a casual passerby, or an intentional visitor, it's worth taking a moment to press your hand against the glass and watch how it affect the otherworldly landscape inside. ♡

Our Picks



Film + Visual Art + Music = ?

★ OH SO QUIET!

Until March 31st - Gerðarsafn

A number of international and Icelandic artists, including Ange Leccia, Dodda Maggý, Sigurður

Guðjónsson, and Steina and Woody Vasulka, present a tête-à-tête on the parallel histories of modern art, contemporary art and cinema, all within the context of music—or, more specifically, noise. Within the spacious rooms of Gerðarsafn, they've created complex sound installations that'll lure you into abstract tonal worlds, which are then abruptly interrupted by a whisper, a scream, or even a song. Along with that is a collection of films from the Centre National Des Arts Plastiques, which will challenge your view on the interconnectivity of these mediums even further. **HJC**



★ Primary Colors

Feb. 9th - April 8th
Ljósmýndasafn

Every week, idiotic tourists get themselves in stupid situations only to be hero-ically rescued by the Icelandic Association for Search and Rescue. Photographer Catherine Canac-Marquis captures this bravery. **HJC**



★ To Fold A Line In Deep Blackness

Until Feb. 14th - Listastofan

Romanian oil painter Mirel Vieru's central artistic thesis is that of dichotomies, limits, and folding. Here, he intersects that with the idea of the line, creating sensual, and ghostly works that, at times, look like cocaine. **HJC**



★ Medium Of Matter

Until Feb. 23rd - BERG Contemporary

Light structures on the wall, reflecting down onto wood sculptures which dominate the floor. White walls, contrasting sharply with lightly coloured floors. Shadows, quivering, perpetually in motion. **HJC**

February 1st—February 28th

Art Listings

Events are listed by venue. For complete listings and detailed information on venues, visit grapevine.is/happening. Send your listings to: listings@grapevine.is

Opening

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSSTAÐIR

Eyborg Guðmundsdóttir: Circle, Square and Line

In this retrospective, experience the abstract geometric art of Eyborg Guðmundsdóttir. Called Op-Art, Eyborg's paintings are based on the primary qualities of art—shapes. • Opens on February 8th, 2019 • Runs until April 28th, 2019

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS

Anna Guðjónsdóttir: Pars Pro Toto

Here, Anna Guðjónsdóttir questions the boundary between the original and the copy. Two-dimensional painted surfaces and three-dimensional real spaces collide. • Opens on February 21st, 2019 • Runs until May 19th, 2019

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

BEIRÚT, BEYRUT, BEYROUTH, BEYROUT

Beirut has, in recent years, become a fashionable locale within the art world. The exhibition highlights the socio-politically complex society, diving deep into its cultural diversity. • Opens on February 8th, 2019 • Runs until March 31st, 2019

Ongoing

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

Treasures Of A Nation

A selection of over 80 works chosen from the national gallery's collection display the evolution of art since the 19th century. • Runs until December 31st, 2019

EINAR JÓNSSON MUSEUM

Permanent Exhibition

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

THE ÁSGRIMUR JÓNSSON COLLECTION

Korriró And Dillidó

Ásgrímur's art explores the fears and dreams of generations, as mysterious Icelandic elves, trolls and monsters finally take shape and materialise as vivid beings. • Runs until April 30th, 2019

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART

Behind The Scenes With

Einar Þorsteinn

In 2014, architect and mathematician Einar Þorsteinn Ásgeirsson gave all his belongings to the museum. Best described as a renaissance man, the exhibit is full of curiosities. • Runs until March 10th, 2019

AND ANTIMATTER

AND ANTIMATTER is a creative studio founded by Þórey Björk Halldórsdóttir & Baldur Björnsson. They've set up a live workspace in the museum to explore the in-between of design and art, objects and experiences. • Runs until March 15th, 2019

ÁRBÆR OPEN AIR MUSEM

Daily Guided Tours

Tours are from 13:00 to 14:00 through its open air exhibits.

REYKJAVÍK CITY MUSEUM

Settlement Sagas

As Viking ruins meet digital technology, this exhibition provides insight into Reykjavík's farms at the time of the first settlers.

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - ÁSMUNDARSAFN

Ásmundur Sveinsson: Under the Same Sky - Art In Public Space

Ásmundarsafn is named after sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson. This new permanent exhibition presents the artist in a new light. What dialogue does his works provoke? • Runs until December 31st, 2019

Sigurður Guðmundsson: Intimacy & Sculpture
Using various mediums, from photos to performance, conceptual artist Sigurður Guðmundsson presents an exhibit where, as he says, there are no ideas behind the works. • Runs until March 31st, 2019

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

...now

Páll Stefánsson has spent 37 years as a traveller and photographer. Here, he captures the silence of the present. From refugees to endless glaciers to random strangers, he explores everything from discrimination to the inevitability of nature in a momentary glance. • Runs until April 12th, 2019

The Weight Of Air

In her search for quiet, Ng Hui Hsien photographed everything from hostile snowstorms to the magi-

cal Northern Lights. Come explore your subconscious, as well as that of the Icelandic wilderness, in this expansive journey into the essence of hidden spaces. • Runs until February 4th, 2019

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ICELAND

Discovering Iceland's Monasteries

Are you fascinated by really old things? God? This exhibit combines both, based on research by archaeologist Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir. • Runs until May 26th, 2019

Artists' Books

Familiarise yourself with the books of Icelandic artists'. You'll find examples of printmaking dating all the way back to the latter part of the 19th century. • Runs until June 2nd, 2019

REYKJAVÍK MARITIME MUSEUM

Fish & Folk

Name a better duo than fish and Iceland. You can't. So come learn about the history of Icelandic fisheries from rowing boats to monstrous motor boats.

Melckmeyt 1659

Melckmeyt was a Dutch merchant ship that crashed near Flatey Island in 1659. Explore the wreck here.

NORDIC HOUSE

The Children's Book Flood

This exhibition provides a day of creativity for children, including a viking ship to craft on, and a dark cave to dream of galaxies in. • Runs until March 31st, 2019

Ingunn Vestby

Ingunn Vestby photographs plants, plankton, flowers, and leaves in such fine detail that they take on the appearance of carpets and textiles. • Runs until February 15th, 2019

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS

Erró: Black & White

Here, historical leaders, Manga characters, and animated figures are put side by side in exclusively black and white works—a first for the artist. • Runs until April 25th, 2019

D34 Leifur Ýmir Eyjólfsson: Manuscript

Leifur's exhibit is a vernacular of the in-between. Words, texts, and fragments of sentences burn into clay plates on the walls around you. • Runs until March 7th, 2019

Ingólfur Arnarsson: Ground Level

From his delicate drawings to his dainty works on industrial concrete, come see exclusively new works by Ingólfur Arnarsson. • Runs until February 10th, 2019

Colour: Draft II

Colour is, perhaps obviously, the focus in this exhibit. Come explore it as both a natural as well as a cultural phenomenon. • Runs until February 28th, 2019

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSSTAÐIR

Jóhannes S. Kjarval: ...author of great aspirations

Kjarval was one of the pioneers of Icelandic art and is uniquely credited with making modern Icelanders appreciate it more. Come see a special exhibit based on his poetry. • Runs until April 28st, 2019

LISTASALUR MOSFELLSBÆJAR

Frost

Architect Steinunn Eikar Egilsdóttir uses abstract art as a counterweight to the strictness of architecture. At once inconsistent, free, unique and discreet, her acrylic paintings showcase an artist having fun. • Runs until February 15th, 2019

IB

Figures In Landscape

Ragnar Kjartansson's newest exhibit functions as a timepiece: seven distinct 24 hour scenes play simultaneously and repeat continuously. The sets are archetypal landscapes: a forest, a desert, a jungle and more. • Runs until March 16th, 2019

SKAFTFELL

White Sun

In Iceland, the sun is not a reliable source for telling time. Explore the effects of this disruption in this multidisciplinary exhibit. • Runs until March 3rd, 2019

HAFNARBORG

Phonemes

Here, music journeys beyond the limitations of sound, with visuals playing a vital role in the perception of the music itself. Music becomes as much a sound as it is a fixed

object.

• Runs until March 3rd, 2019

Upheaval

Marta María's works are abstract, crossing the boundaries between drawing and painting, where the imagery is poetic and open. They portray a mysterious world on the edge of recognition. • Runs until March 17th, 2019

GALLERÍ FOLD

Jakob Veigar

Jakob's abstract works forgo gravity, rules, landscapes, and layouts, inviting you into what he calls, "natural disasters on canvas." • Runs until February 9th, 2019

SIGURJÓN ÓLAFSSON MUSEUM

Connections

To celebrate the 13th anniversary of the museum, this exhibition presents 13 artists in dialogue with Sigurjón and his art. • Runs until October 6th, 2019

WIND AND WEATHER WINDOW GALLERY

Versatile Uprising

In this interactive exhibit, a choreography of light and sound creates a diorama of mysterious imagery. Feel free to move your hand in front of a sensor to control the lights. • Runs until February 26th, 2019

GAUKURINN

Alma + Júnía

Júnía Líf Mariúerla Sigurjónsdóttir and Alma Líf Þorsteinsdóttir have long been the de facto photographers of the Icelandic metal scene. Now, they've curated their selection down to the best of the best at this special photo exhibition. • Runs until March 23rd, 2019

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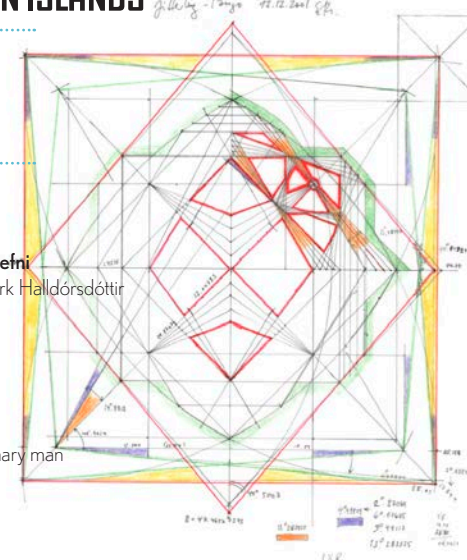
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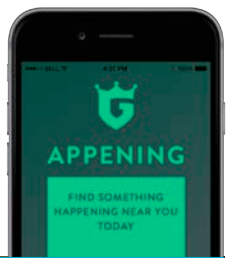
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Borgarnes: it's going on

From Hot Tub Dream To The Big Screen

How three people made their vision of a film festival real

Words: Phil Uwe Widiger Photos: Art Bienick

says Michelle. Due to its popularity amongst locals, the film was screened on all three nights, underlining the team's spontaneity.

Cultural hub Borgarnes

Festival aside, Borgarnes is thriving culturally. "There are many things to do here," says Michelle. "There are a lot of cultural activities and people are really involved."

"Two years back I was thinking that there weren't enough things to do for young people," Halldór adds. "I was born and raised here, so I know about this first hand. I saw this as an opportunity to welcome a younger crowd and show them films I would have loved when I was younger."

The plan worked: this year saw a 100% increase in visitors from all age groups. What is the team's secret? Passion, homeyness and great popcorn.

Diversity

The films varied in length, language and genre. From the horror-themed "Friday Night," to the

Dream fulfilled

"One thing that we really want keep is the honesty and the living room feeling," says Halldór.



Films for the people

hilarious short "Blue Division" and a documentary on gold mining in Africa, "Nobody Dies Here," there was something for everybody.

One film proved to be more popular than the others, however — "Dagur í lífi Palla Egils" (English: "A day in the life of Palli Egils.") It is an Icelandic film that followed Borgarnes local Palli for a whole day. The film is honest and nostalgic, with a refined sense of humour.

"It means a lot to the people here to see an Icelandic film,"

While the Settlement Centre was used for screening the first night, Óðal, an old cinema, was used for the last two days of the festival. It charms the audience with a retro-look, a popcorn machine and couches to sit on. All in all, it feels like watching films at home in the company of good friends.

"If nothing else, we are fulfilling our own dreams," says Michelle. "I'm really proud of us."

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Festival

The second Borgarnes Film Freaks festival was held from January 24th-26th. Follow the preparations for next year's event on Facebook.

Borgarnes is an idyllic little town in the West of Iceland. With roughly 2000 inhabitants, it could be easily overlooked as a drive-through on the road to more popular tourist attractions or Iceland's second city, Akureyri. But, don't be fooled—Borgarnes has some surprises in store.

The story of the Borgarnes Film Freaks (BFF) festival began two years ago in one of the most Icelandic environments imaginable—a hot tub. The idea was hatched by Michelle Bird, Eiríkur Þór Theodórsson and Halldór Óli Gunnarsson. The trio combined their unique skills and cultural and creative backgrounds, to create the first BFF, which was held in January 2018.

"We didn't have any budget," recounts Michelle, a painter and US transplant. "Most of the films were donated from friends of mine. Beer was donated from the Steðje brewery, and the space from the Settlement Centre."

From 900 to 29

The inaugural event was a success, and for the second edition, the team successfully applied for funding. They also started using the FilmFreeway platform to connect with filmmakers from all around the globe.

"We had no idea how effective this platform was," says Michelle. "In the end, we received 900 applications for films to be screened." Within two months, the team

Various Events



Roy Andersson is the Director In Focus at the Nordic Film Festival from Feb. 21st-24th

Friday February 1st

'Deff Is Not The End' Drag Show
21:00 Gaukurinn
'Men In Black': Party Screening!
20:00 Bíó Paradís

Saturday February 2nd

Northern Laughs: Comedy Show
20:30 The Secret Celler
Pub Quiz
20:00 Loft
RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars 4 Viewing Party With Gógó Starr
20:00 Loft

Sunday February 3rd

Guided Tour In English
11:00 National Museum Of Iceland
Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa
Black Sundays: 'Ginger Snaps'
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Takeout Currie With Anne Carson & Robert Currie
21:00 Mengi
Gloria Hole: Think You've Got Talent?
21:00 Kiki Queer Bar
Party Bingo With Sigga Kling
21:00 Sæta Svinið
Seat Filler: Improvisational Comedy
21:00 The Secret Celler
How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes
19:00 Harpa

Monday February 4th

Stand-Up Comedy (in English!)
21:00 Gaukurinn
Magic Viking: Music & Comedy
21:00 The Secret Celler

Tuesday February 5th

Funniest Four: Comedy Show
21:00 The Secret Celler
Gísli Súrsson
20:00 Tjarnarbió
Watercolouring Night
20:00 Loft

Wednesday February 6th

Open Mic Stand-Up Comedy
21:00 The Secret Celler
Poetry & Prose Night
21:00 Gaukurinn
'Heavy Trip': Metal Screening
20:00 Bíó Paradís

Thursday February 7th

Café Lingua: Sign Language
17:00 Grófin Culture House

My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Celler
Harry Potter Movie Pub Quiz
20:00 Stúdentakjallarinn
Follow The Vikings Road Show
20:30, 22:00 Portið in Hafnarhús
Pubquiz
20:00 KEX Hostel
Prump í paradís: 'Mommie Dearest'
20:00 Bíó Paradís

Friday February 8th

Hans & Jackie: The World Tour! (ONE NIGHT ONLY) Drag Show
21:00 Gaukurinn
Miss Gloria Hole: Drag Show
21:30 Kiki Queer Bar
HA HA Very Funny Standup
20:00 KEX Hostel
'Thelma & Louise': Party Screening!
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Drawing Workshop
19:00, 20:00, 21:00, 22:00 Design Museum

Saturday February 9th

RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars 4 Viewing Party With Gógó Starr
20:00 Loft
Northern Laughs: Comedy Show
20:30 The Secret Celler
How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes
19:00 Harpa

Sunday February 10th

Black Sundays: 'Reservoir Dogs'
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Guided Tour In English
11:00 National Museum Of Iceland
Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa
Sunday Yoga
12:00 Loft
Gloria Hole: Think You've Got Talent?
21:00 Kiki Queer Bar
Party Bingo With Sigga Kling
21:00 Sæta Svinið
Seat Filler: Improvisational Comedy
21:00 The Secret Celler
Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa
HANS.mov [night]: 'But I'm A Cheerleader!'
21:00 Gaukurinn

Monday February 11th

Gísli Súrsson
20:00 Tjarnarbió
Stand-Up Comedy (in English!)
21:00 Gaukurinn
Magic Viking: Music & Comedy
21:00 The Secret Celler

Tuesday February 12th

Watercolouring Night
20:00 Loft
Gísli Súrsson
20:00 Tjarnarbió
Funniest Four: Comedy Show
21:00 The Secret Celler

Wednesday February 13th

Open Mic Stand-Up Comedy
21:00 The Secret Celler

Thursday February 14th

Crystal Lubrikunt Drag Show
21:00 Loft
My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Celler

Friday February 15th

Miss Gloria Hole: Drag Show
21:30 Kiki Queer Bar
Drag-súgur: RED Drag Show
21:00 Gaukurinn
'Superbad': Party Screening!
20:00 Bíó Paradís

Saturday February 16th

RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars 4 Viewing Party With Gógó Starr
20:00 Loft
Northern Laughs: Comedy Show
20:30 The Secret Celler
How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes
19:00 Harpa
Kaleidoscope Workshop
13:00 Gerðarsafn Kópavogur

Sunday February 17th

Guided Tour In English
11:00 National Museum Of Iceland
Black Sundays: 'Grizzly Man'
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Gloria Hole: Think You've Got Talent?

21:00 Kiki Queer Bar
Party Bingo With Sigga Kling
21:00 Sæta Svinið
Seat Filler: Improvisational Comedy
21:00 The Secret Celler
Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa

Monday February 18th

Stand-Up Comedy (in English!)
21:00 Gaukurinn
Magic Viking: Music & Comedy
21:00 The Secret Celler

Tuesday February 19th

Watercolouring Night
20:00 Loft
Funniest Four: Comedy Show
21:00 The Secret Celler

Wednesday February 20th

Open Mic Stand-Up Comedy
21:00 The Secret Celler

Thursday February 21st

My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Celler

Friday February 22nd

Miss Gloria Hole: Drag Show
21:30 Kiki Queer Bar
'Cry-Baby': Party Screening!
20:00 Bíó Paradís

Saturday February 23rd

RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars 4 Viewing Party With Gógó Starr
20:00 Loft
Northern Laughs: Comedy Show
20:30 The Secret Celler
How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes
19:00 Harpa
Roller Derby: Ragnarök Triple

Header
11:30 Víkin

Sunday February 24th

Guided Tour In English
11:00 National Museum Of Iceland
Black Sundays: 'Hard Candy'
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Gloria Hole: Think You've Got Talent?
21:00 Kiki Queer Bar
Party Bingo With Sigga Kling
21:00 Sæta Svinið
Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa
Seat Filler: Improvisational Comedy
21:00 The Secret Celler
Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa
HANS.mov [night]: 'Bram Stoker's Dracula'
21:00 Gaukurinn

Monday February 25th

Stand-Up Comedy (in English!)
21:00 Gaukurinn
Magic Viking: Music & Comedy
21:00 The Secret Celler
Gísli Súrsson
20:00 Tjarnarbió

Tuesday February 26th

Watercolouring Night
20:00 Loft
Funniest Four: Comedy Show
21:00 The Secret Celler

Wednesday February 27th

Open Mic Stand-Up Comedy
21:00 The Secret Celler

Thursday February 28th

My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Celler
Drag-súgur Drag Lab
21:00 Gaukurinn

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Finding A Voice In The Void

'What Will We Sing About' dives deep into the psyche of eight dancers

Words: **Hannah Jane Cohen** Photo: **Art Bicnick**

Dance

'What Will We Sing About' will happen on February 8th, 14th, 24th, and 28th at 20:00 at the Reykjavik City Theatre. Tickets are 5,900 ISK and can be bought at tix.is.

Iceland Dance Company's newest show, 'What Will We Sing About?' is an elusive journey into the human psyche, choreographed directly around the personal experiences and inner worlds of the eight dancers involved. Conceived by Belgian choreographer Pieter Ampe, the piece involved months of preparation in order for the group to get to know each other viscerally. This knowledge was then used to build the piece from the ground up.

Pure intimacy

"It's been an intimate journey," dancer Una Björg Bjarnadóttir says softly, when asked about the rehearsal process. "We're touching on subjects that are very human. We're going to vulnerable places. The last two to three months probably had the most sharing I've ever done."

While she speaks delicately, it's clear that this process has touched a nerve. The piece is poignant for all the dancers, but it pushed Una in particular far beyond her comfort zone. "For many of us, we are opening our voices and singing," she explains. "I haven't sung in front of an audience much in my life and it is an extremely insecure and fragile place."

Anything is possible

For Pieter though, this sensitivity is exactly what he hoped for. "They aren't trained singers, so they are discovering... and within that discovery, anything is possible," he says expressively. When Pieter speaks, he oscillates between passionate and poignant insights on the show, whilst apologising that he can't explain it better. It's clear that, like Una, 'What Will We Sing About?' brings out his insecurities.

The goal, Pieter explains, is to let the audience join in and connect with the dancer's emotional bareness. "For an audience to feel so welcome on the stage and feel such a part of the show that they don't mind that someone is singing off-tune... we want to step back and watch something surprising and beautiful be born," he adds.

The collective

Shota Inoue, a Japanese dancer in his debut show with the company, found his passion through the intimate connection of the group. "We

are individual but part of a collective and working here on being individual within a collective," Shota explains methodically. He's a serious man, with clear reverence and respect for the work the dancers have done.

"We are all different human beings," he continues. "How we grew up, our nationality, our family, our childhood, our education, but everything makes you who you are now, and to bring that individually into a group is hard to practise. Someone will start to cry in the process, or start to scream. It's real sharing."

Pieter finds similar meaning in this created community. "To support someone, to know a lot of information about them," he explains. "You say, well this is amazing, that was tough, I know you went through shit, I also went through shit." But, he emphasises, the show is not therapy. "It's also fun. It's playful. We are asking the big questions here, but it's generous." 🍷

"We're touching on subjects that are very human. We're going to vulnerable places."

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M Jackson, hanging out with bae

Feminist Glaciology

M Jackson's new book looks at ice, climate, culture and gender

Words: John Rogers Photo: Joe Tighe

Book

'The Secret Lives of Glaciers' is out now via Green Writers Press

It seems safe to say that much of the literature around glaciers and climate change can be a little dry—no pun intended. Scientific texts on mass balance, false ogives, ground lines, dendrochronology and the cryosphere can be a little heavy for the glacier-curious layman.

This isn't the case with "The Secret Lives of Glaciers," a newly published book by American geographer, glaciologist and National Geographic writer M Jackson. The book takes the unusual tack of reporting climate change as a series of stories told by M and the people she meets during her time spent researching glaciers in Höfn. Containing elements of autobiography and diaristic accounts of the glaciers alongside conversations, observations, and anecdotes of all kinds, it's approachable and readable stuff.

As someone coming from an academic background, this style was a very intentional choice. "I thought a lot about this," she says, speaking over Skype from her home in Eugene, Oregon. "I wrote the first draft in a very

academic style, then put it away. When I came back to it, the academic conventions just weren't a pleasurable read. My goal is getting as many people as possible to read this stuff and learn about it."

What about everything else?

M's approach—the mingling together of physical and human geography—comes from a distinctive sensibility. "I come from a lens of what can carefully be called a feminist perspective for glaciology," she says. "If we look at the practice of glaciology, what knowledge is there and who does it, it generally tends to

be white western men who are well funded. Ice is difficult to get out to, and so there's a real specific way that glaciology has been practised for a long time, enacting a Western scientific model where they're going to measure, model and predict ice. That's how it's

been for a really long time and it's given us good, powerful knowledge. But it's also—as it has zeroed in—it has overlooked, silenced, or marginalised a lot of other ways of thinking about ice."

Whilst we know a lot about the science of how ice forms, moves

and disperses, M seeks to explore other facets of how we understand glaciers. "We don't know a lot about, say, indigenous knowledges of ice, or how people interact with ice," she says. "If you do a literature review, or start talking to people, you find out people think another discipline will cover that, or 'that's not glaciology.' So you end up with wall-building or parameterising what glaciology can be. So from that base point, the work I do says, 'This is really good and solid, but what about everything else?'"

Ice and gender

Hungry to work in little-studied areas, M's work on the glaciers of Alaska evolved into a move to Turkey. "It was right before the Syrian war broke out," she says. "I spent a whole year realising that this was not a safe place for a woman who looks like I do to wander around in the mountains during that time. I wanted to go somewhere where I blended in, and somewhere I felt safe. I started asking people where I could study glaciers, people and ice, and be safe. The Geographic asked if I'd considered Iceland. It's safe for women and there's a lot of research that hasn't been done before."

She found during her time in Iceland that when she talked to women about glaciers, they would often redirect her to men. "There's very little about gender in the new book," she says. "But when I was talking to women, they'd often say 'I don't have anything to say.' But when you spend more time with these women, they know a whole bunch. It's just a different type of knowledge. So I'm doing a whole new book that's just women and just gender."

Our god is in the ice

As well as a lack of female perspectives on the ice, M says there's a lot of work to be done researching the relationships of indigenous people and glaciers. "Nobody's going to Uganda and the DRC," she says, "where local people say: 'Our god is in the ice.' Glaciers make microclimates, and mosquitos have never been able to come there because of the glacial microclimate. People there today say 'God's upset at us, so the ice is melting.' So now they're being punished by exposure to malaria. I could rattle off tonnes of these examples, but we don't have books about how people live with climate change. This is powerful stuff about being human today, but we're not looking at it yet."

"The Secret Lives of Glaciers" is M's second book. Her first, "When Glaciers Slept," is about how people relate to glaciers in Alaska. "I was able to interact with so many different people because of that book," she says. "When I write academic things, three people read them. The academic conversation is really powerful, but it's not my only audience. If you write something that's approachable, then academics can access it and the public can access it too. And maybe that's where we need to be right now. I don't see a lot of academics doing that, and academics have such great knowledge, maybe it would behoove them to do so." 🍷



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Deff Starr



FANCIES is where we talk to Reykjavík's most fashion-forward figures about style

Fancies' latest subject is **Deff Starr, or Neville J. Ingley (29), is a local drag artist.**

Deff is wearing:

- ▶ Neon lace dress by Auland
- ▶ Kimono from MYRKA Iceland
- ▶ Leg warmers by Auland
- ▶ A pink ribbon neck piece that was Miss Gloria Hole's old dress
- ▶ Jewellery from Góði Hirðirinn
- ▶ Cables from the KEX Hostel lost and found
- ▶ Wig was given to me by Dramatik, which I customised

Describe your style in 5 words:

Cosmic. Chaotic. Supernatural. Spiritual warrior.

Favourite stores in Reykjavík:

Spúútnik and Góði Hirðirinn often have a lot of nice vintage things that you can take apart or customise. I also really like going to Kiosk and having a look at what Icelandic designers are making. I'm a big fan of MYRKA Iceland there. Having the occasional designer piece really brings a look together. I'm currently working with Daren Mark on a piece and he's great. I also like to go into KronKron regularly to get inspired. I told the lady there that when I'm rich I'll come back and buy everything. I think she thinks I'm joking.

Favourite piece:

For stuff that I have made, it is probably my shaman poncho jacket with pom poms on it. Everything was from a charity shop and I made the pom poms myself. I didn't have a sewing machine so I had to staple and hot glue it together. Other than that, the head-piece I wore at the last Drag-súgur show, which was made out of a Japanese fan, silk cherry blossoms, glitter-covered sheep jaw-bones, and more. It's between those two.

Least favourite trend:

I don't like it when people try to look like they are from some old time, the 30s or something. I like modern fashion. You can wear tweed, but reinvent it in a new way instead of literally copying and pasting an old look. I like to challenge what you can put together. Wear tweed but wear neon with it as well. Then go dancing.

Lusting after:

An outfit by Comme des Garçons, maybe a coat or kaftan. ♡

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen

Photo: Art Bicnick

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Food

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Soul (food) sistah

In The Upside Down

Systir flips the tables on Dill

Words: Shruthi Basappa Photo: Timothée Lambrecq

Systir

Hverfisgata 12

Hverfisgata 12, originally dubbed 'the no-name pizza place,' became popular in recent years for slinging pizzas that ranged from the unpredictable to the staid. The news of its recent closure was met with utter dismay from regulars.

But true to their edgy nature and gritty flair, the same brains behind Dill, Kex Hostel, and Mikkeller & Friends now bring us Systir ("Sister," in English). This sibling restaurant for the Michelin-starred Dill is housed in the unchanged Hverfisgata 12 premises, and there were just days between the closure of one and the opening of the other.

The upside down

We arrived at Systir full of anticipation and, admittedly, a little anxiety. What will this new place be like? Can H12's delicious cheesy fries ever be replaced? Oh, the uncried tears for the Korean fried chicken!

But lo and behold—with the paint barely dry on the new sign, it turns out that Systir gives a not-so-subtle wink to its grown-up relative downstairs.

The options are even presented on an upside down Dill menu card, overlaid with the sweep-picked font of the Systir logo—a nod to all things unruly and chaotic, as younger siblings are wont to be.

"Systir may prove to be the rebel in the family."

All is not lost

Beloved favourites like the torched cheese fries with kimchi (1,200 ISK) are still on the menu (hallelujah!), while new numbers like the barley beet risotto with cured goose (1,900 ISK)—reminiscent of beef tartare in its appearance—underscore the new establishment's Dill-like sensibility, which includes a five-course tasting menu.

The head chef helming the project is Ólafur Ágústsson. "We felt that we needed a new challenge for our business at Hverfisgata 12, with this ever changing restaurant environment we have in Reykjavik now," he says. "We also feel that the Dill concept should be presented to more people in different environment. We're really focused on our journey here, and we want our guests to experience that with us."

Systir suspense

Engulfed by the comfort of specially curated natural wines to accompany the many small plates, we couldn't help but wonder if Systir will be a disruptive sibling. As if the kitchen were reading our minds, we were treated to a fatty hunk of rib-eye (3,200 ISK) under a mound of refreshing mint and coriander tossed in an intensely tart dressing and dusted with ground toasted rice. The clear Thai influences are such a bold departure from the often sanctimonious New Nordic bible that it seems Systir is determined to be the rebel in the family.

Ólafur appears to revel in the suspense. "Systir will try to play both sides a bit," he says. "It will definitely have some experiments going on, but it will also be there to please and comfort. It will also serve Dill classics—something we know people will love."

Systir retains the easy going vibe of Hverfisgata 12, which is a big part of the draw for its many loyal fans. The new place promises to be a well-priced casual haunt—five courses for 5,900 ISK is a steal—that just so happens to also be an experimental culinary playground for Dill. My hope is for Systir to be an approachable adventure—a true rebel in the culinary upside down. The seriously curated wine list and focus on speciality cocktails doesn't hurt either.

And for those still nursing H12 nostalgia, Ólafur hints that it isn't unlikely that the no-name pizza place will make another appearance, somewhere, somehow. 🍷

What do you know about

Ban Thai
restaurant

Laugavegur 130, Reykjavík

www.ban thai.is



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This man is definitely not cooking scorpions

I'll Eat a Donkey, But Don't Tell Me It's A Thoroughbred

Enough pickled fish to deck RuPaul's All Stars

Words: Ragnar Egilsson Photo: Timothée Lambrecq

Burro

Veltusund 1.

Shortly after Burro flung open their saloon doors for the first time in the winter of 2016, I was pleased with the lively atmosphere and impressed by the lengths they went to feature hard-to-source ingredients like tonka beans, and their threat of serving crickets and scorpions. Sure, the menu was a bit chaotic and the dishes were a little rough around the edges, but that's to be expected while people are getting off the ground.

So how is it working out three years down the line?

No scorpions

The first thing to notice is that the menu hasn't undergone any massive changes aside from losing the pretentious "soil, ocean, land" categories, and most of the desserts. Burro is still far from orthodox Mexican food, and there are still no scorpions to be seen.

The decor still has that Cinco de Mayo party feel, and the music is a playlist of Latin brass band

covers of the Wu Tang Clan. This is all par for the course as the sunshine mafia behind Burro have since expanded their approach to cocktails and dining at their Florida-themed cocktail spot Miami Bar, and a tongue-in-cheek Spanish holiday kitsch bar Benedorm (sic), all of which are replete with tropical colours and fruity cocktails.

Mexican cantina

The food, however, is where my smile starts to fade. On paper it all seems sensible: small plates and shared courses, served either in tacos or with dips. Fish is served ceviche-style—cured in citrus juice—and the slabs of meat come hot off the grill. So what's the problem?

If this was a solid Mexican neighbourhood cantina in a European city or a mid-range Baja Med spot in LA, and a two small courses with a cocktail would set you back €30. Pop it in your mouth, pay the bill, hit the town. No fuss. Here we'd be looking at €50 easy. I know we're in Iceland and prices are crazy here, and

that Burro is positioning itself as a steakhouse, but for this price bracket, the quality would need to be twice the current standard.

Starchy tubers

The crispy platanos chips (990 ISK) were a nice change from the omnipresent tortilla chips and the guacamole was nicely chunky, but lacking in both heat and acidity. The tuna ceviche (1,990 ISK) hit the heat level right but the frozen tuna lacked texture and flavour (I'd opt for fresh local cod instead). The cassava chips (990 ISK) get a glowing recommendation, those starchy tubers familiar to every Brazilian with a pulse—big deep-fried chunks with a thin truffle oil sauce (I hate truffle oil, but even a broken condiment is right once a decade.)

The most pleasant dish was the slab of marbled ribeye with double crisp potato wedges and sautéed mushrooms (8,490 ISK). It was under-seasoned, but that was easily fixed, and then you were left with enough meat to feed two hungry food bros. The béarnaise sauce was superfluous, but with 70% of the guests being Icelandic, I don't see how they could have skipped it. Icelanders are all over béarnaise like tweakers in a Montana meth lab.

All in all, I have some love for Burro, and the vibe at 8pm on a Friday night is fun. But I'd love to see the kitchen upgraded from a donkey to a Shetland pony. 🍷



SNAPS

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Travel

The Frozen Wave

Warm welcomes and cold glaciers around Borgarfjörður's Lava Lodge

Words: John Rogers
Photos: Timothee Lambrecq



Distance from Reykjavík:
136 km

Car provided by:
gocarrental.is

Accommodation provided by:
tripiceland.com

Meal provided by:
thecave.is

Swim provided by:
krauma.is

How to get there:
Route One North,
Routes 50 & 518

“Drive past Reykholt and continue to a farm called Stóri Ás,” read the directions to Borgarfjörður’s Lava Lodge. “Cross the bridge, turn right, and continue for eight kilometres until you see a yellow and red fire hydrant.”

And so it is that, one freezing January afternoon, we turn off Route One just before Borgarnes in search of the farm, the bridge, and the hydrant. In search of Stóri Ás, we take an accidental detour through some snow covered farmland before emerging again at a wide, gushing river. There’s no obvious sign, but as “Stóri Ás” means “big river” in Icelandic we hang a right and hope for the best.

The road skirts the northern edge of the sprawling 52km Hallmundarhraun lava field, draped today with a thick blanket of snow. Just as we begin to fear we’ve taken a wrong turn, the bright dot of the hydrant appears. We trundle up the road to find Villi Goði waiting for us on the driveway. “You made it!” he exclaims, beaming broadly and beckoning us up the candle-marked path to the lodge.

Second home

Villi and his wife, Sigrún, run the cosy red-walled guesthouse nestled on the edge of Hallmundarhraun. We kick off our shoes in the entrance hall, which has, Villi explains, evolved into a music room with a vast stack of records from 80s pop to Icelandic choral compilations. “It’s a ‘no judgement’ zone,” he laughs. The dining room leads through to a warm kitchen, where we’re treated to some sparkling wine and piping hot wild mushroom soup that’s so good we ask for the recipe. It’s a heartfelt welcome, and we immediately feel perfectly at home.

“We were originally planning to open a normal, respectable tourist office in Mossfellsbær,” says Sigrún. “But we found this place, and we knew right away it was for us.”

The couple bought the lodge as a base that would allow them to live and work amongst the nature. They employed local craftsmen to create several cosy, wood-lined bedrooms in an adjacent new building, a fire pit and

seating area, an outdoor hot pot and shower room, and wooden walkways connecting them all together. The attention to detail is apparent in everything from the woollen artworks adorning the walls—made by Sigrún’s daughter—to the comfortable robes and carefree “mi casa, su casa” policy.

Borgarfjörður bandits

It’s an ideal location. The Borgarfjörður area has a variety of natural sites and sightseeing options, and we talk through them, from waterfalls to spa trips. We settle on a sightseeing drive up to the snowy, glacier-flanked mountain pass of Kaldidalur.

With few hours of daylight remaining, Villi warms up the engine of his modified jeep. We set off briskly, rounding the top of the the lava field and plunging down onto the black flats of the Sandur valley. Villi explains the geology and history of the area as we go, including colourful accounts of the bandits who once lived here. He’s an engaging storyteller with an infectious

enthusiasm for the region.

Frozen tsunami

After a while, the sunlit expanse of Langjökull appears, filling the horizon like a frozen tsunami. Villi’s jeep powers through the snow to the base of the glacier, and we step out into a majestic pink-hued icescape. Some locals are returning in a train of 4x4s from a GPS-guided drive over the ice, and a row of snowmobilers soon follows. It’s the most traffic we’ll see all day.

Back at the lodge, Sigrún has prepared a home-cooked meal of lamb and gravy, risotto, greens, and various delectable sides. After the feast, we open another bottle, playing records and talking into the night before sinking into the candlelit hotpot, and then a deep sleep.

The trickling cave

After a leisurely breakfast, we bid a fond farewell to Villi and Sigrún, thanking them for their generous



Whyyy don't mind if I do



Preparing for a homemade feast



The trusty modified jeep ready for a snowy trek



Into the darkness of Viðgelmir

“The sunlit expanse of Langjökull appears, and we step out into a majestic pink-hued icescape.”

light. We end the tour sitting in absolute darkness, listening to “the symphony of the cave”: a silence that turns out, with attention, to hold the sounds of countless trickles, droplets and streams.

The final stop is the Krauma geothermal spa, where we warm up with long and lingering dip, looking out over the steaming Deildartunguhver hot spring. Deep in the winter off-season, there are few other visitors, and after a long soak we have the relaxation lounge to ourselves. I drift into daydreams in front of the fire, struck by the thought that the tourists queuing up for Geysir and Gullfoss really don't know what they're missing in the peaceful outback of Borgarfjörður. ♡

warmth and hospitality. Villi has set up a tour of the Viðgelmir lava tube, where we're greeted by a perky young guide named Hlynur. We strap on helmets and head to the yawning maw of the cave.

A wooden staircase leads down into the darkness. Hlynur explains how the cave was formed, showing us features such as “lava candles,” which formed like stalagmites when molten rock dripped down from the ceiling, and cave bacteria that glitters silver under torch-

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The frozen vista of Hallmundarhraun



[LAMB]
street food

Grandagarður 7, 101 Reykjavík

Writing On The Walls Of Ice

History reveals itself in the Mýrdalsjökull ice cave

Words : Hannah Jane Cohen Photos: Art Bicnick

“Though I couldn’t understand the language, the pages of the glacier’s memoir were right in front of my eyes.”



Distance from Reykjavik:
160km

How to get there:
Route One South, turn left onto Route 222 and drive to the end of the road

Trip provided by:
Arcanum Glacier Tours—book at mountainguides.is

It’s a rare occurrence to see relics of the past untainted by the present. The trenches of World War I have long since been covered in wildflowers. The east side of the Berlin Wall riddled in graffiti. The Terracotta Army oxidised to a dull grey. A glacier remains, perhaps, the only perfect record of times long gone. Each layer, compressed unfathomably tight, provides an untouched reconstruction of the time it last glistened under the sunlight. In each bubble, a microcosm of a past atmosphere forms. In each dark layer, a sprinkling of tephra tells the story of a volcanic eruption long-forgotten. It’s through glaciers that scientists, like leafing through the pages of a book, have pored over the eons of the Earth.

Snow and sleet

But the idea of traversing the millennia of Iceland’s geology was, to be blunt, far from my mind as I set off to the Mýrdalsjökull glacier early one Friday morning. I was very much stuck in the present, fiddling with my coat, worried as I watched the sky hurl sleet and snow down onto the windshield as we travelled southwards on Route One. Our destination was the Katla ice cave.

As we turned into Vík, which was engulfed by fog, it seemed like weather was conspiring against our glacier hike. Arriving early, I huddled in the car, desperately hoping for some sunlight to emerge.

The abyss beckons

Buried deep within the Mýrdalsjökull glacier, Katla is one of the most active volcanoes in the country, having erupted, on average, every 50 years—the last time being in 1918. As we boarded the Super Jeep that would drive us to the cave this reality hit me. We were walking onto a time bomb. But Hákon, our guide, laughed off such concerns. I chose to follow his lead and face the void head on.

As we turned onto the glacier, the clouds parted fatefully, lighting up the sky. While I’ve seen my fair share of glaciers, their stupefying expanse never fails to take my breath away. The sunlight reflected off the pristine snow and the remnants of fog coalesced with the sunlight, forming an all-engulfing white abyss. There was no ground, no sky, just an endless expanse of white with one Super Jeep crawling slowly through it.

A marble tomb

It didn’t take long to come within view of the ice cave. Clumsily putting on our crampons in the calf-deep snow, we trudged towards Katla. From afar, the entrance resembled a black smudge on a white canvas, but as we advanced, it assumed a mystical quality.

Surrounded by imposing black and blue ice, entering the glacier felt like tiptoeing into a marble tomb. Cold and ominously dark, with grandiose icicles adorning the walls, it was hard to imagine that this cave had formed naturally, and wasn’t the lair of a supervillain. Despite being a small space, the cave’s high arches made it feel airy, and the dark heavy walls, regal. I looked up and followed the dripping of an icicle to an overhanging wall, and it was in this moment that I realised something significant had slipped under my radar.

Rife with bubbles

The deep ice contained layers upon layers, some dark and foggy, some rife with bubbles, and some without. Each one contained years of history.

I wondered what the temperature one milky seam had been the day this snow fell. Above all that was a jagged sheet of blue—was it windy, when it formed? In some areas, tectonic stress had moved the layers perpendicular to the ground. Sharp cracks made others appear uneven. Near the top was a sharp black slab. Was this the most recent Eyjafjallajökull eruption? I couldn’t understand the language, but the pages of the glacier’s memoir were right in front of my eyes.

Calling me back to reality, Hákon motioned to a low entrance in the snow beyond. “That’s next year’s cave,” he said. With each season, he explained, the caves melt and reform. Therefore, each year the Katla ice cave changes, revealing new parts while concealing others. The walls of last year told a different story than the walls of this year, and so on. And as the ice continues to accumulate and melt, new chapters wait to be written.



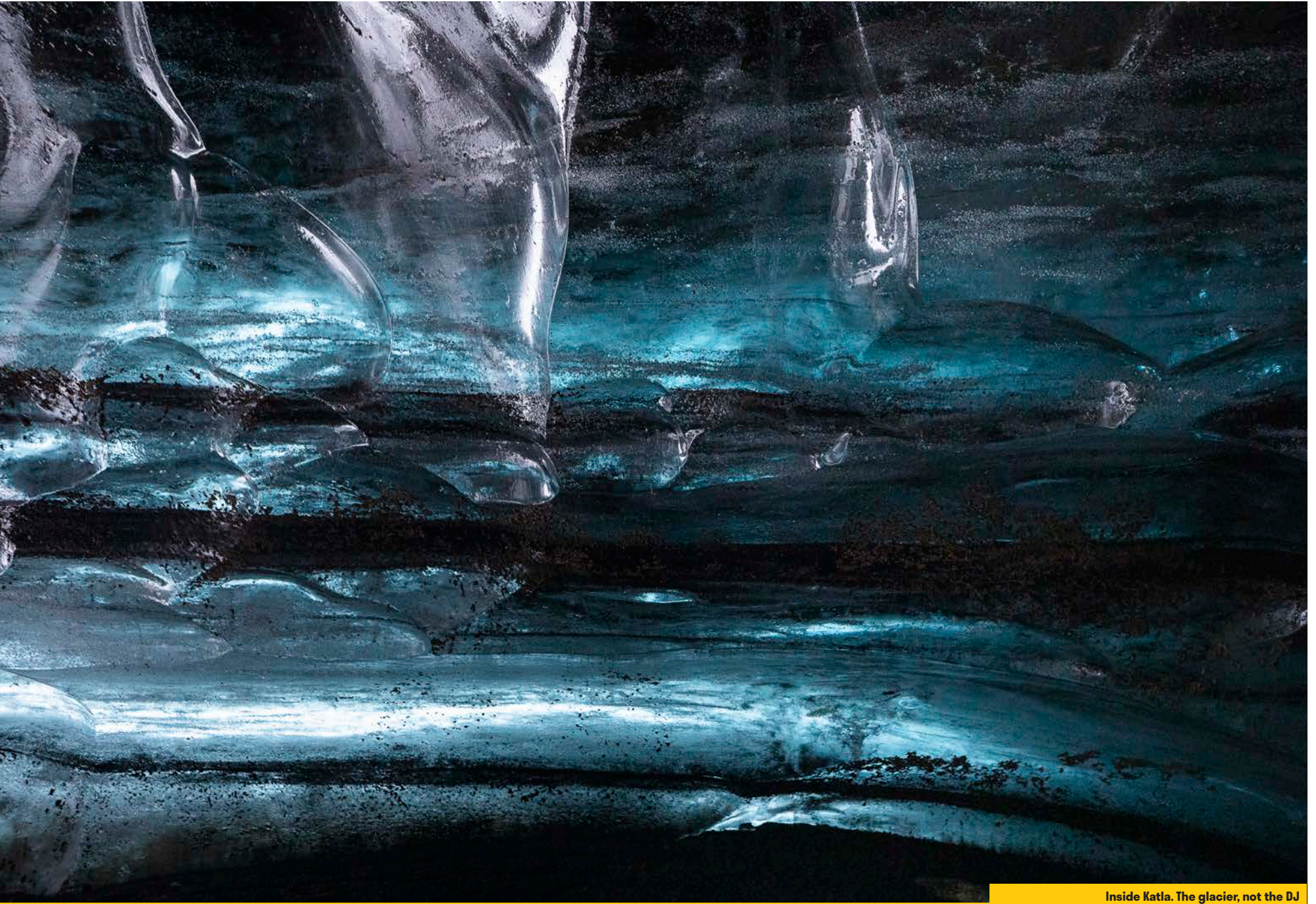
Boarding the Super Jeep



Hákon says relax



Entering the icy void



Inside Katla. The glacier, not the DJ

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Car provided by: gocarrental.is
Accommodation provided by: hali.is



It looks more inviting in summer

TOWN GUIDE

Höfn

Words: **John Rogers** Photos: **Timothée Lambrecq**

The seaside town of Höfn in Hornafjörður is just off the edge of the main South Iceland tourist trail. Lying an hour east of Jökulsárlón, the traffic thins out as you approach through rocky outcrops, abandoned farmhouses and gently rolling farmland populated by occasional herds of wild reindeer. The monstrous, magical Vatnajökull takes up much of the northern horizon, embracing the town on several sides. The gulf stream means Höfn often gets clement summer weather, and the warm seawater means it's also known as Iceland's langoustine capital—a village of restaurants has sprung up by the quaint harbour.

Bathe: Hoffell Hot Tubs

A few kilometres past the guesthouse, down a rough dirt track, you'll find the Hoffell hot pots—five steaming geothermal tubs embedded in the stony ground. There's a container unit to shower and dress in, and you can pick the tub you prefer, from pleasantly warm to searingly hot. With several glittering glacier falls in the distance, it's a spot to remember. Take cash, and leave a contribution in the trust box. If the roads are clear, head onward to the glacier lake at Hoffellsjökull.



Visit: Vatnajökull Visitor Centre

This two-floor museum offers some additional insight into the history, geology and wildlife of the area. With artefacts like antique crampons, taxidermied birds, historical films and informative infographics, you'll come away with an enriched perspective on life near Vatnajökull. Particularly impressive are the lepidoptery cabinet and a map showing walking routes over the ice cap in times gone by. Whilst one should never venture onto a glacier without an experienced guide, you can take supervised hikes from Jökulsárlón or Skaftafell.



Stay: Glacier View & Hotel Höfn

Just outside of town lies the picturesque Hoffell valley, where the Glacier View guesthouse offers unpretentious accommodation in a rural setting. In Höfn proper, there are plenty of options. Hotel Höfn has cosy rooms with ocean and glacier views, but beware of the rather ungenerous 4pm check-in and 11am checkout times. Various smaller guest houses and apartments are also available in the town. If you want something closer to Jökulsárlón and Skaftafell, the Hali Country Hotel is a nice low-key option.



Eat: Otto

There are several dining options clustered around Höfn's harbour area. Humarhöfnin is the place to go to taste juicy langoustine tails in the form of soup, pizza, sandwich or just served with garlicky butter. Pakkhúsið has langoustine, as well as lamb, salmon, duck and more. Íshúsið specialises in pizza. The newest place on the block is Otto, which wins for atmosphere with a cosy, tastefully minimal interior in a house dating back to 1897. The menu is short, but well-done; the barley risotto option is particularly excellent.



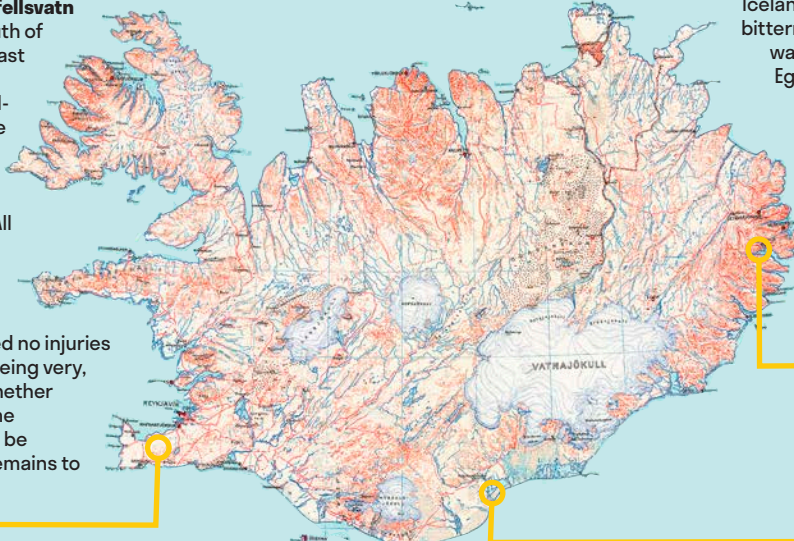
Shop: Urta Islandica Tea Workshop

Started as a post-crash back-to-nature family business in Hafnarfjörður, the Urta Islandica herb company now has a tea production facility and store in Höfn. All of their products are hand-picked from Icelandic nature, and processed locally into teas, infusions, salts, syrups and more. Many of the recipes are based on old Iceland homeopathic remedies. ☺

Island Life

Hot news from the cold Icelandic countryside

Words: Andie Fontaine



Four people fell through the ice at Meðalfellsvatn lake, just south of Hvalfjörður, last month. They were Icelanders who were shooting for the news programme Hringbraut. All of them managed to rescue themselves, and sustained no injuries apart from being very, very cold. Whether footage of the accident will be broadcast remains to be seen.

A rare bird made a surprise appearance in East Iceland: the Eurasian bittern, one of which was spotted near Egilsstaðir. These birds, which belong to the heron family, are normally only seen in southern Europe. How this visitor made its way to Iceland is still a mystery.

The Icelandic Road Administration recently took the decision to lower the speed limit for single-lane bridges to 50kph, in hopes of making them safer to traverse. As the lion's share of these bridges can be found in southern Iceland, the move is expected to have the greatest impact there. Hopefully, for the better.

Best Of Iceland

A selection of winners from our Best Of Iceland travel magazine



South: Must See Spot
Jökulsárlón

Jökulsárlón is impossible to do justice in text. It's the famous glacier lagoon where Vatnajökull calves blue icebergs into the water. You can take a boat trip on the lagoon, sailing between the icebergs as they lazily make their way toward the sea, or take a tour to the ice caves of nearby glaciers. Or just park and watch the dramatic blue icebergs float on by.



West: Must See Spot
Snæfellsjökull

On a clear day you can spot the majestic Snæfellsjökull glacier sparkling in the distance from your balcony in Reykjavik. If it's not a clear day, you can drive three hours to see it up close and in person. While it's considered an active volcano, it's not slated to erupt anytime soon, so relax.



East: Best Road Trip
Kárahnjúkar

The area of Kárahnjúkar, just north of the Vatnajökull glacier and national park, is famous for being the site of a controversial dam—but our panel said that if you ignore that, there are many beautiful canyons to be explored, such as the dramatic Hafrahvammagljúfur and Dimmugljúfur. "See if you can find the secret pool," said one panellist, mysteriously.



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

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MORE ABOUT THE EVENT:
www.bit.ly/isafoldtasting

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HAPPY HOUR

SATURDAYS
19.00 - 21.00

SKÝ RESTAURANT & BAR
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MUSIC IN THE SKY

ÍVAR SÍMONARSON
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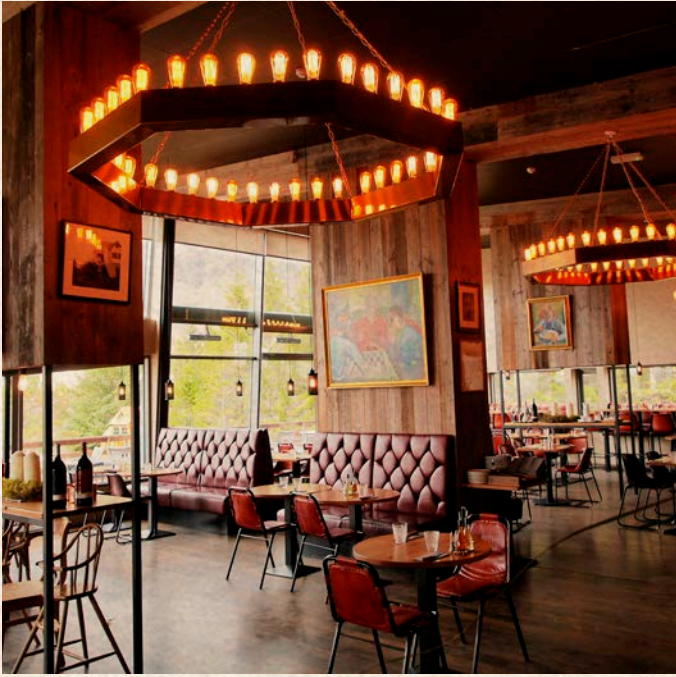
MORE INFORMATION AT:
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BREAKFAST, BRUNCH, LUNCH, DINNER

Your journey to the Golden Circle starts at Þrastalundur



Great place to see the northern lights!



Lovely Restaurant with a Stunning View! We stopped @ Thrastalundur on our way to Geysir (40 min away). Everything about this place was just magical - the food, the coffee, the view and the team. Highly recommend for anyone who wants to rest in a very picturesque scenery and enjoy truly Icelandic hospitality! - *Aga J. - Tripadvisor.*

Food was so good, we came back twice! We really enjoyed eating at Þrastalundur Restaurant. We tried the lamb soup, fresh brook trout, and leg of lamb. It was a Sunday, and they had a lovely two-piece band playing. The staff really made us feel at home, and gave us some travel suggestions for the Golden Circle. We enjoyed it so much, we came back the next night for pizza, soup, and beer. - *Kim H. - Tripadvisor.*

More than outstanding pizza Lovely restaurant situated in very scenic spot on a river bank. In summer one can see people fly fishing. The service was very good. Food was good and the atmosphere good. Will definitely go there a.s.a.p. Old but renovated in good taste. Brunch yummie. Thank you. I loved it - *Sigga_Hallgr. - Tripadvisor.*

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ÞRASTALUNDUR

SINCE 1928

LIFE IN PICTURES

ONTO THE ICE

Photos: **Timothée Lambrecq**

As we researched the feature for this glacier issue, getting onto the ice to experience it first hand seemed like a must. We drove down to Skaftafell on our way to interview Einar Öraefingur, and stopped off to take a hike onto Skaftafellsjökull with Icelandic Mountain Guides.

We got lucky: our guide for the day was a friend of our photographer, Timothée Lambrecq. Tryggvi was a real pleasure to take a trip with. After patiently fitting us up with helmets, axes and crampons, we walked to the foot of the glacier. He talked all the way, answering our questions and explaining the features of the long glacial moraine.

On the ice itself, two hours passed in what felt like an instant. We saw mulans dripping water deep down into the ice, a glistening, otherworldly ice cave, and walking up the deep blue crevasses of the glacier's snout.

Tryggvi took the time to point out some details: the streams of bubbles, compressed into the glacier and pushed into weird, organic shapes by the forces at play; the point where smooth ice started to pass over rough ground, splintering the sheet into dramatic natural sculptures. One thing we didn't see was Jöklamús: free rolling balls of moss that live on the glacier. But Tryggvi knows where to find them, and it's just a good excuse for a return visit. JR



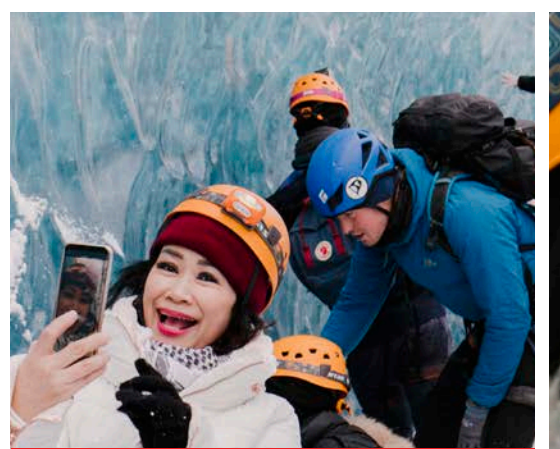
Tryggvi, our expert guide for the day



Photo stops aplenty, with special lighting



Onto the ice we go



Selfie time



Alien texture



Touching the void



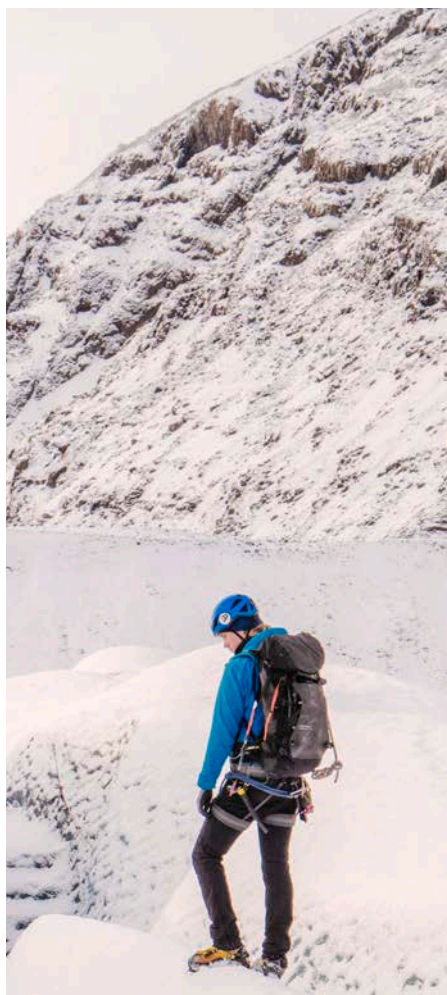
Don't fall in here...



Meeting non-Newtonian fluid



Could it be a jöklamús?



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Interfacing with the glacier



Tryggvi watching over the group



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WELL, YOU ASKED

Only One Nine-Year-Old Child Welcome

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen

Am I a bad environmentalist if I desire nothing more than warm baby puke upon my bosom?

Well, technically, yes. Humans are a plague and the environmental toll of having one child adds up to around 58.6 tonnes of carbon each year. That's a lot. Deforestation, plastic waste, mining—all are the result of your puking spawn, you selfish bitch.

That said, if you and your baby daddy have only one kid together, you are doing your part to decrease the human population by 50%, which is a good thing. My advice? Have one kid and together, we can all work to offset Mormon couples relentlessly reproducing to populate their celestial kingdoms.

Am I a bad feminist for wanting nothing more than to be a housewife?

Damn, I assume you are the same person who asked the previous question. You've got issues. But on the downlow, all women want to be housewives. It means we don't have to work. Thus, aspire to marry a rich woman/man and spend your time on floral design and watching 'The West Wing.' Talk about a celestial kingdom!

Is Sweden even a thing anymore? What have they even done since Basshunter?

Sweden is lame. They've def gone downhill ever since the reign of Charles XII, of whom we at the Reykjavík Grapevine are big fans. That said, there's Eric from 'True Blood,' Robyn, Sabaton and PewDiePie. They're all solid, especially the latter, to whose YouTube channel you should subscribe at this exact moment. Do your part. 🍷

Send your unsolvable (UNTIL NOW) problems to editor@grapevine.is or tweet us at [@rvkgrapevine](https://twitter.com/rvkgrapevine).

WAR OF THE NERDS

Chess Nerds And The Drug-Knights That Say Ni!

What happens when drug-knights send a package to a chess federation? Well, the SWAT team shows up.

Words: Valur Grettisson Photo: GAS

It's safe to say that the Icelandic nation was in shock when the president of the Icelandic Chess Federation was arrested after special forces burst into their headquarters in January last year.

Shortly after the bust, the police issued a statement that the president was in no way a suspect in a complicated drug import scheme that the narcs had been following for some time. The police had tracked a package with amphetamines that was sent to the federation. In the package, they found chess pieces filled with drugs.

Three men were arrested in the days that followed. One of them—wait for it—was pinched at a bar appropriately called the Hvíti Riddarinn (White Knight) in Mosfellsbær. Somewhat like the band of knights that say Ni, the gang was looking for their shrubbery (drugs?) when they were arrested.

The president of the chess federation, Gunnar Björnsson, said in a radio interview with the national broadcaster RÚV that he received a phone call from DHL informing him that his chess pieces arrived. Gunnar said that



Check, mate

he knew that they didn't order anything, but the delivery was paid in full, so Gunnar accepted the package. It was when he was opening the mysterious package that the SWAT team broke down his door and Gunnar found himself staring down the barrel of a gun.

"I'm just glad that our 67-year-old secretary wasn't opening the package when they came," he said in the interviews following the bust, adding that it was just dumb luck that there were no children in the house when the 14

swat members came screaming into the headquarters.

Again, Gunnar is a completely innocent bystander here. The real perpetrators, Hákon Örn Bergmann, Jóhann Axel Viðarsson and presumed ringleader Sigurður Kristinsson, are currently on trial in what the media has dubbed the "chess federation case." Sentencing is expected in the next few weeks, barring any surprise gambit. 🍷

CITY SHOT by Art Bicnick



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LAST WORDS

Bussing Blind

Words: **Kolbeinn Arnaldur Dalrymple**

Strætó, Reykjavík's oft-maligned bus company, has improved its service over the past few years. Buses run later, more frequently, and are on-time more often. The late-night weekend service has made partying much easier (and cheaper) for us suburbanites. This has happened despite the Independence Party's instinctual aversion to any sort of collective action. This steady string of improvements and a rather flattering picture of myself on their social media has not made my commute less stressful. It is anxiety-inducing, as the system does not accommodate the blind and visually impaired.

The biggest problem is figuring out which bus is which. At stops with many lines there is no way to identify the right vehicle. If I am alone at a stop, which I often am in this sprawling car-crazy city, I must ask every driver which number their bus is. This means flagging down half a dozen buses and delaying scores of fellow riders. Thankfully fellow passengers are willing to help or at least try. One time, while waiting at a particularly busy stop, I asked the woman next to me which bus it was in Icelandic. She was on holiday from North America, so I repeated in English only to get the reply: "The yellow one". This vague answer made me laugh because all of Strætó's buses are yellow. I missed my particular yellow bus that day. Most missed buses aren't as amusing.

Fortunately, solutions are available and some are fairly simple and inexpensive. Most buses have audio announcements of stops, transfer points, and reminders to take your personal belongings. However, this system is often turned off or turned down. This can make finding the right stop difficult and stressful. Ensuring the system is reliable is a simple first step.

It would not help in identifying the correct bus to begin with, but there are other options there. Buses in one US city are equipped with speakers on the outside of the bus that would announce the number and direction; this would be quite helpful when multiple buses stop at the same time. In Norway, bus stops have live screens that have an optional audio function. Reykjavík is updating its bus shelters this year and could take this opportunity to include us.

Visually impaired people are similarly out of luck when it comes to Strætó's mobile app since it does not support screen readers. Hopefully a future update can rectify that. 🍷

DAY TOURS

WE GUIDE IN 10 LANGUAGES

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