

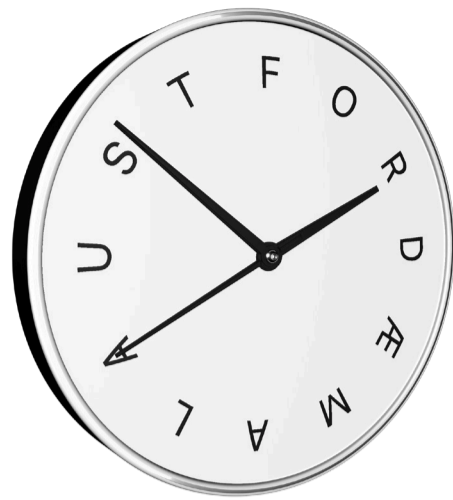
THE 

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2020

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REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE





Fordæmalaust (Unprecedented) by Þórður Hans, see pages 10-17

COVER IMAGE

Painting by **Arnar Birgis** - "Kóróna (my mama don't like you and she likes everyone)" from the Póstprent exhibition Sóttqueen

In addition to being a painter, Arnar has also played with many local bands. He now works and lives in the Netherlands.

THE REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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The Waiting Game

By Editor-In-Chief **Valur Grettisson**

Let's be honest here: The government and associated specialists have done a fantastic job in this incredibly complicated battle with COVID-19. We have gone from over 100 new cases of the virus in one day, to just a couple new daily positive tests over the course of a few weeks.

...

The virus' toll has been terrible nonetheless. Ten have died, and it's not unlikely that number will be even higher before the end of the month. It's still far lower than the current death toll in the United States, which could be a clue how the government there is doing battling the virus.

...

It appears that Icelanders are winning at the moment. The government has announced that

the current strict social gathering restriction will begin to be loosened on May 4th. School schedules will return to normal and the cap on the number of people who can gather in one place will rise from 20 to 50. It's not a big change, most companies will still be closed, the travel industry will still be stuck in this nuclear winter. Icelanders can not trust that the heat will keep the virus away, as is the hope in warmer climates. Our summer is like an early spring in most countries, with the temperatures hovering between 10° and 20° Celcius.

...

So it's clear that this remains a waiting game. We need to ease the restrictions carefully, if we don't want the virus to flare up and ravage through the country again.

Because that will only mean one thing: we would have to go back to the old rules. Stay at home. Hibernate until health workers contain the virus again. And it will cost more lives. And perhaps our sanity.

...

I know we are all frustrated. We at the Reykjavík Grapevine are going insane. But we all need to be patient. You can't rush through a virus unless you are prepared to pay a hefty price. Perhaps the ultimate one. Or worse, you could be responsible for someone else's death if you're not careful. No one wants to live with that guilt. I know that this sounds dramatic, but that's just the state of the world right now. It's dramatic. 🍷



Hannah Jane Cohen is based out of Iceland by way of New York. She's known for her love of Willa Ford, David Foster Wallace, and other such "intellectuals."

Her visionary work is known for expanding the definitions of emotion, introspection, and above all else, taste. Hannah is also the current Drag King of Iceland, Hans.



Samuel O'Donnell Sam is an English major from The United States. He has his Bachelor's Degree, and keeps telling himself that this is the year he will begin

pursuing his Master's. In his spare time, he enjoys playing video games, writing short horror stories, listening to all kinds of metal, and reading.



Andie Sophia Fontaine

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

tirelessly to undermine each other.



Poppy Askham is a languages student, fledgling writer, and lover of flared jeans who has fled to the wonderful nation

of Iceland in a desperate bid to escape Boris' Brexit Britain whilst she still can. Looking for a new adventure, she's swapped her hometown Bath with its crowds of tourists and famous hot springs for ... Reykjavik.

ASK A HISTORIAN

"What Is The Legacy Of Iceland's Red Stocking Women?"

Words: **Poppy Askham** Photo: **Art Bicnick**



We asked **Ragnhildur Hólmgeirsdóttir** from **Iceland's Women's History Archives** to fill us in on the legacy of some of Iceland's feistiest feminists.

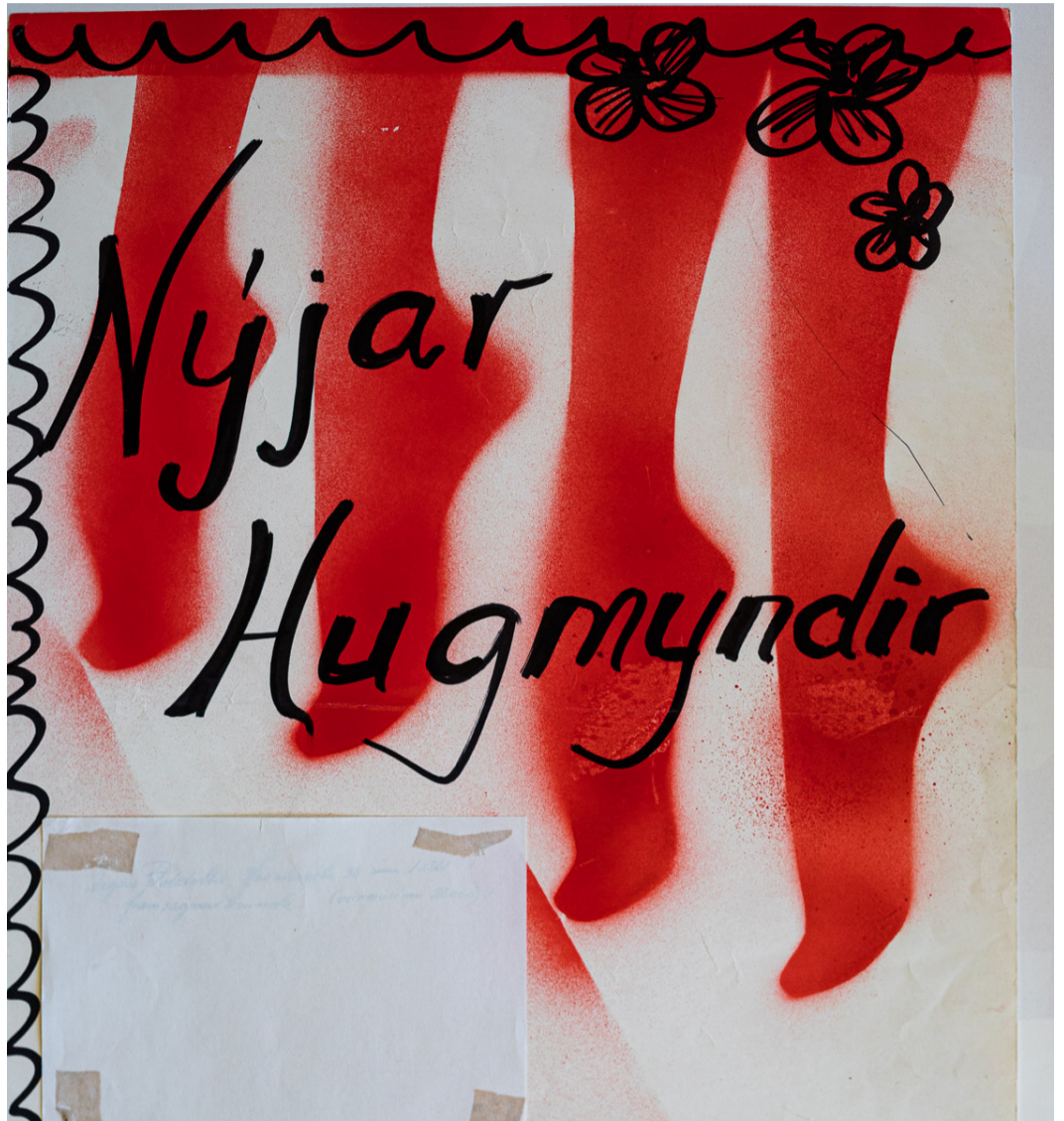
"On May 1st, 1970, the Icelandic Red Stocking Women made their first public appearance, marching through the streets and carrying a statue of a woman with the slogan: "Human being – not a marketing product."

The vision of the Red Stocking Movement was radical and some of their goals are still relevant in today's struggle for equality. One of their main goals was the right to abortion. A Red Stockings member sat on the parliamentary committee for new legislation concerning abortion and contraceptives in 1973. Their proposal sparked a heated debate, but was turned down for a more conservative law, which was not replaced until 2019.

The Red Stockings also campaigned for equal rights in the workplace, focusing on universal access to kindergarten education and whole-day school attendance. Their vision did not become a reality until the 1990s and there is still progress to be made.

The Red Stockings had an artistic, energetic approach to their cause and their public protests frequently caught the press' attention. In one famous example of this, they brought a live cow to a 1972 beauty contest. Partly thanks to this protest, beauty contests were temporarily halted in Iceland.

Finally, I must mention the **Women's Day Off** in 1975. This mass event was a joint effort by several women's organizations, but the idea first started circulating in the Red Stockings' meetings in 1970. The Women's Day Off was most recently repeated in 2018." 🇮🇸



FOOD OF ICELAND

Sterkar Djúpur



"Only a deeply twisted mind could look at an innocuous chocolate-coated licorice ball and think 'you know what this needs? Seasoning.'"

Words: **Poppy Askham**

Only a deeply twisted mind could look at an innocuous chocolate-coated licorice ball and think you know what this needs? Seasoning. Or so I thought. Enter Sterkar Djúpur: the salt-and-pepper-covered sweet that has proven unfathomably popular with Iceland's candy connoisseurs.

If you're unfortunate enough to be given one of these sweets, perhaps by a seemingly well-meaning colleague, first you'll be hit by an unexpected salty tang. The culprit? Ammonium Chloride. Apparently here in Iceland the compound isn't just a cough medicine or shampoo ingredient, it's also been a staple of the candy aisle since its 1930s popularisation. After the initial ammonia-based surprise has worn off, the sourness softens to reveal a peppery kick with subtle smoky undertones that perhaps fortunately doesn't quite live up to the sweets' flame-covered packaging.

In the interest of full disclosure—I'm not a fan of the nation's favourite sweet (please don't deport me, ÚTL),

but I have to admit there's nothing like the taste of spicy salty ammoniac to make you appreciate licorice. In fact, the sweets' chocolatey licorice core is so beguiling that before you know it you've forgotten the initial unpleasantness and you find your hand reaching once again towards the packet, trapped in a self-destructive cycle that can only be broken when your fingers just find pepper dust and plastic.

Bizarre as they may seem, Sterkar Djúpur are not the result of some improbable culinary accident. They're Freyja's (Iceland's oldest operating confectioner) answer to the Tyrkisk Peber craze that has taken Scandinavia's sweetshops by storm in recent years. Can't get enough of that distinctive spicy tang? Why not try some of Reykjavik's other spins on the trend—perhaps ice cream dipped in molten licorice and rolled in pepper powder or perhaps an enticingly grey Tyrkisk Peber cheesecake? 🇮🇸

The Reykjavík Grapnevine Playlist



Hjaltalín. Photo by **Nicholas Grange**



CYBER - "starry night"

Here is an electronic jam that is endlessly cool. The bass line runs effortlessly through the song, while having that essential quality of tying the whole song together. Then CYBER orders "Three shots of tequila" in the middle of the song, and shit gets real. **SPO**



Benni Hemm Hemm - "Say Anything"

This song feels like something from a distant, simpler past. Its beguiling, quietly melancholic melody, slow rhythm and innocent lyrics are oddly comforting. Long-term Benni Hemm Hemm fans needn't worry, the new track isn't anything wildly different from their previous work—acoustic guitar remains as prominent as ever. **PA**



Krummi - "Vetrarsól"

Svala's brother sheds his heavy metal persona to dive into a country song about the winter sun. The persistent banjo is surprisingly nice in a minor key and Krummi's voice is smooth and easy to listen to. **PA**



Hjaltalín - "Needles and Pins"

An enchanting, achingly wistful recording from indie-pop maestros Hjaltalín. Graceful vocals and smooth production—we expected nothing less. **PA**



IDK IDA - "Tomorrow's Heartache"

Plug in your headphones and let IDK IDA's haunting vocals wash over you. The Reykjavík-based Danish producer and composer layers intense, soaring melodies over a discordant electro backdrop in this mesmerising track from her recent EP 'Muscle Memory.' **PA**



Auður - Ljós EP

This short EP feels more like an extended single. Is prog-pop a thing? It is now. And it's brilliant. **SPO**





ANALYSIS

Tourism: The Summer Ahead

Iceland enters the tourism high season
in a state of uncertainty

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine** Illustration: based on **Adobe Stock**

“The hardest fight being fought, however, is for the Merchant’s Holiday Weekend”

Iceland may be approaching the crest of coronavirus infections (or may have already reached it by the time you read this), but we’re not out of the woods yet. As the country approaches the tourist high season, many are looking at the months to come with a blend of concern and cautious optimism, but no one knows for certain how the summer will play out.

Flights

If tourism is the lifeblood of the Icelandic economy, Icelandair would be the heart that keeps it circulating. No other airline transports as many people to and from Iceland as they do. So crucial to the Icelandic economy is Icelandair—and its hub, Keflavík International Airport—that when the Professional Pilots Union threatened to go on strike in 2014, then Minister of the Interior Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir introduced a law that made any kind of interrupting of the workplace at the airport—be it a strike, half-day strike, or sit-in—illegal.

As you can’t exactly pass a law forcing a virus to stop interrupting flights, the government has had to take other measures to triage the damage being done by the virus—and the political responses to it.

US President Donald Trump announced in March that EU nationals would be forbidden from entering the United States for at least 30 days. Barely a week later, EU officials introduced similar travel bans into the Schengen area, which includes Iceland, for non-EU nationals. This effectively put Iceland between two fronts: no one from outside Schengen was getting into the country, and no one from the EU was going to be traveling to one of Icelandair’s most popular destinations, the United States.

Icelandair was forced to cancel many flights as a result, issuing boarding pass vouchers and refunds in their wake, and their revenue began to dry up. On March 28th, the Icelandic government struck a limited deal with the airline to give them up to 100 million ISK in government-sponsored loans, but these were bound to repatriation flights—letting tourists leave and bringing Icelanders home.

On April 15th, the director of Isavia—the company which operates Keflavík International Airport—Sveinbjörn Indriðason told Morgunblaðið that the company’s liquidity would completely dry up in five months if things don’t change soon. By way of comparison, last year some 84,000 passengers passed

through Keflavík International Airport over Easter weekend; this year, the grand total was only 99.

The tourism industry demands answers

Unsurprisingly, many business heads are predicting a recession is on the horizon, with economist Ásdís Kristjánsdóttir telling Fréttablaðið on April 6th that the tourism industry will likely be hardest hit.

Shortly after Minister of Justice Áslaug Árna Sigurbjörnsdóttir announced that Iceland would be participating in the EU’s travel ban extension, which is to last until May 15th, she said it was still impossible to say when flights to and from Iceland would return to normal. As she pointed out, while Iceland’s containment measures have resulted in instances of the virus declining, other countries may still have yet to experience peak cases.

Jóhannes Þór Skúlason, the managing director of the Icelandic Travel Association, told reporters that while he was pleased that some restrictions on public gatherings are being eased, the industry is more concerned with clear information on when they can expect tourism to open up again.

“There is a lot of uncertainty amongst us [in the tourism industry],” he said. “If many restrictions are put in place, then it’s pretty clear that the possibility is off the table of the industry getting any earnings in the height of summer.” He added that many companies may go bankrupt in the months to come, unless the government does something to help.

At the time of this writing, the government is preparing to unveil plans to do exactly that. While the exact details are still unclear, Kjarninn reports that it will likely in part concern financial assistance for small companies that are struggling. It’s a pretty safe bet that a great many of those companies would be ones in the tourism industry.

Sorry, Iceland’s queers

The summer is also a big festival season in Iceland, including Independence Day, the Merchant’s Holiday Weekend, and Reykjavík Pride. All of these festivals see thousands or even tens of thousands of Icelanders in attendance. How or even if these festivals will be held this year is now quite uncertain.

The City of Reykjavík is currently looking for ways to keep Independence Day festivities

alive, despite it being right around the corner, on June 17th, and they also hope that August’s Culture Night can survive.

The hardest fight being fought, however, is for the Merchant’s Holiday Weekend. Held all over the country in the first weekend in August, the biggest version of the festival is in the Westman Islands. Iceland’s chief epidemiologist, Þórólfur Guðnason, recommended that no more than 2,000 people be permitted to gather for the festival this year, but organisers pushed back against the suggestion. Ultimately, organisers were given their own discretion in how to organise the festival, and they are determined to ensure that the show will go on.

Less certain is the state of Reykjavík Pride, which organisers predict will not be held this year, at least in the sense of a physical gathering of people. However, they are hoping that they can livestream the festivities and attract as many attendees of that event as in years previous, but the Pride parade—wherein Reykjavík’s queer community gathers in a show of solidarity and, well, pride—will be out of the question.

Summer of uncertainty

All this being the case, it bears mentioning that anything can change in the weeks and months to come.

It is all but certain that tourism this summer will definitely pale in comparison to previous years, but many if not most tourism industry companies may be able to weather the storm. Travel bans to and from the country may be lifted or extended, with Iceland opening itself to swaths of the world while remaining closed to others.

Life in Iceland unrelated to tourism, by contrast, is returning to normal much sooner than expected, and health officials’ containment measures have even attracted the attention and praise of the New England Journal of Medicine. The curve has been swiftly flattened, public institutions are opening again, and if health authorities continue their vigilance, the state of uncertainty hovering over the country’s most popular summer events may blow by and return to normal as the season approaches.

So while Iceland’s summer may be distinctly less tourist-oriented—which will certainly impact the economy which relies upon it—summertime for many Icelanders may indeed be as beloved a time as always, if somewhat quieter. ♡

THE NOT
HAPPENING
ART SHOW

NO CONCEPT
NO - "THAT'S
THE CONCEPT"

IT'S NOT
HAPPENING

Viktor Weishappel



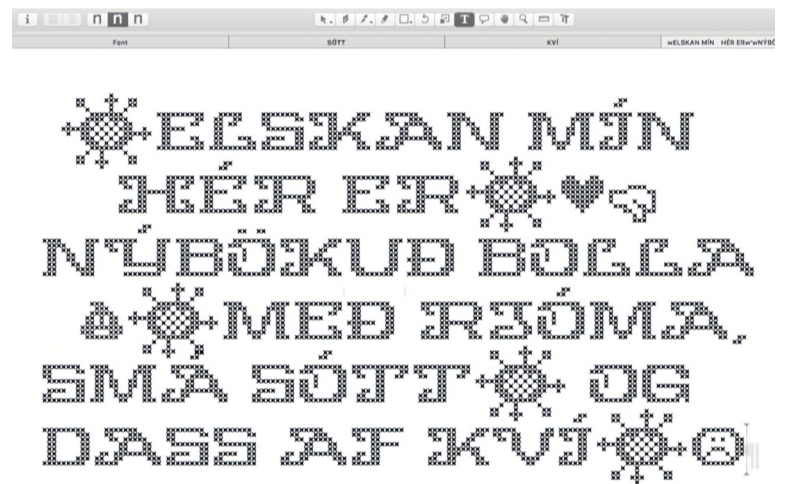
Porgeir K. Blöndal



Eva Örsk



Frosti Gnarr



Sóldís Finnbogadóttir



Friðrik Snær



“We’d been seeing a lot of bad news and we wanted to do something positive”

ART

Today’s Muse

Postprent’s digital exhibition celebrates Icelandic coronavirus-inspired artwork

Words: **Poppy Askham** Photo: **Salka Rósinkranz**

The surreal circumstances spawned by the global spread of the novel coronavirus offer an unrivalled artistic stimulus, something Viktor Weissshappel Vilhjálmsson and Þórður Hans Baldursson, the owners of online print store, Postprent, were quick to realise. In a bid to document the COVID-19 pandemic and provide some positivity, Postprent has been showcasing artworks created by socially-distancing, quarantined or isolating Icelanders in its new collection, Sóttqueen.

Sóttqueen was inspired by Viktor and Þórður’s desire to find a little light amidst so much darkness: “We’d been seeing a lot of bad news and we wanted to do something positive,” explains Viktor. With this goal in mind, Postprent issued an open call on social media for pieces of art inspired by the coronavirus pandemic. Works are exhibited in their digital gallery on Instagram and prints are sold through their online store.

Unexpected Triumph

Less than one month later, Postprent has received almost 200 pieces of art. “We’re super happy about the huge amount of mate-

rial we’ve received,” says Viktor, going on to explain that the project’s huge success came as something of a surprise. “We just had this idea and we wanted to throw it into the cosmos and see what came back to us.”

The democratic nature of Postprent—they post everything they receive that fits their brief—has given many unestablished Icelandic artists a platform to reach a wider audience. One of the things Viktor has most enjoyed about the project is discovering amazing local artists he’d been unaware of. Some favourites include Margrét Lára Baldursdóttir’s depiction of empty supermarket shelves and Kaja Sigvalda’s photographic compositions.

One of the collection’s most striking through-lines is the humorous approach many of the artists have taken to documenting the pandemic. “Dark humour is a very Icelandic response to difficult issues,” Viktor tells us. The collection is full of witty observations about the strange era we are all living through, take this issue’s cover by Arnar Birgis titled ‘Kóróna (my mama don’t like you and she likes everyone)’. Indeed, the very name of the collection, ‘Sóttqueen’, is a pun on the Icelandic word for quarantine.

Community Spirit

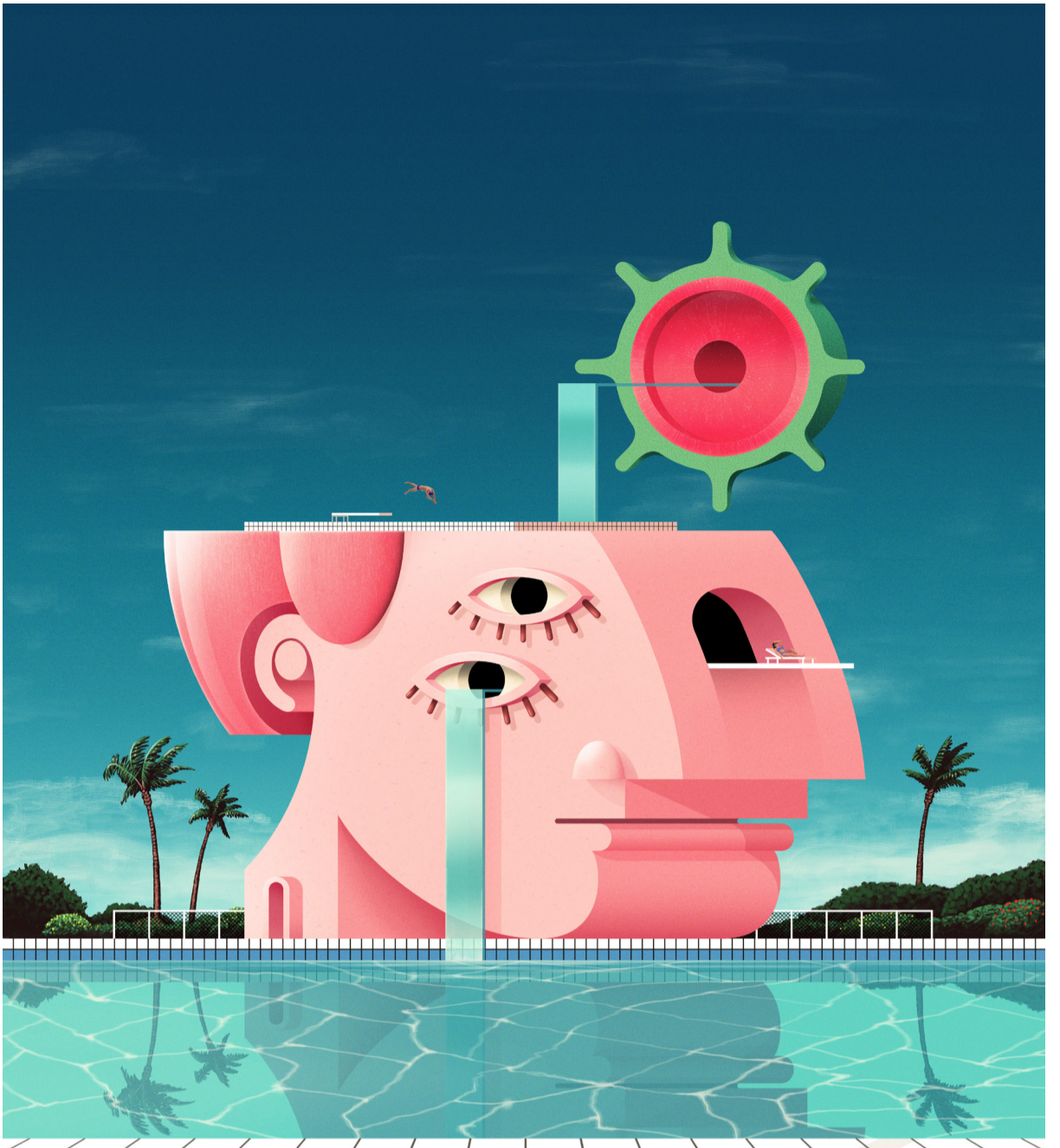
The project has been warmly received by Icelandic art lovers. Viktor tells us he has been thrilled with the support he and the Sóttqueen artists have received. “I think a lot of people relate to the art” he says, “it just goes to show that we’re all in this together.”

Thanks to international travel restrictions, possible restrictions on mass gatherings and social distancing measures, the coming summer is likely to be quieter than usual, so what better time to get your creative juices flowing? Postprent is still accepting Sóttqueen submissions, so check out their website or Instagram if you’ve been busy creating. As Viktor explains these are perhaps the perfect conditions for creativity to blossom: “We all have much more time on our hands” and the coronavirus is an endlessly versatile muse.

Excitingly, fans of Postprent’s virtual gallery can soon see the works in the actual real world! On May 23rd they will launch an exhibition showcasing the Sóttqueen prints in Ásmundarsalur. 🇮🇸



Elin Elísabet



Atli Sigursveins



Sölvi Dúnn



Ariana Vala



Margrét Lóa

SÓTTQUEEN



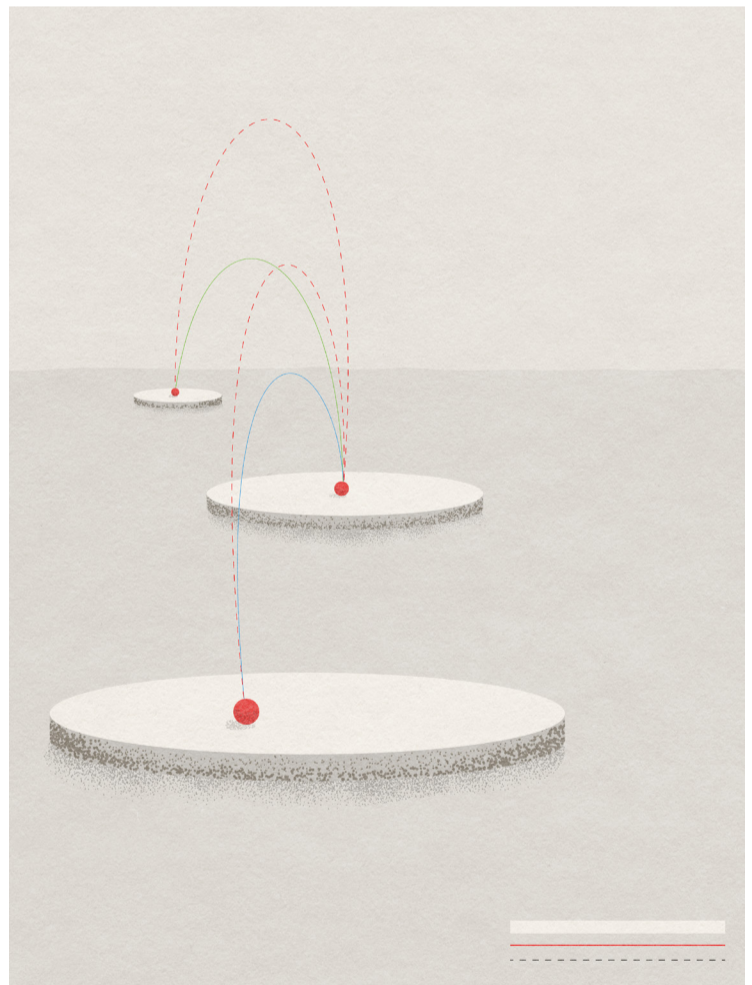
Stefania Emilsdóttir



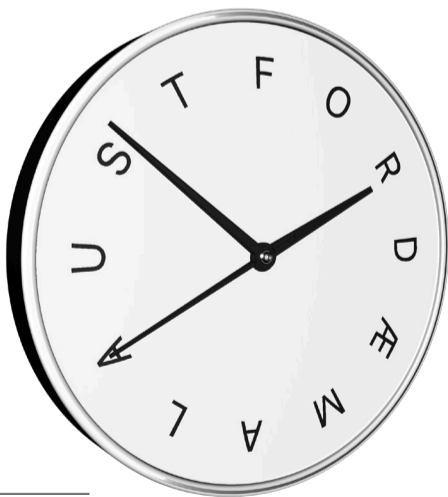
Ýmir Grönwold



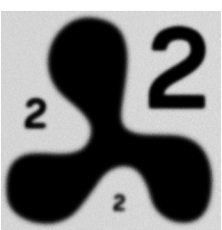
Yulia Panova



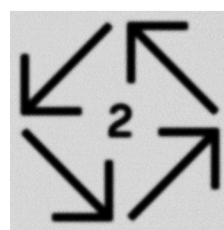
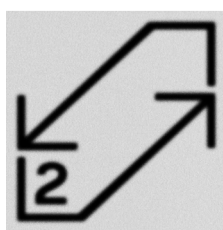
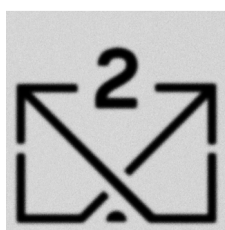
Þórður Gríms



Þórður Hans



Viktor Weishappel





Alex Steinþórs



Einar Lúðvík



Andrea Björk

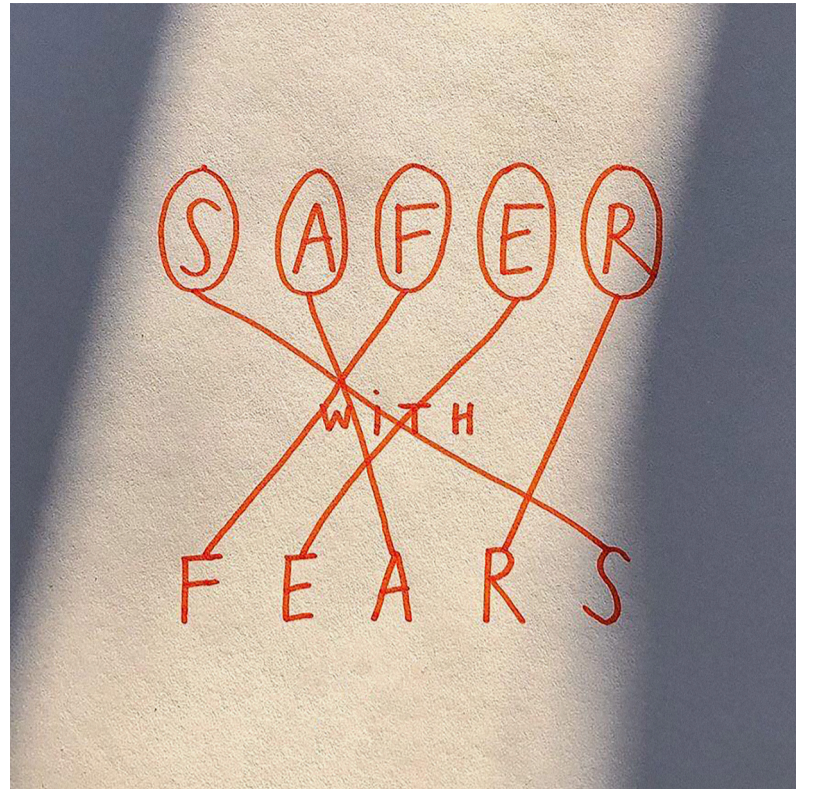
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Rán Flygenring





Keja Sigvalda



Margrét Bjarna



Elin Ósk



Sóley Tómas



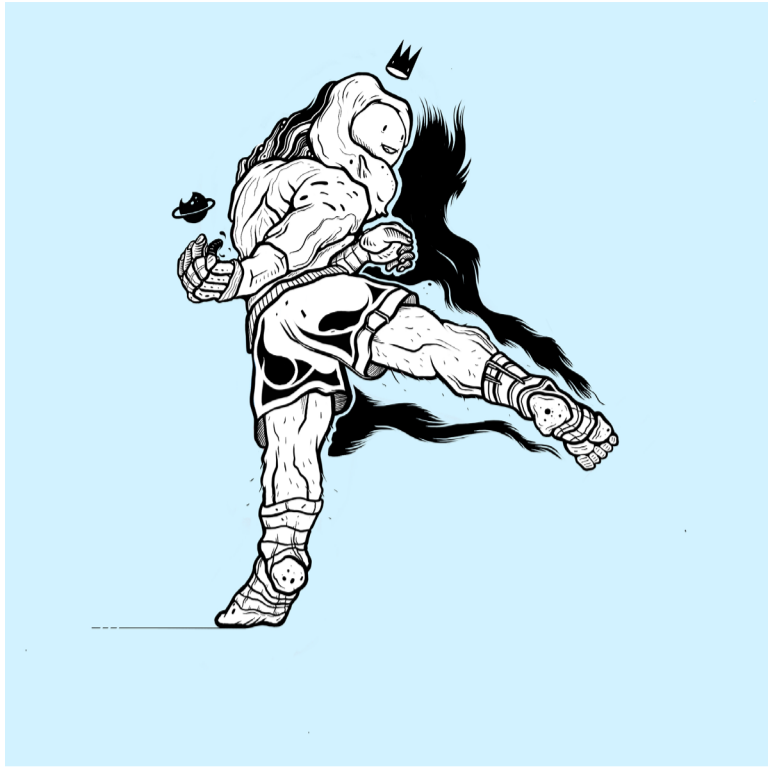
Sólilja Baltasars



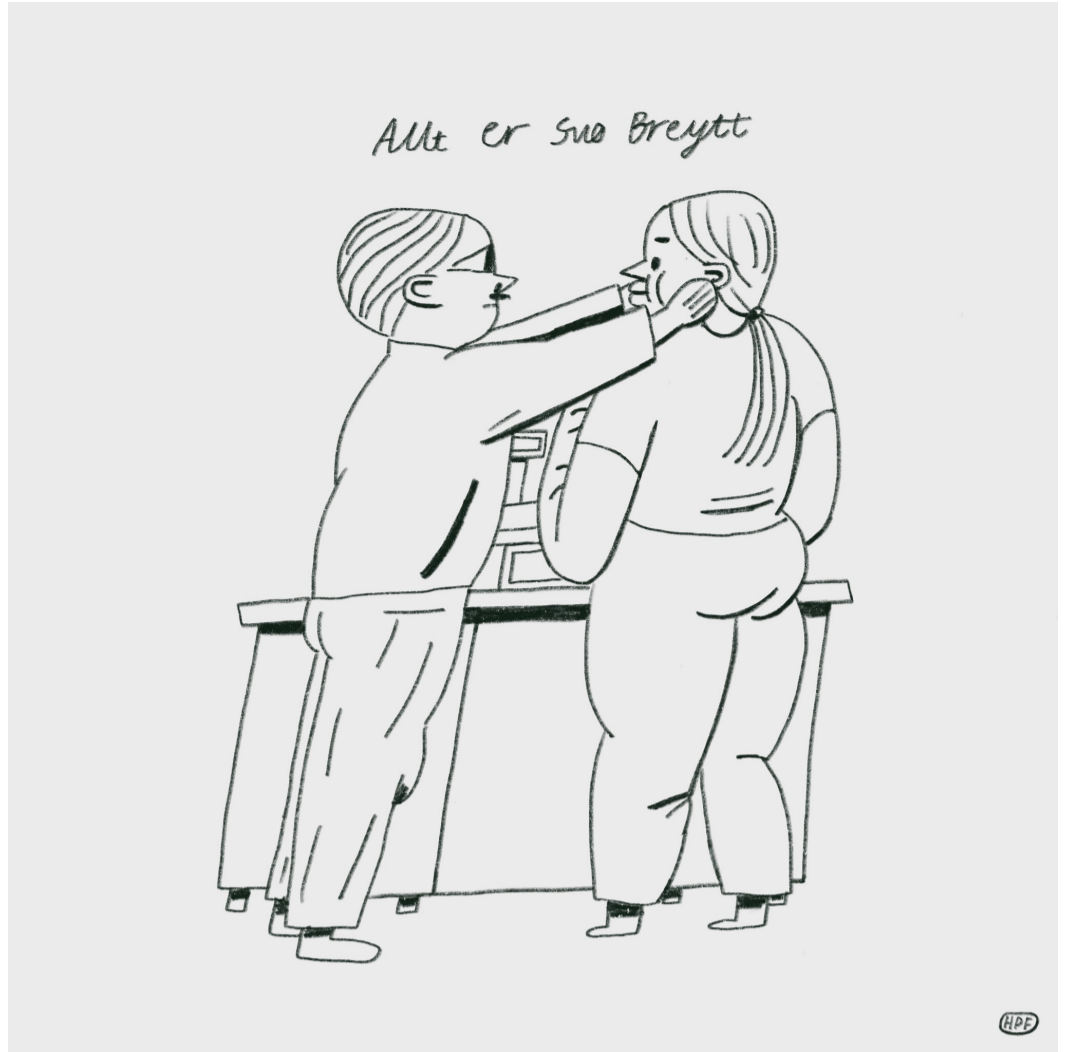
Arnar Helgi



Bergþóra Jóns



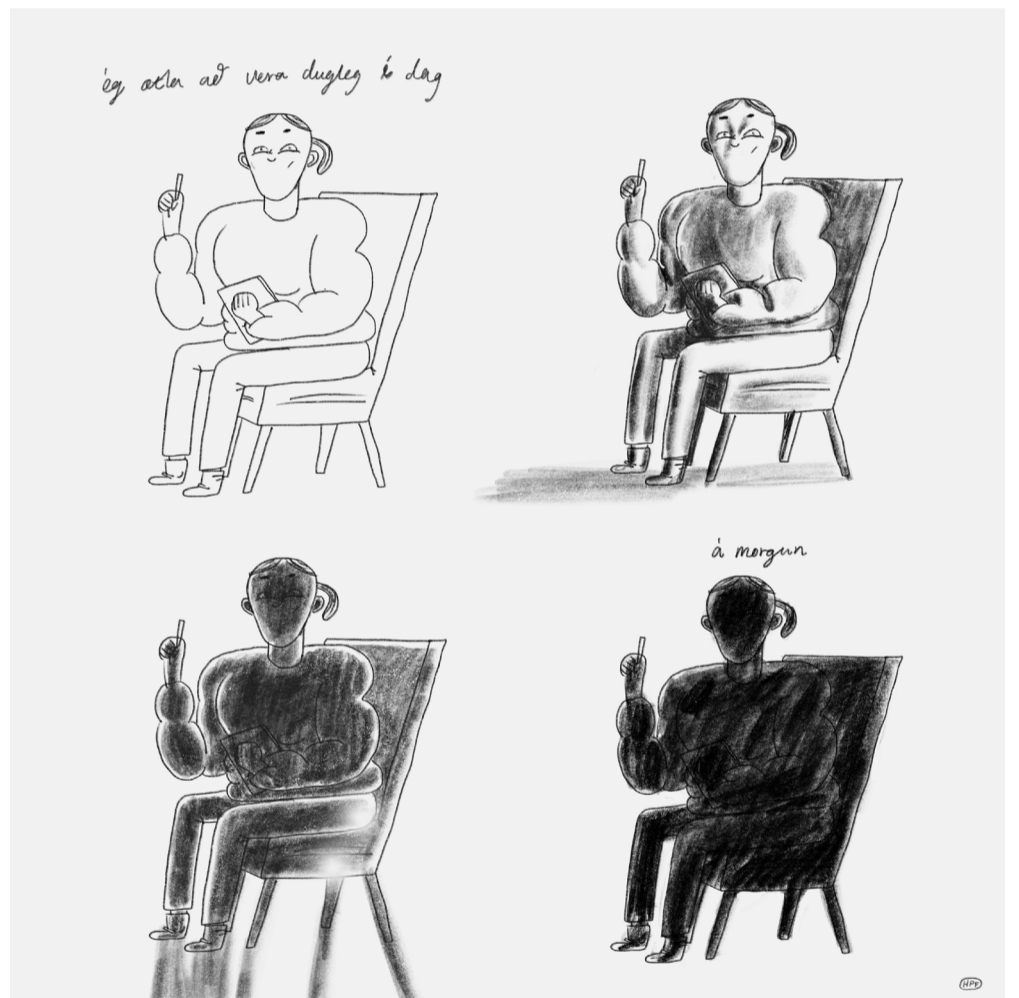
Geoffrey Skywalker



HBF



Lóabroratorium



Helga Páley



Pétur Geir

<https://postprent.is/sottqueen/>




Dóra Dúna



Margrét Lára



Jenný Mikka



“I have this moment like Nina in ‘Black Swan,’ where she does her best show ever but without a piece of glass in my stomach.”



PERFECT DAY:

Andrean Sigurgeirsson

Spectacular, totally unique, completely
not ever been done before...

Words: **Hannah Jane Cohen**

Photos: **Art Bicnick**

Andrean Sigurgeirsson is a dancer-extraordinaire who you can often see gracing the stage of the Iceland Dance Company and performing with Hatari. Here's how his perfect day in the city would unfold:

First thing in the morning

Since I'm in a long-distance relationship, I would love to wake up with the early morning shimmer from the sun, spooning my boyfriend, kissing him lightly. My whole family would be in the kitchen, making breakfast, and we'd sit down and talk about a lot of stupid stuff, mostly laughing. Some nice Indonesian jazz plays in the background.

Mid-morning

After breakfast, my boyfriend and I go and take a walk in Öskjuhlíð, which is one of the few places within Reykjavík with trees. I'm half-Indonesian so I really like to be surrounded by trees, but in Iceland they are non-existent. Afterwards, we'd head to Nauthólsvík. It'd be a total rom-com situation—we have

the beach to ourselves and go skinny-dipping in the warm ocean. Then we kiss and hug in the hot tub.

Lunch

We go to my favourite place, **Coocoo's Nest**, for a late brunch. I have the eggs florentine, which is very cliché, but I freaking love it. My friends are there, and we're planning a new art project, which is brilliant, incredible, amazing, show stopping, spectacular, never the same, totally unique, completely not ever been done before—that whole quote, you know.

Then, we notice in the news that the Icelandic government has stopped the eviction of asylum seeker children and their families, and the solution for the coronavirus is just devouring a huge vinarbrauð. At the same time, Bernie Sanders is elected President of the United States. We celebrate with a mimosa.

Afternoon

I would probably want to be alone with myself because I'm a huge loner and need time to myself. I love hiking so I'd go to **Esja**, put on my

headphones, and just walk very fast up the mountain. I tend to hike very fast and people can't keep up with me. Get those buns of steel, honey!

Evening

Then I'd head to **Borgarleikhúsið** for a show, grabbing some salad from **Local** on the way. We'd be showing my all-time favourite piece, Black Marrow. It's packed and I have this moment like Nina in 'Black Swan,' where she does her best show ever. The whole artistic team surrounds me and are in awe and I say, "I was perfect," but without a piece of broken glass in my stomach.

In the heat of the night

After the show, me and my comrades celebrate with some champagne. We end up at **Röntgen**, my new favourite place, and we dance the fucking house down. Then, my boyfriend and I sneak away—like I always do—and tap into **Kiki** to get our gay songs on for an hour.

Then we'd go home and have sex until we die. 🍷

Sólbjört Sigurðardóttir (25) is a dancer, currently working at Borgar-leikhúsið

Fancies is our compendium of Reykjavík street icons

Words: **Hannah Jane Cohen**

Photo: **Art Bicnick**

Wearing:

- ▶ Sequin pants from Hildur Yeoman. Apparently there is only one pair—they were a sample. I saw them at the store and I was like “Yeah, sold!”
- ▶ Sweater from River Island
- ▶ Earrings from tRASHY Collective
- ▶ Boots from UNIF

Describe your style in 5 words:

Diverse. Colourful. Outgoing. A bit extra. I like to be overdressed rather than underdressed. I often get asked, “Where are you going? Are you going to a party?” No, I just felt like being a bit extra today! I often dress from my emotions. I own very few items of black clothing.

Favourite stores around Reykjavik:

Aftur and Yeoman. There are so many but these two really stick out for me.

Favourite piece you own:

My favourite is a silk scarf dress from Aftur. I will never let that go. I saw it in the window of Aftur and I was like, “I have to have this. I have to.” I also graduated in that dress. It has a silk waistband and it’s beautiful.

Something you would never wear:

There’s not much, but probably not a regular fleece sweater. I’m also trying not to buy fast fashion. I’d rather buy from Icelandic designers, even though it’s a bit more expensive.

Lusting after:

I would really like to have a custom-made suit or a custom-made jumpsuit from MYRKA. Harpa is a genius! 🍷





The Grapevine Astrology team hard at work

HORROR-SCOPES


Guilty Pisces Pleasures

Yeah... as if Pisces can even feel pleasure, am I right?


Words: **Hannah Jane Cohen, astrologer / life coach**
Image: **Syda Productions / Adobe Stock**

In *Horror-Scopes*, the Grapevine's dedicated team of amateur single astrologists break down your upcoming weeks based on shit like leaves on the bottom of tea cups, like they even exist.


Aries

 Do you know what's worth fighting for? When it's not worth dying for? Does it take your breath away? And you feel yourself suffocating? If you didn't immediately start bumping one of the best concept albums of all time after reading those four questions, Aries, it'll be a green day in hell before you have a good day in quarantine. Throw up your arms and accept your emo roots or you'll be... in ruins


Taurus

 In 2001, then-unknown-chanteuse Willa Ford sold over 250,000 copies of her pole dance banger "I Wanna Be Bad." She also had a three year relationship with Backstreet Boy Nick Carter and potentially fucked Eminem, yet you never hear about this blonde Jezebel in the 2000s history roundups. What does that tell us Taurus? Maybe being slutty isn't the answer. Especially when you can't leave your house.


Gemini

 There are 525,600 minutes in a year, Gemini, a fact we only know because of the RENT song. But while others might measure their 2020 in love, you should consider measuring yours in OnlyFans subscribers. For you, my love, being slutty is the answer—the answer to being financially independent at least.


Cancer

 Don't listen to the haters. There's nothing wrong with crying to Kim Kardashian's forgotten 2011 banger "Jam (Turn It Up)". We do it all the time. Just kidding—people don't gossip about us behind our back like they do to you. They just praise us.

Leo


 When My Chemical Romance asks if you want to hear something sad, there's only one response, Leo, and that is "please." It's Okay (I Promise).

Virgo


 Let that social distancing existential breakdown in, Virgo, because there's gotta be more to life than just chasing

down every temporary high to satisfy you, right? The more you're tripping out thinking there must be more to life... well... that's life... right? Wow, you're high-high. Slow down on the weed, bro, because there is more to life than just chasing down every temporary high to satisfy you. We promise.

Libra


 Cobra Starship and Blair Waldorf famously made them good girls go bad, but it seems like all you can do is make the bad boys get worse. Maybe it's your shutter shades or maybe it's the X's on the back of your hands that you wash in the bathroom to drink with the band, or maybe it's the fact that you knew the latter was a reference to a 3OH!3 song, not a Cobra Starship hit. Use this pandemic to grow up, stop trusting hoes, and start listening to Radiohead like all the other sad people.

Scorpio


 We get your paranoia: there IS something eerily similar about O-Towns "All or Nothing" and "Drowning" by the Backstreet Boys. How has no one talked about this? Why are there no BuzzFeed think-pieces on this scandal? HOW HAS THIS GONE IGNORED FOR 20 YEARS? WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT CORONAVIRUS WHEN WE SHOULD DISCUSS HOW SOME SONGWRITER OF THE BACKSTREET BOYS STOLE SOME PART OF A LESSER BOYBAND'S ACHIEVEMENT AND NO ONE EVEN CARES ABOUT IT? WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON? WHEN CAN I LEAVE MY ROOM AND GO

OUTSIDE? SOMEBODY CALL JA RULE! I NEED TO MAKE SENSE OF THIS!!


Sagittarius

 Sagittarius, stop going live on Instagram just so you can rant about how 'Camp Rock' was wildly superior to 'High School Musical'. In fact, stop going live at all. We get that you're an attention whore dreaming of a life where you're the shining star, but maybe you should use this time to look inside yourself. Yes, "This Is Me" could have—and should have—been the "Let It Go" of a generation, but if you keep ranting about it on your kitchen floor à la Trisha Paytas, you'll never find the Joe to your Demi.


Capricorn

 You listen to Coldplay so your opinions don't matter. We're not justifying this. It's a fact.

Aquarius

 We agree: Viking Metal is cool, regardless of what online elitists think. You pop that Amon Amarth on and escape to a world where you aren't unemployed because some people halfway around the world made some bizarre food choices. Real Vikings only eat raw meat anyway. Wait... raw meat... oh shit...

Pisces

 Forget "Savage," the only song you should be learning all the dance moves to is "The Hoedown Throw-down." We're not accepting any arguments, Pisces. Don't even talk to us until you can pop it, lock it and, most importantly, polka dot it. 🍷



*“I was on ‘The Bachelor’
and now I’m rich and I’ve got my shit
together!”*



GRAPEVINE GUIDES

Take Care Of Yourself, No One Else Will

Thanks for checking in, I’m still a piece of garbage!

Words: **Hannah Jane Cohen, aka dirtbag Dr. Phil**



If 2020 was a drink, it’d be Dasani. If it were a TV character, it’d be Georgina Sparks from *Gossip Girl*. Synthetic marijuana, the *Inbetweeners* reunion special, a Jake Paul diss track, soggy okra, Britney’s 2007 VMAs performance, Randy from *That 70s Show*, and ‘Mean Girls 2’—the year 2020 is all of this and more.

Basically, what we’re saying is that 2020 is awful and we never asked for it. We get that you’re struggling—who wouldn’t be?

Well, not us. We at the Grapevine have spent our pandemic time eating clean, meditating, reorganising our houses, creating mood boards, getting creative, and—obviously—working out a ton. It’s been a productive and spiritually-enriching time for our editorial staff and we’re confident we will be returning to the office better and more centred than ever.

...just kidding.

Let’s not beat around the bush: This whole situation kind of sucks and we’re all having difficulty dealing with it. To help you (and us) out, we’ve put together this list of self-help tips.



SLEEP, BITCH

You want a hot body? You want a Bugatti? You want a Maserati? You better get that shut eye, idiot.

Look, it’s easy when you’ve got so much free time on your hands—and little to do with it—to start staying up until the wee hours on Reddit, sleeping in all day, and then repeating ad nauseam. Doing this is easy and while it might feel fun—a dip back into the uni days—it’s an extremely bad habit to get into as fucking up your circadian rhythm has a host of unpleasant effects, from messing with your REM sleep and making you depressed to putting you at risk for a whole host of awful diseases. And do you need your immune system compromised right now? Um, no.

More importantly, wasting your precious daylight hours sleeping will also make you feel like shit. Humans aren’t made to live in total darkness or artificial light. It’s a recipe for disaster. Remember: Just because something feels good—like heroin—does not make

it self-care.

So be mature and make a concerted effort to go to sleep at a reasonable hour every night and wake up in the morning. Fixing your sleep pattern is not easy, but it'll have a tangible and easily seen benefit in your life. Our tips? Try keeping away from your bed during the day so you'll learn to associate it with sleep and reading a book before you go to bed rather than looking at your phone. It's not rocket science, people.

If all else fails and you're already in bed and still can't relax, pop on some tingling ASMR videos. From tapping long nails to crinkling tissue paper to cutting soap to having someone whisper sweet nothings in your ear, there's something for everyone that'll chill you out.

Don't stress, we know just what you're sayin'

There are some weird wannabe-messiahs out there in the world who have taken this opportunity to spread their gospel of productivity. According to these influencers, every moment of your isolation day should be meticulously planned out and used for good. Write a book! Take up yoga! Make your own bread! Learn a language! Look at the clean vegan food I've meal-prepped for the next month with my tan glowing skin while I hawk supplements and FashionNova! I was on 'The Bachelor' and now I'm rich and I've got my shit together! You don't! How does that make you feel, you disgusting failure?

What an apocalyptic nightmare we've entered.

Remember that social media is a highlight reel of curated content that people WANT you to see. That means that everyone is going to post about the time they spent creating a bullet journal of their creative ambitions or did 20 push-ups and no one is going to post about the time they spent two hours stalking the cast of 'Too Hot To Handle' on Instagram. Don't lie—we've all done it.

It's a delicate balance. We would never tell you not to set some goals and try to better yourself during this pandemic—you should, it'll definitely help your mental health—but don't sweat it if you want to take some time to just exist. For the first time in recent history, society is forcing us to take a break from real life. Rest if you need to. Indulge in frivolous bullshit if you want to. Find some goals you want to accomplish but don't stress if your progress doesn't match some people on Instagram. It probably won't, and that's ok.



As Adore Delano would say: PARTY!

Many people are isolating and relapsing into bad social habits during this time. With no concerts or events, days can blur together, which might make you feel aimless and lost. C'mon, suddenly making fun of Rebecca Black for knowing that yesterday was Thursday feels a bit cruel, doesn't it? What day is it again?

To combat this, do your best to make some time special and memorable. Schedule online chats with friends, but turn them into extravaganzas. Have a spa night where everyone spoils themselves with face masks, a fancy afternoon where you get dressed up in your slutty club clothes, or a 2000s throwback party where you can finally don that sequin cropped shrug.

Need more ideas? Start a book club with something fun and ridiculous like Holly Madison's memoir about her time in the Playboy Mansion. Put together a task force to finally figure out the Zodiac cypher. Interview your exs to find out what went wrong. Ok, we're kidding with the last one.

Otherwise, the app Houseparty is a saviour for mindless entertainment with friends. Download and let the fun begin.

DAZE OUT

When times get really bad, escape into YouTube. Unlike Netflix, Hulu, or what-have-you, it's free and if you search hard, you'll be blessed with more bizarre content than you can handle. Someone eating 100,000 calories in a day? Yes please. Pranking your boyfriend with a fake miscarriage? Totally exists. Weird documentaries "proving" that Bill Gates is behind the COVID-19 pandemic? Watched it! Loved it!

At this time, I (personally) enjoy commentary YouTubers like Danny Gonzales, Drew Gooden, Kurtis Conner, and Tom Harlock. For more spectacular fun, I'm always re-watching Jojo Gomez choreography, Tanya Hennessy sketches, and RedLetterMedia film reviews. I'm kind of a YouTube fiend, so if you're looking for more ideas, feel free to email me.

We also cannot underplay how good a nice Vine compilation is in times like these. They are literally hand-selected to make you giggle. So stop, friends, before you drop your croissant, and take care of yourself. The Grapevine loves you, bitch. And the Grapevine ain't never gonna stop lovin' you...bitch. 🍷



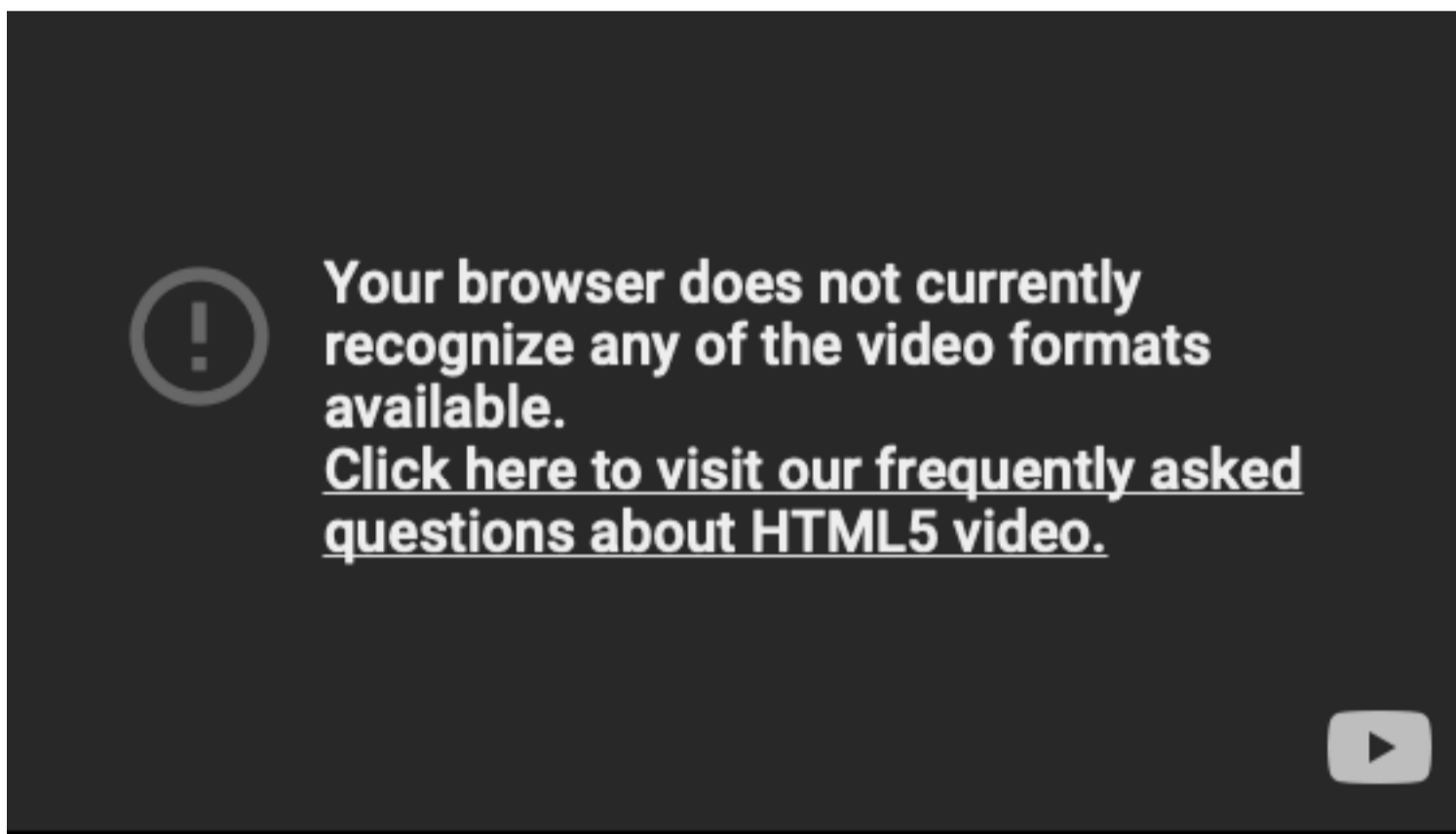
Art In The Time Of Corona

*Can inherently social
art survive isolation?*

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen

In this current climate, artists of all mediums are facing difficulties. When stuck in social distancing, quarantining, or—God forbid—dealing with the virus itself, how do those who rely on shows and concerts to sustain themselves spread their word? To find out, the Grapevine reached out to five artists in town—GDRN, Hatari, Gógó Starr, Daði Freyr, and Une Misère—who have all seen their lives change due to the pandemic. From complete loss of employment to artistic angst to a new hope, each is attempting to deal and heal with this new world.

“There will be a wave of pandemic art, but I think also that artists don’t even need to go out of their way to tackle this pandemic. I think it will just be in the room as an added layer of meaning to anything. It’s inescapable. It affects us all.”



HATARI

Matthías Tryggvi Haraldsson of Hatari is in quarantine—the proper kind. He’s safe, he emphasises, but has been relegated to his apartment after having been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. “I’m stable,” the poet, vocalist, and playwright assures me, his voice crackling over the phone. “I think I function very well in a quarantine situation. Mostly I am just reading, writing and cooking.”

Matthías and the rest of his BDSM-industrial-vinyl-enthusiast-trio had just finished the first leg of their—ahem, perhaps aptly-named—Europe Will Crumble tour, when the pandemic began ramping up on the continent. They subsequently had to postpone or cancel all of the shows on the second leg, as well their summer gigs. “This is especially strange for us since we talk about apocalypse situations and dystopia often in our music,” he says.

A reference point

In Matthías’ opinion, this epidemic is no doubt going to irrevocably change how one views, experiences, or creates any art for the foreseeable future. “This will be a universal reference point and I’m sure many artists will race to have a take on it,” he explains. “There will be a wave of pandemic art, but I think also that artists don’t even need to go out of their way to tackle this. I think it will just be in the room as an added layer of meaning to anything. It’s inescapable. It affects us all.”

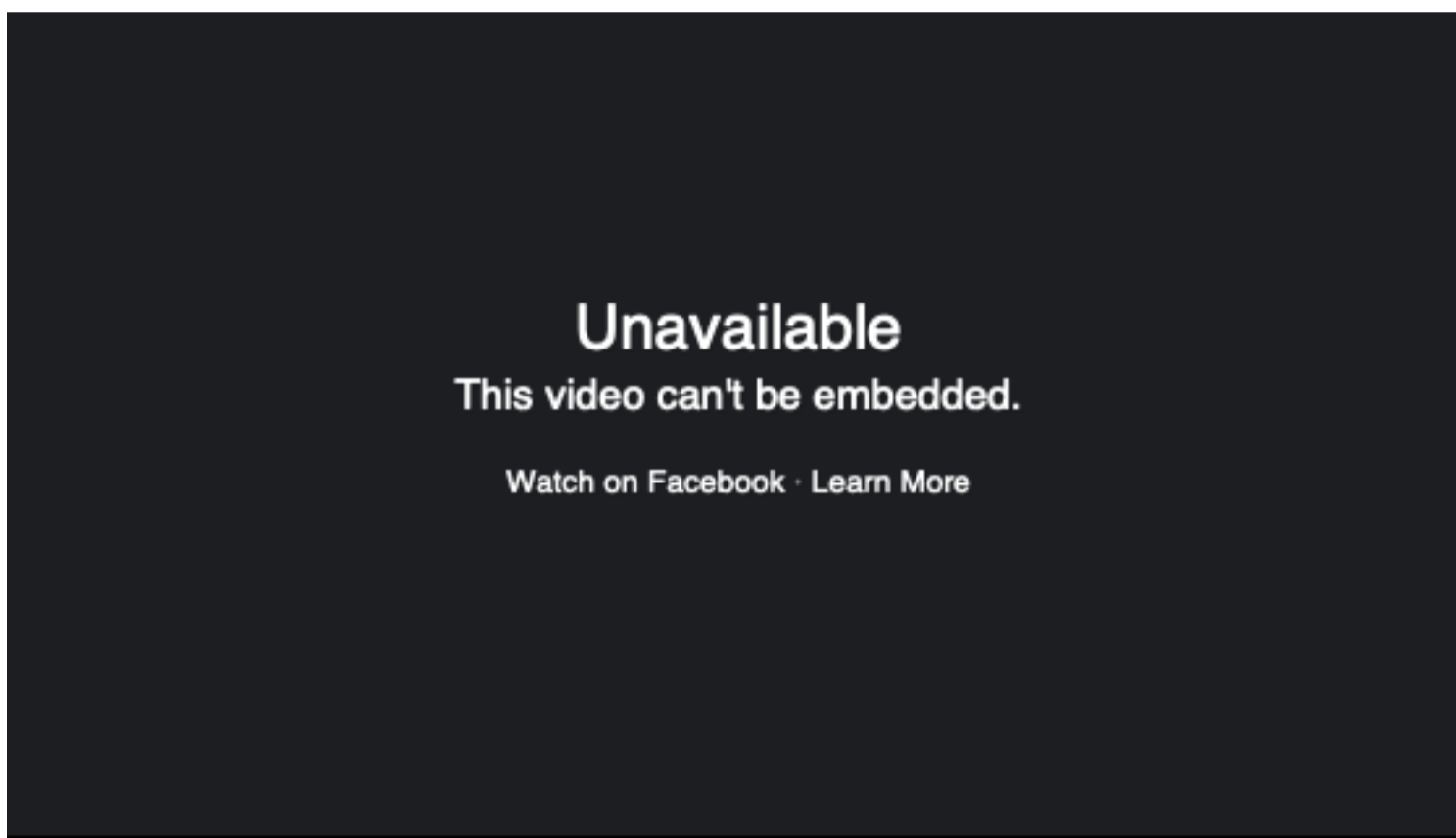
Curiously, the famously cynical artist has a rather hopeful outlook on the crisis. “Obviously, it’s horrible, but there are some positives, you could say,” he pauses. “Oh, I sound like a boring politician. You don’t want to downplay how serious it is, but on a whole, the positive is that everyone is prioritising what they need, what is important, and maybe once this blows over, we can rebuild in a more anti-capitalist spirit.”

Picking up the pieces

That said, on an individual level, Matthías recommends not stressing and trying to take time to enjoy yourself. “You can just not do smart or productive things. It doesn’t have to be a life-coach moment,” he urges. “You don’t have to work through the must-read list you saw on The Guardian. You can also just cook some mushroom risotto and binge ‘Nathan For You,’ which you downloaded illegally.”

While Hatari has no plans to join the livestream wave, they coincidentally released their KEXP session video in the early weeks of the pandemic, so Matthías recommends watching that if you need a Hatari fix. That said, the trio will be back to crumble Europe—whatever is left of it—as soon as they can. “We will just pick up the pieces where we left them,” Matthías concludes.

“One day, when we get old, people are going to ask, ‘Were you alive when this COVID thing was happening?’ And we will be like, ‘Yes, sit down! I will tell you all about it.’”



GDRN

Guðrún Ýr Eyfjörð Jóhannesdóttir, a.k.a. GDRN, had just dropped her long-awaited sophomore effort when the pandemic hit Iceland. She had a big release show scheduled at Háskólabíó as well as numerous festival and summer appearances planned. “When [‘Spring’] came out, I didn’t realise how big this would become, so I was really scared then of not being able to have the concert, the release concert—which, of course, didn’t happen in the end,” she explains. “Then all of my gigs got cancelled and I was like, woah, ok, this is kind of scary.”

A new medium

Summer, the singer emphasises, would have economically been the bread and butter of her year—as it is for most live artists—so the gathering ban and pandemic as a whole has

put her in a difficult position, especially on the tail of an album release. “I thought I was going to have a lot of income this summer so then I’d be good for the year, but now everything is cancelled. It’s weird. It’s not great,” she admits.

But Guðrún is taking the uncertainty in stride, staying positive and doing livestreamed shows online—an avenue many musicians are taking to support themselves in these difficult times. “It’s absolutely harder to do livestreamed shows. You’re in an empty space,” the singer says, bursting out laughing when asked about the change in medium. “You’re saying ‘Thank you!’ and then you get no response. There are a lot of people watching but you get no response so you’re like, ‘Ok, anyhow, here’s the next song!’”

Stay busy, stay positive

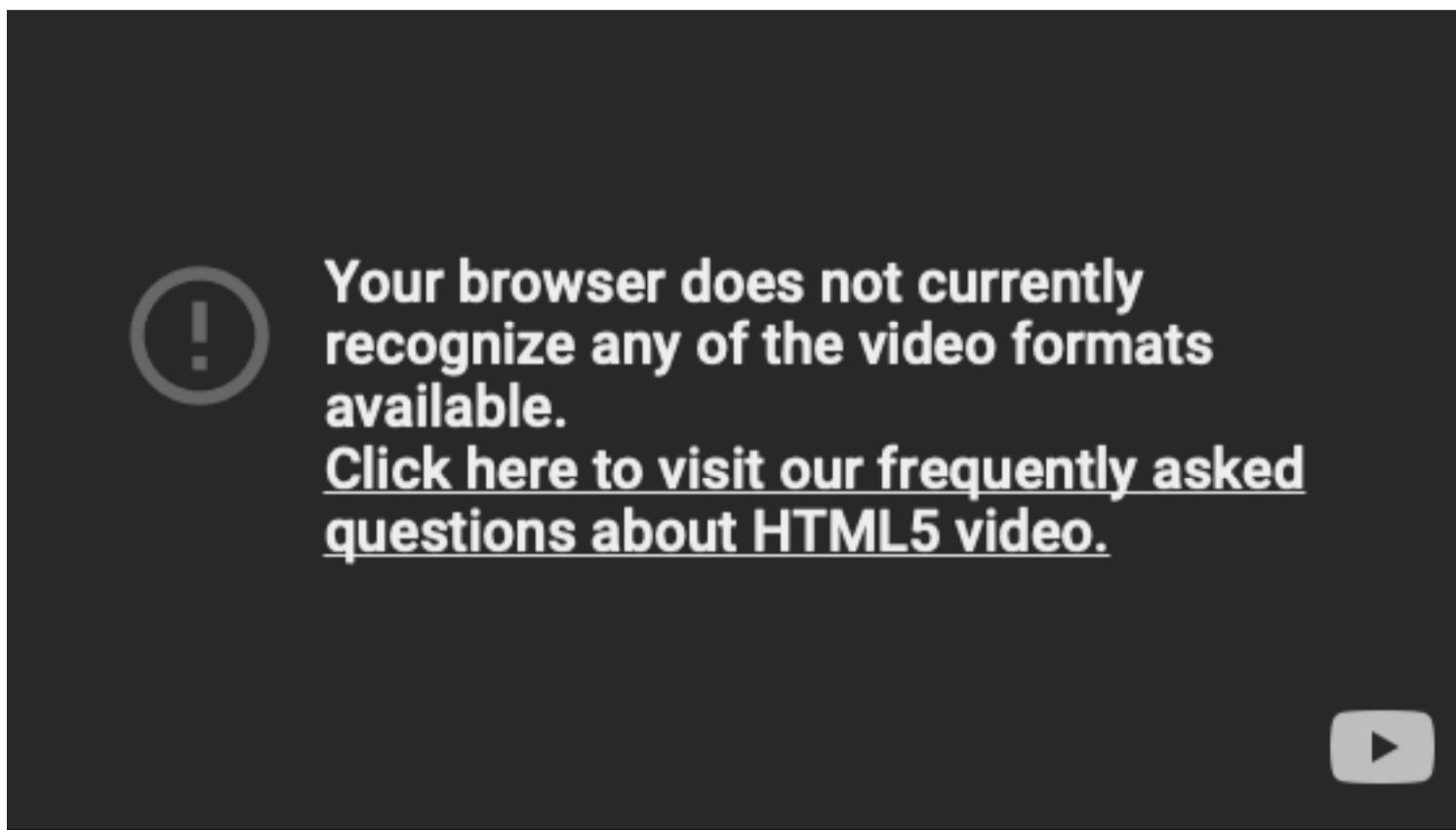
Outside of that, Guðrún is taking advantage of having more free time—something she says she hasn’t had in ages. “I’ve been doing

a lot of yoga, running, reading, and watching ‘Game of Thrones.’” she laughs. “I’m getting the time off that I didn’t ask for, but maybe I needed. In the beginning [of the pandemic], I felt guilty because I was always so busy and all of a sudden I had nothing to do. But just let yourself be. No one is going to say, ‘Why are you so lazy?’ If they did, you can just say, ‘I’m self-distancing.’”

Staying busy, Guðrún emphasises, is imperative to staying sane in these troubled times. “If I become really bored, my mental health will not be that great. I think you have to work for good mental health while all this is happening,” she admits. “It’s scary and uncomfortable, I’m trying not to look at the news too often because I get stressed out.”

“You have to be positive because there are a lot of negative things happening. You have to look at the positive things, even if there aren’t many right now,” she explains. “And one day, when we get old, people are going to ask, ‘Were you alive when this COVID thing was happening?’ And we will be like, ‘Yes, sit down! I will tell you all about it.’”

“It’s going to be a weird time for a lot of Icelandic musicians.”



DAÐI FREYR

If there’s any Icelandic music artist that one would say has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, it’d be Daði Freyr. The dark horse of the 2017 Söngvakeppnin competition, Daði returned to the RÚV stage this year with his winning hit “Think About Things,” which was slated as Iceland’s entry to this year’s now-cancelled 2020 Eurovision song contest.

The upbeat track unexpectedly went viral, with many people—both domestically and internationally—anticipating that with Daði’s entry, 2020 was finally Iceland’s year to win. “Of course!” Daði laughs, when this is brought up. “That was the plan all along.”

#Cancelled

“[Gagnamagnið and I] knew for a while that Eurovision was going to be affected in some way,” Daði explains. “When we competed in Iceland at Söngvakeppnin, there was talk

among Gagnamagnið if we should go out in the audience after the show and greet people or if we should stay away because of this, so it was already, at that point, very high on our minds.”

It was therefore, in the end, not a shock to the artist when the song contest was cancelled. “We knew it would at least be different. We hoped that it wouldn’t be cancelled, but we had some time to anticipate it,” he admits.

The new audience awaits

Daði’s based in Berlin, which has implemented a much stricter gathering ban than Iceland. There’s a strictly enforced two-person maximum, which the musician assures he and his family are taking seriously. “I’m mostly at home and I have a studio at home so I am just doing the same as I would be doing,” he explains. “Except I am not going to Eurovision, and I am not meeting my friends so much.”

“Think About Things” becoming a runaway hit has kept the artist busy working on the business aspects of being a musician. “I am just working on the rest of my career,” he shrugs. “All of a sudden, I have a way bigger audience than I had before. I want to utilise that as much as I can.”

Daði recognises he’s in a rather privileged position. “This summer is going to be pretty bad for musicians that depend on the festivals for their income. It’s going to affect a lot of people more than it will affect me. I just got lucky with timing from this song blowing up because usually this summer would have been my main income for the year,” he explains. “But [because of “Think About Things”] I can work on different stuff right now. It’s going to be a weird time for a lot of Icelandic musicians.”

You do you!

Unfortunately, the answer to the number one question surrounding Daði Freyr’s future is a resounding no. “No, I will not compete again in Söngvakeppnin,” he laughs. “We won that already.” That said, if RÚV wants to send him to Eurovision, he’d still be up for competing. “If not, it is what it is!”

The sweater-clad singer recommends using your time productively during this pandemic, “Learn a new skill. Get an instrument and try to play that. Start painting. I see a lot of people are getting into fitness now and that’s not the dumbest idea. Just work on yourself. Use this time to do you,” he says. “You do you!”

“As a full time drag performer and event organiser, you could say I thrive in gatherings. So basically, I’m about all the things that are just not applicable anymore.”



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**GÓGÓ
STARR**

“As a full time drag performer and event organiser, you could say I thrive in gatherings,” Sigurður Starr Guðjónsson, better known as drag queen Gógó Starr laughs. “So basically, I’m about all the things that are just not applicable anymore.”

A forced vacation

The queen saw coronavirus affect her business rapidly and severely. “I remember when people began talking more and more about COVID-19, you could really notice this tension in the air because this is Árs hátíð season right now,” Gógó explains, referencing the importance of booking annual company parties for many artists. Gógó is a regular fixture at them. “I thought, maybe they’ll have to postpone certain gigs? So having a whole bunch of question marks in your calendar is never good but then almost overnight—the day that they announced the gathering ban—the entire calendar is just gone and you’re like, oh no, what do I do now? It was really scary.”

But Gógó’s a hustler, and immediately began thinking of what she could do next. While musicians have retreated to virtual shows online, drag is a particularly difficult gig to pull off without a crowd. There’s absolutely no history of it, so just how the plethora of international drag performers were going to survive during this pandemic was a real quandary in the community. “Drag is so interactive, and it’s a medium that’s weird to do alone in your house while broadcasting it, all the while hoping that it is received well on the other end,” she says.

It was a harsh realisation for the performer, who took the forced vacation as perhaps a divine sign that it was time to relax for a bit. “I had been working really hard up until this for so long, so I decided to take a tiny break and just focus on social media to bring some joy to people during this,” she explains. “I’ve been playing a whole lot of Dungeons & Dragons online with friends. Craft projects. The Final Fantasy VII remake just came out and it’s excellent. In a positive light, it’s also allowed me to go back into other creative things I just haven’t been giving myself time for.”

Who runs the world?

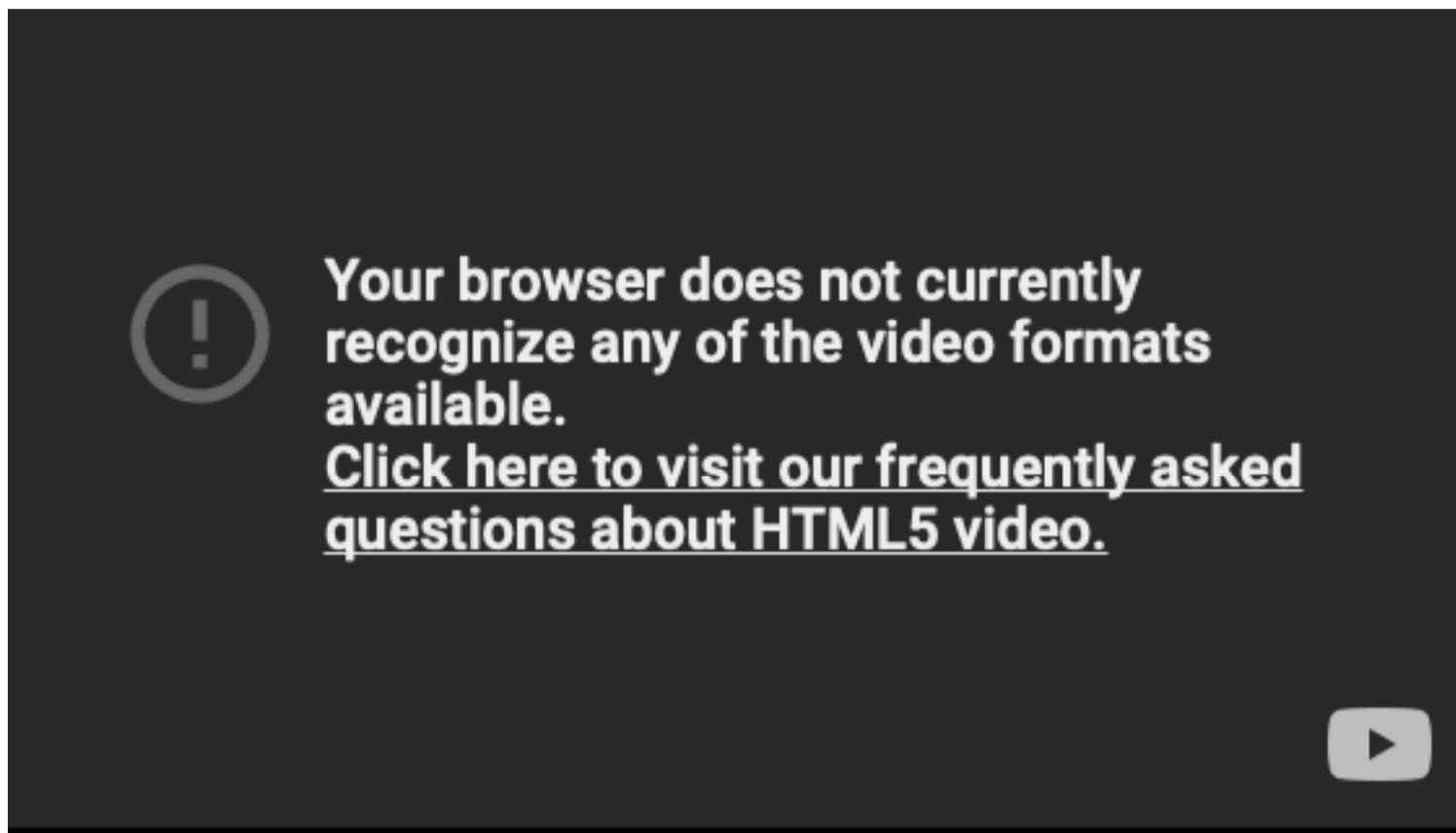
The turning point came when she was booked for Bitch Puddin’s Digital Drag show on

Twitch—the first big worldwide drag event online—along with drag superstars like Alaska Thunderfuck, Vander Von Odd, Bible Girl, Landon Cider and more.

“It changed the game. I hope that we will be seeing a lot more drag on the worldwide web. Looking to the future, I think [the COVID-19 pandemic] will really impact both how drag is perceived and performed,” Gógó says. “There were 2,500 people watching the digital drag show at once. That many people could never fit inside a club. There’s also international collaboration. I think it’s fostering some great stuff that we haven’t had to think about or push.”

Gógó is now inspired to do something similar in Iceland, though she admits she’s nervous to do so. “This is a new area and I think I am afraid to fumble with it. It’s terrifying to think of what if it just fails horribly,” she says. “Icelandic drag is so amazingly diverse in all its aspects and I think that’s something we should take the opportunity to underline and make bigger and better. This is also an excellent time to look more internationally and put all of our stuff on the internet to share so it’s not just Iceland, it’s everywhere.” She pauses. “Let’s take over the world, girls!”

“I hope that the whole industry bounces back and the consequences aren’t completely irreversible, because there’s nothing that comes close to the primal-ness of shows, of a concert setting. You can’t really mimic that online.”



UNE MISÈRE

The boys of Une Misère were beginning their first US tour when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the fan. “We landed in the States on a Wednesday and within a couple hours of being there, we saw on every TV screen that Trump had banned all flights from Europe,” vocalist Jón Már Ásbjörnsson says solemnly over Skype.

It was unclear at that time just how serious coronavirus would be, so the quintet made the difficult decision to push on to Philadelphia, where they did their first show. Within half an hour of finishing their set, the tour was cancelled. “Our manager called us and said, ‘You need to go home right now,’” guitarist Fannar Már Oddsson recalls. “It was like getting mentally punched in the kidneys.” His video freezes, which prompts a laugh from fellow guitarist Gunnar Ingi Jones.

“Just leave him like that,” Gunnar smirks. It’s clear even a kidney punch didn’t dampen the band’s characteristic humour.

100% live

The quintet had long dreamed of touring the US, and after the success of their debut album, ‘Sermon,’ they anticipated it would be a game-changer for their career. Now, they are in a limbo, worried about the future of the band,

the metal industry and the live music world as a whole.

“We are a live band 100%,” Fannar declares. “I hope that the whole industry bounces back and the consequences aren’t completely irreversible, because there’s nothing that comes close to the primal-ness of shows, of a concert setting. You can’t really mimic that online.”

Gunnar nods. “You can also imagine what the competition of putting out music next year will be—it’ll be pretty much impossible to promote new material,” he explains. “At the same time, all the promotional companies and venues are pretty much gone at this point, so it’s going to be interesting to see who takes up the torch.”

“But even though things seem like they are really dark right now, we try to have positive vibes,” Gunnar smiles. “We’re writing so much shit these days.”

Changing the world

At the same time, the crisis has already irrevocably changed how the boys view humanity as a whole. “It’s interesting to see how quickly we can take a stand on something,” Gunnar says. “The world has united and everyone is trying to do their best. It brings up questions: If we can actually do this, why can’t we save the planet now?”

For Fannar, it just reveals how quickly the world can mobilise—and why they haven’t already. “People often aren’t willing to change until they’re at the finishing line of being completely fucked,” he explains. “As long as

your way of life isn’t being affected day by day most people don’t give a shit. They stand up and look at their surroundings and say, ‘Well, nothing is really wrong here.’ Now someone’s cousin is really sick or dies and they think, hey, maybe I should wash my hands and quarantine. Maybe I shouldn’t be jogging with the dog on fucking Laugavegur on a Sunday with 70 people around me during a gathering ban.” He pauses. “And why are those 70 people also there? Also, have you not been washing your hands?”

“I mean, I haven’t bought soap for ten years,” Jón smirks. “Chemtrails.”

The party has arrived

All emphasis that they’ve found their sanity through writing a new album, and also diving deep into other hobbies.

“I’m teaching myself to play the classical guitar,” Jón admits. For Fannar, it’s all about food. “There’s stuff that you wouldn’t do normally from scratch, and now it’s like fuck it, I’ve got all the time in the world. I’ll make pasta and bake bread,” he adds. Gunnar, meanwhile, has been working out, and taking on fitness and wellness challenges.

“For me, this is a good time to learn how to juggle or whistle or yoyo or beatbox,” bassist Þorsteinn Gunnar Friðriksson adds. “So when people have parties again, you can be an asshole and juggle.”

“Wow, someone coming to my house and beatboxing and juggling at the same time?” Fannar laughs. “That’s someone I’d love to kick out of a party.” 🍷

TRAVEL

The Bridge Between Humans And Gods

Bifröst is a little town with a big history

Words: **Sam O'Donnell** Photos: **Art Bicnick**



In Norse mythology, Bifröst is the burning rainbow bridge that extends between the realm of mortals and the realm of the gods. In reality, Bifröst is a quiet town, with not much going on around it. I am told it is a good place to see the Northern Lights. There is almost no light pollution, so Aurora Borealis dance across the sky like much like the fabled rainbow bridge.

A brief visit to a charming hotel

At the time of my visit the park-

ing lot of Bifröst Hotel—one of the few public buildings in town—was completely deserted. A charming wood-panelled wall and old leather chairs greeted me at the entrance but no one stood behind the reception desk.

Through a set of double doors, the cafeteria stood empty, with dishes stacked in the kitchen window. A sign by the door told me I had missed breakfast, which ended at 11:00. Alma, the hotel's manager, moved swiftly from table to table, cleaning and preparing for the restaurant's evening shift,

which would begin at 17:00. She was happy to take a break, have a cup of coffee, and tell me about the town. "A lot of people have memories here," she said. Apparently some prolific individuals have made their way through here, as well.

The university

Bifröst is best known for its university, which was founded by Jónas Jónsson, who is perhaps more commonly known as Jónas Frá Hriflu. Jónas was an educa-

tor and politician, and very influential in 20th century Iceland. When he first built the university in 1918, it was a school for business, and mostly farmers studied there. To this day, the farms supply food, and the greenhouses keep the town in cucumbers and onions.

These days, the university is a host to a number of different programs, but many students study from home, courtesy of their many distance programs. As a result, Bifröst feels like a ghost town in the winter. In the



summer, tourism picks up where the school year leaves off and the town livens up.

Various activities

I asked Alma what there is to do around Bifröst in the winter. She laughed, as if she had heard this question a thousand times before. “There is a lot of hiking, if you’re into that,” she said. The mountain crater Grábrók, and Glanni waterfall are both nearby. These locations had inspired the great minds who made Bifröst their home for

any length of time. With that in mind, I finished my coffee and stood up.

When I did, I noticed that we were sitting by a table with a map of Iceland on it. It was built by a smith in Borgarnes, Alma explained, and it marks the location of every kaupfélag in the country. Without getting into too much detail, a kaupfélag is essentially a co-op that ensures that each business in town functions well. The country’s economy depends on them. The unnamed smith had donated the table a long time ago, because the

town was so dear to him.

An artist and an architect

A group of buildings outside the window caught my eye. “Those are the Sigvaldi houses,” Alma said. They were named after Sigvaldi Þórðarson, a prolific architect who went to school in Bifröst. Originally, they were designed for the school so the students would have a place to stay. A private company obtained the rights to the building, and they have been under

construction for a long time. When they are done, they will be private apartments, she told me.

Before I left, I noticed an abstract painting hanging by the double doors. Alma tells me it’s by Svavar, and I felt like I should have known who that was. I didn’t though, and I was not too proud to admit it. Alma said he was a painter who was born in Iceland in 1909, and lived in Denmark through World War II, where he was a member of the COBRA avant-garde art movement. Today, his paintings sell for a pretty penny.



The one in Bifröst Hotel was green and blue, and it reminded me of a bird's eye view of a mountain next to a river. Alma said that she used to have candles on the table beneath the painting, until one day an artist visited the hotel and yelled at her for having an open flame so close to a Svavar. She moved the candles after that.

A walk in nature

I thanked Alma and left to bask in the glory of nature, and try to get some inspiration of my own.

I started with the crater. Grábrók was formed in a fissure eruption less than 3,000 years ago, and at the size of a small mountain, it is the largest of three craters on this 600 metre fissure. During my visit, it was covered in snow and difficult to climb, but the payoff at the top was worth it.

Heavy winds kept me humble, as I struggled to catch my breath after reaching the summit. To the south, the little town of Bifröst looked like a tiny model village, and snow-covered mountains in the distance touched the sky.

To the north, the second largest crater rested between two roads diverged. The scenery reminded me of the painting. In my mind's eye, the river became a road, and I wondered if Svavar found his inspiration at the top of this same crater.

My final destination was the Glanni waterfall. In a word, it was impressive. From the observation deck, I could see cliffs covered in pale green moss and hard, icy snow. Far below, a waterfall spilled into a shallow lagoon where a steady stream of water

fell over jagged rocks, and a frozen river snaked through the gorge. As I leaned against the railing, I reflected on everything that I had seen that day. Even though Bifröst is a little town, and there isn't a lot to do nearby, there is a vast landscape with a lot to see, and plenty of beautiful trails by which to see it. Bifröst truly is the bridge between the realm of the gods and the realm of mortals. No wonder Jónas, Sigvaldi, and Svavar were so inspired. 🍷



