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# REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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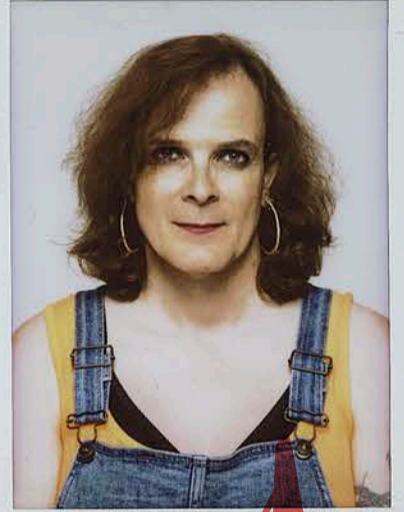
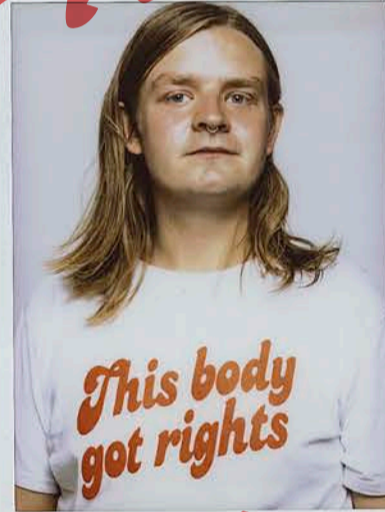
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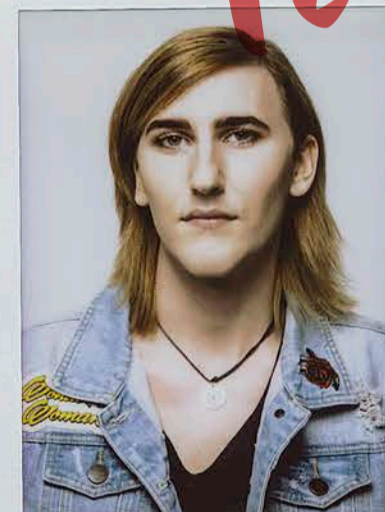
## 2019 PRIDE ISSUE:



### The Queer Frontiers



### Welcome to Trans Iceland



**News:**

### *Hate Words*

Hate speech laws put on trial

**Culture:**

### *Queer As Folk*

Ragga Holm, Mighty Bear, Pride Guide & more

**Food:**

### *Vegan City*

Finally, there's more than one option

**Travel:**

### *Whale Week*

Visiting a mass whale beaching

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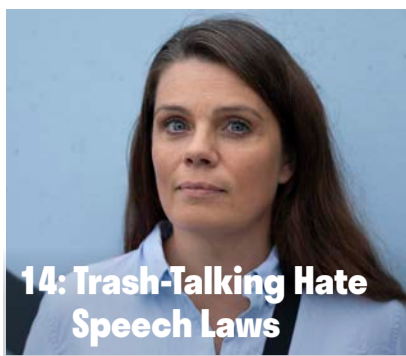


**COVER PHOTOS:**  
Anna Maggy

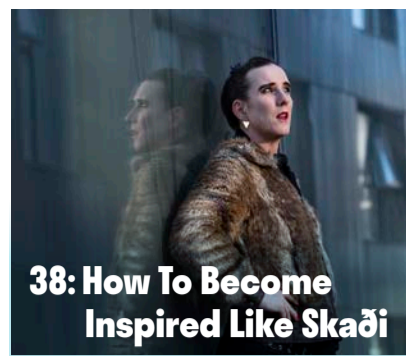
**ABOUT THE COVER:**  
Anna Maggy says: "This was the most inspiring project I have done in a long while. I got to shoot such amazing characters."

What is it like to be born in the wrong body? This project was an eye-opener. There is such beauty in variety!"

# First



**14: Trash-Talking Hate Speech Laws**



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## Just Say No To Pinkwashing

**EDITORIAL** As Reykjavik Pride approaches, we are once again publishing an issue focused on the event. This time, the cover story is about trans rights—how far we've come, and how far we have yet to go. As someone who came out last year and had my registered gender changed to female just a couple weeks ago, it's been a pleasure to speak with some of the leading minds of Iceland's queer community and give them this platform for expression.

While the recently passed gender determinism law is a huge step forward for us, there are still challenges ahead. Amongst these challenges is pinkwashing. One example of this is the US embassy in Iceland, which bought space in the Reykjavik Pride booklet, basically to congratulate themselves on their progressiveness and tolerance.

As an American and a trans person, there is nothing I would love more than to believe the US administration is indeed on my side. However, this administration has been actively seeking to

marginalise trans people in government offices, has turned a blind eye to the serial killing of Black trans women in the country, and continues to support regimes that perpetrate violence against queer people.

Had I been the one to make the decision, I would have told the embassy to keep their money. The US government, and any other self-appointed queer ally, can better support us through actual practices that help and defend us than with empty, self-congratulatory words.

In the meantime, we sincerely hope you check out all the queer artists, writers and activists featured in this issue, all of whom continue to fight for a better tomorrow for all of us. **AF** 🏳️

*Valur Grettisson is away.*



**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.



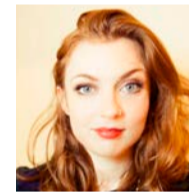
**John Rogers** is an Englishman who first joined Grapevine as a music writer, later graduating to Managing Editor. A constant traveller and a lover of art, culture, food & nightlife, he edits our Best of Reykjavik, Best of Iceland, and Iceland Airwaves sister publications. His first book, "Real Life,"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



**Shruthi Basappa** traded the warmth of Indian summers for Iceland's Arctic winds. She's a food enthusiast masquerading as an architect at Sei Studio, and loves obsessive attention to detail. When not leading our Best of Reykjavik food panel, she can be found trying to become a Michelin restaurant inspector.



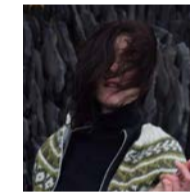
**Sveinbjörn Pálsson** is our Art Director. He's responsible for the design of the magazine and the cover photography. When he's not working here, he DJs as Terrordisco, hosts the Funkpátturinn radio show, or sits at a table in a Laugardalur café, drinking copious amounts of coffee and thinking about 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.



**a rawlings** is Grapevine's literature correspondent, also covering environmental news, travel, and more. An interdisciplinary artist whose work focuses on environmental ethics, dysfluency, and watery bodies, her books include 'Wide slumber for lepidopterists' and 'Sound of Mull.'



**Lóa Hlin Hjálmtýsdóttir** 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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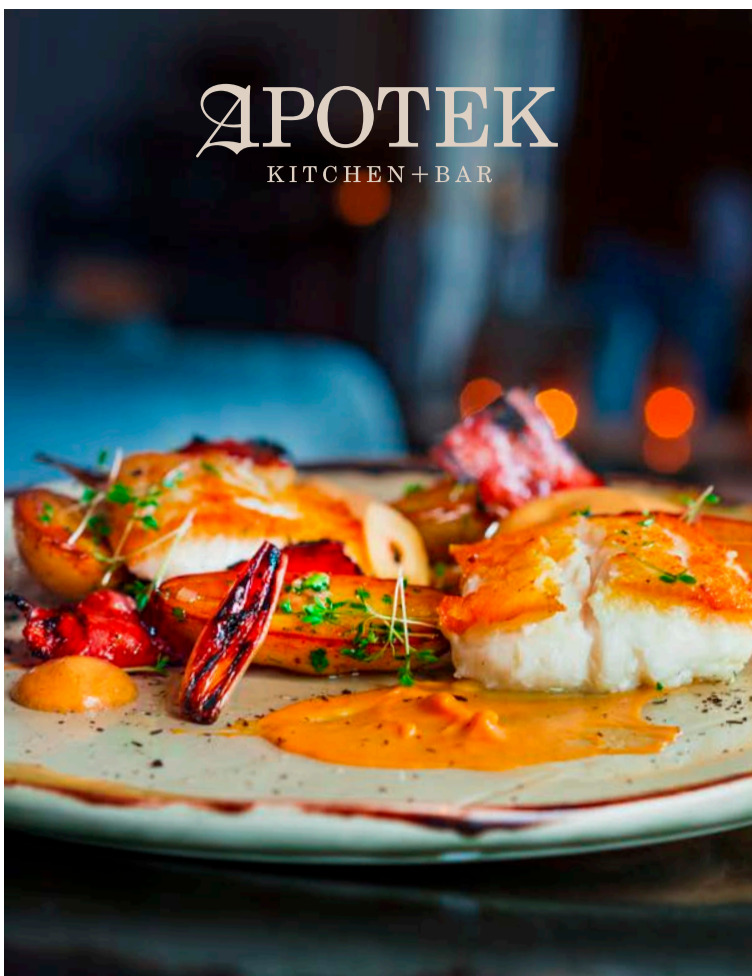
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Peens promptly peeled off prominent peak

## What Are Icelanders Talking About?

Reasons for weeping and gnashing of teeth

Words: **Andie Fontaine/Valur Grettisson** Photo: **Creative Commons**

**NEWS** Many Icelanders are preoccupied with the latest parliamentary polls suggesting that the Centre Party is ascendent, to the point where they are now tied for second place with the Pirate Party. Meanwhile, support for the Independence Party is at a record low, indicating that some Independence Party voters have shifted to the decidedly populist Centre Party. Many have speculated that their protracted filibuster campaign over the Third Energy Package last spring may have helped their popularity. If so, they're going to need to think up more stunts to pull to keep boosting those numbers.

A mass stranding of over 50 pilot whales in Snæfellsnes has been great cause for concern, not least of all because no one knows exactly why so many whales beached themselves. Róbert Arnar Stefánsson, a biologist and director of the West Iceland Nature Research Centre, told reporters that it is "worrying that we're seeing more and more of this in the last years." The tragedy may be in part due to human influence, whether from submarine sonar attracting the whales or human-driven climate change pushing mackerel—a favourite of pilot whales—into shallower waters. Of course, it could also be a fluke of nature, such as a sick whale leading the rest of the pod inadvertently onto Iceland's shores. Whatever the cause, it's a pretty sad affair.

Read a detailed account on page 16. Last June, the picturesque Helgafell mountain became festooned with giant dicks that were crudely scratched into the mountain surface by local teens. Amazingly, they also carved their names into the mountain, as if they were proud of their work.

These creative efforts would all be to naught as a group of volunteers scrubbed the cocks and related graffiti off of the mountains, with the help of park rangers, restoring Helgafell to its original wang-free glory.

A road accident nearly led to a natural disaster in July, as a tanker truck crashed on North Iceland's Öxnadalshéiði mountain pass, dumping 13,000 litres of fuel into the surrounding environs. Thankfully, road workers were fast to respond, containing the oil and pumping most of it up. While ongoing clean-up operations may continue in the weeks to come, there is currently no sign of lasting environmental damage from the spill, thankfully enough.

### CARTOON



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Puffins: rumoured to be often blown out of the sky with shotguns by English people

# New Craze: Trophy-Hunting Puffins

A sensational story looks more like fiction

**NEWS**

UK media has been ablaze lately with the revelation that British trophy hunters are coming to Iceland in droves. Only they're not after reindeer, or even fluffy Arctic foxes—instead, they seek the humble puffin, the hunting of which is illegal in their home country. The hunters are reportedly using guns to bag them at volumes of up to 100 birds per trip.

Words: **Andie Fontaine**

Photo: **Art Bicnick**

This has led to calls for the ban of importing hunted puffins from animal rights activists and politicians. Trophy hunting is poorly regarded in general—but there are also contentions that puffins are a threatened species that could become endangered.

**Just how many puffins are there anyway?**

The number of puffins migrating to Iceland has, in recent years, decreased. Only four years ago, Erpur Snær Hansen, an ornithologist of the South Iceland Nature Institute, cautioned that even the three-day hunting season could be detrimental to a stable population.

Restrictions placed on hunting have helped the puffin population stabilise, but while this indicates that hunting is a contributory factor to declining populations, it isn't the only one. Climate change is also a threat, with

warming oceans driving herring—the bird's primary food source—away from Icelandic waters.

**Shenanigans**

While the story caught like wildfire, in the UK and in Iceland alike, there is a strong possibility that this may be a case of fake news.

Áki Ármann Jónsson, the director of the gun hunting organisation Skotvís, took a closer look at the photos being used in the reporting of hunters posing with piles of dead puffins. It turns out these photos are not only from 2008 and 2010; they were also taken from the website of The Icelandic Hunting Club, which ceased operations years ago.

The Environment Agency of Iceland, which plays a close part in monitoring hunting activity, also confirmed that only a handful of Brits sought hunting licenses in Iceland, and then for reindeer and geese; not puffin.

As such, Iceland's puffins are likely safe from trophy hunters hoping to bag the cuties by the score. 🇮🇸

**FOOD OF ICELAND**

**Icelandic Glacial Air**



What stage of capitalism even is this? Available in a disturbing number of shops across Reykjavik, Icelandic air is, well, pretty much what it sounds like. You can buy it in a can, but if you want the full experience, you can buy it in a pressurised canister with a special nozzle, so you can pretend you're in a really, really, hippy version of Mad Max. Oh, and it costs over 1,500

ISK. Isn't capitalism wonderful? Even more disturbing, I remember seeing Icelandic air for sale when I visited Iceland back in 2012, suggesting that it has been commercially viable to sell for over seven years, saying things about God and Mammon I don't want to even think about. The real question is whether it is actually any good. And here

the brilliance of this diabolical commercial scheme becomes clear. For Icelandic glacial air is generally sold in pressurised cans and, unless you're truly stinking rich, is of limited availability outside of Iceland. Now, try to take a pressurised can through Keflavik Airport, and you can expect a welcome worthy of the Turkish national football team. So you're pretty much

forced to try this air in Iceland which... doesn't tell you very much about its quality. Were you to generously huff from the canister in the midst of the Port Authority Bus Terminal (which, by the way, I wouldn't recommend), perhaps you might discern a difference. But in Iceland, it just tastes like a lot of cold air. FR 🇮🇸

**ASK A Geologist**  
Q: Is there any risk of a volcanic eruption in Reykjavik?



Words: **Felix Robertson**  
Photo: **Dr. Barbara Kleine**

We asked geologist Ed Marshall, a postdoc in Mantle Geochemistry and Igneous Petrology at the University of Iceland: do Reykjavik's several geothermal hot spots indicate that the city could turn into the scene of a Hollywood disaster movie?

In short, no. A volcanic incident in Reykjavik or its immediate vicinity is basically geologically impossible. But that doesn't mean that volcanic activity couldn't have an impact.

Iceland sits on the Mid-Atlantic ridge, so there is quite a significant presence of volcanic and geothermal activity across the island. But crucially, there are two types of geothermal systems—high temperature and low temperature. High temperature systems, which can be volcanic, are connected to magma systems. In Reykjavik, we have low temperature systems. So while there is some geothermal activity, it's simply from the warm rocks below the capital, and not directly connected to any magma systems. This means that there's effectively no risk of an eruption in Reykjavik.

But this doesn't mean that Reykjavik can't be affected by volcanic activity. A volcanic eruption elsewhere on the island could have wide ranging impact, such as the closure of key roads. More directly, eruptions could occur close enough to bring lava to Reykjavik, since the nearby Reykjanes peninsula, the location of Keflavik Airport, is a potentially volcanic region. This risk is small—there's been no volcanic activity there since the 1300s—but it could happen. So, while there's no danger from volcanic activity in Reykjavik, that doesn't mean volcanic activity elsewhere won't have an effect. Of course, Iceland is pretty well prepared for such things. 🇮🇸

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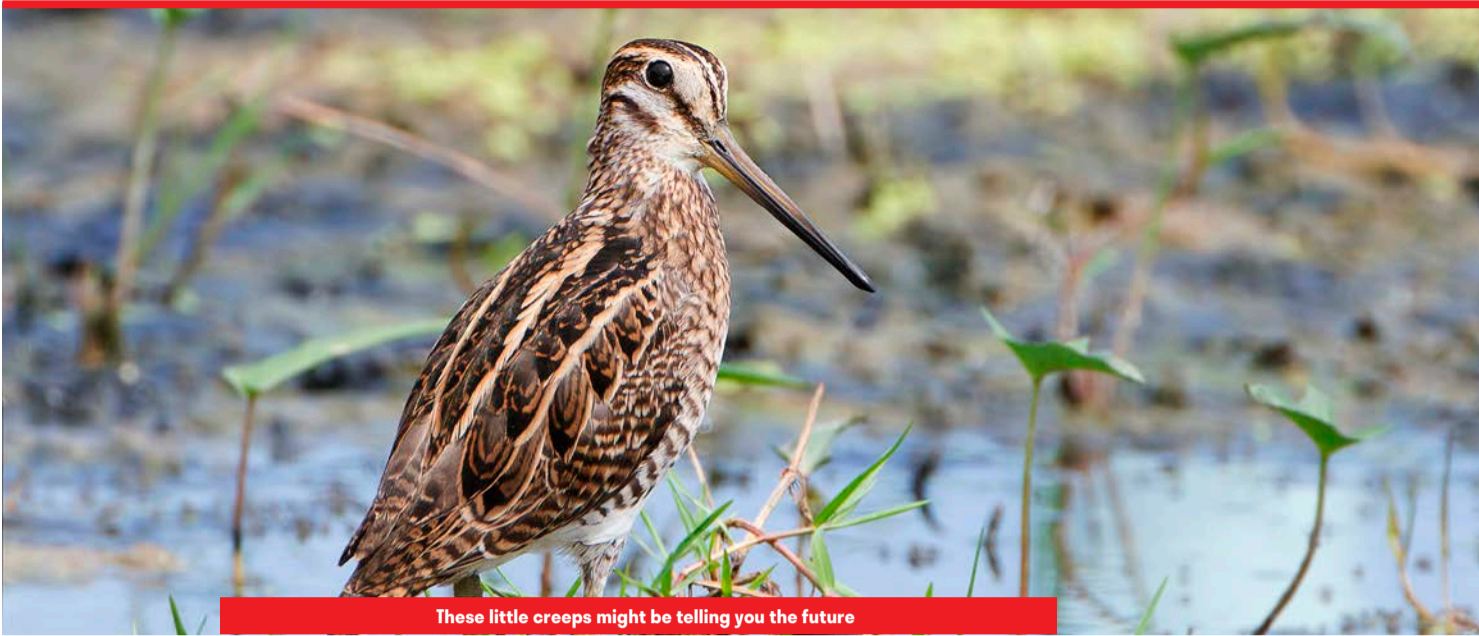
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These little creeps might be telling you the future

# The Snipes Are Not What They Seem

Watch the birds and rodents for life tips

## ICELANDIC SUPERSTITIONS

Words: **Andie Fontaine**

Photo: **Wikimedia Commons**

Icelanders, especially in ye olden times, have always lived in close connection with their natural environments. It is then unsurprising that amongst the roster of Icelandic superstitions there are a fair many which involve animals in some way. Consider the humble common

snipe, for example. You might regard it as a funny little bird with a long, comical beak, but Icelandic superstition ascribes great power to this animal—in particular, from which direction you first hear its song when spring arrives.

According to an ancient rhyme,

the song of the snipe heard coming from the east promises wealth; from the south, happiness; from the west, illness; and from the north, death. Pray you don't hear the snipe's song coming from the north (or better yet, remain ignorant of what the song of the snipe is in the first place).

The song of the plover carries less supernatural power, but is nonetheless significant in being able to predict the weather: a staccato song predicts rain, while a more trilling song indicates sunshine is on the way.

Icelandic animal superstitions aren't all about birds, though. The modest wood mouse, for example, warns people if the winter to come is going to be a harsh one simply by making itself seen in one's home. ♡

## JUST SAYINGS

„Að launa einhverjum lambið gráa“



'The Lion King' is now in theatres and what better way to celebrate the ultimate savannah revenge story than with an iconic Icelandic one? Specifically, that of the Heiðarvíga Saga. In it, teenager Gestur Þórhallason seeks revenge on his father's murderer, Víga-Styr, who then offers Gestur a gray lamb as compensation for the slaying. Of course, Gestur is having none of it and later kills Víga-Styr, saying, in the process, "Par launaði ég þér lambið gráa," meaning "I've repaid your grey lamb." The phrase, "að launa einhverjum lambið gráa," or, "to repay someone with the grey lamb," has since become the best way to express the simple sentiment: payback is a bitch. HJC ♡

## LÓABORATORIUM



### GRAPEVINE PLAYLIST

The must-hear music of the issue

**Hríms Ástarnetið**  
This first release from Hríms is deeply atmospheric, with soaring vocals and an edgy build which, while not quite delivering on its promise, is still darkly satisfying. Marrying traditional folk singing with electronic beats and synth goodness is a tried and tested recipe. They're definitely not to be missed at Airwaves this year. **JG**

**Sigrún - Exhale Your Song**  
If Biophilia is your favourite Björk era, "Exhale Your Song" will not disappoint. Dark, pounding, haunting and at all times unexpected, it'll either make you relive your days as a latex-clad witch shaman, or look over your shoulder to see if one is following you. **HJC**

**Countess Malaise - Veskið Mitt rework**  
Countess Malaise is back with her particular brand of relentless, atonal trip hop, accompanied by a music video featuring her running around a dystopian, video-game version of Iceland. "Veskið Mitt" is the song you want to hear when you finally hit the club after day drinking in this ridiculous weather. **JG**

**Sideproject - sandinista release party / ætli fara godmode**  
Born of the thriving post-dreifing scene, sideproject is seemingly a renewable resource of surprising, playful, mischievous ADHD electronica. With a powerfully effervescent thrust and an eccentric aesthetic, these 19 tracks barrel along like a Mad Max franken-vehicle, zig-zagging wildly, barely under control. **JR**

**Janus Rasmussen - 14**  
A lethargic and chilled house track from Janus Rasmussen, one half of breakout house-pop-techno duo Kiasmos. It's a slow burner, only really gaining depth and momentum in the second half. But that doesn't really matter—the value is in the journey. This track is on part two of a remix EP series, slated for release on August 23rd. Part one is out now. **FR**

**Bárna Gísladóttir - The Worlds Within Our Petty Voids**  
I don't like it, as such, but there's no denying the genius of this pathologically disturbing track. It sounds like a microphone has been dropped into a hornets nest which is then torched with dragonfire, but somehow even more traumatic than that. I can't really imagine a context where this would be appropriate listening, but find one anyway. It's genuinely brilliant. **FR**

Listen, watch & hear more tracks: [gpv.is/play](http://gpv.is/play)

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 <i>The Footballer</i> Kaelon Fox Assistant	 <i>The Mustang</i> Sverrir Yngvi Karlsson Head Captain RIB Speedboats	 <i>The Original</i> Hermann Daðason Head Captain Oak Boats	 <i>The Navigator</i> Aðalsteinn Steinþórsson Captain	 <i>The Tough Guy</i> Ingimar Eydal Óskarsson Captain	 <i>The Gentleman</i> Hallgrímur Guðmundsson Captain	 <i>The Farmer</i> Bjarni Eyjólfsson Captain	 <i>The Cosmopolitan</i> Sarah Arndt Captain – Guide – Ticket Sales	 <i>The Adventurous</i> Daniel González Captain – Guide

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THE REAL THING

## Cool Runnings In The Europa League



As Iceland's domestic Pepsi League chugs along in a state of relative stasis, the top four teams of last year have begun their qualifying campaigns for two European competitions.

As last year's winners, Valur had the chance to qualify for the highest tier of European football—the Champions League. Their path to the finals began with a two-leg tie against Slovenian side Maribor. The away game ended in a 3-0 drubbing, setting up Valur for a heroic comeback in the home game. However, they entirely failed to pull a Cool Runnings, and slumped to a 0-2 defeat, exiting the competition no sooner than they had arrived.

This embarrassingly meek double-defeat wasn't the end of their European hopes—they now get to slum it in the second tier of European football along with the Pepsi League 2018-19 runners-up Stjarnan, Breiðablik and KR.

The Europa League qualification battle is not going well for the Icelandic teams either. League leaders KR were trounced 7-1 by Norwegian hardly-a-superclub Molde, with the home leg ending in a 0-0 draw to seal their fate. Breiðablik were taken down 2-1 over two legs by Swiss nobodies FC Vaduz. Stjarnan were smashed 4-0 by Espanyol.

So it's down to Valur to save Iceland's blushes with their second swing at Europe. Their first leg game against Bulgarian minnows PFC Ludogorets Razgrad ended 1-1, and by the time you read this, the away game will be over and we'll know if Iceland's top four had their clocks cleaned in Europe without notching up a win between them—or if Valur managed to become the Jamaican bobsled team of Europe after all. JR ☘



# There Is A Smite That Never Goes Out

Icelandic footballers poised to dominate the 2019-20 season all across Europe

Words: John Rogers  
Illustration: Lóa Hlín Hjálmtýsdóttir

As the 2019-20 pre-season intensifies, the fate of our bold and mighty smiters comes into clearer focus. Of course, their hearts are set on one goal alone: Iceland winning Euro 2020. But in the meantime, a Viking has to earn a crust. Here's the latest news, sent to us by raven from our extensive network of wily footballing spies.

### Birkir's gallop of terror

Birkir "Horror Hooves" Bjarnason is one of the essential cogs of the Icelandic men's national team. He's a relentlessly marauding midfield attacker whose galloping hooves gnash up the turf—and the feet

of any defender dumb enough not to dive for cover as he rampages upfield. This cool-eyed Viking plies his day-to-day trade at West Midlands club Aston Villa, where he has been something of a marginal figure in recent seasons, to the degree where rumours of his exit have begun.

However, on Aston Villa's recent pre-season tour, he was given a chance to show off his devastating offensive potential, heading home in the 86th minute and joining Jack Grealish and Henri Lansbury on the

scoresheet. Birkir's future, however, is far from clear; he didn't make the matchday squad a week later against Charlton Athletic and, with a week left in the transfer window, he could still be tölting to pastures new come the start of the season.

**"Birkir could be tölting to pastures new."**

### Berg besmirched

The second Icelandic star in the Premier League is Jóhann "The Berginator" Guðmundsson, famed for his dazzling right-wing runs and searing crosses, which have

been compared by poets to majestic sight of a comet raking across the night sky. Only a fool would dare to denigrate The Berg's silky attacking skills. But, as has recently become crystal clear in various major Western democracies, the world has no shortage of fools.

One of them is a Twitter user named @\_bernardooooo, who made the sporting news by using the Tier-maker website to generate a rating system for Premier League midfielders, ranking them from "World Class" to "Cannot Play Football." His first mistake was placing Liverpool stars Salah and Sane at the top, and not the twinkle-toed shaman of world football, Gylfi Sigurðsson. His second was placing The Berg in the bottom bracket. But such smack-talk will only help Jóhann, whose play relies on the element of surprise. As has often been said of his footballing ambushes: like the Titanic, they won't see this Berg coming.

### The kraken awakens

29-year-old striker Kolbeinn Sigþórsson is a legend of Icelandic football. English people may fear his face as they do that of the grim reaper; for it was indeed Kolbeinn who scored that fateful goal at Euro 2016 that knocked them out of the tournament, ending the careers of manager Woy Hodgson and overrated bald millionaire Wayne Rooney in the process.

Since that mighty feat, however, he has endured a torrid time. Having damaged the meniscus in his knee in late 2016, he missed 128 games, making just four club-level appearances over the next two years. Eager to rebuild his career upon his return to fitness, he took a loan spell from Nantes to Ajax in 2018, but it lasted only a couple of months. In March 2019, things looked up when he signed a two season contract with Swedish side AIK, and he will now fight for his place in their starting eleven.

Think of Kolbeinn as the kraken of strikers. He floats beneath the surface, watching and waiting, until the time has come to strike. And when he does, much like that tentacled monstrous leviathan, he will tear apart the Swedish league like it was naught but the scrolls of a feeble Irish monk. ☘

Follow our live-tweets on Euro qualification matchdays on Twitter at @rvkgrapevine. Iceland's march to the Euro 2020 trophy will continue throughout 2019.

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A woman with her eyes closed and a joyful smile is floating in clear, vibrant blue water. Her hair is wet and slicked back. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a soft, hazy sky. The overall atmosphere is serene and inviting.

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**“A defecation resulted in the sprouting of a tomato plant, which was destroyed.”**

new real estate, bringing plant seeds to the island via their droppings. As it became clear how rare and fascinating an opportunity this presented to study how new land develops, Surtsey was declared a nature reserve in 1965, and became an UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008.

**No potatoes, no tomatoes**

There has not been much by way of human impact on the island. There is only one permanent structure—a hut with a few bunk beds and a solar powered generator. A weather station has also been set up, along with a webcam. Apart from that, human influence on the island has been intentionally and strictly limited. Young boys once planted potatoes on the island, but these were quickly dug up, and later, an improperly handled outdoor defecation resulted in the sprouting of a tomato plant, which was also destroyed.

Surtsey has been shrinking; in 2012, its surface area was measured to be 1.3km<sup>2</sup>, as it is subject to intense wave erosion. However, it is likely that Surtsey will remain above the surface of the sea for another century, give or take. 🍅

Don't go pooping your tomato seeds all over Surtsey please

# Iceland's Youngest Island Grows Up

New research shows Surtsey is practically teeming with life

**Words:** Surtsey, Iceland's youngest and southernmost island, has been doing pretty well for itself lately. New research published by the Icelandic Institute of Natural History shows that existing life on the island is increasing, with the diversity of species also on the rise.  
**Andie Fontaine**  
**Photo:** The Icelandic Institute of Natural History/  
**Erling Ólafsson**

## The circle of life

There are numerous interconnected factors that play into this explosion of life on Surtsey. Sea birds have helped fertilise grasslands on the island, causing them to expand. This, in turn, increases the amount of available nesting grounds for these same birds, attracting more birds and a larger variety of species.

These conditions are also very appealing to insects. Their populations on the island have grown, especially where beetles and flying insects are concerned. Where there are bugs, there will almost always be creatures that feed on them—which also explains the appearance of harvestman spiders on Surtsey.

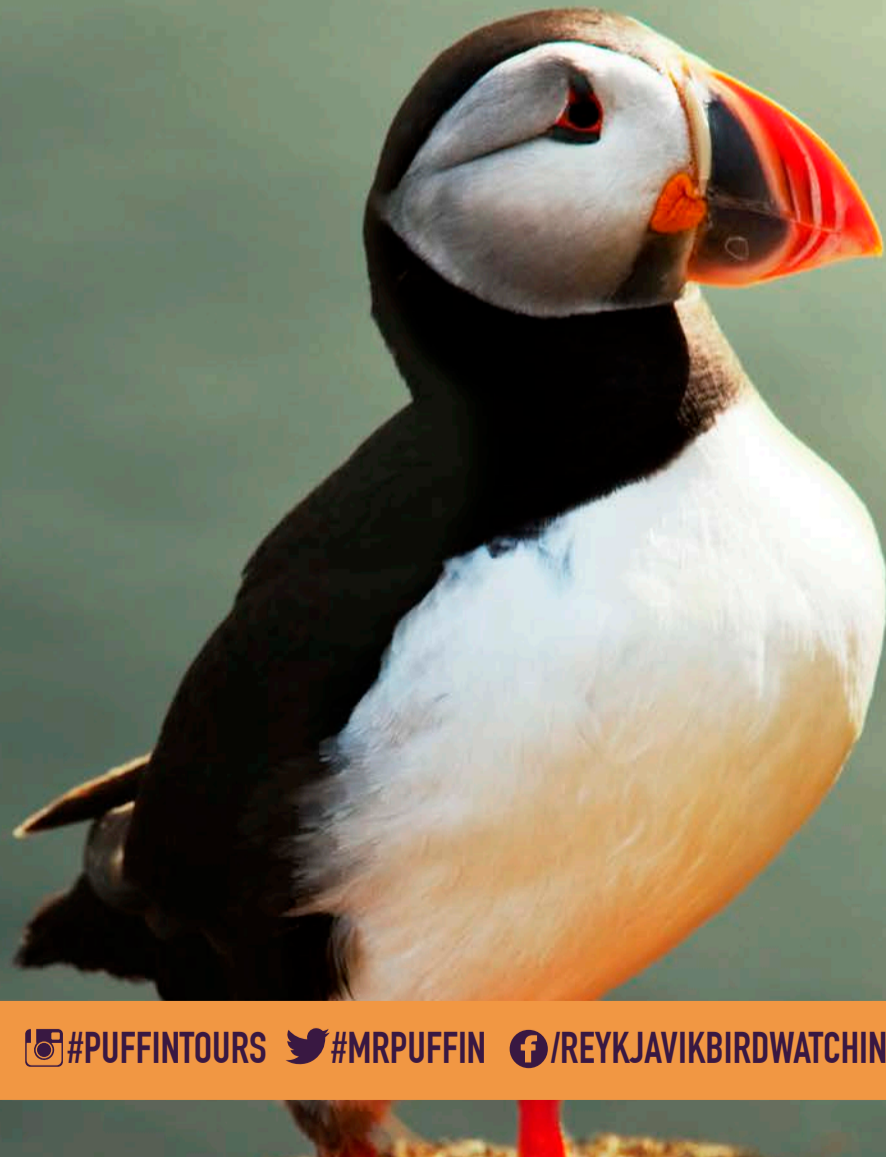
## An island younger than Keanu Reeves

This news is even more fascinating when you consider just how young the island is. Starting with an undersea eruption, it began its life as a hot little blob of lava just poking its head above the waves in November 1963. The eruption bubbled along until June 1967, at which point Surtsey was a mere three square kilometres.

It didn't take long for the aforementioned seabirds to take notice of the



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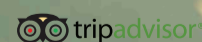
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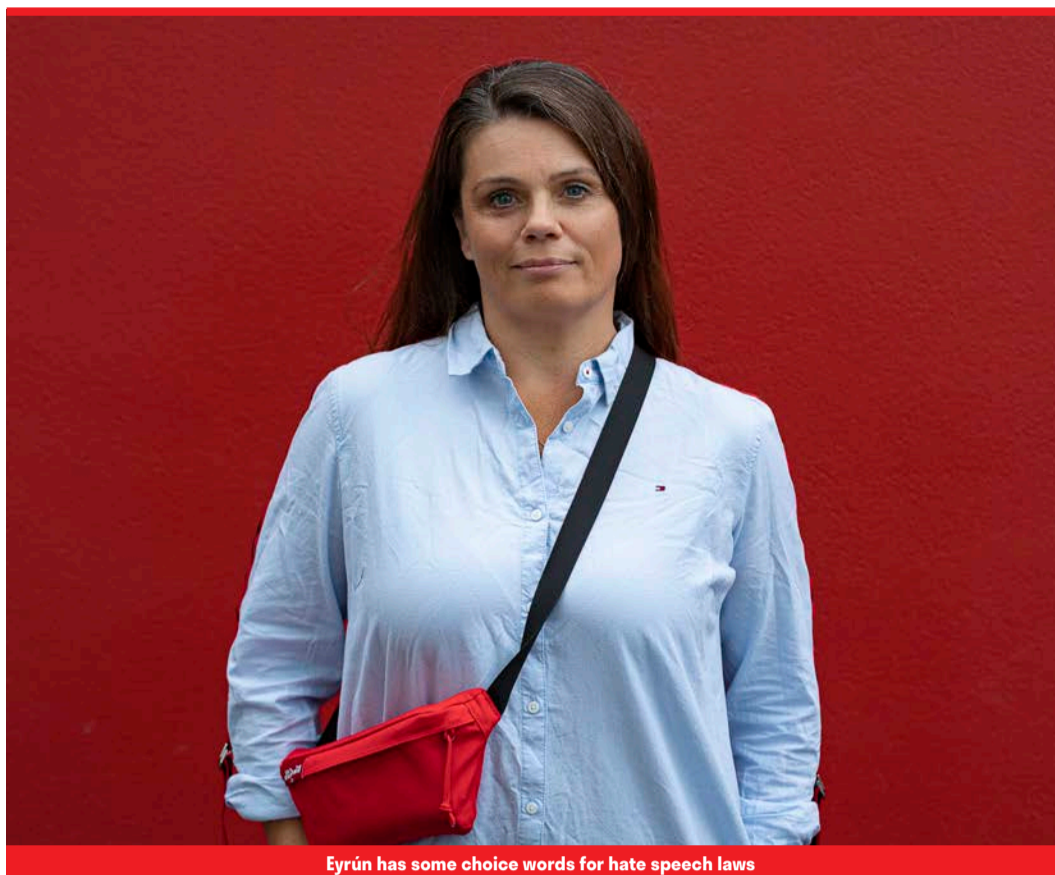
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Eyrún has some choice words for hate speech laws

# Harsh Words

Proposed changes to Icelandic hate speech laws slammed by academic

**Words:** The Icelandic government has been strongly criticised by a leading academic at the University of Akureyri for proposed plans to relax existing hate speech laws. Eyrún Eyþórsdóttir, who previously held a position with the Reykjavik Metropolitan Police as a specialist detective inspector

**Josie Gaitens**  
**Photo:**  
**Art Bicnick**

investigating hate crimes, has said the current approach has “created a society where people find [hate speech] acceptable.” She also warns that further loosening of the laws—to wit, the proposed addition of a requirement that to be classified as hate speech, a

statement must contain a threat of violence—runs the risk of exacerbating the problem. “It’s becoming more and more common for people to put out hate speech or speech with very negative connotations to minority groups,” she said.

## An unworkable system

However, Eyrún acknowledges why the working group responsible for the proposed law changes considers the current system untenable. “A lot of the individuals that have been charged and sentenced because of hate speech in the Nordic countries are not people who belong to hate groups,” she explains. “So the politicians claim that it doesn’t do justice to go after these people, because they are not the main problem.”

But the research that Eyrún has been working on shows otherwise. “We always have to look at the big picture. Even though the main problem might not be hate groups or neo-Nazi groups putting out hate speech, a kind of society has now been created where this kind of thing has been made out to be not as serious as it is. It is looked at as just people putting forward their opinions. I think if our society agrees upon this, then there will be more and more hate speech, with really horrible conclusions for the people who are being targeted.”

## Zero tolerance

Icelandic hate speech laws, which are covered by Article 233(a) of the General Penal Code currently state “Anyone who does by means of ridicule, calumny, insult, threat or otherwise

**“A kind of society has now been created where hate speech is made out not to be very serious.”**

assault [a person or group of persons] on account of their nationality, colour, [race, religion or sexual inclination] shall be subject to fines or imprisonment for up to two years.”

The law has been in place since 1973, but only a handful of cases have ever been brought to court. The proposed changes would add an additional requirement of the perpetrator threatening violence or harm to the targeted group or individuals before they can be charged with hate speech.

Eyrún thinks that much wider work must be done across society to educate people about hate speech before reductions in incidences will be seen. During her time within the police force, Eyrún was subjected to threats and abuse while investigating cases, which came from both members of the public and, in some cases, from Alþingi politicians. She says that there needs to be a “zero tolerance” approach to hate speech from political representatives going forward.

“We are a small nation,” she finishes. “We all want to live in a peaceful country, because that’s the country that can most guarantee security and prosperity for the people living here. And I think we should speak about it that way.”

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Not an easy sight to take

# Mass Whale Death in Snæfellsnes

53 pilot whales die in mass stranding on Snæfellsnes island

Words:  
a rawlings

Photo:  
Art Bicnick

A mass stranding of over 50 pilot whales occurred in July on West Iceland's Snæfellsnes peninsula on the sand island Gamlaeyri along Löngufjörur. The whales were first spotted by David Schwarzhans, a pilot for Reykjavik Helicopters, and his guests during a tourist excursion.

**“If a pilot whale herd leader goes into an inconvenient area or is hurt somehow, the group won't leave.”**

**Note:** Getting to Gamlaeyri is hazardous. Don't try to go there in a normal car. For the story of how we got there, see page 48.

This is Iceland's second largest mass stranding of the past 40 years. The largest mass stranding occurred in 1986, when 148 pilot whales died at Þorlákshöfn. More than 30 pilot whales were similarly stranded at Rif on Snæfellsnes in 1983.

Pilot whale incidents have increased in the shallow coastal waters off West Iceland over the last few years. Edda Elísabet Magnúsdóttir is a marine biologist at the University of Iceland specialising in whales. “Historically, we don't have many strandings,” she explains. “But this is the third year in a row at least where we've had pilot whales coming dangerously close to the shore. In this instance, they stranded.”

Whales have previously been spotted dangerously close to the shores of Rif, Arnarstapi, and Hellnar. Löngufjörur, however, is located in the southeast bend of the Snæfellsnes peninsula,

farther from open ocean. “Where these whales stranded is a much worse situation,” added Edda Elísabet. “We didn't know about it because it's really remote—you can't go to this beach unless you have a certain type of vehicle. It can be very dangerous because the tide comes in so quickly.”

Róbert Arnar Stefánsson is a biologist and director of West Iceland Nature Research Centre. “People can sometimes push them out [to sea] to prevent mortality,” he says. “It's worrying that we're seeing more and more of this in the last years.”

## Stranded hypotheses

The beached whales extend in a line along Gamlaeyri's coast, with most of the bodies grouped tightly together. Their distribution

and numbers on the beach are linked to pilot whales' behaviour of travelling as a herd. Each herd is combined of closely related smaller families; the herd can number 50-100 animals. “If a pilot whale is stranded, it is very unlikely to be a single whale, or two, or five. More like 20 or more,” says Edda Elísabet.

It is not well known why pilot whales strand, but there are several hypotheses. Pilot whales are named because they follow a lead animal,

usually a matriarch.

“Pilot whales are very social animals,” comments Edda Elísabet. “If the herd leader goes into an inconvenient area or is hurt somehow, the group won't leave. We don't know what happened [at Gamlaeyri], but that's something that can happen.”

## Anthropogenic factors

Róbert also indicates anthropogenic factors could contribute to mass strandings. “Sometimes, [mass stranding] is due to human impact, offshore drilling or military exercises,” he explains. “There are also hypotheses regarding Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), because they bioaccumulate and are in their highest concentration in the oldest animals. Those animals are sometimes the herd leaders and POPs can cause nerve damage. In some



Whale teeth were later taken for use in jewellery

cases, that could be the reason.”

POPs include cadmium, mercury, and the man-made chemicals DDT and PCBs used for pesticides that circulate through the food chain.

Róbert adds that these hypotheses are not very likely in the case of Gamlaeyri's stranded herd. “It may have had to do with sickness in their leader, or that they were following prey. They're used to catching prey in much deeper waters so they're not as efficient

in shallow waters.”

Edda Elísabet concurs that it is likely the herd followed prey, rather than other theories, which have included sound pollution caused by military activity or avoidance of predators. “Pilot whales primarily feed off squid,” she says. “They also eat mackerel, which can go into shallow waters. One of the most obvious changes in Icelandic waters is the increased abundance of mackerel. The climate is changing and we are seeing lots of changes in prey distribution, which affects the whales.”

## Tricky topography

Pilot whales have increased in abundance in the North Atlantic in recent years, and the waters west of Snæfellsnes are currently a feeding ground for the cetaceans. Increased abundance is linked to a higher likelihood of mass stranding. In this instance, though, the whales were far into the fjord, which is not their natural habitat.

At the time of the mid-July stranding, a spring tide brought strong currents with increased water during ebbs and floods. “They could have been swimming in when the tide was in,” theorises Edda Elísabet. “Pilot whales easily become disoriented in these environmental situations—strong currents, gradual bank, sandy bottoms. This is the worst scenario for this species and other deep-diving whales, since they use echolocation to navigate and locate prey. In Löngufjörur where you have gradual sand bottoms becoming shallower and softer, there is less reflection by echolocation. The whales can't navigate as they would in deeper water.”

Edda Elísabet adds, “The topography of Snæfellsnes is less convenient for them than the topography of the coastal waters east of Iceland, where we have lots of pilot whales between Iceland and the Faroe Islands. They come close to the East Fjords as well, but there are not as many dangerous sand bottoms and tidal currents as we have around Snæfellsnes.”

## Pregnant whale

During The Reykjavik Grapevine's visit to the site of the mass stranding, we noted that the whales were distributed with at least three males at the far ends of the group, with a larger grouping of females in the centre. Of note was a female pilot whale, who had been in the process of giving birth when she died. Her calf had partially emerged, with the amniotic sac torn but visible.

While neither Edda Elísabet nor Róbert have yet visited the site for direct observation, Edda Elísabet found the eye-witness account interesting. “I'm just hearing that for the first time now,” she says. “It's hard to say if the way they strand is the way they were organised in the group. But if there

was a female giving birth, then a large part of the group is involved in that. Other closely related females usually try to protect and look after the female giving birth. Males could have been guarding the flanks. If the one who was giving birth was the leading female, that could have caused what happened or had influence on what happened.”



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Eyþór Kamban Prastarson and Marjakaisa Matthíasson, the event organisers

# A Different View of Iceland

The Nordic Blind Youth Summer Exchange

## Nordic Summer Exchange

The Nordic Summer Exchange for Blind and Visually Impaired Youth took place in July 2019 in Reykjavík

Words: Kolbeinn Arnaldur Dalrymple

Photo: Dominika Milek

This summer Iceland hosted the Nordic Summer Exchange for Blind and Visually Impaired Youth. The programme began over forty years ago, bringing young people (aged 18-30) from the Nordic countries together for a week of fun, education and adventure. This year, there were 34 participants, plus each country's sighted guide and sign language interpreters for hearing-impaired attendees.

Funded through the EU's Erasmus+ education, training, sport, and youth programme, the exchange has traditionally taken place in the countryside, unfolding at a more leisurely pace, but

this year the organisers chose Reykjavík as the host city, embracing the theme of "Urban Independence." The goal was for attendees to learn practical skills to move in urban environs safely and confidently.

## A logistical challenge

The annual exchange is a logistical challenge, involving transport from four countries, finding housing in a tourist hotspot, and jumping through European regulatory hoops. These efforts were led by exchange representatives Eyþór Kamban Prastarson and Marjakaisa Matthíasson, who began planning over a year ago.

The organisers wanted participants to be seen, in part to show that blindness does not have to be a barrier. Greater Reykjavík is a sprawling city that loves its cars and eschews public transportation.

Mastering Reykjavík, it was thought, would prepare the participants for the better-planned public transport systems of their home cities.

Over the years the programme has been running, society and technology have changed in profound ways that have made the lives of blind people and people with other disabilities more independent and dignified. Legal rights are enshrined in national, European, and international law, which grant them equal opportunity and access. Assistive devices and software are constantly improving, including screen readers that vocalise everything your computer does, thus reducing the reliance on sight.

However, these legal protections and gadgets are not enough, and programmes to educate and encourage disabled people are needed to let them live life to the fullest. "The idea was to challenge participants and hopefully give them experiences they had never had before in order for them to become

more empowered in their own lives," says Marjakaisa. "This is very important for disabled people, because as we know, many of us are limited not by what we actually can do but rather what we and society at large thinks we can do."

## Looking back, looking forward

The programme was launched by the Swedish Blind Association in 1974. Marjakaisa first attended the exchange 30-years ago, travelling to Iceland from her native Finland. She credits that experience with her eventual move to Iceland.

While in the past Iceland's organisers have taken participants to the Blue Lagoon or horseback riding, Eyþór and Marjakaisa wanted to show a different side of the country.

The participants arrived on June 25th, setting up their base in a hostel in Reykjavík's green Laugardalur neighbourhood. They were kept busy in the spirit of a city, visiting several city landmarks, embarking on a hike, doing some arts and crafts, attending seminars on independence, navigating the notoriously blind-unfriendly bus system, and even attending an improvised music lesson. Each night, delegates from one of the participating countries would teach the others about their home.

## Weird And Different

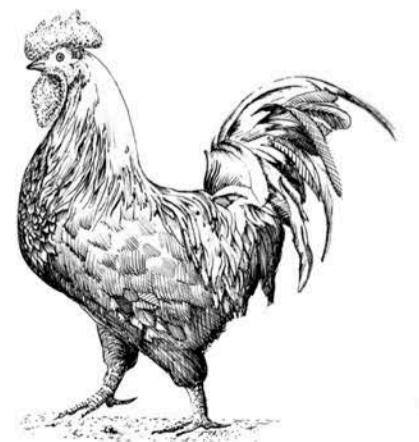
At the farewell dinner, the Grapevine spoke to several participants about their visit. Several delegates also commented on how different and weird Iceland is. They were reluctant to go into specifics, though one young man commented on how "American" the country was.

A few also mentioned the Icelandic language—a stubborn cousin of Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish, which has dispensed with many of the complex grammatical features of Icelandic over time. Several participants noted that they learned and practiced a lot of English with their new friends.

When asked what their favourite part of the week was, the universal answer was the hike to Reykjadalur hot river—one of Iceland's unique geothermal features—impressive to all, whatever level of sight they have.

"Being blind just means that you can't see," said Eyþór, succinctly summarising the philosophy and goals of the exchange. "It doesn't mean anything else. Because of this, we have to do some things differently, but that doesn't mean that we can't do them just as well as everyone else." ♥

**"Many disabled people are limited not by what we actually can do, but rather what we and society at large thinks we can do."**



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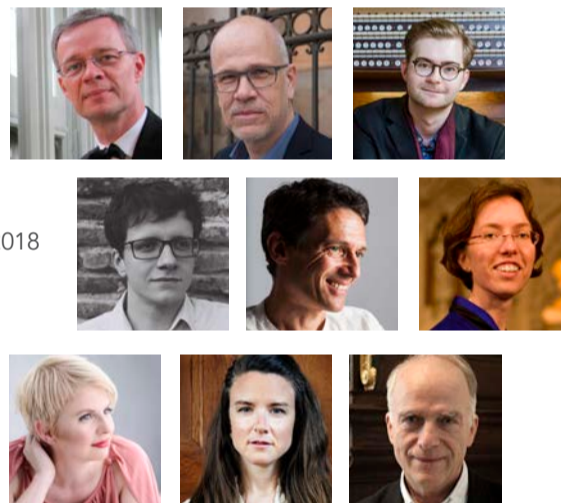


# THE INTERNATIONAL ORGAN SUMMER IN HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA

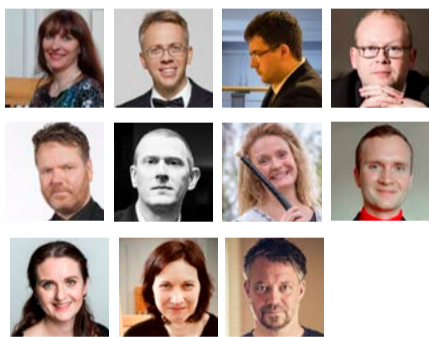
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- 22nd/ 23rd June **Björn Steinar Sólbergsson** organist at Hallgrímskirkja, Reykjavík
- 29th/ 30th June **Mattias Wager**, organist at Stockholm Cathedral, Sweden
- 6th/7th July **Johannes Skoog**, concert organist, Sweden
- 13th/ 14th July **Johannes Zeinler, Austria**, 1st prize winner at the Chartres International Organ Competition 2018
- 20th/ 21st July **Yves Rechtsteiner**, concert organist, France
- 27th/ 28th July **Isabelle Demers**, Canadian concert organist and organ professor, USA
- 3rd/ 4th August **Lára Bryndís Eggertsdóttir**, organist at Hjallakirkja Kópavogur, Iceland
- 10th/ 11th August **Susannah Carlsson**, organist at Lund Cathedral, Sweden
- 17th/ 18th August **Johannes Geffert**, concert organist from Bonn, Germany
- 25th August **Mattias Wager**, organist at Stockholm Cathedral, Sweden



## LUNCHTIME CONCERTS WITH ICELANDIC ORGANISTS - THURSDAYS AT 12 NOON



- 27th June **Tuuli Rähni**, organist at Ísafjörður Church
- 4th July **Guðmundur Sigurðsson** organist at Hafnarfjörður Church
- 11th July **Eyþór Franzson Wechner** organist at Blönduós Church
- 18th July **Jón Bjarnason**, organist at Skálholt Cathedral with **Vilhjálmur Ingi Sigurðsson** and **Jóhann Ingví Stefánsson** trumpets.
- 25th July **Ágúst Ingi Ágústsson** organist Reykjavík with **Lene Langballe**, zink/ cornetto and recorder, Denmark
- 1st August **Steinar Logi Helgason** organist Reykjavík, with 3 baritone singers: **Fjölur Ólafsson**, **Örn Ýmir Arason** and **Hafsteinn Thorólfsson**
- 8th August **Guðný Einarsdóttir** organist at Háteigskirkja, Reykjavík
- 15th August **Kitty Kovacs** organist at Landakirkja, Westman Islands
- 22nd August **Eyþór Ingi Jónsson** organist at Akureyri Church

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*The New Frontier:*

# Trans Rights In Iceland

*Iceland's landmark trans rights law was years  
in the making, but still has room to grow*

Words: **Andie Fontaine**

Photos: **Anna Maggy**

+ Sharon Kilgannon

+ OIII Europe



In 1948, German-American endocrinologist Harry Benjamin had a fateful meeting with famed sexologist Alfred Kinsley, wherein Benjamin was introduced to a child, assigned male at birth, who wanted to be a girl. Benjamin proposed estrogen treatment for the child and, encouraged by positive results, helped develop an evaluation process for assessing trans people, culminating in his landmark 1966 publication, 'The Transsexual Phenomenon.' The process outlined in this work laid the foundations for how the global medical community would assess and progress the treatment of trans people.

Until last June, the process in Iceland went something like this: if you thought you were or might be trans, you would sign up for six interviews, paid out of pocket and stretched out over a period of at least six months, with psychiatrists and social workers. During this time, and for up to a year afterwards, you would be expected to "live as your gender identity" in order to access hormone replacement therapy (HRT), surgery, and other medical procedures.

In light of new research, this process is being slowly replaced with a new one. The informed consent model moves the onus from (often cisgender) medical professionals' opinions on any given person's "transness" to the trans person themselves as the best authority on what their gender actually is. While this new model is not yet established in many countries around the world, Iceland has, more or less, legally adopted it.

Trans people are arguably the new frontier of queer rights. As we move into Reykjavik Pride season, it is important to understand the Icelandic trans experience, how the law moved from one process for trans people to a new one, why it took so long, and what challenges still lie ahead.



*From "nice idea" to "bullet-proof"*

"The old law was considered one of the most progressive ones in Europe at the time," says writer and activist Uglya Stefania Kristjónudóttir Jónsdóttir, who is also the chair of the Trans Ísland organisation, and one of the minds behind the new law. "I guess that shows how quickly things can change and how fast we can move on."

The old law, last codified in 2012, contained elements that were always considered dubious at best by trans people in Iceland. In particular, the stipulation that they must live according to their "gender role" for a specific period of time for approval for HRT and other services.

"It was really strange that the term 'gender role' is written into law, because what are gender roles? We have no

legal terms of what's a man, a woman, or a gender role," Uglya points out.

The new law, says Uglya, began as a well-meaning parliamentary proposal from the Pirate Party, who sought to have "the third gender," as they put it, officially recognised. Uglya says that while this was "a nice effort," she and others believed there needed to be a comprehensive law instead.

Uglya and Intersex Iceland chairperson Kitty Anderson got to work in 2015, contacting numerous government bodies, institutions, and grassroots organisations to form a core workgroup that would help create a draft for a bill. The fact that it took four years for this legislation to go from draft to law was due, in part, to changes in Parliament (the draft was first ready for submission as a bill when Iceland's previous government collapsed) but also because they wanted the legislation to be "absolutely bulletproof." This would mean navigating the contentious process of trying to reach some kind of agreement between all the sectors involved—with mixed results.

*Wins and losses*

As with any piece of legislation, changes were made from initial draft to final form. In this case, some of the original proposals that did not make the final cut—often for purely political reasons—will have real life consequences for already marginalised people.

As an example, both Trans Ísland and the trans diagnostic team were in agreement that there should be no limits set on how often someone can change their gender marker. However, by the time the bill made it out of the



Parliamentary General Committee, the law would end up allowing only a single change to an individual's gender marker, barring "special circumstances".

Uglya believes this was a mistake. "The whole purpose of the law is that people have the right to determine their legal gender and name," she says. "Putting restrictions on that is against the whole idea of the law. I guess we'll just have to see how this works in practice, because in the law, it doesn't really say who makes the decision on what is 'special circumstances.' It's a bit vague, and we're not sure how it's going to work in practice."

The final version of the law also slighted intersex people in particular. The original draft sought to protect intersex children from non-consensual cosmetic surgeries on their genitals—something that would seem to be a done deal for a Parliament that got very close to banning penile circumcision. Instead, the final law merely called for the establishment of a committee, to submit findings in 12 months' time, to examine these surgeries. To Uglya, it was an "absolutely ridiculous" decision, given that four years have already been spent discussing the matter.

"There needs to be a ban on these surgeries," says Uglya. "It's something

that absolutely has to happen. It's not even a discussion for us." Uglya speculates that this element may have been excluded because of Parliament's worry that it could jeopardise the law's passage. "In the meantime, these surgeries will continue. They don't realise the urgency of this and that this needs to happen now."

Kitty elaborated on this point during a conversation with Grapevine last February. "When there is no risk to health it is imperative that children be allowed to grow up and still have the possibility to make their own decisions about what they want to happen to their body," Kitty said, in part. "When invasive and irreversible procedures are performed on children, it not only violates their fundamental rights, but also takes away choices from them when they are older."

*Welcome to the labyrinth*

In a law such as this, numerous government institutions are affected and must make systemic changes. Some institutions have proven more receptive than others. This can mean a delayed reaction between the law's passage, and such institutions implementing the changes the new law demands.

As one example, even though the law codifies the recognition of a third gender marker, X, the National Registry has said it could take them 18 months to add that option to their system.

Another example concerns asylum seekers and refugees. By law, if an asylum seeker or refugee comes to



Iceland and they are trans, they should be given ID according to their gender identity, regardless of what their legal documents might say. However, Uglya and the Grapevine have been made aware of instances in which the Directorate of Immigration has failed to honour that section of the law. Uglya says Trans Ísland will meet with the Directorate to be sure they fully understand the part they must play.

Alexandra Briem, a trans woman and Reykjavik City Councilperson for the Pirate Party, believes that a large part of the problem is the endemic inscrutability of Iceland's bureaucracy. Ministries can even write internal regulations that may seem to contravene national laws.

"It's part of what makes Iceland and its bureaucracy difficult to navigate," she says. "The law may say something which seems straightforward, but it can turn out that the regulations from the ministry interpret it completely differently. It's that interpretation that counts, unless you successfully sue a ministry in the Supreme Court."

Another issue is that the Icelandic authorities often pass the buck on cases they find difficult, says Alexandra. "People don't want to be responsible for something that costs more money,"

*"So many people are coming out now that others think so it must be a fad."*

*But I think it's actually because we're reaching a space where there's much more awareness, people are able to express themselves more freely.*

*We should be celebrating that there are more people willing to be who they are."*



she explains. "They don't want to be responsible for creating controversy."

## Inter-nalising oppression

Even with the passage of this law, the trans community continues to face deeper social challenges, both without and within. One of those is that the old system, whereby trans people needed approval (often from cisgender people) to get access to the health care they need, can be internalised into the belief that cis approval is what makes someone trans. Those holding this conviction are, somewhat tellingly, classified as "truscum" by many trans folks (see sidebar).

"There are trans people who believe you can't be trans without having dysphoria," Ugly explains. "There are trans people who have taken up this medical view or explanation of what it is to be trans. I just find it wild that we ourselves gatekeep an experience that's always been gatekept by others. I think we need to stop seeing being trans as something medical, but instead view it as a personal experience of your own gender and gender expression. I think we'll all be a lot happier and people will feel a lot freer to express themselves if we do."

Another even more questionable belief is that being trans is somehow a fad, giving rise to the erroneous belief in "transtrenders" (see sidebar).

"People don't realise how ridiculous this notion is," Ugly says. "If someone



said, 'you can influence someone into being gay,' most people who say 'that's absolutely not true.'

"It's a really strange thing. I think there's a lot of fear around trans issues. So many people are coming out now that others think it must be a fad. But I think it's actually because we're reaching a space where there's much more awareness, people are able to express themselves more freely. If anything, people should be celebrating that there are more people willing to be who they are."

## "What's the deal with all these new genders?"

A common sentiment one may find bandied about is that the 21st century

has blurred the lines between male and female. The historic reality points to the opposite. Countless cultures around the world recognise multiple genders, or eschew gender altogether, and western medical science has recognised for decades that not only gender but also sex is a spectrum.

Alda Villiljós, a nonbinary board member of Trans Ísland, believes that nonbinary people have helped propel the further examination of gender. "I think before nonbinary people became more prevalent in our society—before we started speaking our minds—binary trans people were still saying, 'Hey, I can be a trans woman and still have short hair and play computer games,'" they point out.

"Then nonbinary people came and said, 'I'm not a woman, and I'm not a man either, so what is my place within these rules [about gender]?' I think that this question finally punched through a wall that we've been punching for a really long time; where people began to think, 'Maybe gender isn't as simple as we once thought.' This isn't to downplay the fact that binary trans people have been saying this for a very long time—but I think nonbinary people speaking up was maybe the final drop."

## The contradictions of gender

Another common aspect of the trans experience is dysphoria, both physical and social. This is the part of the experience that cis people are most familiar



with; the notion that a trans person "hates" their own body. However, this is not entirely accurate; and not all trans people experience dysphoria. Alda attributes this in part to growing representation on television and movies.

"The thing is, the only people the trans team at the hospital meet are people who have body dysphoria, because those are the people who seek their services; who need hormones and surgery," they add. "And so naturally, they are going to assume that all trans people have body dysphoria, because that's all they see."

Nonbinary people in particular have been diligent in fighting against the idea of rigid gender roles, wanting to break those confines even as they might perform particular gender roles themselves. While this may seem on the surface to be a contradiction, Alda says, nonbinary people are simply trying to live within a system they never asked for.

"We can be fighting against the system, but the fact is that we're still living inside of it," they point out. "Trans women and trans men do feel more pressure to adhere strongly to gender roles, especially when you first come out and sort of go all in. Partly because you missed out on being able

to perform this gender for all of your life, but also partly to be taken seriously. And to survive. Choose your battles; choose when you feel safe enough to fight against the system. The only thing that we can do is try to survive within the system and expand our ideas of clocking people's gender."

## "Yes but why are you trans?"

Some people have sought to understand what, exactly, it is that makes someone trans; reminiscent of the once-prominent movement to understand the roots of gayness. While the general consensus on gayness has moved from trying to determine scientific causes to simply showing gay people more empathy and respect, the conversation on trans people has yet to move in that direction.

Alda is among those who believe this belies certain dangers. The scientific and medical community have been trying to figure out why we're like this for years," they say. "Is it something in our upbringing? Is it something in our genes? We need to start realising that it doesn't matter. We need to stop doing this, because this research tells trans people: we want to eliminate you, we want to cure you—which is really scary. Even if that's not the point of the research, someone in the world will use it that way."

## Iceland's unique position

The climate is certainly different elsewhere. In the UK and the US, one sees a shocking level of transphobic vitriol and violence. While there have been transphobic assaults in Iceland, the discourse in this country has been largely measured and reasonable by comparison.

I think it's due in part to better education and a smaller population," says Alexandra. "At the end of the day, there's not that many of us. We all know each other, and most of us are on the same social media. It's hard to hate people that you know personally, and it's hard to be in a flame war with your sister's husband's daughter."

Ugly sees the new law as a big step forward, but with plenty of room left for growth. Intersex people need protections; Iceland's naming laws could be less gendered; and the country's institutions need to make changes to the way they operate in order to fully realise the new law.

"Just because this law is passed doesn't mean that we're all going to relax now," Ugly finishes. "There's still a lot to do." 🍷

What do these terms mean?

Just as there are experiences specific to being trans, there is also a specific vocabulary that helps express these experiences; some from the medical community, and some from trans people themselves. This glossary is not meant to be authoritative or exhaustive, but rather a jumping off point where the curious can begin their research.

**Cisgender:** The opposite of trans; a cisgender (or cis) person is one whose gender identity aligns with the gender they were assigned at birth. It is not, whatever anyone tells you, a slur; it is a medical term.

**Dysphoria:** The discomfort, stress and anxiety of one's gender not aligning with their physical selves or with societal expectations of their gender expression. Not all trans people experience dysphoria, but a great many do.

**Non-binary:** An umbrella term for a person whose gender identity cannot be classified as either male or female. This may mean being both in relatively equal proportions (e.g. androgynous or bigender), being both in unequal proportions (e.g. demigirl/demiboy), experiencing fluidity of two or more genders (e.g. genderqueer/genderfluid), neither (agender), or something else altogether (e.g. fae/faer). Not all non-binary people identify as trans, but they are usually regarded as a part of the trans community.

**"Passing" and "clocking":** Passing is the phenomenon of a trans person being seen by strangers as their gender identity, e.g., a trans woman who "passes" is seen as being a woman by a cis person. Clocking, by contrast, is the ability to tell if someone is trans. Both of these terms are somewhat controversial in the trans community, in particular for its erasure of nonbinary people and the value it places on the judgement of cis people.

**TERF:** An acronym for "trans exclusionary radical feminist," i.e., a self-identified feminist who does not believe trans women are "real" women, but rather men who are trying to invade women's spaces. TERFs usually refer to themselves as "gender critical."

**Transtrender:** Derogatory term that implies a trans person is simply pretending to be trans to be cool. Has no scientific basis whatsoever.

**Truscum:** Someone who believes that a person is not "truly" trans unless they have undergone a medical evaluation process, perform their gender identity on all levels, and elect to have surgery and/or hormone replacement therapy. This belief is also known as "transmedicalism" and is largely regarded as outdated, if not transphobic.



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## Indoor Demons Unite

Innipúkinn Festival 2019

August 2nd-4th - Grandi - 3,990 ISK day tickets, 6,990 ISK weekend wristband

While sensible people get through summer by sweating indoors with some ice-cream, and having a West Wing marathon, even the staunchest innipúki ("indoor demon") has to go out sometime. A holiday weekend is as good a time as any: most Reykjavíkingur flee to the countryside, and those who remain congregate at Grandi for some cutting-edge music, DJs, a market, and some revelry in the theoretical sun. Go on, come out, you can do it! **JR**



## Shaka Brah

Arctic Surfers RVK Surf School

August 9th-11th - Arctic Surfers - 39,000 ISK

If balancing your workload with your social life and the spiritual needs of your emotional-support gecko is beginning to feel too easy, perhaps try balancing on an actual surfboard on the IRL sea. The RVK Surf School gang will provide the gear and the know-how, all you need to do is show up and...try not to fall over, I guess. Is there more to surfing than that? We don't know, we haven't been to Surf School. **JG**



## All The Oumph!

Vegan Festival 2019

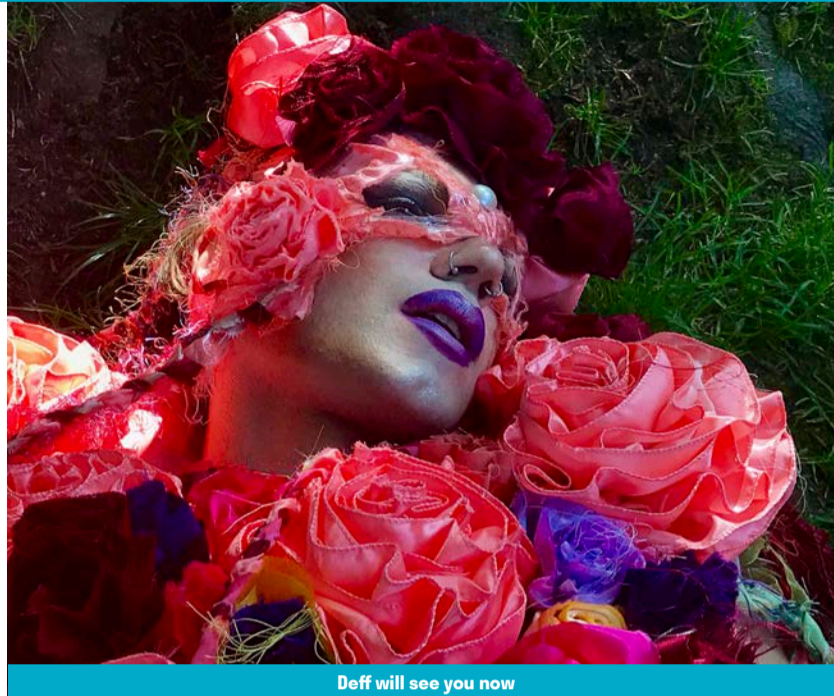
August 11th - 12:00 - Thorsplan - Free!

All hail the cruelty free God! Yes, as it is every year, the Icelandic Vegan Society is here with their annual Vegan Festival, the best place to kneel down and profess your devotion to plant-based proteins. If you worship animals, want to save the environment, and hate capitalism, bring yo' funds and indulge. We hope there will be grilled "cheese." **HJC**

## CULTURE NEWS

### Drag show

'Shemantic Trance' is at Gaukurinn on August 16th. Tickets are on sale at [midi.is](http://midi.is) priced 3,000 ISK



Deff will see you now

## Deff Becomes Her

Enter a shemantic trance at Pride

Words: John Rogers

Photo: Kollin Schafer

Deff is a powerful presence in the Reykjavík drag scene. The alter-ego of Neville J. Ingley, Deff delivers energetic, fast and physical performances. At a recent drag marathon headlined by iconic US queen Detox, they were a bewitching whirl of colour that dominated the big stage of Gamla Bíó, making hearts race, jaws drop and faces crack.

Shortly after that show, Deff relocated to Portland. But for one night only during Reykjavík Pride, they'll return to Iceland to stage a new show entitled 'Shemantic Trance.' An ambitious group effort, it will also featuring Hans, Char-donnay Bublée, Miss Mokki, and Skaði,

amongst others.

The show was successfully crowd-funded—although getting to the target amount was a bumpy ride. "Everything is quite last minute in Iceland, so it was a huge risk," says Deff, speaking on Skype from Portland. "I did it 'all-or-nothing,' which was stupid. But I had a lot of support from close friends and people who are really into what I do, and they made it possible to put it on."

**"I'm not really here to entertain you. I'm here to make you feel."**

### A Starr is born

Deff's relationship to drag has been in a state of evolution of late, as evidenced

by a recent Facebook status addressing both the content of the show, and their relationship with drag as a discipline. "It's been hard to express why I'm frustrated with drag as a whole," Deff explains. "A lot of the RuPaul's Drag Race queens have been doing McDonalds ads and selling Coke and Starbucks; becoming what I think drag is the opposite of. To me, drag is an anti-establishment, punk-rock kind of thing. It's not about fame-seeking and capitalism."

Dropping the "Starr"—taken from Deff's drag mother Gógó Starr—was a part of this evolution. "I wanted to put away an old part of myself," says Deff. "It was never intended to upset my drag mum, but I felt that the name had significance about wanting to be a star. Really, as a teenager, I just wanted to be a starving artist. I wanted to create something for people to feel inspired by. I was thinking these things, and listening to an old Björk song called 'I Go Humble,' and it all just clicked. I want to take away everything that feels superficial, and allow myself more time to focus on producing great work."

### High-art drag

'Shemantic Trance' will be Iceland's first chance to get a look at the refocused, rejuvenated, powered-up version of Deff. "The name of the show came from Gógó," says Deff. "She once said that when I perform, I go into a shamanic trance. And I said: 'Don't you mean shemantic?' And it became a joke. Then I was thinking about what shamans do: they heal people, and help communities. That came together with the fact that I'm getting more political and thinking more about my art."

For anyone interested in drag, it's a must see show. "It'll be high-art drag with a message," Deff finishes. "As I said in that Facebook status: I'm not really here to entertain you, I'm here to make you feel." **👉**

## ELECTRIC DREAMS

### Music

Listen to ZAAR's most recent music on Spotify. Go to [facebook.com/ZAAR.DK](http://facebook.com/ZAAR.DK) for her upcoming events and follow her on Instagram via @[zaar.music](https://www.instagram.com/zaar.music)



## ZAAR's Playground

The Danish singer-songwriter-producer on her year in Iceland, and creating new instruments

Sara Flindt is a 22-year-old singer-songwriter-producer born in Silkeborg, Denmark. She moved to Aarhus to study music when she was 18, and has spent the past year studying music at FÍH music school in Reykjavík. Her recent work—created as alter-ego ZAAR—has been heard at festivals such as Roskilde (Denmark), G! Festival (Faroe Islands), Iceland

Airwaves and, most recently, at an intimate church concert at LungA festival in East Iceland.

For Sara, music came quite naturally from a young age. "I've never had to push making music. I just do it because it feels good, and I've had supportive people around," she says. "I grew up with my great grandmother's out of tune piano, a broken trumpet,

and my mom's age-old experience singing in choirs."

Sara has found that her biggest inspiration in music comes from her environment. "I live in Árbær, where I usually fall asleep to the sound of a river," she says. "You can see Snæfellsjökull glacier through the windows when its not cloudy. It's hard to find words to describe this place, and its best experienced live and in the present."

Through ZAAR, another of Sara's childhood dreams—to become an inventor—has now become a reality. "My current setup consists of a number of effect pedals, a loop station and a drum machine," she says. "The pedals are my playground and my way to create my own instruments and escape the classical expectations of vocals. There are no rules on my playground, and everyone is welcome to join me."

Sara will continue to work with numerous creatives she has teamed up with like ceramicist Antonía Bergþórsdóttir, violinist Raket Sigurðardóttir, singer Salóme Katrín and textile designer Ása Bríet Bratta. Last month saw the release of her single "Our Love Is Dead"—the first from her upcoming EP 'Lost My Sense Of Humour'. "Tied-in with the release," she finishes, "I will play some shows with my band in Denmark, which is very exciting!" **👉**

Words: Alexander Le Sage de Fontenay

Photo: Art Bicnick



Restaurants

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Emilie and only one cool kid

# Reykjavík ExtraVEGANza

16 cruelty-free options in Iceland’s vegan-friendly capital

**Words:** Catharine Fulton, a rawlings, Hannah Jane Cohen, John Rogers

**Photos:** Art Bicnick

It wasn’t a million years ago that it was hard to come up with a reliable dinner recommendation for vegans in Reykjavík. But with increased demand from international tourists, and the help of the wildly popular *Veganuary*, veganism is on the rise. With more demand for tasty and varied vegan fare than ever before, today’s scene is unrecognisable.

While many places have a sole tacked-on, obligatory-feeling vegan option, these are some of our favourite haunts for a vegan meal—go forth, safe in the knowledge that you’ll have plenty of tasty menu items to choose from—or, at the very least, that the vegan option will be one to remember.



**Aalto Bistro**

Sæmundargata 11

As the Nordic House’s eatery, Aalto Bistro is well-situated between gorgeous preserved wetlands and the University

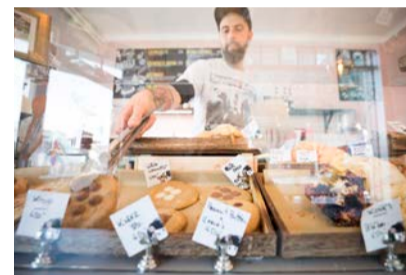
of Iceland. The menu boasts a vegan course of the day, in addition to two charming zucchini dishes. And the avocado ceviche is a delightful, summery twist on the Peruvian classic. **AR**



**Café Babalú**

Skólavörðustigur 22

A staple for locals and tourists alike, Babalú offers comfort food for folks on a budget. Their chilli will fill your belly, and there’s a carrot cake sure to tempt you back for repeat visits. Unpretentious and bubbly, tuck yourself into a booth downstairs or squirrel yourself away for a quiet tête-à-tête over tea upstairs. **AR**



**Emilie and The Cool Kids**

Hverfisgata 98

There’s more to vegan treats than raw cakes and date squares. Just try to stay on your diet after discovering the muffins, cinnamon rolls, and scones at Emilie’s, where vegan offerings are plentiful and clearly marked. And if you do, please let us know your secret. **CF**



**Fine Restaurant**

Rauðararstigur 33

Chinese food can be hazardous territory for vegans, but there’s no risk of unexpected ingredients at Fine. The sumptuous vegan dumplings are so juicy pork-lovers would barely know the difference, and the vegan noodles are authentic, spicy and delicious. A real treat. **JR**



**Gló Vegan**

Laugavegur 20b

There’s comfort in knowing that an eatery is 100% vegan. It’s even better when they serve up some legitimately tasty bowls, burgers, lasagna, and more. Gló’s heaping assorted veggie bowls—we’re suckers for the Indian Dahl bowl and the Keto Bowl—will tick a lot of boxes from your Daily Dozen, and the world famous (or at least it should be) spinach lasagna will make you feel warm inside. **CF**



**Hannesarholt**

Grundarstigur 10

Historical setting? Check. Peace and quiet? Check? Vegan brunch fit for royalty? Oh yeah. The restored home of Hannes Hafstein, Iceland’s first prime minister, has found a new life as a non-profit organisation and quaint eatery. The vegan brunch is plentiful, with a flavourful tofu scramble, pancakes, “vacon,” roasted root vegetables, hummus and more. Finish the meal with a coffee and the latest Grapevine for a comfortable start to your day. **CF**



**Hi Noodle**

Frakkastigur 9

From the rich umami broth, to the irresistibly slurpable noodles, and plentiful sprouts, peanuts and other toppings, Hi Noodle’s vegan ramen is a treat. Just as enjoyable on a cold and rainy day as during this uncharacteristically summery season. **CF**

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## Hipstur

Bíldshöfði 9

The mushroom bread, ohhhhhhhhhh the mushroom bread!!! Newcomer to Reykjavík's expanding foodhall scene, Hipstur serves delectable gourmet street-food dishes. Tossed with nuts and topped with aioli, the grilled cabbage and cauliflower salad is savoury and sumptuous. And did we mention the mushroom bread?! Garlic-fried fungi + red onion + kale + grated horseradish = sitophilia! **AR**



## Hraðlestin

Hverfisgata 64a / Lækjargata 8 / Hlíðasmári 8 / Kringlan

Pakodas, samosas, and bondas, oh my! Hraðlestin's dinner menu features aloo gobi matar spiced for the gods (or, ahem, deities). And you'll thank us for this PSA: Vegan Wednesdays! This home-grown franchise has a special

offer on their vegan thali every hump day. **AR**



## Ísbúðin Brynja

Engihjalli 8, Kópavogur

If ever you've consumed dairy in Iceland, you're likely to have indulged in a towering swirl of soft-serve dipped in chocolate and sprinkled with assorted confections. Vegans don't have to miss out on this classic treat at Brynja in Kópavogur. The Akureyri-transport has three vegan soft-serves on tap (the coconut is divine!) and a range of clearly marked vegan toppings. What are you waiting for? **CF**

## Kaffi Laugalækur

Laugarnesvegur 74a

Vegan cheese that achieves a satisfying consistency on pizza is a unicorn for vegan foodies. Kaffi Lækur skips this problematic topping altogether, instead crowning their vegan Skrúður and Frú Lauga flatbreads with the likes of pesto, pickled onions, chickpeas, greens and cashews. It goes down easy on its own or with a happy hour brew at the hippest café outside of 101. **CF**



## Shalimar

Austurstræti 4

Reykjavík's evergreen Pakistani restaurant will fill your vegan belly with fragrant, flavourful fare. Their Curry in a Hurry lunch special (a steal at 1,290 ISK) always has a plant-based option or two, but make room in your day for the vegan set menu, and tuck in to fluffy onion bhaji, impeccably spiced saag aloo and vegetable masala, naan, and a sweet bite to end the meal. **CF**



## SKÁL!

Hlemmur Mathöll

One of the (many) beautiful things about Hlemmur Mathöll's standout and Bib Gourmand recipient SKÁL! is its creative use of plant-based ingredients. A seasonally-focussed New Nordic outpost with a welcome sense of flair, the menu is constantly being refreshed;

but at the time of writing this vegan can't get enough of the smoked carrots or the mainstay crushed potatoes. **CF**

## Sumac

Laugavegur 28

Though there's been a surge in vegan fast food of late, those looking for more upscale cruelty-free fare are in good hands at Sumac. The vegan-optional Meze seven-course tasting menu is a festival of Moroccan and Lebanese flavours, beautifully highlighting the versatility of mushrooms, legumes, cauliflower and courgette. It's a meal you won't soon forget. **CF**



## Veganæs

Tryggvagata 22

For gooey grilled cheese sandwiches, bearnaise-topped steaks, fried fish burgers, and heaping piles of mashed potatoes, look no further than the dim dive Veganæs. Currently taking residence in the back of the Gaukurinn bar and music venue, the low-key joint'll convince you wholeheartedly that vegan food is for more than yogis. **HJC**

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Laugavegur 30, 101 Reykjavik - [www.facebook.com/DillonWhiskeyBar](http://www.facebook.com/DillonWhiskeyBar)





Hold a flag and dress in one too

## You're Here! You're Queer! Celebrate It!

The Grapevine guide to Pride

Words: The Grapevine Pride Dpt.  
Photo: Art Bicnick

### Festival

Reykjavík Pride happens August 8th-17th. Get more info at [hinsegindagar.is/en](http://hinsegindagar.is/en).

The annual Reykjavík Pride has finally arrived for a fabulous two-week-long celebration. Yipee! This year's iteration is chock full of fun and important events guaranteed to make you celebrate your beautiful queerness. To help you make the most of the festivities, the Grapevine Pride Department has compiled the not-to-be-missed Pride events.

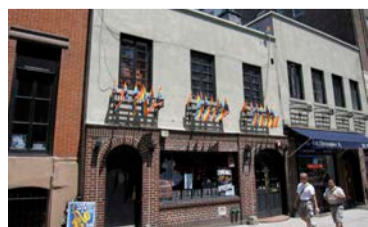


### Pride Parade

August 17th - 14:00 - Downtown

Reykjavík - Free!

Don your finest rainbow garb and don't forget the confetti cannons for the penultimate event of this year's Pride: the Reykjavík Pride Parade. This year's route begins at Hallgrímskirkja, and will conclude on Sóleyjargata near Hljómskálagarður next to the Pride outdoor concert. Unlike other parades worldwide, this one is totally family friendly. Try not to lose your voice from singing too much Páll Óskar. Just kidding. There's no such thing as too much Páll Óskar. **HJC**



### The Stonewall Riots

August 9th - 12:00 - National Museum Of Iceland - Free!

It's been 50 years since the Stonewall Riots—that pivotal moment during which queer people in New York fought back against the police that terrorized them, and in doing so, created a movement that has continued until today. At this special event, go moment by moment through the riots, learning the catalyst, cast of characters, and if or how it matters in today's society. The discussion will be led in English. **HJC**



### Mommie Queerest

August 15th - 20:00 - Tjarnarbíó - Free!

Tina—bring me the axe. Also, it'd be great if you could pick up tickets for international drag superstars Heklina and Peaches Christ's parody of the iconic 'Mommie Dearest', too. All jokes aside, the show will be a romp and a riot through a queer-ified version of the story that destroyed Faye Dunaway's career forever. And remember: No. Wire. Hangers. Ever. **HJC**



### Queers Without Borders: Action Meeting

August 17th - 19:00 - Andrymi - Free!

"Post-parade, pre-party. Create the Pride you want to see." That's the tagline for this event, which goes beyond glitter cannons while "It's Raining Men" blasts over the sponsored content festooning the Pride Parade. This radical meeting space aims to focus on "bodily violence against intersex children, financial inaccessibility of HRT for many low-income people (especially youth), and deportations of queer asylum seekers," amongst other pressing issues within the community. **AF**



### The Icelandic Royal Drag Competition

August 9th - 21:00 - Austurbær - 3,900 ISK

Pageantry and drag go together like Jonathan Van Ness and a good grooming routine. For Pride 2019, ten different acts—kings, queens, and everything in between—will perform for the chance to be crowned the winner of the Icelandic Royal Drag Competition. After the show, the champion will take part in a decadent crowning celebration, entry to which is included in the ticket price. **JG**



### Feminist Swearing Night Iceland

August 16th - 20:00 - Loft - Free!

Bloody Norah! We at the Grapevine flippin love swearing and feminism so this event is right up our alley. The open-mic event is a chance to say whatever you darn well like about the patriarchy in whichever form takes your fancy. Excitingly, the cool-as-heck founders of the Feminist Swearing phenomemom will be at the event, which is pretty effing cool. The night will be conducted in English, Finnish, Icelandic and pure profanity. **JG**



### BEST OF REYKJAVÍK

## Best Place To End The Night

Winner:

**Kaffibarinn**  
Bergstaðastræti 1

This classic party place is still the late-night hangout of choice in 101 Reykjavík. The raucous local crowd is a mixture of Iceland's fashion folks, artists, hipsters and intelligentsia—as seen in the KB "Barflies" photo book. "It's a perfect meeting point where you can go for the dancefloor, space out in the back, or chat all night in the smoking area," said the panel. "The staff are always genuinely nice to you, even if you're pretty drunk. Everyone goes there. It's the only place I'd go after putting a friend in drag and end up having my numerology done by a stranger."



Runners up:

**Kiki Queer Bar**  
Laugavegur 22

If you're going out dancing, Kiki can't be beat. With DJs playing pop classics and an energetic, disinhibited crowd, the panel enthused: "It's so much fun! You can dance, hug your friends, kiss your spouse... you can let everything out and dance your ass off in a safe, welcoming environment."



**Ölstofan**  
Vegamótastígur

On the other end of the spectrum is the no-frills drinking room Ölstofan. With low music, dim lighting, lots of nooks to converse in and a big central bar, "It's a no-bullshit place," said the panel. "There's an interesting older crowd, it's always open late, and you can have a pint and chat without anyone bothering you." **☺**



August 2nd—August 15th

# In Your Pocket



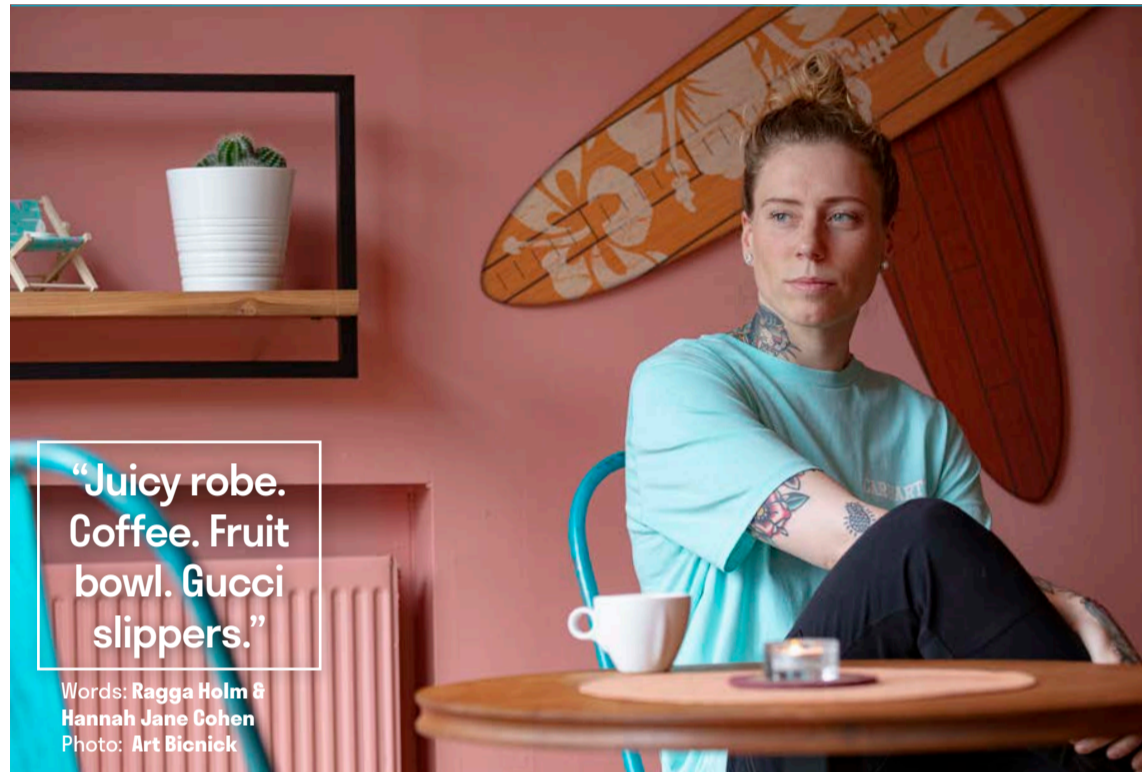
Reykjavík Map

Places We Like

Best Of Reykjavík

## Perfect Day

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



“Juicy robe. Coffee. Fruit bowl. Gucci slippers.”

Words: Ragga Holm & Hannah Jane Cohen  
Photo: Art Bieniek

### Ragga Holm

Ragga Holm is a rapper, a member of Reykjavíkurdætur, a radio personality, and the owner of the new Curious queer bar. We asked her how she'd spend her perfect day in Reykjavík.

#### First Thing

On this perfect day, I'm in my dream position in life, so it can be a little fake right? I'd wake up and the first thing I'd do is put on a juicy robe with a hood and my Gucci slippers. There'd be some people in my house who would make me a big fruit bowl with the best coffee ever. It'd feel like that Versace movie on Netflix. Juicy robe. Coffee. Fruit bowl. Gucci slippers.

#### Mid-morning

I've always dreamt of having my own office space, so I'd put on some comfortable clothes and drive my awesome Tesla over to my new office. There, I'd sit with a good cup

of coffee creating all the stuff that is in my head.

#### Lunch

My favourite food is sushi, so I'd head to **Osushi** for lunch. They'd have a special train just for me. I'd just sit in the middle with a virgin mojito, and they'd know my specials, so I don't get the boring bites. It's so sunny and warm out that I'd have to wear my shades inside.

#### In the afternoon

It's time for the gym—gotta keep my body firm. I'd go to **Reebok** or **World Class**. I'd have my own masseuse. I'd go to the hot tub and cold bath for a bit, and get a one hour massage—at least. Afterwards, I go to my second job. I own coffeehouse, vegan restaurant and club **Curious**, and I'd stop by to take the status, see how everything went. And it went really well!

#### Early evening

I call my friends and we head to **Fjallkonan**. We meet, have some cocktails—I'm having a virgin—and make plans about what we're doing next week—we're going out of the country, just 'cause we can. Amsterdam? Abu Dhabi? We can go anywhere.

#### Dinner

For dinner, we head back to my place and fire up a huge grill. I'm making mojitos and on this perfect day. I have an ice room where I can do my own ice picking. Then, we sit outside with heaters in big robes and eat the best vegan burgers and nuggets you've ever had.

#### In the heat of the night

We don't want to end the night, so we go back downtown in a party taxi to **Curious**. That's where we feel at home. Everyone feels at home there. We sit, have more mojitos and live in the moment. 🍷

## Vital Info



### Useful Numbers

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

### Post Office

The downtown post office has moved to Hagatorgi 1, open Mon-Fri, 09:00–17:00.

### Pharmacies

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

### Opening Hours - Bars & Clubs

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

### Opening Hours - Shops & Banks

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

### Swimming Pools

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

### Public Toilets

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

### Public Transport

Most buses run every 20-30 minutes  
Fare: 460 ISK adults, 220 ISK children.  
Buses run from 07-24:00, and 10-04:30 on weekends. More info: [www.bus.is](http://www.bus.is).



## THE ICELANDIC PENIS MUSEUM

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Open: 10-18 • Next to Hlemmur bus station

No pornography or offensive material in the museum.

## Venue Finder

### Venues

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

Austur Austurstræti 7	D3	lönó Vonarstræti 3	E3
American Bar Austurstræti 8	D3	Kex Hostel Skúlagata 28	E7
Andrými Bergþorugata 20	G6	Kaffibarinn Bergstaðastræti 1	E4
B5 Bankastræti 5	E4	Kaffi Vinyl Hverfisgata 76	E6
Bar Ananas Klappartígur 28	E5	Kiki Queer Bar Laugavegur 22	E5
Bió Paradís Hverfisgata 54	E5	Loft Bankastræti 7	E4
Bjarni Fel Austurstræti 20	E4	Mengi Öðinsgata 2	F5
Bravó Laugavegur 22	E5	Nordic House Sturlagata 5	H2
Boston Laugavegur 28b	E5	Paloma Naustin	D3
Dillon Laugavegur 30	E5	Prikjö Bankastræti 12	E4
Dubliner Naustin 1-3	D3	R6013 Ingólfstræti 20	E4
English Pub Austurstræti 12	D3	Reykjavík Roasters Kárástígur 1	F5
Gaukurinn Tryggvagata 22	D3	Stofan Café Vesturgata 3	D3
Hard Rock Café Lækjargata 2a	D3	Ölsmíjan Lækjargata 10	E3
Hressó Austurstræti 20	D3	Tívoli bar Hafnarstræti 4	D3
Húrra Naustin	D3	Tjarnarbrío Tjarnargata 12	E3

### Museums & Galleries

ART67 Laugavegur 67	F7	The Penis Museum Laugavegur 116	F8	Ásmundarsafn Sigtún	Open daily 10-17
ASÍ Art Gallery Freyjugata 41	G6	Kirsuberjatræð Vesturgata 4	D3	Reykjavík City Library Tryggvagata 15	D3 Mon-Thu 10-19, Fri 11-18, Sat-Sun 13-17
Aurora Reykjavík Grandagarður 2	B1	Kling & Bang Grandagarður 20	A4	Árbæjarsafn Kistuhyllur 4	Open daily 9-18
Asgrímur Jónsson Museum Bergstaðastr. 74	G4	Listastofan Hringbraut 119	A4	The Settlement Exhibition Aðalstræti 16	D3 Open daily 9-18
Berg Contemporary Klappartígur 16	E5	Living Art Museum Gránagarður 20	F4	Reykjavík Museum of Photography Tryggvagata 15	D3 Mon-Thu 10-18, Fri 11-18, Sat-Sun 13-18
The Culture House Hverfisgata 15	E5	Mokka Kaffi Skólavörðustíg. 3A	E5	Saga Museum Grandagarður 2	B2 Open Mon-Fri 10-16
The Einar Jónsson Museum Eiríksgata	G5	Museum of Design and Applied Art Garðatorg 1	A4	Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum Laugarnestangi 70	Open Tu-Sun 14-17
Ekkisens Bergstaðast. 25b	F4	The National Gallery of Iceland Frikirkjuvegur 7	F3	SÍM Hafnarstræti 16	D3 Open Mon-Fri 10-16
Galleri List Skipholt 50A	H10	The National Museum Sudurgata 41	G2	Tveir Hrafnar Baldursgata 12	G4 Open Fri-Sat 13-16
Hafnarborg Strandgata 34, 220	D3	The Nordic House Sturlugata 5	H2	Wind & Weather Window Gallery Hverfisgata 37	E5
Hitt Húsið Pósthússtræti 3-5	D4	Hafnarhús Tryggvagata 17	D3		
Hverfisgalleri Hverfisgata 4	D4	Kjarvalsstaðir Flókagata 24	H8		
i8 Gallery Tryggvagata 16	D3				
Tu-Fri 11-18, Sat 13-17					



**A**




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**D**



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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. Fjallkonan

Hafnarstræti 1-3

Named after the female personification of Iceland, Fjallkonan is located smack-bang in the middle of downtown, and caters to locals and tourists alike. For the Icelandic-cuisine-curious, there is a platter of whale, lamb and puffin, all presented beautifully. For those who are just looking for a great selection of fresh meat, fish and vegetarian options, Fjallkonan does these to perfection as well.

### 2. Block Burger

Skólavörðustígur 8

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

### 3. Matur og Drykkur

Grandagarður 2

In how many ways can we say, "eat here"? Is it the whole cod head you should get, or perhaps the double-smoked dried lamb, or the creamy halibut soup? Whatever you get, rest assured it'll have roots in Icelandic culinary history, elevated to fine dining standards. And do not leave without trying the fried-to-order kleinur.

### 4. Sandholt

Laugavegur 36

Well-known for its sourdough bread, Sandholt has consistently delivered great baked goods since its inception. The laminated pastries are hands down the best in Iceland; try the buttery croissants or seasonal Danish pastries, locally known as "vinarbrauð" with rhubarb and raspberries, or the classic, vanilla custard.

### 5. Le Kock 2.0

Tryggvagata 14

In the ground floor of a new hotel, it's a large space with three components: the Le Kock diner serving burgers, fish and chips, and comfort food favourites; a cocktail bar called Tail; and a second branch of Deig, Le Kock's sister bakery. The music policy can be shaky—unless you like Status Quo—but the all-day happy hour has 1,500 ISK cocktails and 800 ISK beers.

### 6. Ramen Momo

Tryggvagata 16

Iceland's first 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. Public House Gastropub

Laugavegur 28

What happens when Icelandic ingredients are tended to with Japanese flair? Public House Gastropub only gives out-of-the-ordinary, satisfying answers. The duck thigh in a pancake served with ginger sauce and the crispy shrimp dumplings with sriracha mayo are to die for. Come early and enjoy happy hour while you can: you'll never want to leave.

### 8. Messinn

Lækjargata 6b

Messinn may be modelled on the well-known Westfjords restaurant Tjoruhúsið, but it's now no doubt a Reykjavík restaurant of choice. What keeps us coming back is how the food keeps getting better every time we dine there. Our favourites include their savoury plockfiskur, velvety graflax, and a perfectly seared trout with honey and almonds.

### 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 harbour-side 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. Curious

Hafnarstræti 4

Watch out, henny—there's a new

queer bar on the scene, and it's decked out in tropical apparel. Serving up cocktails, coffee and—starting in August—a vegan café, Curious is a one-stop-shop for whatever scene you belong to. Werk.

### 12. 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.

### 13. Loft Hostel

Bankastræti 7a

Loft stands many heads and shoulders above most of the al fresco drinking spots in Reykjavík, not least because it's on the roof of the Loft Hostel and has a balcony that looks over downtown. Before the evening-time entertainment begins, it's the perfect place to catch some late-afternoon sun.

### 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

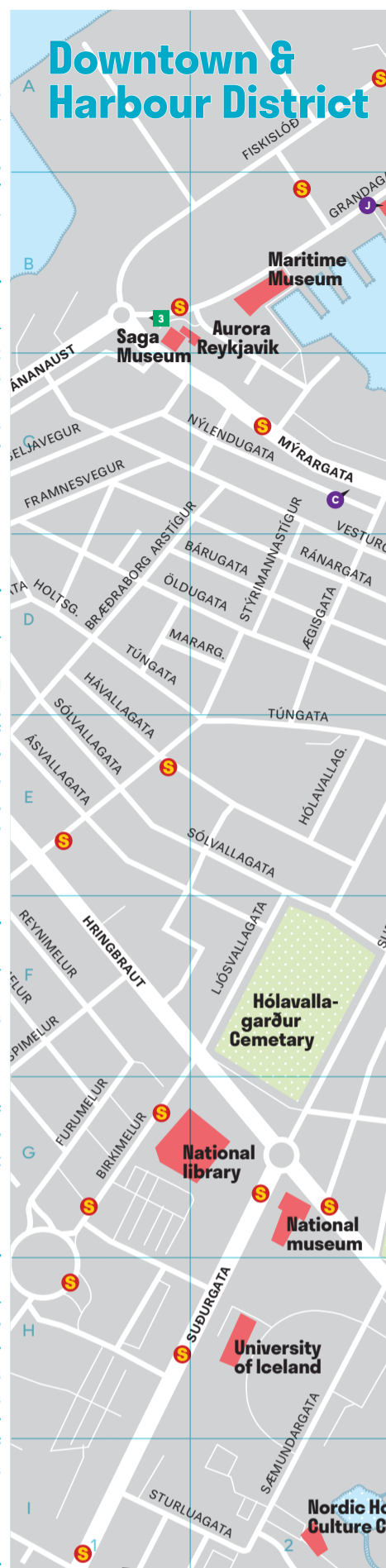
Fógetagarður

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. Papaku Reykjavík

Klappastígur 38

Formerly Bar Ananas, Papaku Reykjavík 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 a pool table, piano, darts board, a spacious bar, a tiny dance floor, and a solid line of DJs that all aim to make you bust a move.



### 18. American Bar

Austurstræti 8

Football fans will rejoice in seeing the row of screens perennially tuned on sports channel above the bar, while troubadours aficionados will find in American Bar a great spot to listen to classic country music. Grab a rib from the adjacent Dirty Burgers & Ribs and be happy.

## Shopping

### 19. Kvartýra №49

Laugavegur 49

This minimalistic, Bauhaus-esque spot took the Icelandic fashion

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### New In Town



**Magic Ice**  
Laugavegur 4

Have you ever been in a bar having a great time when you've thought: "If only this place was much colder"? Well, it's your lucky day. Magic Ice is a brand new ice bar located in a Laugavegur basement. With glasses, walls, and a throne made of ice, the novelty value will appeal to kids, birthday groups and cruise ship passengers; locals may give it a more frosty reception. Entry is 3,900 ISK, which includes your first drink. **JG**

scene by storm upon opening in 2018, with its eclectic streetwear selection. They have designers that no one else has.

### 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. 12 Tónar

Skólavörðustígur 15

This city-centre record store is something of an institution, offering the unique experience of having the store staff ask about your music taste then sit you down with a coffee, some headphones, and a pile of Icelandic records.

### 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. Spútnik

Laugavegur 28b

This well-curated clothing emporium

is more like a secondhand clothing boutique than a charity shop. It's expensive but it's all imported stuff you won't find anywhere else. They're also very particular with their selection: after sorting through maybe six shirts, they'll determine that just one is truly good enough.

### 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.

## HÚRRA REYKJAVÍK

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- AIMÉ LEON DORE
- CARHARTT WIP
- COMMON PROJECTS
- DROLE DE MONSIEUR
- EYTYS
- FILLING PIECES
- HAN KJOBENHAVN
- HERON PRESTON
- NIKE SPORTSWEAR
- NORSE PROJECTS
- PALM ANGELS
- SSS WORLD CORP
- STONE ISLAND
- STÜSSY
- RED WING
- THE NORTH FACE
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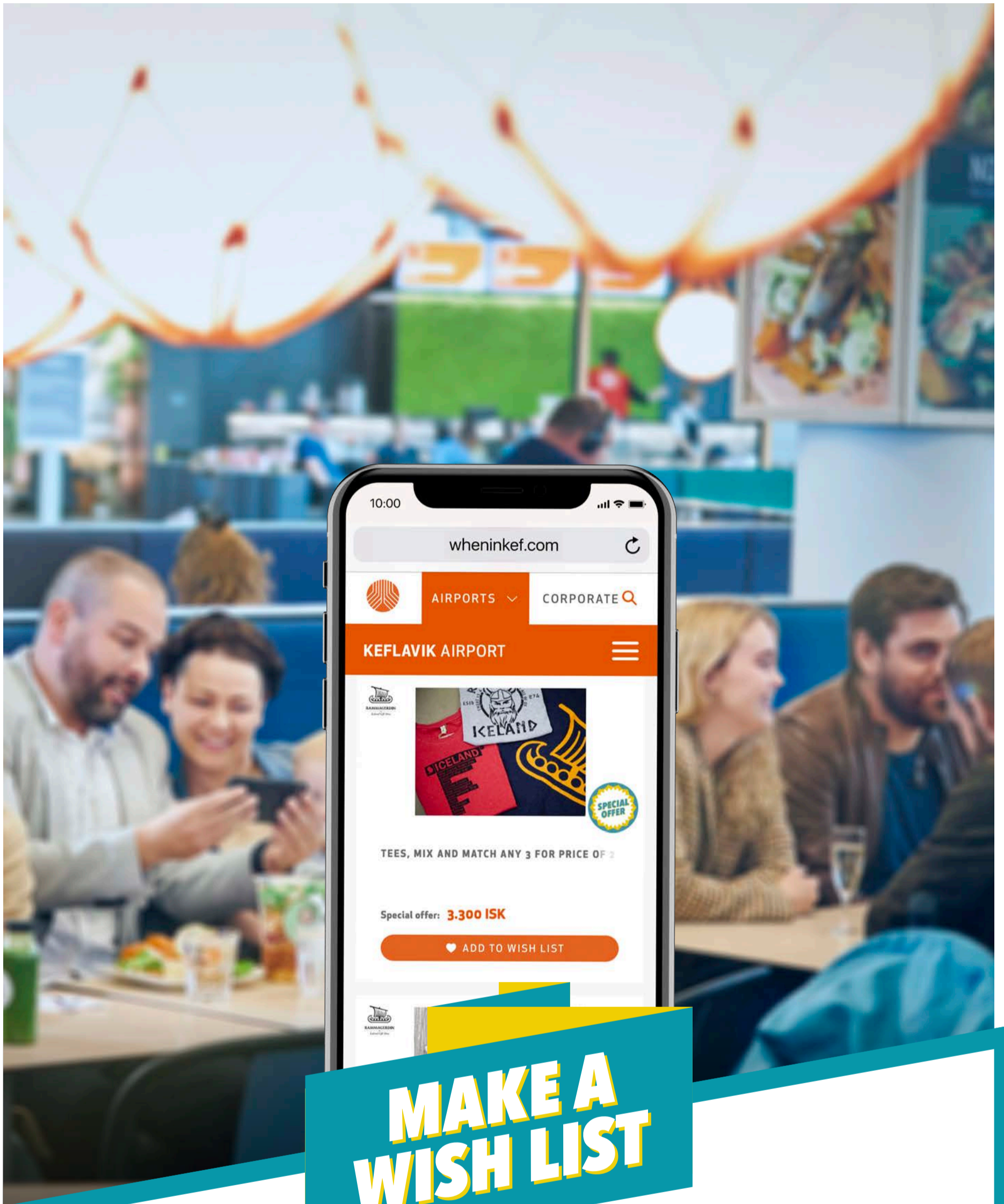
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DJ PLAYLIST

# Emotional Soundscapes

From Páll Óskar to GusGus to MILO, DJ Yamaho lines up her favourite Icelandic tracks

Words: **Natalie G. Gunnarsdóttir & John Rogers** Photo: **Art Bicnick**

## DJ

Check the Grapevine's iPhone and Android app 'Appening Today' for Yamaho's latest DJ dates

Natalie G. Gunnarsdóttir is better known as Yamaho, a respected veteran DJ on the Reykjavik scene. Known for propulsive sets that set the dancefloor alight, she's been a staple DJ at many of the city's best spots since starting out at legendary party bar Sirkus. She won a DJ contest at Pacha in Ibiza in 2013, and, more recently, has played everywhere from Sónar Reykjavik to Berghain in Berlin. We asked Natalie to line up a playlist for us of some of the all-time favourite Icelandic tracks that have stayed in her record bag right into the present day.

### Elly - Sveitin Milli Sanda

This song is one of my all time favourites. When I first heard it, it was like a religious experience for

me. Elly is one of Iceland's greats. She portrays her vocal skills in such a beautiful way.

### Lúdó Sextett og Stefán - Olsen Olsen

When I play this song it puts an instant smile on my face and I can't stop moving. The song and lyrics are top notch. It's such a joy at all times.

### GusGus - David

This song is such a megahit, and another one of my all-time favourites. You have no option but to shake

your money maker when this track starts. It's a wild-thing-mega-mega.

### Ragnhildur Gísladóttir - Draumaprinsinn

This one is an '80s power ballad that ticks in all my boxes. I love her voice, and it's just an emo-

tional journey. You can't hold yourself back from partaking in the song.

### Páll Óskar - Horfðu á mig

Taken from the album "Seif," this is one of the best dance/house songs produced in Iceland. It's been one of my favourites since I heard it for the first time, and it is still relevant on the dance floors today. This one is always on my playlist, wherever I go.


### ILO - Take you to love

ILO songs take you on a journey, and this song is no exception. With firm guidance, you tread through the soundscape with the luscious soulful vocals. Pure bliss.

### Móri - Atvinnukrimmi


'90's hip hop par excellence. The Icelandic language can be hard to flow in hip-hop, but Móri makes it sound easy. I fell in love with the lyrics and the beats when I first heard it. One of the best hip hop songs and albums produced in Iceland. ♡

**"You have no option but to shake your money maker when this track starts. It's a wild-thing mega-mega."**

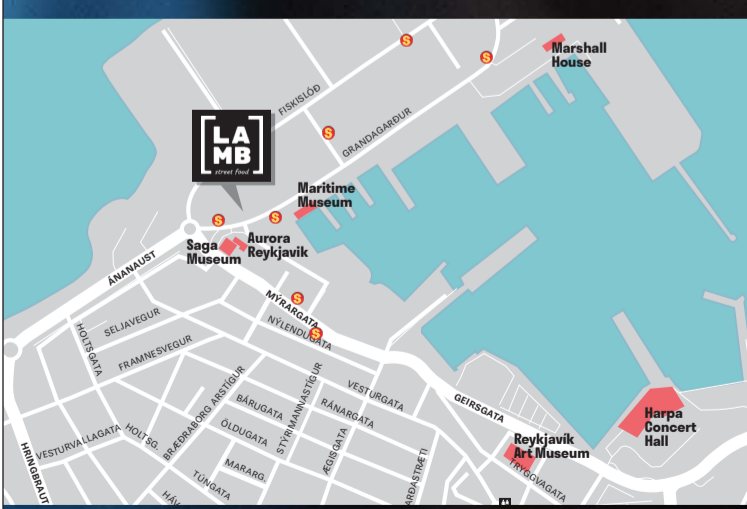


# [ LAMB ]

street food



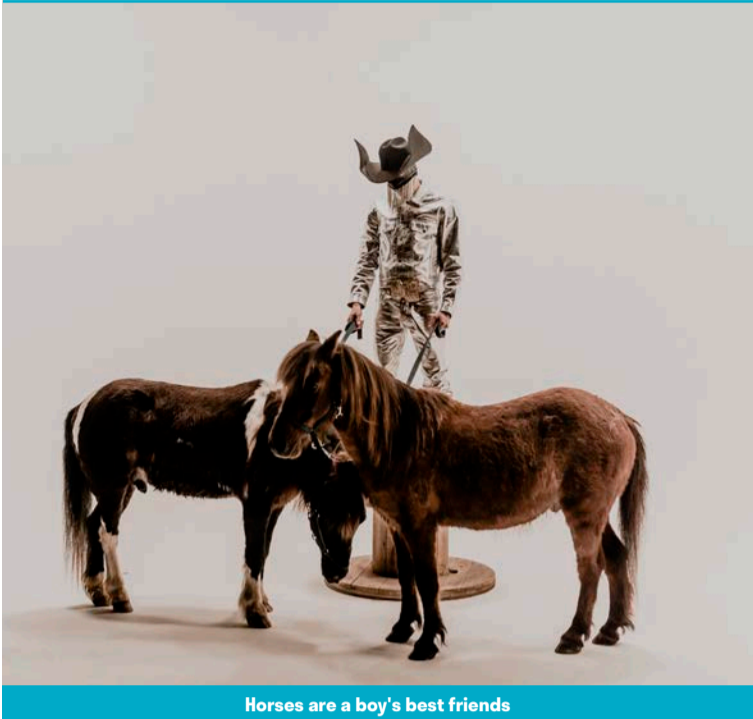
AWARD OF EXCELLENCE  
2019



Grandagarður 7, 101 Reykjavík



# Music



Horses are a boy's best friends

## The Unknown Ranger

New addition to Airwaves' line up, Orville Peck, is keeping the mystery alive

Words: **Josie Gaitens** Photo: **Courtesy of Orville Peck**

### Iceland Airwaves

See Orville Peck at Iceland Airwaves 2019. Tickets are on sale now. Read an extended version at: [gpv.is/peck](http://gpv.is/peck)

Orville Peck has a lot of thoughts about identity, which you might consider odd coming from a masked, pseudonym-adopting country musician who never plans on revealing his own. The masks—somewhere between Zorro and a BDSM Lone Ranger—are handmade by Orville himself. He's always carefully turned out in a variety of cowboy motifs; light wash denim jeans, calf-skin waistcoats, intricately-decorated suits in jewel colours, and, of course, a wide-brimmed stetson, from under which Orville's piercing blue eyes, the only really identifiable part of his person, peer out.

It's not hard to see why many have described his look, name and overall act as a stage persona. But Orville strongly rejects this idea. "The music is all personal and all sincere," he says. "Everything I sing about is based on my past or things I've experienced, or things I went through."

### The unavoidable loneliness of living

The music behind the man is just as important in drawing in fans, and it's every bit as rich in intrigue and imagery as his visual presentation. Orville's voice is deep and mellifluous. Such is the timbre and resonance of his singing style, it has been compared to Elvis on numerous occasions. But it's the artist's songwriting and lyrical prowess that seem to garner the most appealing to his fans. Orville's songs are vulnerable, full of longing, hope and hopelessness, love lost and never gained in the first place. The universal theme of the unavoidable loneliness of living is one that speaks to a huge number of people who find themselves touched by Orville's music.

### Camp technicolour glory

Orville has only very recently burst onto the scene in all his camp technicolour glory. His debut album, 'Pony,' released in January, has already earned him a huge following, with Orville being able to count Iggy Pop, k.d. lang, Paris Hilton and Trixie Mattel as part of his diverse and rapidly expanding fan base. Along with this explosive success has come bookings for many major festivals, including Iceland's own Airwaves festival held in November. Already this year, Orville has performed at the Calgary Stampede, had a feature in Vogue magazine and played to thousands of (self-named) 'Peck Heads' at sold out shows across the US and Canada.

It doesn't come as a surprise to Orville Peck that country music is making a sudden comeback. Alongside his recent popularity, there has been the success of 'Old Town Road' by Lil Nas X, which, at the time of writing, has held the number one position in the American charts for a consecutive 14 weeks. For Orville, there is a clear reason why the music that many previous generations of young people had deemed passé is finding a somewhat spiritual revival in the current day and age.

### Hugely millennial dilemmas

"I think [country music is] taking things like loneliness or anxiety or feeling unsettled or not really having a purpose where you are—I think it's taking on those kinds of things which are hugely millennial dilemmas, you know what I mean? Our generation goes through those questions all the time but it's kind of taking those and flipping it and finding the adventure and the freedom in it. I just think it's exciting. It's kind of like reclaiming the power within that." 🐾



Indoor people, pictured outdoors

### MUSIC NEWS

Innipukinn festival has announced its complete lineup. Muscle-bound RnB crooner **AUBUR**, Eurovision almost-was **Daði Freyr** and veteran musician **Bjartmar Guðlaugsson** have been added to a bill that already includes **Kælan Mikla**, **Valdimar**, **Joey Christ**, **dj. flugvél og geimskip**, **Vök**, **Sturla Atlas** and more. This year, the festival has moved to Grandi, where it will take place in Messinn and Bryggjan Brúgghús, with an "Útipukinn" outdoor area featuring a market and superstar DJs like **JFDR** and **Katla**, with live performances from **Briet**, **GDRN** and **Svala**. Tickets are on sale now at [tix.is/innipukinn](http://tix.is/innipukinn). **JR**



Tapes: inexplicably cool again

The **Myrkfælni** music organisation has unleashed its third compilation. Again charting the darker recesses of the Icelandic music scene, the compilation is a worthwhile exercise in taxonomy alone—while the featured artists are from diverse genres, and so might not necessarily play on the same lineups very often, there's a tangible red thread running between them. From the sultry goth-rap of **Countess Malaise** to the lo-fi alt-pop of **Discipline** to the heavy rock of **Great Grief**, it's a ride worth taking. Download or order a cassette at [myrkfaelni.bandcamp.com](http://myrkfaelni.bandcamp.com). **JR**



Emmy nominee **Hildur Guðna**

**Hildur Guðnadóttir**, the mind behind the haunting score for the HBO hit miniseries **Chernobyl**, has secured an Emmy nomination for her work. In the category of "Outstanding music composition for a limited series, movie or special (original dramatic score)", Hildur was specifically nominated for her work in episode two of the series, "Please Remain Calm." Hildur's genius for film and television scores is well documented, having worked with **The Knife**, **Ben Frost** and **Ryuichi Sakamoto**, and on the film scores for 'The Revenant' and 'Arrival.' The Emmys take place on September 23rd. **AF** 🐾

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## Our Picks



### ★ Harpa International Music Academy 2019

August 6th-15th - Harpa - Various times/prices

In the latest display of the disproportionate talent of Icelandic musicians, the Harpa International Music Academy Festival returns. Held in

Harpa concert hall, the festival brings together around 70 music students from Iceland and abroad for an impressive 10-day programme. Though a

key part of the festival is the lessons and masterclasses the students receive from expert musicians, all thoughts of wrong notes and wobbly scales can be cast away. The first part of the festival is devoted to live masterclasses with virtuoso musicians before moving on to a series of student recitals. Warning, every student recital you ever hear afterwards will likely sound very disappointing. **FR**



### ★ ADHD

August 14th - 21:00 - Nordic House - 3,000 ISK

Destroy genres with a mix of jazz, post-rock, improvisation and more. Get down. **HJC**



### ★ Kira Kira & Hrund Árnadóttir

August 10th - 21:00 - Mengi - 2,000 ISK

Kira Kira is a musical magician who creates warm, emotional, collaborative soundscapes with electro-acoustic flourishes. She'll be joined onstage at Mengi by acclaimed singer Hrund Árnadóttir. Make it so, and go. **JR**



### ★ Norðanpaunk

August 2nd-4th - Laugarbakki - 7,000 ISK

Get your punk on and mix up your best vegan food for this legendary DIY extravaganza. **HJC**



### ★ Ed Sheeran

August 10th & 11th - 18:30 - Laugar-dalsvöllur - 15,990-29,990 ISK

If you like Ed Sheeran, you will almost certainly know about this already. And if you don't... well, we feel you. Tickets have sold out for August 10th, but there are still a few available for August 11th. **FR**

## August 2nd—August 15th

# 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](http://grapevine.is/happening). Send your listings to: [listings@grapevine.is](mailto:listings@grapevine.is).

### Friday August 2nd

#### ★ Innipúkinn Festival 2019

19:00 Grandi

#### ★ Norðanpaunk 2019

15:00 Laugarbakki

#### 80s Karaoke Competition

22:00 Gaukurinn

#### Reykjavik Classics:

##### Great Guitar Solos

12:30 Harpa

#### DJ Orang Volante

21:00 Klaustur Bar

#### Helium Karaoke

22:00 Gaukurinn

#### Reykjavik Classics:

##### Great Guitar Solos

12:30 Harpa

#### International Organ Summer:

##### Lára Bryndís Eggertsdóttir

17:00 Hallgrímskirkja

#### Sunday Jazz: Ife Tolentino

20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús

#### DJ Gunni Ewok

21:00 Klaustur Bar

### Monday August 5th

#### Monday Jazz

20:00 Bíó Paradís

#### Reykjavik Classics:

##### Masterworks Of The Piano

12:30 Harpa

### Tuesday August 6th

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Violin Masterclass With Lin Wei

16:30 Harpa

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Opening Concert

19:30 Harpa

#### Reykjavik Classics:

##### Masterworks Of The Piano

12:30 Harpa

#### Brák Kvartett

21:00 Mengi

#### Karaoke Party!

21:00 Gaukurinn

#### Jazz Night

20:30 Kex Hostel

#### Ísak Ríkharðsson, Martina Zimmerli,

##### Póra Kristín Gunnarsdóttir & Finnur Ágúst Ingimundarson

20:30 Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

### Wednesday August 7th

#### Don Lockwood Band

21:00 Slippbarinn

#### Party Karaoke With DJ Dóra Júlía & Helga Margrét

21:00 Sæta Svínid

#### Schola Cantorum Choir

12:00 Hallgrímskirkja

#### Reykjavik Classics:

##### Masterworks Of The Piano

12:30 Harpa

### Thursday August 8th

#### Parallel Tales

21:00 Mengi

#### Reykjavik Classics:

##### Masterworks Of The Piano

12:30 Harpa

#### International Organ Summer:

##### Guðný Einarsson

12:00 Hallgrímskirkja

### Sunday August 11th

#### ★ Ed Sheeran

18:30 Laugardalsvöllur

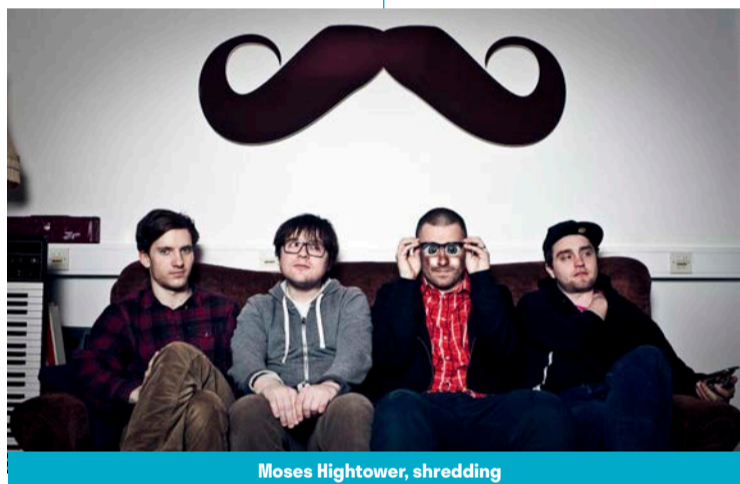
#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Piano Masterclass With Daumants Liepins

9:00 Harpa

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Young Artists II



Moses Hightower, shredding

### Friday August 9th

#### Michael Máni & Lilja María

##### Ásmundsdóttir

21:00 Mengi

#### Velvet Villain, Hemúllinn & Spunk

22:00 Gaukurinn

#### Reykjavik Classics:

##### Masterworks Of The Piano

12:30 Harpa

#### DJ Bob Cluness

21:00 Klaustur Bar

### Saturday August 10th

#### ★ Summer Sci-Fi: Kira Kira & Hrund Árnadóttir

21:00 Mengi

#### ★ Ed Sheeran

18:30 Laugardalsvöllur

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Rising Stars I

12:00 Harpa

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Viola Masterclass With Rita Porfiris

14:00 Harpa

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Rising Stars II

17:00 Harpa

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Young Artists I

19:30 Harpa

#### Singapore Sling & Support

22:00 Gaukurinn

#### International Organ Summer:

##### Susannah Carlsson

12:00 Hallgrímskirkja

#### Reykjavik Classics:

##### Virtuoso Violin Duos

12:30 Harpa

#### DJ Intr0beatz

21:00 Klaustur Bar

13:00 Harpa

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Faculty Concert

16:00 Harpa

#### Reykjavik Classics:

##### Masterworks Of The Piano

12:30 Harpa

#### International Organ Summer:

##### Susannah Carlsson

17:00 Hallgrímskirkja

#### Sunday Jazz: Secret Swing Society

20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús

#### Elin Harpa

15:00 Nordic House

### Monday August 12th

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Rising Stars III

12:00 Harpa

#### New Music For Strings: Corey Fogel

21:00 Mengi

#### Reykjavik Classics:

##### Virtuoso Violin Duos

12:30 Harpa

### Tuesday August 13th

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Rising Stars IV

12:00 Harpa

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Rising Stars V

19:30 Harpa

#### HANS & Mighty Bear Music Video

##### Premiere Concert

21:00 Gaukurinn

#### Karaoke Party!

22:00 Gaukurinn

#### Jazz Night

20:30 Kex Hostel

#### Next-Generation String Artists

20:00 Harpa

#### The Reykjavik Queer Choir & The

##### Rock Creek Singers

20:00 Harpa

#### Reykjavik Classics:

##### Virtuoso Violin Duos

12:30 Harpa

#### Hlín Pétursdóttir Behrens & Ögmundur Þór Jóhannesson

20:30 Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

### Wednesday August 14th

#### ★ ADHD

21:00 Nordic House

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Rising Stars VI

12:00 Harpa

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Rising Stars VII

19:30 Harpa

#### New Music For Strings: Corey Fogel

21:00 Mengi

#### Guð Jon & Högni

19:30 IDNÓ

#### Reykjavik Classics:

##### Virtuoso Violin Duos

12:30 Harpa

#### Don Lockwood Band

21:00 Slippbarinn

#### Party Karaoke With DJ Dóra Júlía & Helga Margrét

21:00 Sæta Svínid

#### Schola Cantorum Choir

12:00 Hallgrímskirkja

### Thursday August 15th

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Rising Stars VIII

12:00 Harpa

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Junior Division

16:30 Harpa

#### ★ Harpa International Music

##### Academy: Festival Gala Concert

19:30 Harpa

#### Smengi #7

16:00 Mengi

#### Óskar Magnússon

20:00 Vínlyl

#### We Will Rock You: Queen Tribute

20:00 Háskólavíó

#### Reykjavik Classics:

##### Virtuoso Violin Duos

12:30 Harpa

#### International Organ Summer:

##### Kitty Kovacs

12:00 Hallgrímskirkja



★ For music listings from August 16th on, check out [happening.grapevine.is](http://happening.grapevine.is) or our app Appening, available on iOS and Android





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Mr. Silla: easier to pronounce than Sigurlaug Gísladóttir

# The Renegade Mister

The overdue return of Mr. Silla

Words: John Rogers Photo: Art Bicnick

mantra in the studio, bumming out about writing lyrics. It became about that it's hard, and what are the ways people get out of that trap. There's advice from David Byrne and David Lynch—and me—repeated as a long chant.

Another song is about the trans experience. "I was listening to a lot of interviews about being transgender, especially as a young person," Silla continues. "I was thinking about the experience of not feeling seen by the people you love the most, and how you react to that in your relationships growing up. So there's a song about that."

### Album

'Hands on Hands' is out in September. Follow @mistersilla on Instagram and @sillasilla on Facebook for updates

Mr. Silla's new single is an unexpected pop banger. A far cry from the largely downtempo and emotional sound of her eponymous 2015 debut, "Naruto (say you wanna run away)" is three and a half minutes of unabashedly summery dance-pop. Its carefree and catchy central refrain seems both tongue in cheek—check out those Ibiza pan-pipe trills—and simultaneously completely earnest.

It's Silla's first solo release since 2015, and the first glimpse of her new album 'Hands on Hands.'

"I think I went both ways with this," she says, sipping a beer in the summer sun. "Some of the new album is way weirder than before and some of it is way poppier. The first record was such a specific moment—it was all about the same thing. And this is me exploring other things."

### All the way there

Silla seems to have avoided "difficult second album" syndrome. After sketching out some tracks in London, she went in for a studio session in her adopted hometown of Berlin with Sam Slater, an engineer who has worked with such luminaries as Jóhann Jóhannsson, Ben Frost and Hildur Guðnadóttir.

"It actually didn't take long to make it," she smiles. "We were going to do three or four songs for an EP, for fun. And before we knew it we'd made a whole record."

The aesthetic swerve, says Silla, was spontaneous. "It was exploratory. I wanted to see where things would go, and then follow the ideas through. I wanted to take them all the way there."

### Self-help mantra

Building 'Hands on Hands' also involved creating fresh visual and lyrical worlds. "The title track is about how you fit your creative life into your everyday life," says Silla. "Because it's always supposed to be this moment. It's like a self-help

### Extreme makeup

The visuals around the album are another departure. During the crowdfunding campaign to create the album, Silla created "extreme makeup looks"—partially inspired by drag—with one persona for each song.

"It's been growing alongside the music," she says. "Some of these looks were super literal, but sometimes abstract. My favourite was the character that's been in the sun too long and had too many vodka energy drinks, and got extremely sunburned."

With her prefix of "Mister," and her visual gender-play, there are a lot of queer vibes swirling around the new album. "I do identify as queer," says Silla, "which might seem funny to say when you're in a straight relationship. But [my husband] Tyler and I are both on that spectrum. He really enjoys traditionally feminine things, and people might see me as a more masculine woman. It's a good fit." She smiles, momentarily embodying the carefree spirit of her new single. "That's just how life goes." 🍷

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Behind the wizard's mask

# Everything Will Be All Right

K.óla on her brand new album and playing with Björk

Words: Phil Uwe Widiger Photo: Art Bicnick

## Album

“Allt verður alltilæ” is out now at [post-dreifing.bandcamp.com](http://post-dreifing.bandcamp.com). Contact K.óla through Facebook to purchase a handmade physical copy

K.óla is Katrín Ólafsdóttir, a 22-years-young artist who just released her anticipated new album ‘Allt verður alltilæ.’ It features seven heartfelt songs, full of cool bass riffs, catchy melodies and honest lyrics. And it’s all thanks to chocolate and boring piano practices. And six cats. Katrín really likes cats.

## Least Netflix study break ever

“That’s how I started making music—being bad at practicing piano,” Katrín laughs. When she was around eight years old, she studied piano but instead of practicing, she quickly started writing her own songs. Katrín also belonged to a children’s choir, which she mainly enjoyed because of the hot chocolate that was served after rehearsals. She went on to join the band Milkhouse and today studies composition at the Iceland University of the Arts.

During a chill study-break, Katrín finished the new album and went to New York to appear with

her choir Hamrahliðarkórinn at eight of Björk’s ‘Cornucopia’ concerts.

“That was like the best month of my life so far,” Katrín beams. “Björk is one of my idols. She is always developing, and she is not afraid to go her own way. I also love how she expresses emotions—both lyrically and musically.”

## Of wine glasses and glass castles

Whereas “K.óla” was first invented as a moniker for signing Katrín’s artworks, it rapidly became the name for any output that Katrín thought was “cool or fun.” In 2017, she unofficially released the album ‘Glasmanía,’ which focused on playing wine glasses. In fact, one of the songs from that album, “Glerkastalinn,” is also featured on ‘Allt verður alltilæ.’

“Some of the songs were already out, but I wasn’t completely happy with them,” says Katrín. “So I decided to finish this bundle of songs and throw it out there and start something new.”

The writing for the new album

began around two years ago when Katrín purchased an electric bass and began to learn how to play it. She explains that these songs all belong to the same period in her life. “They were all about being young and not knowing what you want or what other people expect of you,” she says.

## Behind the spotlight

‘Allt verður alltilæ’ literally means “everything will be okay,” which has been a guiding mantra through Katrín’s life. “It’s like a reminder to myself when I get stressed about things,” she explains. “Some of the lyrics are very honest and it’s sometimes scary to say them. But I think it’s easier to say them in a song than reading them out loud on stage.” Developing her visual art and stage costumes also serves as a means to maintain distance between the persona in the spotlight and the one who writes the lyrics behind the scenes.

## Another album?!

The last track of the album, called “Bros í sólina,” is a string-driven ballad that is an ode to friendship. It also serves as a bridge to a new album that will see the light of day this November.

“It’s a very different atmosphere,” Katrín finishes. Like her musical heroine, it seems K.óla will continue to develop in fresh and interesting directions. ♡

[gpv.is/music](http://gpv.is/music)  
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# WELCOME TO HAFNARFJÖRÐUR Harbour Village

Harbour Village is the perfect place to explore on foot, with a lively harbour, vibrant town centre and curious culture.

Experience the town through its art and historical artefacts, at two museums offering free entry to numerous exhibitions around town.

Hafnarfjörður is also home to three fantastic geothermal pools, all with their own character, so be sure to take a dip!

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Sölvi Helgason

25.05.–  
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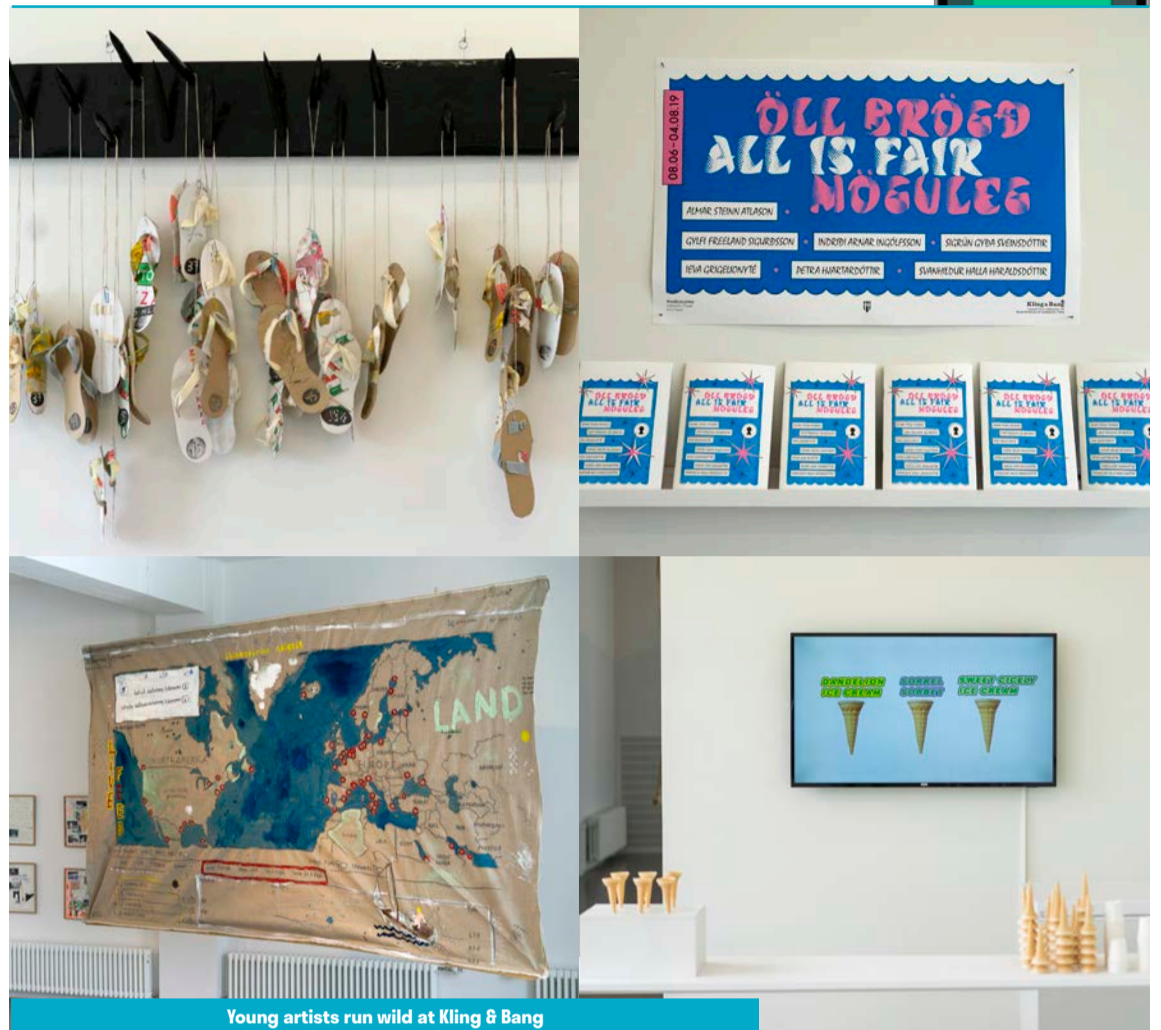
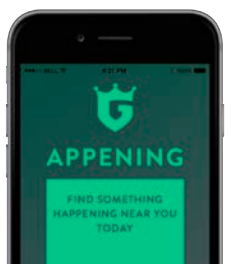
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6 June - 12 August 2019  
**B.INGRID OLSON**  
*Fingered Eyed*

# Art

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Young artists run wild at Kling & Bang

## VISIT KÓPAVOGUR CULTURE HOUSES AND EXPERIENCE

Gerðarsafn  
Kópavogur Art Museum



**OUTLINE**  
**06.04.-08.09.19**

&

Náttúrufræðistofa Kópavogs  
Natural History Museum of Kópavogur

**MANY FACES  
OF NATURE  
& MORE**



Salurinn Concert Hall  
Bókasafn Kópavogs Kópavogur Public Library

**MENNINGARHUSIN.  
KÓPAVOGUR.IS**

Hamraborg 4-6 Kópavogur

Bus 1, 2, 4, 28, 35 & 36

## Rooms Full Of Potential

The smell of sunscreen and the taste of  
weeds at Kling & Bang

Words & Photos: **Berglind Jóna Hlynsdóttir**

### Exhibition

'All Is Fair' is showing until August  
4th at Kling & Bang. Further info:  
[this.is/klingogbang](https://this.is/klingogbang)

Seven promising recent graduates come together in 'All is Fair', an exhibition at the spirited Kling & Bang gallery curated by Hekla Dögg Jónsdóttir, Ingibjörg Sigurjónsdóttir and Una Björg Magnúsdóttir.

"What connects them is their easy going attitude, and low key installations," says Una. "The core of the work—which possibly defines the spirit of the times—matters more than their presentations. The idea of 'the genius' has left." She pauses. "Except when it comes to Almar Steinn Atlason. There, the artist is still very present and approaching, as he states in the work."

### Spikes, sunscreen and weeds

We're first invited to try on pairs of delicate sandals made from used pizza boxes and hung on spikes reminiscent of a torture chamber. Indriði Arnar Ingólfsson's poetic use of cheap, ready-made materials is reminiscent of conceptual artists like Rivane Neuenschwander and Art Provera.

Many of the works in the show have interactive elements, and play with our senses—such as in the ice cream of Ieva Grigelionytė, which is flavoured with common roadside weeds. In 'Scent of Summer' by Svanhildur Halla Haraldsdóttir we're invited to handle small soap-like bars made from sunscreen that function as time capsules of summer. We listen to a soundtrack that tunes us in to the smells and environs of The Marshall House and its surroundings. There's something strange and exciting in this mixture.

### Tiny archives and a sailboat from Sicily

New York-based Petra Hjartardóttir continues this underlining of the everyday, using a combination of decorative metalwork with hobby clay, and enveloping sandbags with velvet cushion ornamentation. There is a tiny archive of "Personal Achievements" by Gylfi Freeland Sigurðsson, which—with its play on size—makes people's mundane achievements seem monumental.

Almar Steinn Atlason has been known as "Almar in the box" since he spent several days nude living in a glass box in a previous artwork. In "The Artist Approaches" he sails from Sicily to Reykjavík, and we see a map of his route and handwritten letters he mails along the way. There's an undertone of art historical irony, referencing Jan Bas Adder's 'In Search of the Miraculous'—during which the artist was lost at sea and never found—and other travel and postcard documentation works from the '60s and '70s, mixed with real sentiments. It's an impressive undertaking, but lacks original framing.

### A stimulus package

In "Stimulus" Sigrún Gyða Sveinsdóttir deals with the need for encouragement, and the correlation between creative recognition and stamina. "I got a lecture at work from a life coach dealing with workplace moral," Sigrún explains. "He only used sports metaphors and endlessly stated that we needed to be a good team. I wanted to transfer this into the context of the arts."

In the work, we see a video of a life coach, dressed in sporting attire, urging the artist on. Next to it a projection runs, showing a musical ensemble and an opera singer wearing sweatbands. They perform the score we see on the wall, entitled "Tell Me a Bit More," and cheer frantically for each other. Having a need for such stimulus is often looked down upon, but has an important role to play in enabling the artist to push on; here, it's both sincere and humorous.

'All is Fair' has hit and miss qualities, but the rooms are full of potential. The lineup is exciting, and the artists are definitely ones to watch in the future. 🐾



## Our Picks

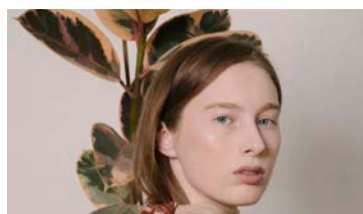


### ★ Plan-B Art Festival

August 8th-11th - Borgarnes

A grassroots artistic endeavor, Plan-B offers a venue for experimental and established

artists will showcase their works in unconventional exhibition spaces around the town of Borgarnes in a lively celebration of forward-looking art. The idea behind the festival began with the wish to push culture and art to the forefront, ahead of the more traditional agricultural and industrial roots of Borgarnes. It was founded by locals who wanted to enrich the local area with an annual cultural experience, all the while offering a space for contemplating the history of Borgarnes as an industrial town. This year's iteration should redefine innovation. See you there. **CES**



### ★ MORRA

Until September 25th - Museum Of Design And Applied Art  
Icelandic flora finds a new home on silk and paper. Say what? Yup, All



### ★ Icelandic Meat Soup

Until September 8th - Reykjavik Museum Of Photography  
Iceland in the 70s and 80s—long hair and printed buttons included—is brought back to life by photographer Kristján Haraldsson, who uses his photos to articulate the practice of photography. **HJC**



### ★ Fingered Eyed

Until August 10th - i8 Gallery  
B. Ingrid Olson's classification-defying exhibit considers the nature of the dual through symmetry, form and function. Particularly striking are the 'Photographic Objects' which "summon multiple truths simultaneously." **HJC**

## August 2nd—August 15th

# Art Listings

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

### Opening

#### RÝMD GALLERY

##### Pastelería Ideal

Here, sculpture and video installations perfectly replicate a Mexico City bakery... but in Iceland. The exhibit will only be open on August 2nd from 16:00 to 20:00.  
• Runs until September 1st, 2019

### Ongoing

#### 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 MUSEUM

##### 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 Reykjavik'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

##### 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.  
• Runs until August 25th, 2019

#### REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

##### I Remember the Mountain

Weather conditions, seasons, lightning, natural forces, and human experiences coalesce into

an exhibition of photographs cum paintings. Analog images reworked reveal the universal vastness and ever-changing qualities of nature.  
• Runs until August 21st, 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

##### 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 - Hz

In a semi-dark dungeon, two mighty subwoofers positioned over a vast tank of black water fill the air with an almost unbearably low hum,

generating a slight ripple over the tank and making you feel like your brain is slowly dribbling out of your ears in the process.  
• 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

##### MORRA

Fashion designer Signý Þórhallsdóttir takes over the lobby to work with Icelandic flora on silk and paper for her MORRA collection.  
• Runs until September 25th, 2019

##### Behind The Scenes: Archiving A Ceramic Collection

In 1979, Anna Eyjólfsdóttir began to collect ceramic pieces by Icelandic artists. In 2017, the Museum of acquired her collection. Currently, the museum is cataloguing the collection in front of your eyes.  
• Runs until September 25th, 2019

#### 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

#### 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

##### William Morris: Let Beauty Rule!

English artist William Morris was a true Icelandophile, and even translated the Sagas. Here, see original drawings of Morris's patterns, wallpapers and work processes, paintings, drawings, and more.  
• Runs until October 6th, 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

#### 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

##### Culture Hunt

This Culture Hunt will lead you in-between the Kópavogur Culture Houses, where in each location guests will be asked to solve a puzzle or answer a question on nature, art or music. It is available in English, Icelandic and Polish and is free of charge  
• Ending date TBA

#### 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

#### LIVING ART MUSEUM

##### And what then...?

Can art change what will happen? Can art show us something that might never happen? Go to this exhibition to find out. 'And what then?' That's for you to answer.  
• Runs until August 14th, 2019

#### ÁRBÆR OPEN AIR MUSEUM

##### HEIMAT: Two Worlds

To mark the 70th anniversary of

the arrival in 1949 of a group of Germans to who travelled to Iceland aboard the Esja ship, this exhibition presents photographs of their journey made by Marzena Skubatz.  
• Runs until October 31st, 2019

#### HVERFISGALLERÍ

##### Corrections

Sigurður Árni Sigurðsson's exhibition presents work based on photographs and postcards that the artist has collected all over Europe over the last three decades. Come soothe your wanderlust.  
• Runs until August 17th, 2019

#### REYKJAVÍK ROASTERS

##### Í Kring 02: Sigurður Ámundason

Sigurður's drawings display classic battles between good and evil that dive into the deepest pits of his subconscious. Ooh, spooky stuff.  
• Runs until August 21st, 2019

#### WIND AND WEATHER WINDOW GALLERY

##### Nonverbal Dialogues

This site specific installation observes and explores how different found objects relate to each other. The objects create a new meaning, a nonverbal dialogue in the space between them.  
• Runs until August 21st, 2019

#### ÍSLENSK GRAFÍK

##### Alternating Currents

A 35 square metre red curtain printed Iceland's imaginary weather patterns in cobalt blue takes over Íslensk Grafík  
• Runs until July 26th, 2019

## MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART HÖNNUNARSAFN ÍSLANDS

Garðatorg 1 • Garðabær  
Open Tue - Sun 12 - 17  
[www.honnunarsafn.is](http://www.honnunarsafn.is)  
@honnunarsafn

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Exhibitions:  
**Urban Shape**  
Paolo Gianfrancesco

**Behind the Scenes**  
Archiving a ceramic collection

**Morra**  
Signý Þórhallsdóttir  
Designer in residence



CENTERTAINMENT  
events in the ♥ of Reykjavik

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# AUGUST SCHEDULE

AUGUST 15TH, THU  
19.00 - 23.00

CENTERHOTEL MIDGARDUR  
LAUGAVEGUR 120, 105 REYKJAVÍK

DRINK & DRAW  
+ BJÓR & BLÖÐ  
SOCIAL DRAWING

HAPPY HOUR & BAR OFFERS  
FOR ANYONE WHO LIKES TO DOODLE

THURSDAYS  
18.00 - 20.00

CENTERHOTEL MIDGARDUR  
LAUGAVEGUR 120, 105 REYKJAVÍK

MUSIC  
IN THE GARDEN

LIVE MUSIC, HAPPY HOUR & OTHER BAR OFFERS

SATURDAYS  
18.30 - 20.30

SKÝ RESTAURANT & BAR  
INGOLFSSTRÆTI 1, 101 REYKJAVÍK

MUSIC  
IN THE SKY

ÍVAR SÍMONARSON PLAYS LIVE GUITAR



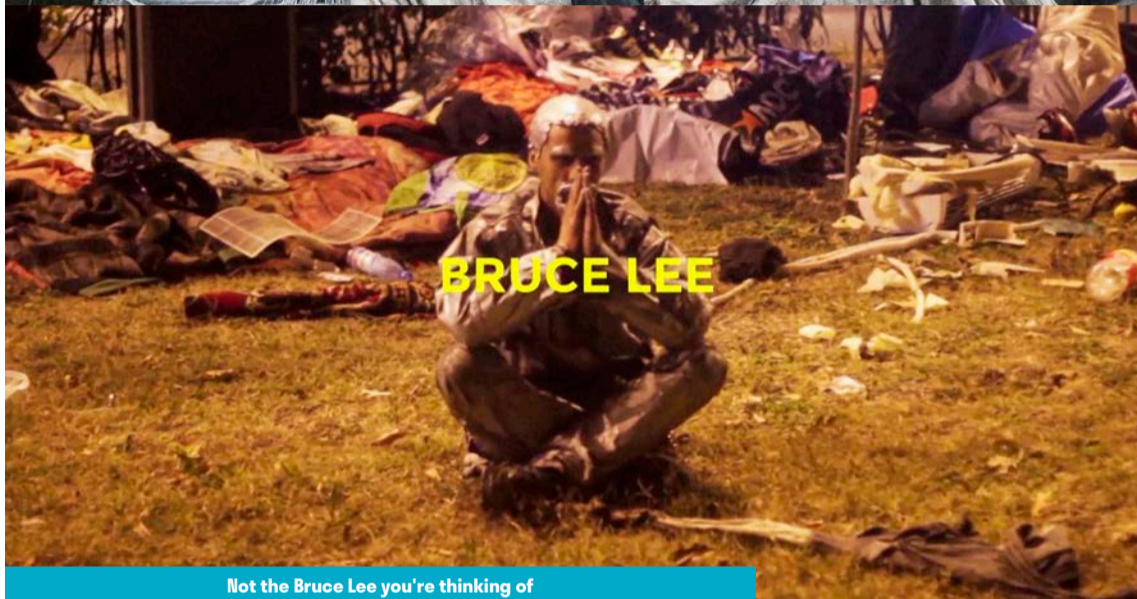
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Not the Bruce Lee you're thinking of

## The Outlaw Is King

'Bruce Lee and the Outlaw' crowned winner of  
the first edition of IceDocs Film Festival

Words: Josie Gaitens Photos: Still from movie

### Film Festival Winner

[IceDocs took place 17th-21st July.](#)  
[Get more info at \[icedocs.is\]\(http://icedocs.is\).](#)

Dutch photographer and filmmaker Joost Vandebreg has won the award for best feature-length documentary at the inaugural IceDocs film festival, for his documentary 'Bruce Lee and the Outlaw.'

The festival took place in Akranes from July 17th to 21st and saw a host of international guests visit the town over the course of the event. The main jury, which consisted of Icelandic filmmaker Anna Þóra Steinþórsdóttir, deputy artistic director of the Edinburgh International Film Festival Diane Henderson and film critic Jessica Kiang, also gave special mention to Macedonian film, 'Honeyland.' 'Haunted' by Christian Einshøj won in the mid-length category, and 'All Inclusive' by Corina Schwingruber Ilić was the favoured short.

### Silver Fagin

'Bruce Lee and the Outlaw' follows the life of Nicu, a Romanian street kid, as he navigates the city of Bucharest and life as a homeless urchin. Supporting

Nicu, who is fondly known as "the outlaw," is a strange and mysterious figure—the eponymous Bruce Lee. No, not the one you're thinking of—this Bruce Lee is a petty criminal covered in silver paint; the self-proclaimed king of the underworld.

In this real-life Oliver Twist he plays the role of Fagin, caring for a raggedy bunch of homeless kids and creating a home for them all in the network of tiny tunnels underneath the city. These cramped and unsuitable quarters turn out to have been built by Ceausescu and were intended to be a central heating system for the city. Throughout the movie, the impact of the fall of communism and the reality it has created for the citizens of Romania is frequently highlighted.

### Hard to watch

There is a real warmth and love between Bruce Lee and his charges, many of whom refer to him as 'dad'. Still, it is incredi-

bly hard to watch as this clearly kind and loving father figure provides Nicu with the silver Aurolac paint he is frequently covered in, so that he can huff it as a drug. Nicu, who it is later revealed is actually 16, appears to be perhaps a nine or ten year old kid. These scenes are difficult, not just because of their content but also because it throws the question of goodness back at the audience. Bruce Lee is the only person who cares about these children and provides them with affection, food and shelter. But his morality, and the viewer's, are constantly called into question throughout the documentary.

**"This Bruce Lee a petty criminal covered in silver paint, the self-proclaimed king of the underworld."**

'Bruce Lee and the Outlaw' is Joost's first foray into documentary filmmaking, but his subjects were already well known to him as he has been chronicling the lives of Romanian street children through his photography since 2011. His sensitivity and familiarity with his chosen topic plays a huge role in how the film develops, but the lack of objectivity does not detract from the thoughtfulness of how the piece is delivered. The award at IceDocs is just the latest in a string of accolades for 'Bruce Lee and the Outlaw'; the documentary has already won at Busan International Film Festival, the International TRT Documentary Awards and Munich International Documentary Festival. ♥

[gpu.is/film](http://gpu.is/film)  
Share this + Archives



## Various Events



So many Pride drag events featuring these lovely monarchs!

### Friday August 2nd

#### Friday Party! 'Stella í Orlofi'

**Screening**  
20:00 Bió Paradís  
**How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes**  
19:00 Harpa  
**Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits**  
19:30 Harpa

### Saturday August 3rd

**How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes**  
19:00 Harpa

### Sunday August 4th

**Guided Tour In English**  
11:00 National Museum Of Iceland  
**Party Bingo With Sigga Kling**  
21:00 Sæta Svinið  
**Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits**  
19:30 Harpa  
**How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes**  
19:00 Harpa  
**Party Pub Quiz**  
21:30 Gaukurinn

### Monday August 5th

**Soulflow: Women & Queer Comedy Night**  
21:00 Gaukurinn  
**Guided Tour (In English!)**  
12:30 Hafnarhús

### Tuesday August 6th

**Funniest Four: Comedy Show**  
21:00 The Secret Cellar

### Wednesday August 7th

**Open Mic Stand-Up Comedy**  
21:00 The Secret Cellar  
**Improv Iceland: Comedy In English!**

20:00 Tjarnarbió  
**Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits**  
19:30 Harpa  
**How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes**  
19:00 Harpa

### Thursday August 8th

**Reykjavik Pride Opening Ceremony**  
21:00 Háskólabíó  
**Queer Literature Walk**  
18:00 Reykjavik City Library  
**My Voices Have Tourettes**  
21:00 The Secret Celler  
**How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes**  
19:00 Harpa

### Friday August 9th

**The Icelandic Royal Drag Competition**  
21:00 Austurbær  
**Friday Party! 'The Rocky Horror Picture Show' Sing-a-Long Screening**  
20:00 Bió Paradís  
**Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits**  
19:30 Harpa  
**The Stonewall Riots**  
12:00 National Museum Of Iceland  
**QueeReads**  
17:00 Tjarnarbió  
**Candle Floating Ceremony For Victims Of Hiroshima & Nagasaki**  
22:30 Tjörninn

### Saturday August 10th

**Pink Party Pride Edition**  
22:00 IDNÓ  
**Drag Brunch**  
13:00 Tjarnarbió  
**Drag Queen Story Hour**  
13:00 Kópavogur Public Library  
**How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes**  
19:00 Harpa

### Sunday August 11th

**Repair Café**  
13:00 Reykjavik Tool Library  
**Party Bingo With Sigga Kling**  
21:00 Sæta Svinið  
**Guided Tour In English**  
11:00 National Museum Of Iceland  
**HANS.mov [night]: 'Mommie Dearest' Screening**  
21:00 Gaukurinn  
**Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits**  
19:30 Harpa  
**How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes**  
19:00 Harpa  
**Queer Short Film Marathon**  
14:00 Tjarnarbió  
**'People Like Tha: The Plague' Screening**  
20:00 Bió Paradís

### Monday August 12th

**Queer Stand-Up Night**  
21:00 Tjarnarbió  
**Soulflow: Women & Queer Comedy Night**  
21:00 Gaukurinn  
**Guided Tour (In English!)**  
12:30 Hafnarhús  
**'Ondt í Røven' Screening**  
18:30 Tjarnarbió

### Tuesday August 13th

**'Everybody's Talking About Jamie' Theatre Screening**  
20:00 Bió Paradís  
**Funniest Four: Comedy Show**  
21:00 The Secret Cellar  
**Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits**  
19:30 Harpa  
**Queer Hike To Vífilsfell**  
13:00 N1 Gas Station In Ártúnsbrekka

### Wednesday August 14th

**Open Mic Stand-Up Comedy**  
21:00 The Secret Cellar  
**How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes**  
19:00 Harpa  
**Drag-Súgur Pride Show**  
21:00 Gaukurinn  
**Queer Sex Education**  
16:30 National Museum Of Iceland  
**Queer Ladies Night**  
20:00 Miami

### Thursday August 15th

**Mommie Queerest**  
20:00 Tjarnarbió  
**Mental Health Of Young LGBT+ People Discussion**  
16:30 National Museum Of Iceland  
**LGBT+ Asylum Seekers In Iceland**  
12:00 National Museum Of Iceland  
**Pub Quiz**  
20:00 Loft  
**My Voices Have Tourettes**  
21:00 The Secret Cellar  
**How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes**  
19:00 Harpa  
**Queer Nightlife Stories Walk**  
18:00 Starts At Hlemmur



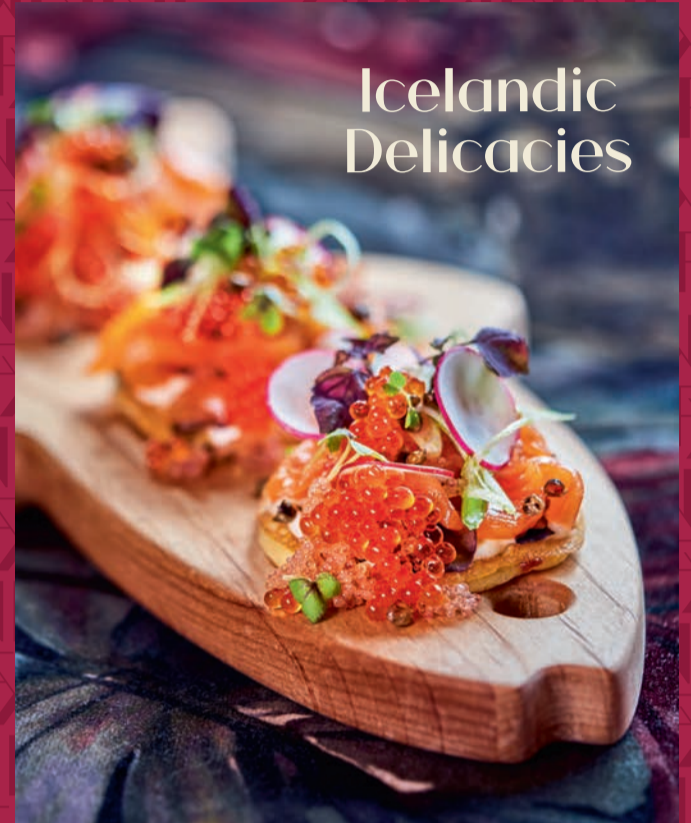
★ For event listings from August 16th on, check out [happening.grapevine.is](http://happening.grapevine.is) or our app Appening, available on iOS and Android

# FJALLKONAN

KRÁ & KRÆSINGAR

Fjallkonan is a new lively restaurant & pub in the heart of Reykjavik offering a selection of Icelandic and international dishes from local ingredients.

Casual and cosy atmosphere yet still fun and festive. Stop by for snacks & drinks, lunch or dinner.



## Icelandic Delicacies



## Must try dishes

### LAMB & FLATBREAD

Slow cooked lamb, traditional Icelandic flatbread from the Westfjords, carrot purée, pickled red onions, horseradish sauce

### ARCTIC CHARR & BLINI

Lightly cured arctic charr, chickpea blini, horseradish sauce, roe, crispy lentils, yuzu-elderflower dressing

### ICELANDIC PLATTER

- > Puffin, crowberry gel
- > Minke whale, malt glaze
- > Lamb tartar, chive mayo

### THE LAMB BURGER

Bacon, mushroom & date duxelle, pickled red onions, pickled cucumber, rucola, smoked cheese, fries

### SKYR ETON MESS CHEESECAKE

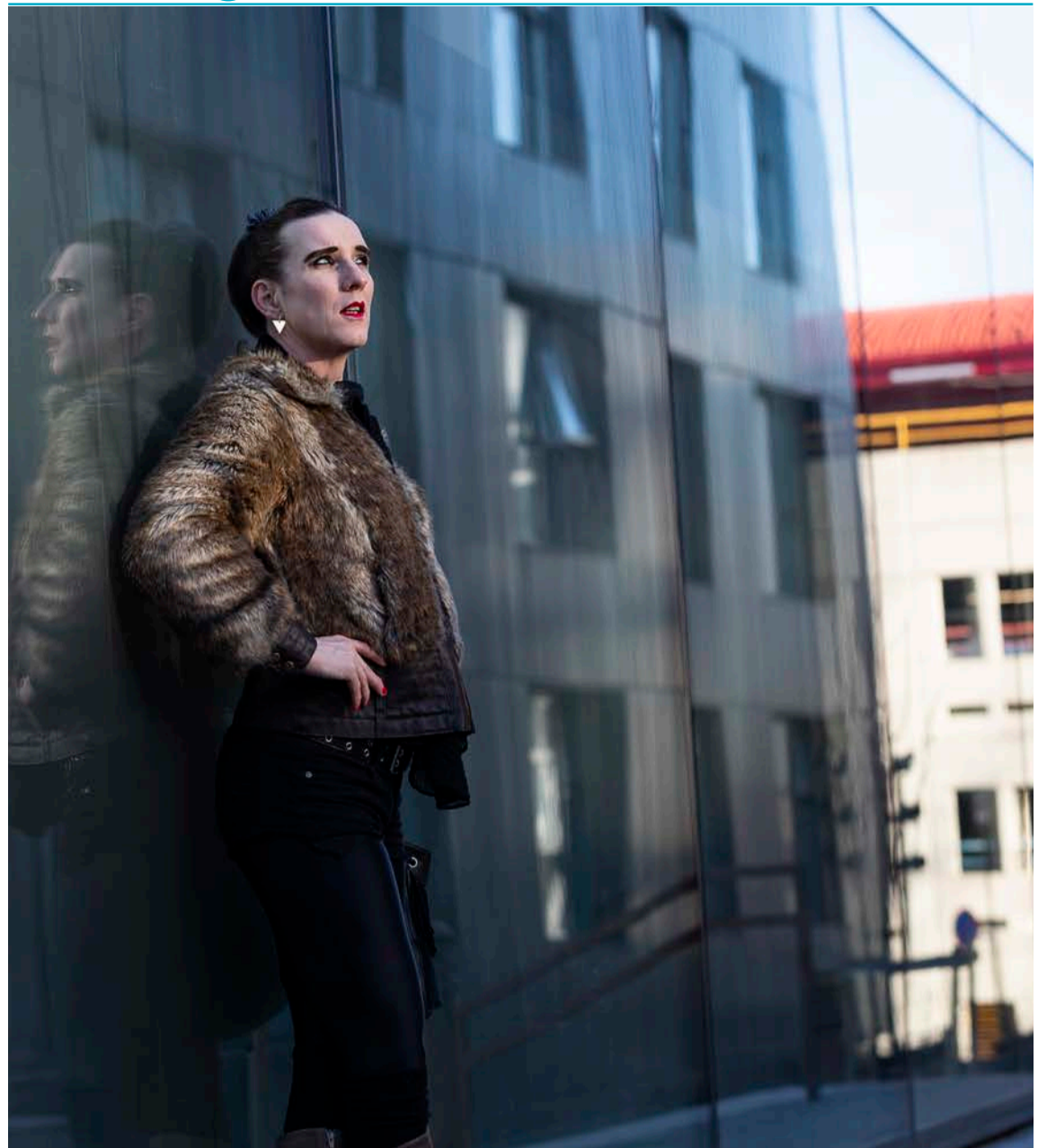
White chocolate "Skyr" mousse, meringue, raspberries, raspberry sauce

**Happy Hour 15-17 every day**

Draft beer, house wine by glass and cocktails – **halfprice!**

FJALLKONAN WELCOMES YOU!





How does one become a Skaði? Read on, dear reader, read on....

**sumac**  
GRILL + DRINKS

## Queen, Bach, Zen And Metal

A few of Skaði Þórðardóttir's favourite things

Words: **Andie Fontaine** Photo: **Art Bicnick**

### Musician

Follow Skaði at [skadi.bandcamp.com](http://skadi.bandcamp.com), and hear her debut EP at [falkworld.bandcamp.com](http://falkworld.bandcamp.com)

*Skaði Þórðardóttir is a musician and visual artist who has been making serious waves in Iceland's alternative music scene and gaining growing positive attention abroad. She is also trans, unabashedly queer, and continues to wow crowds with her explosively energetic performance style. We spoke a bit with her about what has helped make her the artist she is today.*

### Bulldozer flowers and Duran Duran

One of my first memories is of being drawn into a painting. My mother tells me there was this painting of some flowers, and one of those flowers looked like a bulldozer to me, so I was always pointing it out and saying, "That's not a flower; it's a bulldozer." I think in many ways how I view creativity is seeing something that is, but also seeing the possibility of it being something else. You can arrange the cutlery on your table into a fortress, making the forks charge the knives, or maybe the dishes are going to go for a dance. Later, this included getting together with friends, pick-

ing up some pieces of wood and pretending they were instruments and we were Duran Duran. It's seeing everything as something and creating what I wanted to be.

### From Queen to Bach

Rock and metal was always very appealing to me. My first favourite artist, possibly influenced by my older brother, was Queen, which will always be one of my favourite bands. Then came The Clash, Deep Purple, Uriah Heep. I also picked up classical music early on. My parents had a Best Of classical composers album, and from that I started listening to a lot of Beethoven, Wagner, Handel and Bach.

Death metal, the gateway to dance. Then came death metal—bands like Obituary, Sepultura—which I still listen to a lot at the gym. My gym playlist usually has one or two Sepultura songs. Through death metal, I came into the industrial scene; KMFDM, Ministry, Nine Inch Nails, Skinny Puppy, Front 242, and all that kind of metal merged with electronica. That opened up a whole pathway into electronic and dance

music, especially with The Prodigy merging dance music with rock. That was like heroin for me.

### Balkan magic

There was one movie that opened me up to one of my favourite music styles, Balkan folk. "Underground" is still one of my favourite movies of all time, because you laugh, you cry, it's a very dramatic story placed within the horrors of war, but still there's humour. It's such a wonderful movie. I like all the work of Emir Kusturica, and Goran Bregović remains one of my favourite composers. I really enjoy the energy of Balkan music, even if I'm not sure it makes its way into my music.

**"Instead of looking at the finger of the master, looking at where they are pointing."**

Zen and the art of being yourself. When I went into recovery, I became very spiritual, and starting reading a lot about Taoism and Zen. There was one story from Zen, that concludes, "instead of looking at the finger of the master, looking at where they are pointing." I take this to mean work from your passion rather than copy what you like. Allow art and what you like to influence you, but then go on and create. ♡

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Elías Knörr chose his mask over a garbage bag

## The Books Come Out

Reykjavík Pride's QueeReads features  
Elías Knörr and more

Words: **a rawlings** Photo: **Art Bicnick**

### Literary Reading

QueeReads takes place at  
Tjarnarbíó on August 9th at 17:00

"We just do this for the party," Bjarndís Tómasdóttir laughs. "That's a meme."

Along with Elísabet Thorddsen, Bjarndís co-organizes QueeReads, the annual literary gem of Reykjavík Pride. The mood is buoyant between the organizers and author Elías Knörr as they discuss their upcoming event.

"It's important for queer people to know what there is to see and read," explains Elísabet. "Often you seek that when you are queer; you want to mirror yourself. It's very important to have a queer event."

Bjarndís concurs. "As a queer person, when all the books come out, you always notice the queer authors or queer materials, so you always remember those because it reflects your own reality a bit more."

QueeReads will feature readings by Anna Stína Gunnarsdóttir, Ari B. Eggertsson, Elías Knörr, Guðjón Ragnar Jónasson, Ragnar Blöndal, and Þorsteinn Vilhjálmsson. The band Ukulellur will perform, and Samtökin '78 will present details of their book club, which is open to all.

### The return of Elías Knörr

The organizers agree on how much they enjoy having Elías Knörr as a recurring performer at QueeReads. A fixture for more than a decade on Iceland's literary scene, Elías excels at queering the notion of both authorial identity and what literature can be through his work as an avant-garde poet. He is also active as a translator and plays with artifi-

cial languages. Over the next year, he will participate with British, Norwegian, Swedish, and Icelandic LGBTQ+ writers and dancers in the international project 'To write dance and to dance writing.'

For the upcoming QueeReads appearance, Bjarndís encourages Elías by saying, "There is no pressure. You have charisma."

"My charisma didn't work in Kópavogur," rebuts Elías.

"Yeah, but that's because you had a gimp mask," Bjarndís laughs. They are referring to a recent poetry contest in which Elías won a prize, for which he performed incognito.

"The idea was like I was the text, so I didn't have any face. When you give the text a context, it gets a voice." For QueeReads, Elías will wear the mask again. "It's either that or a garbage bag. But I have to find a way to be more comfortable in the garbage bag."

### Passport

"We don't want to police what people say or do," says Bjarndís. "It's just the queerness that matters, either of the author or the text. We don't police that either, you know. 'Are you queer? Really? How many women have you slept with?' We don't do that because that would be weird, right?"

Elísabet extends the joke, "Oh, you didn't pass the test," and Elías rapidly riffs, "Here, have my queer passport with every boundary crossed in society."

On a serious note, Bjarndís comments, "There's a dilemma where authors maybe don't want to be identified specifically as queer authors." Elísabet agrees: "Just as authors."

"That's a political conversation that we should have," Bjarndís

affirms. "But there are different opinions on this, of course."

### Encouraging new writers

The poetry competition affiliated with QueeReads—with an August 1st submission deadline—started a couple of years ago when the organizers noted that it was harder than they liked finding queer authors to perform. "We knew there had to be people out there who needed encouragement or a platform," Bjarndís says.

Elías emphasizes the importance of experimenting with language in non-conventional ways, especially Icelandic. "It's important that when you are a writer, you are creating language. With an endangered language community, like the Icelandic one, it is people's duty to keep on creating language and get to know their language a little bit more. Translators and teenagers are going to be the people to save the language, if it is to be saved."

### How to be a human through literature

"Not so many years ago, studies were made with teenagers before and after reading, for example, Harry Potter," Elías recalls, reflecting on the capacity of literature to grow empathy and tolerance in readers. "Their empathy muscles stretched, and they became more tolerant towards other people after reading. The word 'menning' in Icelandic can be understood as 'becoming a person.' Culture and the act of becoming a human being is very literal in Icelandic—mennta, menna."

Bjarndís also cites a connection between reading and becoming. "Elísabet and I are definitely both avid readers but for me, at least, it's the queer angle that is super important. And this is Iceland. We still understand, I hope, the importance of literature. You learn how to be a human being by reading." She pauses. "That's another meme."

They erupt in laughter. The party has already begun. ☘

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



# Mighty Bear

Words:  
Hannah Jane Cohen

Photo:  
Art Bicnick

Mighty Bear is the dark queen of the Reykjavik electronic scene.

**Mighty Bear is wearing:**

- ▶ Custom made dress by Lovisa Tómasdóttir
- ▶ Headpiece and mask by Hysteria Machine
- ▶ Shoes are just generic.
- ▶ Arm pieces bought somewhere online.
- ▶ This is my natural hair.

**Describe your style in five words:**

- David Bowie.
- Marilyn Manson.
- Goth Party.
- Depression.

**Favourite stores in Reykjavik:**

Rokk & Rómantik. Most of my shit is from them. I also like the Red Cross and Fatamarkaðurinn by Hlemmur.

**Favourite piece:**

My favourite thing I have is probably the fringe dress I wore last year during Airwaves that Lovisa (who made this dress) made for me. It's almost 4 kilos of pure fringe.

**Something I would never wear:**

Colour.

**Lusting after:**

There is this new mask from Hysteria Machine that I am just dying to get, but it is super expensive. Buy my merch. 🐻

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# Food

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More than a cookbook

## More Than A Cookbook

The Simbahöllin cookbook wins big at the Gourmand International Awards

Words: Shruthi Basappa Photo: Art Bicnick

### Café & Cookbook

Visit Simbahöllin at Fjarðargata 5, Þingeyri, and order a copy of the book at [simbahollin.is](http://simbahollin.is)

When my editor called to let me know that the 'Simbahöllin Cookbook' (written by Janne Kristensen and Isobel Grad) had taken third place at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards 2019 for desserts, I immediately regretted not having bought the book while at the Simbahöllin café in Þingeyri a month ago.

It's easy to see why Janne and her husband decided to stay in the cute-as-a-button town. Their love for Iceland runs deep, and the couple leapt at the chance to restore the stately Sigmundarbúð—built in 1915—to its former glory. They opened its doors to the community in the form of cool and casual café-restaurant Simbahöllin.

That was back in 2009. Since

then, the café has grown to include an artist's residency, a community centre, a local gallery and an overall tourist attraction for the town. Yet another addition to this significant labour of love is the simply titled Simbahöllin Cookbook. The attractive book bears the same mossy shade and timber-panel stripes as the café itself.

### A memento

I wonder why they wrote a cookbook. "Isobel has been working with us for a while now," says Janne, "and we were always experimenting in the kitchen. I guess we wanted to write the story of the house, and the coffeehouse. We like working together, so this idea came about naturally."

It's also a great souvenir. "We wanted to give people something to remember their time here," says Isobel. "It's a practical object, and we'd seen visitors taking the leaflets about the house while they were at the café. They wanted something to take home."

The book is much more than a collection of recipes (although there are plenty of those). The pictures show the surrounding landscape changing from summer green to winter white, and traditions like the annual sheep round up, the swimming pool coffee club, and the local "day of the accordion."

It's a heartfelt tribute to the building, the community, and the town. "That's the reason we included more than just recipes," says Isobel. "The funny thing," adds Janne, "is that locals have started to send the book to their relatives and friends elsewhere. The book has become a documentation of life in Þingeyri. We didn't anticipate that."

### Rhubarb Jam

The artwork between the recipes gives one cause to pause. They pay homage to the star ingredients of Iceland—berries, lamb, and fresh seafood—and provide ways to bottle the short window of abundance, such as Simbahöllin's famous rhubarb jam. "It's such a unique jam recipe," says Isobel. "When you eat it with the waffles, the flavour shines through."

Unlike traditional Icelandic recipes, where the rhubarb is cooked over a long period and slowed to a treacly darkness, here the recipe calls for the rhubarb to be cooked only until it is softened, preserving the rhubarb's calming coral colour. The blueberry coffee crumble cake is another recipe that the authors highly recommend.

Currently the book is only on sale at Simbahöllin, and internationally via their website—but the writers hope to make it more widely available in the near future. Simbahöllin cookbook is an honest memento of Icelandic country life.

We can think of no better alternative to plastic puffins than an award-winning, homegrown book. ♡

"Locals have started to ship the book out to relatives. It's a document of life in Þingeyri."

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The Fisherman empire mothership in Suðureyri

# Fish Stew From Heaven

Falling into a plokkfiskur-induced trance at Fisherman

Words & Photo: John Rogers

## Café

Fisherman is on Aðalgata in Suðureyri, with a Reykjavík branch on Hagamelur in Vesturbær. Their products are on sale in Hagkaup and Super 1. Get more info at [fisherman.is](http://fisherman.is).

Ah, plokkfiskur, that most reliable of Icelandic comfort foods. Take some delicious hunks of fresh white fish, mash it together with steaming-hot potatoes and a bit of butter and milk, season to taste, and you're good to go.

Seems simple enough, right? But like many national staples, plokkfiskur ("plucked fish," translated literally) is easy to make but difficult to perfect. It has also been endlessly bastardised over the years. There are the dairy queen versions, creamed to death in an attempted shortcut to comfort-food satisfaction; the UK-style fisherman's pie with the wanton addition of smoked fish, prawns and bechamel sauce; and peppered-for-the-gods remixes, in which spice hides the flavour (or, often, the lack thereof).

You'll find no such populism, however, at the Fisherman café in Suðureyri. Billed as "A simple gourmet meal made exclusively from first-class produce," their take on this Icelandic classic is about as traditional as you can get.

## Fish empire

Cruising into the tiny Westfjords town of Suðureyri, the Fisherman empire seems to have taken over

the town. Hotel apartment buildings bear the Fisherman logo on both sides of the high street, and there's a Fisherman café and welcome centre on one side of the street, and an equally pristine canteen on the other.

We're the only people in the café



The best Plokkfiskur in Iceland?

on a cloudy July afternoon. The airy space is dotted with shelves full of Fisherman products: dried cod fillets, monkfish and cod liver, and other mysterious ingredients that most passers-by probably wouldn't know what to do with. The menu, however, is simple: carrot soup, plokkfiskur, a plokkfiskur sandwich, or fishcakes.

## No messin'

This well-designed and whiskery, callous-handed, still-smelling-like-the-harbour, no messin' brand has clearly brainwashed me, because I order without even considering the options. It has to

be the original, the best, the comfort-food champion of Iceland: the plokkfiskur.

The dish arrives quickly, steaming hot from the kitchen, served with a humble salad, a thick slice of ruðbrauð—Icelandic rye bread—and a side of tartar sauce. It is, of course, as understated as can be. The strands of cods are fine, and the potato smooth and buttery, with occasional fragments for texture. The seasoning is light, and the racy inclusion of the tartare adds an acidic zip to each forkful.

## Ultimate confidence

Finishing the plate is like coming out of a plokkfiskur-induced trance. How, I wonder, could such a truly basic dish be quite so absorb-



# SNAPS

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# Travel

## All That Glitters

A road trip around the otherworldly Diamond Circle

Words: Felix Robertson Photos: Art Bicnick



**Distance from Reykjavik:**  
388 km

**How to get there:**  
Start at Akureyri and choose your own adventure

**Accommodation provided by:**

[Akureyribackpackers.com](http://Akureyribackpackers.com) & [Fosshotel.is](http://Fosshotel.is)

**Car provided by:**  
[Hertz.is](http://Hertz.is)

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You don't need to spend long on the Diamond Circle—northern Iceland's greatest sightseeing route—to realise that it's a different world to the neatly kempt and touristed Golden Circle. Deep in the rugged countryside of the north, everything is rougher, stranger and often even more beautiful.

We started out from Akureyri, northern Iceland's largest town and a good base for the Diamond Circle. After passing through the Vaðlaheiðargöng tunnel—note, despite minimal signage, you have to pay online to avoid a fine—and were soon deep in the wilds of the north, a thick mist contributing to what was an already disorienting landscape.

### The old gods and new

Our first stop was the waterfall Goðafoss, so named for the statues of pagan gods that Icelanders threw into the waters after they converted to Christianity. Looking down into the seething torrents of the semi-circular cascade, you could well imagine why a near religious significance was ascribed to this place.

40km eastward lies Lake Mývatn, one of the landmark sites of the Diamond Circle. It's technically just one

lake, but it's so pocked by outcrops and islands that it feels like many more. We stopped at Skútustaðagígar and walked amongst the pseudo-craters—bizarre rock formations caused by lava violently exploding when it reached the lakewater. From the top of these craters, Mývatn seemed to stretch on forever; the outcrops like strange boats on a misty grey sea.

### Boiling and erupting

This elemental clash between water and lava defines much of the Diamond Circle, nowhere more strikingly than at Dimmuborgir. Sometimes known as 'The Black Fortress,' this strange area was formed when heavy lava covered wetlands, causing the water to boil and erupt through the newly formed rock. The result is an eerie array of calcified explosions. Extensive pathways run through the site, allowing you to hike through the twisted, rocky forest. Over it all towers the jet-black volcano Hverfjall, which poured forth the lava over 4,000 years ago.

The largest town on the Diamond Circle is Húsavík, where we checked into the luxurious Fosshotel Húsavík and enjoyed a pleasant meal before heading off to explore. Húsavík is a

beautiful port town, famed for its whale watching tours, which have some of the highest success rates in the country. When we visited, the town was heavily decorated with a range of colourful—and often bizarre—sculptures and artworks. The tourist office explained that it was for Mærudagar, the festival of candy—and we thought the town couldn't get any sweeter.

### Thick, pearly silver

Before departing Húsavík in the morning, we dropped in at the Geo-Sea Geothermal Baths. These toasty bathing pools look over the sea, so you can sit in the warm seawater and gaze out towards the Arctic circle, thinking about the day to come exploring the north. It was time to press on. The fog had lifted the previous evening, but it returned with a vengeance, cloaking the near-empty road in a thick, pearly silver haze.

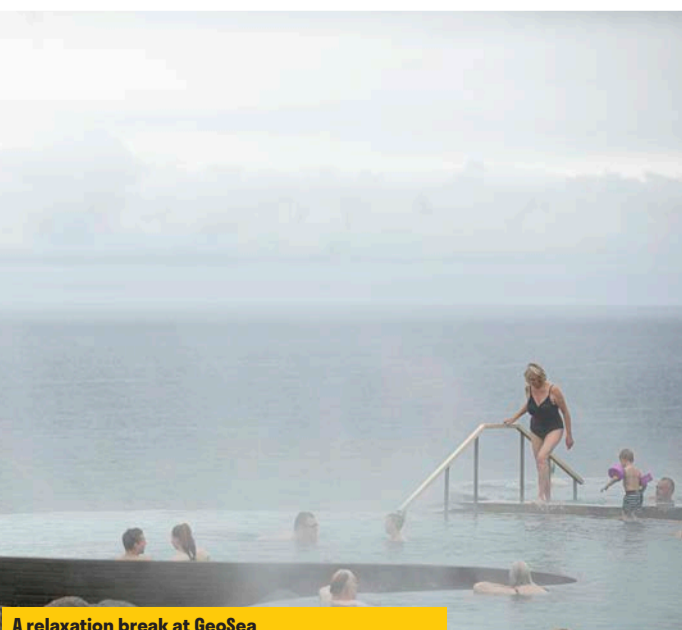
Having seen the dramatic power of lava to shape the landscape, now we were to see the power of water and ice. Our next stop was Ásbyrgi, a vast canyon with rock walls over 100 metres high. Scientists believe it was carved out in a mighty flood from the Jökulsá glacial river, thousands of years ago.

“Were the earth flat, this is surely what the edge would look like.”

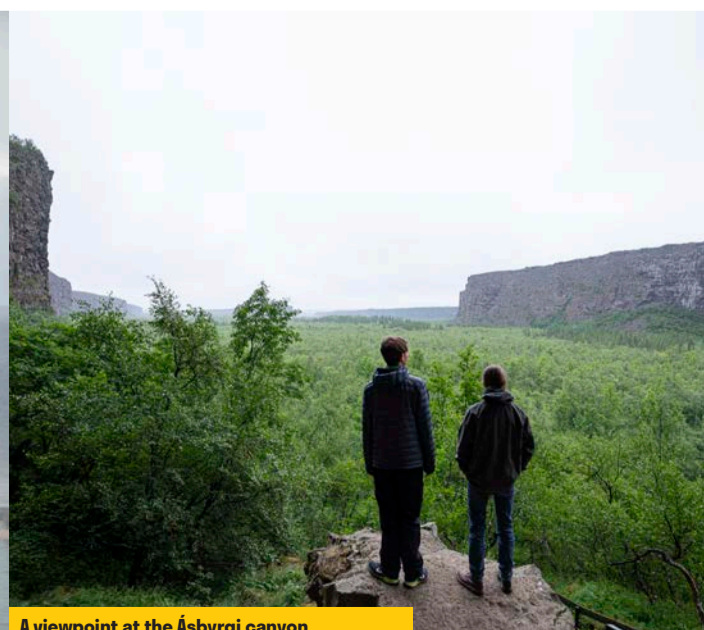
It's a magical place to visit, with the canyon cradling a lush green wood where you can walk, emerging every



Glittering caves on the Diamond Circle

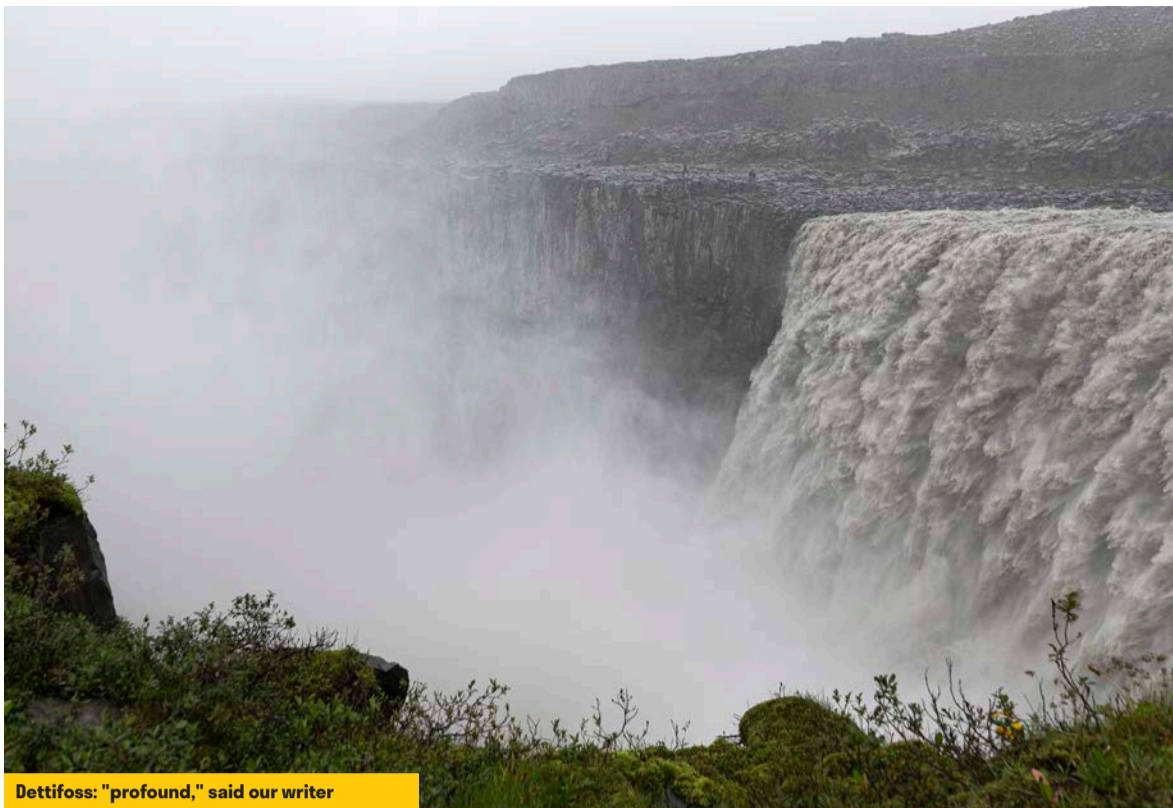


A relaxation break at GeoSea



A viewpoint at the Ásbyrgi canyon





Dettifoss: "profound," said our writer



Summer springing to life

so often onto viewing platforms where Ásbyrgi's vastness becomes clear once more. Some say that Ásbyrgi is the capital of the húlufólk, or "hidden people"—and it's true that the misty forest felt profoundly numinous. But perhaps the overwhelming sense is one of raw, elemental force; the power of water to carve out mighty, extraordinary worlds.

### The edge of the world

The power of Icelandic nature was the most vividly on display at the Diamond Circle's most famous stop. Even from the car park—a good 10-minute walk away—you can hear the thundering of Dettifoss, the most powerful waterfall in the whole of Europe.

Fierce spray emerges beside this breathtaking torrent as the iron grey water churns over the edge at over 500 cubic metres per second. For reference, Gullfoss, the largest waterfall on the Golden Circle route, flows at around 140 m<sup>3</sup>/s. We were thoroughly soaked, and completely and utterly awestruck. Were the earth flat (no arguments please), this is surely what the edge would look like.

We were nearly finished our epic trip, but no sightseeing expedition in Iceland is complete without that good, sulphurous smell of rotten egg. At the Hverir geothermal field, it was present in spades. Just a short jaunt from Mývatn, Hverir is a bleak but beautiful expanse of brightly coloured rock, riddled with fumaroles and pools of bubbling mud.

Steam rushed from vents in thick clouds, just cool enough to walk through, which made for a delightful change from the chill of Dettifoss and Ásbyrgi. Should you wish to warm up even further, the beautiful Mývatn Nature Baths a mere minute drive away—a perfect place to relax after a long drive.

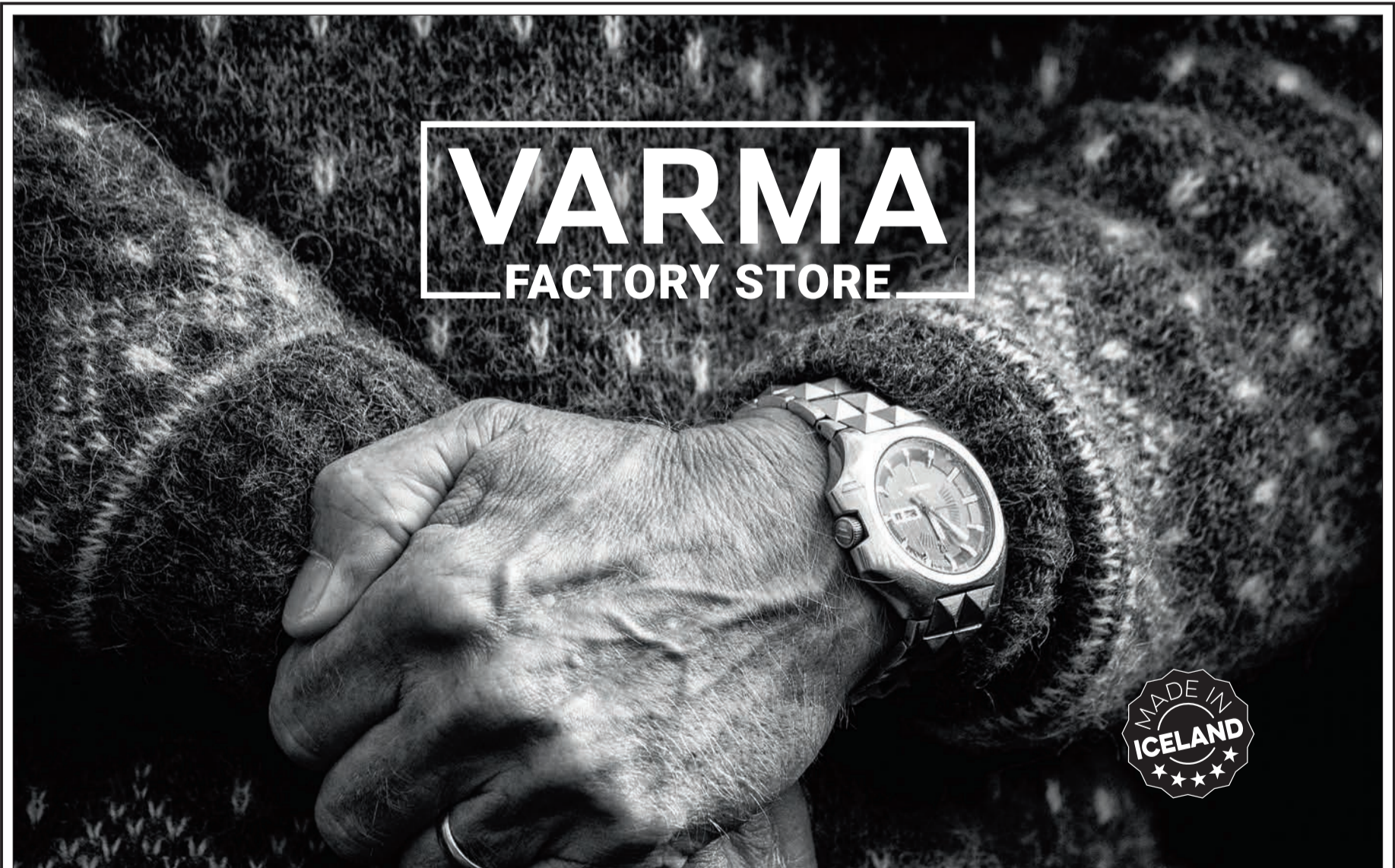
For us, however, it was time to head back home, with the memory of the Diamond Circle sure to stay with me for a long time. The Golden Circle is wonderful. But to see a rougher, more elemental and more profound side of Iceland, the Diamond Circle is a trip you cannot miss. 🇮🇸

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# Travel



## The Whale Wreck

A difficult journey to the Gamlaeyri, the remote site of the Snæfellsnes pilot whale stranding

Words: a rawlings Photos: Art Bicnick



**Distance from Reykjavik:**  
109 km

**How to get there:**  
Route One North,  
Route 54.

*Note: Gamlaeyri is extremely hazardous, and unreachable by regular car or hiking*

**With thanks to:**  
[superjeep.is](http://superjeep.is)

The uninhabited sand island of Gamlaeyri is a dangerous place to reach. The name of this slender spit of land translates as “Old Sand Bank” and it’s only accessible at low tide when the ocean between mainland and island recedes to expose the sea floor. In Icelandic, this geographic phenomenon is called a kelda, a temporary estuary where sea and freshwater rivers snake across the exposed seabed. The sea floor itself is soft and difficult terrain, devoid of much flora or fauna, save for thousands of lugworms’ fecal-cast sand mounds and the occasional kelp-covered rock jutting from the damp sand.

It’s far from the tourist trail and seldom visited by locals. However, this obscure spot became the subject of intense attention around July’s full moon when a helicopter pilot discovered 53 pilot whales stranded on Gamlaeyri’s shore.

### The first attempt

We embark on the two-hour drive from Reykjavik to Gamlaeyri a few days later. At the nearby farm of Stóra-Hraun, we stop to chat with two girls in broken Icelandic and English. Their grandfather, they say, owns the farm. A puppy ambles over and scrambles up into the front seats. The girls gesture to their grandfather, who walks towards us, and we drive up to meet him, with the puppy still in the car.

Kristján Ariliusson, his son (and, today, translator) Arilius, and his granddaughters Anna Jóna and Máney offer to accompany us to

Gamlaeyri as guides. Kristján will bring his tractor in case we get stuck. An Icelandic news agency bogged their vehicle the day before, so he’s had some recent experience.

### Fast and fast

Sure enough, we get stuck. Kristján pulls us out and determines that our vehicle shouldn’t make the trek. He strategises other ways we could get there. An ATV crew is nearby, but they have other plans; the rescue team Björgunarsveit would share its vehicle, for a fee—but not today. The tractor wouldn’t make it.

Máney and Anna Jóna excitedly combine Icelandic and English to explain the minute unfoldings of the plans. “You must go fast, fast, or you get... fast,” they urge. “Fast” in Icelandic means “stuck,” so it takes time to parse the bilingual explanation. The girls are fantastic interpreters, though, and it’s soon agreed to that we’ll return the next day with a better ride to attempt the kelda crossing.

### Over the sea floor

After a few phone calls it turns out that Sigurjón “Síó” Fjeldsted from Superjeep.is is up for the trip. An experienced guide since the early 1980s, this will be his first journey to Gamlaeyri.

We return to Stóra-Hraun in the morning, receiving a warm welcome from the family. Anna Jóna introduces us to a four-week-old puppy, and Kristján fortifies our coffee with

whisky. In high spirits, we climb into the modified super jeep and trundle down to the shoreline.

Low tide is a short window, as the sea floor floods rapidly. Driving at a brisk pace, the vehicle handles the kelda nimbly, splashing through rivers and jostling over washboard sand. Once on the island, the jeep careens over sand dunes. A sunning of cormorants, 300 members strong, takes wing from a distant point on the island. As we drive, Kristján offers Síó directions to navigate the dunes and the shoreline’s quicksand. The knowledge of our guide ensures we cross the island fast, without getting stuck.

### Pregnant with death

We arrive to the harrowing sight of 53 whales perched atop sand dunes, 200 m from the shoreline. The first whale appears half-buried in the sand on our left as we drive. Then two more, to the right. The remaining 50 whales extend in a long line, tightly grouped together, some bodies overlapping each other. Either side of the group is flanked by three male whales, with a grouping of females in the centre. A few calves lay farther inland, their small bodies pushed away from the group by the tide. Almost in the centre lies a whale who was giving birth, her calf half-emerged from the amniotic sac.

Having flown to Gamlaeyri with lightweight planes, several Fisfélag pilots and their guests walk solemnly through the mass gravesite. A few people on all-terrain motorcycles

“The gravesite is eerily devoid of life. The whales are partly buried under long, ribbed dunes, in early stages of decomposition.”

arrive, followed by Gamlaeyri and Litla-Hraun’s landowner, Þorgrímur Leifsson, who has come to collect his hvalreki.

### Devoid of life

Elsewhere on the island, birds flock en masse—but not here. The gravesite is eerily devoid of life. The whales themselves are partly buried under ribbed dunes, in early stages of decomposition; their skins peel in long rubber sheets, and some show signs of internal gas build-up. Some have already exploded.

If this occurred closer to human habitats, authorities would bury or

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Fast-flooding ocean floor at low tide



Regular cars won't cut it at Gamlaeyri



The grim sight of a local extracting whale teeth





Snæfellsjökull in the distance



Meeting a puppy at the farm



Stóra Hraun, close to the incident

remove the whales. On Gamlaeyri, though, “the sand will bury the whales,” Arilius says. “Nature.”

### Anthropogenic hypotheses

A colleague comments that the scene at Gamlaeyri is “anthropogenic,” riffing on the proposed geologic epoch of the Anthropocene, where evidence of humans as a geologic force is now evident worldwide. Several hypotheses for mass strandings involve man-made causes, including Persistent Organic Pollutants, and increased mackerel abundance due to climate change.

Anthropogenic tourism is gruesome tourism. Disaster tourism.

### Hvalreki

The idiom for “windfall” in Icelandic is “hvalreki,” which translates as “whale drift.” In previous centuries, beached whales provided food and other necessities for Iceland’s

inhabitants. Due to high levels of mercury and PCBs in blubber, pilot whales no longer prove as health-sustaining for humans as they had earlier in the country’s history.

Still, in Icelandic law, the discovery of a beached whale on one’s property gives the landowner the right to decide what to do with the whale. The night before, Þorgrímur received the proposition from a jewellery maker to purchase the teeth of the whales. Today, he uses a hacksaw, hammer, and crowbar to remove the jaws of several whales.

The flight club leaves. We observe, and then leave the landowner to finish his grim business.

Each pilot whale has a grey patch along its throat, shaped like an anchor. The whales remain.

Some of us came to witness. Some to mourn. Some to document and report. Some to collect hvalreki. All leave with death indelibly printed on the mind. 🐋



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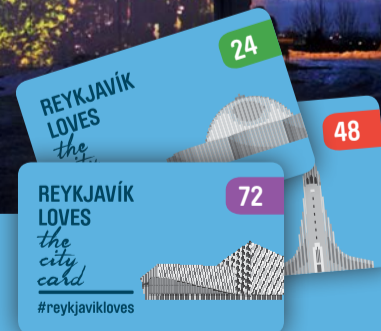
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## Travel

Distance from Reykjavik: 388 km

How to get there: Route One North to Akureyri

Accommodation provided by: [akureyribackpackers.is](http://akureyribackpackers.is)

Car provided by: [hertz.is](http://hertz.is)



“Snow acts like a blanket over the plants. It protects them over the winter.”

A riot of colour near the Arctic Circle

## Just Like Paradise

The beautiful success of Akureyri Botanical Garden

Words: **Felix Robertson** Photos: **Art Bicnick**

Located just under 50km south of the Arctic Circle, the northern Icelandic town of Akureyri is not the obvious location for a verdant garden. But Akureyri's Botanical Garden, opened in 1957, is a successful and popular local attraction, showcasing a wide range of native and international plants in its scenic perch above the town.

### Winter is coming

When I spoke to head gardener Guðrún Kristín Björgvinsdóttir I expected her to speak of the challenges of maintaining a garden in such a northerly setting. But, as she explained to me, the location isn't as problematic as it sounds. “Actually, it's not too challenging,” she says, as we chat in the garden's large greenhouse. “All our plants begin in the greenhouse. We order seeds and put them in a small pot, and when they bloom we keep them inside for maybe two months, depending on the plant. Then we put them outside. If they survive to the end of May or the beginning of June, we can put them outside in the beds and they'll grow over the summer.”

Of course, the real hardship comes in winter, when the tem-

perature often falls below freezing and snow can pile up to one metre or more. But, as Guðrún explains, thick snow isn't as bad as it sounds. “It acts like a blanket over the plants,” she explains. “And this protects them over the winter. We often put plants out first at the beginning of May, and if they live, they normally survive the winter. Not always, but perhaps around 90% survive.”

### An international focus

It's hard not to be struck by the sheer variety of plants. The grounds are a riot of colour, with

to expect from Icelandic plant life. While there are over 400 native species, the garden also orders a great variety of seeds from abroad, constantly testing which plants can survive.

One key partner in this process is the Reykjavík Botanical Garden. “We work closely with the Reykjavík gardens,” explains Guðrún. “Our botanist is in contact with them frequently. We often share seeds and information.” The garden in Akureyri is also a member of IPEN, the International Plant Exchange Network, which helps facilitate the worldwide exchange of seeds. Though small, Akureyri botanical garden maintains an international presence.

### A special place

As we wander through the garden, listening to the sound of the small fountain and visitors enjoying a day out, you get the sense that this is a very special place for the town. Guðrún certainly speaks fondly of her job. “I love being outside and working in nature,” she says. “And it's really nice to hear people saying positive things about the gar-



Head gardener Guðrún Kristín Björgvinsdóttir

poppies, lilies and lavender providing a dazzling contrast to the muted greens and greys one tends

den—they say ‘Oh it's so beautiful, it's just like paradise.’”

We couldn't agree more. 🍷



# Island Life

News From The Icelandic Countryside SPECIAL: All Animal News Edition

Words: Andie Fontaine

If you plan on camping, be advised that **there is a gas canister bandit on the loose** who has reportedly stolen dozens of kilos of gas from camping sites across Snæfellsnes, especially in Ólafsvík and Hellisandur. Maybe play it safe and use charcoal, which is better for the environment anyway.



Residents of Egilsstaðir are in for a treat, as **five F-16 fighter jets** will be conducting NATO exercises in the area in the coming weeks. This involves some 110 US airmen, as well as a number of workers from the NATO base in Uedem, Germany. No word on whether they will be taking us right into the danger zone.

Someone in Iceland is now a millionaire, as a **lottery ticket bought in Selfoss** paid off for someone who picked four of the five winning numbers. The pay out, with a bonus side-bet, was reportedly just shy of one million ISK. You can't win if you don't play!

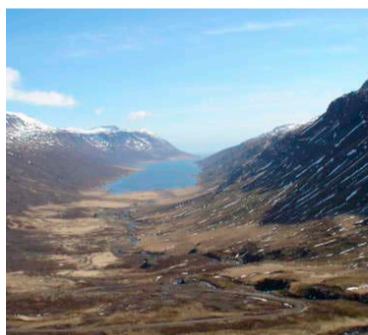
## Best Of Iceland

A selection of winners from our Best Of Iceland travel magazine



**South: Best Shop**  
**Sveitabúðin UNA**

A spacious emporium packed with locally-made products, UNA is probably Iceland's best souvenir shop. You can pick up that authentic hand-knitted lopapeysa you've been dreaming of, and browse shelves and display cases teeming with interesting objects. Jewellery made from lava beads? Check. Rhubarb-infused salt from the Westfjords? Check. And you can definitely squeeze that sheepskin in your case.



**East: Must-See Spot**  
**Mjóifjörður**

One of the most remote fjords in the East, the drive to Mjóifjörður is an adventure in itself. Following the steep slopes down to a tiny village of about 20 inhabitants also provides you with astonishing views of the surrounding mountains and the beautiful Klifbrekkufossar waterfalls. Also highly recommended is a trip to the Dalatangi lighthouse. Don't rush it: life out East is slow, so sink into the rhythm.



**North: Best Hike**  
**Kverkfjöll**

An advanced pick for serious hikers, start your hike at the northeast corner of Vatnajökull. You'll pass between two glacial tongues, famed for the constant volcanic activity below them. Along the way, visit wild mud pools and hot springs. Kverkfjöll also features the genesis of Jökulsá á Fjöllum, the glacial river from which Dettifoss tumbles. It's in the Highlands, so the paths are only accessible from July to September.



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

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

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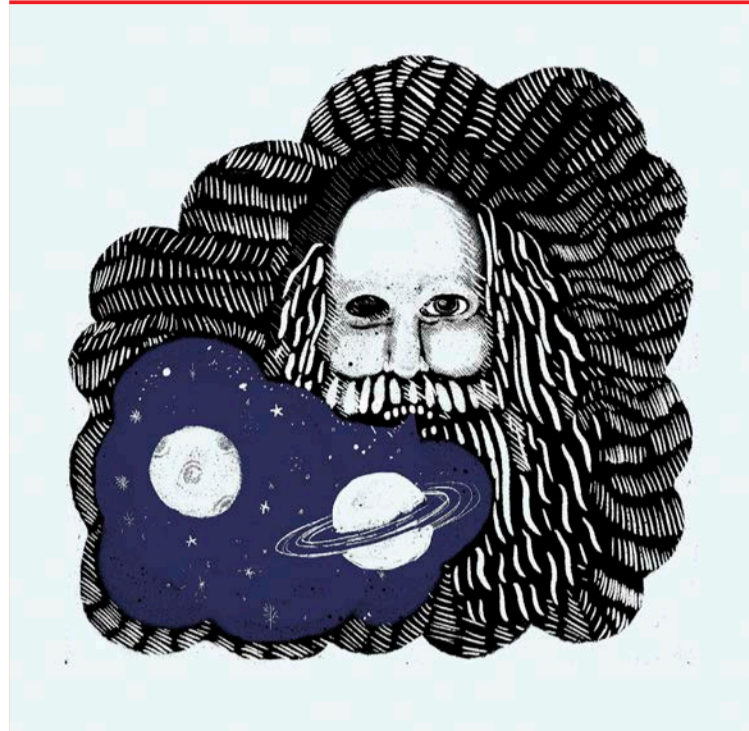
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EDDA RECAP

## Grímnismál

The Sayings Of Grímnir

Words: Grayson Del Faro Illustration: Lóa Hlín 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.'

### Nature or nurture

The introduction to the poem explains that there are two brothers named Geirröður, who is 10, and Agnar, who is 8. They get lost at sea one day while fishing and when they come ashore, they are taken in by an old couple. (Whoever could they be?) The old man is responsible for Geirröður and the woman for Agnar. When winter ends, the couple sends the boys back to their parents. At home, the little prick Geirröður jumps from the boat and shoves his little brother back out to sea, never to see him again.

One day, Óðinn and Frigg are sitting around surveying the universe. Óðinn mentions that Geir-

This poem tells a tale as old as time: a married couple arguing. It centers on the ever-so-sanctimonious Óðinn and his actually-pretty-chill wife, Frigg. The story begins, as many do, with a disagreement, which turns into an argument, during which a bet is made to see who will be awarded the gold medal of any marital dispute: the coveted I Told You So.

röður, his foster-child, is now the king of his kingdom. "And where is your foster-son?" he says. "He's shackled up in a cave with a giant-ess and their spawn, lol!" Frigg retorts that at least her kid is nice. "Geirröður is such a raging shit-head that he would torture his own guests on a whim!" Óðinn says, "Nuh-uh."

Then they make a bet.

### May the odds be ever in your favor

Frigg sends someone to tell Geirröður to be leery of a wizard who might come to bewitch him. Then Óðinn shows up in blue robes, saying, "Greetings, fellow non-wizards! My name is definitely Grímnir."

So Geirröður tortures him, tying him up between two burning bonfires for eight days. Geirröður's 10-year-old son, named Agnar after his estranged brother, brings Óðinn something to drink. Strangely, this is all just the introduction to the poem and the poem itself actually begins here.

"Why, thank you, young man! You shall be king," Óðinn begins. Then he blurts out an unnecessarily long stream of "secrets of the universe," as pretentious mansplainers tend to do. This constitutes the bulk of the poem, until Óðinn finally announces to Geirröður: "You'll pay dearly for torturing me. I raised you better than that. Also, I'm totally Óðinn, by the way. Surprise, dickwad!"

That's how the poem ends. But there is a little epilogue that explains that when Geirröður stands up in surprise, he accidentally impales himself on his own sword. Agnar becomes king and everyone lives happily ever after. Especially Frigg, since She Told Him So.

### Morals of the story:

1. Choose your battles wisely.
2. Torture is wrong.
3. Stay hydrated. ☹️



TV GODDESS

## Spoiled Things

Stranger Things 3, reviewed by TV Goddess/pro-level couch potato Lóa

Words: Lóa Hlín Hjálmtýsdóttir

I hope you've watched 'Stranger Things 3' because, if you haven't, this will ruin it a little bit for you.

But first, a small introduction to Icelandic culture: The winter is long, blah blah blah, we watch American TV a lot and here we are on the third series of 'Stranger Things.' For people born in the '70s this is everything.

The brown and oranges of the early eighties are slowly making way for rainbows and glowing neon lights. Latchkey kids on their

BMXs have to fend for themselves and save the world.

I can relate so hard to this Gremlins/Ghostbusters/Goonies/Eerie, Indiana stew that it makes my heart bleed slimy pink mystery goo. There is nothing wrong with this and I can watch it forever... but I have a few grievances (very minor, don't worry).

It is obvious to me that this is written mostly by boys with cooties. Why else would all the men be so incredibly unattractive? Hopper

is a grumpy dominating man and has ventured to the outer limits of the dad-bod aesthetic. Billy's cowardly lion hair ruins everything else and when he turned evil I always snapped out of the fear because of his silly mullet perm and babyface. Jonathan is a boring worrywart. And then there's Steve. I love his character development throughout the series. He evolves from a beautiful jerk to a beautiful semi-nice guy.

I just realised that objectifying young men is pretty disgusting so I'll move along to the end. Suzie! Yeah I'm looking at you Suzie. Your song was only half-adorable and if you hadn't made Dustin sing it with you Hopper might have lived. I didn't want him to date Joyce, but I wanted him to be Eleven's dad forever.

I'm personally holding you accountable, you little dweeb. ☹️



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WELL, YOU ASKED



## UFO Yurts And Quest Completion

Words: **Felix Robertson**  
Photo: **Art Bicnick**

**Say I want to write for you guys. How would I go about it?**

So you want to write for the Grapevine, eh? It's a goal many have sought. But be warned, all who wish to write for us must complete a great quest to prove their valour and moral fortitude. Deep in the labyrinthine ways of The Office is that dark place we call Stöckroóm. To prove yourself, you must enter Stöckroóm, and retrieve the hallowed 2008 Bar Guide Edition, blessed by Þór himself and said to bestow magical powers upon the bearer. But be warned, dark and terrible things lurk amongst the back issues. Many have entered. Few have returned. Good luck and Godspeed.

**I'm getting married soon, would you recommend Iceland for a honeymoon? And if so, do you have any insider knowledge about things to do?**

Hmm. Well, I've gotta be honest, Iceland isn't really a strong point for us. I mean, there's probably a fascinating, meticulously designed publication documenting all aspects of Icelandic culture, travel and insider knowledge, which you could easily look up to answer all your questions... but we haven't heard of it.

**Where is the best place in Iceland to see a UFO?**

Well, there's a yurt at Árneshreppur that looks like it might have come from somewhere interesting. We can't guarantee that it actually flies, but maybe nobody's found the correct button yet. Alternatively, Snæfellsjökull is said to be a pretty good spotting ground, with multiple reports of extraterrestrial tête-à-têtes. There's no US military installation (yet) to spice it up, but work on your Naruto run and them aliens can't stay hidden forever. ☹️

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

HORROR-SCOPES

# The Fault In Your Stars

Scorpios really are the worst

Words: **Josie Gaitens & Hannah Jane Cohen** Photo: **Art Bicnick**

*In Horror-Scopes, Grapevine's dedicated team of amateur astrologists breaks down your upcoming weeks based on shit like where the planet Venus was at the rough moment you were born.*

### ♈ Aries

Beware: If you don't show up for the Pride Parade, you will be hit by a rogue glitter cannon and spend the next six months combing sparkles out of your unkempt hair. Don't tempt the queer Gods.

### ♉ Taurus

If you know what's good for you, you'll stay away from Gullfoss.

### ♊ Gemini

Travelling the Diamond Circle might just lead to a diamond in your circle, if you catch our drift. That said, avoid Icelandic Libras like the plague.

### ♋ Cancer

Cancers are a fickle folk. Know what else is fickle? Love.

### ♌ Leo

While celebrating your birthday at Kiki Queer Bar, you fall down the stairs and meet the love of your life in the hospital. Watch your feet if you're not looking for commitment.

### ♍ Virgo

Did you know that beer in Iceland was banned until 1989? While this might not seem relevant to you now, mull it over in the upcoming weeks. It might just be the answer you were looking for.

### ♎ Libra

You're just a small town girl living in a Grindavík world. Take the midnight Strætó to Reykjavík and live your truth, baby.



Josie and Hannah have the answers you seek. Maybe.

### ♏ Scorpio

Scorpios are notoriously evil and you are no exception, my friend.

### ♐ Sagittarius

As the nights draw in and the summer warmth is sucked from the air, you long for the days when you can once again creep through the streets of Reykjavík, stalking your prey. Your time is nigh.

### ♑ Capricorn

You definitely need to get that tested.

### ♒ Aquarius

You're still playing "Take Me To Church" by Hozier? What year is it?

### ♓ Pisces

Ah, Pisces. Much like the final season of 'Game of Thrones,' you've been disappointing a lot of people recently. Make like Daenerys Targaryen or Eyjafjallajökull and simply burn everything or everyone that makes you angry, unless they are a Scorpio. Those bitches are evil. ☹️

CITY SHOT by Art Bicnick



Summer: a thing of myth, most years

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The Gateway to Iceland's Most Active Volcanic Area

Photo: Eyjafjallajökull Eruption 2010



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**LAST WORDS**

# When History Repeats Itself

Words: **Bárna Halldórsdóttir**  
Photo: **Art Bienick**

Recently, new laws for gender registration were passed in Iceland and of course one of the largest newspapers ran some incredibly tactless comic depicting a trans person at the pool. The “why are you so sensitive, it’s just a joke” discourse started the second its crassness was pointed out.

It hurt me, as my spouse is trans, and doesn’t dare go swimming; my child is also trans, and has only recently gotten up the nerve to go to the pool and I know of at least three trans adults that have allowed themselves to use the men’s and women’s locker rooms, some with my help.

It was as if this particular comic was drawn from the body self-image of those who are trying to take the unbelievably difficult step of coming out from under the shadow of fear. Men and women with bodies that are different, due to disability, accidents, weight or their own damaged self-image.

I didn’t feel great about this, but I wasn’t in the mood to argue with people on social media. Then I saw news from Poland of a 4,000-strong protest against a queer pride march featuring 1,000 people, many of whom were attacked. Violence and protests against people who are different isn’t new, but it’s becoming more common with the rise of people like Trump and Duterte. Just a few years ago, I believed that we were making progress, and that little by little, people could be themselves without needing to fear violence.

Violence and exclusion begins in a consenting environment. And that environment begins to form when people dip a toe into these little jokes that tell minorities to be careful, because their environment is not safe. These minorities laugh along, not wanting to be seen as “snowflakes” who can’t take a joke.

20 years ago, attacks in Iceland were common, and brutal. I knew Móði, who ended up with a plate in his head after an attack by a group. My friends Dís, Örn, and a others didn’t survive. When I read about the attacks in Poland, the knot in my stomach came back. I felt as though the world was returning to where it was 20 years ago. I have felt this way for a few years.

The human soul must be handled with care. 🍷

# DAY TOURS

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