



The DEVK IAVÍK GRAPDEVINE REYNJAVIN GRAPDEVINE

Free!

Also in
this issue:

POLITICS
Force-Quitting
Filibusters

MUSIC
All The
Festivals!

LIFE
Hatari's Queer
Palestinian Collab

TRAVEL
The Witch Shop
Of Búðir

“A novel is
always built
by
oppo- sitions.
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to write a novel
about life, you
speak about
death.”

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the everyday, the big questions and the death of language

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ON THE COVER:
Auður Eva Ólafsdóttir

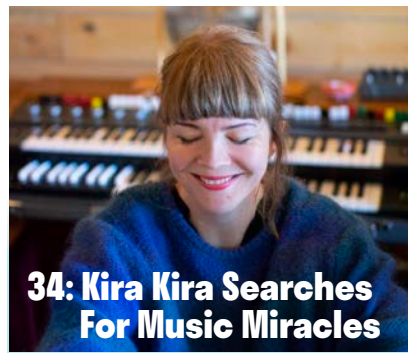
PHOTO
Rut Sigurðardóttir

ABOUT THE PICTURE:
The cover was a collaboration between Rut and our Art Director, Sveinbjörn. An attempt at the metaphorical to portray a plain-spoken interview, alluding to the origin story of a generation, or generations of women.

First



14: Bashar Murad Raises His Flag



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Still from Aquaman

The Justice Of Aquaman

EDITORIAL Jason Momoa surprisingly (or not... he is Aquaman, after all) hopped on board a campaign of online criticism against Iceland in the first week of June. The target is against a pair of Icelandic sailors who have come under harsh criticism for mutilating a shark that got caught in their fishing nets, releasing it back into the sea without its tail. This act was unprofessional, cruel and sadistic. Other sailors have stated that if the shark was hurt, they should have killed it; if it wasn't, then their actions—which they filmed and posted to Facebook—amount to old-fashioned cruelty against animals.

Of course, people were upset. The video was shocking. The sailors laughed as they cut the tail off the shark, and laughed even harder when the shark attempted to swim away, followed by a trail of blood.

Icelanders traditionally don't have much sympathy for sharks, or fish in general, but the cruelty of this act caused an outcry, and Icelanders demanded action. The fishing company responded by firing the two sailors on the spot, despite their apology. It's also

likely that they will be charged with animal cruelty, and if they are found guilty, they will be fined heavily.

Justice served, right?

Not in the eyes of Aquaman. Momoa criticised the sailors on Instagram, where he has an audience of 12 million followers. It began fairly reasonably, as he recognised that the fishermen are probably providing for their families—which they are. But his critique got rougher from there. He ended up calling their acts were "pure evil." In the end, Momoa told the pair to go fuck themselves. Fair enough. The sea king is allowed to despise these hunters if he wants to.

But what happened next, is also kind of "pure evil.". The two sailors started getting harassed by English-speaking people shortly after Momoa's post went live. One sailor, Visir reported, received a message on Facebook saying "I hope someone cut your children feet and let them bleed out, you little bitch".

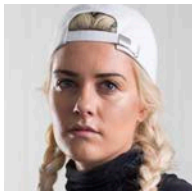
This was followed by another chilling message: "Hey bud, my next stop is Iceland, Inow have photos of you and your family. Your actions now have consequences."

These are just two of the hundreds of messages that one of the sailors received. People that threaten children are no better than those that torture animals. They're worse, if you ask me. And people with 12 million followers that lead an online charge against a pair of simple sailors also bear some responsibility—especially when they dehumanise the individuals they are criticising. Because, as another superhero famously stated, "with great power, comes great responsibility." The Icelandic sailors are not monsters; their actions were cruel and juvenile at best. They made a mistake.

Jason should apologise to those sailors and their families for the harassment they have endured from his fans. It's both the honourable thing to do, and a clear message to people that it's not okay to threaten people or their children—even if they made a bad and very public mistake. **VG** 🐉



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. Her visionary work is known for expanding the definitions of emotion, introspection, and above all else, taste.



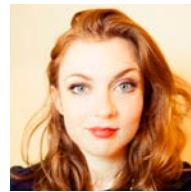
John Rogers is an Englishman who first joined Grapevine as a music writer, later graduating to Managing Editor. A constant traveller and a lover of art, culture, food & night-life, he edits our Best of Iceland, and Iceland Airwaves sister publications. His first book, "Real Life", was published in 2014.



Art Bicnick is a man of mystery, moving like the wind through the parties, soirées, openings and socialite 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 our Art Director. He's responsible for the design of the magazine and the cover photography. When he's not working here, he DJs as Terrordisco, hosts the Funkpátturinn radio show, or sits at a table in a Laugardalur café, drinking copious amounts of coffee and thinking about fonts.



Josie Gaitens is a Grapevine intern who is also a freelance arts project coordinator, musician and writer from the Scottish Highlands. She was once erroneously referred to as the Queen of Scotland by a Malaysian newspaper and has been falsely using that title ever since.



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.



Felix Robertson is a theology student from the UK who is currently on a gap year and is trying, with varying degrees of success, to 'find' himself in the frigid wastes of the north. He likes classical music, long walks and really dead languages. He's one of our current interns.



Lóa Hlin Hjalmtýsdóttir is a national treasure. One of Iceland's leading illustrators, when she's not drawing in her unique style, she's the front-woman of Icelandic electro-pop supergroup FM Belfast. Her comic strip Lóaboratorium appears every issue on page 8, and is also available as a daily dose on her Twitter.

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What Are Icelanders Talking About?

The everlasting fire of Icelandic social media

Words: **Andie Fontaine**

NEWS Social media has been ablaze these past couple of weeks, and one of the hottest topics amongst Icelanders on Facebook has been the **Centre Party filibuster against the third energy package**. This has constituted all nine MPs for the party engaging in protracted mock debates about the EU legislation, sometimes extending well into the night. As a result, every other bill pending discussion and voting into law had to wait while the Centre Party tied up hours of parliamentary time. Plenty of people were angry at these MPs for their antics “they’re holding Parliament hostage” was a common refrain—but Icelanders also saw cause to point out the complicity of other members of Parliament; most notably, parliamentary president Steingrímur J. Sigfússon, who possesses the power to move the issue to elsewhere in the discussion lineup, make a deal with the Centre Party to postpone it until the autumn, or to go for the “nuclear option” and have the matter put to a vote. Ultimately, the matter was postponed, which the Centre Party have taken to mean that they won, but the most recent polling shows that the filibuster had no effect on their level of support one way or the other.

Icelanders are fiercely proud of the unspoiled beauty of their country, so naturally, few things upset them more than when someone fucks it up. Last week, that someone was **Alexander Tikhomirov**, a self-described filmmaker and photographer, who **deliberately**

drove into the protected geothermal area around Mývatn, getting his vehicle mired in the soft soil in the process. As if that wasn’t bad enough, he then decided to post several photos of himself posing with his stuck vehicle to Instagram, bragging about having been hit with a fine. Once Icelanders

started pouring into the comments section of the pics berating him for his blatant disregard, he made another (now-deleted) post asking why everyone was so angry at him. Police reported that they had to rescue his vehicle, and fined him in the process, to the tune of 450,000 ISK. If there is any heartwarming part to this story, it’s the fact that several Russians also berated the guy, while imploring Icelanders not to judge all Russians by his actions alone.

Remember those fishermen who cut off a shark’s tail and laughed about it on video? Terrible behaviour, to be sure, but the backlash has risen to a whole new level. Enter **Jason Momoa**, star of Game of Thrones and (appropriately enough) Aquaman, who decided to chime in on the matter on Instagram. Not only did he post the infamous video; he also posted screenshots of the personal Facebook pages of two of the fishermen involved, calling them “pure evil” and ominously warning that they should “get what the shark got.” Numerous comments on the post soon followed, many of them calling for physical violence against the two men. And look, we get it. What these two men was disgusting and inexcusable. At the same time, a sense of proportion would probably dictate that calls for bodily mutilation and death might be going a tad too far. But such is the nature of social media at times. 🍷

ELÍN ELÍSABET



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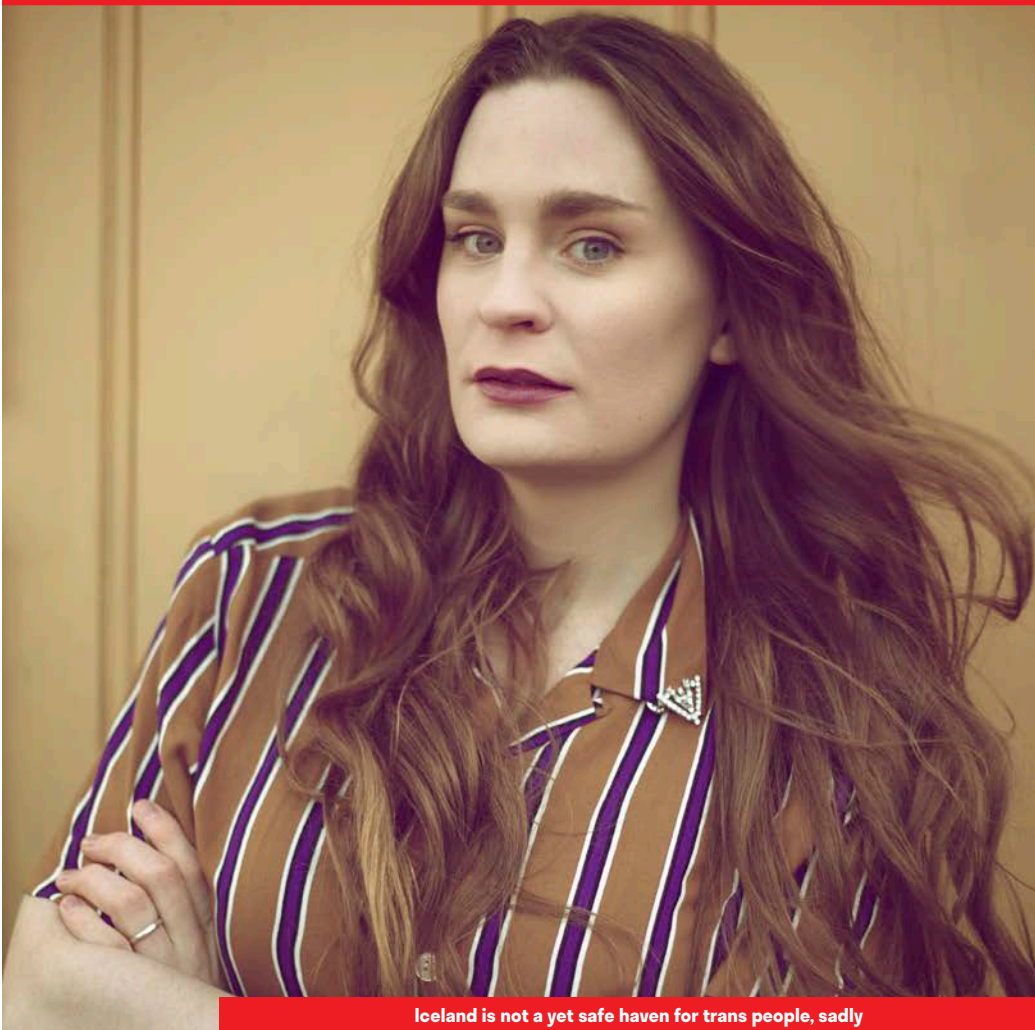
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Iceland is not a yet safe haven for trans people, sadly

NEWS

Trans Person Assaulted, And Not For The First Time

Chair of Trans Ísland warns of disturbing trend

Words: **Andie Fontaine**

Photo: **Sharon Kilgannon**

On May 31st, police reported that someone had requested police assistance after being assaulted by two men. The target of the assault was taken to hospital with some injuries, with police

saying the person was attacked due to their gender expression, and that police considered the assault a hate crime. As *Vísir* reports, the survivor is trans woman Candice Aþena Jónsdóttir, who told reporters that she was walking in Árbær, east of Reykjavík, when she was approached by two men. They soon became verbally abusive, and when she objected to the way they were talking to her, they became angry. After trying to walk away from the men, they chased her, with one of them attempting to kick her in the face.

“Pushing back against human rights”

She managed to get away, with some injuries to her hand, and called the police, but by the time they arrived the attackers were long gone. Police are still searching for the suspects.

Uglya Stefania Kristjónsdóttir Jónsdóttir, a trans activist and chairperson of Trans Ísland, told reporters that this is not an isolated incident. In fact, they said, they know of at least two other recent incidences of transphobic attacks in Iceland.

“We’re seeing this everywhere in the world, not least of all with certain political movements that are actually on the rise,” they said. “These are political movements who are pushing back against human rights in general, and naturally trans people are one of the groups who have been under attack.”

The pending legislation

Uglya says that this reality makes it especially important that Iceland not narrow its legal definition of hate speech, as former Minister of Justice Sigríður Á. Andersen proposed, and that Parliament expedites the passage of a bill on gender identity and expression, which has yet to be brought to a vote.

“This is because the bill on gender identity and expression would in itself be a big step in the fight for the rights of trans and intersex people in the world,” they told reporters. “This is our life we’re talking about, so of course we should be able to do something about this.”



What Is The Bill On Gender Identity?

The bill Uglya is referring to is a wide-ranging piece of legislation aimed at improving the rights of trans, non-binary and intersex people. This includes being able to register your gender identity as your legal gender without having to go through months of interviews with medical professionals; being able to register your gender as non-binary (marked as an “X” in passports); and the adoption of the “informed consent” model for trans people to get access to the medical services they need almost right away.

The bill, which will be submitted by the Prime Minister’s office either this spring or autumn, is likely to pass, as it is backed by the ruling coalition. While it has been praised as a step in the right direction, the bill has also been criticised for not going far enough. For example, the bill calls for the formation of a committee to establish guidelines for protecting intersex children, instead of immediately prohibiting unnecessary cosmetic surgery performed on them without their consent. Further, Iceland’s own Trans Diagnostic Team objected to the condition that a person can only change their legally registered gender once, barring special circumstances, as the team believes this goes against the spirit of the bill with its emphasis on the right to gender determination.

How does this relate to reducing transphobic assaults? In essence: when the state establishes by law that a particular marginalised group are entitled to certain rights and protections, it tends to have a broader sociological effect of increased tolerance amongst the general populace. Coupled with Iceland’s existing hate speech laws, it helps foster an environment where the message is clear: intolerance will not be tolerated.

FOOD OF ICELAND

Harðfiskur



Finally! Food that is not only for the brave or foolish. ‘Harðfiskur’, or dried fish, is basically superfood. Research conducted a few years ago by Matis

(Iceland’s food Research, Innovation and Safety authority) found that dried fish is a very rich source of protein—it’s actually 80-85% protein! I can liter-

ally hear the joyful cries of the Keto-maniacs. Even the bodybuilders are into it.

Also, harðfiskur’s amino acids compare to the levels found in

eggs. The conclusion was that proteins in the dried fish were of high quality. This supports the marketing of dried fish in the health foods and traditional

food markets.

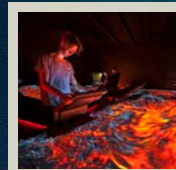
Harðfiskur is most often made of haddock, wolffish or cod. And, despite being a traditional Icelandic food, the method of making it is not even that disgusting. They fillet the fish and hang it outside on special trestles to dry—before they do this, they of course roll it in salt. We can’t really flee the salt-culture of Iceland. And that’s actually the only

downer when it comes to the health benefits of harðfiskur; it’s too salty.

But how does it taste? Like goddamn candy. Roll that sucker in butter (imagine the butter is a dip) and it will be glorious. Dried fish is the candy of the north; you haven’t lived until you’ve tried it. But watch out for that healthy protein, it will make you live a healthy life forever! **VG**

Volcano & Earthquake Exhibition

Photo: Eyjafjallajökull Eruption 2010



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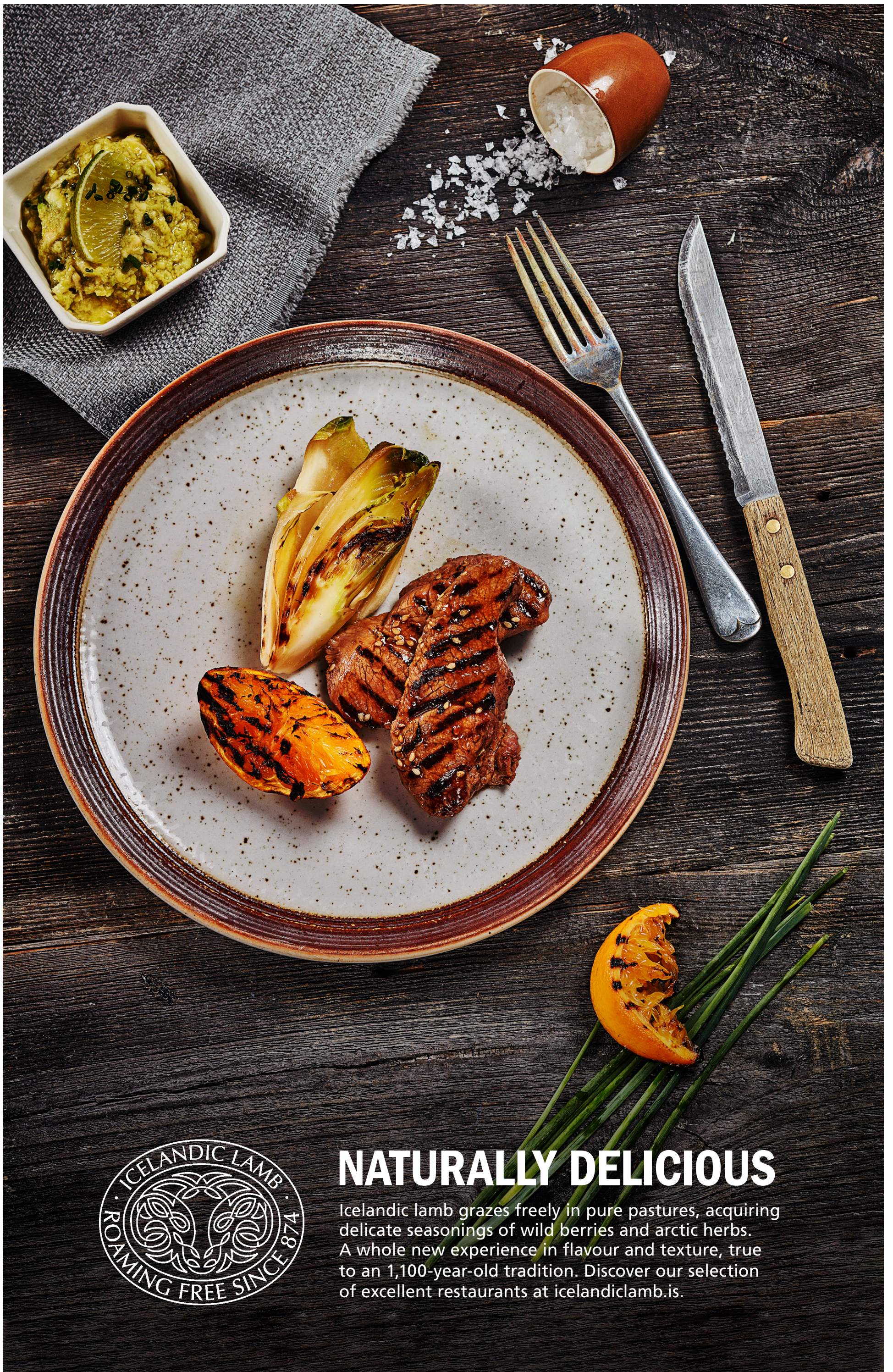
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Unlucky for some

Icelandic Superstitions

“Sjö Níu Prettán”—Seven, Nine, Thirteen

ICELANDIC SUPERSTITIONS

Words: **Andie Fontaine**

Photo: **Adobe Stock**

You are likely very familiar with the old superstition about “knocking on wood” or “touching wood”—rapping your knuckles lightly on a table or any piece of wood in order to avoid a bad outcome for a specific hope (e.g. “We should get our summer bonuses today, knock on wood”).

Icelanders take that to a new level, though. It’s not enough to simply knock on wood; you’re also supposed to say “sjö níu prettán” (literally “seven nine thirteen”) as you knock.

This particular superstition is so common that many Icelanders do it without realising its origins.

There are numerous explanations for where “knocking on wood” came from: everything from it being a reference to touching the cross of Christ, to waking up good spirits in the wood to fight evil spirits that might undo your hopes, and even to knocking on a table being a common way for abbots to scold boastful monks at the dinner table.

The use of the numbers seven, nine and thirteen are similarly a blend of Christian and pagan origins. Seven has long been considered a magic number, stemming from adding three (a triangle) to four (a square), with their respective shapes representing the spirit world and the material world, or possibly stemming from the number of days in a quarter lunar cycle. Nine is of course the product of three times three, the number of the Holy Trinity. Thirteen having some (usually evil) supernatural connotations does not, as popularly believed, come from Jesus and his 12 disciples; it’s even older than that, going back to the old Roman calendar which used 12 months of equal length and then one extra month added every six years. Just as Leap Day is a mild annoyance for some, the Leap Month was an even greater inconvenience, and led to 13 being associated with ill fortune.

This being the case, sjö níu prettán is really just a Superstition Value Pack; mashing together several different superstitions at once in an effort to defend one’s best laid plans from being destroyed by the forces of chaos. It’s popularity is pretty interesting, given that Iceland is the home of the “þetta reddast” (“it’ll all work out in the end”) guiding philosophy. ♡

JUST SAYINGS



This saying is not really that old. It originated at Akureyri Junior College and means to tell someone off, often by higher authority. The direct

translation of the saying—which in Icelandic would be used “Að taka einhvern á beinið”—is “to force someone on the bone.” So what’s with the bone, you ask? Well, the former headmaster of the school had a whalebone that could be used as a chair. A really uncomfortable chair, may I add. So when the headmaster was telling those poor kids off, they were supposed to sit on the bone while listening to him, as an extra punishment. So there you have it, to tell someone off in Icelandic, basically means forcing you to sit on a whalebone while being scolded. VG ♡

”Tekinn á Beinið”

LÓABORATORIUM



THE GRAPEVINE PLAYLIST

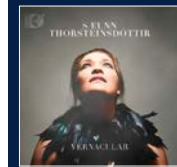
The must-hear music of the issue



Hatari ft. Bashar Murad - Klefi / Samed
Hatari’s new single was snap-released as their post-Eurovision hype hit its zenith. Recorded with Palestinian singer Bashar Murad, it’s a stunning, goosebump-inducing track, with a video shot in Palestine during the band’s controversial run at the world’s cheesiest song contest. **JR**



CELL7 - Built To Last feat. Beta
One of the first members of the Icelandic rap scene, Cell7 has lost little of her punch or relevance. A song of empowerment and strength, Cell7’s voice and message comes through clear. The album is called ‘Is Anyone Listening’, and we can say without doubt that we are. **FR**



Halldór Smáráson - 0
While it’s not a particularly pleasant listen, there’s a haunting effectiveness to Smáráson’s highly enigmatic piece, with the percussive qualities of the cello’s form drawn out for great effect, along with chilly shards of string. To get the maximum effect, watch the masterfully weird music video. **FR**



Ragga Holm - Stund Eða Staður
The latest track from Reykjavíkurdætur’s Ragga Holm is a bright mix of bubbling rhythm and semi-discordant electro beats. Holm’s delivery is subtle but never delicate, a unique balance that she absolutely nails in this song. Dreamy interludes lend a slightly summery hint to what would otherwise be an edgy number. **JG**



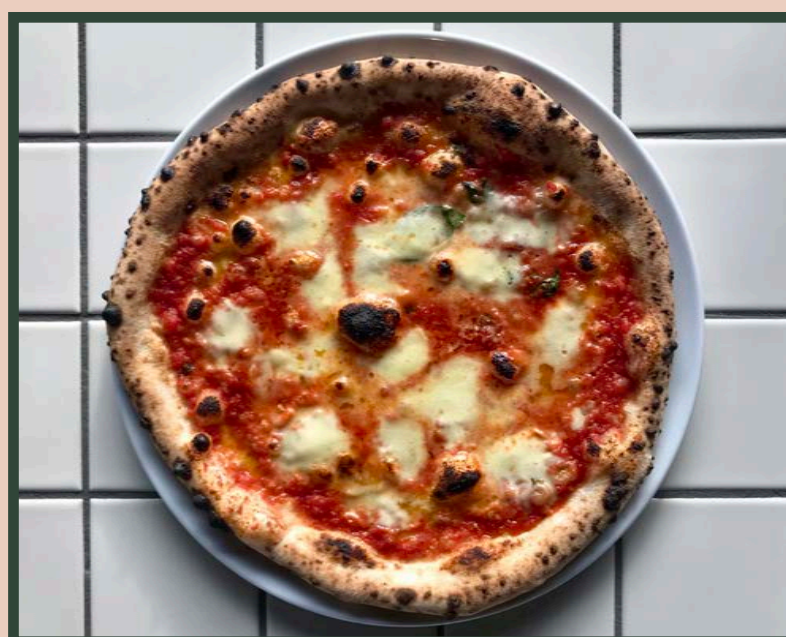
Sigur Rós - Ágætis Byrjun 20th Anniversary Edition
As Sigur Rós’s ‘Ágætis Byrjun’ turns 20, the band are releasing alternative takes, live versions, demos, notes and sketches from that period. The LP still stands up as a powerfully delicate and ambient-rock opus. **JR**



Warmland - Overboard
Sultry, synth, dream-pop grooves underpin this new track from veteran music-makers Arnar Guðjónsson and Hrafn Thoroddsen, also known as Warmland. “Overboard” is rich with indulgent, ‘80s-tinged delirium. **JG**

Listen, watch & hear more tracks: gpv.is/play

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It's do or die time for Iceland to get into Euro 2020

Wanted: Young Smitters, Must Have Own Battleaxe

Will Erik Hamrén field fresh-faced warriors in the battle for Euro 2020 qualification? from an Icelandic point of view

Words: John Rogers Illustration: Lóa Hlín Hjálmtýsdóttir

FOOTBALL

There are no two ways about it: the globe-straddling, battle-hardened, foaming-at-the-mouth, never-say-die berserker glory of the Iceland men's national football team, under the tutelage of Swedish coach Erik Hamrén, has dimmed.

Of course, any manager taking on a new team needs time to bed in; to get to know his players—in this case, an insane tribe of vicious Ásatrú Vikings, all Hades-bent on fulfilling an existential quest for world domination. A manager needs time to experiment with different troop formations and battlefield systems, and to find that elusive Goldilocks zone and solve the puzzle of tactics, personnel, and the correct motivation (the promise of a half-time leg of lamb and a victory Einstök has been known to do the trick).

However, in the eight months and nine matches since Hamrén took his place on the fur-draped throne of Iceland's great hall, the horde have won one just one

game, and exhibited troubling form. After their brave but ultimately doomed debut World Cup run, Iceland lost a spate of unfriendlies before crashing out of the inaugural Nations League contest ignominiously.

Along the way, the proud, vicious, barely-hinged warriors were emphatically torpedoed by a trilogy of European footballing titans in Belgium, Switzerland and France. It was an ill-fated and unfortunate sequence of games with barely any bright points—and, to many loyal supporters, it felt like a return of the bad old days.

The hard way

The prize of the Nations League was a sought-after Euro 2020 qualification place. Without it, Iceland are now engaging in the familiar grind of doing things the hard way. Drawn in a competitive qualification group, finishing in the top

two qualifying spots to enter the tournament proper doesn't seem like a given. The team has failed to recapture the swash-buckling, blood-splattered, gung-ho glory of their Euro 2016 campaign, when they captivated the world on an unlikely journey to the quarter finals, smiting England out of contention with the force of a 100-foot wall of starving brown bears before eventually being bested by the wine-swigging ballerinas of the host nation and eventual runners-up, France.

The first step towards repeating that semi-legendary feat at Euro 2020 went well enough, when Iceland swatted aside the lightweight eleven fielded by Andorra—one of the few minnow nations in world football small enough to make Iceland feel like a superpower. The next match—a Stade de France blockbuster against the old enemy France, who'd become world champions in the meantime—went depressingly according to form, with the unruly Gauls netting four in a one-sided fixture.

The smitening

All of this leaves the horde in the position they have, according to recent history, preferred—with their backs to the wall, in a do-or-die moment when potential glory rests on a good old-fashioned comeback. On June 8th, they'll face off against the eminently beatable Albania. On the 11th, it will be a skirmish against Turkey that

could either seal Iceland's fate, or propel them into a commanding second place—assuming that France do their duty and dispatch the Turks with their trademark half-cut theatrics.

For Hamrén, these games will prove crucial. The Swede met with a luke-

warm response upon his appointment, with warning bells sounded by those familiar with his work, and he's yet to really make his mark on the team. Few fresh-faced young champions have been seen storming onto the battlefield during Hamrén's reign, and with a first eleven consisting largely of the grizzled veterans of Iceland's greying golden generation, invigorating the side with some new

talents could be his best move to correct the course of the listing longship.

In the meantime, Iceland supporters are preparing for the matches by sharpening their sacrificial blades and bringing a goat in from the garden. International fans should bring in two—they'll need that first one just to find a working stream. Onwards! 🍷

“Supporters are preparing by sharpening their sacrificial blades and bringing a goat in from the garden.”

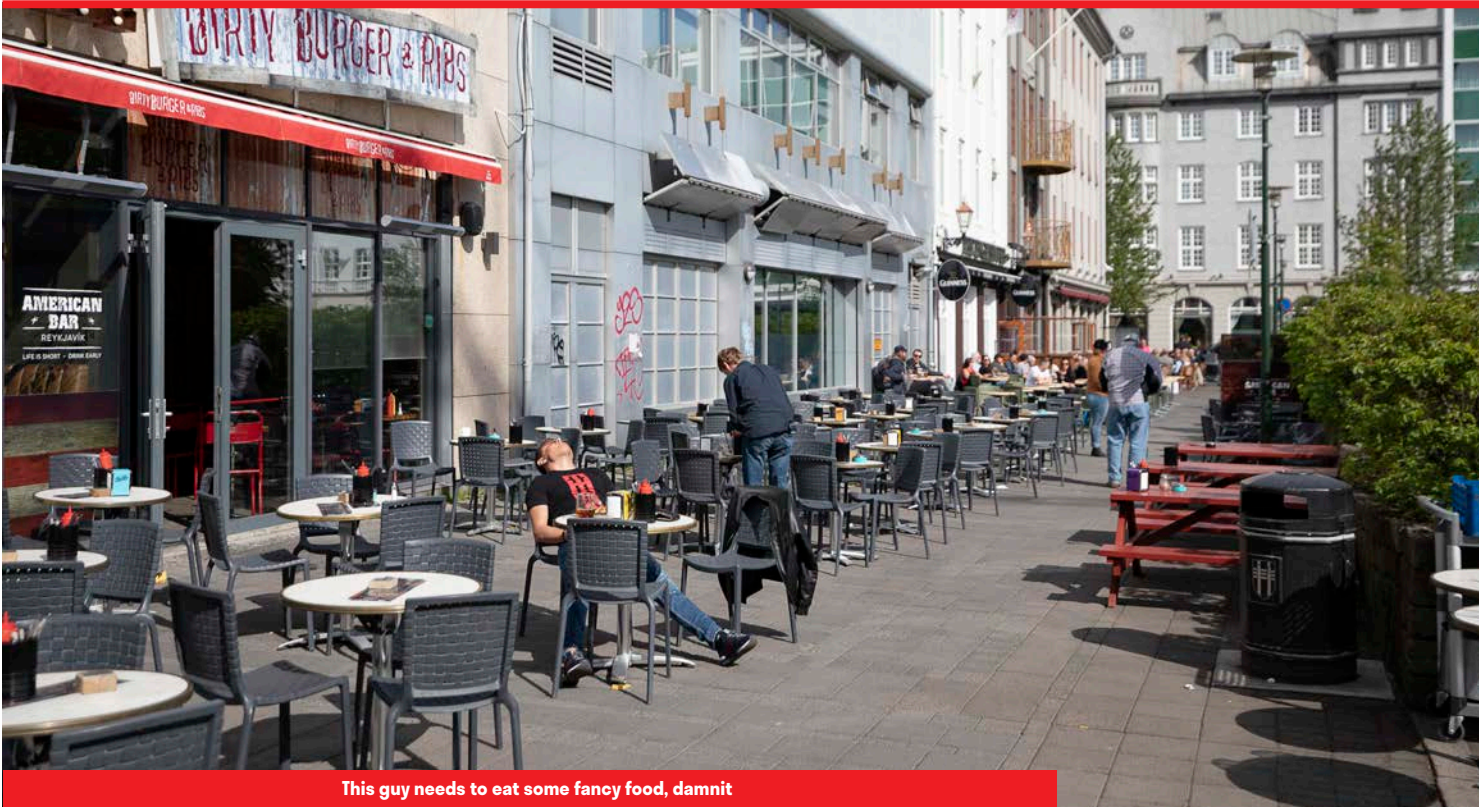
Follow our live-tweets on Euro qualification matchdays on Twitter at @rvkgrapevine. Iceland's indomitable and unstoppable march to the Euro 2020 trophy will continue throughout 2019, as Aron, Gylfi, Jóhann Berg and the boys smite their way through all the continents of the world, laying waste to any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

A woman with her eyes closed and a joyful smile is partially submerged in clear, vibrant blue water. The water is splashing around her neck and shoulders. In the background, a soft-focus landscape of rolling hills or mountains is visible under a pale, hazy sky. The word "Welcome" is written across the upper portion of the image in a large, white, brushstroke-style font.

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This guy needs to eat some fancy food, damnit

Cook Fast, Die Young, Leave A Nice Looking Dining Room

With closures coming thick and fast, is the restaurant scene in crisis?

Words: It feels appropriate that Icelanders didn't have much in the way of a summer from 2017 through 2019. During the same period, many of Reykjavik's restaurants also faced a long winter, finding

Ragnar Egjllsson

Photos: Art **Bicnick**

it hard to escape the looming shadow of bankruptcy. A slight reduction in foreign visitors to our shores has had an outsized impact as restaurants rely on tourist

revenue more than any other small business—except the stores selling the plush puffins and googly-eyed rocks we hold so dear. The recent bankruptcy of Iceland's only low cost airline, WOW Air, hasn't helped. Whatever the reason, we have seen a number of food and beverage businesses having to pull down the shutters for the last time this winter—and rumours suggest that we haven't seen the end of the unfortunate trend.

Bye bye bearnaise

The opening and closure of the extravagant seafood restaurant Skelfiskmarkaðurinn last year provoked a great deal of media attention, but they were far from alone. We also had to say

goodbye to Hótel Holt, Borðið, Nora Magasin, Argentina Steakhouse, Bazaar restaurant, Laundromat (though it's soon to re-open), Rósenberg, Vegamót (reopened as Bastard Brew + Food), and Hverfisgata 12 (immediately reopened as Systir). Some were downtown institutions; others barely had a chance to take the plastic off the marble. Others have been forced to reduce opening hours or days to cut costs. We even saw a record shattered as Spanish restaurant LOF had to close its doors after only three months of operation.

The trend isn't singling out restaurants. Downtown's only independent fishmonger, Kjöt & Fiskur, closed in 2018 after a promising start. Even middle-of-the-road donut and coffee spots like Korníð and Dunkin' Donuts called it quits.

For people outside of Iceland, this may not seem particularly severe, but it's worth keeping in mind that this is happening in a city of only 120,000 people. And all of the businesses mentioned above were within spitting distance of the central downtown stretch of Laugavegur (Reykjavik's high street) so their locations couldn't be any better.

So what's going on? How did we get to this point, and is it all doom and gloom? Of course, each story is different and you will get different answers depending on whom you ask. So we reached out to some people in the food business for answers.

Too many cooks

It's never been easy to run a restaurant in Iceland. Much of the produce needs to be imported, and the size of the population means that we are reliant on the peaks and valleys of tourism. With the recent influx of tourists, Reykjavik defi-



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nately saw a spike in restaurateurs setting up shop to feed the incoming hordes.

One such restaurateur is Ragnar Eiríksson, formerly of Dill and Hótel Holt, currently of wine bar Vinstofan 10 Sopar, who is sceptical of blaming the tourism downswing outright.

“I don’t believe the business itself has gotten that much harder,” he says. “Yes, we have more restaurants than a decade ago, but we also have more tourists than a decade ago. The problem is that restaurateurs often get dollar signs in their eyes and over-invest, and it can be really hard to pay back that investment in this business.”

The rent is too damn high

In some cases, greed and hubris played a part. However, that doesn’t paint a complete picture. No one who has tried renting or buying in downtown Reykjavik needs to be told about the sky-high rental prices and many claim that this has played a major role in the recent spate of business closures.

“The high down-payments and rental guarantees are definitely one of the issues,” says Jóhanna Jakobsdóttir, the owner of recently-shuttered Nostra on Laugavegur. “This and the fact that all the cost of renovation falls on the tenant’s shoulders. Elsewhere in Europe you have a

tradition of grace periods and landlords taking a more active role in establishing the business to ensure success—but you don’t hear about that here.”

Where do we go now?

It’s easy to join in the Greek chorus of doom and gloom, but people in the restaurant business are no strangers to the struggle. Many solutions have been proposed.

“I definitely agree with the role of the landowners and landlords,” says Erna Pétursdóttir of Ramen Momo. “We need to establish the shared interest when opening a restaurant. Nobody should be benefitting from a bankruptcy. Some of these changes may need to be pushed into being by the government, through new regulations or tax incentives.”

New horizons

Another organic solution may be coming, as an increasing number of ambitious food businesses are venturing out into Reykjavik’s satellite towns and neighbouring municipalities, from the new, industrial-located Mathöll Höfða to the Ölverk pizzeria and brewpub in Hveragerði.

It makes sense on paper. People like to be able to grab a bite and a beer after work without having to fork over the value of a UK plane ticket to a local taxi firm. If the suburbanite will not come to the

“If the suburbanite will won’t come to the food, then the food must go to the suburbanite.”



Empty chairs are also a problem in the restaurant crisis

food, then the food must go to the suburbanite. Will this spell the end of downtown Reykjavik’s role as the hub of Iceland’s food culture?

Run with the dogs tonight

Ásgeir Þór Jónsson of the Brauðkaup bakery in Kópavogur doesn’t think so. “I think we’ll see more businesses moving to the suburbs,” he says. “This is normal. You don’t see people only dining out on La Rambla or in Manhattan, except the tourists. And it does seem like our little neighbourhood bakery is part of a

bigger trend you see with places like Von in Hafnarfjörður. But 101 Reykjavik will continue to be the ‘go-to’ place for a night out. That’s not about to change.”

Eiríkur Örn Þrastarson of Mathús Garðabæjar agrees, saying: “People said this concept wouldn’t work outside the centre, all the way over in Garðabær. But we like to think we proved people wrong, and played a role in this trend. Two years later we’re still seeing increases.”

Can I offer you an egg in these trying times?

Going out to dinner is justly considered a luxury for many, but sustaining a vibrant restaurant scene is not a luxury—it remains a vital component of Reykjavik’s future as a viable tourist destination, and essential for maintaining the city’s quality of life.

Whatever the future holds, things look like they are boiling over in downtown Reykjavik. Will it result in new regulations? New ways of doing business? Or will the trickling of talent into the suburbs turn into a flood? For now, it remains to be seen. ☞



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Bashar Murad, half way through his Icelandic tour with Hatari

“It’s important for me to keep performing, and to create a space where people can be themselves.”

“Just Being Palestinian Is Political”

An interview with queer Palestinian musician and Hatari collaborator Bashar Murad

Words: Few Icelanders had any knowledge of musician Bashar Murad until May, when anti-capitalist BDSM techno lads Hatari

Photos: Patrick Onkovic & Brynjar Snær

dropped a post-Eurovision video—shot in Palestine during the Israel-hosted competition—for a new song called “Klefi/Samed.” Co-written with Bashar, the single spotlights his powerful, haunting vocals, with lyrics that are a defiant cry for freedom (“samed” means “steadfast”).

Released on the eve of Hatari’s post-Eurovision tour of Iceland—during which Bashar appeared onstage as a guest vocalist—the video attracted considerable attention, not least for the raising of the Palestinian flag.

“People think that we’re attacking someone [in the video] just by raising a flag,” says Bashar. “But we’re not attacking anyone. We’re just saying that we exist. As a Palestinian, I feel that my

identity is constantly under attack. Most of the negative comments are saying ‘Palestine doesn’t exist, Palestinians don’t exist.’ It’s very disheartening. That’s why I felt it was so important to raise the flag in the video.”

The story behind how the single came to be made is interesting in itself, but it’s Bashar’s story that ought to command more attention, for his background, his dreams, and the work that he continues to diligently produce against the odds.

Breaking down the norms

As Hatari prepared to travel to Tel Aviv to represent Iceland in the Eurovision Song Contest, they stated in numerous interviews that they intended to highlight the Palestinian cause. On the sidelines of the contest, they also wanted

to collaborate with Palestinian artists. Mutual friends put Hatari and Bashar in touch, and when Hatari suggested working together, he was receptive.

“There was a lot of pressure on them to boycott Eurovision,” he says. “I myself thought it would be best for people to boycott. But there should be room to find different ways to show solidarity and challenge the system, and I thought that this band could do that. Of the 43 participants at Eurovision, I think they were the only ones who commented on the occupation, or about anything that’s going on there.”

“You couldn’t do that in Palestine!”

One of the more frequent criticisms levelled at Hatari during Eurovision was that they couldn’t possibly perform in Palestine because the country is intolerant and homophobic—a criticism Bashar made the point of addressing.

“Israel is painted as a safe haven for queer Palestinians,” he says. “This might be true in many situations, but it’s not right to generalise a whole population as homophobic. And it’s not right legitimise occupation by saying ‘Palestinians do this.’ Furthermore, Tel Aviv is the only bubble in Israel that’s very accepting of

“I just want to be a major pop LGBT icon, like Lady Gaga and Freddy Mercury.”

people our stories, because when you’re a Palestinian musician, you can’t just be a musician. It’s always going to be political somehow. Just being Palestinian is political. Everything you do is a political statement. So it’s important to me to keep performing and keep making music, and to create a space where people can be themselves and be accepting of everyone and not to judge people based on the colour of their skin, or their background, or their gender.”

queer people. There was a gay parade in Jerusalem a few years ago, and a Haredi Jew stabbed one of the people walking in the parade—but I don’t then generalise that “all Jews or all Israelis hate queer people.” It’s an argument that doesn’t get us anywhere, and it’s exhausting. How do you get through to those people who are being brainwashed?”

At the same time, he cautions that those who want to show support for him or Palestine as a whole mind their words. “I don’t like seeing comments that say ‘fuck the Jews.’ That’s not what I’m about at all,” he says. “That’s very frustrating. They think they’re helping by saying stuff like that, but that’s not what I’m going for, at all. We want peace, at the end of the day, we want to be recognised and we want justice. We don’t want to talk shit about another people.”

Doubly divided

Bashar was raised in East Jerusalem, and says it’s in many ways doubly divided; separated from the rest of the city and from the rest of Palestine itself.

“East Jerusalem is under Israeli military occupation, under international law,” Bashar explains. “But recently [US President Donald] Trump decided—I don’t know why—that it’s the undivided capital of Israel. This disregards all the basic agreements detailing how, when the Palestinian state is established, East Jerusalem will be the capital of Palestine.”

The Palestinian scene

However, there is the Palestine Music Expo, started by Martin Goldschmidt and Palestinian artists. Held in Ramallah every April, PMX is a three-day festival of Palestinian artists with music delegates from all over the world. And for those who cannot make it to PMX but want to check out Palestinian music, Bashar recommends the Spotify playlist Palestine Sounds.



Bashar takes the stage with Hatari in Reykjavik

Hard criticism

From the moment Hatari announced their intention to leverage their participation in Eurovision as a platform to draw attention to the Palestinian cause, responses have been mixed, but none of them have been lukewarm. The same could also be said of “Klefi/Samed,” the single and video released by Hatari and Bashar. Just a quick glance at the comments on Hatari’s Facebook page, or at the YouTube comments under the video, shows people saying that neither

Palestine nor Palestinians exist; that the use of the Palestinian flag constitutes an attack against Israel, and so forth. The most prominent criticism came from the Jerusalem Post, in an article from Barry Shaw entitled “In Iceland, hate has prevailed from the Nazi SS to Eurovision 2019,” which documents the history of Nazi sympathising in Iceland. Historical fact, but the connection to Hatari or Eurovision is tenuous at best.

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This guy talked for so long he may have blacked out

Show of Power: The Future of the Filibuster in Iceland

When the gears of democracy grind to a halt

Words:
**Kolbeinn Arnaldur
Dalrymple**

Photos:
Art Bicnick

Last month saw one of the longest filibusters in Icelandic history. The Centre Party’s populist grandstanding over routine—and, for Iceland, irrelevant—European Union legislation has dominated the headlines for a rather dull run. As a member of the European Economic Area, Iceland must adopt most EU regulation and legislation. The controversial “Third Energy Package” regulates cross border energy markets within the EU/EEA, but, as Iceland is not connected to mainland power grids, the law’s provisions are inconsequential.

Not to be deterred by facts, the Centre Party blocked all parliamentary business under the false claim that the law would give control of Iceland’s energy to the EU. They dragged debate out for over a 134 hours; often only talking to each other in an otherwise empty chamber. On Friday May 31st party leaders agreed to delay debate on the bill indefinitely. It is not clear when or if the bill will be brought to the floor again.

Slow Rolling Tradition

It is the second longest debate since the two houses of parliament combined in 1991. Only the debate surrounding the controversial IceSave deal lasted longer. Indeed, the debate has been dragged out longer than that about Iceland joining the EEA. While prolonging debate is a tactic that has been employed by all parties at one point or another, these filibusters are rare and tend to last about a day.

Conservative opposition parties twice protested the post-crisis left-wing government’s budgets by prolonging debate for nearly twenty hours. The leader of that government, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, famously gave a twelve-hour speech in 1998 to protest the government ending construction of new social housing. Once a point has been made abundantly

“Senators rarely make speeches in the style of ‘Mr. Smith Goes to Washington’, rather, leadership counts how many votes they have.”

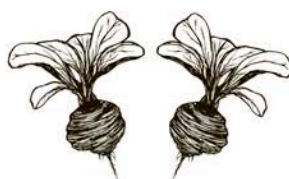
clear ordinary business resumes. Section 71 of the parliamentary law allows the speaker—in this case, Steingrímur J. Sigfússon—to limit or end debate. The same provision also permits nine MPs to propose a vote to end the debate, though this hasn’t happened in 70 years. Steingrímur J., was reluctant to call the Centre Party’s efforts a filibuster, but after several days, members’ patience was wearing thin. Leader of the opposition Social Democrats, Logi Einarsson, told Visir that MPs had discussed turning to Section 71 to end debate. However, he was cautious because it would set a new precedent and may be used by the Centre Party to elicit sympathy from the public. Logi and others are right to be cautious about changing the rules.

A World of Alternatives

Filibustering has become the norm in the United States Senate, where it was once a rarity. However, changing rules have created an environment where minority leaders are almost encouraged to stall. US Senators rarely make speeches in the style of “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,” rather leadership counts how many votes they have before moving forward. At least in Iceland MPs are still required stand at the podium and speak for many hours.

Fortunately, the US model of gridlock is not the only alternative. British parliament has a strongly majoritarian tradition. The government chooses what legislation comes to the floor and when votes will happen. It only needs a one vote majority to pass. However Ministers must face biting questions and jeering members on the opposition benches. In contrast, in Denmark a one-third minority of MPs can demand a referendum on most non-financial legislation. The Centre Party has just half of that representation in Icelandic parliament. This provision has rarely been used because the country has a tradition of consensus politics. Unlike his predecessor the current Icelandic president is fiercely apolitical and unlikely to veto a bill that will pass with broad support in Alþingi and little public opposition.

The proposed new constitution would have formalized the process and bypassed the president. Alþingi is moving quickly to finish other business and get out in the long absent summer sun. The nonsense controversy waits for another day. ♡



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“There’s no such thing as an innocent text.”

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen
Photos: Rut Sigurðardóttir

Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir on the everyday, the
big questions and the death of language

“When I decided to become a writer,” says **Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir**, “I started relatively late, like many women writers. I asked myself this very simple question: ‘Do I have something to say?’”

Despite her early reservations, Auður did have something to say, and she has since written words that have resonated with readers worldwide. Though she began her literary career in her late thirties, Auður has undisputedly made her mark on Icelandic literature, writing bestseller after bestseller, and finding fame from Iceland to France to China; she even snatched the Nordic Council Literary Prize last year for ‘Hotel Silence.’ “I made the decision to give a voice to those that didn’t have a voice in my novels,” she explains, nibbling on a homemade croissant in her dining room. “You know, there’s no such thing as an innocent text.”

Auður often speaks like this, just like the voice her novels—dissecting her own words, and then organising the overarching concepts into simple statements. Oftentimes, she’ll ask herself questions and then answer them. The late-blooming artist has the uncanny ability to format and unravel the small moments of human existence into pithy words and statements that make you stop and think about your own life. Auður is a novelist, yes, but she’s more than that: she’s a scientist.

Discovering worldly literature

Auður’s youth told a different story. Growing up in Reykjavík, Auður was interested in reading, but didn’t necessarily identify as a voracious reader. In the 1970s, the breadth of her intake was limited by the availability of Icelandic-translated literature. In high school, they focused on the Sagas and Halldór Laxness, rather than the greats of the international community.

In fact, she didn’t start reading foreign writers until she went to study abroad at age 21. “I went to study in Italy, and Italian was really the first foreign language I knew at the level where I could read difficult literature,” she explains. “It was like a whole new world opening to me. Being born on a remote island, and speaking a marginal language that few people know, learning a foreign language was the door to worldly literature.”

She began to read Pavese and Elsa Morante, among others, and when she moved to Paris years later, entered the world of Marguerite Duras and Hervé Guibert. It was during this time that Auður’s lifetime fascination with the limits of language was born. “I was getting to know writers that were so completely different than anything that had been translated to Icelandic,” she says.

Guibert’s books, in particular, taught her to be uncompromising with her words. “He was just so unlike anything I had read before,” she explains. “It was so poetic. It was so raw. It was so daring. I was a stranger in Paris speaking with Russian-accented French; and somewhere, as a writer, I was born, many years before I started to write.”

Duras’ works, on the other hand, allowed her to experience viscerally what she had missed in Icelandic translations. “She’s impossible to translate because it’s all breathing; it’s all between the lines, between the words. When you see it in any other language, it’s just not, well, you know,”

she pauses, trying to find the right words to describe not being able to find the right words. If there’s anything that articulates this conundrum, Auður’s thoughts have found it.

It’s interesting that Auður counts Duras and Guibert as the spark that lit up her passion for literature. Duras, most famous for ‘The Lover’ and the script for ‘Hiroshima, Mon Amour,’ is known for her peculiar take on prose. She wrote autobiographically, albeit in the third person; unpretentious and bold, she often explored the feminine experience in her works. “A man and a woman, say what you like, they’re different,” she once famously wrote.

Auður’s works also show that same autobiographical quality, albeit less obviously than Duras’. While Duras wrote books that were explicitly about her own life, Auður’s works take a less direct inspiration from her reality—but if you look deeper, her own experiences are clearly there. Moreover, Auður was distinctly inspired by Duras’ ability to distill truths down into their most direct and purest form.

Born poets and geniuses

Auður’s newest novel, ‘Ungfrú Ísland’ (‘Miss Iceland’), which will be released later this year in English, shows this style most clearly. The story is set in 1963, and charts the travails of a female writer who can’t find her place in a male-dominated literary society, where women are not allowed—where they, unfortunately, belong in the home.

“In ‘Miss Iceland,’ a character says this,” she says, exhaling, preparing to quote a difficult passage from her novel. “Male writers are born poets and they become geniuses by the age of 13, but women writers are born with a body and they become pregnant.” She lets the thought sink in, a hint of sadness flashing across her face. “If you look at autobiographies of people like Nabokov or Sartre, you can see that they are born poets and just have to explain why they became geniuses. But women writers often start writing around the age of puberty and the body is central to their stories and it’s a problematic body. It can get pregnant.”

The writer within the novel is clearly talented, a distinct parallel to the geniuses of Icelandic literature like Laxness. “For my hero, everyone is more interested in her body rather than what she wants to say. She’s supposed to be a very original writer with a different voice, and so they can’t put her in a box,” Auður explains. “That’s why she isn’t being published—because she isn’t writing like male writers.”

The book’s message, Auður emphasises, is one of freedom. “It’s a book about liberty, the need for liberty and the search for beauty,” she says. It then dives into what beauty is, specifically, within Iceland. “You know, the meaning of beauty in a society that organises beauty contests,” she says with a small smile.

The others of society

Unlike Auður was, the heroine in her novel is well aware of literature outside Iceland. She has a sailor friend, who is a homosexual—an outsider, like her—who brings her works like ‘The Second Sex’ by Simone de Beauvoir and novels by Sylvia Plath. For authenticity, Auður

made sure such books were available in English or Danish during the year the novel was set.

“In 1963, Sylvia Plath committed suicide, Kennedy was shot, and it’s also the year of the Surtsey eruption near Vestmannaeyjar,” she says. “I looked at this very isolated society in the light of what’s going on abroad.”

She made the eruption of Surtsey a fundamental moment to illustrate the plight of women at that time. “When you get the news of the eruption, it’s the women doing the washing up who are watching the cauliflower in the sky, and they phone a friend who is washing up in another house, and that’s how the news spreads,” she explains. “Some say it’s like a dystopia. It’s so black and white. It’s a male-dominated society, every aspect of it. Just men smoking their cigars and making all the decisions in politics, no women and all, and very few women in the world of literature either.”

Taking a chance on the unknown

The protagonist’s plight as an ignored author isn’t unlike what Auður faced at the beginning of her career. At first, Icelandic publishers were wary of her. “In a way, it was a male dominated society in Icelandic literature until the 21st century,” she explains. “I had to fight for my novels. With my second novel, ‘Butterflies in November,’ no one wanted to publish it. The male publishers all played football together, and had synchronised their taste in literature—so if one said ‘no’ to a writer, they all did.”

After many rejections, Auður finally found a publisher. “I found a woman publisher—Hildur Hermóðsdóttir from Salka Publishing,” she grins, clearly having great affection for the first person who took a chance on her. “She was my saviour.”

Auður then sent one chapter of the novel to a small publishing house in France. “I was quite happy with my 200 readers in Iceland,” she explains, but she still decided to try out the international market. “It was too expensive to translate it all, but my publisher lent me the money. At the same time, ‘The Greenhouse’ was nominated for the Nordic Council Prize and it was translated into Danish and got very good critical reviews. In France, it then became a bestseller and won the prize for the best foreign novel of the year, selling 300,000 copies.” She pauses. “But Icelanders didn’t know anything about me.” Eventually though, with time, Icelanders came around, and Auður became an integral part of the canon of Icelandic literature.

Auður is a female writer who often writes male protagonists, much to her audience’s confusion. “I remember when I was published in France, my name ends with -ur, which is usually a sign of a male name,” she laughs. “They were probably expecting someone else.”

The pitfalls of language

Along with a focus on the others of society, Duras and Guibert instigated a fascination with translation within Auður that would prove fundamental to her career. “I’ve always been interested in what’s practical and impractical about minority languages,” says

Auður. “There’s a different way of seeing the world in each language.”

When talking about the unforgiving grammar of the Icelandic language, things get complicated. “Take a demonstrative pronoun like ‘enginn,’ which means ‘nothing,’” she says. “You have 24 different ways of saying what’s nothing, depending on the nature of the void. Enginn, ekkert, engar, and so on. My translators often say I use so many different ways of speaking of the same thing,” she laughs.

She then begins to talk about her favourite Saga character, Melkorka of the ‘Laxdæla Saga.’ Melkorka was stolen by the viking Höskuldr, and in protest, she stopped speaking. At one point, when she thought no one was listening, Melkorka spoke to her own son in her native Celtic language, which later causes her own detriment. Auður was so inspired by Melkorka’s rebellion that she named her eldest daughter after the character. “I thought that not speaking was so courageous,” Auður explains.

Melkorka, the silent

Melkorka was also, no doubt, a fundamental inspiration for one of Auður’s most beloved works—the tragicomedy ‘Butterflies In November,’ which has consistently found a place on Grapevine’s must-read lists. The main character is a translator, but is forced to take on the sole responsibility for a deaf-mute son of a friend, who speaks only in sign language. “There’s a silent person and one that speaks many languages,” she explains. “But the translator has difficulty expressing herself verbally. It’s a very physical novel.”

Auður’s most widely translated novel, ‘The Greenhouse,’ tells a similar story. It’s about an Icelandic man, who, after a series of pitfalls, journeys to a monastery. There, he encounters a monk who speaks 34 languages. The novel is full of evocative prose that concentrates on the banal exchanges of life, and in that quotidian matter, taps into the larger aspects of being human.

Auður attributes these contrasts to the fundamental tenet of her novels. “A novel is always built by oppositions,” she explains. “If you want to write a novel about life, you speak about death. If you want to write about women, as I did in ‘Hotel Silence,’ you make the main character a man. In ‘Butterflies In November,’ I wanted to confront this character who speaks too many languages with someone who didn’t speak, to somehow show that there was this world beyond languages.”

Something bigger, something true

At this point, Auður needs a break from discussing her novels. Taking a bite of her croissant, she smiles. “There’s a particular smell of croissants in the oven. It reminds me of my mother and my grandmother. I feel safe,” she says. “I feel like I have cleaned up the house the day before Christmas, even if it’s a mess.” Once again, Auður has managed to dissect her thoughts beautifully, perfectly articulating the beauty of childhood through the simple act of eating a croissant.

It’s this focus on small actions that has become characteristic of Auður’s prose. “I think that’s actually my

method,” she states simply. “To speak about the small things of everyday life and make them stand for something bigger—for something true. I’ve always admired writers that can teach intellectual topics and make them simple at the same time. The more specific, the more global. It’s like the ecosystem—what is local becomes global.”

The risk in this ethos, Auður explains, is in how a reader might respond. “Someone might just find it naive, or even see the Icelandic humanistic way of seeing the world naive,” she says. This is particularly true of ‘Hotel Silence,’ the plot of which revolves around a suicidal Icelandic man flying to an unnamed country that is in the process of recovering from a civil war. “The idea of ‘Hotel Silence,’ or sending this Icelandic peace into the world—it’s not to obviously save the world, just to do some repairing,” says Auður.

The handyman, she explains, represents the archetype of Icelandic masculinity—the typical male Icelander that can fix or repair everything but himself. “He’s lost, and no one can do everything to fix or repair a broken world, but everyone can do something. It’s also my thought that if you know what’s going on and you don’t do anything about it, you are the responsible one,” she says. “It’s something I never preach, though, it’s something that the reader finds or does not find.”

A translation of a translation

The idea of translating her own novels, or dealing with the translations of them, has become somewhat of a running joke for the author. “‘The Greenhouse’ has been sold and translated into 27 languages. ‘Hotel Silence’ a bit less, but almost as many,” says Auður. “Korean, Chinese, Turkish, Hebrew, Arabic, and more. In that case, it is translated from English or French, which means I don’t even know what kind of book they are reading.” She laughs. “That’s probably the reason why they like them so much—they are completely different.”

Self-deprecation aside, Auður tries not to trouble herself with imagining how her novels have evolved across languages. “Sometimes it’s better not to know,” she says. “I tell myself ‘what you don’t know doesn’t exist,’ so I won’t be able to read these translations of translations—but it’s sweet.”

The death of words

Auður just released ‘Miss Iceland’ in 2018, but she already has many new projects on her mind. “I always have three books in my head,” she grins. “There’s a part of my brain where a novel matures.”

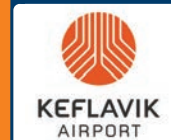
The importance of language is perhaps what’s closest to Auður’s heart, possibly even more so than her novels, and so once again, before she finishes, she manages to distill down her thoughts into a few meaningful sentences. “You know, there are around 3,500 languages in the world, but 40% will die within 10 years,” she says, with sadness crossing her face. “Two languages die each month. With each language we are losing a culture and a way of thinking. There’s a different way of seeing the world located in every language.”

“I think that’s actually my method, to speak about the small things of everyday life and make them stand for something bigger—for something true.”



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Fade In/Fade Out

What's the (Power)Point?

June 12th - 20:00 - Loft - Free!

Are you craving a one minute PowerPoint comparing German war-planes to puffins (and flying potatoes)? Feeling like there just isn't enough Comic Sans, garish transitions and dubious 90s gradients in your life right now? Then brush up on your clip art, grab your clicker and prepare to learn something very, very new at Loft with comedian Kimi Tayler. We have been assured that technical issues are very much included. **FR**



Triple Threat Triple Treat

Jaakko Eino Kalevi, JFDR & Farao

June 11th - 21:00 - IDNÓ - 2,500 ISK

Bowie-influenced Finnish wonky-psych-disco-maestro Jaakko Eino Kalevi, dark Norwegian simmering, poetic pop princess Farao, and Iceland's own introspective, soulful lullaby queen JFDR join forces for a must-see concert at IDNÓ on June 11th. The three sit amongst the brightest stars of their respective scenes, drawn together as friends by an audible commonality and aural chemistry that bridges the genre divide. The vibes will be good, and the music even better. **JR**



Icelandic Opulence

Drag-Súgur: Motherland!

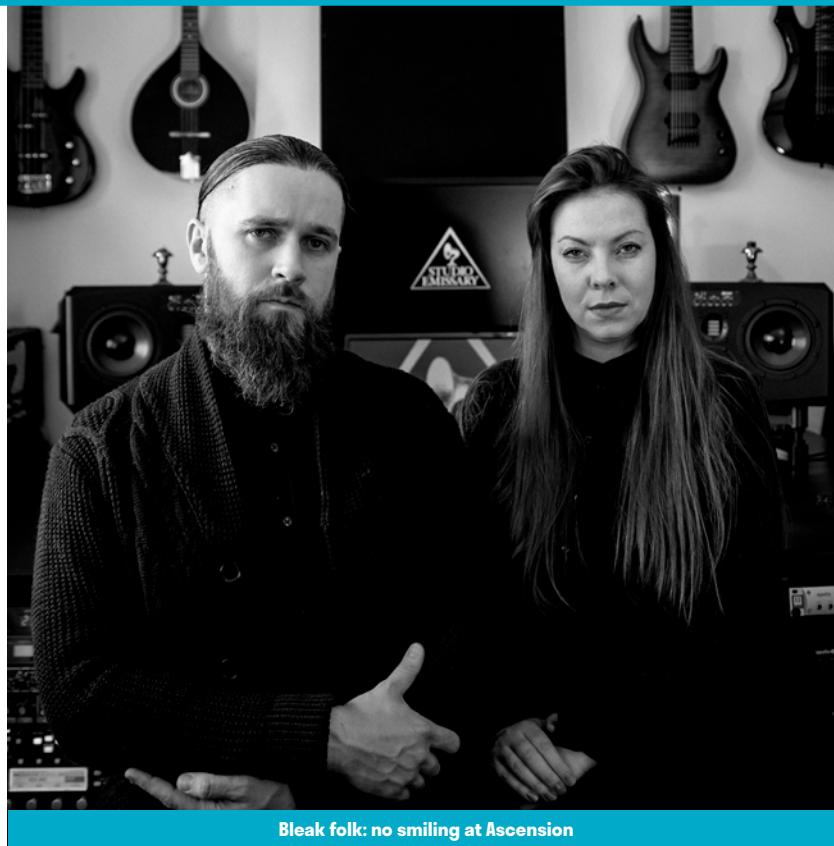
June 7th - 21:00 - Gaukurinn - 2,500 ISK

Donald Trump doesn't have to be the only one who gets to meet a Queen this week. Head to Gaukurinn on Friday to see the astonishingly fabulous Gógó Starr host a special Icelandic-themed edition of Drag-Súgur, Reykjavík's premier drag show. Last year Gógó led the official Independence Day parade as 'Fjallkonan,' Iceland's national mother figure. If previous form is anything to go by, then this year's interpretation will only be more extravagant. Expect glamour, glitter and a glut of civic pride. **JG**

CULTURE NEWS

Info

Ascension MMXIX takes place June 13-15 at Hlégarður in Mosfellsbær. A few tickets are still available on tix.is



Bleak folk: no smiling at Ascension

Darkness Rising

The Ascension MMXIX metal festival shrouds the midnight sun

Words:
Rex Beckett

Photo:
Woda i Pustka

As the summer light increases and festival season takes off, Ascension MMXIX brings together the blackest of the black metal and dark music in Iceland. Risen from the ashes of the Oration festival, held for the past three years, the newly christened festival is set to be a bigger, more all-encompassing event, with a diverse lineup of cutting-edge metal and oddball bands.

Put together by Stephen Lockhart, an Irish import and producer at Studio Emissary, and his partner in crime Gunnhildur Edda Guðmundsdóttir, Ascension is an altogether new experi-

ence. "Sure, there is a red thread, as it's organised by the same people with the same aesthetic values, but that's about as far as it goes," says Stephen. "Our aim was to create a different atmosphere to Oration—a more festive vibe, as opposed to just three nights of long gigs at a bar."

Vision / execution

For this atmosphere to flourish, Ascension will take place in the Hlégarður hall in Mosfellsbær, on the outskirts of Reykjavík. "The venue is far better suited to our needs than just about any

venue downtown, or at least a venue that actually allowed us to execute our vision to our liking," says Stephen. "If people can travel 15 hours across the country or go to a different country to see a festival, they can travel 20 minutes to Mosfellsbær."

The lineup consists of 30 bands from over 13 countries on three continents. In fact, only 13 of the acts are Icelandic. The styles are dark and diverse, with a strong emphasis on black metal, but also comprising darkwave, post-punk and esoteric doom acts. "When the decision was made to start a new festival after Oration, we were certain that we wanted to host more than just black metal bands," Stephen continues. "I believe there is an aura given off by certain bands that transcends genre tags, an indescribable feeling that binds our lineup together."

Exceeding standards

Among the standout acts are Swiss powerhouse Bölzer; first-ever live performances by the bands Akhlys, Aoratos and Kaleikr; exclusive one-off sets by Sinmara, Carpe Noctem and Sólstafrir; and Drab Majesty and King Dude from the cult American label Dais Records. "They all provide an excellent twist on the dark side of things, but without the overt metal leanings," says Stephen. "There's certainly something for everyone to check out."

Along with the three days of non-stop music, the festival will host art exhibitions and be an all-around immersive environment. "We are constantly trying to push boundaries and raise the bar with our festival," says Stephen. "We are not content with just having a 'cool gig' at a bar that you forget about in a week, we want to create experiences that leave a mark. Ascension is a festival that aims to exceed the standards of any metal or metal-related festival that has taken place in Iceland, and we are determined to do so." **✂**

ELECTRIC DREAMS

Music

Listen to Eyewitness Records' most recent releases at ewrecords.bandcamp.com Go to their monthly 'Face Your Fate' club night at Bravó



The Search For Different Angles

Ívar Sævarsson on Eyewitness Records, his medium of choice and dance music experimentation

Words:
Alexander Jean de Fontenay

Photo:
Magnús Magnússon

Eyewitness Records—E.W. for short—is a Reykjavík-based record label releasing a range of electronic music. It launched last year as a sub-label of Robotdisco Electronix (R.D.E.)—an

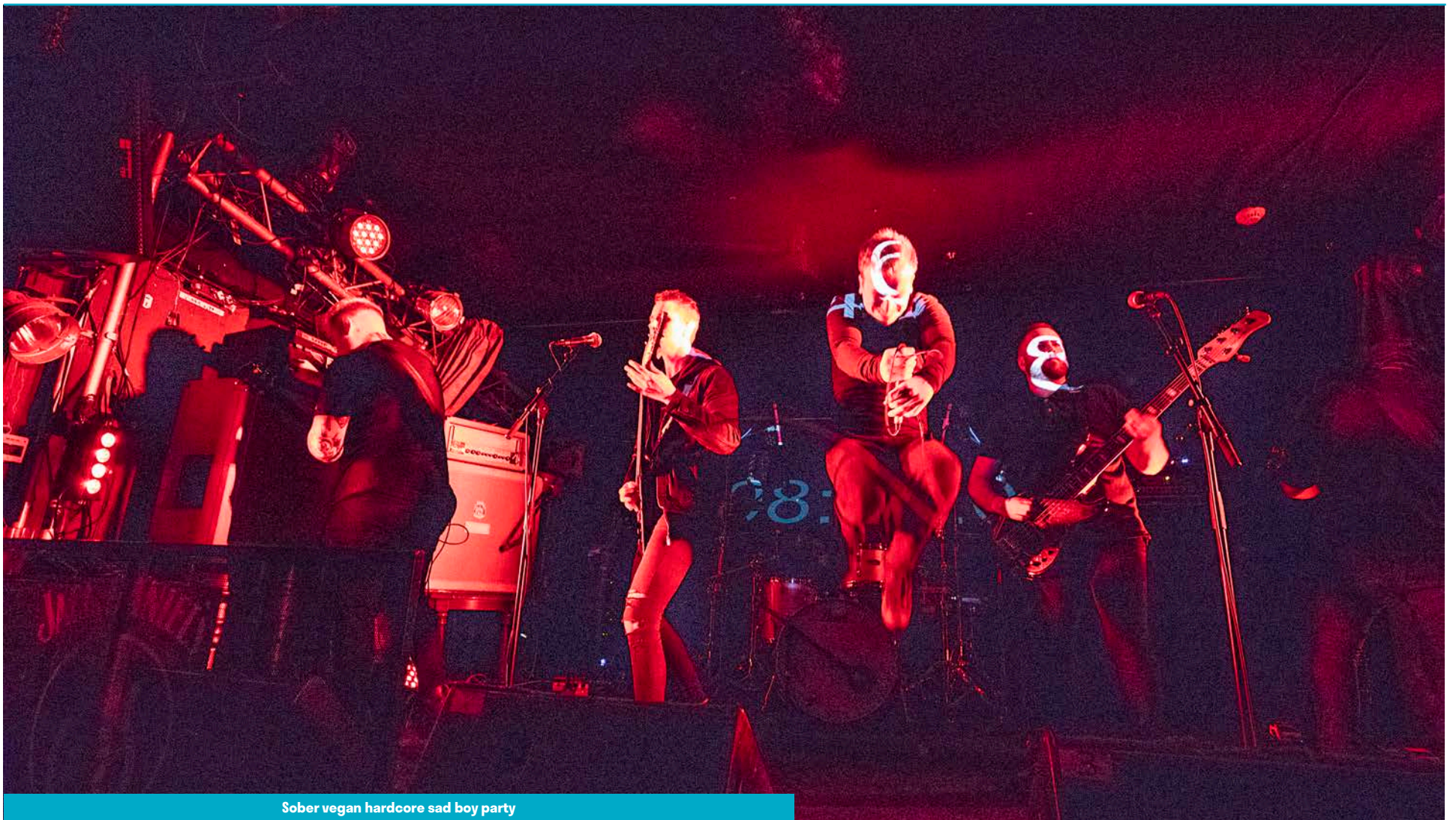
Icelandic outfit that has been releasing electro music for the past decade. We met up with E.W. founder Ívar Sævarsson to discuss the label's past, present and future plans.

Ívar started organising parties under the R.D.E. moniker around the year 2010. "To begin with it was called 'Robotdisco Club,'" he says. "You could say E.W.'s approach is more flexible than R.D.E.'s—we support the so-called outsider genres of dance music."

E.W.'s aim is to look for different angles and stay clear of traditional dance music markers, such as house and techno. "It's music that relies heavily on synthesizers and drum machines, without focusing on one specific genre," Ívar explains. "With drive towards a more in-depth style of musical-experimentation."

Ívar initially thought of his label simply as a vessel for his own music. "Our latest release is a four-track cassette called 'Global Times' by my own project E n c n t r i," he explains. "Then others came along, like the Copenhagen-based Somke, whose seven-track tape of terrific slow-style techno we released in March."

Ívar's affinity for releasing music on cassette tapes is apparent. "I manufacture the tapes and take care of designing the whole package as well," he says. "Cassettes are fun but we are planning some seven-inch record releases, too." Asked about summer plans, Ívar mentions 'Face Your Fate'—a monthly club-night that he organizes at Bravó. "And remember, keep on making moves—the future is now!" **✂**



Sober vegan hardcore sad boy party

Flying Balls & Indoor Demons

It's Iceland's summer festival season

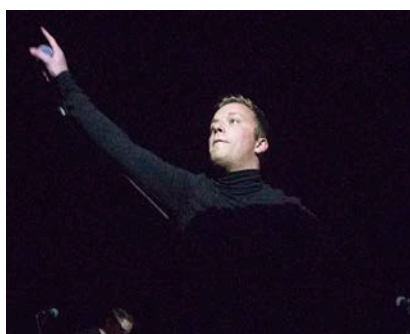
Festivals

All around Iceland from June-August. Check items for website info

Words:
John Rogers & Rex Beckett

Photos:
Art Bicnick & Timothée Lambrecq

Iceland might not be the best country in the world for camping, but that doesn't stop us from putting on a fun and diverse array of summer music festivals. Most of them are built around Icelandic acts, with a focus on intimate crowds, creative music, and an atmosphere of camaraderie, often set in beautiful and idyllic countryside locations. Here are seven of our most anticipated Icelandic festivals of the year.



Secret Solstice

June 21st-23rd, Reykjavik
secretsolstice.is



The largest and most mainland European-style summer festival in Iceland is Secret Solstice. Held in the Laugardalur neighbourhood of Reykjavik, it was originally a (mostly) dance music-oriented event, but has diversified to in-

clude everything from pop to stadium rock to hip-hop and heritage acts. This year, the headliners are The Black Eyed Peas, Patti Smith, Pussy Riot, Sugarhill Gang, Rita Ora and Robert Plant, and there's a supporting roster of Icelandic bands. It's a full-commitment dancing-'til-dawn kind of thing. Don't forget to hydrate, y'all.

Hátíðni

July 5th-7th, Borðeyri, post-dreifing.is



The young-scene DIY festival of the year is Hátíðni. Run by the post-dreifing arts and music collective, it's a free-spirited event with performers booked from an open call—the application post invited any kind of recording, even one made on a phone. Expect chaos, lo-fi, passion, polite partying, and a lovely,

good-spirited atmosphere. Performers include: The Beeves (US), bagdad brothers, Sideproject, IDK | IDA, Skoffin, and many more.

Eistnaflug

July 10th-13th, Neskaupstaður,
eistnaflug.is



Held in an otherwise quiet and idyllic Eastfjords town, this is Iceland's longest running metal and rock festival. For 14 years, the event has been bringing raucous headbangers of all sorts to transform Neskaupstaður into a loud, wild party. It's best known for bringing together the best of Iceland's hard scene, with bands like Sólstafr, Kontinuum, and Skálmöld playing regularly, as well as renowned and varied international acts like Kreator, Napalm Death,



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Meshuggah, and Dillinger Escape Plan. Ranging from black metal to hardcore to good old fashioned rock 'n' roll, it's truly a place for absolute debauchery surrounded by the very friendly metal community.

LungA

July 14th-21st, Seyðisfjörður, lunga.is



An unusual, lively arts festival with a vibrant and unpredictable week-long programme and an electric atmosphere, LungA in Seyðisfjörður is an event like no other. Participants engage in various workshops, getting directly involved with making the art that will be on display. This makes for a strong sense of community—it's an environment where anything can, and usually does, happen. The finale is two nights of outdoor concerts. This year the lineup is a who's who of local faves, including Grapevine Music Award winners GDRN, Hatari and bagdad brothers, as well as Kælan Mikla, Briet, and more still to be announced.

Bræðslan

July 27th, Borgarfjörður Eystri, braedslan.is



A down-to-earth summer party in one of the most picturesque villages in Iceland, Bræðslan brings together the mainstream pop acts of the moment—which, in the current climate, basically means R'n'B and rap—with classic bands of yesteryear. AUDUR will bring out his sensual pop—and probably his oft-seen six pack—alongside collaborator and R'n'B star GDRN. Dr. Spock bring the metal—and the rubber gloves—and clean-cut duo Jón Jónsson and Friðrik Dór bring the family-friendly pop. Take a tent, or book accommodation ahead, and be ready for the alarming mountain roads that you'll need to traverse to get there.

Norðanpaunk

August 2nd-4th, Laugarbakki, nordanpaunk.org



This non-profit DIY underground music festival is a genuine escape into absolute buttfuck-nowhere to enjoy the most cutting edge and up-and-coming

weirdos in the Icelandic music scene. You'll find all the punk, hardcore, synthpop, metal and noise music you could ask for. Technically not even in a "town", the festival entirely revolves around a small community centre and campground and has a capacity of about 250 people. Everything in this festival happens through community and collaboration, from the technical work to the cooking and cleaning. The sense of bonding and love is strong. A true paradise for peaceful freaks.

Innipukinn

August 2nd-4th, Reykavík (Venue tba), innipukinn.is



This festival falls on the Merchant's Weekend, when most of Reykjavík goes out to the countryside for a few days to barbecue in the spitting rain and pretend that summer is real. Those who don't escape the city, however, are treated to a weekend of great music at Innipukinn ("Innipukinn" translates to "indoor demon," and is a term for kids who don't like to play outside). In recent years, the festival has been held at Húrra and Gaukurinn, with the street of Naustin temporarily grassed-over so that terminal 101 rats can get some of that festival feeling. This year's venues and lineup will be announced in June, so keep 'em peeled. ♡



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Our office is above here so the smell of this pizza taunts us every day

O.G. RVK

The veteran 101 joints that have stood the test of time

Words: John Rogers Photos: Art Bicnick

In this fast-moving city, if a shop, bar or restaurant has been around for years or even decades, they must be doing something right. Right?

American Style

Iceland has no McDonalds, but if you're craving a burger without any pretentious chilli jam or brioche buns, go here. It's a no-fuss fast-food diner with cosy booths and 90s rock-star artwork that's so old it's gone full circle and become cool again. Except for Bono. Fuck Bono.



Austur-Índíafélagið

Iceland's Indian cuisine mecca is Austur-Índíafélagið, offering tandooris, authentic local delicacies, homemade paneer, and veggie options. Unlike most Icelandic places, you can expect some heat from their freshly ground spices. Its modestly-priced sister restaurant, Hraðlestin, is a good budget backup.



Ban Thai

This Reykjavík staple is famed equally for its seriously spicy Thai dishes and its long waiting times—so much so that one friend of the Grapevine takes along a chessboard when he dines there. But hey, they cook for the stars: Russell Crowe and Emma Watson are never wrong. Except doing Noah. That was wrong.



Boston

The sequel to the late, lamented, and currently undead-in-Seyðisfjörður Sirkus bar, Boston is a dark drinking room with and a huge heated terrace. So if you're done listening to the DJ, you can go smoke your face off in absolute comfort.



Grái Kötturinn

This cool, shady, art-filled basement café is only open until 3pm, and serves traditional, hearty English or American-style breakfasts. Why it isn't also an evening-time diner is one of Reykjavík's great mysteries.



Hornið

An airy spot with big windows and old-school touches, Reykjavík's O.G. pizzeria has been baking crispy thin-crust pizza since before it was cool. We recommend the seafood iteration with a glass of the house white for a leisurely lunch.



Italia

Through a narrow Laugavegur corridor lies Italia's dining room, where you can choose from an extensive menu of Italian dishes. The Cacio e Pepe was a steaming plate of cheesy comfort-food perfection. A family-style place that harks back to when pasta was considered fancy.



Jómfrúin

Get away from the hipsters and munch on some Danish-style smørrebrød in the company of multitudinous old folks. Wash down your open-faced delights with dangerously smooth Akvavit shots. Off-the-radar boozy lunch fun guaranteed.



Mokka-Kaffi

This moody coffee joint was famously the first in Reykjavík to have an espresso machine. It still has a lot of the original charm, with retro decór, low-hanging lampshades and comfortable booths. There's no wi-fi, so bring a book, or a fun companion.



Kaffibarinn

With a saloon-like atmosphere by day, when dogs and kids run around amongst locals and tourists, Kaffibarinn turns into an all-out party during the small hours. Whether you're day-drinking or nighthawking, it's an eternally amusing barfly institution.



Mál og Menning

Iceland's flagship indie bookstore. The entrance area might look touristy these days, but upstairs there's a nice selection of English-translated Icelandic literature, and there's a quiet coffee shop to dip into the pages of your purchase.



Seabaron

Some say the langoustine soup recipe has changed a little since the eponymous "Seabaron" passed away, but this harbourside diner remains popular. Get a cup of soup and a melt-in-the-mouth fish kebab, still smoking from the coals.



Vitabar

This old-school burger 'n' beer joint is right downtown, but it feels like a true neighbourhood bar. An unassuming exterior contains the cosy, no-frills dining room, where you'll mostly be surrounded by locals. For once.



BEST OF REYKJAVÍK

Best Chinese

Winner: Fönix
Bildshöfði 12

Don't be fooled by the industrial location—Fönix is a nonsense family-run joint that caters to blue collar workers, as well as homesick Chinese expats. The owners are a couple from the Sichuan province, and rightfully play to their strengths—the Mapo Tofu, available as a vegan dish or with pork, is a study in extracting big flavours from few ingredients. Ignore the deep-fried shrimp and discover the joys of the steamed dumpling—each one is a treasure chest of flavour and texture. Vegans aren't ignored here and the place is fantastic for groups big and small.



Runners Up:

Tian

Grensásvegur 21

While we hear whispers of a secret menu at Tian—Chinese diners are treated to the real thing, while non-Chinese diners get chop suey—Tian's toned-down renditions of Western favourites fare well above the average. The Kung Pao chicken is deservedly popular—but try and get something from that enticing hidden menu.



Jia Yao

Ármúli 5

Jia Yao rounds off our Chinese restaurant trio. Ármúli has been a tough neighbourhood to crack, but this Pan-Asian lunch buffet is hearty and well-priced, and there's an à la carte menu. The raw ambience can be a turn-off, but don't let that stop you from trying some authentic Chinese fare.

A



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IN THE HEART OF
REYKJAVIK

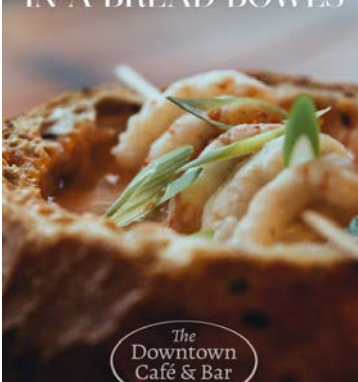
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The Map

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. Matwerk

Laugavegur 96

This meat-forward nuts-and-bolts Nordic joint falters slightly when it dares deviate from the set course, but it does stand head and shoulder above the flock of Reykjavík's substandard tourist-fleeing restaurants. The thick skyr brulée with a tart sheep sorrel sorbet and blueberry jam is delicious enough to demand a return visit.

2. Block Burger

Skólavörðustígur 8

Block Burger is an office favourite. You can see their white paper to-go bags stacked on writers' desks, accompanied by empty Fizzy Lizzy soda bottles. 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. Ostabúðin

Skólavörðustígur 8

This is a veteran lunch spot so no surprises that it is still going strong. If the fish of the day isn't satisfying enough, we suggest asking them for a half portion of the day's soup as well. What's truly admirable, though, is that perch (karfi), cusk (kleifa) and ling (lánga) make regular appearances besides staples like salmon.

4. Brauð & Co.

Frakkastígur 16

Regulars swear by Brauð & Co.'s "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.

5. Deig Workshop

Tryggvagata 14

Barring kleina and the odd US chain, we've been a doughnut-starved nation. But thanks to Deig, fresh fried doughnuts are a reality. Should we gush about the custard filled creme brulée doughnut or cry for the now discontinued surmjölk and Cheerios doughnut? (Bring it back!) They make pretty good bagels too. Psst... they open at 7am.

6. 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.

7. Café Paris

Austurstræti 14

Café Paris jolted the corner awake with its renovation and an all-day menu that promises to live up to its bistro-esque name. The breakfast menu, however, is the real winner here. Choose the glistening eggs on spinach and smoked salmon, poached to perfection.

8. Sæta Svinið

Hafnarstræti 1-3

With big portions and a tasty menu, this hip restaurant offers everything you might desire, from juicy lent and big bowls of mussels to a great leg of lamb and a taste of minke whale. Try and get a seat upstairs: it'll be like dining under a starry sky in the most romantic, dim-lit set-up.

9. Sea Baron

Geirsgata 4a

Some say the langoustine soup recipe has changed a little since the eponymous "Sea Baron" himself passed away, but this harbourside diner is as popular as ever anyway. Get a warming cup of soup, and a melt-in-the-mouth fresh fish kebab, still smoky from the coals.

10. Pylsuhúsið

Ingólfstorg

One of the many post-jam options in town for those looking to put a tasty end to a fun night out, the Hot Dog House is a solid place for a quick snack. If you feel too inebriated by life to experiment, a classic one "with everything" will do the trick.

Drinking

11. Bravó

Laugavegur 22

Oh, bravo, Bravó, for having the best happy hour in this fair city. With its colourful fairy lights and a plethora of comfortable pillows, Bravó feels like a children's bedroom tent for adults. If you get lucky and grab a

table, or even just a single seat, then it's the happiest place on earth.

12. Bar Ananas

Klappastígur 38

Bar Ananas, named after that pizza topping that only decent people enjoy on their pizza (pineapple), is Reykjavík's only beach bar, and it is truly a breath of fresh air for the otherwise dreary downtown scene. No sir, this is no dive bar, but a club, with an indoor smoking lounge, stairs, a spacious bar, a tiny dance floor, and a solid line of DJs.

13. The Pedersen Suite

Ingólfstræti 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. The regular crowd is mostly loud business types, so find a good niche to escape them.

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. Session Bar

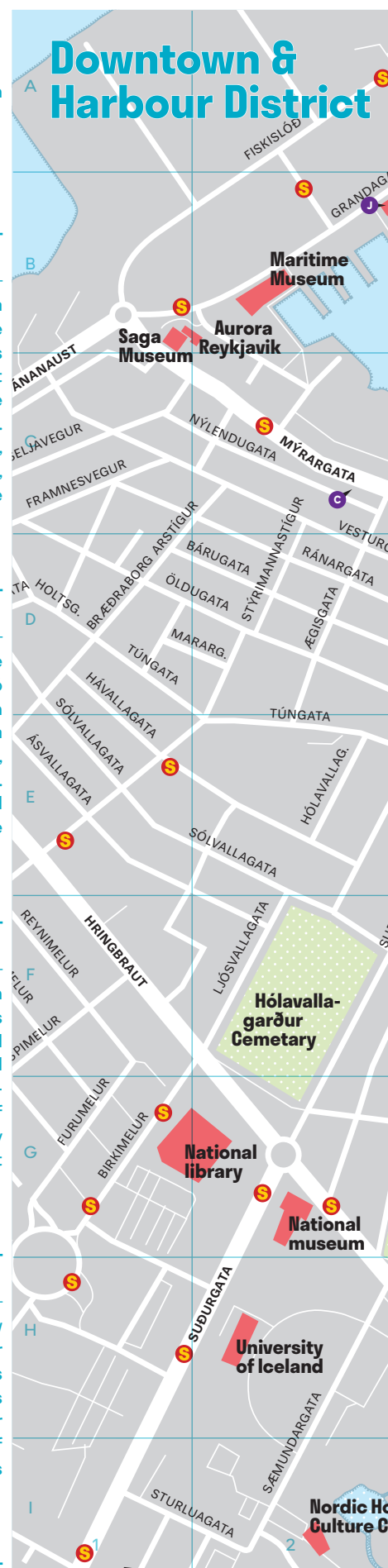
Fógetagarður

Session Bar is a minimalist craft-beer-focused drinking den housed in a former hair salon in the heart of downtown. There are sixteen beers on tap, both Icelandic and international, and they have a focus on keeping the prices affordable, in contrast to Reykjavík's generally pricey craft bar.

17. Kaldi

Laugavegur 20b

Kaldi is one of the champion craft beer brands of Iceland. Their bar in Reykjavík is a cosy hole-in-the-wall, with a literal hole in the wall—a former alleyway is now an additional seating area. Patrons can get a satisfyingly chunky pint of their unfiltered lager, dark ale, or whatever seasonal brew is currently on the taps.



18. English Pub

Austurstræti 12

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

Shopping

19. Kvartýra №49

Laugavegur 49

This minimalistic, Bauhaus-esque

Grandi Mathöll is Reykjavik's only street food hall

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New In Town



Myrkraverk Studio

Skólavörðustígur 3, 101 Reykjavík

This hole-in-the-wall artist-run space is a true treasure for those seeking some edgier artworks. Featuring a rotating cast of Reykjavik's best underground artists, they're currently showing YNGRIL, Solveig Pálsdóttir, Hjálmar Guðmundsson, and Sunna Shabnam Halldórudóttir. It's a feast for the eyes with paintings and prints covering nearly every available piece of wall space. In the back, get your picture taken amidst a light show of neon green lamps and stars in their Northern Lights studio. **HJC**

spot took the Icelandic fashion scene by storm upon opening in 2018, with its eclectic streetwear selection. They have designers that no one else has, designers that you wouldn't know before going there.

20. Fischer

Fischersund

More art installation than regular store, the "Sigur Rós shop" is an aesthetic environment with a soothing soundtrack, sweet scents floating in the air, and a natural, earthy colour palette. They sell a range of amazing things, from hand-picked tea, to artworks and records.

21. IDA Zimsen

Vesturgata 2a

This peaceful spot is equal parts café and bookstore, so you can get a coffee and a snack while you leaf through your purchases. Everything there is interesting. If the magazines fail, people-watching never does.

22. Lucky Records

Rauðarárstígur 10

LuckyRecords 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.

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. CNTMP

Laugavegur 12b

This sleek and minimal streetwear boutique occupies an enviable spot on the main Laugavegur strip. An acronym for "contemporary," the shop's name describes its concept—the store will sell limited garments by streetwear brands.

25. Hertex

Garðastræti 6

A true-blue second-hand shop, you

never know what you're going to find at this Salvation Army outlet. The stark store, covered with clothes of all shapes and colours, is a delight for all senses that'll have you alternating between, "Who would throw that away?" to "Who would buy that?"

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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TRACK BY TRACK

AdHd - AdHd7

The making of AdHd's latest fusion-jazz-post-rock masterpiece

Words: John Rogers & AdHd Photo: SPESSI

Album



'AdHd7' is out now on Spotify and Apple Music. Visit adhdiceland.com for further info

AdHd are an acclaimed genre-destroying four-piece group that started in 2008, comprising saxophonist Óskar Guðjónsson, guitar and bass player Ómar Guðjónsson, pianist Davíð Þór Jónsson, and percussionist Magnús Trygvason Eliassen. Since then, they've released seven free-flowing albums with elements of jazz, post-rock, improvisation and more. We asked them to talk us through their latest: 'AdHd7.' "The album was recorded and mixed in Göteborg, Sweden at Svenska Grammofonstudion by Mr. Ívar Ragnarson," they say, "and mastered in Eastside mastering in Berlin by Götz-Michael Rieth."

Hangir

"Hangir" is the song that we worked on first; we had played it live for a few months before we recorded it. Being the first song we worked on together it kind of set the tone for the recording session.

Bacalao

This is the first song in the history of the band where the Hammond organ plays the main theme, which is kind of weird because we have been using the organ for about a million years. Bacalao is a great dish. Recommended. The song is dedicated to our main man, double bass player and bacalao aficionado Tómas R. Einarsson.

Dolos

"Dolos" is the first musical idea that Tómas came up with after he moved to Þorlákshöfn but the idea was taken apart and now there is nothing left of the original idea. A dolos is a reinforced concrete block in a complex geometric shape, used in great numbers as a form of coastal management.

Clay Camilla

The song is about Óskar's frustra-

tion; his younger brother was sent to an art teacher/art class but poor Óskar was by that time considered to be too old to take part in the seminar.

Stulli

"Stulli" is a word that is both a person's name and some form of lingo, meaning crazy fun, a lot of fun, etc. This track is a keyboard riff driven, rock influenced crazy fun time tune.

Róró

"Róró" were two songs that became one. "Ró" translates to "peace." It's a soothing song.

Tindlingur

"Tindlingur" is an old Icelandic word meaning "small cigar." But this song is about all the Tinder-swiping hunters of our modern society.

Tjulli

This song was supposed to be very up-beat but ended up as a slow ballad. The final outcome is two takes cut together, one starting straight after the other.

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Music



Life is a video game for ratchet dude Flóni

Levelling Up

Flóni enters stage two

Words & Photo: **Sigurður Unnar Ragnarsson**

Album

'Flóni 2' is out now. [Listen on Spotify](#)

On every Icelandic hip-hop fan's lips, you'll hear the name Flóni. After dropping his debut album only two years ago, the singer quickly dominated the scene in a way that had never been done before. Now, he's back with his second endeavour, 'Flóni 2'—an upbeat effort that has cemented his rightful place as the current king of Icelandic hip-hop.

In person, Flóni is intelligent, open, honest, and—when it comes to music—a self-described perfectionist. "I really wanted to take my time with 'Flóni 2,'" he explains, sitting relaxed on a sunny day in the 101derland Studio. He started working on it only weeks after finishing his debut. "I was really motivated by how positively people had taken to the first album; I was kind of riding the high from that," he says. "We planned it like a video game. First level: releasing the album. Final boss: the album release concert."

Super ultra speed mode

In contrast to his first effort, 'Flóni 2' is a true pop album. Filled with heavy synths, guitars and more catchy melodies than you can count, it's an emotional, rhapsodic experience.

While he produced much of the album himself, Flóni did have some unexpected contributors, including pianist and composer Magnús Jóhann Ragnarsson. "He's a real synth perv," Flóni says, smiling. "I quite like the analogue touch that

he brought to the album."

The song "Hraðar" is particularly poignant for the singer. A fast-paced ode to seizing the day accompanied by a snappy hi-hat and synth-driven beat, it's on this track that he speaks about how his life has changed since his music career blew up.

"It's about being grateful for the things that you have and enjoying every second of the day," he says. "My life has been on super-ultra-speed mode recently. The past two years went by in a haze. It's like Thanos came and snapped his fingers and they just disappeared."

"At the beginning of my career I was a pretty ratchet dude."

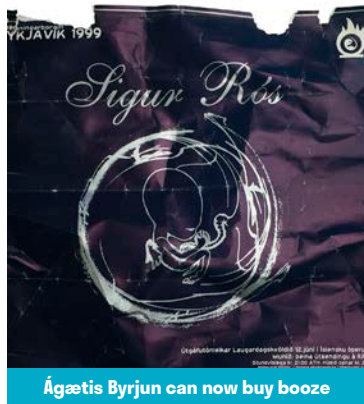
On "Fyrir Aðra," though, Flóni shows a more personal side. The song was inspired by his close friend, singer Jökull Breki, who won his secondary school Verzló's annual singing competition, Vælið, in 2015 with the song "To Build A Home."

"I remember thinking how beautiful that song was," Flóni says. "Jökull was going through some tough times when I was making the album, so I was thinking about him a lot. 'Fyrir Aðra' was inspired by warm thoughts for a friend."

Still ratchet

The last two years have been a period of growth for the singer, as he reached an unprecedented level of popularity in seemingly record time. "I think the number one thing that probably every artist who blows up in Iceland learns is how to be more professional," says Flóni. "I can say that, at the beginning of my career, I was a pretty ratchet dude."

"I am still ratchet today, but I've learned to tone it down a bit." 🐼



Ágætis Byrjun can now buy booze

MUSIC NEWS 'Ágætis Byrjun,' the breakthrough album by Sigur Rós, is twenty years old on June 12th. To celebrate, the band are staging a variety of events looking back at how the album was made, and unveiling a time capsule of unseen archive materials. First of all, the band will screen a remastered film of their album release party—20 years later to the day—on the very same stage of Gamla Bíó (known at the time as Íslenska Operan.) There will also be events at MENGI and Smekkleysa, where special edition LPs will be on sale. Check the band's web presences for signup details. **JR**



#VapeWaveHealthGoth

Breakthrough Icelandic coldwave band **Kælan Mikla** are on a seemingly endless upwards trajectory of late. As well as endless touring, festival appearances, and becoming bezzies with goth-in-chief Robert Smith of The Cure, they have announced that a song of theirs will soon be coming to your TV or laptop screen as the theme tune of a new TV show. "HBO Nordic is releasing a new comedy series written by Swedish legend Lukas Moodysson," they said, via Facebook. "We are so proud to announce that our song 'SYNIR' is the opening theme of the show 'GÖSTA.'" Follow Kælan Mikla's adventures via their Instagram and Facebook. **JR**



Sacred Arts 4 u

The **Festival of Sacred Arts** continues until June 10th with a busy programme at Hallgrímskirkja. Look out for performances of Bach cantatas on Saturday and Sunday (admission is free for both), and don't miss the intriguing combination of Hallgrímskirkja's magnificent organ, church bells and computer technology in 'Computers, Klais and Carillon.' The closing concert looks to be particularly fine, with the internationally renowned Hallgrímskirkja Schola Cantorum and Motet Choir joining forces with the Hallgrímskirkja International Baroque Choir in a performance of three Bach cantatas and the premiere of Veni, Sancte Spiritus by Sigurður Sævarsson. Find further info at www.kirkjulistahatid.is. **FR** 🐼

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Our Picks



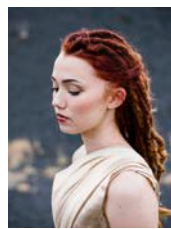
★ Reykjavik Midsummer Music

June 20th - 23rd - Harpa - 16,900 ISK

Reykjavik Midsummer Music, the brainchild of Icelandic virtuoso pianist Vikingur Ólafsson, will be held for the seventh time this June, and looks to be as beautiful,

striking and thought-provoking as ever. Held in the magnificent Harpa concert hall, the festival deftly blends old and new, with a programme ranging from Bach concertos

and overtures by Prokofiev to works by Mark Simpson and Hans-Joachim Roedelius, who is often dubbed the father of ambient music. Expect the Grand Finale to be particularly memorable, with Vikingur joining the renowned Labèque Sisters in the second half for an extraordinary three person performance of Rachmaninoff's 'Valse et Romance', before winding down with the profound spirituality of works by Pärt and Phillip Glass. **FR**



★ VASI

June 7th - 19:00 - Pink Iceland - Free!

Blues, jazz, R&B, funk and more—Russian/American transplant VASI will serve it all. **HJC**



★ Lucy In Blue

June 15th - 20:00 - Gaukurinn - 1,000 ISK

Travel back to the '70s with Lucy In Blue's marvellous psychedelic prog-rock. If you like long hair, soft tunes and fringed clothes, this'll probably be your scene. Surf-sludge doom rockers Godchilla and heavy headbangers Volcanova will support. **HJC**



★ Mikael Máni Trio

June 9th - 20:00 - Harpa - 2,000 ISK

A jazz trio comprising Skúli Sverrisson, Magnús Tryggvason Elíassen and, of course, Mikael Máni. **JR**



★ Andy Svarthol & Skoffin

June 14th - 20:00 - KEX Hostel - Free!

Skoffin is one of the breakthrough stars of the thriving post-dreifing lo-fi DIY indie scene. Andy Svarthol are a recently formed band of two brothers who play dark, atmospheric, shoegaze rock 'n' roll. See them live for a taste of the weirder end of the Reykjavik underground. **JR**

June 7th—June 20th

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 June 7th

★ Pink Iceland's Queer Fridays: VASI

19:00 Pink Iceland
Visions Showcase
21:00 Bravó
DJ Andrés Nielsen x DJ Katla
21:00 Kaffibarinn
DJ Alexandra Baldursdóttir
22:00 Mikkeller & Friends
Alvia Bash & DJ Thaison
22:00 Prikið
Háteigskirkja Church Choir
22:00 Háteigskirkja
Siggi String Quartet: South Of The Circle
21:00 Mengi

Saturday June 8th

The Moronic / Gamli / Kvelja & Spaðabani

21:00 Gaukurinn
Vök
21:00 Hard Rock Café
Allenheimer
21:00 Bravó
DJ Áskell
21:00 Kaffibarinn
DJ Krystal Karma
22:00 Mikkeller & Friends
Valdimar Guðmundsson & Örn Eldjárn
14:00 Sólheimakirkja
Formaðurinn & 101 Savage
22:00 Prikið
Festival Of Sacred Arts: Computers, Klais & Carillon
21:00 Hallgrímskirkja
DJ Andrés Nielsen
18:00 Petersen svítan
Sigurður Flosason Quartet
15:00 Jómfrúinn
Freddie Mercury Tribute Concert
20:00 Harpa

Sunday June 9th

★ **Mikael Máni Trio**
20:00 Harpa
Sunday Jazz
20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
Mill & S.hel
19:00 IÐNÓ
DJ Terrordisco
21:00 Bravó
DJ Gísli Galdur

21:00 Kaffibarinn
Uné Boys
22:00 Prikið
Festival Of Sacred Arts: Dances Joyful, Dances Solemn
20:00 Hallgrímskirkja
Nicola Lolli & Bjarni Frimann
16:00 Gljúfrasteinn
Vilhjálmur Hólmur Vilhjálmsson Tribute Concert
17:00 Harpa

Monday June 10th

DJ Árni Sveins
21:00 Kaffibarinn
Festival Of Sacred Arts: Eternal Fire, Fountain Of Love
17:00 Hallgrímskirkja

Tuesday June 11th

★ **Jaakko Eino Kalevi / JFDR & Farao**
21:00 IÐNÓ
Icelandic Music & Storytelling
13:00 IÐNÓ
Karaoke Party!
21:00 Gaukurinn
Callaz & MSEA
20:00 IÐNÓ
DJ Sonur Sæll
21:00 Kaffibarinn

Wednesday June 12th

Ágætis Byrjun: 20 Year Album Anniversary
16:00 Mengi
Ragnheiður Gröndal
21:00 Nordic House
Don Lockwood Band
21:00 Slippbarinn
Party Karaoke With Þórunn Antonía
21:00 Sæta Svinið
Wednesday Jazz Night
22:00 Miami
DJ Halaköttur
21:00 Bravó
DJ Ómar E.
21:00 Kaffibarinn
DJ Maggi Lego
22:00 Prikið
Jazz With A View: Sigmar Þór Matthíasson Quartet
21:00 Harpa
Benedikt Kristjánsson Album Release Concert

20:00 Harpa

Thursday June 13th

Ascension MMXIX
14:00 Hlégarður
Kikióki
21:00 Kiki Queer Bar
DJ Óli Dóri
18:00 Petersen svítan
DJ Thizone
21:00 Bravó
Anthony Pateras
21:00 Mengi
DJ Yamaho
21:00 Kaffibarinn



Skaði, the Queen Bee herself

DJ Vala
22:00 Prikið
Release Concert: Icelandic Folksongs and Schubert
20:00 Harpa

Friday June 14th

★ **Andy Svarthol & Skoffin**
20:30 Kex Hostel
Skepna Album Release Concert
22:00 Hard Rock Café
DJ Óli Dóri
21:00 Bravó
Ascension MMXIX
14:00 Hlégarður
Asmus x Ewok
21:00 Kaffibarinn
DJ Byssukisi
22:00 Mikkeller & Friends
DJ Sura
22:00 Prikið
Tons Of Nordic Tones: A Summer's Concert With Nordic Male Voice Choirs
12:15 Harpa
GRL PWR x Spice Girls x Píkipopp

22:00 Gaukurinn
Pétur Eggerts: Electronic Music For People And Other Objects
21:00 Mengi

Saturday June 15th

Ascension MMXIX
14:00 Hlégarður
Groupa
20:00 Nordic House
Blóðmör / KUL & Foreign Monkeys
22:00 Hard Rock Café
Jói Það Er Á Tali
21:00 Bravó
DJ Caspa x Introbeatz

15:00 Nordic House

Monday June 17th

Monday Night Jazz
21:00 Bió Paradís
DJ Sveinni Solo
21:00 Kaffibarinn
SMENGI #6 | Smekkleysa X Mengi
15:00 Mengi

Tuesday June 18th

Karaoke Party!
21:00 Gaukurinn
Icelandic Music & Storytelling
13:00 IÐNÓ
DJ Silja Glommi
21:00 Kaffibarinn

Wednesday June 19th

Don Lockwood Band
21:00 Slippbarinn
Jazz With A View: Balda/ Ásmundsson/Kappynne Trio
21:00 Harpa
Tómas R. Einarsson
21:00 Nordic House
Party Karaoke With Þórunn Antonía
21:00 Sæta Svinið
Wednesday Jazz Night
22:00 Miami
DJ Sensi
21:00 Bravó
DJ Óli Dóri
21:00 Kaffibarinn
DJ Fonetik Simbol
22:00 Prikið

Thursday June 20th

Kikióki
21:00 Kiki Queer Bar
Thursday Techno
22:00 Prikið
Formaðurinn
21:00 Bravó
DJ Introbeatz
21:00 Kaffibarinn
★ **Reykjavik Midsummer Music: Souvenir De Florence**
19:00 Harpa
Aragrúi & Great Grief
21:00 Gaukurinn
DJ Símon FKNHNSM
18:00 Petersen svítan



★ For music listings from June 20th on, check out happening.grapevine.is or our app Appening, available on iOS and Android

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Music

The Reykjavik Grapevine 34
Issue 09—2019



The chilled out life of Kira Kira

Music, Medicine And Miracles

Kira Kira's sonic meditation

Words & Photo: Berglind Jóna Hlynsdóttir

Album

Hear 'UNA' at kirakira.bandcamp.com

Kristín Björk Kristjánsdóttir, better known as Kira Kira, is a visual artist, composer and producer who creates sound sculptures with a focus on experimentation, new technologies and group improvisation. Collaborative practise has been a key aspect in Kira's development throughout the years, and each new cooperation seems to bring out something new in her work.

"I like to create soundscapes and invite other musicians to come and improvise with me in that world of sounds," she says. "I create the sounds from scratch, or they come from live audio recordings. It's a bit like creating your own meal from the herbs in your garden—you've sown the seeds, and you know their origin, and there is a satisfaction that comes with that."

A surprise album

The latest fruit of this practise is 'UNA.' The album came together quickly, arriving just a year after her 2018 release 'Alchemy and Friends.' "This album is a total surprise," she says. "My other albums took five years to create, be-

cause I'm meticulous; I like to have all the details perfectly aligned."

It began when Kira was approached by Andrew Hargreaves of The Tape Loop Orchestra to make an album on his Letra Rec label, as part of a series celebrating long-form music. The Tape Loop Orchestra treated some of her choral samples, running them through tape machines. The resulting album is a deeply peaceful listen. "It's a bit of a sanctuary," says Kira. "I'd like people to lie on the floor with closed eyes and just let it wash over them."

Yoga soundscapes

Kira has been meditating for seven years and has long thought of making music that supports meditation practice. In fact, the songs on 'UNA' are based on mantras she wrote with her collaborators. One such mantra is "A miracle is a shift in perception from fear to love."

"When I saw these lines for the first time, it was like everything around me just stopped," says Kira. "I found myself reading them over and over again, and they felt like medicine. It was like finally stumbling onto something that

helps you, in a way that something actually physically moves in your thought system, and your emotional structure. It had an irreversible impact."

Dream therapy

Kira has several other projects on the go, including recording music for the third series of 'Dream Corp LLC' by Daniel Stessen—a surreal hybrid sci-fi animation that takes place in a dream therapy laboratory—and working with Orri Jónsson and Davíð Hörgdal Stefánsson on a documentary about the late composer Jóhann Jóhannsson.

"A miracle is a shift in perception from fear to love."

Yet another project is 'Motions Like These'—a collaboration with LA-based musician Eskmo, due for release next month. "It has a very different energy from 'UNA,'" says Kira. "There's a lot of speed and power, joy, colours, and percussion. We wanted it to be the best of Eskmo and the best of Kira, like a third animal. The danger in collaborations where two producers meet fifty-fifty is that there's too much compromise. We were mindful of that trap and sailed right over it to create something that contains the best of both worlds."

Despite her busyness, Kira is keen to stay present and light-hearted in her work. "Playfulness is everything," she finishes. "That's something that I make a point of nurturing in everything I do—because life is serious enough as it is." 🍷

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Wild man Styrmir questions his existence

From Biennale To Vinyl

Styrmir lays performance art down on wax

Words: **Rex Beckett** Photo: **Andrej Vasilenko**

Album

Styrmir's album 'What Am I Doing With My Life?' is available on vinyl and digitally on Bandcamp.

Most of us at some point have taken pause to ask ourselves "What am I doing with my life?" For Styrmir Örn Guðmundsson—artist name simply Styrmir—this question came to him during a fateful walk through a Riga cemetery and became the title of his album. After more than a decade of working primarily as a visual and performance artist, the now Berlin-based Styrmir recently released his debut record, pulling together a collection of performance pieces into a cohesive musical narrative.

Created over time with a large group of collaborators, friends and colleagues, the songs were originally performed primarily within the context of art spaces and festivals. "At first it was just basically gathering people that I liked to work with and not worrying that it would have a certain sound throughout," says Styrmir. "Just kind of getting a lot of people involved. By the time we had recorded some stuff with a few of the beatmakers and kind of just

mixing, it slowly melted into a musical piece."

The medical team

The pieces are an idiosyncratic smattering of dissonant catchy electropop, aggressive avant-garde rap, and dreamy psychedelic lullabies. Most of the songs follow the theme of not only the titular existential query, but also of physical health. "I set out to make this project with a theme of the failures and perils of Western medicine, which came from a visit to a doctor who wanted to get me hooked on some steroids because of asthma," says Styrmir. "At that time I was writing some lyrics to songs and then came the idea of a theme for a whole record, which in some songs I follow but in some songs it just bleeds into other directions."

Following this theme, his group of collaborators are credited on the album as The Medical Team and each hold a particular medical pro-

fession as their role in the production. "I ended up directing the performances in a way that we would be this team of self-proclaimed doctors," says Styrmir. "Then it was kind of a cryptic titling of each person. When I invited the artists I asked them 'What kind of a doctor would you be?' So they self-proclaimed their own titles."

Immediacy and dynamics

His team ended up with four beatmakers-slash-producers, and over ten vocalists, including himself. The final product still reflects the immediacy and dynamics of the pieces originating as performance art. "All the people in the project just have such different vibes and energies," says Styrmir. "So every time we perform, it really changes the vibe, even though the songs are more or less the same. That also makes the experience very different each time."

Although this shift into music was very new for Styrmir, it is a direction that he plans to continue in. "I'm really happy to celebrate it as a finished project," he says. "That's kind of

the visual artist thinking. But on the other hand I really want to continue making music. I was always this visual artist. I never believed myself to be a musician, but I will definitely continue making music. Then this project can just come and go." 🍷

"I ended up directing the performances in a way that we would be this team of self-proclaimed doctors."

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Ben Boorman, Bismút curator

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Found In Transition

Café Bismút goes from serving
caffeine to culture

Words: Berglind Jóna Hlynisdóttir Photo: Art Bicnick

Gallery & Events Space

Visit Bismút at Hverfisgata 82,
and follow them on Facebook and
Instagram at [@bismutreykjavik](#)

Coffee lovers are out of luck, but art lovers are in the green, as one of Reykjavík's favourite cafés has become an art gallery and events space. This quirky corner café had become a daily haunt for many, with their friendly service and excellent coffee—indeed, it was awarded for having the Best Coffee in our Best of Reykjavík magazine earlier this year. Caffeine aside, they also hosted an array of art exhibitions in the two years since opening, and will now turn their core focus to events, parties, design exhibitions and the visual arts.

Founded by artists Katla Rós Völudóttir and Ragnar Már Nikulásson—and later joined by Ben Boorman—Bismút is located on the corner of Hverfisgata and Vitastígur in a beautiful, bright space, with minimalist details and big windows that allow for after-hours viewing. In recent years, rising rents have led to a retreat of artist run spaces, with a few exceptions like Harbinger,

Gallery Port and Ekkisens. Reykjavík, without question, needs more spaces for young and emerging artists to exhibit. The new iteration of Bismút presents an exciting new option with just the right properties to fill the gap.

Saga, Joey, Merry and more

One of the first events since the transition was the launch party for Joey Christ's album 'Joey 2,' and there's lots more in the pipeline. In the works are shows by young photographer Svanhildur Gréta Kristjánsdóttir, and Saga Sigurðardóttir, a renowned fashion photographer who has recently been experimenting with fine arts.

There's also an exhibition planned with James Merry—an embroidery artist from the UK, now based in Iceland. He is Björk's art director, and hand-makes the masks she's worn onstage in recent years. He recently experienced a swell of interest in his individual practise, in which he

embroiders subtle elements from nature onto vintage brand name sports sweaters. Another planned event in this varied programme will happen on Reykjavík Culture Night when the Grazie! Press—run by Bobby Breiðholt and Helga Dögg Ólafsdóttir—will collaborate with Þórsteinn Sigurðsson to make a large-scale exhibition and magazine launch, which will stay open as a shop for some time after.

Take all of this

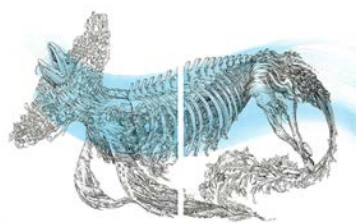
"I would like to mix these established artists with young up and coming people. Its not exclusive ... if you have good concept we can work together," says Ben. "One of the most successful shows I did here was with Anna Maggý—she did really well in this space. Her show was visually arresting. When it was lit up at night, one guy passed by... he just came in and said "yeah, I'll take all of this," and bought all 25 images."

After the exhibition openings, there will also be other events happening at the same time. "It's all about keeping the place alive," says Ben.

So if you need a place for your record launch, somewhere to host your private party, or to show and sell your designer beach towels or set up a pop-up store, Bismút is your new go-to. "You're very welcome to have your wedding here, of course!" laughs Ben. "Bring your own priest." 🐾

"A guy came
in and said
'yeah, I'll take
all of this' and
bought all 25
images."

Our Picks



★ The Factory

Until August 31st - Djúpvavík & Þingeyri
Djúpvavík is one of the most stunning and memorable locations in all of Iceland. An almost-abandoned fishing village on the wild Strandir coast, it was once home to hundreds of fishermen and

workers who lived in a few buildings scattered around a massive, hulking fish processing factory. When the herring left, so did the people; today, the workers' quarters have been repurposed into a cosy family-run hotel. The factory has become a crumbling labyrinth of rusting machinery, a small museum, and—each summer—a contemporary art exhibition. A monument to a herring-era gold rush, the factory is also a roadmap of how such buildings can be used to foster community, culture and tourism—and the art on display is worth the trip alone. This year, the exhibit will also be in Þingeyri. **JR**



★ Fingered Eyed

Until August 10th - i8 Gallery
B. Ingrid Olson's genre-defying exhibition considers the nature of the dual through symmetry, form and function. Particularly striking are the indeterminate 'Photographic Objects' which aim to, 'summon multiple truths simultaneously.' **FR**



★ Matrix, Or Genesis Of Private Property

Until June 26th - Wind & Weather Window Gallery
This window gallery exhibition examines the nature of a matrix spanning three dimensions, each exemplified by different artworks. Confused? Go check it out for more info. **FR**



★ The One And Only Body Of The Hum & Lego Flamb

Until June 21st - Harbinger
Anderson's exhibition looks at the dynamics of visibility and performance. Look out for textiles, workshops, and more. **FR**

June 7th—June 20th

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 ROASTERS

Í Kring
This showcase features an exhibition at each of the three Reykjavík Roasters shops. The first exhibition ('brief session of affection') features five artists, whose work reveals truths about humour, irony and imperfection. Visit Brautarholt 2 on June 14th (4:30 p.m.) and catch an afternoon walk between the three shops, where you can enjoy and discuss the art in an informal setting.
• Opens on June 14th, 2019
• Runs until July 9th, 2019

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - ÁSMUNDARSAFN

Jóhann Eyfells: Palpable Forces
Early in the 1950's, Jóhann Eyfells started creating abstract sculptures which were based on experiments in physics and chemistry. Come see them here.
• Opens on June 15th, 2019
• Runs until August 25th, 2019

MIDPUNKT

Í morgunsárið
In the morning, the mind is new. Time is relative, and the day is full of possibilities. In this exhibit, dissect this concept in full force.
• Opens on June 7th, 2019
• Runs until June 30th, 2019

Ongoing

LISTHÚS ÓFEIGS

Litka Myndlistarfélag
In this exhibit, a diverse group of creators celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the Litka artist collective.
• Runs until June 12th, 2019

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

Treasures Of A Nation
A selection of over 80 works chosen from the national gallery's collection displays 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.

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
Brynhildur Þorgeirsdóttir: Natural Elements
Beloved Icelandic sculptor Brynhildur Þorgeirsdóttir presents a new exhibit of her pivotal work.
• Runs until June 10th, 2019

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Sonja Margrét Ólafsdóttir - Roots
Sonja Margrét Ólafsdóttir's photographs show everyday scenes and places but also have an air of mystery. Where are these places? Who are these people and what connects these images?
• Runs until June 10th, 2019
Icelandic Meat Soup
Photographer Kristján Haraldsson focuses on the practice, process, and form of photography, ultimately creating intimate portraits of himself, his family, and the nation of Iceland in the '70s and '80s.
• Runs until September 8th, 2019

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ICELAND

Myth Of A Woman
Agnieszka Sosnowska immigrated to Iceland 13 years. With her photographs, she documents herself, her students, new family members, and friends. Her inspiration is the strength of the female spirit.
• Runs until September 1st, 2019
Life, as it is lived, before the transformation
In stark black and white, Yrsa Roca Fannberg captured life in Árneshreppur, the smallest parish in Iceland. Crisp and unrelenting,

the photos capture the symbiotic relationship between man, animal and dirt.
• Runs until September 1st, 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.

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS

Erró: Mao's World Tour
Between 1972 and 1980, Erró painted over 130 paintings, with two images of different origins against each other: Chinese propaganda posters of Mao Zedong and Western tourist pictures from famous sites.
• Runs until January 5th, 2020
D37 Gunnar Jónsson - Gröt
The D-Gallery exhibitions show up-and-coming artists in their first solo exhibition. This iteration features video, sounds, and photographs by Gunnar Jónsson.
• Runs until June 23rd, 2019
Human Condition Draft Of Contemporary Art History In Iceland (III)
What does it mean to be human? What are the psychological and corporeal characteristics of it? Here, selected artists take on these fundamental questions.
• Runs until September 15th, 2019
Finnbogi Pétursson
In this private exhibition, Finnbogi Pétursson works to make sound waves visible through explorations in material, space, and physics.
• Runs until September 15th, 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

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART URBAN SHAPE

Architect Paolo Gianfrancesco used data from Open Street Map to celebrate cities. The constant interplay of people and their environment will be revealed before your very eyes.
• Runs until September 8th, 2019

BERG CONTEMPORARY

Louder Than Bombs
Silence both opens and closes a conversation. In 'Louder Than Bombs' three artists—Birgir Snæbjörn Birgisson, Heidi Lampenius, and Miikka Vaskola—engage with this disarming theme.
• Runs until June 15th, 2019

LISTASALUR MOSFELLSBÆJAR

Atli Már
Bright colours, cartoonish figures, and movie references are what you can expect at Atli's exhibit of sketches and paintings.
• Runs until May 31st, 2019



Í morgunsárið

NORDIC HOUSE

Porcelain Souls
Photographer Inuteq Storch went through his parents' archives and found photos and letters from their lives in Greenland and Denmark in the '60s and '80s. Explore them here.
• Runs until September 26th, 2019

WIND & WEATHER WINDOW GALLERY

Matrix, or Genesis of Private Property
This site-specific installation uses word, printed images, and chromed metal to make an overwhelming image that questions your very reality.
• Runs until June 26th, 2019

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSSTAÐIR

Jóhannes S. Kjarval: Can't Draw a Harebell
Here, explore the floral works of Jóhannes S. Kjarval, after whom the museum is named. Be it ornamental plants, potted plants, or wildflowers, you'll find it all.
• Runs until December 31st, 2019
Sólvi Helgason: Floral Fantasy

Folk artist Sólvi Helgason was a true eccentric. In 'Floral Fantasy,' his colourful floral patterns are put on display, with 16 unknown works joining them.
• Runs until June 10th, 2019

HAFNARBORG

In Transition
Eight photographers present their take on the town of Hafnarfjörður. The town is currently in a state of transition, and this exhibition documents its progress into that of a true urban centre.
• Runs until August 25th, 2019

EKKISENS

Soft Rock Assemblage
A magmatic memory mined at a depth, hosting intrusions of the cushioned life, has materialized metamorphically. At least, that's what Sara Björg Bjarnadóttir says this exhibition is about.
• Runs until June 16th, 2019

GERÐARSAFN KÓPAVOGUR ART MUSEUM

Outline
The exhibition 'Outline' shows works from the collection of Gerðarsafn from 1950 until this day. In the exhibition, the outline becomes the connection between works in different mediums, the thread that ties them together.
• Runs until September 8th, 2019

HVERFISGALLERÍ

Corrections
In Sigurður Árni Sigurðsson's third exhibition at Hverfisgallerí, he presents a body of work based on photographs and postcards that he collected all over Europe and corrected over the last three decades.
• Runs until August 17th, 2019

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART

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LAUGAVEGUR 120, 105 REYKJAVIK

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CENTERHOTEL MIDGARDUR
LAUGAVEGUR 120, 105 REYKJAVIK

**DJ
IN THE GARDEN**
HAPPY HOUR & OTHER BAR OFFERS

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FILM



Hildur Guðna, about to shred the cello

Sickening Silence

Hildur Guðnadóttir's 'Chernobyl' soundtrack
brings radioactivity to life

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen Photos: Timothée Lambrecq

TV Show

'Chernobyl' is available to view now
via HBO streaming services. The
soundtrack is out now

How do you transform something silent and invisible and yet inhumanly savage into sound? Composer and former Grapevine cover star Hildur Guðnadóttir was faced with this challenge when tasked with creating the soundtrack for HBO's newest mini-series 'Chernobyl.' What she ended up making is an uncomfortable, eerie, and remarkably beautiful accompaniment to one of the greatest human tragedies in recent memory.

An atypical soundtrack

"It was clear from the get-go that it wouldn't be appropriate to do a normal thriller TV score," says Hildur, when asked how she initially approached creating a soundscape for 'Chernobyl.' "We'd need to approach the subject honestly. It's such an important historical event—and we didn't want to sugar coat anything. It was out of the question to have violins marching in for the dramatic moments."

Instead, Hildur approached the project scientifically, asking herself, 'if you could hear radioactivity, what would it sound like?' "It's just such an interesting sound world, because radioactivity is so powerful and strong... but it's silent at the same time," she answers. "Of course, the explosion was big, but the impact of it, and the actual aftereffects... they are so silent and invisible."

A loaded experience

To turn the silent into sound, Hildur journeyed to Lithuania to spend time in a mid-decommissioning nuclear power plant that looked and operated very much like Chernobyl. She recorded every sound that went into the soundtrack in the plant. "We went to just observe and document what it was like to be there," she explains, "And to find out how it sounds to be in such an environment; what that physically feels like."

Hildur was determined to seek out the sounds rather than creating them. "I didn't want to go in and slam doors or bang on stuff because that would be too much of an intrusion," Hildur says. "We tried

to capture as honestly as we could what it sounded like to be there."

The whole experience was an eye-opening one. "The feeling of being there—the smell, the intensely long corridors, the amount of people cleaning any radioactive material, the constant measurements they have to take," she pauses, reliving those uncomfortable moments. "It was so loaded."

Human element

The soundtrack Hildur ended up with was also loaded. One of the most haunting moments in the show comes whenever radioactivity is unknowingly passed between two parties—a fireman picking up a piece of graphite, or a wife touching her sick husband in the hospital. In these scenes, a delicate but intense frequency becomes audible. Hildur perfectly managed to articulate the passing of this invisible decay between objects and people, which only the audience is privy to.

"That comes from this door to one of the pump rooms," says Hildur, when asked about this particular sample. "We had to pitch it down because it was at this crazy high frequency, almost inaudible."

The only human touch on the album is Hildur's own voice, which she added for a few selected moments. "There's not a single instrument on the whole score," she says. "It's all actual recordings that we made there, but we needed the human element as well. It's a huge human tragedy, because it was a human mistake that caused the catastrophe." She pauses; it's clear working so close to the tragedy has had an effect on the artist. "My voice became the human element in it." ♥

gpv.is/film
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Various Events



Jono Duffy is here! He's queer! He's still alive...

Friday June 7th

Jono Duffy Is Not Dead... Yet
20:00 Tjarnarbió
Friday Party!: 'Dirty Dancing' Screening
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Drag-Súgur Queer Variety Show: Motherland Realness!
21:00 Gaukurinn
Clothing & Art Market
12:00 Listastofan
Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa

Saturday June 8th

Out Of Control: Drag Show
22:00 Kiki Queer Bar
Clothing & Art Market
12:00 Listastofan
How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes
19:00 Harpa

Sunday June 9th

Guided Tour In English
11:00 National Museum Of Iceland
Seat Filler: Iceland's Only Free Game Show!
23:30 Secret Cellar
Party Bingo With Sigga Kling
21:00 Sæta Svinið
Children's Aid Clothing Market
16:00 Loft
Clothing & Art Market
12:00 Listastofan
Life In The Village
13:00 Árbær Open Air Museum
'Fire At Sea' Screening
17:45 Bíó Paradís

Monday June 10th

Stand-Up Comedy (in English!)
21:00 Gaukurinn
Clothing & Art Market
12:00 Listastofan
Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa

Tuesday June 11th

Funniest Four: Comedy Show
21:00 The Secret Cellar
How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes
19:00 Harpa

Wednesday June 12th

Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa
Open Mic Stand-Up Comedy
21:00 The Secret Cellar
What's The (Power)Point?
20:00 Loft
Improv Iceland: Comedy In English!
20:00 Tjarnarbió

Thursday June 13th

Game Of Thrones TV Pub Quiz
20:00 Stúdentakjallarinn
My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Friday June 14th

Friday Party!: 'Dumb And Dumber' Screening
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa

Saturday June 15th

How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes
19:00 Harpa

Sunday June 16th

Yoga
12:00 Loft
Seat Filler: Iceland's Only Free Game Show!
23:30 Secret Cellar
Party Bingo With Sigga Kling
21:00 Sæta Svinið
Guided Tour In English
11:00 National Museum Of Iceland
Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa

Monday June 17th

Stand-Up Comedy (in English!)
21:00 Gaukurinn

Tuesday June 18th

Funniest Four: Comedy Show
21:00 The Secret Cellar
Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa

Wednesday June 19th

Open Mic Stand-Up Comedy
21:00 The Secret Cellar
Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa
How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes
19:00 Harpa
Improv Iceland: Comedy In English!
20:00 Tjarnarbió

Thursday June 20th

My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Cellar
How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes
19:00 Harpa

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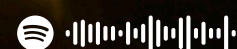


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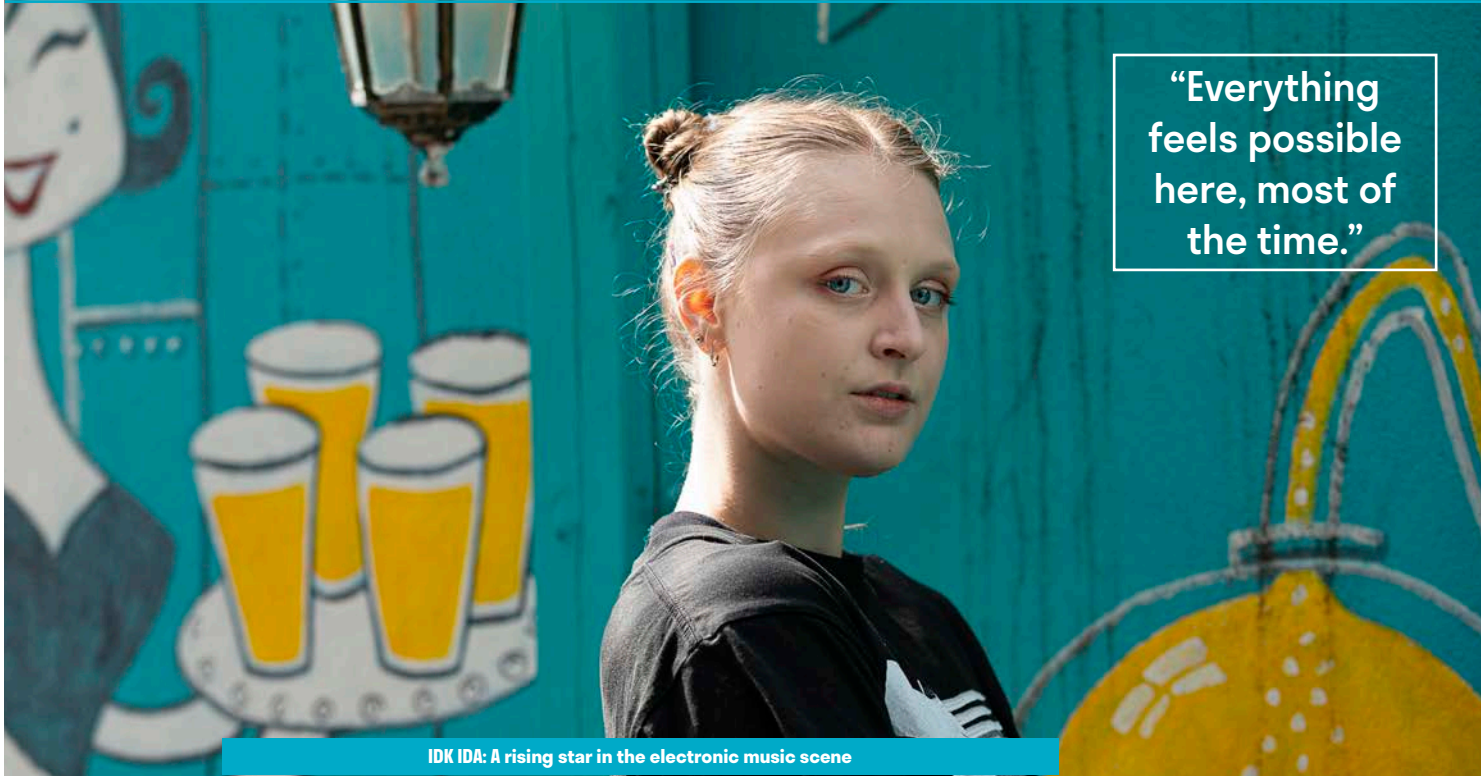
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“Everything feels possible here, most of the time.”

IDK IDA: A rising star in the electronic music scene

The forgotten

Being on this journey has matured me into a passionate feminist. I'm asked on a frequent basis if I make everything myself. I've become very aware of women's space in music, art and society in general. It's an incredibly important issue. One example is how The Grandmothers of electronic music haven't received the recognition they should; Daphne Oram and Delia Derbyshire, Suzanne Ciani and Else Marie Pade, whose work has been overlooked—because the focus of history is men. Women are thought of as less capable, and taken less seriously. There's a lot to fight for still. It should never be surprising that a woman produces everything herself.



A combination of it all and end notes

There would be no IDK IDA without Björk and her groundbreaking work, without Thom Yorke's 'The Eraser,' or Mark Bell and his insane productions. When all these things are added up, a development becomes evident—a combination of it all. I've also found communities of daring and playful souls that see opportunities instead of obstacles, which is one of the biggest pillars in the making of an artist. Everything feels possible here, most of the time—it isn't far from idea to execution. From the Weird Kids collective, to setting up Háskar on Good Friday, or an unofficial show at a gallery during Iceland Airwaves. Or the exciting achievements of post-dreifing, of course.

Psychoacoustics and friction

Reading scientific papers on random topics is something I enjoy. The lyrics of my song 'Bees' Riot' are inspired by a gory article about how the society of a bumble bee hive can collapse. My interest in field recordings was sparked by an article on psychoacoustics. The ear recognises the pattern and frequencies of a sound we know from our surroundings in a way that differs from digitally generated sound. But if a field recording has been manipulated, played backwards or chopped up, the ear will pick up on it, unsure of what it just heard. I had no idea what I'd just heard when I first heard 'Selmasongs.' It's an interesting mechanism that speaks to the primal side of our brains. ♡

Bees, Beauty And Anarchy In The Bleak North

The influences that lie behind the world of IDK IDA

Musician

Listen to IDK IDA's debut album 'The Big' at idkida.bandcamp.com, and look out for new material this year.

Words:
John Rogers & Ida Schuften Juhl

Photo:
Art Bicnick

Ida Schuften Juhl is IDK IDA, a young producer, performer, artist and organiser who has become a firm favourite at the Reykjavik Grapevine. Her debut album, 'The Bug,' is out now, and she has some stunning new material in the works, which you can experience by seeing her play live. We asked Ida to tell us about a few influences that made her the artist she is today.



Freaky sounds and playfulness

My musical background is very influenced by spending my early youth watching music video charts on the TV. For me, the '00s pop music was more edgy than we remember. The videos caught my attention as a kid,

but sometimes a track would catch my attention, too; Missy Elliot's "Work It," Pharrell Williams/Snoop Dogg's "Drop It Like It's Hot" and Timbaland. They have playfulness and push the boundaries of music.



Cries of emotion, duduk and soundtracks

My first music passion was Irish folk music, where the structure revolves around a theme that morphs into another, with small motifs gluing it together. The scales that got carved into me derive from the use of Armenian duduk flute in movie soundtracks to express sorrow and fatefulness. I remember very clearly watching 'The

Gladiator' and I suppose my passion for translating emotions started there.

Technological progress and industrial rock

Had it not been for the technological progress and fairly cheap production equipment, IDK IDA wouldn't have come to be. Developing your own sound world and techniques creates some unique takes on music. This has also generated a whole new segment of DIY artists and ideology, with more anarchy. I'm attracted to the idea of breaking up conservative views of instrumentation, and—to a certain extent—being able to go around the conservatism of the music business.



Aesthetics and the far north

From the Western Sea in Denmark to Reykjavik's endless cranes and Iceland's alien nature, there's beauty in a harsh landscape. Moving far away from home when I was young had difficulties for me, but also presented an opportunity to give less of a damn. The scarab beetle is a personal symbol of that. We roll our dung and we shine, and shining has invited all sorts of neon and fluffy pink into my life.

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Every day from
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Beer 700 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK,
Cocktails 1,650 ISK.

BAZAAR
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 850 ISK.

BÍÓ PARADÍS
Every day from
17:00 to 19:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
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BRAVÓ
Every day from
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Beer 700 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

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15:00 to 19:00.
Beer 600 ISK,
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CAFÉ BABALÚ
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Beer 695 ISK,
Wine 795 ISK.

DUBLINER
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12:00 to 22:00.
Beer 700 ISK.

FORRÉTTABARINN
Every day from
16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK.

GAUKURINN
Every day from
14:00 to 21:00.
Beer 600 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK,
Shots 750 ISK.

GEIRI SMART
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 550 ISK,

Wine 600 ISK,
Cocktails 1,200 ISK.

HÚRRA
Every day from
18:00 to 21:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK.

ÍSLENSKI BARINN
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 700 ISK,
Wine 700 ISK.

ÍDA ZIMSEN
Every day from
19:00 to 22:00.
Beer 495 ISK.

ÍSAFOLD
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 600 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

KAFFIBARINN
Every day from
15:00 to 20:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine (On Wed.)
750 ISK.

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Beer 650 ISK,
Wine 650 ISK.

KIKI QUEER BAR
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Beer 600 ISK,
Wine 1,000 ISK,
Shots 600 ISK.

LOFT
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK.

LOFTIÐ
Every day from
18:00 to 21:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK,
Shots 500 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500 ISK.

**MATUR OG
DRYKKUR**
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 550 ISK,
Wine 700 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500 ISK

MIAMI
Every day from
15:00 to 20:00.
Beer 500 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK,
Cocktails 1,000 ISK.

PABLO DISCOBAR
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500 ISK.

MIAMI
Every day from
15:00 to 20:00.
Beer 500 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK,
Cocktails 1,000 ISK.

PRIKIÐ
Weekdays from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK.

PETERSEN SVÍTAN
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00,
Beer 700 ISK,
Wine 890 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500 ISK.

SÆTA SVÍNIÐ
Every day from
15:00 to 18:00.
Beer 645 ISK,
Wine 745 ISK.

SKÚLI CRAFT BAR
Every day from
16:00 to 19:00.

Beer 850 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK.

SPÁNSKI BARINN
Every day from
14:00 to 20:00.
Beer 650 ISK,
Wine 650 ISK.

STOFAN CAFÉ
Every day from
15:00 to 21:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 950 ISK.

SOLOM
Friday and
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2 For 1 Cocktails

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Every day from
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TAPAS BARINN
Every day from
17:00 to 18:00.
Beer 645 ISK,
Wine 745 ISK.

VEÐUR
Every day from
12:00 to 19:35.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

ÖLSTOFAN
Every day from
15:00 to 20:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.



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Árnessýsla folk museum is located in Húsið, the House, historical home of the Danish merchants built in 1765. Húsið is one of the oldest houses in Iceland and a beautiful monument of Eyrarbakki's time as the biggest trading place on the south coast.

Today one can enjoy exhibitions about the story and culture of the region, famous piano, shawl made out of human hair and the kings pot, are among items. Húsið prides itself with warm and homelike atmosphere.

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The Southeast Museum

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Every day
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Lobster sushi, ribs & more - 890 ISK
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- Gló**
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- Shalimar**
Monday - Friday
12:00 - 14:30
Curry - 1,290 ISK
Vegan option
- Sæta svíníð**
Every day 15-18
Chicken wings - 1,190 ISK
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- Solom**
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Ceasar salad - 1,490 ISK
- Lemon**
Every day
16:00 - 21:00
2f1 Juice + sandwich 1,095 ISK
Vegan option
- Uppsalir - Bar and cafe**
Every day 11-14
Burger & fries - 1,390 ISK
Vegan option
- 2,000 ISK And Under**
- Essensia**
Every day-All day
Lunch-catch of the day - 1,980 ISK

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11:30 - 15:00
Dish of the day soup & bread - 1,690 ISK
- Solom**
Monday - Friday
11:00 - 14:30
Fish of the day - 1,990 ISK
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Fisherman's fish soup -1,990 ISK
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We Know What You'll Read This Summer

A beginners guide to contemporary Icelandic literature

Words: Valur Grettisson

individual will to survive. This is a moving, timeless, intense novel deserving of all the attention it gets.”



The Greenhouse (2007)

Audur Ava Ólafsdóttir (Translated by Brian FitzGibbon)

Although Hotel Silence is Audur Ava's smash hit—it won the Nordic Council Literature Prize—we'd be remiss to not mention her brilliant story about a young man that has to deal with his own manhood—and also flowers—in the novel 'The Greenhouse.' The book was a surprise hit in France in 2010, but never found its feet amongst Icelanders, even though it won a literature award from local newspaper DV at the time. The core of the story is about a young man that moves abroad and leaves his newborn baby, his disabled brother, and his father, bringing with him a cutting of a rose. It sounds simple enough, but of course, it never is.



LoveStar (2002)

Andri Snær Magnason (Translated by Victoria Cribb)

A rare Icelandic sci-fi novel, we can say with confidence that this book predicted the rise of social media, and all of the hollow marketing therein. The book is essentially a beautiful love story of people in a mad world ruled by a crazy company called LoveStar that shoot your remains to the space and transform death to stars. This book had an incredible impact on me, and I am still amazed that Hollywood has not taken notice of it and its smart criticism that really resonates with the modern social media environment that rules our lives today. Trust me, it's a timeless masterpiece. ♡



Codex 1962 (2016)

Sjón (Translated by Victoria Cribb)

Even if you have never heard of Sjón's name before, you have probably heard his lyrics, such as those featured in the songs "Isobel" and "Virus" by Björk, as well as many of her other songs. Sjón is also one of Iceland's most unique writers and it's safe to say that he is paving the road for Nordic magical realism. His book *Codex 1962* is an amazing trilogy of stories in one book. The Guardian described it as "a clay baby that becomes the narrator of a chaotic extravaganza in which Bosch meets Chagall, with touches of Tarantino," also saying that Sjón has mastered the earlier fabulists' technique of merging history with high-speed comedy and surreal profundity. If that isn't enough for you, The New York Times said in a headline about the book: "An Epic From Iceland, Complete With Unicorns, Angels and a Stamp-Collecting Werewolf." We, his countrymen, are still blushing from the praise.

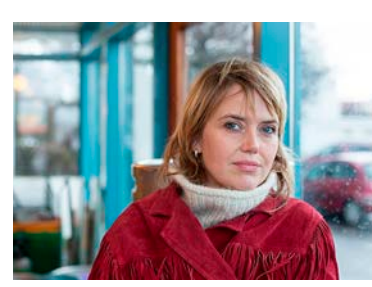
This is perhaps the oddest book in the bunch, but we have to include it, because it feels like the key to the Icelandic soul is hidden somewhere in its pages. The book teeters between being a novel and a non-fiction autobiography, telling the story of the writer, her relationships, her colourful private life, and her endless search for inner peace—and perhaps something even bigger than that. It's almost hypnotic in its odd narrative, and its wider connection with nature, language and birdlife. This book is not one for speed readers, although it's relatively short at only 233 pages. *Oddný Eir* won the European Union Prize for Literature for this book in 2014. And deservedly so.



Heaven and Hell (2007)

Jón Kalmann Stefánsson (Translated by Philip Roughton)

Jón Kalmann's name has been uttered more than once in the same sentence as "Nobel Prize" and he has probably won all other prizes between heaven and hell. This novel is the first in his trilogy about life and death in the countryside, and is filled with magical sentences that are borderline poems in themselves. He has a unique talent for connecting the divine with the ordinary, and filling the heart of the reader of something important. The Reykjavik Grapevine wrote about the book in 2010, saying at the time, "Heaven and Hell" is a universal tale of man's fragility amidst the gargantuan power of nature, about the enduring strength of friendship and the



Land of Love and Ruins (2011)

Oddný Eir (Translated by Philip Roughton)

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

Agnes Björt Andradóttir

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen Photo: Art Bicnick

Agnes Björt Andradóttir (27) is the singer of electro-pop act SYKUR.

Agnes is wearing:

- ▶ Leggings & plastic pants bought online.
- ▶ Shirt is from my brother's brand, Child Merchandise. It's the most expensive piece of clothing I own.
- ▶ Thrifted under-shirt
- ▶ Vintage pants from Spúútnik.
- ▶ I got these shoes from my friend. She thought she'd be too tall in them, but I thought the taller the better.
- ▶ Bag from Húrra Reykjavík.

Describe your style in five words: Here's six: Anime. Bold. Big Prints. Sharp. Futuristic. Right now I'm really inspired by Anime sci-fi cities. If I would be walking the streets of those kind of cities, I'd be wearing this outfit.

Favourite stores in Reykjavik: I thrift a lot, so Rauði Krossinn.

Favourite piece: My favourite piece is actually a dress that I am currently sewing. I have been putting a lot of love into it and I am really excited to find the right opportunity to wear it. It's made of neon tulle and really poofy. It's to be continued, but you can go to my instagram @agnesbjort for updates.

Something I would never wear: There isn't. It all depends on what mood you're in. Ugly is not always ugly. Beautiful is not always beautiful. Everything can look cool.

Lusting after: There is a brand called ASAI. I saw that Nana from Of Monsters And Men was wearing it for a new shoot and I was like oh my god, I thought I was the only one who knew this brand! They are not that big, but it is super cool. I want an outfit from them. I'm really into bold forms, big prints, crazy colours. ♡



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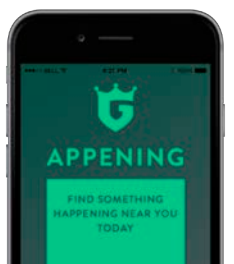
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"Crowberry wine is the only wine tradition that we have in Iceland."

Raxel is into fermentation. A lot.

The Call Of The Wild

Ragnheiður Axel Eyjólfsdóttir livening up Iceland's liquor and wine

Words: **Andie Fontaine** Photo: **Art Bienick**

Og Natura

Buy Og Natura's products at Vinbuðin. Find out more at ognatura.com

Iceland's booze scene is experiencing a renaissance right now, from the recently-sparked ubiquity of craft beers to locally-distilled whiskeys. Ragnheiður Axel Eyjólfsdóttir—nicknamed Raxel—is the manager of the organic foods company Íslensk Hollusta, which has taken things to a whole new level with the Og Natura line of drinks. Her concept is simple: use local, wild-grown ingredients to craft high quality alcoholic beverages, from wine to gin.

Purple fountains provide important clues

One of Og Natura's newest products is their crowberry wine. Crowberries are a small, dark, bitter berry that grows plentifully around Iceland. They're used in many of local recipes, but this is the first we'd heard about anyone making booze from them.

As it turns out, the idea is actually pretty old. "I've been brewing for some time, and became interested in fermentation," says Raxel. "I

was just experimenting. As I started to think about it more, I arrived at crowberry wine—because that is the only wine tradition that we have in Iceland."

The tradition of making crowberry wine may date as far back as 40 to 60 years, Raxel explains. "Some of my friends' grandparents have made crowberry wine. People used to make it in their basement or in their garage. I went on a search for old stories for old recipes, and a lot of families had their own recipes."

It's the intrinsic qualities of crowberries that make them ideal for brewing. "Because the crowberry has a thick skin, with a lot of oils and tannins, it preserves really well," says Raxel. "So the crowberry doesn't oxidise as much as blueberries, for example. The ageing process is then closer to that of grapes than other berries or other things that grow in Iceland."

Part of the experimentation process involved learning from the mistakes of others; in particular, trials wherein someone didn't engage the fermentation quite right, resulting in exploding barrels of juice. "I went on a search for all the stories," says Raxel, "especially stories about 'purple fountains.' People would have their containers explode all the time

from fermenting too much."

Ragnheiður isn't just making wine, either; she's also launched a bold take on an old favourite with what she calls "Slow Gin," using blackcurrants that are slightly fermented with sugar before being added to the gin. Her recipe uses hard-to-find Icelandic juniper berries, Arctic thyme, angelica root and "a little bit of rhubarb."

"All of these ingredients are wild—none of it is cultivated. It's all handpicked," she says, adding that even her parents take part in foraging the ingredients.

Hidden gold

One of Og Natura's stand-out stars is a liqueur made from stone brambles. They're foraged in the north—but good luck trying to find them yourself. "Stone brambles are like a hidden berry," says Raxel. "A lot of people don't know them. The pickers have their own secret locations. They're like gold. They're really expensive and it's difficult to pick them."

All of these beverages and more can be found at the state-run ÁTVR alcohol stores. Given the nature of the ingredients, their availability may depend on the time of year, but Ragnheiður sees the bright side to seasonality. "I want to be able to provide these products all year round, but we're dealing with limited resources," she says. "But then it's also nice to have to wait for the next harvest. It's a luxury problem." 🍷

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Best brunch in town? Maybe....

One Flew Into The Coo-coo's Nest

Fine fare at Grandi's cosiest eatery

Words: Shruthi Basappa Photo: Íris Ann Sigurðardóttir

The Coo-coo's Nest

Visit the restaurant at Grandagarður 23, and online at coocoosnest.is

When The Coo-coo's Nest first opened its doors in 2013, they confirmed suspicions of Grandi becoming the hip new Reykjavík neighbourhood. A family-run business from day one, it didn't take long for their Italian/Californian fare to impress diners, with their brunch winning a loyal following—they've been consistently voted Best Brunch in our annual Best of Reykjavík awards.

Íris Anna and Lucas Keller are not only the owner-chefs, but the couple have also revamped this former industrial shed to great advantage. Their small but cosy restaurant has a gentle lived-in vibe, and with the new Luna Flórens gypsy bar next door—also run by Íris—the number of seats has grown.

Not just bread

One of the first to serve sourdough bread in Reykjavík, Coo-coo's embraces sourdough culture entirely. The all-American brunch pancakes (1,690 ISK) are fermented to fluffy perfection, and the classic sourdough loaves have an enviable crumb and satisfyingly crunchy

crust; perfect for their freshly made sandwiches. A carb vehicle for all those good gut bacteria, this is the sort of healthy eating we should be seeing more of.

Deli lunch

Soup lunches are a dime a dozen in Reykjavík, and I don't say it lightly that Coo-coo's makes the best soups. Almost always vegan, they manage to coax deep flavours out of seemingly commonplace vegetables without resorting to the heavy-handed use of cream that many establishments are guilty of. The sandwiches (1,790 ISK) are either gratifying deli-style with mustard, cold cuts and house pickles or open-faced with anything from plump tiger shrimp to grilled in-season veggies. A glass of house wine (900 ISK) rounds things off nicely, and at 1,590 ISK for a soup-sandwich-salad combo, you'd be hard pressed to find a better lunch deal.

Chef Lucas is from California and this influence is reflected in their sourdough pizzas. On a combination of NY-style and traditional

A carb vehicle for all those good gut bacteria, this is the sort of healthy eating we should be seeing more of."

Italian crusts, it's the toppings that set Cali-style pizzas apart, with local, often organic and ethically-sourced produce used sparingly. I'm partial to their ricotta, mozzarella pie (2,790 ISK) with kale, carolina reaper honey and toasted hazelnuts—it's creamy, with hints of spicy sweetness. I could scarf one down any day.

Menu in motion

Coo-coo's menu has a daily theme, from Taco Tuesdays to pizza nights, Little Italy weekends, and a Sunday brunch. The brunch is ever-popular and on-point—reservations are recommended—but unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the other days of the week.

The varied menus seem promising on paper, but I'm unsure if the theme nights ever really caught on with diners. I—like many customers—often forget the day, and wander in expecting pasta on pizza days. On more than one occasion now, the weekend Italian menu has been entirely replaced in favour of the pizzas and appetizers. It's a common sight to see customers walk in and out again, slightly bewildered, and the confusion isn't helped by service that blows hot and cold depending on the server.

To be clear, though, it's the organisation—and not the food—that's frustrating. Themed nights may have their place, but it's perplexing that the menu has a personality transplant every other day, demanding dedicated planning on the diner's part. That said, the hearty, fresh, seasonal fare and the convivial atmosphere are ever-present, and a revamped approach to their menu could be all it needs to take that spark up a notch. 🍷



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Travel

Floating Among The Jewels

Kayaking the sparkling waters of Sólheimajökull

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen Photos: Art Bicnick



Distance from Reykjavik:
165 km

How to get there:
Take Route One South and turn left into the Sólheimajökull Glacier Parking Lot

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For those looking to enjoy the stunning Icelandic wilderness without the sweat of hikes or climbs, there's no better choice than floating around a glacial lake in a kayak. Add to that some towering, sparkling icebergs, and you've got yourself an unforgettable day. At least, that's what I found on my recent southern excursion to Sólheimajökull's glacier lagoon.

Effervescent pearls

On one of those rare toasty Icelandic summer days—hey, we don't get many of them—I headed east with one mission: to kayak around the Sólheimajökull glacier lake. There wasn't a cloud to be seen in the sky, and the usual chilly breeze was notably absent. Our guide, Elsa, assured the group that we were truly lucky as we pulled on our wetsuits and other waterproof apparel.

After a short jaunt over to the lagoon and a paddling demonstration, we tottered onto our kayaks and slid out into the icy water. Immediately, I was stunned by a smattering of shining clumps of glacial ice. These were but tiny bits of the glacier, but the effervescent pearls wowed us, and we crowded around them with our hands outstretched—desperate to prod the

ice without tumbling out of our boats.

Smatterings of sand

At this point, we gathered in a circle around Elsa for a primer on the lagoon. She explained how the lake didn't even exist a few years ago. But, as the Sólheimajökull glacier has melted—which it is doing at an alarming rate—the meltwater lagoon was born and continues to grow each year.

Elsa also explained what we were floating above. The lagoon is more than 60 metres deep, she said—meaning that if the landmark Hallgrím-skirkja church was built on the bottom, we'd only see the very top of the steeple above the surface of the water.

This fact made the glacial vista around us even more impressive. With icebergs emerging out of the water up to ten metres high next to our kayaks, it was spooky to imagine just how deep under the surface they extended. Knowledge about the lagoon's expanse also made us keep our cameras extra close, and not just for the photo ops—were we to drop them, they'd be gone into the icy water forever.

As we continued paddling around the lagoon, the icebergs got bigger and bigger. While many were starkly white, most were covered with layers

of black sand. This, we learned, was tephra from the Katla volcanic eruption in 1918. The volcano is one of the most active in Iceland, usually erupting every 100 years or so. It's on track to do so soon—any moment, actually—a fact that Elsa joked about, telling us that she might get a radio call telling us to kayak very quickly back to shore.

A relaxing enterprise

Kayaking, I found, requires the perfect amount of athletic exertion. The arm movements keep your blood flowing, but it's chill enough that you can spend your energy taking in the gorgeous scenery, rather than fretting about whether you'll be able to paddle back.

Elsa did, however, keep us on our toes—at one point, she stopped in front of an enormous iceberg to teach us some tricks. First, we practised standing up on our kayaks. She assured us they were sturdy, but it was still an adrenaline rush to balance on an unstable piece of plastic over 60 metres of ice cold water. While some opted out, two of us took on the challenge and held our paddles over our heads like Olympic trophies as we stood up and found our balance. She was right, though—kayaks are cer-

“As chunks of glacial ice floated around my feet, the magic of Sólheimajökull hit me in full force.”

tainly more sturdy than they look.

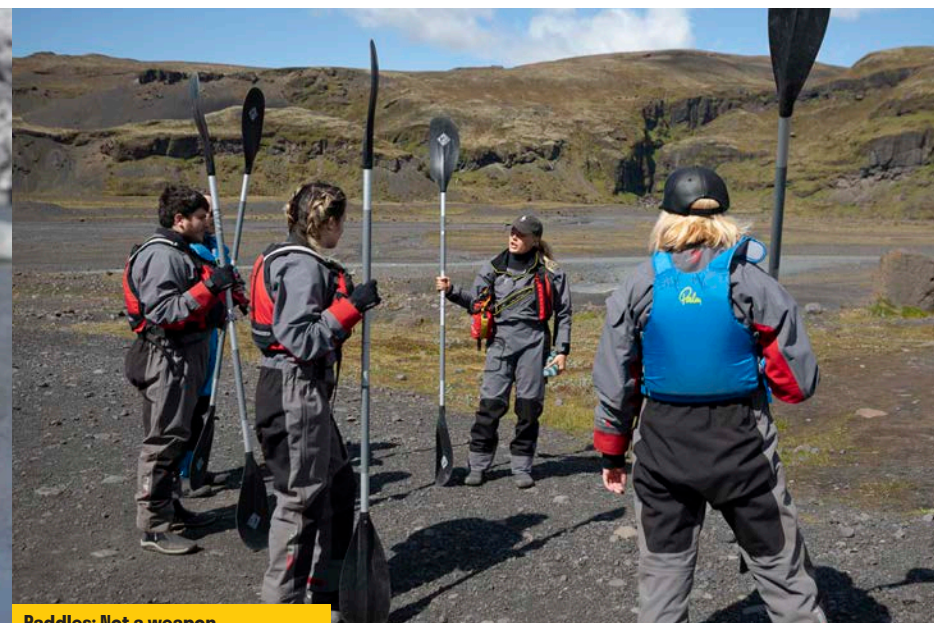
Elsa then jumped down and sat on the nose of the boat, so close to the edge that the other side of the kayak began to raise. We tried this out as well, and though I found the prospect of face planting into the glacier lagoon terrifying, I dangled my legs off the bow and into the water just like she did. And as chunks of glacial ice floated around my feet, the magic of Sólheimajökull hit me in full force.



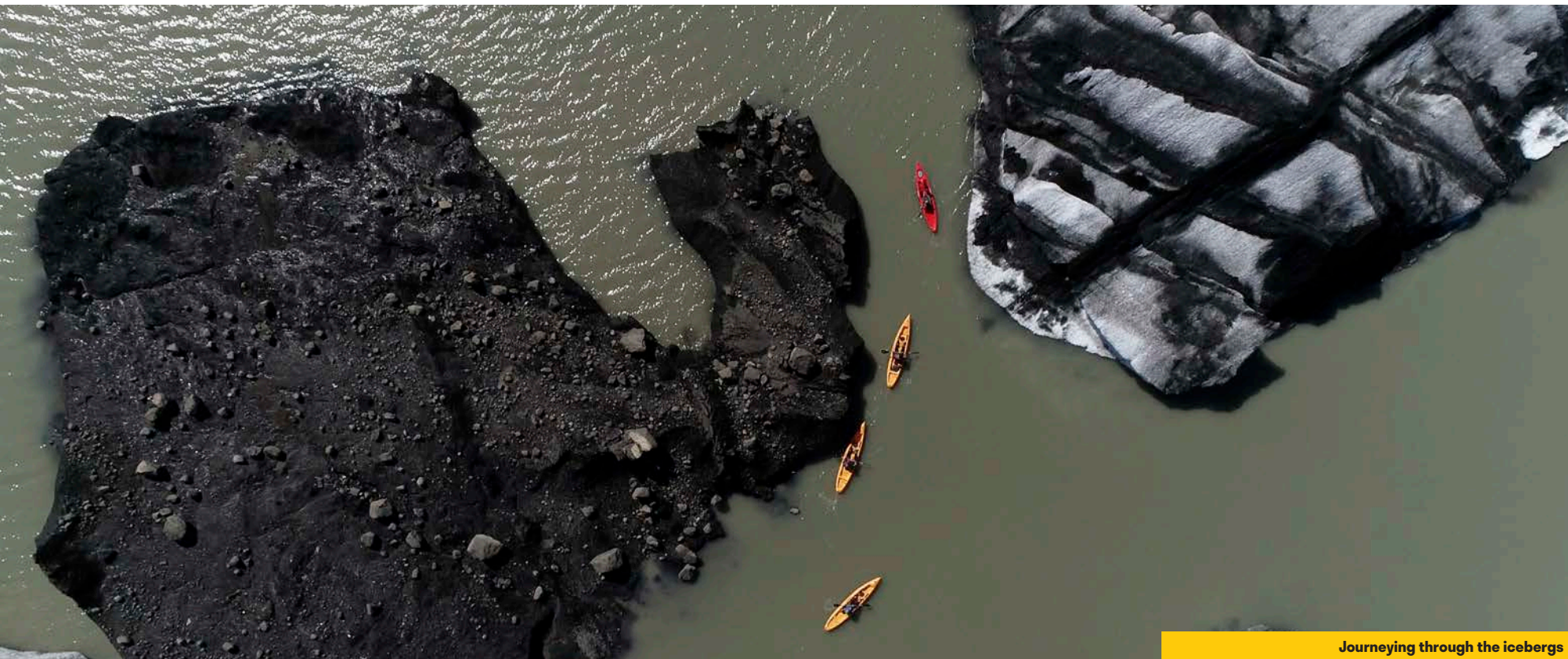
The fated kayaks



Elsa, our travel guide



Paddles: Not a weapon



Journeying through the icebergs

Soaking in the sparkles

It was then time to soak in our surroundings, as the tour was nearly finished. Brilliant and shining bright like a diamond (as Rihanna would say), the encompassing ice boulders glistened like blinding, twinkling jewels, and we struggled to take it all in before heading back to shore. Most of the icebergs have been in this frozen state for almost unimaginable periods of time—since long before your grandparents were born. So as the Sólheimajökull glacier continues to melt, another wonder is born—that of an icy lagoon just begging to be floated along and reflected on. 🇮🇸



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Travel



The Witches Of Búðir

A visit to a magical little shop in Snæfellsnes

Words: John Rogers Photos: Art Bicnick



Distance from Reykjavik: 173km

Car provided by: gocarrental.is

Accommodation provided by: hotelbudir.is

How to get there: Route One North, Route 54, park at Hotel Búður

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Hotel Búðir juts up from Búðahraun lava field on the southern coast of the Snæfellsnes peninsula. Visible for miles around, this imposing hotel is well known as one of the most plush and comfortable getaways in Iceland, sitting almost in the shadow of the towering, mesmerising Snæfellsjökull glacier.

Lesser known is the mysterious store that occupies one of the nearby sheds. With a large Ægishjalmur stave—the Helm of Awe, a magical stave of protection—mounted on the wall, and a sign that says simply “SHOP,” it picks up plenty of foot traffic from hotel guests and passersby who come to visit the historic black wooden church of Búðakirkja.

The coven

A bell tinkles when you step through the door into the dark confines of the store. At first, your eyes might not know where to rest—everywhere you look, there are fascinating objects. The neat tables are packed with small, softly lit carvings, amulets and bowls of intriguing rune tiles; the shelves are loaded with paper parcels and brown bottles with handwritten labels, containing mysterious powders and tinctures, and the windowsills are lined with sculptures made from familiar beach ephemera, wave-worn sticks, shells, strands of wool,

fronds of seaweed, knotty string and weathered floats.

Suddenly, I become aware of two pairs of eyes looking at me from a side-door. It's Sigga and Agnes, the two self-professed witches behind this curious place. They emerge from the office smiling, happy to share stories of their craft.

Beach herbs

Everything in the store, says Sigga, is handmade. “We climb the mountains looking for roots and herbs,” she says in a calm, assured voice. “We go through the lava fields to the beaches to get herbs, and collect them at the right time. We bring them back here, work them, dry them, and pack them—everything is done personally and by hand.”

The picking season for Icelandic plants starts when the snow begins thawing in March, and runs through into the autumn. “All the herbs go into oils so I can work with them later in creams and balms,” says Sigga. She speaks circuitously, weaving together different points and returning to others, slowly painting the picture of the shop's story. “These things have been done throughout the ages. We're continuing with the old habits of using the herbs. That's where I learned this way of doing things.”

Heathen calendar

At first, Sigga and Agnes had to seek out obscure bits of information from various conversations and sources. But over time, collating traditional knowledge has become easier. “In the beginning I really had to dig,” says Sigga. “It has become more open—more information is available now, and shared online. What we have here is the heathen way. It's getting quite popular, now. People are becoming more open to using things from mother nature.”

Heathen beliefs run through many aspects of the store. Sigga points to a calendar on the wall, divided up into eight sections in a circular design. “We work a lot with this Chan Tok—a calendar of the old heathen seasons, with eight holidays in the wheel of the year,” she says.

“The modern calendar has the familiar months we know now, but here we see the old Icelandic months, and in the inner circle are the old heathen holidays. Celebration, of course, starts on the 21st of December on the Winter Solstice. Then there's the Spring Equinox, the Summer Solstice and the Autumn Equinox. It's all about harvesting, and loving mother nature. Everything we make has a meaning—to celebrate mother nature, and give grace and thanks.” She smiles. “Not very complicated.”

Blessed beginnings

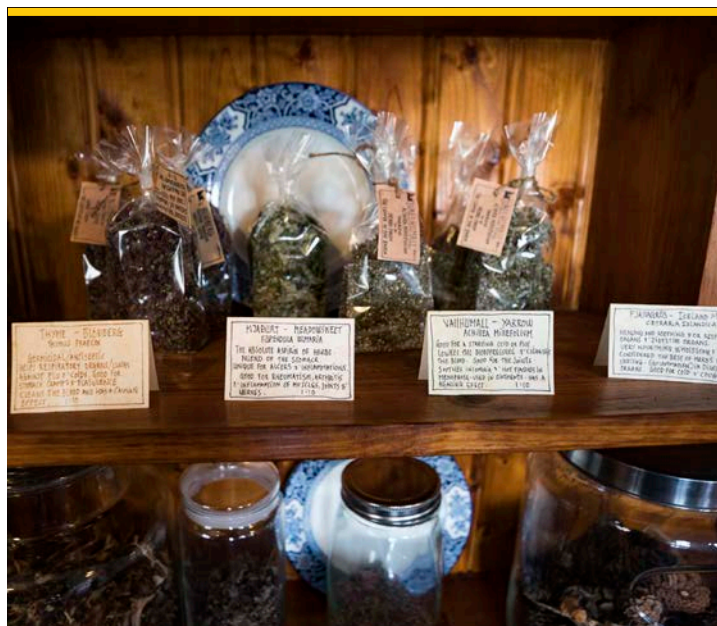
The shop's intriguing displays are no coincidence. “We are both in the arts,” says Agnes. “I work in the hotel, taking care of the flower arrangements and things like that. Sometimes I go there with lavender and bless the hotel. People will say ‘What was that?’ when I come. And when I put out the flowers, I also go with a little bit of magic. I work on many weddings here with the flowers, and I always put a little bit of magic inside. They don't know about it, but I bless the marriage.”

Guests of the hotel might also sometimes see a ritual taking place from their room windows. “We work with the magic of nature,” smiles Agnes, her eyes shining brightly. “We sometimes have ceremonies outside when it's good weather, and people are welcome to join us. We burn sage, and let people come and write wishes. It's all about where the moon is—if it's waning, waxing or full. There are rituals for if you want to take something in from the flow of the cosmos, or if you have something to let go.”

Witch and proud

Some hotel guests love the store, say the pair, but they get all kinds of reactions. “People felt we were really quite weird at first,” laughs Sigga. “But not any more. Still some do—they think this is a serious witch shop. Which is okay—we are witches. That's fine. It doesn't bother us.” Agnes adds: “There are still people who walk in then walk out. But others come inside, and their eyes open wide. They look at it like a museum, talking very softly.”

“A woman who was 150 kilos come into the shop looking for chocolate—there was none here, and she was going to buy ten soaps because she thought they were chocolate bars. I told her they were soaps, and her mind changed immediately. She bought rune books and charms, and she left happier than ever.”



Magical herbs ready to be brewed



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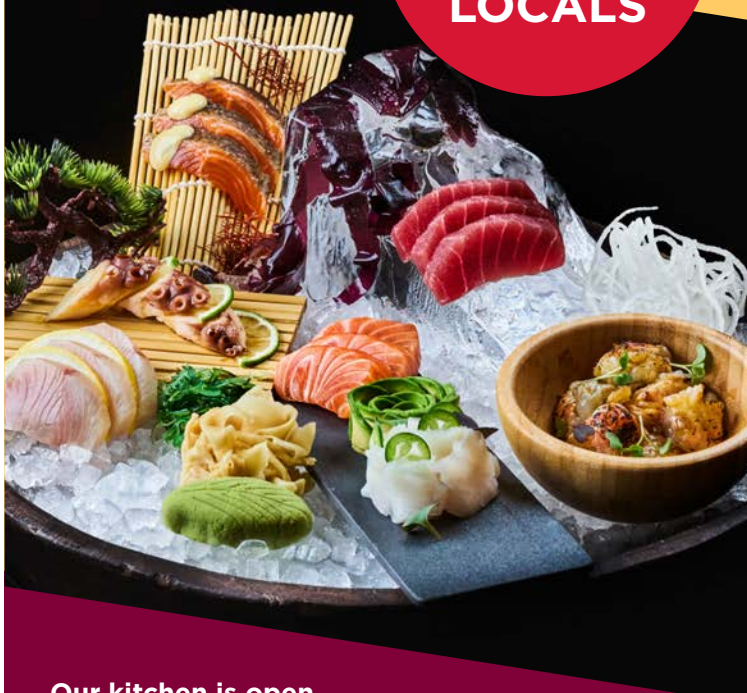
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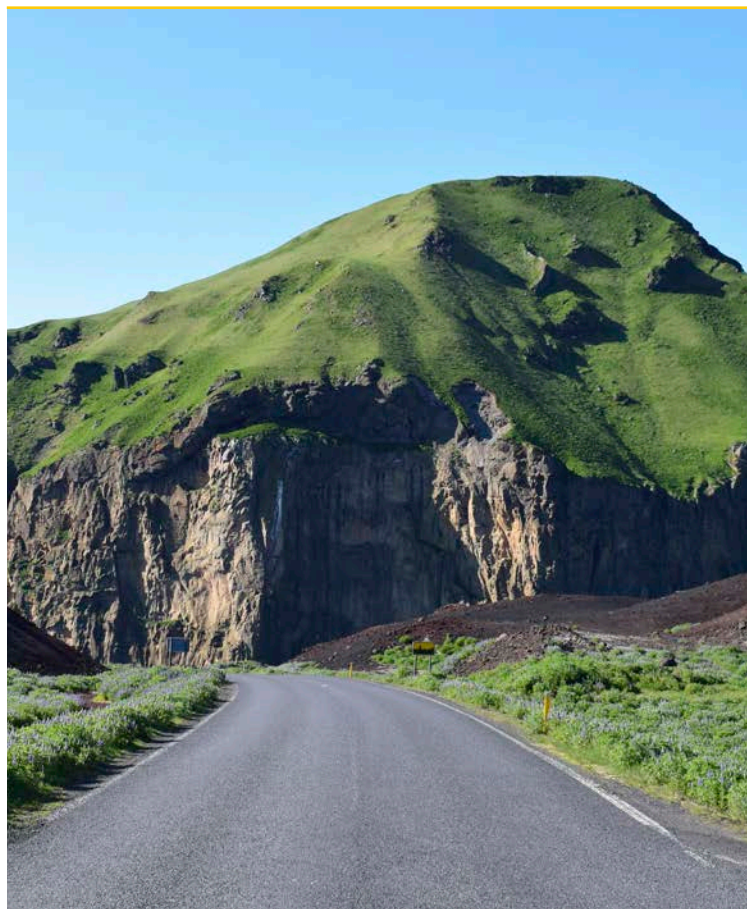


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Distance from Reykjavik: 153km
How to get there: Route One South
Car provided by: gocarrental.is
Meal provided by: slippurinn.is
Ferry provided by: herjolfur.is



Driving across the Nýja Hraun lava field

ROAD TRIP

The Westman Islands

Words & Photos: **John Rogers**

The Westman Islands are a mountainous archipelago just south of Iceland's mainland. The most scenic way to get there is to drive and catch the Herjölfur ferry, then zip between the town, the Nýja Hraun lava field, and the Stórhöfði peninsula. Here's our itinerary for the perfect summertime day-trip.

Ferry: **Herjölfur**

The 35-minute ferry ride is an adventure in itself. As you pull out to sea from Landeyjahöfn, majestic glaciers will rear up behind you before you glide between the craggy islands and arrive in the stunning Heimaey harbour. Stand on the right as you dock, and have your camera ready.

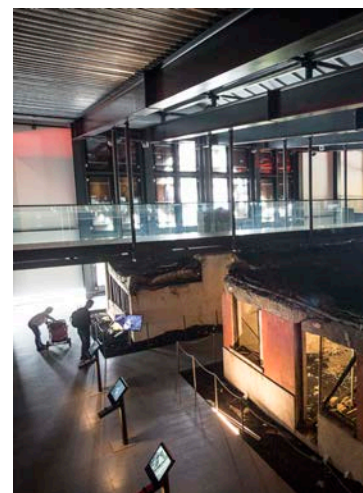
Lunch: **Gott**

Next, walk over to Gott for lunch. This bright, family-run café has a lot of great options; highlights include a vegan flatbread with hummus, avocado and melon, and the spicy Eldfell burger, named after the nearby volcano.



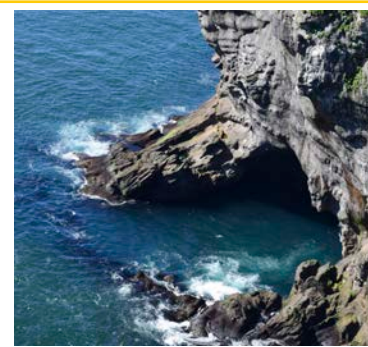
Explore: **Nýja Hraun & Eldfell**

The volcano in question was the culprit of the famous 1973 eruption that reshaped the island. It produced 2km² of new land that was christened "Nýja Hraun" ("New Lava"), navigable via a network of discrete roads. The hike to the 200m summit of Eldfell yields beautiful views, and there are many more trails with secrets to discover.



Visit: **Eldheimar**

This smart museum is dedicated to the eruption. It's built over a pair of houses that were destroyed by the lava flow for a visceral reminder of the destruction it wreaked on the island. There's engaging newsreel footage of the evacuation of Heimaey's entire population, and some vivid interactive displays charting the terrifying flow of lava through the heart of the town.



Hike: **Stórhöfði**

At the other end of the island, an 8km drive away, lies the Stórhöfði promontory. Topped by one of the oldest lighthouses in Iceland and a working weather station, it's famous both as the windiest point in Europe, and for its steep cliffs—which become a teeming puffin colony during summer. Hike the trails or visit the birdwatching hide to spot them.



Tour: **Rib Safari**

Arguably the best way to see the islands is from the ocean. The Rib Safari tour takes you out on a small speedboat that's maneuverable enough to allow it inside the watery caves along the shore. It's an invigorating trip and very much worth your time.

Drink: **Brothers Brewery**

After being out on the choppy ocean, you might well need a drink. The Brothers Brewery is the island's brewpub, producing over 20 craft beers. It has proven popular—so much so that it recently moved to a larger space with a seating area outside to catch some afternoon sun. Try their limited seasonal ales, some of which are named after well-known local fishermen.



Drink: **Slippurinn**

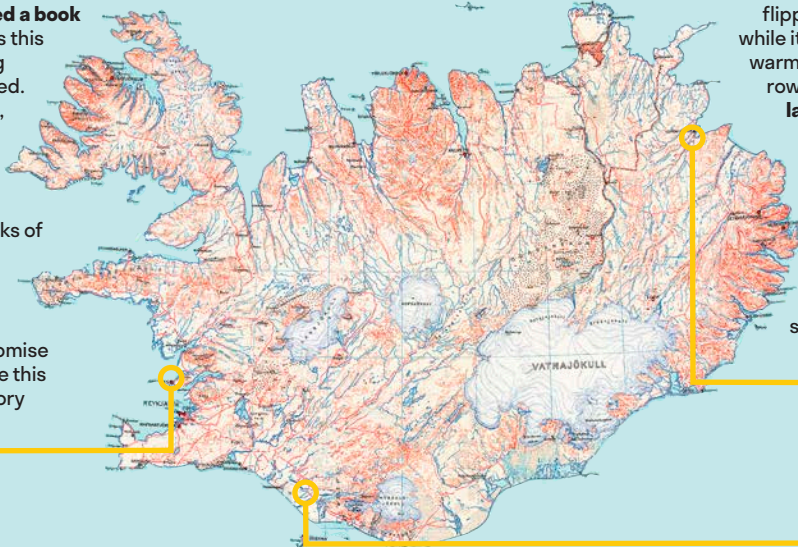
No trip to the Westman Islands would be complete without a meal at the fine-dining paradise of Slippurinn. Worth the trip alone, the phenomenal tasting menu makes for an unforgettable feast of local produce, from bright blue guillemot eggs to oyster leaves, wild herbs, sea truffles, cured fish, juicy lamb, and desserts so good they'll bring tears to your eyes. Book in advance, set aside a few hours, and go all in on juice or wine pairings—you won't regret it. 🍷

Island Life

Hot news from the cold Icelandic countryside

Words: **Andie Fontaine**

A cat in Akranes going by the auspicious name of **Jósefina Meulengracht Dietrich** has just **published a book** of poetry. Yes this is a real thing that happened. Furthermore, it's actually an anthology, selecting her best works of hundreds she has composed over the years. We promise to investigate this intriguing story further.



Summer in Iceland typically means a cloudy and cool Reykjavik area while the northeast is sunny and warm. However, the last weekend of May flipped the script—while it was sunny and warmish for days in a row, **northeast Iceland was hit with freezing temperatures and even snow.** Can both regions ever experience the same weather at the same time? Time will tell.

You know how they say, “make hay while the sun shines”? Well the people of South Iceland aren't ones to stick around waiting for favourable conditions for the venture, as it has been reported that **hay harvesting has begun** in the region. Livestock everywhere breathed a sigh of relief.

Best Of Iceland

A selection of winners from our Best Of Iceland travel magazine



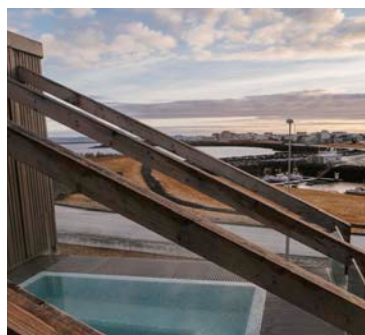
North: Best Bar
R5 Micro Bar, Akureyri

With an expansive selection of craft beer, R5 is your cozy local in the North. Their taps pour a diverse array of ales from Icelandic breweries. Our panel raves that this is the “ideal place to have a beer or wine with friends and just sit down and chat.” Time your visit with a weekly concert for an extra treat.



West: Must-See Spot
Flatey Island

You know that quintessential summer feeling of time slowing down? The smell of the season—grass, wildflowers, sea spray—floats on the breeze, and there's nothing on your agenda but to breathe it in. That's Flatey. Drive to Stykkishólmur and catch the ferry to spend a day among Flatey island's colourful houses, impossibly green grass—and puffins.



Reykjanes: Best Hotel
Hotel Berg, Keflavik

This smart, modern hotel is located on the hill behind Keflavik harbour. While the town itself is not known for its beauty, this spot is as tranquil as you could wish for, with comfortable bedrooms, a relaxed sitting area, and a rooftop pool from which you can watch the sun sink into the sea. The perfect final stop before a morning flight.



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

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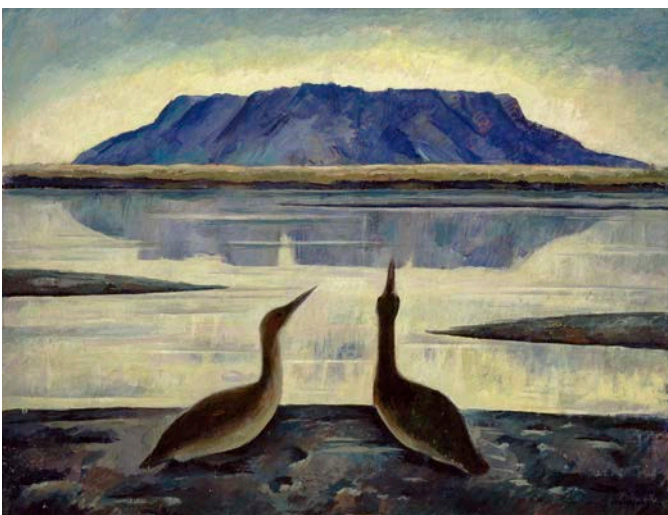
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POEMS OF THE EDDA

Hymiskviða

The Poem of Hymir

Words: Grayson Del Faro Photo: Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir

In this series, we illuminate the individual poems of the Edda—that most famous, epic masterpiece of Icelandic literary tradition—with humour, vulgarity and modern realness. If you're still confused, Google 'Saga Recap.'

fancy themselves an amateur Old Norse scholar because they've seen all three of Marvel's 'Thor' movies might already know, Þórr is not a godly character so much as a slapstick buffoon. That's about the only thing that's accurate about them, so here is the real talk.

Party like it's 999

Just like the elite of today, the gods known as the Æsir had nothing to do and decided to throw a party. God forbid they do it for themselves, so Óðinn gets Ægir, the giant of the sea, to plan it for them. Ægir thinks (with good reason)

Although it's named after a giant, this poem is about Þórr. That means it has a very different tone from the more famous, more whiney poems of the Edda. The ones about Óðinn are melodramatic and self-important, whereas anything having to do with Þórr is literally a joke. As any neckbeard who might

that Óðinn is a pretentious douche-bag, so he says, "Fine, I will. But if you want enough beer for a proper fucking kegger, you're gonna have to get a cauldron at least three miles deep."

Luckily, the god Týr knows just the giant who has that much, uh, pot. (It's his dad.) So he hops into Þórr's goat-powered Bentley and off they go to steal it. They are welcomed by Týr's nameless mother and Hymir serves them dinner, even though he hates Þórr. Þórr eats so much that Hymir complains they'll have to go fishing tomorrow.

Gone pissin'

Fishing is one of many varieties of masculinity pissing contests amongst the Norse gods and giants. Hymir catches two whales but is emasculated when Þórr pulls up his arch-nemesis Jörmungandur, a sea serpent so large it encircles the entire Old Norse universe. Game over!

Of course Hymir is a sore loser, so he challenges Þórr to break his magically unbreakable goblet. It proves difficult at first until Hymir's wife slips him a tip, "My husband's head is thicker than any goblet!" (And she ain't talkin' about down there, amirite giant ladiezzz!) So Þórr smashes it against Hymir's head, winning the cauldron of their choice.

Þórr low-key massacres a bunch of giants on their way out, just for fun. Then his goat gets a flat tire, so they stop and kidnap the children responsible for the inconvenience, making them his child-slaves. Finally, the gods can get properly fucked up. Typical rich people.

Moral of the story: 1. Marvel movies are not historically accurate. 2. Beer is good. 3. Child-slavery is bad. 4. Actually, while we're at it, all slavery is bad. ♡



TV GODDESS

Easy S01

Lóa takes on the world of TV

Words: Lóa Hlín Hjálmtýsdóttir

I like the rain and I enjoy getting sick. I'm happy whenever I get a legitimate reason to watch TV without feeling I should be doing something important with my time. When I managed to weasel my way into writing a TV column I felt as victorious as Angela when

she and Jordan Catalano started dating or when Rachel finally got the job at Ralph Lauren.

One of the many series I'm watching at the moment is 'Easy' on Netflix. The show is on its third and final season, but I just got the memo and have only watched the

first season. They are written, directed, edited and produced by Joe Swanberg. I imagine him looking like Ed Wood with a complete one-man band contraption.

Each episode only lasts thirty minutes, so it's a cheap investment of your time. Some of the episodes have poor production value, but since the narrative is good it doesn't really matter. It's just like hearing an interesting story from someone with a slightly bad breath. The story is still good and you can, for the most part, ignore the smell.

All the characters are modern adults living in Chicago with their lives connected in various ways. We travel with them through their love stories and business adventures. Some interesting situations are dealt with, like the guilt carnivores feel around vegans and the most honest break up conversation I've ever witnessed. There is also lot of sex.

The actors are, overall, doing a good job—but the greatest actor in the world could never fix my micro brewery culture intolerance or open marriage allergy. I don't mind the beer and I think people should do what they want to but still... it's just beer, and if you need so many lovers why on earth did you get married in the first place? I'm sorry for being judgmental—and I probably have to see a therapist about this—but I'm still looking forward to when monogamous teetotalers become fashionable. ♡



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WELL, YOU ASKED

Let's Rant About Meat

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

How best to deal with meat guilt? I feel bad 4 eating it.

It sounds to me like you want to be a vegan but have no self-control. We'd recommend taking a hallucinogen while sitting in front of a steak. Relax, trip, and talk to it. You'll either find out that it's fundamentally imperative that you become vegan to save your new steak friend Steve, or become so disillusioned to the plight of the animal world that you no longer have meat guilt and can start eating whale. Success!

Was it really that important that Icelanders jailed the bankers and crowd sourced their new constitution? They still had a prime minister in the Panama papers and the British 1% is buying up all the good land, so it can't have been that important.

Woah. It sounds like you've got the basis of a sure-to-be-viral opinion piece going on. Please email us at grapevine@grapevine.is with your continued thoughts. We'd love the advertising money those clicks will make us—so will our bankers.

I've been watching Netflix's flat-Earth documentary "Behind The Curve." I've lost faith in humanity. Please help.

Well, we never thought we'd be saying this, but you should check out Logan Paul's mockumentary, "FLAT EARTH: To The Edge And Back." It's a satirical take on the issue, and proves that, apparently, Logan Paul, the guy who filmed a dead body, is more reasonable than flat earthers. We truly do live in the darkest timeline. 🍷

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

WAR OF THE NERDS

Even The Robots Are Confused

The odd battle of the roundabouts

Words: **Valur Grettisson** Photo: **Art Bicnick**

Let's just be honest about it: roundabouts are nightmarish and confusing structures. It's like a saddening metaphor for the pointless circulation of life—if you lose focus, some idiot will ram into your side and possibly kill you.

The Icelandic way

But in Iceland, roundabouts are even more confusing. Icelanders have this odd rule, one that is in no way legalised—it's more of a traditional mess—that the driver in the inner lane has the right-of-way to exit the roundabout. Yes, this is crazy, but it was not really a concern until early this decade, mostly because we have gone from 100,000 tourists up to 2 million annually in just ten years, and no-

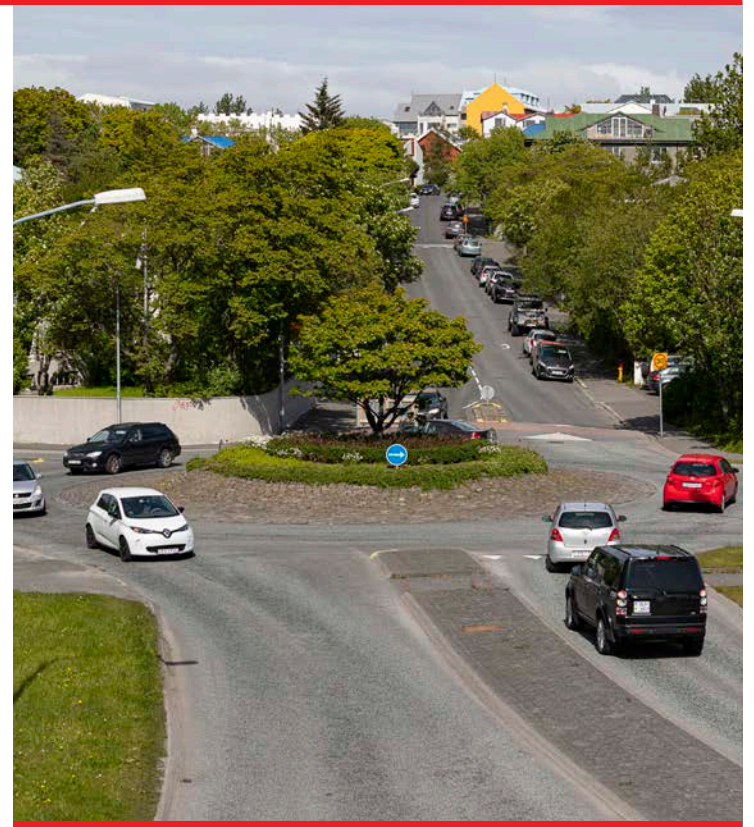
body bothers to inform tourists about this rule.

Ridiculous statistic

The consequences are quite devastating. From 2011 to 2015, 22% of those involved in accidents related to roundabouts were foreign tourists. And this number grows significantly at roundabouts near tourist attractions.

This has sparked an interesting debate in Iceland about whether we should stop entirely with this silly, special right-of-way rule and adapt to the rest of the world, or if we should just force the rest of the world to adapt to our eccentric way of life.

Specialists have also pointed out that self-driving cars are right around the corner—literally—



The soulcrushing roundabout

and this has been a problem for those cars as well. So, it seems, even the robots are confused.

No, you're doing it wrong!

But Icelanders are very independent and stubborn people when it comes to defending their ways and traditions, so not everyone is happy about changing the round-

about rule. Some have stated that we should simply go back to driving on the left side of the road like in the 60s, so that this rule would make any sense at all. Or—and we love this—we could even educate the rest of the world about our unique solution and force them to adopt it. Either way, it's a really nerdy war. Who other than Icelanders would get into a heated debate about roundabouts? 🍷



CITYSHOT by Art Bicnick

Teenagers, not on Instagram

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LAST WORDS

From The Bottom Of My Ovaries

Words: **Kimi Tayler**
Photo: **Art Bicnick**


“Wear that. It’s kooky and cute. That’s your thing.”

This was my first taste of feedback from a professional comedian before my first proper gig in London. In this moment, I realised I would rarely be judged equally beside my male counterparts. How silly I was thinking it should all be about the quality of my jokes! But there was no womb for sensitivity or ovary-action; if I wanted stage time it was made clear that this kind of mansplanation was part of the package. And so I began my journey into stand up comedy.

Whilst there are brilliant women slaying on the comedy scene in Reykjavík, like everywhere, we are few. When I ask myself why there aren’t more, I only have to remember all the times it was my appearance that was “complimented,” instead of my jokes. I’ve been told I have to work 20% harder because I own a vagina, and numerous guys have said to me “If you weren’t a lesbian I’d hit on you,” and much worse. But as a comedian—necessarily, with a certain degree of ego—the last thing you want to lose is the mic. So you put up with it.

This thing that I love is so often a bastion of misogyny, often under the guise of free-speech, that it is rendered an intimidating world to be situated within, both here in Iceland, and further afield. But as the scene begins to diversify in Reykjavík, I watch other comedians carve out new paths. The most beautiful thing about humour is that it’s a spectrum. Whilst I may be considered biologically unfunny by many, fortunately there are some who find my story about the time someone shat on my car quite amusing. Which is something of a relief.


Striking out on my own and running my own nights is terrifying. It means I have to work not just 20%, but 100% harder; but I’m doing comedy on my own “kooky” terms. So thank you, Iceland, for affording me the privilege of a platform—thank you from the bottom of my lovely-kooky-lady-ovaries. 🍷






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