

Skrattar: A Night Out With Your Demons



Skrattar, rock's last Icelandic hope, have released their fourth studio album



We got drunk with the devils, discussed their music and the extinction of rock'n' roll

More Of The Same

News: It's Groundhog Day at Parliament

Eivör

Culture: Old traditions lead in new directions

Human Stories

Film: The Female Immigrant Experience

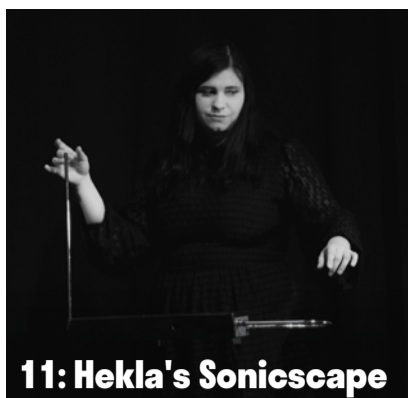
Power Trip

Travel: Steamy Geothermal South



COVER ART:
 Photo: **Art Bicnick**
 Art director: **Sveinbjörn Pálsson**
 Rockers Skrattra strike a santa pose before trying to party harder than Reetta Huhta, our Finnish reporter. (Spoiler alert: they failed.)

First



11: Hekla's Sonicscape
06: New Government
07: Eir—Goddess And SuperNurse



12: Eivör's Global Roots
15: Auður's Perfect Day
20: Guðný's Unsettling World



26: Voices Of Pólfónía
28: Top Chef Book
31: South Iceland Power Trip



EDITORIAL

A Mad Year

Christmas is coming. And that means one thing. Stress. Mental breakdowns. Sweaty frustration at the mall. Even a silent scream with a single tear sliding down your cheek when you feel like you just can't go on. And don't forget COVID-19!

The Omicron is looming, just waiting to morph us all into bloodthirsty zombies. Or at least fucking up our Christmas get-togethers.

The saddest thing is the inevitability of all of the above. There is no way to avoid the madness, but there are a few ways to deal with it.

First, we just need to accept that this year, once again, Christmas is going to be weird, and possibly even sadder than the last one. Perhaps this year, we should just repeat Nikos Kazantzakis' famous quote: "I hope for nothing. I fear nothing. I am free." Hey, there's a reason the guy won a Nobel Prize.

Perhaps it's time to ponder, sit down and consider. Is there something else you would like to work at? Perhaps write a book? Perhaps an article? How about travelling to that place you've been talking about for so long? What do you have to lose? Well, there is always something. But if there are no stakes, it's probably not worth your time to worry.

We at The Reykjavik Grapevine have been living by Kazantzakis' motto for years, and we have realised that in extreme circumstances there can only be new paths. And although not all of them work, some do. And you might just enjoy the journey.

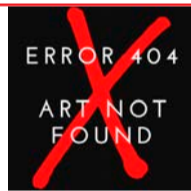
So, we want to thank you all for your incredible support in this truly mad year, which will be remembered as the year nobody really remembers. Because nothing happened, and yet everything happened. You all have been wonderful. 🍷

Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

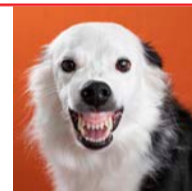
Valur Grettisson
 Editor-in-chief



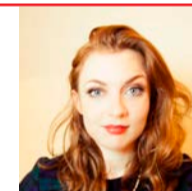
John Pearson, the Grapevine's culture editor, is a Reykjavik resident with professional backgrounds in live music events, broadcasting, scuba diving, journalism, engineering and underwater photography. We suspect that he just likes to collect job titles. He is a big fan of puns, alliteration and lists that have three things in them.



Art Bicnick, the Grapevine's video magician and photographer, is himself unphotographable. This is due to the fact that he consists mainly of stardust; a handy characteristic that enables him to float smoothly across rocky volcanic terrain, and through apparently solid objects.



Polly is a hard-working journalist by day and an enthusiastic ball-catcher by night. A five-year-old dachshund mix with an IQ of a five-year-old human, Polly is Chief Morale Officer at the Grapevine, and a regular contributor to the Grapevine Newscast on YouTube. Woof!



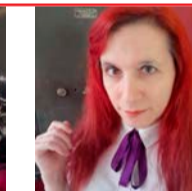
Josie Gaitens, journalist and YouTube Content Coordinator, is also an arts worker, musician and writer from the Scottish Highlands. She was once erroneously referred to as the Queen of Scotland by a Malaysian newspaper and has been falsely using that title ever since.



Catharine Fulton is a writer who has been involved with the Grapevine for many years—possibly too many—serving as journalist, food editor and news editor before settling on copy editor. When not wielding her red pen she's often found opining on Canadian politics (professionally), and bitching about Icelandic politics (for fun).



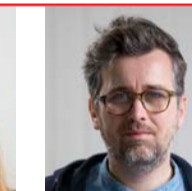
Shuruthi Basappa is one of Iceland's most knowledgeable foodies. She's covered local restaurants for years and has also been involved in various food competitions in Iceland, such as Food & Fun and more. By day, she works as an architect at Sei Studio.



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.

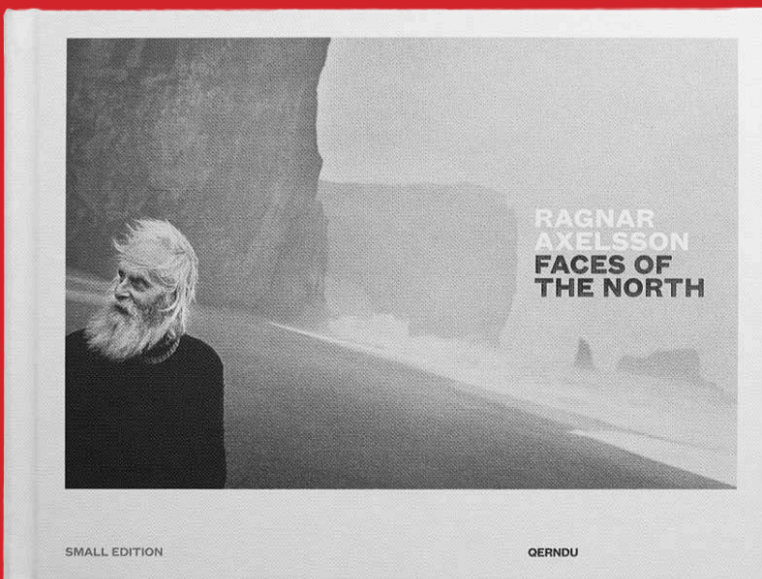


Reetta Huhta is a Finnish student who moved to Iceland to become an au pair, and decided to never fully leave the country. She aspires to become a journalist, and what would be a better place to start than Grapevine? You can probably spot her at Kaffi Vest, where she spends most of her free time.



Valur Grettisson is an award-winning journalist, author and playwright. He has been writing for Icelandic media since 2005. He was also a theatre critic and one of the hosts of the cultural program, 'Djöflaeyjan' on RÚV. Valur is not to be confused with the dreadful football club that bears the same name.

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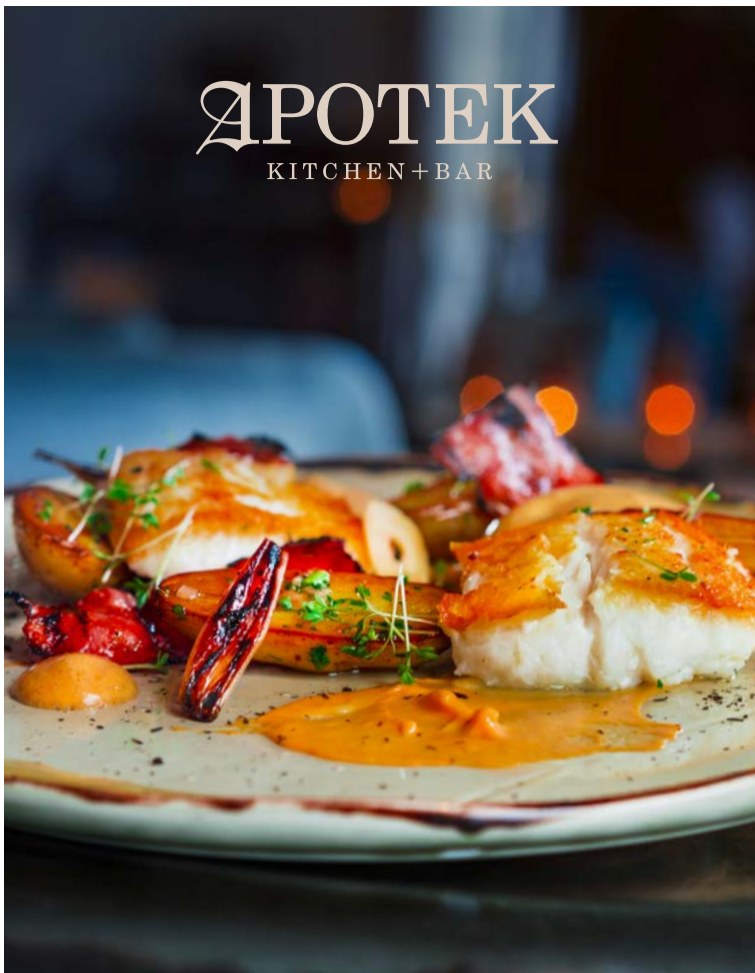


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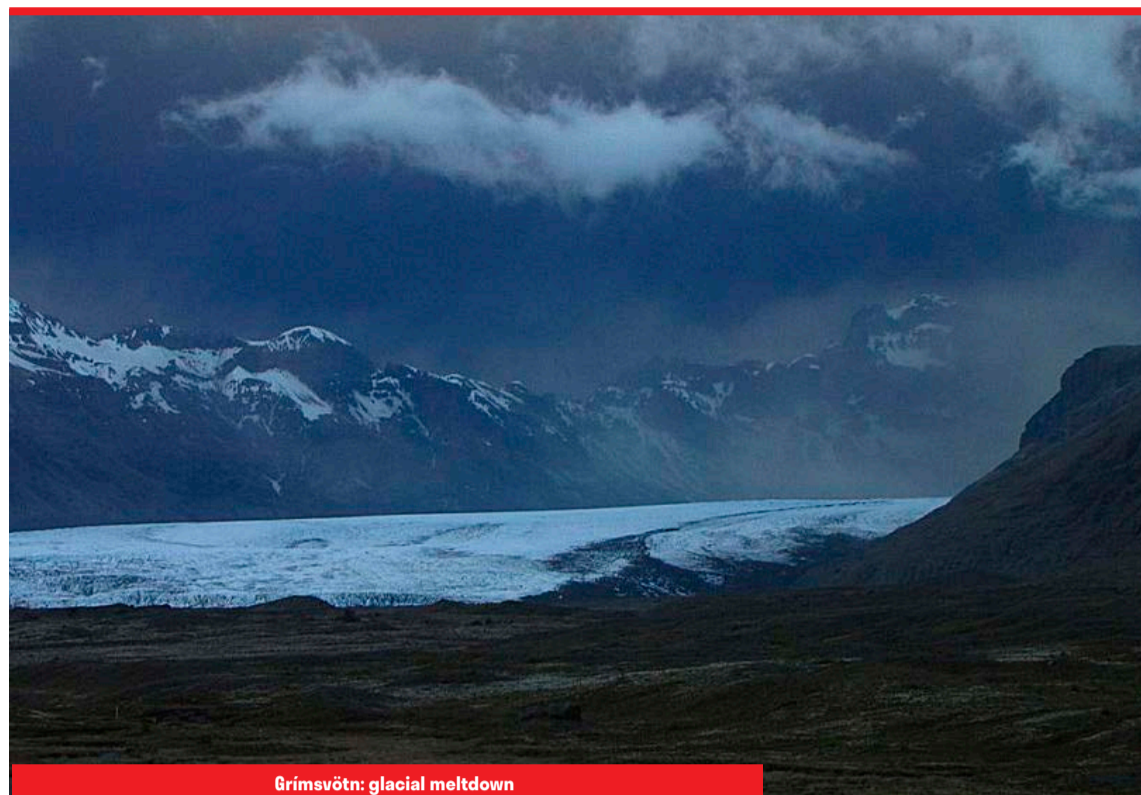


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Grímsvötn: glacial meltdown

What Are Icelanders Talking About?

All the headlines that nobody bothers to read beyond

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine** Photos: **Art Bicnick**

NEWS As one of her last acts as Minister of Health, Svandís Svavarsdóttir announced new border guidelines in the wake of the so-called Omicron variant of the coronavirus. According to the new rules, anyone who has spent 24 hours or more in Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe or South Africa within 14 days of coming to Iceland must take a PCR test, go into immediate quarantine, and then take another PCR test five days later, whether or not they have been vaccinated. This new rule went into effect on Nov. 27th. However, with the variant already detected in the UK and elsewhere in Europe, there may be arrivals to Iceland who never spent a second in the restricted nations who may nonetheless be carrying the variant. Indeed, the first confirmed case of Omicron in Iceland was detected on December 1st, in an individual who had not even been abroad.

By the way, the reason why this was one of her last acts as Health Minister is because the new government was announced on the 28th. Some new ministries were created, and the Progressives increased their ministerial presence, but for the most part we're seeing the same faces within Iceland's ministries, albeit in different positions; only Katrín Jakobsdóttir and Bjarni

Benediktsson kept their previous jobs, as Prime Minister and Finance Minister, respectively. In fact there are only three new faces: Progressive MP Willum Þór Þórsson as Health Minister, and two Independence Party MPs serving as Minister of Justice, Jón Gunnarsson for the first half of the term and Guðrún Hafsteinsdóttir for the second half of the term. More details on the new government and its joint platform can be found at grapevine.is/news, but the broad strokes are that we're getting four more years of the same.

As if things weren't bad enough, it looks like glacial flooding from Grímsvötn may begin soon. Scientists monitoring the ice over the

volcano have detected a considerable amount of meltwater, and GPS measurements show that it's probably on its way down the mountain. Adding insult to injury, such glacial flooding is often (but not always) accompanied by a volcanic eruption. On the bright side, scientists also believe that if the volcano does erupt, it probably won't be a devastating, flight-disrupting volcano like Eyjafjallajökull was. That said, volcanoes are notoriously difficult to predict, so the consensus remains "maybe it'll erupt, maybe it won't." Keep your fingers crossed!

Lastly, the Animal Welfare Foundation (AWF) and Tierschutzbund Zürich have exposed deplorable conditions at so-called "blood farms" in Iceland, where mares are impregnated to have their blood harvested for a hormone that increases pork production. Many Icelanders weren't even aware such farms exist. Indeed, only three countries in the world engage in this practice. Horse lovers across the country have denounced the farms, and so it might be that they won't be long for this world. 🍷



Now where did I put those ballots? I had them a minute ago...



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Meet the new bosses, same as the old bosses

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 Minister of Infrastructure: *Sigurður Ingi Jóhannsson (B)*
 Minister of Foreign Affairs: *Dórdís Kolbrún R. Gylfadóttir (D)*
 Minister of Health: *Willum Þór Þórsson (B)*
 Minister of Social and Job Market Affairs: *Guðmundur Ingi Guðbrandsson (VG)*
 Minister of Food, Fishing and Agriculture: *Svandís Svavarsdóttir (VG)*
 Minister of Justice: *Jón Gunnarson (D)* for half the term, followed by *Guðrún Hafsteinsdóttir (D)*
 Minister of Schools and Children's Affairs: *Ásmundur Einar Daðason (B)*
 Minister of Business and Culture: *Lilja Alfredsdóttir (B)*
 Minister of the Environment, Energy and Climate Affairs: *Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson (D)*
 Minister of Innovation, Industry and Universities: *Áslaug Arna Sigurbjörnsdóttir (D)*

Iceland At Last Has A New Government

Get ready for more of the same

After the September 25th elections and following the longest parliamentary break in Icelandic history, negotiations between the Left-Greens, the Independence Party and the Progressive Party have produced a new government.

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine**

Photo: **Gunnar Vigfússon**

A strong Progressive showing

Changes include not only who will serve as minister, but also what the ministries are, as some new ministries have been created. The Left-Greens will continue to front three ministries, and the Independence Party will continue to helm five, while the Progressive Party will

now have four ministries under their control.

This is most likely due to the strong showing the Progressives made on election night, adding five seats to their tally, while the Left-Greens lost three seats since the 2017 elections and the Independence Party broke even.

Who gets what?

The ministerial composition is now as follows, with VG (Left-Greens), D (Independence Party) and B (Progressive Party), indicating party affiliation in line with their official party symbols:

What was the hold up?

As can be seen, most of these MPs were also ministers during the previous term, but only Katrín and Bjarni retained their original positions. Willum, Jón and Guðrún are completely new to ministerial positions. One reason for the delay was the decision not to announce a new government until the committee investigating the Northwest District ballot counting scandal reached a conclusion. Ultimately, the majority of the investigating committee decided to consider the results of the regional recount valid. This cleared the way for the new government finally be announced." 🍷

LOST IN GOOGLE TRANSLATION

Seismic Activity Allegedly Produces Pissheads

Last month, the daily newspaper Morgunblaðið appeared to report that an earthquake near Hekla—the active volcano in the south—had caused the nearby farm of Selsund to be overrun by drunks.

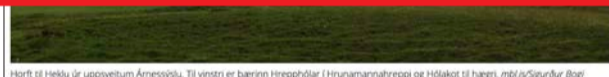
Woah! Hang on a second. Aren't active volcanoes supposed to spit out ash-caked changelings? That's what Baltasar Kormákur told us, anyway. Is someone trying to sell us some sort of low-rent, English football hooligan version of 'Katla' here?

Well, no. Rather boringly, this is merely another case of GoogleBollocks™, when the world's favourite language mistranslation algorithm is asked to interpret a headline, and fails. Miserably.

The Icelandic phrase "drunur gengu yfir bæinn" which The GoogleMangle™

interpreted as "drunks swept over the town" is probably better rendered as "a rumble swept over the town". At least that's what Valur Grettisson, The Grapevine's editor-in-chief, says. He should know, being a proper Icelander and all. And his linguistic abilities aren't governed—as far as we know—by some confused Google app, Zuckerdroid style.

So don't believe everything you read; it's perfectly safe to travel to southern Iceland. The chances of you encountering a zombie-like hoard of slobbering drunks—shouting incoherently, and singing at the tops of their lungs—are slim. Assuming, of course, that Selsund hasn't become the new cheap package destination for British stag parties. JP 🍷



Hortit til Heklu úr uppveitum Árnessjóla. Til vinstri er bæinn Hrepphólar í Hrunamannahreppur og Hólakot til hægri. mbl.is/Sigurður Bag

Drums swept over the town when the quake struck



Looking at Hekla from the uplands of Arnessjóla. To the left is the farm Hrepphólar in Hrunamannahreppur and Hólakot to the right. mbl.is/Sigurður Bag

Drunur gengu yfir bæinn þegar skjálftinn varð



ASK AN
Expert
Q: Why is it hard to rinse soap off your hands?
 Words: **Reetta Huhta**
 Photo: **Atli Már Hafsteinnsson**



When washing your hands here in Iceland, you might have realised that the soap doesn't seem to rinse off easily. It's a phenomenon that has puzzled us at The Grapevine for a long time—so we decided to find out what's that all about.

According to Ingvi Gunnarsson, a geochemist at Orkuveita Reykjavíkur, the chemical composition of water affects how easily it rinses off soap. Water can be classified as hard or soft, and Icelandic groundwater is generally categorised as soft. Rinsing soap with soft water takes longer than with hard water, Ingvi explains.

But why is it easier to get the soap off with cold water?

Ingvi is intrigued by the follow-up question: "I never have I heard before that cold water rinses the soap off better than hot water," he admits, but proceeds to contemplate the possible reasons.

"Low temperature geothermal waters—at least here in Reykjavík—are softer than fresh groundwater and therefore not as effective as cold water in terms of rinsing soap off your hands," he says, adding that although there is a difference between the water compositions, it is not that big.

However, this might not be the only reason behind the phenomenon. Ingvi says that another possible explanation is that hot water in Iceland comes directly from low-temperature geothermal fields and is mildly alkaline. "Alkaline waters can be a little slippery to touch compared to neutral water, and therefore one feels that the soap does not come off one's hands when washing them," he explains. In reality, the soap has been rinsed off, but the alkaline water makes you feel like you still have some soap residue on your hands. 🍷

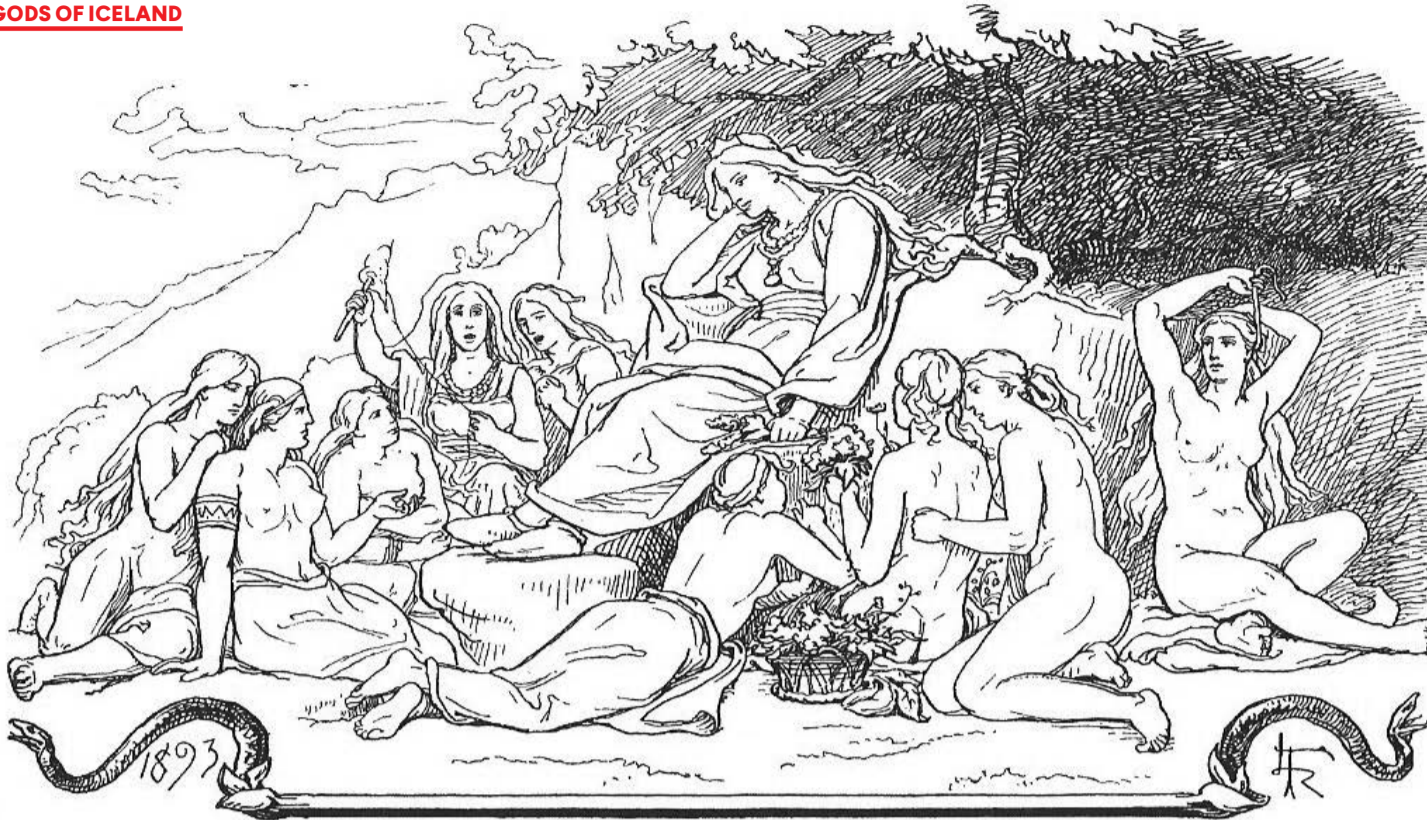
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GODS OF ICELAND



Eir, the Healer

The Norse Florence Nightingale

Today, her name lives on in the Fire Emblem franchise, God of War, and also in an east Reykjavík nursing home that bears her name. Unfortunately, all attempts to find Lyfjaberg itself have turned up nothing. Maybe it was closed due to overcrowding. ♡

Words: Very little is known about this goddess, but what little we've been able to piece together from the Poetic and Prose Eddas, she must have served a vital function among the gods. While many were involved, directly or indirectly, with the propagation of violence, Eir stands out as a healer.

Image: Wikimedia

Her primary abode was the top of a mountain called Lyfjaberg, or "healing mountain," which the sick and injured could climb to be cured. In fact, it is attested that once a year, she and her staff would hold a ceremony to pre-

emptively cure the entire community of any diseases that might befall them in the year to come. This is certainly no mean feat, and is probably why Snorri Sturluson named her a particularly important goddess.

Unfortunately, given that this community was prone to violence and war, it was also her responsibility to visit the sites of battle. There, it fell on her shoulders to decide who would live and recover from the violence, which we can't imagine felt great to someone devoted to healing others.

Superpowers:
Heals the sick and wounded

Weaknesses:
The awesome responsibility of being a war medic

Modern Analogy:
Florence Nightingale



???

JUST SAYINGS

The Child-Eating Troll

The saying: "Að hafa/nota eitthvað fyrir/sem grýlu á einhvern" ("To have or use Grýla on someone") means, in short, that you can scare someone shitless and sway him to do whatever you want by invoking Grýla. Grýla is actually the mother of the 13 Yule lads and is a troll. According to legend, she snatches up unruly children and boils them alive before eating them. Grýla is possibly the most terrifying troll in Icelandic folklore and all Icelanders have PTSD after

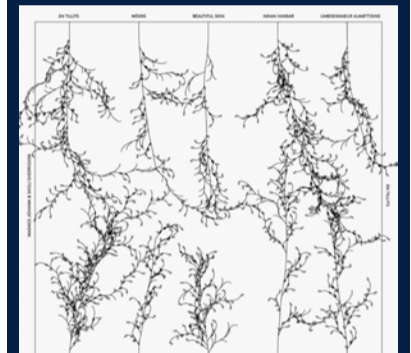
their parents threatened them with her wrath if they don't behave. Therefore, December is the month all Icelandic children are on their best behaviour, not because of all the gifts they could receive from the Yule Lads, but because of the fear of being eaten by a psychotic ogress. This saying, "to use Grýla on someone", can also be used on grown ups because, well, we were all kids at one time right? **VG ♡**

NEW MUSIC PICKS



Inspector Spacetime
"Bára"

Just before they brought the groove to last month's Live From Reykjavík festival, Inspector Spacetime delivered this breezy slab of tight, funky French-flecked disco to get us all warmed up. In the video the trio take to an ice rink, wrapping themselves in a fur-coated eighties Bond villain vibe. And they manage to dance without slipping and falling on their arses, (at least not in the final cut). **JP**



Magnús Jóhann & Skúli Sverrisson
'Án Tillits'

Magnús Jóhann Ragnarsson and Skúli Sverrisson combine forces on their new album, 'Án Tillits'. It's filled with beautiful songs featuring soft piano from Magnús, accompanied by Skúli's magical acoustic bass playing. Standout track "Mógrá" is a reflective piece that urges you to take a moment for yourself and relax. **RH**



Damon Albarn
'The Nearer The Fountain, More Pure The Stream Flows'

In an interview in the last issue of The Grapevine, Albarn details how this album was composed from the landscape he saw from his living room window in Iceland. Listening to "Royal Morning Blue"—one of the record's focal points—it's easy to hear what inspired him. This lush piece carries an undercurrent of joy and expansiveness, marking Albarn at his absolute best. Definitely one to add to your playlist. **ASF**

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“WE’D LIKE TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE ARE ACTUALLY A POP GROUP NOWADAYS.”



Skrattar: Keeping The Rockstar Lifestyle Alive

Words: **Reetta Huhta**
Photos: **Steinar Ólafsson**

We’ve all heard wild tales of rock bands’ raucous nights with groupies, drugs and wacky behaviour. However, it seems like this destructive culture is dying out. Gone are the nights when TVs were thrown out hotel room windows by deranged rock stars—and gone are many of the rock stars themselves, unfortunately. I wanted to investigate the alleged extinction of rock music by hanging out with the last hope of Icelandic rock ‘n’ roll, Skrattar, who have just released their fourth album, ‘Hellraiser IV’.

It's obvious that the true essence of these guys won't be revealed by a plain old interview at a cafe. I want to peek into the reality of Skrattar, so we arrange a pub crawl around their favorite bars in Reykjavik. We set a date for a Wednesday night, which I thought—combined with the tightened pandemic restrictions—was going to be a bit of a bummer. Bars can't stay open late, and the boys would probably want to take it easy in the middle of the week. However, it turns out I could not have been more wrong.

STARTING OFF WITH A JOKE

We start our journey from Kringlukráin, a restaurant located inside Kringlan shopping center. An odd choice, given the fact that it's located quite far away from the city center, where the rest of the crawl will concentrate. I'm led to a round table in the back, with no sight of Skrattar just yet. I sit down, order myself a beer and wait for them to arrive.

As the waiter brings me a glass of jólabjór, Skrattar arrive. I notice that even though it is cold outside, these guys are all wearing leather jackets. Maybe they truly are the last hope of rock 'n' roll.

The band consists of five members: lead singers Karl 'Kalli' Torsten Stállborn and Sölvi Magnússon, guitarist Guðlaugur 'Gulli' Hörðdal, bassist Kári Guðmundsson and drummer Jón Arnar Kristjánsson. Unfortunately, Jón Arnar, who works as a sailor, was sent out to sea and was thus unable to join us. Be that as it may, the remaining band members slammed a framed picture of him on the table in front of me before taking a seat themselves. "It seems like he has died at sea and we're commemorating him by bringing his picture here, but really we just thought he should be with us somehow," the guys laugh.

And this is surely not the last laugh of the night. These characters are all about the banter, and they say that's also the aim of their music. "If making music stops being fun, the outcome of the product won't be good," Kalli explains, while the other members nod in approval. "There's a lot of humour in our music. Actually, I would say that most of our songs have started with something that we have all found funny," Sölvi adds.

Even though Skrattar emphasise the role of humour, the band have cultivated a mischievous image of themselves through social and print media. Leather jackets, cigarettes, bare skin and beer are very much the aesthetic. When asked if this really describes how they are as people, the response I get is a jaded laugh from the whole group.

"We didn't create this image, other people did. We're just normal guys, but the media is making people believe that we actually are the devil," Kalli says, gulping his beer. Sölvi agrees and reveals the craziest comparison they have heard of the band. "Somebody described us as the offspring of fentanyl and heroin. And they meant that as a compliment!" he says, shaking his head.

BRINGING DIFFERENT GENRES TOGETHER

However, Skrattar concur with the claim that they're the last hope of rock 'n' roll in this country. They think that these days Icelandic music is heavily concentrated on hip hop and techno. "There are, of course, indie rock bands and all that. But they don't play the type of rock that we are known for," Sölvi explains.

Although the group agrees with the above, they still don't want to label themselves as a pure rock band. Skrattar used to refer to their music as "cigarette rock", but they don't really stand by that anymore. The band members listen to everything from ABBA to deep death metal, and that comes through in their productions.

Kári goes on to describe how these different genres take a new shape in their music. "For example, you could say that the tone of it is punk-ish, but the 'I don't give a fuck' attitude typical of punk music is much more mellow in our songs," he explains. Gulli nods and clarifies that they are not even trying to make rock music, to which Kári adds that even though they're using rock instruments, they're adding electronics and attitude.

Because of all these genres mingling in Skrattar's music, they have ironically shifted their description of it from "cigarette rock" to "cigarette pop". "We'd like to make it clear that we are actually a pop group nowadays," Kalli says jokingly. So, does the future of Icelandic rock 'n' roll lie in the hands of a pop band?

By this time, the guys have finished their beverages. My glass is left containing a few sips of beer, but I decide to leave it as is—a decision that truly shocks Sölvi, as he will reveal to me later that night. We head out and hop in a taxi that takes us from Kringlan to the next bar, Mónakó.

Now, those of you who think that this bar—judging by its name—is an elaborate casino in the heart of Reykjavik, I'm here to tell you that this image is far away from the ugly truth. This is a place where lost souls go. As we step inside the bar, we are hit by a pungent smell of cigarettes. At first I think that it's coming from a smoking area inside the pub, but as we head upstairs we walk past the source. A man hiding in the staircase is inhaling every last bit of his cigarette. Ironically enough, he is sitting right next to a sign that clearly states "No Smoking Inside".

Luckily, we don't stay here for long; apparently this place was included on the list of bars to visit as a prank. "We just wanted to

take a picture of Jón Arnar next to the slot machines, because he used to play them here," Kalli explains, adding that this is not a go-to bar for any of the band members.

FROM TOTAL CHAOS TO CONTROLLED DISORDER

We gear up and leave for the next waypoint, PÜNK Restaurant. As the weather seeps into my bones, I clench my teeth to fight the cold. The few minutes' walk feels like an eternity, but the guys in leather jackets don't seem to mind.

"THE MEDIA ARE MAKING PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT WE ACTUALLY ARE THE DEVIL."

PÜNK was Sölvi's choice, and as Kári points out, he fits there "like a fist in one's eye". The place has a tiki bar type of ambience, and Sölvi—wearing a Hawaiian t-shirt and sunglasses straight out of Miami Vice—blends in like a chameleon. However, the sleeveless Metallica top underneath breaks the image a bit.

We sit down on the corner table and order ourselves another round of beer. The conversation revolves around the development of the band from its early years to present day.

"When Gulli and I started Skrattar we were both inspired by a band called Suicide, and especially their gigs. Their performances were always versatile, the songs were never the same. We wanted to bring that freestyle vibe to our own shows," Kalli says.

He claims that in the early days they were a bit wilder on stage, but that somehow changed when Sölvi joined the band. "He was baffled by the fact that I wasn't singing the lyrics as I was supposed to," Kalli laughs.

According to Sölvi, the thing that he brought to the band was a change of energy at their gigs. "I had been involved in the local metal scene and saw how those bands were able to pull this primal energy out of the crowd. I think that was something I brought to the table when I joined Skrattar," he recalls.

The others do not object to his assessment. Even though the band feel like they have always been able to create a certain atmosphere at their concerts, that has risen to another level during recent years. Their provocative stage presence has drawn attention, making Skrattar renowned throughout Iceland.

"I remember a gig we had on July 17th. There was a festival going on that same day, but we weren't a part of it. However, most of the people listening to our music were going to be at the festival, and we were anxious that nobody would attend our concert," Kalli says, describing the day everyone realised they were on to something. "When we went on stage, the venue was full of people. After that night, I thought we really have something great going on here."

SHOTS AND CIGARETTES

The guys have yet again polished off their beers before I manage to finish mine. Sölvi jokes that his anxiety is taking over because he isn't drunk enough for this interview. I offer him the remains of my beer, which he gladly tosses back. However, Kalli seems to have a better solution to Sölvi's problem: "Let's do shots and get blackout wasted!"

This conversation is, of course, part of their endless banter—but as they say, nothing is that much of a joke that it isn't at least half true.

We approach the bar and Kalli orders Fernet-Branca for everyone. After swigging the bitter, brown liquid down my throat, I can't help but let out a grinning "Oj maður!" I've told the guys the only word I know in Icelandic is "kúkalabbi", so Sölvi gets excited when he hears this idiom coming out of my mouth. "I've always said that everyone starts speaking languages when they get drunk!" he cheers.

After downing the shots, it's time to move on. As we are waiting for Sölvi to join us, the rest of the boys pull out their cigarettes—a habit that repeats each time we step outside. Kári kindly asks if I want one as well, but after seeing that there's only one smoke left in the carton, I decline. I tell him I don't want to be that annoying party-smoker who steals everyone's last cigarettes. Without saying anything, he pulls out another carton from his jacket pocket and urges me to take one. Now, I don't know about the state of rock 'n' roll, but at least we can say that chivalry isn't dead.

As we are walking towards the next stop, Spanski Barinn, I notice to my delight that it isn't that cold anymore. Or who knows, maybe it's the alcohol running through my veins at this point. Either way, it's a nice surprise.

At Spanski we are greeted by Agustin, the sweetest bartender in the city. He speaks Icelandic with occasional Spanish sentences replenishing his speech. In addition to beer, he brings a bowl of seasoned nuts to the table. I understand why Skrattar like to hang out here, even though the bar is almost empty on this particular Wednesday night.

TOGETHER DURING BIRTHDAYS AND SKRATTAR SHIFTS

Halfway through our third beer, Skrattar start to reminisce about Sölvi's 30th birthday party that was held in the beginning of November at Húrra. The other band members had arranged for Dr. Mister & Mr. Handsome—an electronic and dance music band from the early 2000s—to perform at his party. This band had not been active in years, and I'm shown a video of Sölvi's astonished reaction when he realised what was happening.

"It was the craziest gift I've ever gotten. I even got to sing one of their songs with them on the stage," Sölvi recalls.

Even though the band celebrated Sölvi's birthday together, Kalli reveals they don't actually go out together that much. They usually all hang out during their studio sessions, which they refer to as "Skrattar shifts". During these sessions, the whole band is submerged in music. They pull all-nighters and drink heavily—all for artistic purposes, of course. Yet another sign that Skrattar is keeping rock culture alive in Iceland.

CANNED PEAS, MARGARITAS & CREEPS

We proceed with the bar crawl and head to Röntgen. On the way there, we walk past the office of Rough Cult, the film production company that has directed many of Skrattar's music videos. After seeing some friends inside, we decide to pop in. I chat for a moment with a girl from the office, and as we are leaving, she offers me a can of Ora green peas—the star of Icelandic Christmas dinners—to take with me. She wants to ensure I don't get hungry as the night wears on. I thank her and continue the journey with peas in my bag.

As we get to Röntgen, the guys think it's time to order the most rock 'n' roll drink on Earth for everyone—margaritas. At this point, I feel like I need to stick to water for a moment, so I end up taking only a few sips of my cocktail. The drink itself, however, doesn't go to waste as the guys come to the rescue and gulp it down. I've learned it's clearly unacceptable to leave a drop of booze untouched in their presence.

Next up is a quick stop at renowned bar Prikið. By coincidence, we meet Jón Arnar's girlfriend there. "We need to take a picture with Jón Arnar and his widow who's lost her husband at the sea," the guys laugh as they give her his framed picture, which has miraculously stayed with us through the evening. We down a shot of something and proceed on our pub crawl.

Walking down Laugavegur, we get harassed by a man who claims he hates capitalism. Nobody provokes him, but he follows us, shouting that "these fools in leather jackets think they aren't slaves of capitalism". As we reach Lækjartorg, the creep is still behind

us. The guys have had enough of him, so they form a semicircle around him. I'm left outside to observe what happens from a distance.

Not one member of the band decides to punch this dude, even though he is clearly begging for a tussle. They just stare at him and say that it's time for him to fuck off, which he eventually does, and everyone continues their night unharmed. Walking towards the next place, the guys lighten the mood by saying that they will send this man after me if I write a bad article about them. Let's hope that doesn't happen.

FROM BARS TO AN AFTER PARTY

We arrive at our last destination of the night, Skúli Craft Bar. The clock is ticking and we don't have that much time to spend here before it closes. However, there is enough time for me to learn Kalli's signature handshake and for the boys to write messages to my notebook. One of them is smudged and there's a text above it, saying "Don't read this!" I try my best to make sense of the smudged text, but it remains a mystery.

As the bartenders announce that the bar is closing, a melancholic wave washes over me. It's sad to end the night so early when graced with such perfect company, so I'm pleasantly surprised when the guys start looking for an after party.

Apparently, Skrattar are not the only people drinking today, because the guys find another party in no time. We gear up and leave for someone's friend's apartment.

When we get there, the first noticeable thing is that the apartment smells heavily of incense. The place is decorated with plants, statues and a lamp that washes the room in a red glow. A swing hangs from the ceiling in the corner of the living room, and it's accompanied by a couple of couches. Electronic music is playing in the background.

GHOSTS, DRUGS, BALLERINAS AND BOARDGAMES

"AFTER THAT NIGHT, I THOUGHT WE REALLY HAVE SOMETHING GREAT GOING ON HERE."

I approach the owner of the apartment, a sweet girl who rolls a blunt as I start talking to her. Apparently the incense isn't wafting in the air because she likes the smell of it, but rather to cover the scent of pot. When asked if she lives here by herself, she reveals that she's never completely alone: there's a 75-year-old ghost who stays in the apartment with her.

The place is packed with people, and countless cans and bottles are laying about. Some people are playing cards, others just chatting. Kalli has found a small guitar, and plays it while sitting on the swing.

As I'm having a conversation about life in general with Kári, Sölvi comes in from the kitchen and offers us drinks, accidentally spilling them all over the floor. It tastes like my teenage years: vodka mixed with a juice that's designed to disguise the taste of booze, (mango-passion in this case).

After finishing my drink, I leave the members of Skrattar sitting on the sofa and approach the toilet. When I open the door, I see a bunch of people powdering their noses—quite literally. They are nice enough to ask if I'd like to have some as well, but I politely decline the offer.

It's 4am and I'm starving. I'm advised to go to the kitchen, as there should be a few pieces of pizza laying around. I find a slice and turn to get back to the living room, but I'm stopped by a ballerina. She wants me to witness her dance and urges me to feel her muscles. I can't disagree, she's got some strong thighs.

I return to the living room and notice a chess game has begun between Kalli and the apartment's owner. As Kalli gets crushed by his opponent, he demands a drink. The owner pours everyone a shot of vodka, after which she asks me and Kári to join her for a game of backgammon. Neither of us have ever played, but an unbelievable amount of double numbers from the dice drive us to victory. You could say it's beginner's luck, but I beg to differ.

The party goes on until the owner gets tired of hosting, and we leave the premises at around 5.30am. The guys are keen on continuing the night, but I think that this is my cue to head home.

The night proved much more eventful than I ever expected it to be. As I crawl home, I consider the complex question of the death of rock 'n' roll. I might not be able to offer a complete answer to it, but after this night one thing is for sure. Skrattar are very much alive and well. ♡

Info: Skrattar's new album is available on shop.grapevine.is



Happening

Find today's events
in Iceland!
Download our free
listings app - APPENING
on the Apple and
Android stores



Metal Music Festival

Doomcember

December 3rd and 4th - Gaukurinn
- 6,990 ISK

The arrival of the darkest month means that Doomcember is here again! For the third time, Gaukurinn brings together the best local and foreign stoner/doom metal bands. But this year the festival has been expanded, and the concerts go on for two whole days. The festival caters for all tastes in slow & heavy sounds, with performances from bands such as Belzebong, Mars Red Sky and Saver. A perfectly dark event for slowdoom metalheads. **RH**



Christmas Movie Parties

Die Hard! Elf! And More!

During December - time depends on the movie - Bíó Paradís - 1,690 ISK

Movie enthusiast, ahoy! Bíó Paradís has come up with a perfect series of events for you during the cold winter nights. Throughout December, the theater is playing seasonal movie classics from 'Home Alone' and 'Love Actually' to 'It's A Wonderful Life'. Get yourself down there for a few of these feelgood flicks, best enjoyed with a bucket of popcorn and a party soda (or perhaps a stolen and some sherry). **RH**



Holiday Haircuts For Free

Pop-up Hair Salon

December 10th - 17:00 - Nordic House - free of charge

Need a haircut for Christmas? We've got you covered! There's just one little thing you might want to know: you'll need to trust children with the scissors. Theater and performance project Kidarchy's Bar is opening a pop-up hair salon in the Nordic House, offering free haircuts by kids. Get ready to receive a creative coiffure which will definitely stand out from everyone else's at the Christmas dinner table. Well, whatever happens you'll have an anecdote to tell. And the kids will have had a great time! **RH**

CULTURE NEWS



Ghosts in the machines

Christmas In The Stratosphere

Hekla Magnúsdóttir and Lilja María Ásmundsdóttir take you to an atmospheric extreme

Words: **John Pearson** Photos: **Pola Maria** and **Hekla Magnúsdóttir**

Seven days before Christmas, Reykjavík musician Hekla Magnúsdóttir will team up with multimedia artist Lilja María Ásmundsdóttir to perform a groundbreaking concert at Hannesarholt.

You may know Hekla as one of Iceland's foremost practitioners of the theremin, the otherworldly-sounding electronic instrument invented in the 1920s by a Russian physicist. And Lilja María can list among her creative achievements the design and construction of a unique stringed instrument—the hulda—that produces both sound and light, and which she will play at the concert.

Hekla and Lilja María, who studied composition together at the Iceland Academy Of Arts, will be presenting the premiere performance of their new joint creation 'Lofthjúpur'. "It's like the edge of the world, where space starts, you know?" Helka says when asked about the meaning of the name. "Kind of like where oxygen stops."

Denatured sounds

In addition to her hulda, Lilja María will be playing prepared piano; one where the tone of the strings has been deliberately denatured, for example by resting screws on them, or weaving wooden pegs between them. "And the sounds that come out—these two unusual sounds that you don't hear often—just mix so beautifully with the theremin," Helka enthuses. "It's like a very airy atmosphere."

In addition to performing 'Lofthjúpur,' Hekla is also looking forward to playing some

theremin classics which were composed a century or so ago. "We will be playing some of the earliest written electronic music—like a piece by Schillinger from 1929—and a piece by Wilkens called 'Dance In The Moon,'" she says, harking back to a time when writing conventional music for theremin was quite routine for many composers.

A quirky curio

These days—at least, compared to a century ago—the theremin is mainly viewed as a quirky curio, tending to serve more experimental types of music. However Hekla's unconventional approach extends beyond her choice of instrument and, despite being a formally trained musician, she eschews standard musical notation for her theremin compositions. She has instead devised a system all her own: a form of graphical notation which makes sense to her, but could also be learned by other players.

"When you're playing, you're kind of drawing in the air," Hekla explains, referring to the fact that the player doesn't actually touch a theremin while playing it. "So I find it really helpful while I'm scoring to just make an abstract sketch of what it's going to sound like."

Looking at Hekla's notation, it's easy to visualise the graceful hand movements of the player that the swoops and squiggles represent. And those swoops and squiggles are quite beautiful on the page, a bonus not lost on their creator who is selling colourful prints of the notation online. "A great Christmas present

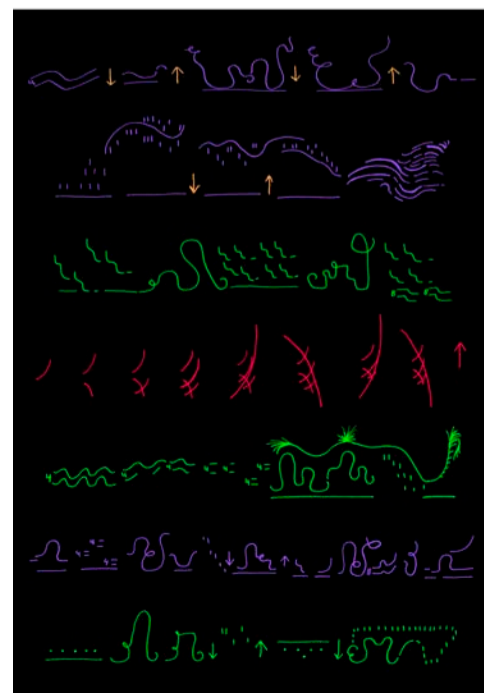
for a grandfather or aunt who is practicing the theremin!" Hekla notes on her Facebook page.

Where space starts and oxygen stops

Hekla and Lilja María intend to record 'Lofthjúpur' at some point, and release an extract from it on seven-inch vinyl. To accompany that, they also plan to print the score for the composition, each musician using their own unique personal notation, and include that with the record.

So get along to Hannesarholt and hop on the sleigh to 'Lofthjúpur', "the edge of the world, where space starts and oxygen stops". And have yourself a thereminy Christmas. **♥**

The concert takes place at Hannesarholt in Reykjavík on December 18th. Tickets are available from tix.is



Hekla's unique notation



Global Roots

Eivør's music crosses cultural and linguistic borders

Words: John Pearson Photos: Sigga Ella

"It's nice here, isn't it?" offers Faroese musician Eivør Pálsdóttir as she settles into an office chair. "I miss it all the time." Of course, she's not referring to The Grapevine's pleasant but essentially rather functional business premises. She's referring to Iceland; her erstwhile home, and a place long close to her heart.

Eivør's love affair with this country began back in the late nineties, when Reykjavík vocal coach Ólöf Kolbrún would travel to the Faroe Islands to teach singing. The teenaged Eivør was taking lessons with her by day, but by night was straining her larynx fronting Nordic-noir rock band Clickhaze. Alarmed by how her student's pure soprano was tumbling towards Janis Joplin territory—and not in a good way—Ólöf Kolbrún invited Eivør to stay with her in Reykjavík for a spell of vocal rest and rehabilitation. Eivør packed her bag, and flew the next day.

"It turned out to be life-changing for me, and it really just put me on a different route," Eivør says of Ólöf Kolbrún's kind act. "We became very good friends, and she was my vocal teacher for many years. And I made so many friends here in Iceland, including musicians, that I ended up staying here for five years."

In the two decades since, Eivør has divided her time between Reykjavík, Copenhagen and her home in the Faroes. And she has forged a remarkable career, developing her distinctive and diverse sound to encompass folk, jazz, world and dark electronic pop influences; collecting their threads together, and tethering them to a solid anchor of global roots music that has struck a chord with people around the globe. Her top ten tracks on Spotify now have a combined total of 34 million plays, and last month she received the prestigious Nordic Council Music Prize.

Fertile islands for creative roots

A tiny set of islands rising out of the north Atlantic, roughly halfway between Iceland and the coast of Norway, the Faroes are a geographically remote place to grow up. But they also support a culturally fertile society.

"There is so much great art and music that's being created all the time," Eivør says, when asked about her creative roots. "I think it might have something to do with it being a small community and so people know each other. Maybe that puts rings in the water; you

inspire each other to create, because you're closer. But another theory is that it's a small place and people get bored, so they have to be creative!"

Faroese folk music puts the singing voice at the centre of its tradition, so it comes as no surprise that Eivør chose that instrument as her first means of musical expression. And her expansive world view led her to write in ei-

ther Faroese or English. Or both, as was the case when she simultaneously wrote and released two albums in 2015; 'Slør' in Faroese, and 'Bridges' in English.

But that point in her career represented a change in approach, Eivør recalls: "After that, I just started not worrying so much about the language. Now when I write a song, I just start writing it. And if it wants to be in Faroese I just let it be, but some songs sound better in English. It's like instrumentation. I might choose the electric guitar because it just fits better than the acoustic. It's a sound."

The purest instrument

The idea of voice as a pure instrument of music—rather than language—echoes Eivør's adoption of throat singing, a style that crept into her repertoire after she met Canadian vocalist Tanya Tagaq.

"She taught me a little trick once, just for fun, then I didn't think about it for years," Eivør recalls. "Then at one of my shows, I was singing my song 'Tröllabundin' and all of a sudden I was feeling it. And I was like, 'Whoa! What's happening?'"

At this point a deep, guttural, percussive sound starts to flow strikingly from Eivør; it resembles how a wild animal might sound having mastered the art of beatboxing. And then the sound stops. "So then that just became a part of the song," she concludes.

"Tröllabundin" is by far her most streamed track, with the current count of 13.5 million Spotify plays making it three times more popular than its closest rival in her canon. It has become a staple of her live set, and concert versions now often include the throat singing component.

It's the dynamic nature of stage performance—the freedom that songs have to grow as they're performed—which appeals to Eivør about live music.

"Because I play so many shows, along the way I feel like 'Let's loosen this part up. Let's make it longer. I'm gonna sing it like this.' And that is something that can only happen when you play something 100 times," she says. "So that's why I love making live albums, because they always have something that I can't capture in

the studio. For me, that's where all the magic lives—in a live concert. That's where I discover stuff."

Old traditions, new directions

Another staple of Eivør's live shows is her shamanic drum, which has become somewhat emblematic for her and forms the sole instrumentation on "Tröllabundin".

"That drum is not a Faroese instrument. We don't have any traditional Faroese instruments; like in Iceland, it's all about the singing," she says. "But I was walking down the street in Norway, and I met a shaman who was selling drums. I had never in my life played a drum, and I had never even thought about buying a drum. But he made such beautiful instruments, I bought this drum. I just took it to my hotel and immediately wrote "Tröllabundin", and the drum has been with me ever since."

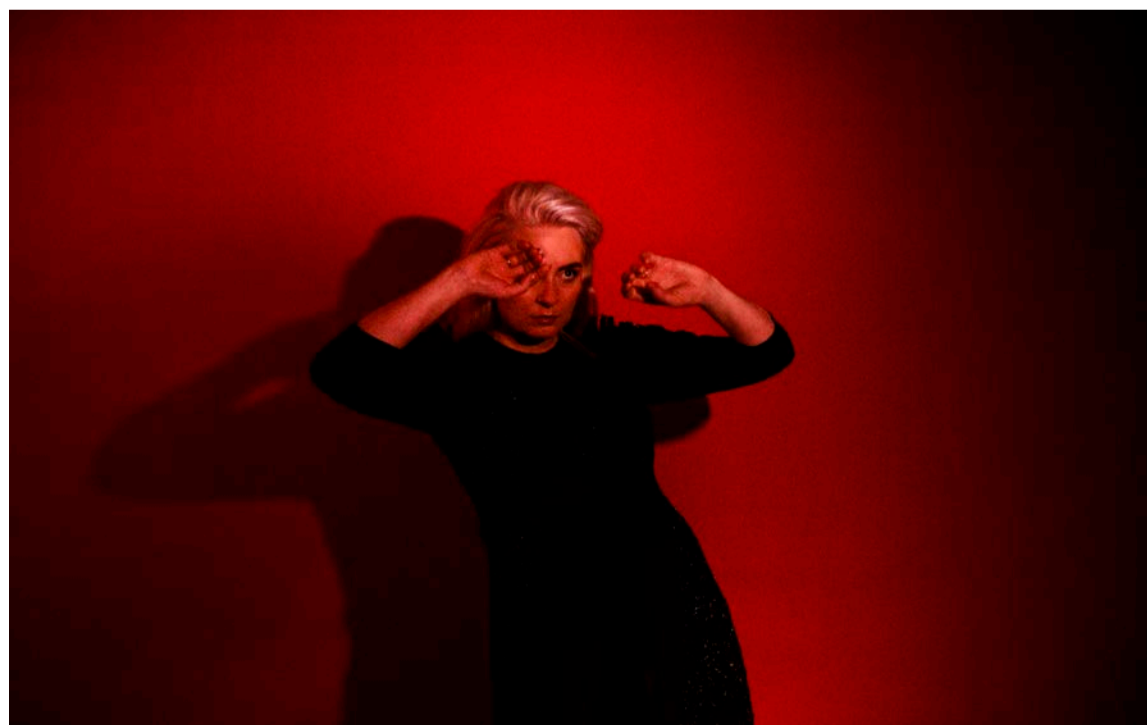
That track, with its simple primal beat, and guttural throat singing, has taken Eivør's career in unexpected directions. Composer John Lunn—who had been commissioned to soundtrack the British Viking drama 'The Last Kingdom'—heard "Tröllabundin" and got in touch to see if Eivør would be interested in providing some vocals. They got together in London, hit it off straight away, and the singer's role in the project quickly expanded into composition.

Taking on this novel challenge has led her into a whole new area of creativity, since writing for film requires a very different approach to writing for yourself. "You write in a different way to when you write a song," Eivør observes. "Film music is all about the

emotion that you have to provoke from that scene. You can't overrule the scene; you have to support it."

More soundtrack work is on her slate for next year, and with a new album on the way and headline tours in the US and Europe, Eivør will no doubt continue to expand her horizons. Her remarkable creative energy will always be welcome in Iceland, and no doubt anywhere else on the globe that she chooses to call home. 🇫🇷

"I made so many friends here in Iceland, including musicians, that I ended up staying."



Farmers Market

ICELAND



OUR STORES IN REYKJAVÍK: FARMERS & FRIENDS



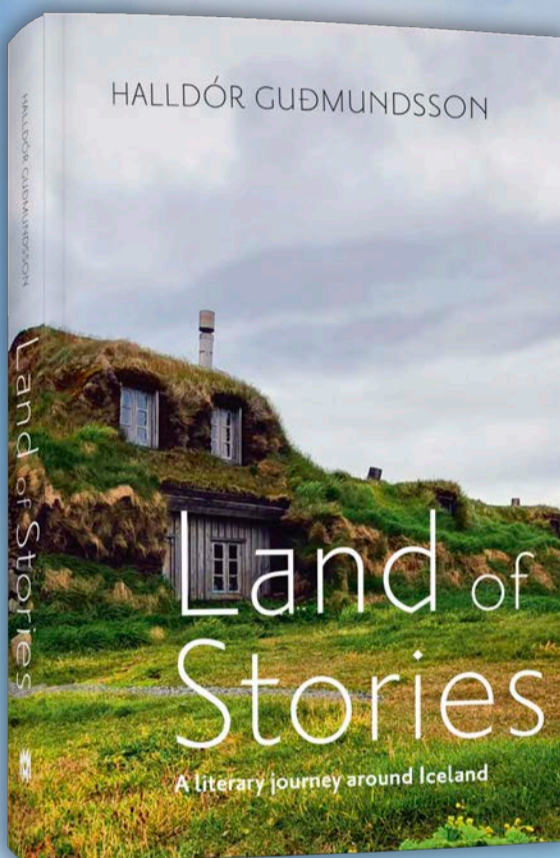
Laugavegur 37



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From the rink at Ingólfstorg

Christmas Markets

Why not go ice skating while buying stuff?

Words: **Valur Grettisson** Photos: **Art Bicnick**

Christmas and New Year's Eve are about two things for Icelanders: setting off some fireworks while drunk, and spending some serious money on a bunch of stuff. Let's focus on the spending money side of things. With this compilation of the best Christmas markets, which coincidentally, are also the best remedy for the December darkness.

Christmas Market Heiðmörk

[Elliðavatnsbær](#)

The Christmas market at Heiðmörk is not only a great place to buy your Christmas tree and gifts, but to have a cup of hot cocoa as well as chill in front of the bonfire in the small wood by the lake. On a beautiful day, this conservation area is nothing less than magical, with children running around in nature, hiding in the woods or skating on the shallow lake that is often frozen at this time of year. And, on top of everything else, you can buy handmade things at the Christmas market.

Ingólfstorg Christmas Market

[101 Reykjavík](#)

The Nova Ice Skating Rink is perhaps the most American cliché when it comes to Christmas mar-

kets in Iceland. But that doesn't matter, it's so fun! It's wonderful to go ice skating and enjoy a cup of coffee afterwards, check out the goods being sold in the little huts lining the square, buy something for your grandparents and lie to them that you made it yourself (we're joking, don't lie to them).

Hafnarfjörður Christmas Markets

[Strandgata, 220 Hafnarfjörður](#)

The Christmas market in Hafnarfjörður, arguably the most beautiful town in the world, is the OG Icelandic Christmas market. They were first to start the tradition and even sued Reykjavík City for stealing their idea. The market's stage features a rotation of the Yule Lads, children's choirs and other Christmas-related stuff. Plus, you can buy all kinds of local handcrafted stuff. Also, it's a good opportunity to visit the wonderful town and chat with the locals. Just don't mention any Reykjavík Christmas market while you're at it.

Ásmundarsalur

[Freyjugata 41, 101 Reykjavík](#)

So you're a posh type and despise those talented handcrafted locals. We got you, you snob. Ásmundar-

salur is hands down the best Christmas art market, where all of Iceland's finest artists are represented and you can make a seriously good purchase there—and buy some artwork for yourself while you're at it. There is a wonderful coffeehouse on the ground floor and an incredible sculptor always carving some masterpieces in the garden outside. This is where you go to buy something for your new girlfriend to impress her, or your callous mother that never thinks anything you do is good enough and has inflicted you with crippling anxiety and an inferiority complex. Good luck with that, by the way.

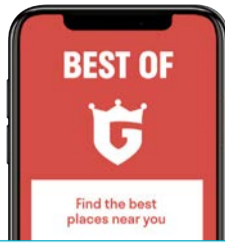
Jólamarkaður Hjartatorgi

[Laugavegur, 101 Reykjavík](#)

The market at Hjartatorg is different from the others, it offers a variety of art and finer stuff from the shops lining the square. But you will also find seriously nice food there. The market started a few years ago and has become a smash hit. Icelanders like the market since it's a little different from the others it feels like you're in another city, roaming around finding some nice gifts for friends and family. And that can be incredibly refreshing. 🍷

December 3rd — January 6th

In Your Pocket



Reykjavík Map

Places We Like

Best Of Reykjavík

Perfect Day

Dance, jive & have the time of your life



Words: **Reetta Huhta**
Photo: **Art Bicnick**

Auður Jónsdóttir

Balance Between Solitude And Socialising

Auður Jónsdóttir is an award-winning writer whose books have been published in multiple languages. She's known to draw inspiration from real life experiences, which she then turns into captivating stories. The novel "Stóri skjálfti" was her first book translated into English; it will also be adapted into film next January. Here's how she would spend her perfect day in Reykjavík.

Having a moment of her own

An ideal day would start with me making breakfast for my son early in the morning. He would then make his way to school, and I would have time to go back to bed and doze off for a few more hours.

When I would feel like waking up again—let's say somewhere around

9:30—I would get a few cups of good coffee into my system and relax by myself. I love spending time on my own and appreciate those moments when I have some space for myself. During these moments, I would either sit still and be with my own thoughts, or put on some music and dance.

Pools and arbitrary cigarettes

When I would have charged my energy with a healthy amount of solitude, I would head to the pool, most likely Sundhöllin. I would sail between the hot and cold tubs until I would feel this high that you experience after sudden temperature changes in your body. I might pop into a sauna as well, if I feel like it.

After refreshing at the pool, I would squeeze in a visit to my mother's house and chat with her for a while. I might even steal a cigarette from her, since I don't smoke anymore.

Writing, dining and dancing

Then it would be time to meet friends or my partner over coffee or lunch. We would catch up quickly, and then I would head back home to write. I would try to write until my son comes back from school or football practice, after which we would make some food together. If it was my son's perfect day in question, there's no doubt we'd make pizza. So maybe I'll steal that idea from him.

After that, my son would go to his father's place and I would head out with my friends. We would have dinner at Hosió, since they always serve spectacular courses. We would drink great wines as well, and go dancing at Dillon afterwards. I never actually even go there, but I love the idea so I want to include it in my perfect day. When we would have danced enough for the night, I'd crawl back home, happy after this eventful day. ♡

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 is located at Hagatorg 1, and is open Mon–Fri, 09:00–17:00.

Pharmacies

Lyf og Heilsa, Fiskislóð 1, tel: 561 4600
Lyfja, Hafnarstræti 19, tel: 552 4045

Opening Hours - Bars & Clubs

Bars can stay open until 1:00 on weekdays and weekends until 4:30.

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 outdoor swimming pool with hot tubs and a diving board. More pools: gpv.is/swim
Open: Mon–Thu from 06:30–22. 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: 490 ISK adults, 245 ISK children. Buses run from 06–24:00, and 7–04:30 on weekends. More info: www.bus.is.



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A

STEREO



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Craft Beer
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B

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Laugavegi 27 • 101 Reykjavík

C

Wine bar & food



VINSTÚKAN TÍU SOPAR

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. Blackbox Pizza

Borgartún 26

Blackbox is a solid competitor for best pizza pie in the city. Thin crust, inventive toppings, delivery—what else could you ask for? We'd particularly recommend the Parma Rucola, which serves up all the parma ham goodness you could wish for. For those journeying outside the city, they've also got a location in Akureyri.

2. Chikin

Ingólfsstræti 2

This ain't your mama's KFC. No, Chikin—Reykjavík's first dedicated hot chicken and bao joint—manages to be at once both totally sophisticated foodie cuisine and also food that'll definitely fill the hole in your soul you usually quench with a spicy Twister. So grab some chicken with pickled daikon, shiitake mushrooms, miso mayo and lots of other delicacies.

3. Hosiló

Hverfisgata 12

A newcomer on the block who has certainly made a big stir! Hosiló is a small spot—seating around 30 patrons at full capacity—that offers an eclectic rotating menu of local fresh food. The offerings feature meals from around the world, from French cuisine to Northern Africa goodness, and much more.

4. Kaffi Laugalækur

Laugarnesvegur 74a

For many a young parent, the cafe stop at the end of a long stroll is the proverbial pot of gold. Kaffi Lækur is especially popular with new parents, with a special kids' corner for crawlers and drawers. The generously topped chicken and pesto 'litla gula hænán' and the 'shawaramabake' are our top lunch picks. Also, if you're keto, don't miss 'em,

5. Brauð & Co

Frakkastígur 16

First off—don't miss Brauð & Co's pretzel croissants unless you really don't want to have a spiritual experience. We also swear by their "snuður"—cinnamon bread rolls smothered with a sugary glaze. They take it a step further and stuff the classics with blueberries and whatnot, eliciting inappropriate satisfied moans. Get there early to snatch a warm one.

6. Snaps

Pórsgrata 1

Year after year, regardless of how many restaurants open and close, Snaps remains a timeless classic. Be it lunch, date-night dinner, lazy weekend brunches or a boisterous Christmas work party, Snaps is the perfect venue for a boatload of memories. Steady standbys include the deeply savoury onion soup (with a union of its own we suspect), the house-made fries with crispy rosemary that begs to be a meal on its own, and a textbook crème brûlée topped with an envious snap.

7. Hlemmur Mathöll

Hlemmur

Once a bus station and now a bustling food hall—we love a repurposed space. Hlemmur Mathöll is a classic in the Reykjavík dining scene, with everything from Vietnamese street food to delicious gelato to old school Italian pizza present. Yum.

8. Dragon Dim Sum

Bergstaðastræti 4

For those of us longing for dim sum in Reykjavík, cravings have often had to be satisfied with daydreams of visits past to dim sum houses of Chinatowns abroad. But then Dragon Dim Sum arrived with their fare, which is the perfect marriage between Icelandic ingredients and labouring of Asian dim sum passion. Don't miss their bao or shao mai, and don't worry, their carrot vegan dumplings are also sublime.

9. Lamb Street Food

Grandagarður 7

Pure Icelandic lamb with a middle eastern twist—that's what you'll get at this juicy local eatery where pure kebab is served up with no processed meat. For all you vegans though, never fear, the fresh made salads and hummus are equally wowing. This ain't your regular kebab spot.

10. Laundromat

Austurstræti 9

Have you ever wanted to have lunch and do your laundry in a public place? You're in luck. The Laundromat Cafe on Austurstræti is open (again) for business. Whether you want brunch, a sandwich, or a burger, they have a quality selection of food made to order. Their brunch ain't nothing to scoff at either,

11. Nauthóll

Nauthólsvegur 106

Just behind the University of Reykjavík overlooking the Nauthólsvík geothermal beach is Nauthóll, the definition of a hidden summertime gem. The restaurant is one of those places that downtown Reykjavík rats might call "too far away," but with the advent of public scooters, you can arrive there in style in but 15 minutes. Without hyperbole, there probably isn't a better outdoor view in the city than this place—and their Scandinavian fare is good too.

Drinking

12. Prikíð

Bankastræti 12

Prikíð is the bar version of the "I'm going to bed early tonight vs. me at 3 a.m." meme. At 22:00 you'll have a bunch of regulars relaxing at the bar sipping brews, but arrive at 3:00 and it's Project X. Their outdoor smoking area should be applauded too. Hang out long enough and you'll be sure to buddy up and find an afterparty.

13. Röntgen

Hverfisgata 12

If the cancellation of literally everything is damping your glamorous rock and roll style, Röntgen at Hverfisgata 12 will cure what ails you. This place—a relative newcomer—is already a stalwart in the bar scene, with a stellar atmosphere, great drinks and a lineup of the best DJs in Iceland. Just remember to raise a glass to the good doctor Wilhelm Röntgen (who discovered x-rays) while sipping your tipples.

14. Húrra

Tryggvagata 22

Húrra is BACK! ARE YOU SERIOUS? YES, WE ARE! After a despairing absence from the local scene, the beloved favourite has returned with a vengeance. Seriously—in the few weeks they've been open, the bar/venue has already had shows from heavyweights like Skrattar, Skóffinn and Mannveira. Stop by for vibes, alcohol and other fun things like that you know. Also, their bathroom renovation is pretty crazy.

15. Veður

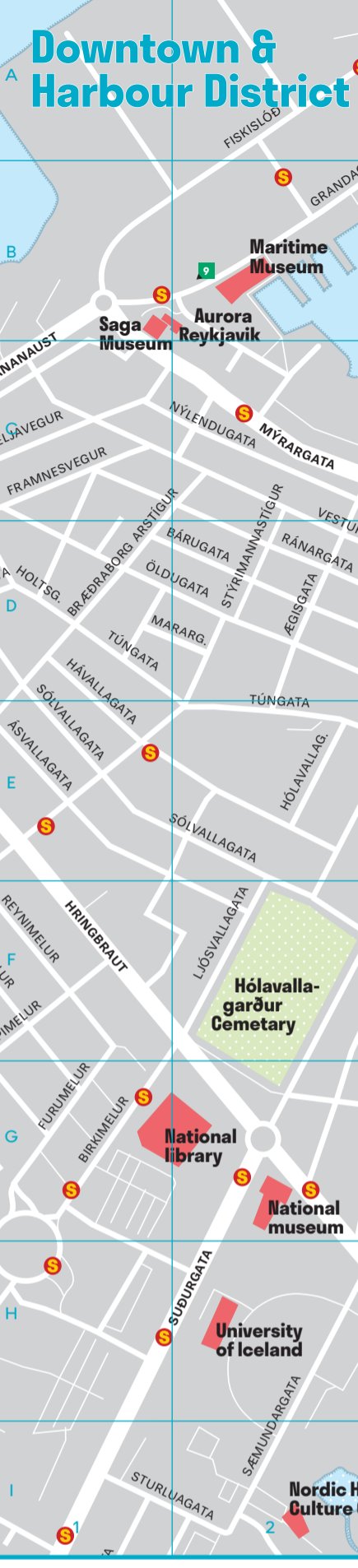
Klapparstígur 33

This charming, low-key, hole-in-the-wall serves up some great cocktails and a dedicated crowd that has grabbed the heart of the Grapevine, even though we are a magazine and not humans. If you feel fine relaxing and chatting, it's still a nice and sophisticated bar, but they've also got an edge. Sometimes they play punk music. \m/

16. Íslenski Barinn

Ingólfsstræti 1a

Of the many nation-themed drinking



establishments in Reykjavík, The Icelandic Bar is the only one that is also a restaurant. Go there at night and maybe you'll meet an elf or Björk or something—that's all people know about Iceland anyway.

17. Mál og Menning

Laugavegur 18b

Wait, a new bar/music venue? Yup! And you thought the pandemic had destroyed all culture in this town. But never fear—Bókabúðir Máls og Menningar is here. There's live music most nights, from DJs to jazz, and during the day, the legendary Bókin is operating from the basement. Seriously—we anticipate this place will be a game-changer in the local cultural scene. Takk fyrir.

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New In Town ☆



Lemmy

Austurstræti 20

This quirky rock 'n' roll joint—named after the late legendary singer of Motörhead—has popped up on the main drag downtown. You can't miss the lurid cerise signs and windows filled with kitsch and toys from previous decades, guaranteed to draw a nostalgic “Ooooooh!” from any passing Gen-Xer. Inside, the bar offers food, live music—often a drummer playing with a DJ—and a snug vibe. And if snugness isn't your thing, Lemmy has outdoor seating for smokers and really hardcore rockers who have JD and coke for blood. **JP**



F
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Souvenir shop

Skólavörðustígur 22



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Skólavörðustígur 15

18. Dillon

Laugavegur 30

A mix between grunge and classy, Dillon Whiskey Bar dominates their little stretch of Laugavegur. Crammed most nights with rockers, metalheads, and tourists looking for a place to mumble AC/DC songs into their beer, Dillon boasts a wide selection of over 100 whiskies and hosts some of Iceland's best hard rock bands on the weekends.

19. Petersen svítan

Austurstræti 12

The sun is finally out, which means it's time for your annual pilgrimage to Petersen svítan. Never been? Well, make sure to bring your sunglasses

because this place has one of the best views in Reykjavik and also very fashionable clientele. Look over the city and have a beer in almost entirely direct sunlight (!!!!!!!!!!!).

Shopping

20. Íslenska Húðflúrstofan

Ingólfsstræti 3

This classic shop caters to all styles, with a roster of artists that serve up everything from realism to new-school and more. We'd particularly recommend the hand-poked pieces by Habba (@habbanerotattoo). Not only are they gorgeously ornate in that straight-out-of-800-AD-way, but they might save you from spirits.

21. Nielsen Sérverzlun

Bankastræti 4

Way more than your average design store, Nielsen is filled to the brim with knick-knacks from all over, from gorgeous diaries to cosy towels and all the candles you could desire. Stop by, grab something for a gift and don't forget a little something for yourself.

22. Fótógrafi

Skólavörðustígur 22

Fótógrafi claims to have been one of the first photo galleries in town. While its interior is tiny, there's a surprising number of photos to be found inside. The pictures on display are mainly shot in Reykjavik or

elsewhere in Iceland and all of them have a slightly different, edgy take on the island, instead of adding to the abundance of touristy subjects.

23. Stefánsbúð/p3

Laugavegur 7

Stefánsbúð showcases local designers and second-hand high-fashion finds (hello 1990's Gucci!) as well as accessories from quirky international brands. Fun and zany, you don't know what you're going to find but you know it'll be exciting.

24. Lucky Records

Rauðarárstígur 10

Lucky Records is probably the biggest record shop in Iceland, with

shelves upon shelves of new and used vinyl and CDs on offer. If that's not enough, they're notorious for their expert staff whose knowledge goes far beyond the latest Björk or Sigur Rós offerings. In fact, it's best if you just let them take the lead.

25. Húrra Reykjavík

Hverfisgata 18A

This minimalist streetwear/athleisure store serves up a mixed selection of classic items and trendy cuts. They were massively hyped when they opened a few years ago and have stayed hyped because they know what they are doing and are damn good at it.

H

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SECOND HAND
CLOTHING
Ingólfsstræti 5
101 Reykjavík



guitar performance, accompanied by a voice somehow reminiscent of Jeff Buckley. “Cold Aired Breeze”, an ode to the raw natural charms of her Ísafjörður home, is a definite set highlight. Wonderful gentle folk, in every sense.

Inspector Spacetime

Across town from the church, in the black-walled rock ‘n’ roll venue of Gaukurinn, three young MCs bound onstage with more energy than Iceland’s entire geothermal power system.

Inspector Spacetime raise a buzz despite the room not being packed; COVID restrictions still dictate audience sizes. But the sparse crowd soon follow the trio’s example, and bounce so hard that the TV cameras capturing the action jump in sympathy.

However, Inspector Spacetime are more than mere youthful enthusiasm. Set highlight “Dansa Og Bansa”, (which translates, unsurprisingly, as “Dance And Bounce”), is equalled in accomplishment by the more subtle “Hitta Mig”—a track that draws on two-step, a form of UK garage which had come and gone before any of Inspector Spacetime were born. These musical waters run deeper than might appear.

BSÍ

Julius and Silla—who comprise pop-punk powerhouse BSÍ—create challenging, vital, vibrant music

that wears its heart permanently on its sleeve. The title of their album, ‘Sometimes Depressed... But Always Antifascist’, openly reflects the band’s self-doubt, while emphasising their vehemence about their principles.

And their show at Gaukurinn is truly in the DIY spirit of punk. Julius plays bass, but also uses his feet to control floor-mounted samplers and keys—performing in his socks to remain nimble-of-toe throughout the show. Silla sings while she drums; or screams, whichever is most appropriate to the moment.

Their set highlight has to be the surf-soaked “Vesturbæjar Beach”, delivered tight, bright and jangly. But standout moments also arrive in the shape of “Boo On You”, where BSÍ make a stand against the deportation of refugees from Iceland. And then there’s Silla’s reaction to the somewhat shambolic run-through of an as-yet untitled new song. “Needs a little practice still. Oh well!” she shrugs. What’s not to love about BSÍ? 🍷

Info: “You can catch highlights of these Live From Reykjavik performances—and exclusive artist interviews—on the Reykjavik Grapevine’s YouTube channel.”

gpv.is/music
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Íslands In A Stream

Live From Reykjavik gives Icelandic artists a global platform

Words: John Pearson Photo: Yael Bar Cohen

Live From Reykjavik—Iceland’s newest live music event—had its second annual outing last month. It’s a hybrid affair: a live stream to bring the music to an international audience, with a few hundred people present at the event’s four venues to bring an intimate vibe.

The festival presented 16 of Iceland’s best musical acts, and highlights of the stream are still available to watch. But to give you a flavour of the event, we’ve sharpened our focus on four sets by emerging artists—spanning jazz, folk, bouncy house and agitprop-pop—which we know you’ll love.

Laufey

Laufey Lin really came into her own during lockdown. The classically trained multi-instrumentalist made good use of her time at home, creating a healthy YouTube fanbase by posting simple clips of her singing and playing cello, piano and guitar.

This is Laufey’s first ever hometown gig, and the location of Frikkirkjan—a serene old Lutheran church by Reykjavik’s duck pond—is poignant for her, as it’s where she used to perform classical music as a youngster. Tonight however she’s left her cello at home, and after kicking off with a couple of tunes at the grand piano, she

moves centre-stage to coax warm diminished chords from her lovely red Gibson guitar.

Buoyed by the rich reverb of the church space, Laufey’s mellifluous voice sits perfectly in the traditional groove created by the likes of Billie Holiday. Her lyrical topics—often reflecting lost loves and longing, which belie her youth—are exemplified in set highlight “Dear Soulmate”, a song already written for the perfect partner she has yet to meet. But we’re pretty sure we’ve just found our ideal jazz artist for the 2020s.

Árný Margrét

Taking the church stage before Laufey—but coming from folksy rather than jazzy roots—is Árný Margrét, a 20-year-old singer-songwriter from the Westfjords. Since taking up the guitar six years ago she has been honing her craft, quietly producing increasingly accomplished musical creations.

Árný appears diminutive on stage, performing alone beneath an imposing portrait of Christ, (an unavoidable feature of the stage set in Frikkirkjan). But Árný prepared for this—her biggest show yet—by making it her fifth gig in four days, and she remains unimpressed. Exuding a quiet confidence she delivers a flawless finger-picked

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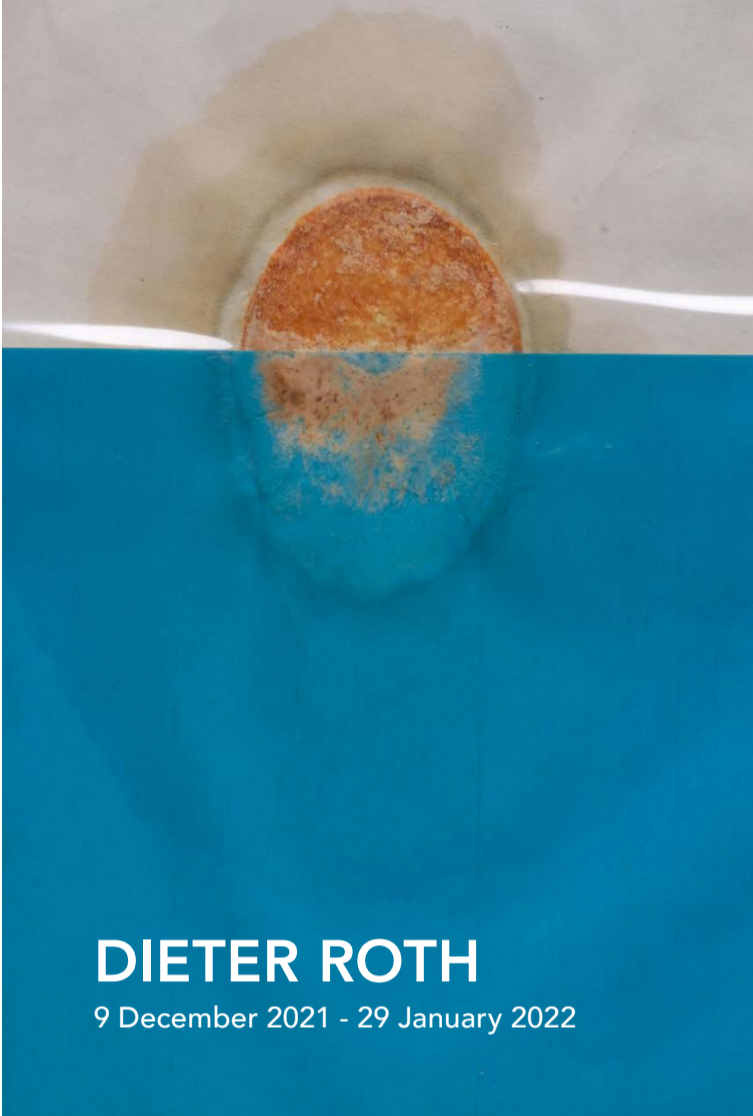
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DIETER ROTH

9 December 2021 - 29 January 2022

Art



Guðný Rósa Ingimarsdóttir

On The Verge Of A Breakdown

The delicate, unsettling works of Guðný Rósa Ingimarsdóttir

Words: [Andie Sophia Fontaine](#)

Photos: [Hildur Inga Björnsdóttir & Andie Sophia Fontaine](#)

pipettes suspended from thin coloured strings, held in place by equally thin pins.

No matter the medium, Guðný Rósa deftly conveys feelings of anxiety, fragility; a person on the verge of breaking down completely in the most beautiful way.

Multiple media

One of the more intriguing works in this exhibition isn't even visual media. There are two purely audio works. In one, the attendant is invited to put on a pair of headphones and listen to a woman's voice review a series of numbered, anonymous letters. The letters are not recited; rather, the narrator summarises their contents. There is an intimacy to this piece, as what is left unsaid in the details of these letters that invites the imagination to consider their writers. In another audio work, 'Time and Water', a child reads texts in languages that are clearly not their own. It is at times difficult to understand what is being said beyond supposing that we are probably hearing Icelandic or French. The effect is such that even if you happen to understand these languages, they are rendered near incomprehensible to the listener.

There are also two video works—one of a pair of hands cutting apart wool with a pair of scissors, and another showing an infant's hands grasping at a nipple—convey the same delicateness that can be found throughout this exhibition.

Anyone attending 'opus - oups' is likely to come away from the experience with the same unsettling feeling of a friend sharing an intimate secret, but also with the same sense of honour of being made privy to that secret. [👉](#)

Opus - oups will be shown at Kjarvalsstaðir until January 16th

02.10.2021–16.01.2022

Guðný Rósa Ingimarsdóttir

opus-oups

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Layers of translucent white paper, cut into vaguely cloud-like shapes, lend different shades of cream to light grey due to the layers themselves. In impossibly tiny, handwritten letters, the word "PANIC" is written in several places. Different coloured paper cards, with mysterious rectangular holes cut in them, are lined up in rows within a simple white frame. On these cards are typed phrases from what looks like a manual typewriter, conveying such messages as "take the blame if ever possible" and "alltaf þæg, góð og stíllt" ("always nice, good and still"). Brown wrapping paper is sewn over top of swirly burgundy and cream wallpaper, revealed to us only because the words "WAKING UP WITH AN OVERDOSE OF SELFPIITY" have been cut into the brown paper.

These are just some of the many unsettling, delicate works of Guðný Rósa Ingimarsdóttir, being shown now at Kjarvalsstaðir at an exhibition called "opus - oups", referring to the Latin word for "work" and the French word for "whoops", respectively.

Two decades in the making

Guðný Rósa has been making art for over two decades, and this retrospective reflects her growth as an artist. Many of these works make use of simple paper and ink, which in her hands are transformed into a fragile beauty. On one white

space, measuring about one square metre, first glance only shows a series of curiously bent black horizontal lines. On closer inspection, these lines are actually handwritten numbers, leaving the viewer to wonder if this is some encryption code or pure randomness. Another work features long, thin strips of different kinds of paper, some of them cut from books, arranged in a row and sewn into place along the top in tiny stitches.

But as with any artist interested in exploration and whose career stretches back this far, there are other media at work here, too. There are, for example, abstract sculptures made from knitted wool, a nod to her Icelandic heritage (Guðný lives and works in Belgium), and a series of thin glass



Art Picks



★ **Kökur Eru Málverk, Málverk Eru Kökur**

Until Dec 17th - Listasafn Mosfellsbæjar, Kjarna, Pverholti 2

"Cakes Are Paintings, Paintings Are Cakes", to translate its title, is an installation comprising paintings, sculptures and found materials. Its inspiration comes from other materials that are more often used in artistic creation than in cooking.

cakes and other desserts—both appetizing and disgusting—and the interaction of mankind with his environment and his consumer culture. Artist Valgerður Ýr Walderhaug, who recently graduated from the University of Trondheim, creates cakes from plaster, paint and other materials that are more often used in artistic creation than in cooking. She also uses asparagus, which obviously should never be used for anything. The creations emerge from a chaotic experimental process, the environment for which resembles a kitchen where everything is now in order after a long, manic night of extreme baking. Mosfellsbær Art Gallery is located inside Mosfellsbær Library, and entry is free. **JP**



★ **Ljósabasar**

Until Dec 19th - Nýló, Grandagarður 20

For the third year in a row, Nýló celebrates the shortening of the day by honoring the light. This year's showing is a diverse bunch, but all the works are connected to light in some sense. Light makes the world visible and leads us to various destinations, deep-rooted and real, high-pitched and poetic, fabricated and distorted. **JP**



★ **Yfirgefin List**

Until Jan 30th - Reykjavik Museum Of Photography, Tryggvagata 15

Abandoned farmsteads in the Icelandic countryside have long inspired the work of Guðmundur Óli Pálmason. His creations present fragments from the past, captured using old photography methods. The artist often leaves these works where the photo was taken, for anyone to find and own. **JP**



★ **Snowland Art**

Dec 4th until Dec 23rd - PULA, Hjartatorg (við Laugaveg 21)

Ásdís Pula,—the owner of the PULA gallery—came across Snowland Art School in the small Chinese town of Labrang while travelling in 2017. Inspired by the work of the students and the school's founder, Kristel Ouwehand, Ásdís decided to show these remarkable pieces created by Kristel and the pupils. **JP**

December 3rd — January 6th

Art Listings

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

Opening

ÁSMUNDARSALUR

Svona eru Jólin
This chic gallery has a tradition of Christmas exhibitions dating back to the 1950s, and they're not going to miss this year—pandemic or not. The title of this year's seasonal celebration translates as "So This Is Christmas", and the organisers promise "secret artist talks sprinkled in, if covid permits."
• Opens on December 4th
• Runs until December 23th

KLING & BANG

Flygjur
This non-profit artist run space, established by a group of artists some 18 years ago, presents a new group exhibition by Halla Einarsdóttir, Hanna Kristín Birgisdóttir and Smári Rúnar Róbertsson. Although Icelandic, all three artists all now live and work in Holland and Germany. At 6pm on the opening day Halla Einarsdóttir will do a performance. We're not sure what kind of performance—the information we have about this exhibit is teasingly enigmatic—so maybe just rock up and see...
• Opens on December 4th
• Runs until January 23rd

Ongoing

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

Of The North
'Of the North' (2001) is created from Steina Vasulka's archive of video recordings of Icelandic nature, shot from macroscopic and microscopic viewpoints. So from microbes to crashing waves and melting ice, this is a visual document of the formation and destruction of our planet.
• Runs until January 9th
Hello Universe
It's 2021, and we're so over Earth; cue the entrance of Finnur Jónsson. The avant-garde art of Finnur—the first Icelandic artist to address outer space in his works, in the early 20th century—presents the artist's unfettered interpretation of the marvels of the celestial bodies. Always remember: we are but matter experiencing itself on a pale blue dot.
• Runs until January 9th

Muggur

Guðmundur Thorsteinsson, widely known by his artist name, Muggur, was also known for his captivating personality. While his artistic career may have been relatively brief—he died at the age 32—he lived a full and adventurous life. This fact is evident in this exhibit which depicts scenes from his travels around the world, as well as around his native Iceland. His worlds of fantasy are also on display here, among works showcasing various other themes.
• Runs until February 13th

EINAR JÓNSSON MUSEUM

Permanent Exhibition
In 1909 Einar Jónsson—described on the museum's website as "Iceland's first sculptor"—offered all of his works as a gift to the Icelandic people, on the condition that a museum be built to house them. The resulting edifice, constructed just over the road from Hallgrímskirkja, now contains close to 300 artworks. There is also a beautiful garden with 26 bronze casts of the artist's sculptures to enjoy.

REYKJAVÍK CITY MUSEUM

Settlement Exhibition
This permanent exhibition— where Viking ruins meet digital technology—provides insight into Reykjavík's farms at the time of the first settlers. Archaeological remains uncovered on site dating back to 871 AD surround you.

HAFNARBORG

Songbirds
On a trip to Cuba some time ago, Icelandic artist Katrín Elvarsdóttir noticed caged songbirds adorning windows of local homes, as many tourists to the island do. In her work, Katrín compares the loneliness of these isolated birds with the human experience of isolation.
• Runs until January 16th

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 row boats to monstrous trawlers.

Melckmeyt 1659

Melckmeyt was a Dutch merchant ship that crashed near Flatey Island in 1659. Explore the wreck here, with two images of different origins against each other.

GERDARSÁFN

Debatable Lands: Dialogues from Shared Worlds
This is a mid-career retrospective of the 20-year collaboration between artists Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir and Mark Wilson. Snæbjörnsdóttir and Wilson approach their art partnership with an ecological and pluralistic view. In a research-based practice, they prompt discussion and thought about our changing world, and our own human role in those changes.
• Runs until January 9th

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART

Kristín Þorkelsdóttir
You've probably seen Kristín Þorkelsdóttir's work before, though you might not know it. She's designed the packaging of countless foodstuffs, as well as Icelandic banknotes and other famous items. Come trace her progression as an artist.
• Runs until December 30th

HARBINGER

Splitting The Wig / Flipping The Lid
This is a joint show duo by Californian Rollin Hunt and Reykvikingur Hrafnkell Guðmundsson. Other than that, we can tell you very little except that it might be about UFOs. We'll let the poetic press release speak: "Meanwhile unknown objects fly through the air / Unlike ghosts they wear a metallic guise of science / The metallic embodiment of a spirit / The UFO has decimated what we know."
• Runs until December 18th

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The Return of the King
Artist and photographer Sigmundur Unnar Birgisson marries floral images by the late photographer Hjálmar R. Bárðarson with strikingly simple photographs of elderly Icelandic men. The union feels a touch unusual, but at the same time quite harmonious.
• Runs until December 12

NORDIC HOUSE

Time Matter Remains Trouble
The interplay between matter and time is the focus of this exhibition featuring artists Alice Creischer, Anna Lindal, Anna Rún Tryggvadóttir, Bjarki Bragason and nabbteeri. They urge us to remember that creation, preservation and decay is a natural progression faced by humans, objects and ideas alike.
• Runs until December 21st

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSSTAÐIR

Guðný Rósa Ingimarsdóttir: opus-ops
Guðný lives and works in French-speaking Belgium. The word 'opus' denotes a piece of artwork, while 'oops' is French for 'oops'. Paired together the words demonstrate that art that can come from seemingly inconsequential things. Often employing found, forgotten or formerly used materials, Guðný brings the essence of 'opus-ops' to life.
• Runs until January 16th

Budding Earth

Swedish sculptor Carl Boutard and Icelandic sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson are featured in Ásmundarsalur's current exhibition, Budding Earth. When the work of the two is presented together, each shines a light on the creations of the other to offer a view distinct from that if they were considered separately. With strong themes of nature, movement and human life, this exhibition allows you to rethink the interplay of these things and ultimately, make the experience of the work all your own.
• Runs until February 6th

HVERFISGALLERÍ

Reconstruction
Following a devastating avalanche in Siglfjörður, artist Hrafnkell Sigurðsson saw opportunity among the damage. Nature might break lives down into particles, but perhaps it's the role of art to put them back together. What is the artist telling us through this exhibition? That once our reality has been dismantled, categorized and analyzed, this is the only way to reassemble it.
• Runs until February 12th

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ICELAND

The Portrait Collection
The artistic journey Hulda Stefánsdóttir took in publishing her book 'Time Map' inspired the creation of her newest exhibition. The pandemic has, for better or worse, made all of us stop and reconsider time—likely more than ever before. For Hulda, it's no different. Pay a visit to BERG Contemporary to press pause on your own timeline.
• Runs until January 2nd

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS

Attempting The Embrace
Have you ever walked outside on a perfect spring day? The air is neither warm nor cold. If you close your eyes and extend your arms away from you, it can often feel as if the barrier between body and space is blurred. That's the experience Reykjavík-based artist Claire Paugam aims to deliver through this exhibition, which investigates the dynamics linking the human body and its environment.
• Runs until December 5th

Abrakadabra

The newest exhibition at Hafnarhús aims to open the world of contemporary art up to a new generation of art enthusiasts, namely children and young adults. The works on display are all in the permanent collection of the Reykjavik Art Museum.
• Runs until March 20th

BERG CONTEMPORARY

Dieter Roth, Graphic Works
What you wear often reveals who you are, and Sunna Örlygsdóttir understands this as well as anyone. Her fascination with the process of garment making is evident in her curious and captivating creations.
• Runs until December 23th

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART
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210 GARDABÆR
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KRISTÍN ÞORKELSDÓTTIR UNTIL 30.12.

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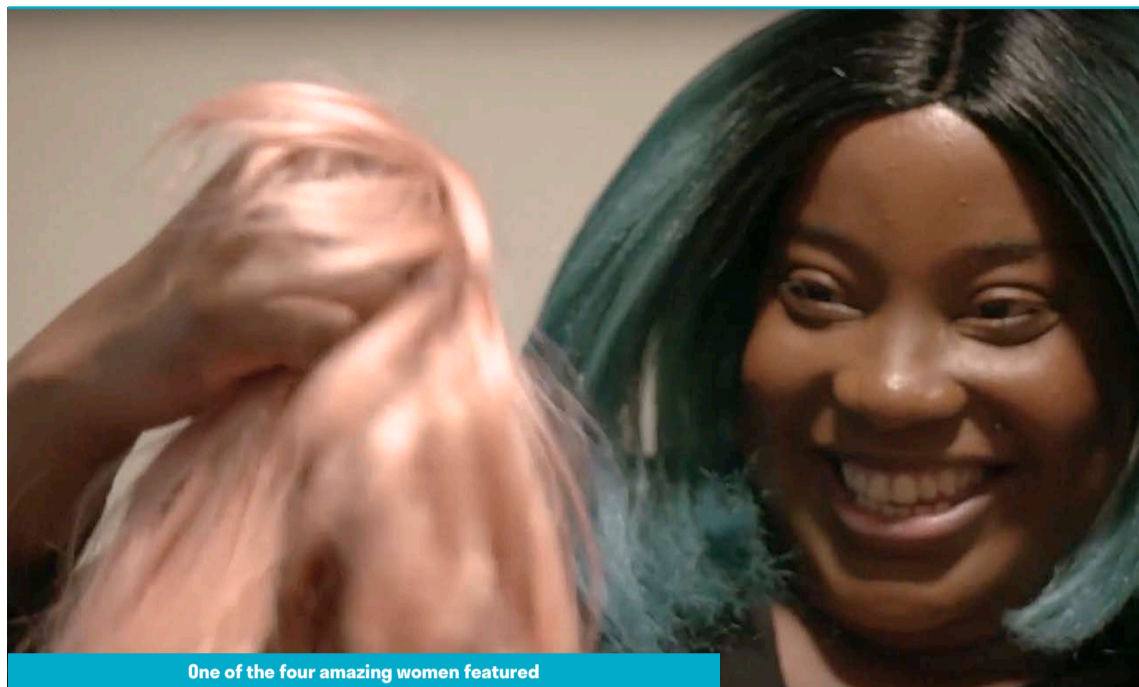
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One of the four amazing women featured

Just Human Stories

'Hvunnagshetjur' tells the tales of foreign women in Iceland

Words: [Andie Sophia Fontaine](#) Photos: [Saga Sigurðardóttir](#)

'Hvunnagshetjur' is a new film from Magnea Björk Valdimarsdóttir. It tells the tales of four people of foreign origin living in Iceland. There's a lot about this movie that Icelanders may find eye-opening, and that many foreigners living in Iceland may find very relatable.

In one example, a woman named Karolina, who is originally from Poland but has been living in Iceland for over 20 years, reflects on the much-heard question "Where are you from?" With a heavy sigh and a wry laugh she admits, "I am so tired of this question."

But what inspired an Icelandic woman to make a film like this?

"Injustice," Magnea says without hesitation. "I've been working in restaurants, book stores and bars downtown since I was 20 and I've always worked with foreigners. I've not stood by when I witnessed injustice; when they've gotten a lower salary and so forth. [I was] Karolina's first Icelandic friend, and today she's one of my best friends. I've witnessed injustice, violence, unfair pay and many things that inspired this. Many foreign friends of mine, for example one friend of mine from Algeria, he was once beaten up on his way home. These kinds of stories, these endless stories where just judging by your looks you're beaten up."

Things to be thankful for

Although Magnea has lived abroad herself, in Spain and France, she doesn't presume to know exactly what it's like to be a person of foreign origin in Iceland.

"I've always been surrounded by foreign friends and have lived a lot abroad and travelled the world, so maybe that's opened my eyes to the feeling of being a foreigner," she says. "But I can say that I'm very aware that I'm a privileged person compared to my friends who are North African. They're treated differently than I am as a foreigner. But I just wanted to point out different life stories as well. Ordinary people with crazy life stories. The

hidden people that we don't think of every day—taking care of our children or at the cash register at Bónus. People we maybe don't really see and should be thankful for."

She continues: "I was just thankful to get to know these four friends of mine even better. There are things you can't ever understand unless you've been through them, like war. They talk about losing their parents, which I also haven't experienced. I've been through different kinds of trauma in life, so just to have this human touch that we all go through, maybe it was surprising that their stories of what they've gone through touch everybody, I have noticed. All ages and all genders, it doesn't matter. They're just human stories. So maybe if you haven't been through these things, you just connect in a human way. That was something that I was very thankful for."

The colourfulness and the joy

Magnea has very clear ideas on what she hopes Icelanders take away from 'Hvunnagshetjur.'

"I just want to raise awareness," she says. "I want to point out that this shouldn't have to be pointed

out. That these voices should be heard. If you think about sexual violence and injustice, women of foreign origin often experience more of that than other groups. I also wanted to point out the positive things; the culture, colorfulness and joy that immigrants bring to Iceland. It would be really sad to walk downtown like we did in the 90s, when there were no tourists and not so many foreigners, and we were just like 'Yes, this is downtown, just two people on Laugavegur'. Society's blooming thanks to them. So I want to point out that we should celebrate that, and bring more focus to them so it will be common; so it won't be strange."

She also hopes foreign audiences find some comfort in the film.

"I just hope that foreigners living in Iceland feel heard, and that it encourages them to raise their voices" Magnea tells us. "Even though you're tired of these silly questions, you know, 'Where are you from? Oh, you're a foreigner!' and such, to not give up. Language is always a way into society, but it can be hard. You can't be a single mother working 16 hours a day, come home to your kids, and you don't have time to go and learn Icelandic in the evening."

"I just want us to show a little tolerance," she says in closing. "I want to bring some love and hope into this world. We're all in the same boat. We don't need this apartheid bullshit." 🇮🇸

Info: 'Hvunnagshetjur' will be shown at Háskólabíó from December 6th through 9th, and aired on RÚV after Christmas.



Magnea Björk Valdimarsdóttir

“It was diverse, it was subversive, it was surprising, it was funny. And it was accessible for everyone.”



Reach Out And Dance

The Reykjavík Dance Festival: connecting communities and moving the masses

Words:
John Pearson

Photos:
Owen Fiene
and John Pearson

Dance should be the most accessible, comfortable, familiar art form known to mankind. Everybody has a body, and most people can move theirs—even if only in part—making the ability to dance an almost universally shared experience.

And yet, dance as performance is often perceived as culturally ring-fenced; intended for those aficionados who “get it”, but not so much for the common folk.

The Reykjavík Dance Festival, which wrapped up the performances of its 19th year last month, is having none of that nonsense. Directors Brogan Davison and Pétur Ármannsson, the Anglo-Icelandic couple who took the reins of the festival only at the start of this year, are quietly determined to democratise dance.

“It’s something we really think about, and one of the problems that we face with this festival,” Brogan reflects after the event. “And one of our intentions this year was to make it more accessible.”

The dance of the common folk

One way that the festival fosters that accessibility is to balance the virtuosity of professional festival performance with the dance of ordinary people. As Pétur observes: “How does my grandmother dance in the kitchen with my grandpa? How does our baby daughter dance to CoComelon on Netflix? It’s our responsibility to tap into this folksy side of dance.”

Normally, folks are able to get dancy at the various parties which form the fabric of the festival around its performances—in “the spaces between”, as Brogan calls them. A COVID-19 rapid test regime for audiences saved this year’s scheduled performances. Unfortunately the same approach wasn’t possible for those more freewheeling interactive elements, and much of the

action in the spaces between simply wasn’t possible.

However Brogan and Pétur did manage to save the festival’s Baby Rave, (literally a rave for babies—surely the ultimate in youth outreach), by following the format of recent times and streaming the event from their living room. Its success is one that they hope to bring to next year’s programme, along with more symposiums, workshops and artist talks to optimise access for audiences.

Open and reflective

Accessibility is a theme clearly embedded in the DNA of the Reykjavík Dance Festival. One of the standout performances this year was ‘Stefnumót’, (Icelandic for ‘Rendezvous’), three pieces created by bringing together a performer with a disability and one without. Each resulting show was accompanied by a candid conversation between performers and audience about the cre-

ative process, its challenges and the insights revealed.

“I think it really embodied the festival,” Pétur reflects. “It was diverse, it was subversive, it was surprising, it was funny. And it was accessible for everyone else. So we’re really proud of that event.”

As well as being accessible, dance should naturally reflect the social and political issues touching those who create and experience it. As Pétur observes: “Good art is of this world. I think that to connect with people it needs to be somehow in the same space as them.” Such connections were made this year through performances like ‘Dance If You Want To Enter My Country’, in which Michikazu Matsune reflects on racism and the nature of identity. And ‘When The Bleeding Stops’—a piece by Lovísa Ósk Gunnarsdóttir focusing on the silence and sense of taboo surrounding menopause—was a hot ticket, clearly connecting with a community touched by that theme.

Making connections

Outreach is a large part of the festival’s purpose. It is active in the community all year round, and is probably best thought of as an arts foundation that holds biannual events. Thanks to a commitment of long-term support by the City Of Reykjavík, the festival is able to lead programmes engaging underserved social groups. One such initiative is the Litla Systir project, an evening “school” encouraging creative activity and critical thought in teenagers, and offering participants an active role in helping curate the festival.

So the festival’s mission might be described as bringing dance to the people. However Brogan is quite understanding that those new to dance might fear that they won’t understand the culture. “If people are coming in and maybe seeing dance for the first time, they might worry that they won’t understand the ‘rules’ of the space,” she observes. But with an interactive, innovative and experiential approach, Brogan and Pétur hope that these needless barriers can be dismantled. It’s all about getting dance to the people, and getting the people to dance. 🍷



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Track By Track

The Reykjavík Grapevine 24
Issue 12—2021



Kig & Husk, replete with lollies

‘Kill The Moon’ By Kig & Husk

Don't worry, the moon isn't real

Words: Valur Grettisson/Kig & Husk Photos: Kig & Husk

Info

Kig & Husk is comprised of music veterans Frank Hall from the band Ske and Höskuldur Ólafsson, who made international headlines in the late 90s with the energetic hip-hop outfit, Quarashi. This new album is a notable departure from their earlier work, so we asked the duo to walk us through it, track by track. Here's what they had to say.

Two Gods in a Taxi

The album begins with a mantra of sort; lyrical repetition sung over a chord-cycle that gradually changes and evolves. The original idea for this song was to paint a digital soundscape using individual notes that would (in theory) form harmony but are, in fact, entirely random and accidental in its composition. The indistinct conversation you hear at the beginning of the song is a sample from a wonderfully awkward 1966 clip of John Lennon and Bob Dylan sharing a limousine. Writing a song about the banality of two musical giants (two gods) trying to have a normal conversation in a glorified taxi was just irresistible to us. They're “all around but nowhere found” seeing as one is dead and the other unapproachable, at best.

So Long Holly

A critique of toxic masculinity still found in various socially acceptable institutions and behaviour (e.g. male choirs, country clubs, Freemasons, gender segregated chess tournaments, etc.)—the whole being more dangerous than the sum of its parts. The bass is in the forefront, aggressive, unwavering and self-righteous; with an incisive Bowie-influenced guitar-riff (à la Scary Monsters) on top. The title of the song is a reference to the sample heard at the end, taken from Orson Wells' (in)famous monologue in the 1949 film, *The Third Man*: “In Italy for thirty years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder, and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland, they had brotherly love, they had five hundred years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock.”

Wonder Woman

Probably the only song on the record that has a genuine band feel to it. We invited a few friends (amazing musicians and instrumentalists) to the studio, cooked some pasta, drank a few bottles of cheap

wine and recorded the song in one session. This number (originally inspired by Jeff Bridges' “Brand New Angel”) is also an honest attempt at deconstructing the country music genre, both in terms of lyrical content and musical composition.

Kill the Moon

This song is the end result of an attempt to build a song around a groove. In a way, it's a piece that favours atmosphere over logical song structure. The hippie-ish guitar riff reminds us of Jefferson Airplane and Love, and when we realised where the song was taking us, we couldn't resist the urge to add a few Eastern spices to the phrasing and harmony. The title of the song and the lyrics are a not-so-subtle reference to Romeo and Juliet (act 2, scene 2): “Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon.”

Lognið

“Lognið” (The Calm) was originally written for a theatre production (Dubbeldusch) but we felt it had further potential, so we decided to expand on the short piece and see where it would lead us. There's lots of vocal disruption and experimentation going on, as well as tireless overdubbing of acoustic instruments, such as classical guitar, balalaika, and mandolin. Halfway through the song there's a sharp transition to electronic instruments, guitars, synthesizers and some excellent drumming (inspired by Chemical Brothers, “Where do I Begin”) by our dear friend Diddi. This is also the only song on the album sung in Icelandic. 🍷

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Beer 600 ISK,
Wine 850 ISK.

FJALLKONAN
Every day from
15:00 to 17:00.
Beer 790 ISK,
Wine 990 ISK.

FORRÉTTABARINN
Every day from
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Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

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

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BAR**
Every day from
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Wine 1,000 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

KAFFIBARINN
Every day from
15:00 to 19:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine (On Wed.)
850 ISK.

KAFFIBRENNSLAN
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 650 ISK,
Wine 790 ISK.

KALDI
Every day from
16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 850 ISK,
Wine 850 ISK.

KEX HOSTEL
Every day from
15:00 to 19:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK.

LAUNDROMAT
Every day from
20:00 to 22:00.
Beer 650 ISK,
Wine 1,000 ISK.

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

MIAMI
Every day from
15:00 to 19:00.
Beer 700 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK,
Cocktails 1,200
ISK.

PRIKID
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 700 ISK.

PUBLIC HOUSE
Every day from
15:00 to 18:00 &
23:00 to 1:00.
Beer 890 ISK,
Wine 890 ISK.

PUNK
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 890 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

PETERSEN SVÍTAN
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00,
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 1,000 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

RÖNTGEN
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Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

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Wine 990 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
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11:00 - 14:30
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1,490 ISK

Lemon
Every day
16:00 - 21:00
2f1 Juice +
sandwich
1,095 ISK
Vegan option

Uppsalarir
Every day
11:00 - 14:00
Burger & fries -
1,390 ISK
Vegan option

**2,000 ISK
And Under**

Sólon
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11:00 - 14:30
Fish of the day -
1,990 ISK

Matarkjallarinn
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Fisherman's fish
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Icelanders are famous for their writings, for their old Edda poems and tales of our Viking history. This small island even has a literary Nobel Prize winner to boast of. Our rich history of literature is long and complicated, but Iceland today is changing in many ways. One of the most interesting changes when it comes to this cold island in the north is that immigration has never been higher. Around 55,000 immigrants live in Iceland, a nation of 370,000, but literature remains shielded from changing with the times by one of the toughest languages out there. It's safe to say that the language barrier makes it difficult for immigrants to be a part in the literary side of the culture.

The Brave Poets

But there will always be brave poets, and a collection of first-generation immigrant writers in Iceland have composed a remarkably diverse and well-written book that breaks the toughest cultural wall there is in Iceland: the old tradition of poetry that Icelanders have dominated for centuries.

The mind behind the book "Pólifónía af erlendum uppruna" (Polyphonia of foreign origin), published by Una publishing house, is Russian born poet Natasha Stolyrova. Fittingly enough, she speaks Icelandic when interviewed, and says that it was the work of a Danish poet that encouraged her to break the wall.

"I was inspired by Yahya Hassan's poetry," says Natasha. The Danish/Palestinian poet became a literature star overnight around



Immigrant Poets Rethinking The North

A new generation of poets publish a poet book

Words: **Valur Grettisson** Photo: **Patrik Ontkovic & Art Bicnick**

No frustration

a decade ago when he published his first book, simply named after his own name. The poetry of Hassan is incredibly powerful. Sadly he died last year, still only a young man.

"I realised that the voices of immigrants were not heard in Icelandic literature. This is in some ways understandable," she adds, since it's in relatively recent years that immigration to Iceland has increased. But the second genera-

tion is knocking on the door of Icelandic society, and immigrants are taking more space than ever in Icelandic arts. One writer in the book also wrote and performed in the incredibly enjoyable play, *Polishing Iceland*, which was performed in one of Iceland's biggest theatres a few years ago. Another writer, Juan Camilo Roman Estrada, played a role in the hit movie, *Woman At War* (Kona fer í stríð), which received the Nordic Council Prize in 2018.

"This book is not fueled by frustration or anything like that," Natasha explains, "it just feels like it's time."

And she is absolutely correct. The immigrant generation is emerging with a fresh understanding of Iceland, both when it comes to the Icelandic nation, as well as the contradistinctive national soul of Icelanders, which still relies heavily on the heritage of the romantic poets from the 18th century, when more or less all Icelandic tradition was invented.

What is the North?

Natasha met with the writers in Gröndalshús in Reykjavík, a fitting place for literature, as the famous writer Benedikt Gröndal used to live there at the end of the 18th century.

She wrote down questions and placed them into a hat, which the writers pulled out and used as prompts for discussion and, ultimately, their writing.

"These questions were about our experience in Iceland, what we miss in our homelands, how we experience the Icelandic language, the society and its prejudices," Natasha says. The result is that the reader can now find these experiences, interpreted through poetic form, in the book. But it doesn't focus on the negative elements of being an immigrant such as the frustration of learning Icelandic. One of the most powerful poems in the book is called *My North*, written by the Colombian born Juan Camilo Roman Estrada. It's eye-opening for Icelanders to read such a poem, and he hits hard in the beginning, reminding one that in the north, we worry about the weather, not war. Perhaps, the idea of north doesn't really belong to the north alone after all.

Odd experience for Icelanders

The book itself is aimed at Icelandic markets, Natasha says, although the poems are also translated to English. One poet, Elías Knörr, offers a unique experience for Icelandic readers. At first, he seems to be writing in Icelandic, but the reader, if Icelandic, quickly finds that he cannot understand a word – yet, the words truly feel like Icelandic. It can be frustrating reading these poems but the reader quickly realises that they themselves have been put into the shoes of a person learning the Icelandic language, not understanding much, if anything. A truly astonishing experience that works perfectly for Icelandic readers.

Big step for new poets

Overall, the book presents a diverse choir or immigrant voices and perhaps reminds us that there are no fundamental differences between them and any other poets, although they have a fresher way of approaching many themes. Although they think and write about the language, they are still writing about universal feelings of love, regret, sense of loss and violence.

"I believe that this is a big step for immigrants when it comes to Icelandic literature," says Natasha, and explains that she at first wanted the book only to be in Icelandic, but that her ideas changed through the process. She has also seen a lot of interest within the Icelandic cultural scene to draw these voices out.

"Tímarit Máls og Menningar [(Iceland's) biggest and most influential literary magazine] wanted to republish these poets, so there is clearly an interest in these voices," says Natasha. And she just might be right.

Pólifónía book is available on shop.grapevine.is

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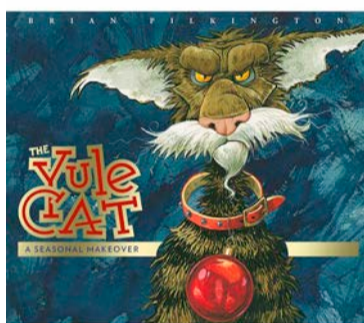
Christmas Books To Set The Mood

Get your read on

Words: **Valur Grettisson** Photos: **Various**

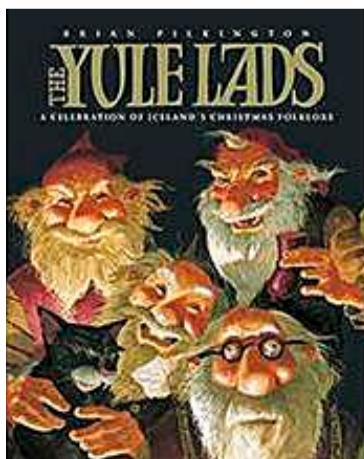
Info

If you want to understand the Icelandic Christmas tradition, here are the books you have to read.



The Sad Old Yule Cat

Icelandic Christmas is rife with tradition. It's quite old fashioned in many ways. Everything is closed on Christmas Eve, everybody goes around to the home of family or friends to eat a smoked rack of pork. That may seem quaint, but our Christmas stories might just scare the living daylights out of you. One of the horrific characters in Icelandic Christmas tales is a freaky cat that has developed a taste for poor children that didn't receive any new clothes for Christmas. But one of Iceland's most inventive artists, Brian Pilkington, doesn't fear the Yule Cat. In this book the Yule Cat has become old, and, well, not so fierce. He has become a moth-eaten, fleabitten, lazy old geriatric that is in need of a seasonal makeover. This delightful story is ideal for children of all ages, and a perfect introduction to Icelandic Christmas.



The Creepy Yule Lads

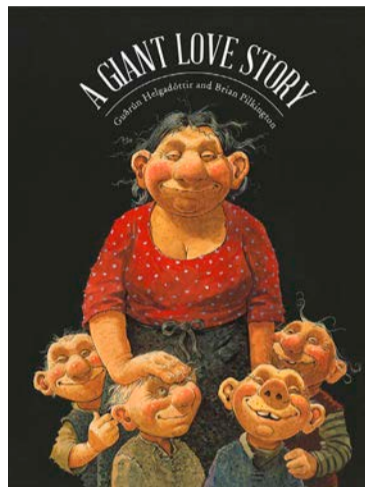
We're not done with Brian Pilkington on this list. He also wrote and draw this wonderful book about

the weird pranksters and thieves that we Icelanders welcome into our childrens' bedrooms 13 nights in a row. I'm of course talking about the Yule Lads. Wait, what did you think I was talking about? Don't answer that. This is actually the book that shaped the millennial generation's image of the Yule Lads and is a wonderful portrayal of these weird lads who lick our spoons, slam out doors and even peek into the window like a peeping tom. But they give us stuff, so it's worth it.



Elves Are a Christmas Thing

Elves and supernatural beings are a big part of Christmas in Iceland. The elves roam around and even move from one palace (rock) to another at this time of year. If you're lucky, you will meet them at a crossroads. Just don't accept any gifts from them—doing so would drive you utterly insane. In this book, Jón R. Hjálmarsson retells and explains many of Iceland's most famous folktales, bringing trolls, elves, wizards, mermen and a host of other mysterious beings to life.



Trolls and Mundane Tasks

Speaking of trolls, they are more complex creatures than you think. They're not just roaming around waiting to be turned to stone, they live pretty complicated lives, with mundane tasks to perform and troll kids to raise. In this wonderful book that 80s kids grew up with, the best Icelandic children author of all time, Guðrún Helgadóttir, tells the wonderful tale of a troll mother and her fight with the wilderness. Our good friend Brian Pilkington drew the brilliant pictures for the book, making the adventure both warm and relatable, just like Guðrún's story.



A Simple Novella? Think again

If you're looking for something a little more grown up, this is the book for you. Or give it to your parents. Gunnar Gunnarsson is one of Iceland's greatest poets, and was close to winning the Nobel Prize in the 50s, only to be beaten out by Halldór Laxness. Gunnar's *Aðventa*, or *The Good Shepard* is a simple novella telling the story of a shepherd looking for a sheep. But don't be fooled by the simple premise—this is one of those stories with such depth at its core that it takes a lifetime to digest it. It's one of Iceland's great stories and has also been translated into 20 languages.

Books are available on shop.grapevine.is

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

FJALLKONAN WELCOMES YOU!

NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF ICELAND



WELCOME
TO THE
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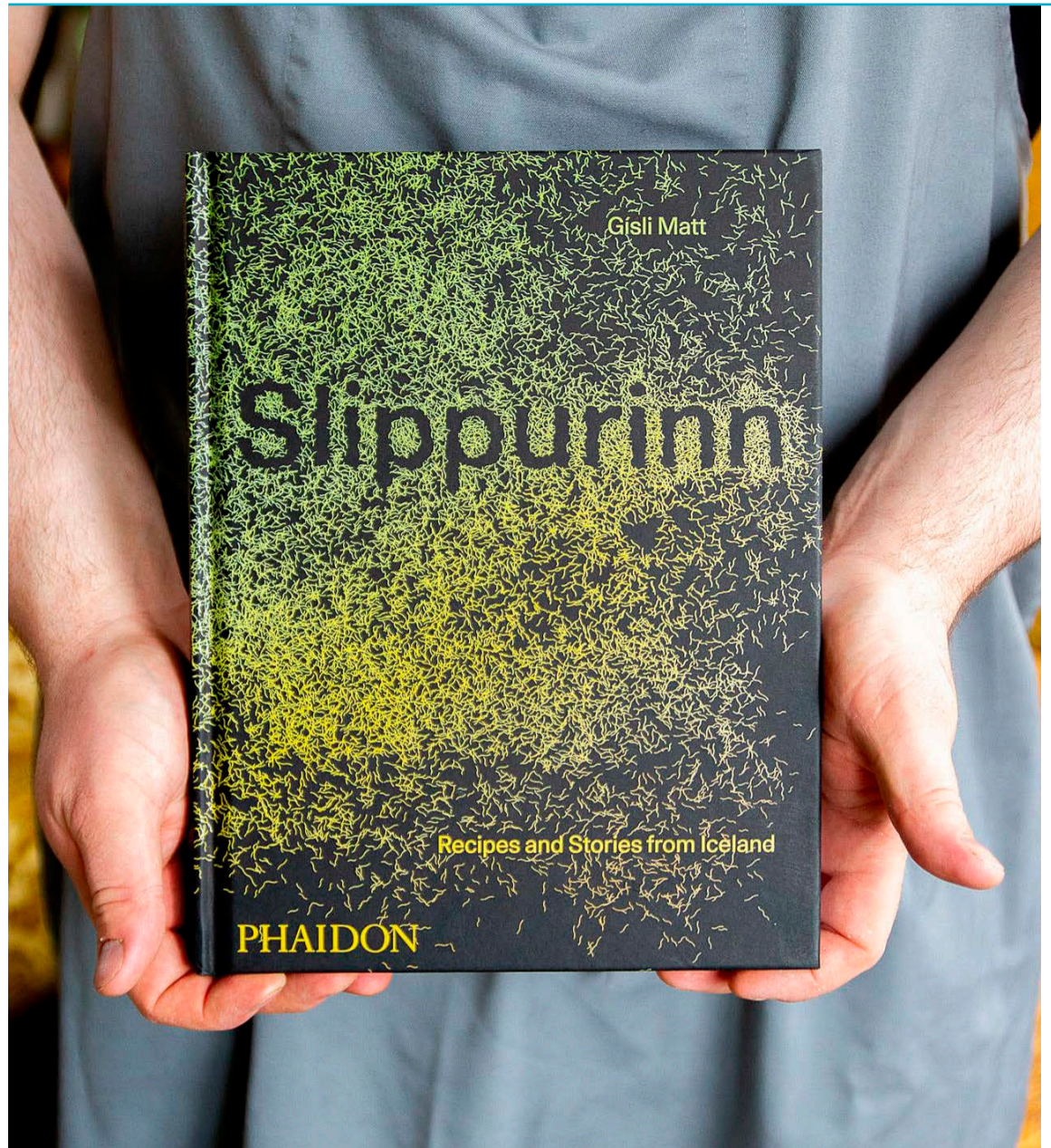


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Food



Icelandic Ingredients, Fine Dining Results

Chef Gísli Matt's new book shares Iceland
with the world

Words: [Shruthi Basappa](#)

Photos: [Karl Petersson](#) & [Gunnar Freyr Gunnarsson](#)

"Hello, I'm Gísli, I'm a chef from Iceland and I would like to make a book. Can we meet for coffee?" This was the email Gísli sent to the Phaidon publishing team in 2014 after the publishing house had shown interest in working with the young chef at a pop-up dinner celebrating Magnus Nilsson's "The Nordic Cookbook," of which Gísli was part.

"My phone cover had been the Phaidon logo for many years," Gísli confesses sheepishly. We are sitting across computer screens; him in Heimaey, and me, in Reykjavík. "It was a reminder to myself that I really wanted to make this happen, and yeah, it worked out in the end."

I look at the black hardbound book with a scattering of neon green

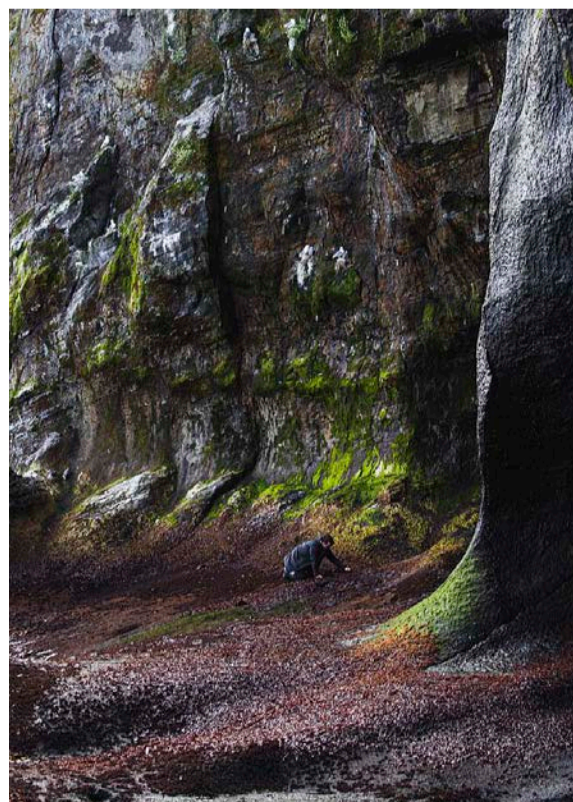
moss and seaweed like strands across the cover, the word SLIPPURINN traced as if by a finger across the field. I turn over to the spine, and there it is, the distinctive logo, the Greek symbol for phi. Preceding it are the words Gísli Matt. Turns out Gísli was manifesting long before TikTok influencers.

Chef Gísli Matthías Auðunsson's debut cookbook "Slippurinn: Recipes and Stories from Iceland," is written by Nicholas Gill, and photographed by Gunnar Freyr Gunnarsson and Karl Petersson and is now available in bookstores and online stores. Readers will now be able to peek into the culinary universe that Gísli and his family—mother Katrín Gísladóttir, father Auðunn Arnar Stefniðsson, and his sister Indiana Auðunsdóttir—have created at Slippurinn, the family-run restaurant on Vestmannaeyjar were not only the food, but the restaurant itself is seasonal.

sumac
GRILL +
DRINKS



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With a foreword by Carlo Petrini, founder of the Slow Food movement, of which Gísli has been a long time member and believer, the book immediately draws you in with expansive shots of Vestmannaeyjar, stunningly plated food and even a hand painted cocktail booklet, tucked discreetly into the book (if you've dined at the restaurant, you'll recognise it is the same style and size as the menu). Writer Nicholas Gill really captures Gísli's voice in his words. If you have met Gísli, you'll find yourself reading it in his voice, a true compliment to their combined efforts.

The restaurant and the book

"We're not trying to be the best restaurant in the world. We're trying to be the best restaurant we can be on a tiny island off the south coast of Iceland," read the opening lines of the book. If you have dined at Slippurinn you know then that this modesty makes light of the enormous impact the restaurant exercises and continues to have on not only the restaurant industry at large, but more importantly, on Icelandic cuisine.

In a generosity not always hitherto associated with chef-centered cookbooks until recently, Slippurinn the book gracefully continues in the same vein, showcasing recipes, techniques and basic have-to's and know-how's that are employed at the restaurant kitchen. Gísli even admits candidly that he doesn't expect a lot of people to dig in and cook a lot of the recipes. (Although Instagram has been lit up with people doing precisely that).

So who is the book for? "For other cooks, people running restaurants, people just starting to dip their toes into the techniques and such," Gísli offers. "This is also, selfishly, a nice handbook for us at the restaurant for future staff and ourselves," he grins.

Icelandic food vs Slippurinn food

Is the food at Slippurinn Icelandic? "No," insists Gísli. "When at Matur og Drykkur, we were working towards elevating Icelandic food, digging it out of our heritage. But at Slippurinn, we are exploring the realms of possibilities with Icelandic ingredients as the focus," he clarifies.

Gísli's strength has indeed been recognising Icelandic ingredients and making them mainstream in

an approachable yet exciting and familiar fashion. But don't be fooled by the seemingly innocuous simplicity, it is complex, time consuming food. By breaking down all fish that comes into the restaurant, he has been able to extend the nose to tail philosophy to its zenith. Cod collars are typically thrown away, but by looking at food cultures far and wide, and adapting them to local contexts, Gísli turns things like fish collars into a perfect bite that you wake up dreaming of. Like the famed cod wings that are double fried. "I did wonder if we have any business making hot sauce, but you know what, it works." Gísli's recipe uses young spruce and I can vouch for its addictive deliciousness. The fermented garlic butter takes three months to prepare. This is slow food, literally and philosophically.

"If people can use the recipes with the nature around them, I'd be honoured."

Unlocking possibilities

Slippurinn the book is really for anyone trying to make a difference within existing systems. As explained in the book, the restaurant forages a lot more than the average fine dining restaurant based on similar principles. "We do an average of 180-200 covers a day, Gísli shares. And we don't offer the same three kinds of fish fillets like other restaurants in the country. Working closely with purveyors means we can offer a larger variety than buying from the same one or two producers." The wolffish roe with fresh cheese on toast illustrates this point perfectly and now all I can think about is how to source the damned eggs!

The book is divided into chapters that shine a light on the restaurant's philosophy. The fish and shellfish chapter has a whole section dedicated to oily fish. The recipes are easy to read, although I recommend starting your way from the back with the basic section—build on the building blocks that take time and patience to reward you with that signature Slippurinn soul in the dishes. "There aren't many dishes you can simply whip up in an hour," Gísli admits.

But therein lies the strength of the book precisely. It is an invitation to look around, slow down, and pick things. Crumble them in your palms and smell them. Try them.

Like the spicy beach mustard pods that grow along the sandy beaches of Vestmannaeyjar that pack a horseradish level wallop of stinging heat quickly dissipating into a crunchysweetness. To sit down and snack on blue-green oyster leaves that are abundant all around Iceland. To steal rhubarb from your neighbours and pickle them. To forage in the seas and not accept ocean farmed seafood destroying ecosystems. To question why we must accept food and food waste in the same breath even as we choose the same tired filleted cod and badly butchered lamb at the supermarket.

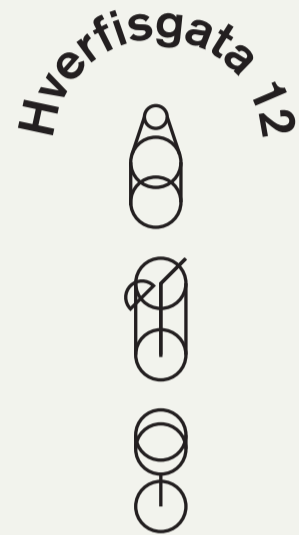
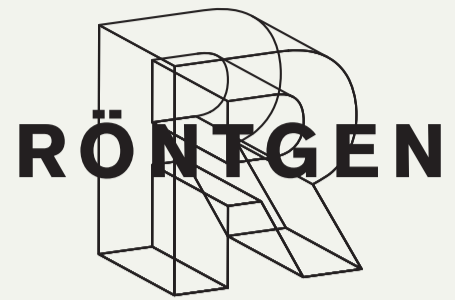
To learn that by making different choices, we can influence change, demand variety and in the long run, a more holistic food system. The beauty of it all is that these are moments to revel in, celebrate and question no matter where you are.

Redefining realms

Many reviews have been written about Slippurinn the restaurant. What isn't always obvious, however, is its significance in the shift in the psyche of the native Icelander encountering their own cuisine through the lens of local produce. North of life, as writer Nanna Rögnvaldardóttir poetically describes the bleak landscape, Iceland's bounty of land and sea have curiously been under utilized or completely remiss. Gísli's own search for his culinary voice might have sprung from brushes with New Nordic cuisine and the Slow Food movement, but it is on his volcanic home island that it reaches a crescendo. It is here that the shift for people to go out to eat Icelandic food was ignited. Slippurinn has been making inroads in the Icelandic psyche about what Icelandic food can look like and be like beyond survival and all the possibilities that come with such a realisation.

The book captures this optimism, and pride that are easily replicable in our own kitchens and the kitchens beyond. "If people can use the recipes with the nature around them, I'd be honoured. All food in the world, when put in the right context, makes sense," Gísli signs off. ☘

Slippurinn book is available on shop.grapevine.is



Happy hour / 4–7pm
Beer / Wine / Cocktails



Travel

Power Trip

A steamy day trip around Iceland's hottest power stations

Words: **Josie Anne Gaitens** Photos: **Art Bicnick**



Travel distance from Reykjavik:
130 km

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Icelandic winter entices for many reasons. There are ice caves, snowy mountains and long, dark nights full of stars and Aurora. But there is another category of beauty and intrigue with a unique premise: power stations.

Iceland's iconic geology is a source of breathtaking vistas; but it's also what fuels the whole country. There are a number of interesting – even pretty – power plants within a short distance from Reykjavik. We found that linking them together into a day trip was the ideal way to get a sense of Iceland's power development, from an emerging economy after the Second World War, to its current position at the forefront of cutting-edge technology.

Take the high road

First stop was Nesjavellir, the second-largest geothermal power plant in Iceland. During the summer months, Nesjavallavegur mountain pass is open and accessible to most vehicles, and makes for a spectacular drive to the station. But in winter the road is closed and inadvisable to all but high clearance, 4WD vehicles and experienced drivers.

Luckily I had both at my disposal, and we made it through, despite a couple of heart-racing moments when the snow drifts were a little higher than

I was comfortable with. We were rewarded by a postcard-perfect view of glistening Þingvellir with steam clouds rising from Nesjavellir below.

Water, water everywhere

From there it was only a short drive to Ljósafoss. The oldest hydropower station in the Sogið river, it was built in 1937 to meet the growing demand for power from Reykjavik, whose population was booming at the time. Turns out Icelanders have been harnessing the power of the natural landscape long before it was cool.

Ljósafoss hosts a small and engaging visitor centre with lots of fun interactive exhibits for wee ones. The staff were delighted to show us around and patiently tolerated my attempts to pronounce things in Icelandic.

With the sun as high as it was going to get on this short winter's day, it was time for a hike. In keeping with our steam-powered theme, the obvious spot was Hveragerði. Famous for its geothermal activity, the river Varmá runs through and heats the many greenhouses dotting the landscape.

We stopped at Almar Bakari to fuel up on their lava-bread sandwiches, before setting off up Reykjadalur valley towards the hot river, admiring the juxtaposition of snow and steam. Parts of the path are steep and require good boots, in particular in winter

where sneaky ice patches can be your literal downfall.

The river is warm year round and plenty of folk were enjoying the bath-like temperatures. As tempting as it was to join them, the sky was already tinged with pink and we had one more stop to make. Somewhat reluctantly, we headed back.

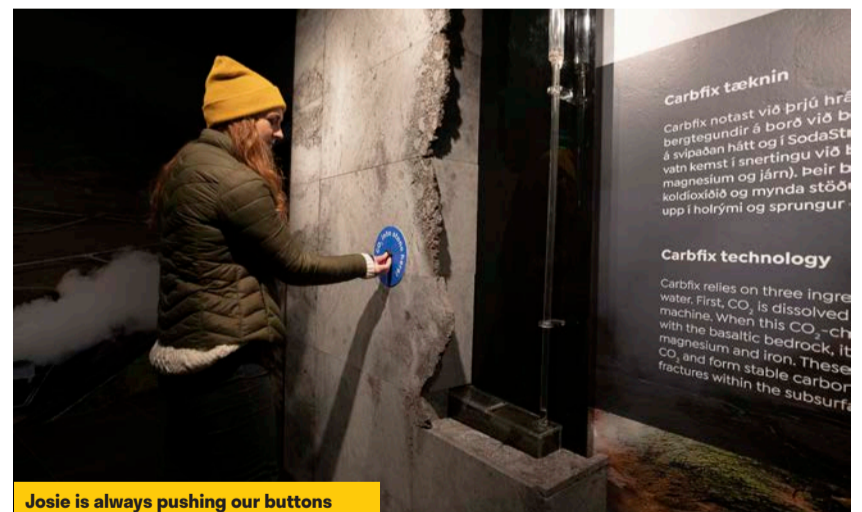
A bright future

Our last destination was Hellisheiði Power Plant. On the main road just outside of the city (if you've ever driven Route 1 south from Reykjavik, you've passed it), many people don't realise what a fascinating place this is and miss the opportunity to visit. Not only is Hellisheiði the biggest geothermal power plant in Iceland, it's the third-largest in the world, creating 303 MW of electricity.

Wandering through the visitor centre, we took the opportunity to see the

internal workings of the plant from the viewing platform and learned about how the site is now involved in new carbon capture and fixing technologies. This involves a huge structure that collects carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, the largest of its kind in the world so far. Dwarfed by the huge fans whirring above us, I felt a huge sense of relief and gratitude for the existence of this machine, steadfastly consuming the harm we commit to the environment, and storing it safely away.

We finished our trip as night was falling, and as streams of car headlights flashed past us in the dark, I was reminded of how dependent we all are on these power plants and the energy they consume, in almost every aspect of our lives. It was reassuring to know that green energy creation is possible and practical, and that Iceland is leading the way in showing how achievable it is. 🍷



Josie is always pushing our buttons



Nesjavallavegur looking glorious



Carbon capture — we're big fans

Deep Space Nine Edition

DS9 = Best Trek, Confirmed

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine**

In this edition of Horror-Scopes, we're going to tell you which character you are in the objectively best Star Trek franchise, Deep Space Nine, based on your sun sign. And no, Gul Dukat will not be making an appearance here. That would be downright insulting. Let's go!

Aries

You are Worf, son of Mogh—serious, strong, and with an undying warrior's heart. The only thing more powerful than your sense of honour is your refusal to take a joke. Work on that!

Taurus

Congratulations, Taurus, you're Odo, the chief of security. Nothing annoys you more than someone flouting the rules, i.e., the only thing holding the fabric of society together. Only you get to break the rules, doesn't anyone

know that?

Gemini

To some, you are but a humble tailor, but to others, a quick-witted and cunning spy. You are Garak, and honestly, no one is fooled by your duplicitousness.

Cancer

Can I interest you in the bargain of a lifetime? Being just like Quark the Ferengi, your wheeling and dealing definitely gets you your share of gold-plated latinum—and a reputation for stealth. Caveat emptor indeed!

Leo

Good news, Leo, you are Commander Benjamin Sisko. A natu-

ral leader with a commanding personality, who always sticks up for the little guy, with just the slightest flexibility of morality when needed.

Virgo

Sweet, humble, and endlessly loving, you are Professor Keiko O'Brien (née Ishikawa). Your loved ones can always count on you, but may the Prophets help anyone who ever crosses you.

Libra

Much like the Chief Science Officer Jadzia Dax, you are cool, graceful and precocious, but you can also work harder than anyone else—provided some good-hearted fun doesn't distract you.

Scorpio

You might fancy yourself a smoother operator and an expert at seduction, but you're about as smooth as Chief Medical Officer Julian Bashir. And much like Julian, you'll probably get much further once you tone down your ego and let your talents speak for themselves.

Sagittarius

You are First Officer Kira Nerys!

Strong-willed and with a powerful sense of justice, but not without your romantic side, you would fit in well with any Bajoran resistance militia.

Capricorn

Steady, dependable, and with the work ethic of a Clydesdale, you are Chief of Operations Miles O'Brien. There's always a problem cropping up, and it's always on you to fix it. Give yourself a rest from time to time.

Aquarius

Yes, even the Dominion makes an appearance in this horoscope, as you are Weyoun, the Vorta clone who could be a master of diplomacy, but with the sense to know when to cut your losses. Watch out for those Klingons!

Pisces

You are Rom, little brother of Quark. Always underestimated, you still have the ability to organise and rally allies against the status quo when needed. Chin up; you're capable of good things. ♡

WELL, YOU ASKED



The Cutlery Elite

Words: **Valur Grettisson**

Is it true all Icelanders have to learn to swim in order to graduate from school?

Yes, that is correct! The reason is pretty practical, we were drowning en masse before learning to swim, so it felt like the right move. It was put into law in 1925 that all children must learn to swim. Many sailors in the olden days could have been saved if they would have known how to swim. And of course, drowning was reduced greatly over the years as a result. Feels like a no brainer.

How much lava can exist under the EARTH?

Well, it's a few litres, (Five gallons if you're from one of these countries that use that idiotic system of measurement).

We have heard it's very impolite to blow your nose in a tissue, while at the table. Is this true? And why do Icelanders eat everything (even pizza!!) With knife and fork?? In Holland, we eat pizza with our hands....

We just loudly snort our snot back up into our sinuses. It's not like we are at the Versailles Palace! It's obviously not preferable to blow your nose at the dining table, but there is no strong etiquette about this, mostly because everybody has a cold all the time anyway. About the knife and fork thing, I don't know how you do it in Holland, but in Iceland, we have something called "manners." Aside from snorting our boogers, those include using a fork and a knife when eating. Some savages in Iceland of course eat everything with their hands (everything being hamburgers and pizza), but we, the cutlery-elite, strive to never let food come in contact with our hands. ♡

CITY SHOT by Art Bicnick



Women's Bobsleigh Heats — Reykjavik 2021

HOT CHIKIN & BAO BAR



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