

The Reykjavík Grapevine



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Volume 21

Issue 15 2024

Best before October 3

From Iceland To Hollywood

Culture

Music

Travel

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On The Cover

The folks behind INNI Music are an international bunch. When we caught up with founders Colm O'Herlihy and Atli Örvarsson, they were in LA and London respectively. The company's work means a bit of jetting around, but it's clearly working – they've placed Icelandic music in productions for Netflix, Apple, Disney and HBO. The cover was shot in Los Angeles by Alexandré Souëtre, and it captures something of INNI's journey from the wilds of Iceland to La La Land, and Hollywood.

COVER PHOTO:
Alexandré Souëtre

Editorial

Everything Everywhere All Of The Time



WORDS John Rogers
Issue Editor

Making this issue of your Reykjavík Grapevine was a whirlwind.

As we were calling across the time zones to chase down the INNI guys for our cover feature (pages 14-16), news broke of another suspected murder in Iceland, and we could hear the chants of street protests through the office window over the shameful threatened deportation of chronically ill Palestinian boy Yazan Tamimi (page 4).

At the same time, we were having conversations and photoshoots with many great people in Iceland's flourishing arts scene. We talked to film directors, festival organisers, talented chefs, and music pioneers, from exciting upstarts to returning legends.

It was a crunching change of gear switching back to reporting on rising knife crime and the sky-high cost of living one minute, then joking around about a deadly spider infestation of suburban paradise Grafarvogur the next.

It's a lot to hold in one's head when things are simultaneously so vital, exciting, and dystopian all at once. As many of you readers expressed in the comments online, we found ourselves asking – what the hell is going on in Icelandic society right now? Get a thoughtful take on that from Grapevine's publisher Jón Trausti on page 45.

The whirlwind continues, and we hope you enjoy this snapshot of it. If you're in Grafarvogur, good luck with those spiders. Aukwafina forever. And free Palestine. ■

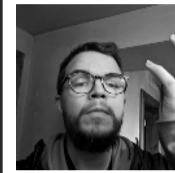
Catherine Fulton will return.

Contributors



CATHERINE
MAGNÚSDÓTTIR

Catherine studies culture and literature in Iceland and came to the Grapevine for the internship but ended up freelancing for the magazine. When she's not trying to reconnect with her Icelandic roots, she's usually watching video essays or attempting to finally come up with that one good story idea that she can actually finish writing.



CIARÁN DALY

Ciarán is a UK-based journalist and game developer who first started writing for the Grapevine in 2015. He currently resides with his cat and his partner on the Kent coast where he spends his time exploring rock formations, programming, and struggling with self-induced acid reflux. He refuses to go to war.



ISH SVEINSSON HOULE

Ish is a former radio station manager and DJ, mainly focusing on music writing with a side of other cultural happenings. Ish moved to Reykjavík to get more in touch with half-Icelandic genes, also writes poetry, and has unfortunately only ever been in a cover band.



IRYNA ZUBENKO

Iryna is a Ukrainian journalist working at the cross-section of media and technology for the past five years. While still figuring out what to do in life, Iryna's love of travelling, unspoiled nature and Scandi design has brought her to Reykjavík. One day she'll write a non-fiction book.



JOANA FONTINHA

Joana is an Aries baby expressing her soul through photography. She's been obsessed with Icelandic culture since her teens, so much that at 20 she threw herself headfirst on a plane to her long-time dream country, Iceland. Driven, energetic and unable to be still, she clumsily moves like a flash and suffers from a serious fast-talking condition.



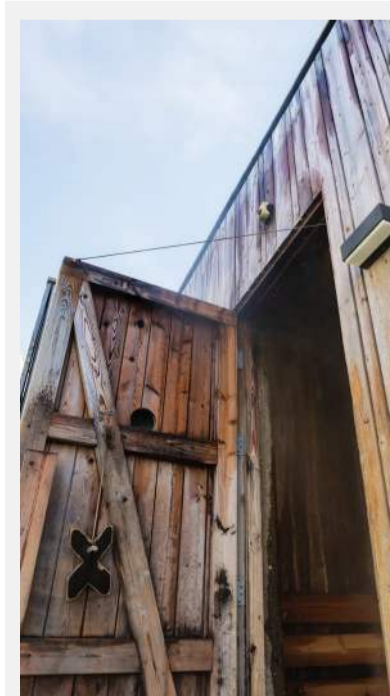
JÓHANNES BJARKI
BJARKASON

Jóhannes Bjarki is a Reykjavík local, straight out of Grafarvogur. Having been active as the frontman of the post-punk band Skoffin and in the post-dreifing art collective, Jóhannes is fascinated by the Icelandic music scene. Among his interests are politics, history and pop culture.



REX BECKETT

Rex Beckett has been a fixture in the Reykjavík culture scene for over a decade as a longtime music/art writer and as former synthpunk diva Rex Pistols. They are currently working on a series delving into the influence of Garfield on queer millennials.



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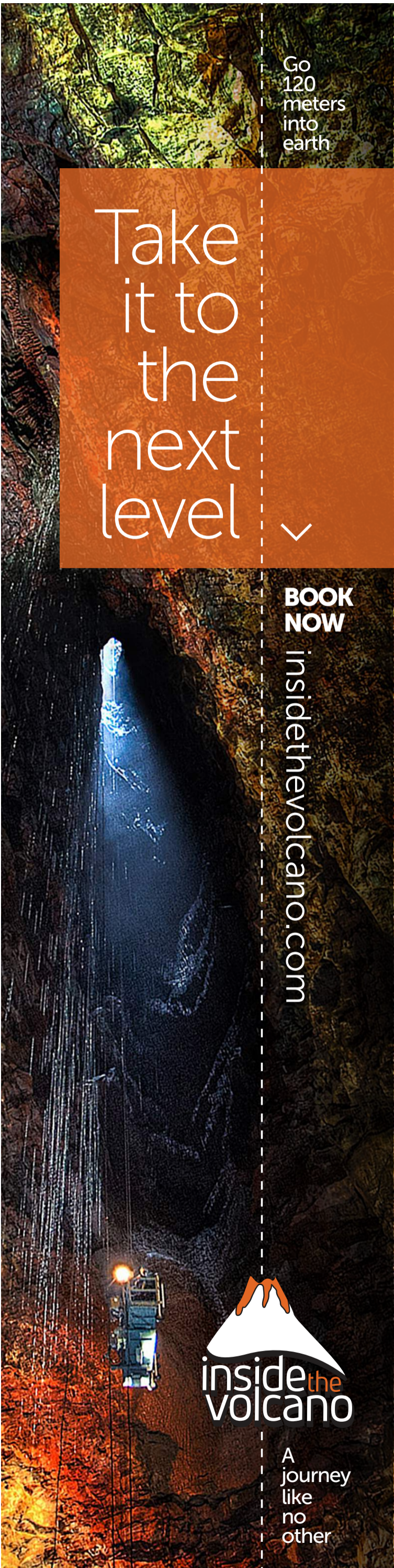


Laugavegur 37



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What The News!?

Suspected Murder, Halted Deportation, And A Venomous Spider

A look at some of the news making headlines in recent weeks

WORDS The Reykjavik Grapevine
IMAGE The internet

The news in Iceland has taken a dark turn of late. Where we once scanned the headlines to see puff pieces about cute animals and a steady flow of tourist tomfoolery, both knife crime and murders have been on the rise in 2024. Why? Check out the opinion piece on page 45 for one take. But for now, here's what's been going down.

ANOTHER SUSPECTED MURDER

An Icelandic man, Sigurður Fannar Þórsson, was taken into police custody on September 15 on suspicion of killing his young daughter. The arrest occurred on the Krýsvík road, just north of Kleifarvatn.

The investigation is ongoing, with the police so far refraining from releasing further details. But according to RÚV sources, the man called the police himself to report that his young daughter was deceased. She was pronounced dead on the scene by the emergency services, and Sigurður was arrested on suspicion of causing her death.

This is the sixth homicide case in Iceland this year, with a total of seven people having been killed. Check grapevine.is/news for more updates as the investigation progresses.

PALESTINIAN BOY'S DEPORTATION HALTED

A seriously ill Palestinian 11-year-old had his imminent deportation halted at the eleventh hour on Monday, September 16. Yazan Tamimi – who needs a wheelchair and constant medical attention due to Duchenne muscular dystrophy – was due to be deported with his family. He was awoken and removed from Reykjavík's pediatric hospital by police and spent eight hours in Keflavík airport before the deportation was halted.

20 protestors had gathered at the airport, organised at short notice by the No Borders organisation. The family's lawyer, Albert Lúðvígsson, said to RÚV that he was not allowed full access to his client with a suitable interpreter, and condemned the police's actions as reprehensible.

Yazan's case has been bouncing around between various committees and ministers due to regulations surrounding the family's arrival in Iceland via Spain. For now, Yazan is safely at Hringurinn Children's Hospital, where he will receive the care he needs. The family's ongoing residency situation is still to be determined.

A FRUITY SPIDER

Grafarvogur resident Brynhildur Helgadóttir discovered a sister spider of the black widow in a bunch of grapes on September 12 – a venomous northern black widow. At first, Brynhildur thought it was a black widow because the spider had a red spot on its back, just like the black widow's distinctive marking.

"It had settled in nicely – it clearly had eggs, and there was a web spun between the grapes forming a cosy nest," she said. "I was pretty shocked when I saw it. We have two small children at home, and it really hit me that we had a venomous spider in the house." Brynhildur contacted the City of Reykjavík, and workers arrived at the scene to collect the spider and take it to the Reykjavík Family Park and Zoo – presumably to terrorise more families. The zoo posted later that the spider was a northern black widow, whose bites contain a potent neurotoxin, though bites are rarely fatal.

This isn't the first time a poisonous spider has been discovered in imported fruit, with other instances occurring in 2019 and 2017, both times in Garðabær. So while some (don't look at us) immediately dubbed Grafarvogur "the black widow capital of Iceland", that title is still up for debate. ■

Get the latest news posted every weekday at grapevine.is/news.



The Reykjavik Grapevine

PUBLISHER
Jón Trausti Sigurðarson
jontrausti@grapevine.is

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Catharine Fulton
editor@grapevine.is

ISSUE EDITOR
John Rogers

PHOTOGRAPHY / MEDIA EDITOR
Joana Fontinha

JOURNALISTS
Iryna Zubenko
Jóhannes Bjarkason

CONTRIBUTORS
Catherine Magnúsdóttir
Charlie Winters
Ciarán Daly
Grayson Del Faro
Irina Shtreis
Ish Sveinsson Houle
Micah Green
Rex Beckett
Shruthi Basappa

PHOTOGRAPHY
Alexandré Souëtre
Art Bicnick
Nikolai Galitzine
Jónatan Grétarsson
Magnús Ólafsson
Rex Beckett

ILLUSTRATIONS
Maria Rosaria Dell'Olio

PODCAST & LISTINGS EDITOR
Rex Beckett

SALES DIRECTOR
Aðalsteinn Jörundsson
adalsteinn@grapevine.is

LAYOUT
Blaldur Björnsson

MAGAZINE DESIGN
Sóley Bartsch
& Amar Hjartarson

GRAPEVINE STORE
shop@grapevine.is

FOUNDERS
Aldís Pálsdóttir
Hilmar Steinn Grétarsson
Hörður Kristbjörnsson
Jón Trausti Sigurðarson
Oddur Óskar Kjartansson
Valur Gunnarsson

EDITORIAL
editor@grapevine.is

ADVERTISING
ads@grapevine.is

DISTRIBUTION & SUBSCRIPTIONS
distribution@grapevine.is

PRESS RELEASES
events@grapevine.is

GENERAL INQUIRIES
grapevine@grapevine.is

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The Street

Everyone's A Cinephile!

The people of Reykjavík weigh in on film

WORDS The Reykjavik Grapevine
IMAGES Joana Fontinha

It makes a lot of sense that Iceland is a nation of film buffs, given that half the year is a shitty, endless winter. So with the annual RIFF festivities bearing down on us once more, we took to the streets to ask people a question or two about Icelandic cinema.

TARA NJÁLA, 27

What's your favourite Icelandic movie?

I really like *Dalafí*, about a farmer – he's going on vacation so he advertises his farm, and these two guys who know nothing about farming go there, and everything turns mad. It's an older film. It's really funny, the movements are really cool.

What do you think makes Icelandic cinema what it is?

I think it's the community aspect. The films I think about are made by a small group of people on intimate sets. I like the community aspect of how people come together to make it. After we show films here, everyone watches the credits and hangs out afterwards.



ADRIANNA, 33

Do you watch many Icelandic films?

No, I haven't watched many yet. It's hard for me to find them. Usually they are in Icelandic of course, and it can be hard to find them with subtitles.

What kind of films do you like?

A bit of everything! I studied audio visuals back in Venezuela, so I like films in general. But I really really like psychological thrillers like *Memento* and *Insomnia*.



ÁSDÍS SÍF, 48

Are you a fan of RIFF?

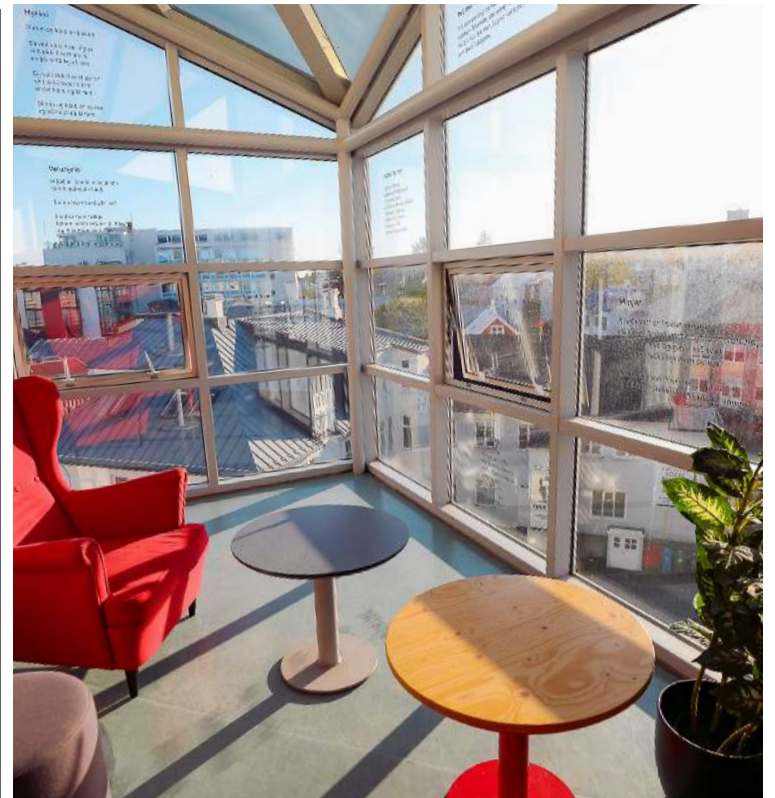
Yes, I'm a fan, I've been part of it two or three times, and I'm definitely going to try to go. I love that it's always at this time of year.

What do you think makes Icelandic cinema Icelandic?

You know it's funny, but I haven't thought of Icelandic cinema as having something specific like that. I'm not sure it has that yet.

What's your favourite Icelandic movie?

Tár úr Steini. I love the look of it. It has such beautiful images. It's about a composer. It's a good story of an artist, I think. ■



Word Of
The Issue

A Window Of Opportunity

The Grapevine's guide to sounding Icelandic, one word at a time

WORDS Ish Sveinsson Houle
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

You're not alone in this experience. In fact, it's such a common experience in Iceland that there's a term for it: *gluggaveður*.

To break it down, *gluggi* is a word for window in Icelandic, which comes directly from the Old Norse. *Veður* means weather, taken from the Old Norse *veðr*. Put them together, and you get *gluggaveður*, or "window weather" – the term for weather that looks nice through a window, but isn't at all nice once you're outdoors.

Continuing the "two (or more) words for the price of one!" deal from our last Word of the Issue column, this week's pick is another beloved and classic compound word. And it's a timely one – you'll get a lot of mileage out of this word for the next few weeks, before it goes more or less dormant until Spring.

Have you ever woken up to the sun shining through your window, with a seemingly beautiful day just a pane of glass away? You bounce out of bed, excited to head out into this nice-looking day. You get dressed in some light clothing and go outside – then BAM. You're hit by a wave of biting cold. You've been tricked! You trudge back inside to collect a hat and some wool.

As we're now entering *gluggaveður* season, there are two paths forward for using this word. One, when hit by that unexpected gust of freezing wind, you can now complain about the *gluggaveður*! You know exactly what to say when you're deceived by a sunny, warm-looking day that's anything but. Secondly – and this is how I try to think of it – you can talk happily about the *gluggaveður* from behind the safety of a window.

And now for an extra-credit section: window, in English, actually is a compound word stemming from Old Norse too! *Vindauga*, *vind(r)* + *auga*, is wind + eye. An eye to the wind! It's almost too perfect.

With a new window of opportunity to talk about wind, windows, and weather, you're all set. So go forth and enjoy the *gluggaveður*. ■

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Do Shit

Pass As An Icelander

Our ongoing útlendingar's guide to getting shit done

WORDS John Rogers
IMAGE The Reykjavik Grapevine archives

project. Maybe people clock your accent and immediately start offering you noob advice you learned years ago. Or maybe you're trying to work on your spoken Icelandic, but people switch to English the second you open your mouth. In these cases, it could be good to "pass" as Icelandic. And guess what? We've got some advice for y'all on how to do exactly that. So here are a few things you can try to vanish into the crowd, and pass as a native islander.

1. ALWAYS USE THE ABSOLUTE MAXIMUM ALLOWANCE AT THE DUTY FREE

You can start blending in as soon as you set foot on Icelandic soil with an extravagant trolley dash at the Duty Free store in arrivals. This is a place of true joy for Icelanders. Alcohol — and especially hard liquor — is prohibitively expensive in Iceland due to sky-high taxes, so you'll see Icelanders absolutely maxing out their allowance. Couples and families will have a trolley that looks like they're opening a bar. It'll be stacked with trays of beer, whisky, and wine or aperitif. They probably have some útlönd contraband hidden in their case, too. Top up your trolley with

some doorstep-sized bags of liquorice and a roll of snus, and you're good to go.

2. DON'T QUEUE FOR ANYTHING, EVER

Something else you might notice Icelanders doing — or rather, not doing — is queueing in a traditional fashion. While English, Americans, and people of many other nationalities are overly polite, fastidious, habitual, natural (read: obsessive) queuers, often asking, "are you waiting?" before falling neatly into line, Icelanders have no such qualms about getting served. Stride boldly into any establishment like it's your house, plaster a big grin on your face, and exclaim "HÆHÆ!" towards nobody in particular at high volume. You're Icelandic, baby.

3. EAT ICE CREAM OUTDOORS IN THE DEAD OF WINTER LIKE A MANIAC

There's a certain gung-ho "fuck it" attitude towards winter in Iceland. You'll hear people saying, "there's no bad weather, only bad clothing" — and they'll mean it, too. In the dead of winter, when there are only a few hours of sunlight and the temperature hovers around zero for

months on end, you'll see Icelandic families standing outside of any ice cream place in town, dressed like the Michelin man and chowing down on a gelato as if the winter isn't even happening. If you wanna pass as Icelandic, bundle up and join the throng.

4. LEARN HOW TO PRETEND IT'S SUMMER

Summer is a fleeting thing in Iceland that's kind of half season, and half religious belief. After six months of the pitch dark, icy, storm-lashed shitshow that is the endless winter season, Icelanders are absolutely desperate for summertime to arrive — so much so, they'll try to will it into existence. In that spirit, throw on a pair of shorts and some sunglasses at the first sign of blue sky in April or May, and go marching around town like you're on a tropical beach holiday. Learn to steel yourself and pretend you're not absolutely freezing. Whip out the barbecue in your back garden and try to quickly char some pulsa (or pylsa, depending on which camp you belong to) before it starts snowing again. It's all make believe — but whatever it takes to stay sane, y'know?

5. ÁTTU KAFFI, OG HÉRNA, HA?, JÆJA, ÆÐI!

Even if your Icelandic isn't stellar yet, you can freewheel your way through some conversations with just a handful of common buzzwords. Upon entering any room, from a library, to a gas station, to someone's house, immediately utter, "áttu kaffi?", your under-caffeinated eyes scanning the scene hopefully. If there is indeed coffee, exclaim, "ÆÐI!" and go get some. If someone says something to you, say, "HA?" and then mumble, "já... nei... og hérna..." as if you're slowly processing what's been said. A couple of progressively quieter, "jæjas", you'll be free to sidle away.

6. HAVE KIDS FIRST, THEN GET MARRIED

If you really wanna commit to the bit, few things are more Icelandic than having kids by accident then getting into a relationship as a result. It's a bit more forward than dating traditions elsewhere, which usually involve, you know — having a coffee, going to the museum, escalating to a dinner date, and that sort of thing. In Iceland, it's more, have kids first and ask questions later. Good luck with that, Íslendingur. ■

If you've been following the Do Shit series for a while, you should be able to do a lot of shit by now. We assume you've gotten your legal status squared away, successfully filed your taxes, gotten housing benefits, joined a union, and been checked for breast cancer. So hopefully things are pretty ship-shape.

Even so, feeling truly at home in Iceland can be more of a long-term

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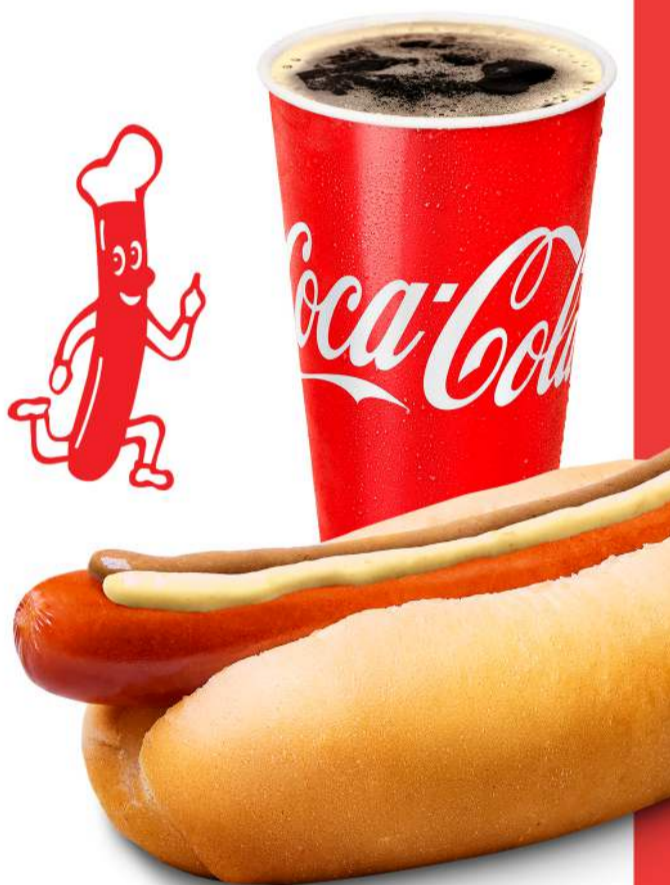
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On The Fringes

Fluffy, Fuzzy, Fabulous

Meet Burger the furry ice dragon

WORDS Catherine Magnúsdóttir
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

Thinking back to my first exposure to the furry fandom I remember mistaking them for very enthusiastic and elaborate mascots. Upon receiving further intel on the basic concept of people creating stylised anthropomorphic animal personas, I also remember thinking "Well, that's not for me" and moving on, admittedly, with the occasional side-eye. It was not until I caught a glimpse of the creative and technical effort that often goes into a "fursona" that my interest was piqued, and I decided to seek out the ever-growing furry community right here in Iceland. Thus, on my ongoing field trip feeling out Reykjavík's festival of fun, I spoke with a local furry, first name Birgir, about his creation.

"I became a furry because of a video of a fursuiter dancing," says Birgir. "And I just wanted one of those suits. At that point, I didn't even know what a furry was. Then a friend — who does not like furies — told me about them."

After doing some research on the artistic process involved, Birgir took up the hobby for himself. "I mostly do the fursuit part of being a furry," he says. "I'm not a good artist, though I'm trying to get better at it. It's a nice little form of escapism, putting on the suit, trying to make others smile, just having a good time and being myself and not having to worry about someone realising who I am."

In a similar vein to roleplaying games, a fursona is often a character that someone has created to embody, with their own backstory — such as Burger the furred Ice Dragon, battle-scarred and cybernetically enhanced. Making a fursona is not dissimilar to creating a Dungeons & Dragons or LARP character, except that fursuits arguably take more time and resources (and therefore money) to put together. Making a fursuit is an art of its own, with the head alone taking a lot of time and finesse to make. Crafting a suit often involves watching tutorials about everything from foam to fake fur to resin to 3D printing, and all of this must be combined with an intricate knowledge of the character being created. Sometimes that means saving up, or putting the suit together

er in partials — meaning creating or sourcing the head, paws, or tail separately.

Birgir places emphasis on not rushing the process. "Most of the time it takes a few tries to get it right," he says. "It took me over 10 years to get a design that I really liked. But someone's fursona is often very personal, because it's their character, and in the end they can make whatever they want, and whatever makes them happy."

Putting together a proper fursuit is reminiscent of old school practical effects and costumes in films. Many furies commission the crafting of their fursuit, particularly if they're short on time or have a hard time getting their hands on their preferred materials, especially here in Iceland.

The local community goes by the name IcelandFurs. Birgir says it's small, especially compared to the rest of the world, with many Icelanders never having heard the term "furry", let alone seeing one in the wild or understanding the appeal. As a result, the furry community faces a lot of vitriol from all sides. "It is a nice community but of course it is not for everyone," says Birgir. "It's just a hobby for folks like me."

All the more reason to look into it and give it a go, if you are genuinely curious — or leave the community alone to express themselves and find joy in their hobby, and move on. ■

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Side Hustle

A Side Gig In A Big Rig

Baldur Bjarman Teitsson makes driving a big truck look effortless

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

“Everybody is fat, lazy and toothless. That’s the stereotype about truck drivers,” laughs Baldur Bjarman Teitsson. By day, he’s a carpenter, and by night, he’s behind the wheel of a big truck. Having just finished one of his two jobs, he gave us a sneak peek into his long daily haul.

Baldur Bjarman Teitsson, 34, a carpenter

I’m a carpenter – or, you could say, a “construction guy” – but on the side, I work as a truck driver. I’m still an apprentice, so I go to a carpentry school at night. Truck driving used to be my old job. I started in 2017 and when I quit, I said I would be able to take night shifts if possible.

I usually drive to Landeyjahöfn – the sea port for Vestmannaeyjar. My company delivers food and products that would then be shipped there. Now, in September, I have three driving shifts a week. They usually start roughly an hour after I finish my main job. Usually it starts at 17:30 and ends at 22:00 or 23:00. I rarely need to work until midnight, but it happens. It’s not that much money for the time I’m working. I mainly do it because I like driving around Iceland.

Sometimes I go home between jobs for a breather. But usually I just go straight from my main job to truck driving, and eat dinner when I have the time. If I’m driving through Sel-

foss, I’ll just eat there. My personal schedule for the day is just work, work, work, and because of my night school, I only have free evenings on Fridays and weekends.

I used to drive around the whole island when I was full-time. I thought it was very nice. I like travelling around my own country. That’s one of the reasons I wanted to become a truck driver in the first place.

EYES ON THE ROAD

The worst thing about being a truck driver is that your attention always has to be on the road. You can’t drift off or do anything else. You’re stuck in the cab, somewhere out of town, always alone. It’s kind of boring. But you’re driving around Iceland, and not just in Reykjavik. I like it, but I don’t like it at the same time.

Driving a truck is pretty easy. It’s just much bigger [than a car]. You just put it in drive and drive. The main thing to remember is that the truck

and trailer are very heavy and large, but once you get used to it, it’s not that hard. The weather can be hard in Iceland, and tourists can be a problem when they stop in the middle of the road to look at horses or northern lights or something.

I’ve driven through very bad weather conditions and nearly crashed into the car in front of me a few times due to the extremely slippery roads. A few years ago, in the winter of 2018, there was a blackout in North Iceland. Around 50 to 70 trucks were driving from Reykjavik to Akureyri and Dalvík, which was hit particularly hard because some power lines had fallen during the storm. It was weird being surrounded by so many trucks at the same time, all waiting for the snowplows to clear the mountain pass we were driving through.

If you want to be a truck driver, make sure you get a really good sleep. I try to get eight hours but usually get six or seven. I can function okay on six. Falling asleep when you’re driving

is not something that I recommend. And, of course, don’t use your phone while driving.

MORTGAGE GRIND

It’s so expensive to live here that we need more than one job. I have a mortgage that I pay and pay and pay, and nothing happens. The inflation never goes down. Prices never go down in Iceland, they’re always going up. Before the summer, my girlfriend was only working 20%, so my income was the main income for the house. Now, she has a full-time job, so we can save a bit more now. I don’t think it’s a good thing that a lot of us have two jobs. It’s stressful. I would like to just one job that I go home from at four o’clock, and just chill. ■

Want to share how you’re making ends meet? Email us at grapevine@grapevine.is with the subject line “Side Hustle.” We’ll happily keep your identity anonymous.

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Feature

Icelandic Music's Big Score

Music company INNI's prevailing success in the world of film scores

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason
IMAGES Joana Fontinha & Alexandré Souêtre

often soundtracked by the sound of Icelandic composers in cinema halls around the globe.

One trailblazer in this field was the late, great Jóhann Jóhannsson, whose CV includes the music for movies like *Prisoners*, *Arrival*, and the Oscar-winning *The Theory of Everything*. When he died in 2018, the torch seemed to pass to his friend and collaborator Hildur Guðnadóttir. Another paragon of Icelandic film composition, Hildur is just a Tony short of an EGOT, having received an Emmy and a Grammy for work on TV series *Chernobyl*, and adding an Oscar to her mantlepiece in 2020 for *Joker*.

THE INNI CIRCLE

A key player in connecting Icelandic music with the film industry — and its global audience — is Reykjavík-based music company INNI. Founded in 2019 by Colm O'Herlihy (pictured above, right) and Atli Örvarsson, a successful Hollywood composer in his own right, INNI has become a vibrant hub for some of Iceland's most forward-looking artists. Since its establishment, INNI-affiliated artists have secured deals with some of the largest entertainment corporations in the world, including Apple, Disney, Netflix, and HBO.

Among its recent and current projects include the TV series *Silo*, with music composed by Atli; Herdís Stefánsdóttir's ongoing collaboration with director M. Night Shyamalan on *Trap*; and Sin Fang & Kjartan Holm's work on *The Darkness* (CBS).

INNI releases records, organises events, and acts as a music publisher, which means managing the business side of artists' work, and making sure they get paid so they can continue to write more of that sweet, sweet music. Their headquarters on Bergþórugata — an unassuming residential street near the downtown swimming pool — houses INNI's offices and nine recording studios.

"Music publishing is managing the writer's compositions and copyrights," explains Colm, speaking from LA on a three-way call with myself and Atli. "You're basically trying to find as many opportunities as you can. You're trying to get music into TV and film, you're trying to find writing opportunities, you're collecting royalties around the world and doing the paperwork. You're trying to work for the writer and as much as you can to make an income."

EXTRAORDINARY SOUNDS

Originally from Ireland, Colm moved to Iceland in the 2010s. He interned for the acclaimed Bedroom Community label, quickly becoming acquainted with the Reykjavik scene, and the strange inner workings of the Icelandic music industry.

"I was working in labels and whatnot," says Colm. "And a lot of music supervisors [people overseeing music for film productions] were like, 'How do we get our hands on Icelandic music, and who should we talk to?' Because a lot of the independent artists weren't signed, so there was no way to get your hands on their music. But as we know, this place is full of composers. So I

had this idea that there should be a publishing company in Iceland. This should be a thing. And weirdly, at the same time, Atli was thinking the same thing."

As serendipity would have it, Atli was also interested in getting Icelandic music into more ears. Originally from Akureyri, he swapped the Northern freeze for southern Californian haze, living and working in Los Angeles for most of his career. An acclaimed Icelandic film and TV composer, conductor, and musician, Atli's canon spans over 40 major studio film productions,

who introduced me to the Icelandic music scene." He smiles. "It took an Irishman to do that. I didn't have a good idea of what the Icelandic music scene was like anymore."

The Recording Fund's board doles out recording grants to musicians, meaning Atli rapidly got reintroduced to Icelandic music, listening to demos in most of his free time. "I always knew there were a lot of talented people here," he says. "But it really opened my eyes. I realised that the majority was really good, and a ridiculous amount is just extraordinary."

There are so many incredibly good musicians in Iceland that maybe don't really have a chance outside the borders.

and includes working closely with soundtrack icon Hans Zimmer.

After founding the Akureyri-based orchestra SinfoniaNord in 2014, Atli moved back to Iceland in 2016. Since then, he's gone from strength to strength, earning a BAFTA win and an Emmy nomination for his work on the HBO series *Silo* in 2024 alone.

After a long time in the U.S., it took a while for Atli to get his feet back on the ground in Iceland. "I sort of got roped into being on the board of Hljóðritasjóður [the Icelandic Recording Fund]," he says. "I think it was the product of having been gone for so long. But it was actually Colm

DECODING THE STEPS

But Atli's motivation wasn't manufacturing more breakout Icelandic stars — it was creating better conditions for local musicians. "Obviously we have our superstars, but there are so many incredibly good musicians in Iceland that maybe don't really have a chance outside the borders," he says. "Perhaps having lived in LA for all this time, I saw what I could do to help build some sort of bridge to the outside world, and give more people the chance to spread their wings — to be full-time musicians and dedicate their life to the work they love."

Iceland's handful of global music superstars are the exception rather than the norm.

When asked to picture a successful Icelandic musician, people might think of Björk carefully conceptualising her next project, or Laufey performing on the world's most popular talk shows — when she's not too busy selling out concert halls.

But there's a quieter corner of the Icelandic music scene that's just as successful, if not as visible. The popularity of Icelandic composers has risen sharply in recent years, often via film and cinema. Since 2010, more than 50 major studio titles have been shot in Iceland,



Atli corrects himself. “Actually, I think ‘help’ probably isn’t the right word. It’s a bit patronising. These people need no help creating art. They’re brilliant artists. But, the bridge that I talk about is kind of decoding the steps it takes to get your music in front of more people. I think that’s the key to it.”

Colm agrees, adding: “That was one of our goals. It was like, ‘How do we create a company that supports artists and opens up different opportunities and channels?’”

ly that. “They’re just full time artists, doing their thing,” says Colm. “And they’re becoming really successful. With Atli’s experience as a film composer, he passed on a lot of that, like projects for TV and film, and connections, and understanding the industry better.”

A RISING MARKET

In contrast to other markets, Iceland has traditionally been devoid of any lingering notion of having a ‘music business’. However, in recent years,

As Colm points out, some Icelandic musicians were giving up on making their music work in Iceland. As Atli, Jóhann Jóhannsson and Hildur Guðnadóttir’s success demonstrates, the lack of professional composer opportunities meant exploring new avenues overseas. Iceland just didn’t seem like it could sustain a composition career.

“At the time, there were a lot of people moving from Iceland to Berlin,” says Colm. “A lot of people were like, ‘Well, I have to leave Iceland to do this.’” But Colm had other ideas. “What’s really unique about all of this is that people [overseas] *want* Icelandic music. It sounds very special to the place. That was a big thing.”

BALANCING ART AND BUSINESS

When INNI was established in 2019, it broke ground as the country’s first ever music publishing company. Given Icelandic artists’ inexperience with professional music business practises, Colm claims that many were initially hesitant about the concept.

“I think a lot of people had never dived into publishing,” he says. “I guess there was no publishing company here when we started.”

Atli says this attitude is still prevalent. “Music publishing is quite an unknown entity in Iceland,” he says. “As the name implies, it comes from printing music. Back in the days, that’s how music was released — your music was on paper. And obviously, nowadays, most people

don’t do that. There’s a disconnect there, because in every other market there’s still the role for somebody who handles your catalogue and promotes it and makes sure you get paid. It’s a big part of what it means to be a professional musician.”

But Atli thinks this shouldn’t interfere with the creative process. “The beauty of the music scene in Iceland in many ways, is that it’s never been money-driven, and it shouldn’t be,” he stresses. “But at the same time, if you don’t get paid for your work, you may have to take another job which takes away from your time to be an artist full time. So we wanted to try to find this balance.”

tions for *Joker* and *Mary Magdalene*. More recent examples of building capacity in the industry include the 2022 launch of classical publishing house Wise Music in Reykjavík, and composer Ólafur Arnalds’ OPIA Community initiative in 2023, focused on bringing together contemporary and electronic musicians.

Atli didn’t intend to return to Iceland brimming with lucrative business ideas. “It wasn’t even on my mind,” he says. “But when I started taking in the scope of talent — and not just talent, but the quality of production — it was more like, ‘How do we help people make a living as musicians?’ That’s really what I wanted to do.”

The beauty of the music scene in Iceland in many ways, is that it’s never been money-driven, and it shouldn’t be.

While there are multiple feasible options today for musicians to live off their work, a common stereotype is the struggling bohemian musician trying to catch their big break. According to that template, what should follow is record sales in the millions, sold out world tours — and down the line, probably some kind of tax fraud.

“I just don’t think that’s the case,” says Colm. “There are so many other opportunities. There’s writing, scoring, collaborating, producing. There are just so many different ways you can actually make a living doing this.”

Five years since its establishment, INNI has managed to achieve exact-

that seems to be up for debate — perhaps because of an unprecedented uptick in educated music professionals moving back home that occurred around the Covid pandemic.

“Artist-wise, Icelanders are just so music-focused, first and foremost,” says Colm. “It’s all about creating great music. The business side of it comes much later in their minds, which I think is what makes it really special and brilliant. But understanding the opportunities that are available to the artists had me like, ‘All of these things that we could be doing, nobody’s doing here.’ There’s no company in Iceland that can get this music out into the world. So it seemed like a no-brainer.”

Artist-wise, Icelanders are just so music-focused, first and foremost. The business side comes much later.

INCREASING THE CAPACITY

Despite the relative lack of music industry infrastructure in Iceland, the last decade has seen the country making some great strides towards building internationally competitive organisations.

In 2014, Atli had a hand in founding SinfoniaNord, an Akureyri-based symphonic orchestra performing film scores for major productions. A similar project, the Reykjavík Orkestra, played Jóhann Jóhannsson and Hildur Guðnadóttir’s composi-

As Atli points out, due to the country’s size, “everybody in Iceland has to wear five hats. You have to work three jobs. And also know how to fix your toilet.” In his opinion, this analogy applies to INNI. “It’s like, ‘yes, we’re a publishing company, but we’re also a record company, and we also have studios.’ We are what we need to be, and need to become.”

The idea of working primarily as a professional musician has been a relatively novel concept for many. But INNI’s work has definitely altered the standards and practises in the Icelandic music industry.



FAMILY DYNAMICS

Looking at INNI as an outsider, it feels more like a family-run cottage industry than a rigid business. Loosely consisting of close friends, INNI's internal relationships run long and deep. There's even some family resemblance — the music INNI represents is framed within a signature visual style, and its releases denote a particular branded aesthetic.

"We were in this house together, and it feels like we all live together," says Colm. "So it's this sort of family thing. We're all friends, and we all respect each other and care for each other."

Atli agrees. "I think that at the end of the day, it's Colm's extended family," he says. He smiles, turning to Colm. "He's the person who unites all these people. I have to give Colm huge credit for being one of these people that has this motivation not only to unite people, but to inspire them."

The INNI family includes musically diverse artists like Salka Valsdóttir (Cyber, neonme), Úlfur Hansson, Herdís Stefánsdóttir (Kónguló), Kjartan Holm, Jack Armitage, Sindri Már Sigfússon (Sin Fang) Tjörvi Gissu-

raron (Smjörvi) — all pictured above — along with Rose Riebl, múm, Mono Town, Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir (Inki), Atli himself, and many others.

"Being a composer or a writer is a solitary endeavour," Atli reflects. "But there's something really brilliant about being able to knock on somebody's door and ask for advice, or seeing somebody for lunch. For the people who work in the house in Reykjavík, it's a real benefit."

opens up the scope. It makes it a lot more international, where the business is happening. We've scored Irish films, and we've had films from Netflix and HBO, and projects from the UK. So it's nice to have people on the ground in those places to facilitate things."

INNI has also started expanding their roster with international artists. Its most recent label releases include music by Swedish artist Jakob

jokes. "The whole industry is based on personal contacts. It's the people you speak with at meetings, where you tell them about how passionate you are about what you're doing. And like anyone who works in music, they got into music because they love music."

Between the lines of mundane email communication, paperwork, and office duties, INNI's persistent passion is at the heart of its business. "There's nothing better than sitting down with somebody and playing them the music, and telling them about what you're doing," says Atli.

bigger projects. And putting more into the world. I think that's a huge success."

And there's a lot more to come. "We just signed a global deal with Warp Publishing, which opens us up to more A&R and sync opportunities," says Colm. "Warp is a company we've been fans of for a long time, with fantastic people who really understand what we want to achieve. We're looking forward to collaborating with them and their fantastic artists."

But despite their massive achievements, the founders are modest about where things stand. "We're still just a baby company," says Atli. "We're still figuring out what we're doing. But I think the key to success and longevity is to be patient — and stubborn." He pauses. "It's a long game, you know? I'm not sure if it has taken off yet. We're just getting started." ■

There's so much noise in the world right now. You just have to keep yourself visible.

EVERYDAY WE HUSTLIN'

Although based in Reykjavík, an integral part of INNI is its international scope and outreach. More than half of INNI's staff are from outside Iceland and the company's team cover a lot of ground — from Los Angeles and Portland, to Reykjavík, Ireland, London, and further afield, if need be.

"I think it's important to have people in different territories," says Colm. "It

Lindhagen and Japanese artist Wataru Sato — a development in line with INNI's ethos.

As both Atli and Colm explain, the nature of the business depends on constant interaction and keeping up with professional relationships. INNI needs to constantly remind the world of their existence. "There's so much noise in the world right now," says Colm. "You just have to keep yourself visible."

"I believe it's called hustling," Atli

JUST GETTING STARTED

In only five years, INNI has managed to make itself — and its artists — known to the world. Through their diligent efforts and knowledge of the international business, Icelandic music has never had a better chance of world domination.

"We just want to create more," says Colm. "More opportunities, more art. But you have to be sustainable about these things. You don't want to grow too big. What's great is when you look back and you start seeing the success stories of these artists, that they're getting better and doing

Check out INNI's existing catalogue and upcoming releases on www.innimusic.com, and remember to watch the credits next time you Netflix and chill.



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Top Events



HAFNAR.FEST 2024
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It's hard to imagine a place with a higher concentration of cool kids in town these days than Hafnar.haus. It has it all: ceramic artists, carpenters, perfumers, photographers, game designers — about 300 creatives who share their studios under one roof. On September 21, as the community celebrates its second birthday, they invite you for an open day, promising workshops, lectures, and whatnot — in their words, “a melting pot of curiosity.” Doesn't sound like a boring Saturday to me. IZ



RIFF DRIVE-IN CINEMA
SEPTEMBER 21, MULTIPLE SCREENINGS
4.990 ISK PER CAR
REIÐHÖLLIN VÍÐDAL

Before the official RIFF kick-off, the festival hosts a drive-in cinema on Saturday 21 at Viðidalur. The area, known mostly for its horse stables, will undoubtedly add to the spooky ambience while watching Icelandic horrors *Ghost Story* & *Tilbury*. The programme also includes a children's screening of *The Brothers Lionheart* and musical comedy *On Top*. Popcorn and other movie snacks will be available onsite, but, personally, I'm most curious about how to tune in to the film's audio using a car radio frequency. IZ



FRED ARMISEN: COMEDY FOR MUSICIANS
BUT EVERYONE IS WELCOME
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 21, 20:00
9.990 ISK
HÁSKÓLABÍÓ

I love that more and more stand-up comedians are making a stop in Iceland. I've been talking about Elf Lyons, who performed at Gaukurinn pretending to be a fly on the wall (quite literally), for a while now. While Fred Armisen's show doesn't promise a highly abstract performance — rather traditional and awkward — he is very funny. Known for *Portlandia*, *SNL*, *Late Night with Seth Meyers*, and *Parks and Recreation*, Fred brings his European tour 'Comedy for Musicians (But Everyone is Welcome)' to Reykjavík. The show is exactly what the name suggests: stand-up with musical elements and industry humor. IZ



Queer
All Year

Rooted Revolution

The House of Revolution is a good home

WORDS Rex Beckett
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

If you are feeling a bit drab, lost and in dire need of some variety in the form of live entertainment, head on over to the House of Revolution where they are serving radical representational fierceness.

The House of Revolution is an ongoing variety show series and the creation of the R.E.C. Arts Reykjavík, an artist-activist collective whose mission it is to bring visibility, diversity and inclusivity of marginalised performers to Icelandic arts and media.

“Our goal is showing people who are either already professional artists or on their way to that who have not been given a platform in the Icelandic arts scene to really shine,” they say. “Some of them have been working artists for years and years but because there's so much nepotism in Iceland and so much gatekeeping, they haven't had that platform.”

A BURGEONING COMMUNITY

The collective began in the end of 2021 when its founders and acronym-namesakes Rebecca Hidalgo, Eva Yggdrasil, and Chaiwe Sól Patiswa Drifudóttir decided to create a platform for artists from marginalised communities. The three founders are themselves artists who

intersect many different identities and marginalizations.

It began as a series of workshops and community building. “Being in a marginalised group and trying to get a voice in Iceland is like being one of those rats in the cage that are always being electrocuted,” they say. “It might make you feisty and kind of unsure and unsafe. Feeling a sense of community is gonna have the reverse effect.”

In the summer of 2022, R.E.C. Arts Reykjavík brought their burgeoning community together to do a takeover at the Reykjavík Art Festival's hub in Iðnó, which culminated with a variety show and thus House of Revolution was born.

Since then they have staged four shows (or volumes) of House of Revolution in the National Theatre's cellar, with previous themes including “Metamorphosis”, “Valenteaze” and “Hallowdream”. In May of this year, the series was nominated for a National Icelandic Theatre Award (Gríman) for Outstanding Innovation in the Performing Arts.

OPEN CALL

Each edition of House of Revolution is cast through their open calls, which they note is not a common practice in the Icelandic performing arts and theatre scene.

The theme of their upcoming fifth show is “Rooted”, with performances centred around what it means to call a place home — especially for those who have moved here and have complicated relationships with

where home is. It's also about the concept of rootedness in one's own identity.

“There are so many factors that come into where you're from and how you identify and where you belong,” they say. “It's not just about home as a place, but feeling at home within your body too. We have a few artists doing pieces about their body image about where they stand with that.”

The performers will include comedian Dan Roh, aerial pole artist Kamilla, a combined poetry singing & sign language storytelling performance by NÓEL, a new collaboration by musicians Mario Infantes & Monace, and many more. The entire show will be sign language interpreted by Hraðar Hendur Táknaóstúlkar, will have audience participation and prizes, and ends with a dance party with DJ Carla Rose.

The entire event will showcase powerful stories that bolster R.E.C. Arts Reykjavík's main mission — to enact social change through the force of art.

“We see theatre as a mirror to create a better society,” they say. “It's a platform to tell stories to teach the majority how to be around people that don't fit in the norm. We want to create something that would make the minority the majority.” ■

House of Revolution vol. 5 “ROOT-ED” takes place Saturday, October 5 at 21:00 at the National Theatre's Basement. Tickets cost 4.900-6.500 ISK but you can pay-what-you-can at the door.



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The Edda Or Whatever

Scalding Hot Takes

The one where Þórr gets a rock stuck in his head forever then sits on two go

WORDS Grayson del Faro
IMAGES Maria R. Dell'Olio

Welcome to The Edda or Whatever, where I'm spilling the tea on Norse mythology. We're breaking down the Prose Edda, a Medieval Icelandic textbook that also low-key recaps most of what we know about the Norse gods today, but we're doing it with a little bit of style and a whole lot of sass. (Not to mention ass!) If you've ever wondered, "Wasn't Þórr like the blockhead of the Norse gods?" (he was) or, "Didn't Loki get dicked down by a literal horse?" (he did)... Then shut up, I'm getting to it.

BUMPS ON AN EPILOGUE

Now that the author Snorri has explained how poetry was invented and we've been properly grossed

out by how many different bodily fluids were involved in the process, he jumps into what he calls an epilogue. For all he knows about poetry, he doesn't seem to know much about basic narrative structure because last I checked, an epilogue doesn't generally appear about 10% into the second-to-last section of any text. But what do I know? I'm just a hack who puts his epilogue where the sun don't shine. (Iceland lol.)

Snorri's epilogue is not that different from his prologue. If you've been keeping up with this series, you'll know what I mean when I say Snorri's back on his bullshit. He offers a stern reminder that the events he's depicted of the Norse gods are actually just allegories of the Trojan War, for educational purposes only, aNd GoOd ChrisTiAnS dOn'T bE-

The stone stays stuck in Þórr's head forever, thus explaining why he's such a dumbfuck.

IleVe In ThEm. He rambles on about how Ásgarður is Troy, Þórr is Hector, Jörmungandur is Achilles, and Ragnarök is the fall of Troy. Like, "Sure, Grandpa, we get it: Troy ahoy! Let's get you to bed."

NEED 4 SPEED

Once he gets off his Trojan horse-shaped soapbox, he finally (finally [FINALLY]) dives into the nitty-gritty

of Old Norse poetry: kennings. Kennings are hilariously specific references referring to common things, so that every poem basically becomes a crossword puzzle. If it says "whale road," it means "sea;" if it says "Óðinn's son," it means "Þórr;" and if it says "the king of Norway's lil' bootlickity bitch," it means "Snorri Sturluson." Stuff like that. The rest of Skáldskaparmál is basically an encyclopedia of kennings, occasionally stopping to explain some of their dubious origins.

In one of these, a giant named Hrungrnir claims his horse is better than Óðinn's. To prove him wrong, the butthurt Óðinn races him to Ásgarður, and although he wins, the giant slips in through the gates. Just like every dude at every bar ever, he promptly gets drunk and harasses

the local goddesses, refusing to leave. To get him out, Þórr challenges him to a fight: "Meet me at the flagpole outside Giant High School at 3 pm, or else!" The terrified giants build a golem out of mud and bring it to life with a horse heart to defend them against Þórr, but it literally pisses itself when it sees him. Þórr's slave kills it nbd.

Þórr kills Hrungrnir, but not before



From Skáldskaparmál

giantesses and crushes them to death

the giant manages to shove a rock into Þórr's head. Þórr gets trapped under the giant's body. When Þórr's son Magni frees him, Þórr gifts him Hrungrnir's horse, sending Óðinn into a jealous rage like a little girl who didn't get a pony for her birthday. As a witch named Gróa tries to remove the rock from Þórr's head, he tells her that he turned one of her husband's toes into a star and she's so happy she forgets all her magic. The stone stays stuck in Þórr's head forever, thus explaining why he's such a dumbfuck.

STICKS AND STONES

Another little ditty about our favourite dimwit starts, as usual, with our favourite troublemaker, Loki. He's just casually tormenting some giants when he manages to get his ass kidnapped by a giant named Geirröður, who locks Loki in a box and starves him for three months. In order to buy his freedom, he agrees to lure Þórr the dumbfuck to Geirröður without his famous drip: his magic belt, his magic gloves, and, of course, his magic hammer. Þórr may be a macho mess, but only a true

queen knows how to accessorise like that.

Luckily, Þórr crashes with Gríður, a kind giantess who understands his fashion dilemma. She lends him her own belt and gloves, along with some kind of staff. I guess those were trendy back then. On his way to Geirröður's castle, one of the giant's daughters tries to drown him in a river. By the power of the belt, he throws a boulder at her and escapes. Then he arrives and sits down, but little does he know that Geirröður's giant daughters are

hidden under his seat (best not to question the physics of that). They rise up and try to crush him against the ceiling, but Þórr saves himself with his new second-favourite pole, using it to push himself down. This breaks the giantesses' backs and kills them.

After Þórr has sat on Geirröður's daughters and crushed them to death – and like, not even in a sexy way – their father naturally invites Þórr to play a game with him. The game is like catch, but with a ball of molten iron. He whips it at Þórr using

tongs, but Þórr catches it thanks to his borrowed gloves. He throws it right back, burning a lava-ball-shaped hole right through Geirröður. Considering how Þórr is a god of few words and even fewer brain cells, I think that's the closest he'll ever come to a hot take. How's that for poetry?

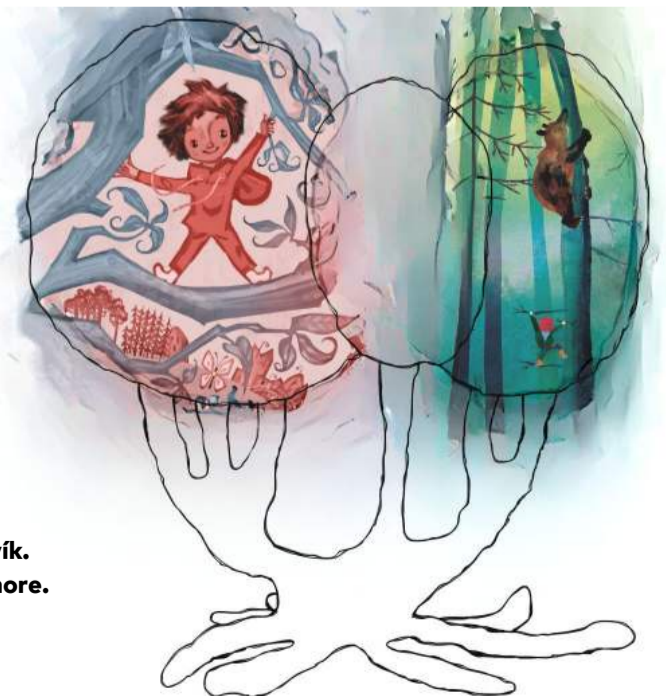
Morals of the story:

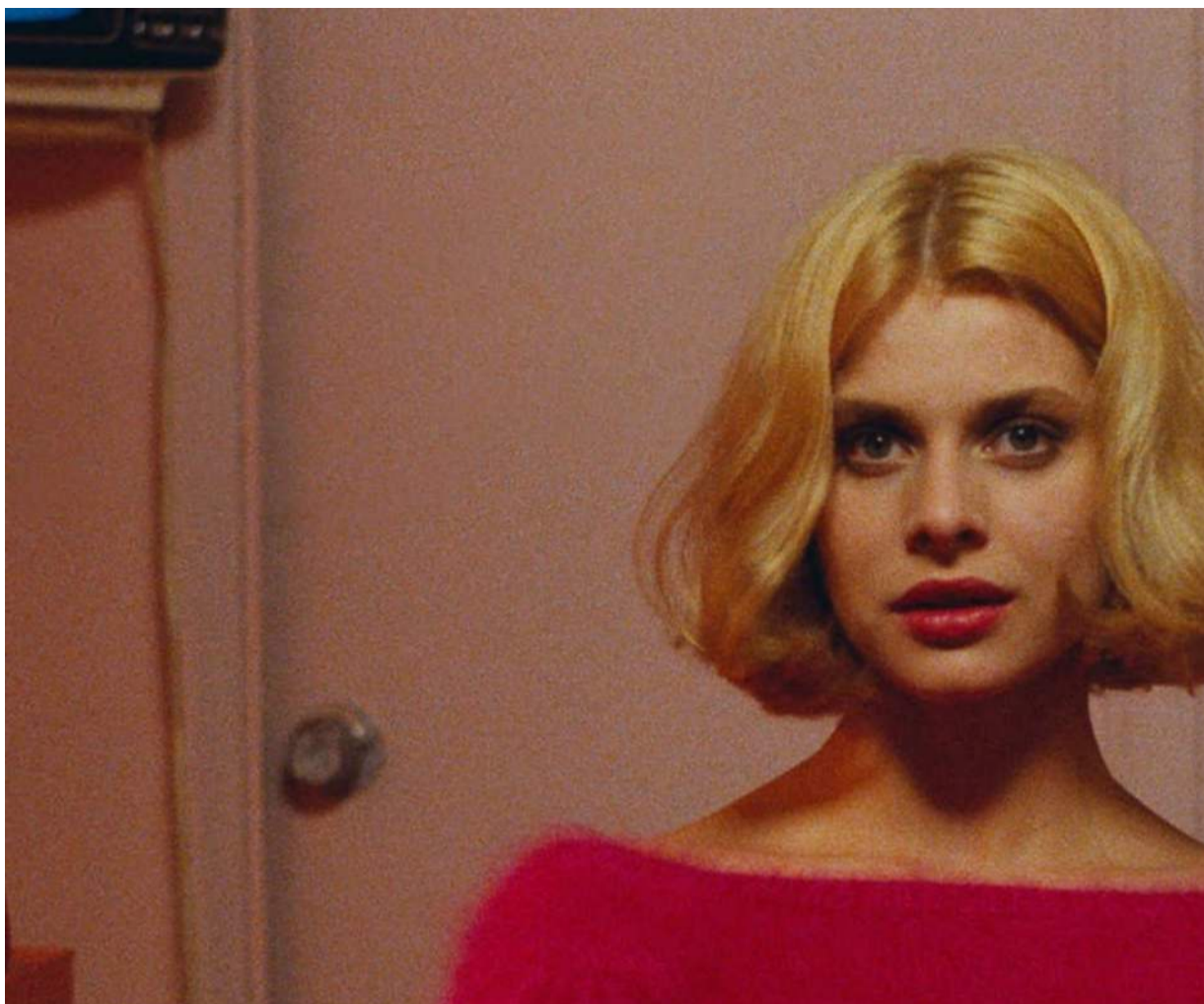
1. Some writing advice: if you don't know where to stick your epilogue, maybe just keep it to yourself.
2. When in doubt, accessorise, accessorise, accessorise! ■

Tréð - The Tree - Trädet



Welcome to the new children's exhibition at The Nordic House in Reykjavík.
Opening Festival 14th September - reading, face paint, workshops and more.
Open tue - sun 10am - 5pm. Always Free entry!





Riffing On Film

Cinephiles, Brace Yourselves For RIFF

Annual Reykjavík International Film Festival is around the corner. Here's what to watch.

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGES Joana Fontinha & supplied still

flix, checking your Disney+ account (shared with your parents or maybe a few strangers), then over to Prime, and maybe a peek at Apple TV. Feeling arthouse vibes? Time to pay for that MUBI subscription, again.

Now imagine doing the same in a more analogue way – paper brochure in hand, standing in front of Háskólabíó. It's nothing short of daunting.

As RIFF approaches, we've taken it upon ourselves to sift through the festival's programme. Our goal? To make life easier – both for us, and for you – when the time comes to choose what to watch.

ARTISTS IN SPOTLIGHT

"Every year, it's a challenge to put this festival together, but it's not difficult because there are so many good films," says Festival Director Hrönn Marinósdóttir. "It's a challenge in a nice way – how to involve the audience and get them interested. We always focus on new progressive cinema and then put satellites on authors, our honorary guests."

RIFF has been visited in the past by an impressive roster of inter-

nationally acclaimed directors like David Lynch, Luca Guadagnino, and Jim Jarmusch. The 2024 edition of the festival will welcome several honorary guests, including actress Nastassja Kinski and directors Bong Joon-ho, Athina Rachel Tsangari, and Jonas Åkerlund.

ies: *Mother* and *The Host*. After the screening of the latter, Bong Joon-ho will address the Icelandic audience by joining online for a discussion, moderated by Frédéric Boyer, RIFF's Head of Programming and the Artistic Director of the Tribeca Film Festival.

more. To complement the main line-up, the festival also invites audiences to a drive-in cinema Bílabíó and a variety of side events, some with a focus on gastronomy.

One of the highlights is a special screening of *Like Water for Chocolate* (directed by Alfonso Arau) paired with a unique menu by Sónó Matseljur. The restaurant, located at the Nordic House, was deeply inspired by the film, according to Hrönn.

The documentary *Shelf Life* (directed by Ian Cheney) looks into the art of cheese-making, drawing parallels between the ageing processes of cheese and humans. This screening will be complemented by a cheese and wine tasting. Following the film, there will be a Q&A session featuring Helgi Pé from the Icelandic Association of Retirees and psychologist Sjöfn Evertsdóttir, focusing on the joys of ageing.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE LOVE-ABLE

The festival will open with *Loveable (Elskling)* by Lilja Ingólfssdóttir, a Norwegian-Icelandic writer and director. Lilja has been working in the film industry for about 30 years, having

95% of the films that we screen will not go to Icelandic cinemas. Most of them are not on Netflix, and will never be on Netflix.

Nastassja, who had her breakthrough in Roman Polanski's *Tess* in 1979, rose to global fame with the neo-western *Paris, Texas*. As of 2024, she has over 60 titles to her name. To celebrate her diverse acting career, RIFF will screen *Cat People* and *Paris, Texas*, followed by a masterclass.

Greek filmmaker Athina Rachel Tsangari, who co-produced three films with Oscar-nominated, BAFTA and Golden Globe winning director Yorgos Lanthimos, is bringing three of her films to screen in Iceland, including *Attenberg*, *Chevalier*, and her 2024 drama *Harvest*.

DRIVE, WATCH AND DINE

In total, the festival's programme features around 75 films, including short films, documentaries, features of all sorts, including horrors, and

Though Bong Joon-ho, whose film *Parasite* put South Korean cinema firmly on the world map, won't be able to attend in person, RIFF will screen two of his earlier mov-

"Oo!" I let out a loud sigh as the first iteration of the Reykjavík International Film Festival programme lands in my hands. At a mere 112 pages, navigating the festival's schedule feels like trying to choose a movie on a weeknight. You know the drill: scrolling through Net-

Great Dining Experience in the City Center



written and directed 25 short films and scripts for three features, as well as teaching film.

But her journey to her first feature film wasn't without bumps along the way. As Lilja admits in our conversation, it took her 15 years to secure funding for the feature. She began working on *Loveable* six years ago, but the project faced several unsuccessful funding applications.

"It's a relationship drama about a couple who have four children," Lilja explains. "They're under a lot of pressure, both at work and in their home life, and at some point, one of them wants a divorce, which pushes the other one into a very deep crisis. It pushes the protagonist to realize a lot of her inner psychological matters and why she has the problems she has, and where they come from."

The film explores deeper themes of self-love and intimacy beyond the surface-level relationship drama. It delves into why people struggle with love and commitment, examining the psychological barriers and past experiences, like how your childhood can affect your relationships. Lilja stresses that while divorce rates are increasing worldwide, she

wanted to investigate the root causes of marital crises and personal resistance to love, beyond external reasons like infidelity.

She admits it's a very personal film. "I have four children myself, and inspiration for the film really came out of a personal crisis," she says. Lilja's husband, cinematographer Øystein Mamen, served as the film's DoP and has worked on previous projects with her. Balancing family and work life wasn't always easy. "It was a personal project for both of us because we actually kind of grew out of the crisis we had a long time ago."

Having premiered at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, the reception of *Loveable* has been really good so far. "It was unbelievable. There was a standing ovation for, I don't know how many minutes, in this big cinema with 1,200 seats," Lilja recalls. She had to leave the festival early, but was asked to return. "I won five awards and I had to come back because otherwise there wouldn't be an award-ceremony since almost all awards were for our film."

"One of the most fantastic things was to see how the film deeply resonated with the audience," she

continues. "They were very touched and emotional. One guy came to me and said, 'You've just saved my marriage.'"

Loveable will have several screenings at RIFF, with Lilja attending for a Q&A session. For those who miss it at the festival, here's a tip: Bíó Paradís will be screening the film this autumn.

CHOREOGRAPHY ON SCREEN

With Sweden as the country in focus, RIFF's programme includes a number of Swedish films from the past two years – including features, short films, and more experimental work. "Sweden has a huge film industry and they produce really quality films every year," Hrönn explains. "Ruben Östlund visited RIFF way before he was famous," she adds, hinting that some new Swedish breakthrough directors might be in the audience this year.

One Swedish filmmaker who certainly doesn't chase accolades is Jonas Åkerlund. Known for directing music videos for high-profile artists, including Paul McCartney, Lady Gaga, Madonna, and Rammstein, Jonas will present his dance film

DuEls. It's a dance special based on live performance choreographed by Damien Jalet and Erna Ómarsdóttir.

"It's based on a few different things that these amazing choreographers and dancers have done," says Jonas, who met Erna, the artistic director of Iceland Dance Company, while collaborating on music videos for Sigur Rós and Duran Duran. "It was one of those things that we did out of pure passion because we really like to work together," he says. "It's really Damian and Erna's film. I was there to translate what they created into film. I've known Erna for quite some time, and I'll do anything for Erna. I would like to work with her all the time."

Having worked with Madonna for 25 years, Jonas admits it was there he learned a lot how to film and edit choreography. "She's very much a dancer," he says. "The biggest natural challenge is that usually dance should be experienced live – you should see it on a stage or in a performance space. I learned over the years where to put the camera and how to shoot choreography but I also learned that through editing and sound effects and music, you can also make choreography more of a film experience. Some choreog-

raphers think that I'm messing a little bit with the choreography, but it's important that the film experience is as powerful as seeing it live."

Sitting in a room and watching his own work with other people is a rather rare occurrence for Jonas, but he's very excited to be back in Iceland. "I've been going to Iceland since the 1980s," he admits. "Iceland is one very few places I go to for pleasure and not for work." In addition to *DuEls*, he'll also be screening a catalogue of his music videos followed by a Q&A.

Those eager to see Tilda Swinton in a new role can catch her in the festival's closing film – Pedro Almodóvar's *The Room Next Door*.

So, grab your festival pass, a bucket of popcorn, and mark your must-see films. But first, take a deep breath. It's a lot to take in.

As Hrönn says: "95% of the films that we screen will not go to Icelandic cinemas. Most of them are not on Netflix, and will never be on Netflix." ■

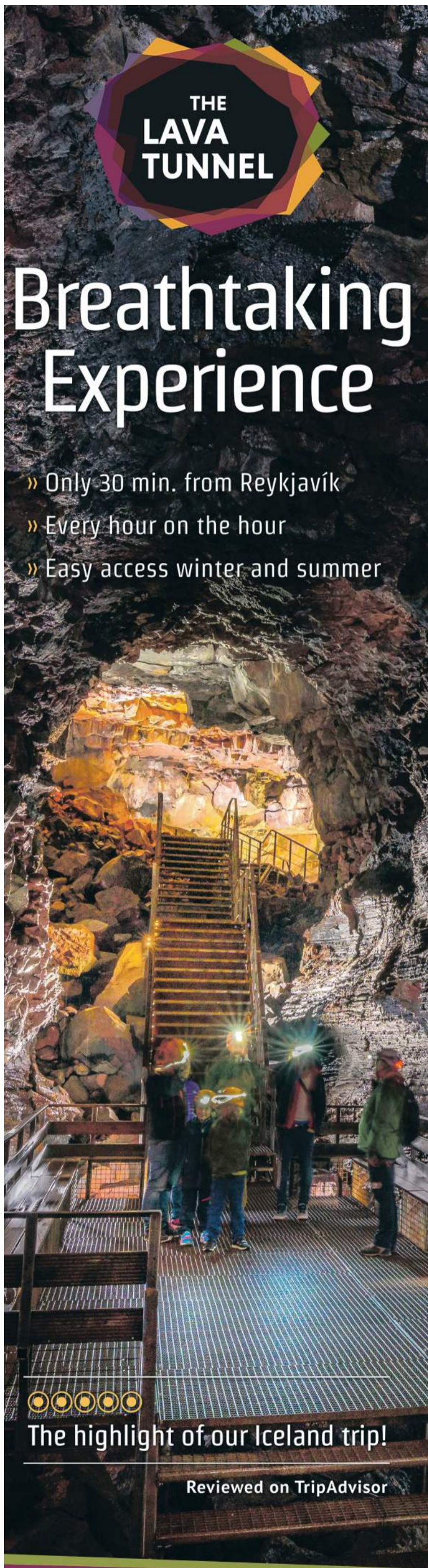
Reykjavík International Film Festival takes place on September 26 - October 6. Tickets and info: riff.is

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Film **Portrait Of An Island**

Nikolai Galitzine's new film captures a year in the life of the Grímsey islanders

WORDS Ciarán Daly
 IMAGE Nikolai Galitzine

In 2021, the only church on a tiny Arctic island burnt down – and with it, a living archive of the past 800 years went up in smoke. The fire didn't just erase a piece of the island's past; it also marked the end and the beginning of an era. History, after all, moves pretty slowly on Grímsey.

"There's no sense of time," says U.K.-based filmmaker Nikolai Galitzine. "None of the clocks seem to work. The only way to tell the time is by watching for the ferry, which shows up at noon three days a week. Then you calculate your entire day off of that one sighting. After a while, I can't tell you how... normal it starts to feel."

ISLAND LIFE

Nikolai is the creator of *MIDGARÐAKIRKJA – Portrait of an Island* – a feature-length documentary about life on Grímsey. Taking place over the course of the early 2020s, the documentary follows the islanders through the twists and turns of the seasons – from that church fire, to the rise in mass tourism. Through

intimate portraits and interviews with the locals, it also attempts to preserve the island's lengthy oral history.

Grímsey is just five kilometres long with 30 residents. It's a place relatively few people visit, Icelanders included. But despite its isolation, it has been continuously inhabited for more than eight centuries. Throughout that time, it has been a haven of peace and freedom – something Nikolai has grown to love. "This year, I was there for three months without leaving," says Nikolai. "Nobody recommends that, not even the locals. You get this sort of island madness everyone suffers from. But when you return to the mainland, something incredible happens. You step off the ferry in Akureyri, and suddenly there are roads, and you don't know where they lead. And on those roads, there are all these rows of doors. You don't know who's behind each door. On Grímsey, you know every blade of grass."

HANGING IN THE BALANCE

But life on Grímsey is becoming tougher. With strict fishing quotas imposed by the government, and local authorities in Akureyri subtly encouraging residents to leave, maintaining a community there is increasingly difficult. The fate of the island hangs in the balance. But then perhaps it always has.

Initially involved in the church's reconstruction as a carpenter, Nikolai had never been to Grímsey before he began making the film. But after spending more time there than most Icelanders, what started as a documentary about the church quickly became something bigger.

"It became more about how I can contribute to this community – because they've become friends now," he explains. "I'm not here to make a tourist video for YouTube, although I'm still not sure whether the islanders actually believe that. I'm here to record something that may not be this way in ten years' time. I'm making this film for the people of Grímsey."

When Nikolai first began filming, it was just him and his camera. But the *MIDGARÐAKIRKJA* now has the backing of state broadcaster RÚV, and will even represent Iceland nationally at the Nordisk Panorama film festival in Malmö, Sweden in September.

I'm here to record something that might not be this way in 10 years time.

And next June, the documentary will finally come home, with a premiere set to take place in the very church it takes its name from. What began as an attempt to preserve a building's history will very soon become part of it. ■

MIDGARÐAKIRKJA - Portrait of an Island will be released on June 21, 2025.



Stayin' Alive

Please Don't Leave

Suicide awareness is all the rage during Yellow September

WORDS Rex Beckett
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

Last week, a remarkable video emerged of legendary rocker Jon Bon Jovi talking someone off a ledge in Nashville. In the three and a half minute video with no sound, a heart-wrenching scene unfolds as Mr. Jovi and his production assistant calmly approach a woman on the verge of jumping, speak and listen to her, and then help her back over the railing. Once back on solid ground, the New Jersey icon hugs her and they continue speaking as they leave the bridge together, his arm still around her shoulder.

The incident happened to take place on September 10, which is World Suicide Prevention Day. It's the call-to-action day within Yellow September, a month-long global initiative for suicide awareness and prevention.

GETTING THE HELP

"During Yellow September, we put the light on this problem and also on just mental well being in general," says Gunnhildur Ólafsdóttir, team manager (fagstjóri) at Pieta Samtökin, Iceland's leading organisation dedicated to suicide pre-

vention. They provide support and treatment for those struggling with thoughts of suicide and self-harm, as well as services for people who have lost loved ones to suicide or may be at risk.

Gunnhildur is a psychologist who has been involved with Pieta since its beginning in 2018 and specialises in dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), the primary treatment method offered at Pieta. She is in charge of organising therapy services offered to people with suicidal ideation, as well as the support groups for grieving relatives and friends.

"When you have these problems and you're ready to open up about them, you really need to get help as soon as possible," says Gunnhildur. "That's why we really emphasise that people should not wait. When people call us and want to come to get help, we try to book them with a therapist as soon as possible so people don't have to wait for weeks or months."

TOO MANY SUICIDES

Pieta has a 24-hour helpline where people can call if they are struggling and request their services, but if one is already hanging off the ledge, they will most likely be advised to go to the psychiatric emergency department at Landsspítali (Geðdeild) or to call the main emergency number 112.

Over the past ten years, Iceland has had an average of 39 recorded suicides per year, ranging between 27-49 each year. While the number may sound low to an average Jon from New Jersey, it's still far too many for Pieta to live with.

"We have to still keep going, because there are still too many suicides," says Gunnhildur. "Our main message is that there's always hope and we will try to find some hope together. I'm not saying it's easy, of course, but we see that if we try, we can do it together."

While they spend the majority of September on a dedicated campaign to raise awareness, Pieta wants to be known as a haven where people can shed their shame and experience compassion and kindness at any time of the year. Gunnhildur does concede that due to Pieta's current resources, they are not able to provide interpreters to non-Icelandic or fluent English speaking people, and they are working towards improving their foreign language services.

"We want to offer this warm environment that people can come to without judgement and feel welcome," says Gunnhildur. "Our ideology is hope, care and respect, and compassion."

That is just what made the video of actual superhero Bon Jovi's suicide intervention so gripping and beautiful – no judgement, no big sudden moves, no drama. Just a calm, caring, compassionate person showing someone that it's their life and it's now or never. ■

If you or someone you know has been dealing with suicidal ideation, or you have lost someone to suicide, you can contact Pieta Samtökin for counselling at 552-2218. You can also call the Red Cross Helpline at 1717. If you are in immediate danger, please call 112.

BOOK OUTLET!

WIDE SELECTION OF LOCAL BOOKS IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES



Date night in the heart of Reykjavík

DUCK ♡ ROSE

Centre Map

We're here to fill you in on our personal favourite places around town – and a few to consider avoiding.

Dining

1 NAPOLI
Tryggvagata 24
We love places that do one thing and do them damn well. This takeaway place is a case in point. Napoli offers sourdough Neapolitan-style pizzas with a menu to match – think margherita, quattro formaggi, parma, calzone – plus vegan options and magnificent sandwiches. Look out for their lunch offer, every day from 11:30 to 15:00. JT

2 GAETA GELATO
Aðalstræti 6 & Hlemmur Mathöll
Gaeta Gelato is at the centre of a heated ongoing debate at the Grapevine office about who makes the best ice cream in the country. For those keen on the deep tastiness of Italian gelato, this place is IT. They are also located right smack downtown, so you can take that icecream for a stroll – we suggest a stroll to their other location for another scoop. JT

3 PLANTAN
Njálsgata 64
This cute little neighborhood cafe is 100% vegan and does a few things right: their soup of the day menu updates every week and uses seasonal produce, they mastered the plant-based cheese bun recipe to perfection, and this might be the most hearty vegan brunches in town. Look out for the daily bun and coffee deal, it truly is like a warm hug. IZ

5 CAFÉ BABALÚ
Skólavörðustígur 22
This quirky café hangout is a great choice when you're looking for a cozy, chill experience. Decked with kitschy decor and plush chairs, the café is perfect for a refuge from an instant shower of rain. If you're looking to snuggle up with a book and a good cup of coffee, look no further. JB

6 BAN THAI
Laugavegur 130
The absolute GOAT – as they say – in Thai cuisine in Reykjavik. Ban Thai's menu is dotted with little symbols of chili, denoting the spice level of each course. You're welcome to order a level-5 chili course, but do so at your own risk. JB

7 GRÁI KÖTTURINN
Hverfisgata 16a
This no-nonsense downtown staple has been serving Reykjavik dwellers quality breakfast food since 1997. Tucked away in a cute cellar, the diner boasts retro Icelandic design charm, while its menu is far from outdated. Pancakes, bagels and frying oil all have their special place at Grái Kötturinn. As Grái Kötturinn closes at 14:30 every day, it's not a place for nighthawks, but early-birds. JB

8 CHICKPEA
Hallveigarstígur 1
This Mediterranean-inspired restaurant is a great place for a quick bite. Servings are generous and the

food nutritious, meaning you'll go full well into the day. They do wraps, falafels, and all kinds of salads exceptionally well. Prices aren't extremely steep, but nothing to write home about either. JB

9 KRÓNAN
Hallveigarstígur 1 & more locations
If you're ever in a pinch while looking for something cheap to eat if you're downtown just go to Krónan and pick out some flatkökur. Flatkökur goes great with everything. Be it the Mediterranean/Icelandic fusion of lathering some with hummus, or turn it into a poor-man's pizza with pizza sauce and cheese. Honestly, the flatkaka is an empty canvas for you to paint your wildest dreams on. JB

10 JÓMFRÚIN
Lækjargata 4, 101 Reykjavik
Icelanders may have a love-hate relationship with the Danes, but let's be honest, who can resist craving a delicious smørrebrød every now and then? If you get what we are talking about, there's no better place in town for an authentic Danish smørrebrød than Jómfrúin. This family-run restaurant specialises in serving Danish and Scandinavian dishes, and to top it off, it boasts a fantastic outdoor terrace where you can relax, sip a beer and complain about politics overlooking the Icelandic parliament. IZ

If you're staying in Reykjavik more than a few days, you ought to find your own dive bar – this is ours. It seems like the time froze at Vitabar, but we love it that way. People come for their famous blue cheese burger, but stay for a few pints and delicious fries. Sometimes I wish Vitabar discovered craft beer, but I go back nevertheless – for a late night bite and Thule on draft. IZ

15 VÍNSTÚKAN TÍU SOPAR
Laugavegur 27
There are a few bars in Reykjavik that have learned how to do wine right, and Vinstúkan Tíu sopar, although located in the middle of the chaos and tourist buzz of Laugavegur, is one of them. Craving Pét-nat? In the mood for orange wine? Ready to explore small Slovenian wineries? You name it – the bar's staff will be ready to come up with suggestions that will suit any pocket. Don't get me started on their small bites to pair with wine – I'm already dreaming about their grilled peppers and torched broccoli with salted lemon. IZ

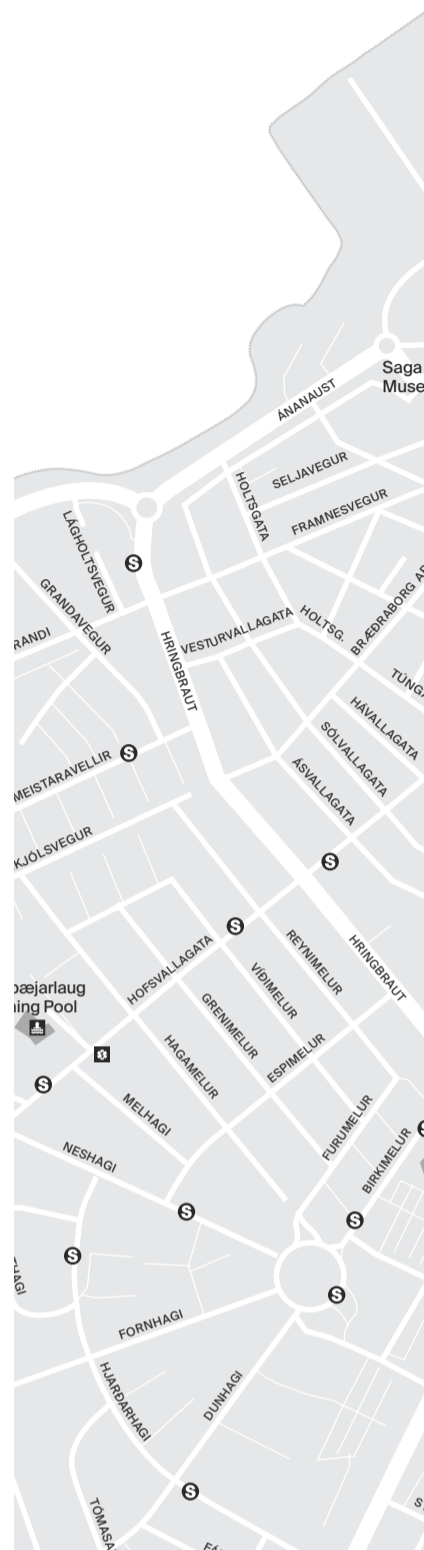
Shopping & Activities

16 BIÓ PARADÍS
Hverfisgata 54
Sometimes the smell of popcorn fills the air of Hverfisgata, as if beckoning you to come inside. You succumb and find yourself in the cutest art house cinema with colourful posters on the walls and vintage-looking bar straight outta Wes Anderson movie. There's always a film screening and you rarely need to book tickets in advance, so enjoy the old school walk-in experience and one of the best Happy Hours in town. IZ

17 LAVA SHOW
Fiskislóð 74
I didn't know I had a primal urge to see a person clad in a Homer Simpson nuclear suit replicate the natural flow of molten lava until I paid the Lava Show a visit. Nothing will prepare you for sitting in an enclosed space while literal magma flows out of a chute through the wall. And then you just stare at the colours as the host explains the geological properties of lava. JB

19 10-11
Austurstræti 17
If you're shopping here, I hope it's because you consider this an absolute last-minute resort. Like, you're down-and-out after a night of partying and you need some form of carbohydrates (or for that matter, protection). Don't make this a frequent pitstop in your grocery-shopping because: a) their prices are gouged to compensate for the fact they're always open, and b) their product variety is shit – even by Icelandic standards. Check out Krónan instead, a stone's throw away. RG

20 LEBOWSKI BAR
Laugavegur 20a
A joke that's gone too far. The longest lasting theme bar that sprung up during a theme-bar craze many years ago. We'd list off a bunch of reasons to avoid this place, but the owner has our phone numbers and we're over the after-hours calls. So just take our word for it. The Dude does not abide. RG ■



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New In Town

KLEI Atelier

BALDURSGATA 36

There are lots of shops to buy locally made ceramics in downtown Reykjavik – but what about places that let you go hands on and make something yourself? The KLEI Atelier on Baldursgata does exactly that, offering various workshops that'll teach you the art and craft of ceramics and pottery. There are night classes if you'd like to dip a toe in the water, or month-long courses for the more committed – but get your name down quickly if that's you, as they're known to sell out. JR ■

OPENING HOURS:
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and by appointment



S

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Opening

HAFNAR.HAUS

Hafnar.fest 2024: Open Haus
Hafnar.haus turns two years old this September. To celebrate, the community opens their doors and welcomes everyone to come visit their studios and meet its members.

Saturday September 21, 13:00
Single event

HAFNARHÚS (REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)

Hreinn Friðfinnsson – From Time - To Time

Based on works in the museum's collection, the exhibition is a poetic and philosophical exploration into every-day human experience and the artist's attempts to handle transience and capture the infinite.

Opens September 21
Runs until January 12

LISTHEIMAR

Louisa Matthíasdóttir – Louisa
Paintings from the estate of Louisa Matthíasdóttir, depicting Icelandic landscapes, urban and rural portraits, animals and more. This is the final exhibition at Listheimar's current location.

Opens September 21
Runs until October 5

NÚLLIÐ GALLERY

Margo – Dragons Souls: Emotions Burned In Wood

Pyrography works where women and dragons express universal emotions. Patiently burned into wood, the full range of human experience is captured, from fierce to vulnerable.

Opens September 20
Runs until September 22

SIGURJÓN ÓLAFSSON MUSEUM

Carl Philippe Gionet – Imprints of Laugarnes
Graphite works exploring the interplay between the artistic legacy of Sigurjón Ólafsson and the rugged landscape and rich history of Laugarnes.

Opens September 28
Runs until December 1

Ongoing

ÁSMUNDARSAFN (REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)

At Hand
Works from the collection

Runs until December 8

ÁSMUNDARSALUR

Helgi Þórsson
Solo Exhibition, mixed media

Runs until September 29

ASSOCIATE GALLERY

Patricia Carolina – All the Moving Lines, All the Shapeless Words

Mixed media

Runs until September 28

BERG CONTEMPORARY

Steina Vasulka & Woody Vasulka – Orka & Lucifer's Commission

Photography, video work

Runs until September 28

GALLERY FOLD

Ástríður Jóséfína Ólafsdóttir – Harvesting

Paintings

Runs until September 28

GALLERY GRÓTTA

Alfa Rós Pétursdóttir – Unseen Textures

Textile works, mixed media

Runs until October 12

GALLERY PORT

Hlynur Hallsson – A Room with a View

Mixed media

Runs until September 28

GALLERY SIGN

Anna Hrund Másdóttir – Water Lilies

Mixed media, silicone works

Runs until December 15

GERÐARSAFN (KÓPAVOGUR ART MUSEUM)

Gerður Helgadóttir – Transformation

Works from the collection

Runs until October 21

GERÐUR

Works of sculptor Gerður Helgadóttir

Permanent exhibition

Glerhúsið

Pórunn Valdimarsdóttir – Tóta Draws

Drawings, paintings

Runs until September 29

HAFNARBORG CENTER OF CULTURE & FINE ART

Unknown Benevolence

Group exhibition, mixed media

Runs until October 27

Elin Sigríður María Ólafsdóttir – “We See What We Want to See”

Paintings, mixed media

Runs until November 3

HAFNARHÚS

(REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)

Jónsi – FLÓÐ (Flood)

Installation, mixed media

Runs until September 22

HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA

HALLGRÍMSHORFUR

Design, archival works

Runs until December 1

THE HOUSE OF COLLECTIONS

Resistance: Interplay of Art and Science

Interdisciplinary group exhibition

Permanent exhibition

HÖFUÐSTÖÐIN

Shoplifter/Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir – Chromo Sapiens

Installation, colourful whole body experience

Permanent exhibition

18 GALLERY

Stefán V. Jónsson (Stórval) – The Mountain Within

Historical paintings

Runs until October 5

18 GRANDI

Andreas Eriksson – Real Time

Paintings, progressive exhibition

Runs until December 2024

KJARVALSSTAÐIR (REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)

Paintings from Home

Group exhibition, works from the collection

Runs until October 6

Kjarval and the 20th Century: When Modernity Anchored

Paintings, drawings

Runs until December 2024

KLING & BANG

Arnar Ásgeirsson & Kristín Karólína Helgadóttir – Infinity Pool

Mixed media

Runs until September 29

KORPÚLFSSTAÐIR

Magdalena

Mixed media

Runs until September 22

LISTVAL

Ingunn Fjola Ingþórsdóttir – Palebright Beamdeep

Textile works, paintings

Runs until September 21

LITLA GALLERY

Jóhanna Hauksdóttir – Elements of Two

Sculpture

Runs until September 29

THE LIVING ART MUSEUM

Some Paintings

Group exhibition, paintings

Runs until September 29

MOSFELLSBÆR ART GALLERY

Magga Eddudóttir – Please Revolt

Textile work, mixed media

Runs until October 11

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ARTS

Archiving The Works of Gísli B.

Björnsson

Sketches, drawings

Runs until September 29

WOOL

Textile works

Runs until October 27

Katla Einarsdóttir & Una María Magnúsdóttir – Messages

Graphic design

Runs until November 24

At Home in the Design Museum
Icelandic design works from the collection

Runs until March 2026

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

Tumi Magnússon – Loop

Video work

Runs until September 22

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ICELAND

Þorgerður Ólafsdóttir – Future Fragments

Mixed media, archival works

Runs until January 2025

The Lögrétta Valences

Historical textile works

Runs until June 2025

THE NORDIC HOUSE

The Tree

Children-oriented exhibition

Runs until January 2025

REYKJAVÍK MARITIME MUSEUM

Heimir Freyr Hlökkversson – We are Earth, We are Water

Video installation

Runs until December 2024

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Hlynur Pálmason – Lament For a Horse

Photography

Runs until September 22

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Eva Ágústa – Queer and Autistic

Photography

Runs until November 3

THE SCULPTURE GARDEN

Nína Óskarsdóttir – Gathering Rain

Ceramics, sculpture

Runs until October 26

SIGURJÓN ÓLAFSSON MUSEUM

From Various Sources

Sculpture, mixed media

Runs until December 1

SÍM GALLERY

A Seed Grown from Stone

Group exhibition, mixed media

Runs until September 21

Y GALLERY

Hildur Elísa Jónsdóttir – Seeking Solace

Video work, performance art

Runs until September 28

PULA

Kristín Morthens & Scott Everingham – Axis

Paintings

Runs until September 29

Art Picks



Margo – Dragons Souls: Emotions Burned In Wood
September 20 – 22
Núllið Gallery

'Here be dragons' was a quick excuse by cartographers of yore to basically say they couldn't be arsed to explore more territories. Unlike those ancient mapmakers, visual artist Margo embraces her dragon lineage – according to the Chinese zodiac – by burning art. In her Burn the Witch project, Margo exhibits her first pyrography collection dubbed Dragon Souls, inspired by American psychologist Paul Ekman. There's even an opportunity for you to unleash your inner dragon, with a pyrography station for you to inscribe your own designs. JB



Hreinn Friðfinnsson – From Time - To Time
September 21 – January 12
Hafnarhús (Reykjavík Art Museum)

Throughout his successful career, Hreinn Friðfinnsson (1943-2023) created photographic works, text pieces, bas-reliefs, and installations using found materials. His work is a poetic dive into human experience. The exhibition From Time to Time at Reykjavík Art Museum commemorates the artist's legacy, featuring works from the museum's collection that span his entire career and capture his profound influence on Icelandic art. IZ



Magga Eddudóttir – Please Revolt
Runs until October 11
Mosfellsbær Art Gallery

Inspired by artist Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir's op-ed on human rights and the protection of children, artist Magga Edda opened her exhibition Please Revolt on September 14. Amidst the horrors happening in the world today – specifically in Palestine – Magga argues that powerful forces can be found in love and collaboration. Passionate for the liberation of Palestine, the artist has in recent years processed a range of emotions and ideas surrounding the cause. Exhibiting soft lines and pastel colours, Magga displays ceramic figurines which either give or protect. JB



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Saturday September 21
Gum-Pop (DJ set)
 21:00 12 Tónar
Maggi Kjartans & The Vintage Caravan
 20:00 Bæjarbíó
Brimbrot & Smutty Smiff
 20:30 Bird
The Chop Sueys
 21:00 Gaukurinn
Hipsumhaps
 20:00 Hannesarholt
Nýdönsk
 17:00 Harpa (Eldborg)
Fred Armisen: Comedy For Musicians But Everyone Is Welcome
 20:00 Háskólabíó
Hellirinn Metalfest 4
 17:30 Hellirinn / TþM
Hist Og
 20:00 Mengi
Danni Bigroom & Björn Salvador
 23:00 Kaffibarinn
DJ Karítas
 22:00 Röntgen
Erlendur Fashion Week
 19:00 Whales of Iceland

Sunday September 22
Joey Wit (US) Album Release Show
 21:00 Gaukurinn
Raggi Bjarna 90th Anniversary
 20:00 Harpa (Eldborg)
Sunday Classics: The Chamber Music Society & Ssens Trio
 16:00 Harpa (Norðurljós)
Vinyl Sunday
 21:00 Kaffibarinn

Monday September 23
Nerd Party Night
 20:00 Gaukurinn

Tuesday September 24
Karaoke Tuesday
 20:00 Gaukurinn
DJ Júllala
 21:00 Kaffibarinn
Pub Quiz
 20:00 Röntgen

Wednesday September 25
Emma Geiger, lúpína & Áslaug Dungal
 19:30 12 Tónar
Deffice
 21:00 Gaukurinn
Silja Glømmi
 21:00 Kaffibarinn
MTV Unplugged With Hildur Hlíf & Franz Gunnars

21:00 LEMMY
Tómas Jónsson: Gúmbó nr. 5
 20:00 Múlinn Jazzclub
Vinyl Wednesday: DJ Ása Kolla
 21:00 Röntgen

Thursday September 26
Moses Hightower
 20:00 Bæjarbíó
Prince Of The City
 21:00 Bird
Una Torfa Album Release Show
 19:00 Gamla Bíó
Mighty Bear & Skaði
 21:00 Gaukurinn
BERGIÐ Headspace Fundraiser
 20:00 Iðnó
Eva Luna
 21:00 Kaffibarinn
Pétur Ben
 20:00 Kaffi Flóra
Casio Fatso & Suð
 21:00 LEMMY
English Stand-Up Open Mic
 18:00 Mál og Menning
Ssuper.sport Album Listening Party
 20:00 Prikjó
DJ Snazzy
 21:00 Röntgen

Friday September 27
Æð, Nöp & Saktmóðigur
 21:00 Bird
In Goth We Trust! Goth Night
 21:00 Gaukurinn
Cauda Collective
 20:15 Hannesarholt
Ivan Medved
 23:00 Kaffibarinn
Kjörk
 22:00 Röntgen

Saturday September 28
Flying Elbows
 21:00 Bird
Aron Can: The Monní Show
 18:30 & 21:00 Gamla Bíó
Nave & The Ghost Collectors (NO)
 21:00 Gaukurinn
Biggi Maus & Guests
 20:00 Iðnó
Back In The Y2Ks: 2000s Theme Party
 22:00 Iðnó
Simon fknhdsm
 23:00 Kaffibarinn
DJ Hotline
 22:00 Röntgen
Söngvaskáld: Jóipé x Króli
 20:00 Salurinn

Friday September 20

DJ Óli Dóri
 21:00 12 Tónar
Magnús Jóhann & Óskar Guðjónsson
 17:00 Ásmundarsalur
Moskvít
 22:00 Bird
Drag Stand-Up Night
 21:00 Gaukurinn
Rebekka Blöndal Quartet
 18:00 Hafnarborg
Emílio Santoro as ELVIS
 20:00 Harpa (Eldborg)
Luka Okros (GE/UK)
 19:30 Harpa (Kaldalón)
Már & Nielsen
 23:00 Kaffibarinn
Birgir Hákon Album Release Party
 21:00 Prikjó
Verksmiðjan III
 22:00 Radar
DJ Ok
 22:00 Röntgen
Erlendur Fashion Week
 19:00 Whales of Iceland

Event Picks



Hellirinn Metalfest 4
 Saturday September 21, 17:30
 Hellirinn / TþM
 Free, all ages

A public service institution by this point, Hellirinn has been the refuge of the metal and hardcore scene for many years. Every once in a while, they announce their much sought-after Metalfest, showcasing some of the most interesting up-and-coming metal bands in the Icelandic scene. The 2024 Metalfest sees the first performance by Wistaria in eight years, as well as newcomers MC MYASNOI, Múr, Smegmageddon, winners of the 2024 Músíktilraunir Vampíra, and Úlfúð. Hellirinn prides itself in being an all-ages venue, with limited admission. This one's free, y'all. JB



Joey Wit (US)
 Sunday September 22, 21:00
 Gaukurinn
 1.500 ISK

Having toured the British Isles following up on his recent record *Rose Gold*, out September 13, Connecticut-based alt-rock artist Joey Wit finishes off his circuit with a quick stopover in Iceland. A former professional baseball player, Joey Wit pursued his true passion for music following a tragic injury. The journey across the Atlantic is in tune with Joey's musical inspiration, drawing from a wealth of American and English classic rock influences. Rumour has it that Gaukurinn will stock up on PBR and Coors Light for this special occasion, but don't quote us on that. JB



Mighty Bear & Skaði
 Thursday September 26,
 21:00
 Gaukurinn
 Free

If you haven't listened to artist Mighty Bear's recent EP *Angurværð*, this is your sign to do so right now. Rich with tension, Mighty Bear explores a stark shift from their previous material, characterised by experimental ambience and electronica. Skaði and Mighty Bear are both mainstays in Reykjavík's queer culture scene, with Skaði's music emitting goth drum loops and soothing vocal harmonies. For a night of darkness, queer punk and electronic noise, make sure to hit up Gaukurinn on September 26. JB

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 123 x 117.5 cm

Steina & Woody Vasulka
Orka & Lucifer's Commission
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Events

20.09-03.10.24

Concerts, comedy, movies and other happenings that defy categorisation

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Thursday October 3

- Grunge Unplugged*
22:00 Bird
- Reykjavik Deathfest: Festering Fall Kickoff*
18:00 Gaukurinn
- Jazz í Djúpinu: Hrafnhildur Magnea*
20:30 Hornið
- KK**
20:00 Kaffi Flóra
- Doom Honey, Social Suicide & Spiritual Reflections*
21:00 LEMMY
- English Stand-Up Open Mic*
18:00 Mál og Menning
- Fríðrik Dór*
20:30 Salurinn

Sunday September 29

- Iceland Symphony Youth Orchestra Plays Dvorák*
17:00 Harpa (Eldborg)
- Vinyl Sunday: DJ Óli Dóri*
21:00 Kaffibarinn
- Tíbrá Series: CAPUT Ensemble*
13:30 Salurinn

Monday September 30

- LoFi Music Monday*
20:00 Gaukurinn

Tuesday October 1

- Karaoke Tuesday*
20:00 Gaukurinn

Wednesday October 2

- Queer Open Mic*
20:00 Gaukurinn
- Fundraising Concert For Palestine*
20:00 Iðnó
- Ásgeir Ásgeirsson's Folk Ensemble*
20:00 Múlinn Jazzclub



Featured Happy Hour

Skúli Craft Bar

ADALSTRÆTI 9

As the cool September weather settles in and everyone shifts into cosy mode, it's time to slow down and snuggle up with soothing beers. Pioneers of the craft beer craze in Iceland, Skúli Craft Bar is the perfect place to do just that. With their extensive and ever changing menu of taps and bottles, with plenty of exclusive international brews and something for every palate, you can settle into their warm woody tavern and enjoy maximum hygge vibes. RX

HAPPY HOURS:

Every day from 12:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

Appy Listings

Some Of The Happiest Hours In Town

If your bar has a happy hour, email us on events@grapevine.is with the details.

101 HOTEL
Wednesday to Saturday from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.390 ISK, Wine 1.590 ISK

12 TÓNAR
Every day from 14:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.100 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

AMERICAN BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.100 ISK, Wine 1.300 ISK

APÉRO
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 1000 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

BINGO DRINKERY
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

BÍÓ PARADÍS
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

THE BEER GARDEN
Monday to Friday from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 1.100 ISK

BODEGA
Every day from 14:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

BRAVÓ
Every day from 16:00 to 1:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

BREWDOG
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00 & 22:00 to 00:00
Beer 1.290 ISK, Wine 1.490 ISK

BRÚT BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.160 ISK

DAISY
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

DEN DANSKE KRO
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer & Wine 1.550 ISK 2-for-1 offer

FJALLKONAN
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.190 ISK, Wine 1.390 ISK

FORRETTABARINN
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 950 ISK

FORSETINN CAFÉ
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 990 ISK, Wine 990 ISK

FREYJA PUB
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

FRÖKEN REYKJAVÍK
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.100 ISK

GAUKURINN
Every day from 17:00 to 21:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

**HAFNARHÚS
LADY BREWERY POPUP BAR**
Every thursday 17:00 to 22:00
Beer 1.100 ISK, Wine 1.300 ISK

THE IRISHMAN
Every day from 12:00 to 19:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 950 ISK

**JÖRGENSEN KITCHEN
& BAR**
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

JUNGLE COCKTAIL BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.100 ISK

KAFFI LÆKUR
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00 & 22:00-23:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

KAFFIBARINN
Every day from 15:00 to 19:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

KAFFIBRENNSLAN
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 950 ISK

KALDI BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 950 ISK

LITLI BARINN
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 990 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

LOFT
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00
Beer 990 ISK, Wine 1.400 ISK

ÖLSTOFAN
Every day from 15:00 to 20:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK
PETERSEN SVÍTAN
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

PRÍKID
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 1.500 ISK

RÖNTGEN
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

SÆTA SVÍNID
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.090 ISK, Wine 1.390 ISK

SATT RESTAURANT
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

SKÚLI CRAFT BAR
Every day from 12:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

SLIPPBARINN
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00, late happy Monday to Thursdays from 21:30 to 23:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

SPILAKAFFI
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, no wine

STÚDENTAKJALLARINN
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00, until 21:00 on weekends
Beer 850 ISK, Wine 1.090 ISK

TIPSÝ
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
50% off select cocktails

UPPSALIR BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 850 ISK, Wine 850 ISK

VEÐUR
Every day from 14:00 to 19:35
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 900 ISK

VÍNSTÚKAN TÍU SOPAR
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00
Buy one wine bottle, get two courses (any price)

VOX BRASSERIE & BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

* We do our best to keep these prices current, but still they change.

Cheap Eats

Here are some sweet meal deals that'll fill your tummy and without draining your bank account.

APÓTEK
Soup of the Day
1.990 ISK all day, every day

ARABIAN TASTE
Falafel Roll
1.790 all day, every day

BIRD
Deathmetal sandwich and beer
3.500 ISK all day, every day

BÆJARINS BEZTU
Hotdog and soda
990 ISK all day, every day

DEIG
Poor Man's Offer: filled bagel, doughnut & drink
1.850 ISK weekdays after 10:00

HAMBORGARABÚLLA

TÓMASAR
Tuesday Special: burger, fries & soda
1.990 ISK all day on Tuesday

HLÖLLABÁTAR
Lunch Offer: Choice of any sub and soda
2.195 ISK every day until 14:00

ISLENSKI BARINN
Soup of the Day
1.950 ISK all day, every day

LEMON
Combo of the Month: large sandwich & juice
2.390 ISK all day, every day

MAI THAI BISTRO
Lunch Offer: daily curry meal
2.290 ISK weekdays between 11:00 - 14:00

NAPOLI PIZZA
Lunch Offer: choice of menu pizza or sandwich
1.890 ISK every day from 11:30 - 15:00

PÍTUBARINN
Veggie pita sandwich
2.090 ISK all day, every day

REYKJAVÍK ROASTERS
Breakfast menu & sourdough toasts
580 ISK - 1.800 ISK, all day, every day

SHALIMAR
Curry in a Hurry Lunch Special
1.790 ISK weekdays from 12:00 - 15:00

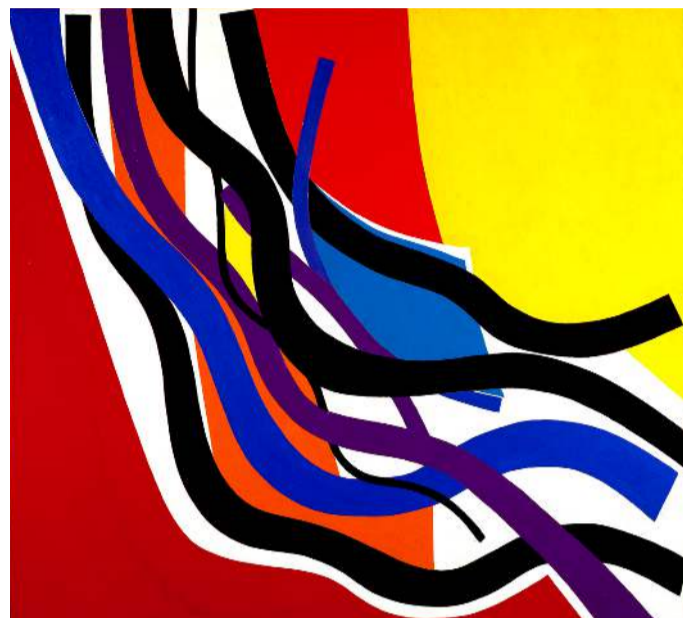
ZORBIAN HOT
Chicken shawarma wraps & falafel wraps
1.690 ISK all day, every day

* We do our best to keep these prices current, but shit's outta control. Let us know if you spot a sweet deal: grapevine@grapevine.is



National Gallery of Iceland
Fríkirkjuvegur 7
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Karl Kvaran (1924–1989). Orka / Energy, 1978–79. Lí-4081

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Music News



1.500 Guests At Skálmöld's Arctic Henge Concert

Iceland's longest-running viking-themed metal band Skálmöld stayed true to their brand when they organised a concert performance near the Arctic Henge. The Henge — Iceland's knockoff Stonehenge, kinda — is a neopagan monument close to Raufarhöfn in Northeast Iceland. Inspired by the Eddic poem Völuspá, the structure consists of 72 blocks, representing dwarves, which

in turn represent the seasons, as prescribed by the text. Perfectly in theme with Skálmöld, whose music is inspired by all things viking and Eddic, the band turned up 1.500 concertgoers to their September 7 show. In conversation with Vísir, a spokesperson for the Raufarhöfn municipality commented that concert preparation took 18 months. JB



Icelandic Artists Hit Showcase Festivals

Icelandic artists KUSK & Óviti, Kiasmos, and Múr performed at the German showcase festival Reeperbahn on September 19-20. One of the largest showcase festivals in Europe, Reeperbahn takes place in Hamburg every year. The festival offers young and up-and-coming musicians an opportunity to connect with European music professionals, with a laundry list of artists subse-

quently taking off after their performances. In addition to the Icelandic troupe travelling to Germany, September 17 saw the first ESNS line-up announcement, which includes local indie band Supersport! A Dutch showcase festival, ESNS happens in January 2025. Supersport! Is set to release their forthcoming album allt sem hefur gerst on September 27. JB



Hjaltalín Announce First Show Since 2019

Indie art-pop band Hjaltalín has announced their first-ever concert since 2019. As per a post on their social media, Hjaltalín will take the stage at Gamla Bíó on October 25. The band was first established in 2004, with their debut album Sleep-drunk Seasons out in 2007. In 2008, the band broke through with a cover of "Þú komst við hjartað í mér",

originally performed by Páll Óskar. Hjaltalín's discography includes six LPs. Their most recent one, simply dubbed Hjaltalín, was released in 2020. Tickets for Hjaltalín's October show are available at tix.is, priced at 8.990 – 10.990 ISK. JB



Old Punks

Wide Awake

Post-punk pioneers Purrkur Pillnikk are the subject of a new music document

WORDS Irina Shtreis
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

less, according to Dr. Gunni's seminal history book *Stuð Vors Lands*, the band's "death throes" lasted for a few months. An EP called *No Time To Think* — recorded during their tour with The Fall — came out later that year, and a third album, *Maskinan*, followed in 1983. Two years later, with new drummer Sigtryggur Baldursson onboard, the band played live again.

"We are in great spirits. After all, we're newly dead," said Einar Örn Benediktsson to the audience at Félagsstofnun Stúdentanna that night. "Only three years old. Newly deceased. We have a terrible odour, which amuses us, and we are high."

kjavík. "We wanted to record *Orð Fyrir Dauða* as it is our only set of songs which we hadn't recorded in a studio. And we wanted to make a proper delivery of that. We got Bambus [director Kolbeinn Hringur Bambus Einarsson] with us in the studio to film our work, which evolved from making five music videos for *Orð Fyrir Dauða* into the documentary *Sofandi Vakandi Lifandi Dauður* ('Sleeping Awake Living Dead', in English)."

The resulting 53-minute film by Bambus and Tómas Sturluson captures the band in several temporal realms. It begins with slow-motion footage remembering Purrkur

While we were active, we managed to make a song at nearly every rehearsal.

THE LIVING DEAD

Nearly forty years later in 2023, Einar Örn, Bragi Ólafsson, Friðrik Erlingsson and Sigtryggur gathered once more to create studio recordings of that suite of five songs for the first time. Many labelled it a reunion — but Einar Örn begged to disagree.

"The band has not decided to reform in the traditional music business sense," he tells the Grapevine, while driving circles around Rey-

Pillnikk's original drummer Ásgeir Ragnar Bragason, who died in 2015. The following collage of newspaper clippings, archival images and video fragments from Melarokk sets the pace for a quick and flickering as the band's 18-month lifetime.

Although *Orð Fyrir Dauða* implied the band's departure — the title means "Words Before Death" — Einar Örn informed the audience at Melarokk that their idea of death was a perverted one. "It's the greatest misunderstanding among you



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entary

guests that we are dead; we will never die.”

The title sums up the band’s enduring influence, juxtaposed against the temporary state of everything else. It also encapsulates a more profound sense of time and appreciation for the present moment. “It was our words before death,” says Einar Örn. “While we were active, we managed to make a song at nearly every rehearsal. We are unstoppable.”

HIGHBROW AND LOWBROW

Watching the documentary, we fast forward to Menntaskólinn við Hamrahlíð in 2023, where Einar, Bragi, Friðrik, and Sigtryggur are pictured reminiscing about their first rehearsal which took place at the school. “I believe the difference between highbrow and lowbrow music has never been clearer than at that moment,” guitarist Friðrik says on the screen, recalling the moment when Purrrkur Pillnikk were nearly kicked out of the rehearsal room by choir conductor Þorgerður Ingólfssdóttir.

“When we started making some noise downstairs in the basement, Þorgerður showed up and didn’t look particularly happy,” says bassist Bragi Ólafsson. “She asked us simply to stop.”

The film features several thought-provoking interviews with present-day local tastemakers. Commentators include Smekkleysa co-founder Ásmundur Jónsson and artists of different generations — seasoned DJ Andrea Jónsdóttir, young punks Gróa, and Blóðmör’s Haukur Þór Valdimarsson — all of whom try to get to grips with the phenomenon of Purrrkur Pillnikk.

It’s no easy task. Words like “strange” and “mysterious” are said several times in the documentary. Purrrkur Pillnikk themselves describe it more simply, labelling their sound

— influenced by the CBGB scene and Britain’s anarcho-punk and new wave — simply as “Purrrkur” music.

Either way, Purrrkur Pillnikk were punk pioneers in the North Atlantic. Their open-minded approach attracted collaborators from spaces that were musically different but shared the same disobedient intensity, much like the high chieftain of the pagan Ásatrú society Sveinbjörn Beinteinsson.

IT’S ABOUT WHAT YOU ACTUALLY DO

Presenting a local context against the global narrative, the directors of *Sofandi Vakandi Lifandi Dauður* cleverly incorporate footage from protests in France. Featuring superimposed computer game graphics and blurry motions, this sequence resonates with the direct and close-to-the-edge attitude of Purrrkur Pillnikk. Footage of the 1957 visit of German-Argentinian chess grandmaster Herman Pilnik hints at the inspiration for the band’s name.

Purrrkur Pillnikk meant nothing at the beginning. But now it’s a line between sanity and insanity.

“When we were editing the film, a close friend of ours from France, Lory Glenn, showed us an art piece he was working on,” says Bambus Einarsson. “As soon as we saw it, we knew we had to collaborate with him and use his footage. The footage itself is from a protest over a water reservoir in Sainte Soline. The piece is called *Sécurise tes images: Détruise-les.*”

Another revelation that happened during production was the discovery of a music video by Þór Elís Pálsson on VHS tape. “We started to dig

into all sorts of archives — through newspapers, RÚV archives and a big collection that Bragi’s mother had collected,” says Bambus. “We heard that there might have been some sort of music video for the band. It sounded like a myth. No one remembered exactly what it was, but people were confident that it was the first proper Icelandic music video.”

The search led them to Þór Elís, who started trying to find the video. “It became sort of hopeless that it would pop up,” says Bambus. “The documentary was ready — but then he finally found the missing piece. He even has some clues about where the master tape is, so it’s exciting to see if that will be found too.”

Both directors are candid when discussing their personal connections with Purrrkur Pillnikk. “Purrrkur Pillnikk meant nothing at the beginning,” says Tómas. “But now it’s a line between sanity and insanity — a very fine one but easy to walk on.”

They are truly amazing and inspiring in a lot of different ways, with their quotes like the famous, ‘It’s not about what you’re able to do, but what you actually do.’ That applies to everything.”

“Everything is possible if you hold this life motto close to you,” sums up Bambus. ■

Sofandi Vakandi Lifandi Dauður is screening at Bíó Paradís. The *Orð Fyrir Dauða* reissue box set by Purrrkur Pillnikk includes the band’s discography, available at Smekkleysa, Hverfisgata 32.

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Track By
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Witchy Hip-Hop, Bitchy Cars

Rapper Kött Grá Þjé's *Dulræn Atferlis-meðferð* is mystical, groovy and true to the heart

WORDS Kött Grá Þjé
IMAGE Supplied by the artist

Debuting as a solo artist 10 years ago, Kött Grá Þjé recently released his most mystic album yet. Out on August 16, the feline-loving rapper joined forces with producer Fonetik Simbol, a.k.a. Helgi Pétur Lárusson, with additional support from artists Benni Hemm Hemm and Emperor Sara Lou.

TÍKARLEGIR BÍLAR

I prefer shitty cars to nice ones. The latter don't agree with me. It's not very profound. The verses begin as nonsense. Then the rhyme disappears.

UPP, MÍN ARGÁ SÁL

Probably my favourite beat on the album. Such a beautiful piece. It's a kind of psalm, albeit a deranged and chaotic one. The witch in the chorus has followed me for a while, appearing first in a book of mine a few years back. Nice lady.

HVÍT SKÝ

The world is ending. Nevermind. The word "sequence" is fucked. This can happen as the world ends. In the demo version I rapped the chorus, which was trash, so Benni Hemm Hemm sang it like an archangel.

KABALAR Á NESINU

My ode to Seltjarnarnes, that shithole. It's not only little and low, but also overrun by secret cabals, monsters, and devilry. It is true. The beat is way too cool for me, but Helgi made it work.

GRÍÐUNGR

The beat is a sweet little piece, like a nice spring morning. The "I" in the lyrics on the other hand is a useless piece of shit. Self pitying cunt. Probably some part of myself.

DAUÐI MED KÖFLUM

The mundane. It's basic, like a summer edition of a soda. I borrowed the title from José Saramago. I imagine Helgi made the beat while taking a bubble bath, and Benni played the bass in a sauna.

SKRIÐDREKAR Á HRINGBRAUT

Haven't got a clue what I'm rapping about except that in the chorus I'm watching rows of pink tanks drive west Hringbraut, as I drink coffee by my kitchen window.

ÓMEGAMAÐURINN

The last man, the least man, the opposite of the alpha. The chorus is

a poem by Aðalbjörg Jónsdóttir frá Helgastöðum, a melancholic piece on getting old. I've got issues but the flute is pretty.

ENDURHEIMT VOTLENDIZ Helgi did a fantastic job. It's so clean while the rap is filthy. The glorious witch, Emperor Sara Lou, did the beautiful chorus. The juxtaposition of an avian love affair and all the fucks is kind of sweet.

KETTLINGUR MEÐ SLÍPIROKK

I once got an angle grinder to the face. That was fun. The beat is kind of hypnotic to me. It doesn't flow like a stream, it's more like a spot in the ocean.

KÖTT SÁ SÓL

Disco about suicide. Death is always near. It's okay to dance to it. The voice box effect was Helgi's idea because I'm shit at choruses.

ÞAÐ SEM FUCKERS DREYMIÐ UM

Reykjavík as seen by a depressed 38-year-old through the windows of a bus on route 11. There's some science fiction in there. The beat carries me out to sea. You can watch the city from there, from some islet.

TILHUGSUN UM KINNALIT

One of the prettiest songs on the album, courtesy of Helgi and Benni. The lyrics are full of witchcraft, madness, and bad omens. Cthulhu on the toilet.

HRÆLJÓSGANGUR

I'm not sure how much I remember and how much I imagined. The past is like that. Facts are fiction. Red wine, speed and oblivion. I recorded the rap over a different beat but Helgi wanted something funky.

HANDAN SVARTA REGNBOGANS

The lyrics are a variation on an old piece of mine. The gods are laughing at us; in us and above us. Fuck us.

DULRÆN ATFERLIS-MEÐFERÐ

Funky drums and some soul. The lyrics are a little rushed but I like my performance, how I almost fall behind but still keep up with the beat. Benni did the beautiful chorus. I can't write like that.

SKUGGI Í BUXUM

Shout out to Mayakovsky. If you're a shadow you can't escape the darkness. Just roll a smoke and take it easy. The beat reminds me of something but I'm not sure what. ■



Hip-talk

An Enduring Collaboration

Beloved hip-hop duo Jóipé & Króli kick off the Kópavogur concert series Söngvaskáld

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason
IMAGE Jónatan Grétarsson

It's been seven years since Jóipé & Króli became an overnight sensation. Their 2017 single "B.O.B.A." became the country's most-played song, rushing the then-18-year-olds under the national spotlight.

The song's popularity was well-deserved, mixing modern-day hip-hop production in between snippets of musician Bubbi Morthens commenting on a boxing match. Having written music together for just about a year at the time, the breakthrough moment for "B.O.B.A." spurred a long-lasting collaboration between the two artists.

Throughout the duo's career, the pair have branched out into separate avenues — Króli in acting, Jóipé in music production. However, despite their divorced occupations, they're always interested in returning to their productive Lennon/McCartney dynamic.

On the back of their latest album, *SCANDIPAIN vol. 1* in March, Jóipé and Króli kick off the upcoming concert series 'Söngvaskáld' in Kópavogur's Salurinn. Happening on September 28, the series highlights some of Iceland's most beloved contemporary artists, inviting audiences to five intimate evenings of performances and artist talks.

THE DANISH CONNECTION

Kristinn Óli Haraldsson (Króli) and Jóhannes Damian Patreksson (Jóipé) are currently in Akureyri, North Iceland, as Kristinn takes part in Leikfélag Akureyrar's production of the *Little Shop of Horrors*. "I'm heading back to school in January to finish my acting degree," Kristinn says as he takes a bite out of his lunch.

"It's funny we decided on calling it

volume one," he continues, referring to their recent EP. "I didn't imagine us creating a larger collection." Jóhannes adds jokingly, "We're going all the way up to seven."

Collaborating with the Copenhagen-based artist USSEL — who previously worked with Icelandic artist Daniil — *SCANDIPAIN vol. 1* is the duo's first release since the 2020 *í miðjum kjarnorkuvetri*. Supported by nonstop momentum throughout its six tracks, the album exhibits a sense of newfound joy among the duo.

The connection to the Danish USSEL (Emil Mercedes Baadsgaard) was suggested by the group's friend and Copenhagen-based events promoter Snorri Ástráðsson, who incidentally was selected as one of the top 20-under-30 music professionals by IQ magazine.

"Snorri knew of Emil who set it up and brought us together," explains Jóhannes. "We went over a weekend to Copenhagen and wrote a bunch of songs. We were playing around and getting to know each other, and finding ways to work together. That was very entertaining, we allowed ourselves to be a bit careless."

ON THE CUSP OF BREAKING

For fans of the duo, the album came as a breath of relief amidst speculation of the two discontinuing future music releases. Those speculations were intensified by the release of Jóipé's 2022 debut solo album *Fram í rauðan dauðann* and Kristinn's submersion into theatre projects. "I was planning to quit or at least take a break," Kristinn admits. "I mean, technically I did. We didn't make music for two years. I was up North acting, but we always kept in touch," he continues.

"I never felt that we stopped working together," says Jóhannes — a feeling perhaps influenced by the duo's constant performances. "A month didn't pass that we didn't have a show or meet up," adds Kristinn.

Coming up on their eighth year working together, neither Kristinn nor Jóhannes show any interest in quitting the collaboration. "Our relationship has been in constant

development since we first started working together. No matter what happens, no matter whether we stop trying to be pop stars, we think we'll continue doing something," Kristinn says confidently.

"We work well together. Obviously," Jóhannes smiles.

PERSONAL CHALLENGES

Though still in their early 20s, the pair find opportunities to explore their separate interests together. Jóhannes worked on a musical for Kristinn's school project in 2022 paving the way for their collaboration on a production at the National Theatre, the children's play *Orri Óstóðvandi* premiering in March.

"That's something we both enjoy," Kristinn says of the project. "Jói has been writing theatre music for a lot of projects at the Iceland University of Arts, so it tickles both our fancies."

At the heart of the duo's collaboration lies their love of performing. "We're going to try all kinds of new things and challenge ourselves," Jóhannes says of their upcoming Salurinn show. "We're stripping down playback and changing up the arrangements. We're playing songs we haven't played in a long time."

Throughout the years, Jóipé & Króli have been supported by a combination of a backing band and pre-recorded playback. One of the challenges Jóhannes refers to includes arranging their songs for a fully-formed support band. "It's something we've been planning to do for a long time," says Kristinn. "For people who've seen us play before, this will be a completely different show."

Focusing on less-represented songs from their catalogue, Jóipé & Króli will honour Salurinn's audience with performances of brand-new material from their forthcoming releases. ■

Söngvaskáld premieres September 28 at Salurinn, Kópavogur, with a performance by Jóipé & Króli. Other artists featured in the series include JFDR, Bríet, Gugusar, and Emmsjé Gauti. For tickets and more information, visit www.salurinn.kopavogur.is.



Fart Punk

Happy Songs For Happy People

Dr. Gunni keeps the fun going on his latest album

WORDS Irina Shtreis
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

requested song at kindergartens in the country.”

Even now, Dr. Gunni cannot leave a stage before playing a song filled with trademark farting sounds. Playing at Lemmy on the final day of the venue’s annual festival Rokkhátíð, a group of scruffy metal fans chanted, “Prumpufólkið” — and the band obliged.

LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE

In a way, Dr. Gunni’s forthcoming album *Er Ekki Bara Búið Að Vera Gaman?* seems to continue the trajectory of his 1997 record, at least figuratively. Here, the worlds of adults and children merge. Both kids and grown-ups play games — but the older you get, the more is at stake.

Jolly-sounding opening track “Alltaf á leiðinni” conjures up images from the *RoboCop* comic strips. Yet, it has a more solemn and topical connotation.

“The first song is just a simple statement about the ongoing wars,” says Gunnar. “Some young guy is going somewhere to kill. It’s not very deep but I liked the lyrics, “Ég er alltaf á leiðinni”. It’s a play on an Icelandic 70s hit, “Ég er á leiðinni” by Brun-

al-íði. That song was about someone who was going home from the sea to meet his wife. It’s too awful to think about it and take it seriously — especially if you can just stay here and all the awful things happen somewhere else. So we present a comic version. There are similar themes elsewhere on the album.”

HEAVY HITTERS

Similar to the opening track, other songs are inspired by stories of immigrants Gunnar encounters at his workplace — the National Registry of Iceland. “I see a lot of Slavic people, young men from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia and Ukraine,” he says. “It’s the same people on the battlefield as those that come here to work in the building industry.”

Built on a tune from bassist Grímur Atlason, “Faðir Abraham” is a take on immigration. The travelling protagonist experiences the same problems as some foreigners, residing in Iceland and rubbing their shoulders with one another in the queue at Útlendingastofnun.

“Father Abraham, he said to me. You’re undesirable. You’re unwelcome,” sings Dr. Gunni in Icelandic, accompanied by backing vocalists with firsthand knowledge of the subject matter — Ukrainian singer

Anastasiia Yefimenko, and Serbian/Canadian artist Jelena Ciric.

Despite the topical subjects, the title and the album’s overall concept are open for interpretation. When asked if *Er ekki bara búið að vera gaman?* is a comment on the current state of the world, Gunnar doesn’t deny it. “You could say so, but this title actually means that something fun is over and now it’s time to clean the mess. The fun ends and another fun... starts later,” he laughs. Fittingly, the album cover depicts guitarist Guðmundur Birgir Halldórsson in a party photo booth with a lady sitting on his shoulders.

DREAMY INSPIRATION

Whatever the state of the world, Dr. Gunni’s creative world is inventive and hopeful. Starting on a slightly absurdist note, the album gets more contemplative by the end, with at least one song inspired by the artist’s dreams. “Síðasti Dagur í Heiminum” is a mellow ballad that’s reminiscent of Slowdive.

“It’s a result of you putting yourself in a certain mood while you are making an album,” says Gunnar. “Writing songs, and thinking about this and that. You’re in the mood that you have to write an album — and your dreams help you.”

As a music historian, Gunnar supports this thesis with a couple of examples from the saga of British pop — The Beatles’ “Yesterday” and The Rolling Stones’ “(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction”.

For Dr. Gunni, the analytical and creative sides of music composition go hand in hand. With its joyous Hakuna Matata vibe, the album’s second track “Bónobó” is a love letter to Britain’s 1960s trendsetters The Kinks.

Produced by Árni Hjörvar Árnason of The Vaccines, *Er Ekki Bara Búið Að Vera Gaman?* combines straightforward, punchy music and idiosyncratic songwriting. It’s the 35th release on Gunnar’s very own label Erðanúmúsik, launched in 1983 to promote local underground bands. Whether it’s lovingly compiled 80s cassette compilations *Rúllustiginn* and *Snarl*, S.H. Draumur’s *Goð* or the albums of his current band, Gunnar’s good-natured work emanates generosity. “I like to make people happy,” he says. “It’s all about karma. You just have to be nice, and the world will hopefully be nice back to you.” ■

Dr. Gunni’s album *Er Ekki Bara Búið Að Vera Gaman?* is out on October 1, 2024.

Gunnar Lárus Hjálmarsson, aka Dr. Gunni, is a true local legend. Initially the driving force behind Icelandic cult indie collectives S.H. Draumur and Unun in the 1980s and ‘90s, he’s also a renowned tastemaker whose audience has no age limits. His children’s album *Abbababb!* (1987) marked a shift from underground trendsetter to national hero. One of the songs in particular — “Prumpufólkið” (“The Farting People”) — was described by newspaper Morgunblaðið as “the most



Fancy Bathing

In The Embrace Of The Lake

Vök Nature Baths are a secluded, otherworldly spa experience

WORDS Rex Beckett
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

It always surprises me when people tell me they are afraid of swimming in lakes. Maybe it's my total disinterest in horror b-movies and skepticism towards lake monster lore, but the finite limits and measurable depths of lakes just make sense to me. I spent many a hot Canadian summer finding reprieve

at a secluded lake in eastern Ontario, Charleston Lake, where my go-to move was swimming just past where my feet stopped touching the bottom, gliding onto my back into a starfish pose and floating under the sun.

Since moving to Iceland nearly 15 years ago, I have dipped into a local lake precisely three times. The third, most recent and most gratifying one of these was at Vök Nature Baths in East Iceland, where I found myself on a most unexpected and delightful afternoon in July. Spoiler alert: it was amazing and I loved it.

SOOTHED NERVES

My travel companions and I were in dire need of a spa experience on this particular day, as the day prior we had driven the 11 hours from

Reykjavik to Egilsstaðir in terrible weather. It came to a head with me white-knuckling it through the already terrifying Öxi mountain pass in the densest fog imaginable, repeating "oh fuck oh shit I hate this!"

Our nerves were soothed the next morning as we hung out with the precious reindeer angel babies at the Reindeer Park in Fellabær, but needless to say, we were real tired, a little stinky (okay, just me), and totally needing to relax.

Located about 15 minutes north of Egilsstaðir, Vök Nature Baths opened in 2019 and has become a favourite with locals and weary travellers alike. The baths are located on Lake Urriðavatn, where geothermal heat flows from the ground in an otherwise "cold spot" of the country.

Approaching the site of Vök's marker flags and parking lot, it was practically impossible to spot the baths from the road which is significantly elevated from the lake. Even stepping out and looking across the grassy knoll that houses the Vök's indoor facilities, I could pretty much

FLOATING HOT TUBS

Immediately upon entry, Vök was sleek, immaculate and ultra chic, as if the whole building was calling me poor. With fancy nature baths and spa lagoons having sprung up here, there, and everywhere in

I slid both my forearms into the cool fresh lake water, and felt a delirious jolt of joy.

only see the lake peeking out behind it. So it came as an extra delighted surprise once we'd made our way down the incline to the lobby and saw past the glass walls onto the sprawling tubs extending out into the lake.

Iceland over the past decade and a half, quality standards at many have slowly succumbed to the visiting masses. I hadn't expected to be quite this gagged. The locker rooms continued to woo me with soothing low light, slick design, and generous amenities.



The team at Vök have craftily circumvented any possible gripes from visitors who sneer at traditional Icelandic pool showering customs by simply making every shower a private booth, and they are plentiful. I counted at least 10, and at least one for wheelchair access, all spacious and stocked with Sóley Organics products.

Finally stepping out into the main area, the picturesque view of the nature baths was really quite breathtaking. Immediately outside the locker entrances were two interconnected hot pots that are built onto the shore of the lake, including the swim-up bar. Further on, a wooden gangplank leads out to two hot tubs floating in the lake, each with one infinity end facing the open water.

I found my companions — namely

Grapevine photographer Joana, her friend, and my BFF from Montreal — over on the further end of one of the shoreside hot tubs. Its edge came nearly up to the grassy hillock that conceals the bathing area from view from the road. At this lower height, the road was no longer visible and it simply felt like we were blending into the landscape.

A JOLT OF JOY

Once we felt content with our gossip in that secluded location, we made our way to the infinity tubs in the lake. The approach offers a full view of the tubs and the lake ahead, but it's not until one gets to water level that the full visual effect sinks in. The visible infrastructure prevents any real confusion, but there was a certain perspective that gave me just enough cognitive dissonance

for what exactly I was swimming in at that moment.

That effect was made even more impactful when I finally snagged a prime spot in the first tub. Reaching over the infinity edge, I slid both my forearms into the cool fresh lake water as the rest of my body was still submerged in the pristine geothermal heat, and in that split second I felt a delirious jolt of joy.

By now we had of course clocked that the gangplanks between the floating tubs had ladders on them at various spots, and one could enter the lake at will. I finally entered a natural lake in Iceland for the third time and fully submerged myself in its clear, frigid waters.

I had intended to let go of the ladder handles and fall onto my back into

my signature pose, to float freely and feel the warm sun on my skin in the embrace of the lake. Instead, I reemerged gasping and screaming, and scrambled up the ladder to safety. So embarrassing.

Regardless, it was enough to make me feel deeply nostalgic and grateful for this chance to be in my favourite kind of body of water, but for a moment.

WHAT WE CAN'T HAVE

After lengthy soaks in both floating tubs, we found ourselves dehydrated so we returned to the shore to have a swim-up bar beverage. Finally we took a trip to the steam bath that's built right into the side of the knoll, and ended with a stroll through the cold mist tunnel right outside of it.

Finally clean, dried and dressed, it was back out to the main entrance where I took a spin around their tea bar included with admission and helped myself to one of the cold infusions. We had a quick bite at the Vök Bistro, a simple but elegant cafeteria style eatery, which was enough to hold us over until Akureyri.

Anytime I think back on Vök Nature Baths, I find myself thinking "Oh, I have to go back there soon!" Then I remember how far away it is. But someday I will. It is perhaps this elusiveness that makes it so appealing. I always want what I can't have, like swimming in a lake in Iceland. ■

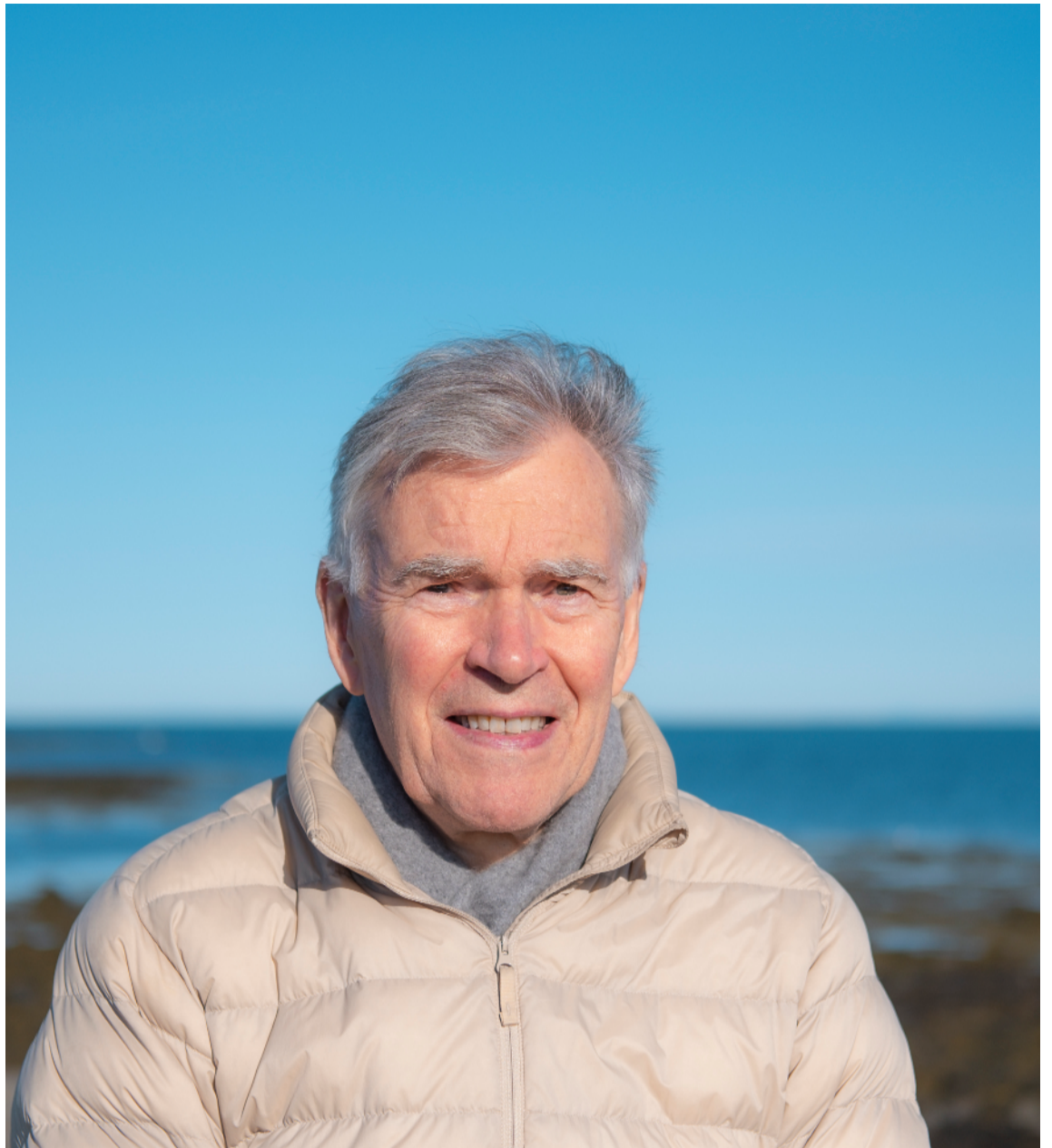
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Environment

The Augury Of The Gr

Anthropologist Gísli Pálsson on the great auk, and the discovery of man-m

WORDS Micah Green
IMAGES Joana Fontinha & Art Bicnick

eaten by the same saviours, now savouring a tasty feathered dish.

DRAMATIC DISAPPEARANCE

Atlantic puffins are a relative of the great auk, or geirfugl, that went extinct in Iceland more than 150 years ago. Great auks were large, flightless seabirds who spent most of their lives in and about the ocean. The last nesting pair of great auks were caught and killed in 1844 on Eldey island off the west coast of the Reykjanes peninsula. The population of great auks had moved to Eldey when their little island nearby, Geirfuglasker, or “great auk rock”, sank in a volcanic eruption in 1830.

Yet the dramatic disappearance of the great auk seems to have had little lasting impact on our collective thinking, as we cascade relentlessly into a sixth mass extinction. Following the path of the great auk,

Atlantic puffins today are critically endangered, their population having declined 70% in the past three decades.

Have we learned nothing then from the well-documented demise of the great auk?

HUMAN-CAUSED EXTINCTION

I asked that question of Gísli Pálsson, who has been working to recenter our understanding of humanity’s relationship with the natural world and our impact upon it. Gísli recently wrote *The Last of its Kind*, *The Search for the Great Auk* and *The Discovery of Extinction*.

Gísli grew up surrounded by nature in Vestmannaeyjar, and became an anthropologist. “Anthropologists for a long time thought about animals – birds in particular – as symbols, in terms of their place in human rea-

This August I spent two days in Vestmannaeyjar documenting the annual puffling toss, where teenagers, mostly, seek out wayward pufflings wandering the streets, having been drawn out by the bright lights of the harbour to leap from their cliff dwelling in search of the moonlit sea.

The locals collect them in cardboard boxes, and the following day, lovingly toss them off nearby cliffs into the ocean, thus ensuring their survival. I only later learned that when the pufflings return to the island as grown puffins a year or two later, they are likely to be caught and



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Great Auk

made extinction

soning or symbolism," he says.

Gísli happened upon the manuscripts of Alfred Newton and John Wolley at Cambridge University detailing a journey they made in 1858 in search of the bird, and got hooked. The last known pair of great auks had been killed in 1844. 14 years later, John Wolley and Alfred Newton went to Iceland in search of the great auk.

Their documentation that the larger-than-life sea bird was really gone was the first time human-caused extinction came into focus. "These strange guys from Cambridge came on their own, riding horses in the countryside and interviewing peasants," says Gísli. "It reminded me of anthropology – this is what we do. But I realised it was far more powerful than another curious journey. It signified the discovery of extinction. No one believed in human-caused extinction at this time. Newton put

it on the agenda. When he returned to England, he realised the bird was gone, and he became active in bird protection agencies."

COLLECTIVE GUILT

Gísli says there was, and still are, a lot of misgivings in Iceland over the extinction of the great auk. "There has been a kind of collective guilt, the world thinks that we killed them." The story of the local fishermen-turned-bird-hunters has become almost mythic, with details like the wringing of the necks of the last auk couple, and the crushing of the last egg under a boot added in recent retellings.

"We need to keep in mind that the three men who went to the island for the last hunting trip shouldn't be flagged as terrorists," says Gísli. "It was the economic system that supported these hunting expeditions. This was the Victorian age –

museums became fads. Every major power had to have collections of curiosities – or "wunderkammer" – demonstrating their relevance in the contemporary world by bringing samples of every possible species."

Iceland that killed the last pair of great auks was Denmark-financed – and ironically, the last two birds were killed to put into a collection. Also, in the 16th and 17th centuries, during the height of colonialism, the

suffered the same fate as the great auk. "It was a genocide, plus the extinction of a species," says Gísli. "It's a sad indictment of European colonialism."

Gísli also points a finger at the entire system of cataloguing animals that began with Carl Linnaeus in Sweden in the 18th century, which contributed to speciesism. "The discourse has been heavily species-oriented," he says. "It's part of the museum tradition. You need fancy pieces in your boxes. But extinction is much more – it involves not just the great auk, but the whole ecosystem. The animals are part of a community, so with disappearing sea birds, the web of ocean life is bound to change."

If we are to augur anything for the disappearance of the great auk it's that we ourselves need to change, and quickly, or we – humans and animals alike – might suffer a similar fate. ■

There has been a kind of collective guilt, the world thinks that we killed them.

THE WEB OF BLAME

Perhaps in an effort to assuage Iceland's collective guilt, the country raised money in 1971 to buy a stuffed great auk that had gone on the auction block. It would be the most expensive stuffed bird ever sold at the time, going for 21,600 USD.

But Iceland isn't alone in taking the blame. The hunting expedition in

birds were gathered by the thousands from Funk Island in Newfoundland, and gang-planked onto waiting ships where they were killed for food. "Iceland is often framed as the place of the last killings, but that was the real slaughterhouse," says Gísli. "The species suffered a huge shock."

An indigenous tribe in Newfoundland, the Beothuk, who canoed to the island to collect great auk eggs,



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Love Letter

A Timeless Classic

La Primavera is a luxurious Italian restaurant that pulls no punches with its

WORDS Shruthi Basappa
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

SEASONAL SIMPLICITY

La Primavera has a pervasive sense of calm from the moment you step through the glass doors. Its location is a former fish factory that's now an art museum, thoughtfully restored to pared down modernity by local architecture firm Kurt og Pi. From the ground floor, you can see bobbing boats hauling in their catch with Harpa in the distance. Everything is primed for an easy time.

Behind the bar, however, is a reminder that 'Scandinavian Pain' is never too far away. A popular work by celebrated artist Ragnar Kjartansson, the glowing neon artwork is evidence of subtle luxury and discreet thoughtfulness that carries over to the food.

the coral sacs offer resistance to piquant tomato-caper sauce.

Even tired old carpaccio (3.850 ISK) gets a new lease of life by simply leaning on technique. At dinner recently, there was a sublime rendition of this tired trope. Velvety slices of fresh beef are stretched across the plate, the only adornments being a high pile of fresh rucola, shavings of sharp parmesan and a lemon wedge. The very first bite reveals that this may just have been a hand pounded slice of meat; the rich texture is simply not possible with industrial sliced beef.

This simplicity is woven through every dish. Often a single ingredient or flavour note takes command as others on the plate lend balance

One of the peculiar things about Italian food is that its relative simplicity often leads folk to confidently, although falsely, assume that anyone can cook it. Some also feel like they could do the same thing at home, so why pay for it at a restaurant? And despite the prevalence of Italian restaurants in Iceland – delivered by way of heavy Icelandification, of course – good ones are hard to come by.

In his 1996 review of La Primavera, then at the Austurstræti location above where Laundromat is today, Steingrímur Sigurgeirsson advised readers to “put aside their prejudice and succumb to temptation” whilst describing a mushroom risotto. Rice may not entice diners, he remarks, as he goes on to make a note of the polenta with blue cheese. 28 years later, this is telling as to just how ahead of its time La Primavera was.

La Primavera wears this reputation well. Its second iteration has been nothing short of spectacular, and five years since our last review, it has gone from strength to strength.

Many an insipid Tuesday has taken a turn for the better after a campari tonic with some pasta on the side.

While seasonality is something restaurant menus propound with great enthusiasm, it's a concept that clashes with Iceland's chilly North Atlantic reality – but chef Leifur Kolbeinsson's take on seasonality is one that thrills my little foodie heart. He effortlessly marries Italian traditions and techniques with local ingredients, as if they were always meant to be so.

Last winter, they had a pale rosy-hued radicchio salad that was as snappy and crunchy as its blushing Italian twin. As early spring rolls around, they may celebrate with pan-fried cod eggs, a local delicacy, beloved by Icelanders of a certain age and shunned by others. But instead of boiling them grey, here

and harmony. Where bitterness is often ignored, shunned even, here it is celebrated. Like that seasonal radicchio, its stronger cousin chicory makes an appearance. The assertiveness of the intensely salty anchovies is tamed by olive oil and brioche. Vegetables so often assaulted by copious amounts of dairy, or pulverised beyond recognition find respite here in the same devotion afforded to 'fancier' ingredients. Cruciferous veggies are singled to perfection alongside hearty carrots, parsnips and beets. Lentils and beans make a quiet appearance, then grip you with their toothsome personalities. Warm cannellini beans at a recent lunch were served with torched broccoli, and my dining partner and I made quick work of it.



food

QUIET LUXURY

As someone who dines out more than your average customer, I've always been acutely aware of my anonymity slipping, and how that impacts the dining experience. After almost a decade of food reviews for the Grapevine, I notice when I've been 'made'. My family and friends often ask if I'm worried that restaurants will give me special treatment when I dine out. So I maintain my anonymity as much as one can in a small society like ours. My job is to get you, the reader, to choose a place that's worth your time and money. It's then up to the restaurant to deliver that same experience to you.

La Primavera has been one of a handful of places I can comfortably recommend, safe in the knowledge that this attention to detail and warm service is not reserved for a select few. And if you have been to La Primavera already, you'll know this to be true. For many Icelanders, barring its brief closure a decade ago, this was the 'it' restaurant. Now many are coming back with their kids and families — a full circle, if you will.

Lunch here is a bustling affair. It's both the hardest table to get and the best-kept secret at the same time. The investment bankers, politicians, the art crew, and septuagenarian reunions all commingle in the dining room, with the fish of the day being the most popular choice. But if you spot a soup on the menu, get it! Offered both as a starter and a main course, the type varies, often leaning vegetarian like the puy lentil strewn warm carrot soup I tried at lunch recently. There's a recurring seafood soup that is, in my humble opinion, one of the nicest soups in town. You could go all Italian, and get yourself a primo, secondi and dolci and turn a meh day into some-

thing worth remembering. But be warned, doing all three at once is like being at nonna's house on a Friday afternoon, and you can safely kiss work goodbye. That said, many an insipid Tuesday has taken a turn for the better after a campari tonic with some pasta on the side.

EVENING DAME

How the bustling lunchtime La Primavera turns into a demure dame for dinner service with a swish of its crisp white tablecloths still seems magical to me. I have often lingered in those quiet moments before doors open for dinner and caught myself thinking, if I could live at a restaurant, this is where I'd be.

One of our most recent dinners saw a table heaving with food — the evergreen La Primavera classic of parma on toast with goat's cheese sauce (3.850 ISK) that my 11-year old fought to the last crumb, a memorable squid ink penne with octopus and nduja (6.250 ISK), both brightened and heightened with the freshness of lemon brunoise stirred through the entire dish. The veal Milanese (7.250 ISK) was as good as

cake craze in the city, but few held a candle to Primavera's version. Leifur once shared that the recipe is straight outta San Sebastian. More traditional Italian bakes make frequent appearances, like the chewy ricciarelli almond cookies, olive oil cake — an underrated classic — and a deeply satisfying nubby polenta cake, potent with lemon zest.

THE FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Wines span the classics from major Italian regions, and the staff is very good at recommending something to your liking. There is a small cocktail menu, with even the mocktails made thoughtfully. I like that there are plenty of good-with-food options by the glass, and magnum bottles for sharing if that's how you roll.

My deep affection for La Primavera is no secret to those who know me. Andres and his front of house team have worked here for so long now, I think of them as an indelible part of the family experience. They remember your preference for certain tables from previous visits, or that you perhaps always make room for desserts.

If I could live at a restaurant, this is where I'd be.

ever: crispy thin cutlets delicately crumb fried, served with spaghetti in an arrabiata-esque sauce. My friends raved over what they described as 'handkerchief-like ravioli' (6.450 ISK).

There was once an overcooked lamb at lunch. But really, when you are consistently good, and the service unflinchingly so, a bad day is just that — a bad day. Besides, there is nothing that dessert cannot fix. The cheesecake la vina (2.300 ISK) sparked a Basque cheese-

And if you are thinking 'that's because they know you', I want to share with you dear reader, that La Primavera is a one of a handful of places in town where this is the quality of service and experience that awaits each of you. Seldom have I pointed people in this direction and had them come back dissatisfied. And in a sea of middling experiences, it's nice to have that one place that you can go back to again and again and again. ■



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Food Festival

Around The World In

Matey Seafood Festival 2024 was a confluence of cuisine, culture and community

WORDS Shruthi Basappa
IMAGES Provided by Matey

David Selvam and Ernesto Puga, they formed the brigade and what a world of flavours they unleashed upon Vestmannaeyjar.

The festive atmosphere is seldom dampened by the northerly winds, which were extra ferocious this year. But even the weather serves as inspiration. Having arrived days before the start of the festival, the chefs have all had access to the bountiful wilderness that is the Icelandic backyard – the seashore, with the inimitable chef and restaurateur Gísli Matthías Auðunsson acting as host and Vestmannaeyjar ambassador, and sharing his own insights and experiences.

With each growing year, Matey has displayed a refreshing maturity going beyond a starry line-up of guest chefs – from its commitment to further pride in the island's bounty, to rigorously fostering appreciation for seafood as cultural heritage, spotlighting lesser-known fish, and expanding collective knowledge within communities. The people behind the festival have not shied away from the scrutiny that follow endeavours like this. When conversations veered towards a general lack of intersectional diversity, Frosti and Gísli made no excuses, but listened. That was last year. And this year, the festival brought to Icelandic shores three chefs with diverse culinary experiences that spanned the globe.

"Frosti and I had been playing with this idea of making this island a food destination, and lengthening the tourist season," Gísli explains. "But really, we wanted people to know how good our fish is. Unlike other festivals where there is usually a brief of 'use this lamb filet, use this filet of arctic char,' we wanted to keep it rather open, and see what was available at the time."

FOR, BY AND FROM THE COMMUNITY

Spread over three days, Matey puts the food festival formula to good use on the island of Heimaey. A confluence of local chefs and restaurateurs are supported by food producers big and small, alongside sponsorship from various agencies. All this resulted in a "for the community, by the community" vibe that is both celebratory and contagious.

Icelandic seafood has long been all about cod. This is with good reason, but at the expense of the many other varieties that are fished from Icelandic waters, which rarely make an appearance on dinner tables or menus. Brú in Reykjavik has been working towards changing that, but by and large, the average customer doesn't even think of the seasonality of seafood.

Gísli is all too aware of this. "It's so

The role of women in coastal communities is often overlooked but invaluable: from knitting clothes, mending nets, keeping families fed and together, the handiwork and hands of women have held communities together longer than the spotlight shone on them." With these words firmly echoing through the halls – and reiterated throughout the week – Frosti Gíslason, co-founder of Matey Seafood Festival, declared the 2024 event open.

As if to bridge the parallels between coastal communities and cuisine, this third edition had its first all female lineup of chefs, each bringing with them an enviable professional experiences that spanning stints at starred establishments like El Bulli, Pujol, Gaa, Gaggan, Mana, and Higher Ground. Chefs Adriana Solis Cavita, Renata Zalles, and Rosie May Maguire were the headliners, and along with sous chefs



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Three Days

community

valuable for us to get all kinds of knowledge and perspectives that benefit everyone," he says. "For instance, at last year's Matey, mackerel and pollock were in season, so chefs had access to them. But it isn't in season now, so the selection is different. It's a conscious decision – we want to see what ideas and dishes chefs come up with on their own. Since it is a close collaboration with local chefs, totally unique dishes are born. It's quite interesting to come in sort of blind for all parties."

CULINARY TAKEOVER

As I peruse the menus the chefs have dreamed up, I'm low-key relieved that I don't have to choose between them. The chefs have all traveled with their own special ingredients, some even sacrificing their personal baggage allowance, "just for my pulses and tallow!"

Our first night is at Gott. Adriana Cavita is the author of *Cucina Mexicana*, and chef-owner of Cavita in Marylebone, London. Gisli jokingly says that she seems to have been around forever, seeing as her CV includes a stint at famed El Bulli. For someone with as storied (and starred) an experience as hers, Adriana is as down-to-earth and curious as any greenhorn chef. Her menu reflects her go-with-the-flow attitude, with dishes inspired by a tour of the island, with herbs she brought

straight from Mexico.

Chef Cavita remarks on the similarity in hospitality she experienced in Vestmannaeyjar with how she grew up in Tlaxcala. She reflects on how "the more I lived in the city, the more important I felt the need to connect back to the earth." Her cooking exudes a striking sense of comforting earthiness, even when plated to fine dining standards.

The Mexican oregano and its heady camphoraceous anise notes sparkle through the aromatic green marinade in the grilled monkfish, with the salsa macha adding a whisper of heat. The table however sighs and quiets when the aguachile de pescado makes an appearance. Carefully sliced halibut and green apple are arranged alternately, floating over a zippy, citrus bright aguachile spiked with fresh ginger and chile Arbol. Unlike ceviches where raw fish is 'cooked' in a citrus marinade, aguachiles rely on fresh seafood taken out of water, only to be tossed quickly in intensely seasoned chili water. Somehow, the chef seems to have imbued each halibut slice with a gut punch of flavour in the brief moment where the water and fish met.

The next dish of Esquites had the diners divided. I do want to say, dear diners, that texture is a sandbox in the culinary playground, and you

are missing out if you avoid it. Chef Cavita cooked heirloom corn like a pozole, taking on a dense, chewy, nutty texture that recalls boiled jackfruit sans the mealiness. We tore into the little pans of piping hot stew, asking for extras of the freshly cooked bread served in lieu of tortillas.

THE BITE OF THE FESTIVAL

Over at Slippurinn, chef Rosie May Maguire has come armed with her passion for working closely with producers. Her menu is a celebration of modern British bistro fare, and her deep love of pulses and Dexter cows. The youngest chef of the trio, Rosie's demeanor betrayed a maturity and introspection often associated with age. I wanted to eat my body weight in those Baccalá and English pea fritters. With marrowfat pea flour used as a binder with ripples of shredded salted fish, the deep fried morsels are moreish and reminiscent of falafel topped with a mound of grated Feykir – a throwback to the British cheddar she uses at Higher Ground. They went down as that Matey bite that best represented the spirit of the festival.

Her deft technique was on display again with the monkfish cheeks. Cooked in Dexter beef fat – an Irish cow breed known for its deep, savory flavour – the well-rendered fat

adds a velvety richness contrasted by the brown butter rich cauliflower puree. It was a study in two kinds of fat from the same animal, and a reflection of the quiet complexity that might be chef Rosie's signature.

On our third and final night, we dined at Einsí Kaldi. Chef Renata Zalles has lived and worked across multiple continents, from Bolivia to Bangkok and everything in between. Currently looking at the 'culinary colonisation of Copenhagen', chef Zalles combines her love for bold flavours from her professional escapades in Thailand, Mexico, India and Spain.

Barcelona Bacalao bombas get a little Tamil kick from the fresh tomato chutney, like fiery little grenades. Her Peruvian ceviche is a studied interplay of texture, colour and flavour, with rutabaga and cod sliced to ribbons that looks astonishingly alike. I indulged in more than one serving of the cool ceviche with the warm heat of aji amarillo, and the crunch of cancha corn.

CUISINE, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

Cuisine and culture have both been marked by patriarchy. Deified or altogether ignored, women have existed as the silent guardians of everything we consider culinary heritage across the world. At Matey, I

was especially reminded of the power of listening, participating and the strength of shared allyship. It is so easy to slip into the realm of tokenism when it comes to women in the hospitality industry.

Sure, we hear from and see more women in the kitchens and outside of it as chefs, cooks, owners, spokespersons, and authors. But we have a long way to go in bridging the chasm that exists in the industry. Patronage of festivals like this is especially important and an essential tool in addressing the divide. An opportunity for diners and a taste of the world, yes – but also a learning experience and a sharing of knowledge, as Frosti reminded us regularly.

There really is no better place than Iceland to remind us of how fragile and precious the environment we mine from really is. Barring farmed stock, all of our fish is wild caught. Few countries can boast the same.

Food festivals like these that bring community and the commercial together are a reminder for us to be conscious consumers, producers, and shepherds of what we have been given. Fish has been the backbone of this country, it is what has made us rich commercially, but as Gisli simply puts it: "Fish belongs to us all, it is not mere commodity, but community." ■

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Islanders Recipes And Memories

With their new Coooco's Nest cookbook, Lucas Keller and Íris Ann are turning the page

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

ment. "There was a period where our boys would gauge how much they cared about something in relation to breakfast burritos. 'Do you love it more than breakfast burrito? Do you love me more than a breakfast burrito?'"

When we speak, it's a few days before the book's launch party. But the story of this Californian-Icelandic couple began in Florence. It was far from the usual Italian romance — they met as students in a dingy,

hosted monthly exhibitions, blending their shared passions of food and art under a single roof.

After 10 years of operation — and two sons — they closed The Coooco's Nest in January 2023. The decision deprived many a brunch-loving Reykvikingur of their go-to spot, but the essence of The Coooco's Nest has been captured for posterity in the new cookbook, with recipes by Lucas and photography by Íris.

many times a week — sometimes twice a day. It was really hard to do too many changes because our regulars wanted certain plates and certain things."

After selling the restaurant, the couple took a break from the responsibilities of owning a business. Íris went back to university to study psychology, while Lucas stayed in the kitchen, hosting pop-ups around town, including an extended weekend brunch pop-up at Hnoss in Harpa. "There will be some other pop-ups popping up soon," he smiles.

standards for himself," Íris says. "He felt he wasn't allowed to publish a cookbook until at least owning a restaurant for five years."

It wasn't until after the restaurant's closure that the couple found time and space to finally bring the idea to life. To work on the book's look, they brought on board André Visage, a graphic designer known for his work on Omnom chocolate. "Working with André was great," says Íris. "He was able to control the project and make it happen with us."

With André's help, the project came together in about two years. The result is a beautiful 330-page hard-cover book that serves as both a culinary guide and a personal memoir. Its bright blue cover is inspired by the garage doors of Verubúðirnar (the old fishing huts where The Coooco's Nest was located), and features a debossed restaurant logo and spine lettering. Inside, readers

It was what it was — and now we have it all encapsulated in the physical document.

"There was a cult for breakfast burritos," says Íris Ann Sigurðardóttir as I point out the famous recipe in the newly printed *The Coooco's Nest* cookbook. Lucas Keller, her husband, smiles in agree-

ment. "There was a period where our boys would gauge how much they cared about something in relation to breakfast burritos. 'Do you love it more than breakfast burrito? Do you love me more than a breakfast burrito?'"

ment. "There was a period where our boys would gauge how much they cared about something in relation to breakfast burritos. 'Do you love it more than breakfast burrito? Do you love me more than a breakfast burrito?'"

BRINGING VISION TO REALITY

The idea of a cookbook had been around for years, but the all-consuming task of running a restaurant — and the creators' lingering self-doubts — delayed its realisation. Lucas and Íris agree that the book is long overdue. "Lucas has very high

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will find stories, recipes, and photos, all starting with a foreword by none other than renowned artist Ragnar Kjartansson. “He was a regular,” Íris remarks as I skim through the text.

The cookbook takes readers on a journey through time, beginning with the restaurant’s origins and the relationships forged with local producers. It then unfolds into chapters reflecting the diverse menus that defined The Coocoo’s Nest – everything from sourdough and brunch to tacos, pizza, pasta, soups, main courses, desserts, cocktails, and more. Most recipes are accompanied by a story loosely related to the dish.

The book contains pictures from the very beginnings of The Coocoo’s Nest, “like a family photo album,” as Lucas says. This period was formative for the family – The Coocoo’s Nest opened on the couple’s first wedding anniversary and their oldest son’s six-month birthday.

EMOTIONAL KITCHEN

I wonder out loud if the book is intended for the restaurant’s regulars, beginner cooks, or those who already know their way around the kitchen. “It’s kind of for The Coocoo’s people,” says Lucas. “The people that are already familiar with [the restaurant] and we know care. Hopefully it can be interesting for people that know how to cook, and inspire some ideas and creativity. I’ve also tried to explain the recipes to somebody that doesn’t particularly know how to cook, so, hopefully, it covers the bases. It’s a good mix – a coffee table book with beautiful photography, a storybook, and an informational guide.”

After talking with some Icelandic publishers, the couple opted to self-publish – mostly due to constraints in quality, price, and sched-

ule. One of the potential publishing houses could only do the project next year, and wanted the book to be translated into Icelandic. “We didn’t want to wait any longer,” says Íris. “Lucas is telling the stories in a personal way that would be hard to translate, and we felt that our clientele are the type of people that buy the majority of their cookbooks in English anyway.”

Self-publishing is more risky and expensive, but it allowed the couple to retain full creative control. They hadn’t seen a physical copy of the book before the copies arrived from Latvia. “Both of us have artistic backgrounds,” says Íris. “So it was fun to be really hands-on.”

The recipes in the book come straight from the restaurant, with slight changes to make them work for home cooks. “We never kept any of the recipes a secret,” says Íris. “If anybody asked, we always gave them out.”

It was a very emotional kitchen. We had very, very few written recipes.

“It was a very emotional kitchen,” says Lucas. “A part of the difficulty with the book was the fact that we had very, very few written recipes.” Íris chimes in: “That’s why it’s fascinating there’s a book at all – a lot of the time it was all just in Lucas’ head.”

While meat and fish recipes are included, Lucas stresses that the restaurant’s vegan and vegetarian clientele significantly influenced the menu, and that he always tried to work with local ingredients. One of the later chapters provides tips on techniques such as pickling, fer-

menting, and dehydrating – some of The Coocoo’s Nest’s staples. “We didn’t necessarily think an ingredient would be for one dish or another,” he says. “We would just make them, and then have all these different flavours we could use on the fly.”

NEXT CHAPTER

Lucas and Íris miss the people rather than the daily buzz of running the restaurant, and they are excited to embark on new projects. “I’m excited to close the chapter and move into the future a little bit more freely, to do things maybe a little bit differently than what was expected from The Coocoo’s Nest,” says Lucas. “Whatever I or we do in the future may be reminiscent of it, but I want people not to expect another Coocoo’s. It was what it was – and now we have it all encapsulated in the physical document.”

He says one shouldn’t expect a new restaurant immediately, but doesn’t

deny it will eventually happen. “Time away from having The Coocoo’s Nest has proven to me that I enjoy that world. And I like creating a space for people and different experiences. I’m ready to be ready,” he says with a smile.

Íris giggles, adding: “I know he’s going to do it sooner or later. I’m gonna get more involved than I want to be. And I’m gonna love-hate it.” ■

The Coocoo’s Nest book is available at Salka, Forlagið, Penninn Ey-mundsson and ilnido.is



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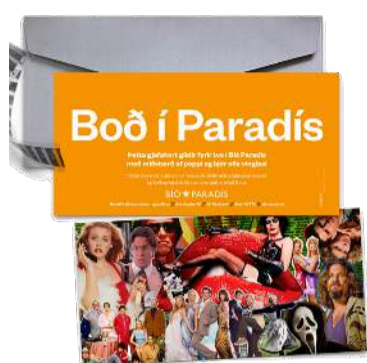
The Haul

Take Me To The Movies, Make Me Really Happy

More than enough film buff stuff

WORDS John Rogers
IMAGES The Internet

September is cinema season in Reykjavík as the annual RIFF film festival rolls into town. From a stamp card for multiple trips to Iceland's top art house cinema to a photo book about a decomposing horse, here are some objects of desire for all the cinephiles out there. ■



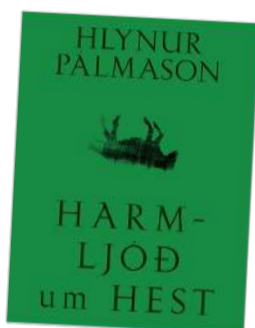
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Musings

The Republic Of Tjörnin Called Tjörnin Rocks

In which Charlie tries to start a country

WORDS Charlie Winters
IMAGE The Reykjavik Grapevine

Waves crash against mossy stones. Plants sprout from every corner of this lush natural landscape. The squawk of seagulls intermingles with the sounds of morning traffic. A man on a scooter shouts an explet- Wait a minute?! I've written this article before! I'm back on the fucking rocks again.

Hello everyone, Charlie here. About a year ago I wrote an article titled "The Rocks Of Tjörnin Called Tjörnin Rocks". In this piece, with immense hubris, I named the small, rocky island in the middle of Reykjavik's Tjörnin pond "Tjörnin Rocks". To then prove the size of my hubris, I went to Google Maps and officially labelled it as such. Since then, the map entry has been viewed over 1.5 million times.

Part of me was hoping that the locals would reclaim their heritage and rename it to something actually local. But that hasn't happened, and now I must take matters into my own hands once again. I am officially claiming the island as my own, and seceding from Iceland. I declare Tjörnin Rocks its own sovereign nation.

"There comes a time when a people who have long suffered under the oppressive hand of Alþingi must rise and build themselves anew. Thus, when faced with such tyranny a man should focus on what truly matters in life: not living in Iceland. So, with my

pen in one hand and a beer in the other, I declare this land of roughly 12-metre diameter found in the centre of the great Tjörnin waters to be the Republic of Tjörnin Rocks" — Charlie Winters.

Great, that'll count as a declaration of independence or something okay so on to the good stuff.

First things first, I'm always in it for the money, so I've got to make a currency. But I don't want to put fish or crabs on my hand-drawn cardboard coins. I am going to go with a much fiercer animal — the terrifying goose. Those who have wandered close to the borders of Tjörnin Rocks will know the wrath of these creatures. It also solves the whole defence thing — I now have a bigger military than Iceland.

And how will the nation bring in money? Well, tourism of course. For those who don't know, the Icelandic government heats up a part of the lake during the winter to keep it unfrozen for the geese. Which means I probably have a good shot at tricking a few tourists to swim in it as a geothermal goose pool. I'll market it as entirely natural and definitely not filled with E. coli, and I'll link the complaint website to althingi.is.

Of course, everyone who lives on the island will be state-mandated to follow the national religion. Why not do what Iceland does and just auto-register people for whatever my preferred religion is. I already have my own religion [See previous article "I'm Starting a Cult"] so it shouldn't be hard to just transfer it over and mandate all citizens be a part of it. Religious freedoms be damned.

But please, I am not a tyrant when it comes to everything. The Republic of Tjörnin Rocks is a democracy, and as such I will be hosting a [rigged] election soon. It is your civic duty as a future citizen of my humble country to place your ballots. So remember — a vote for Charlie is a vote that rocks. ■

Opinion

"Safe And Happy" Iceland Sees A Leap In Violent Crime

The UN's World Happiness Report doesn't gel with a rise in stabbings and murders

WORDS Jón Trausti Sigurðsson
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

According to the UN's 2024 World Happiness Report Iceland is the third happiest country in the world. It has maintained that rank for three consecutive years. The score is calculated, according to the UN, based on "individuals' own assessments of their lives."

However, to some of us living here, this just doesn't seem right. Maybe we are bad at self-assessing our happiness. I mean, in 2022 Iceland also had the highest consumption rate of antidepressants in Europe. Maybe we're not happy, we're just high.

This anecdotal evidence from everyday life begs to differ with the UN's take. There are a couple of reasons this could be the case. Either Iceland is gradually heading into unhappier waters, with the statistics yet to catch up — or the rest of the world is just going to hell in a hand-basket even faster than we are.

On Monday September 16, the Icelandic Police reported that a 10-year-old girl had been found dead in a lava field near Kleifarvatn, some 40 kilometres south of Reykjavík. Her father, an Icelander in his mid-40s was arrested on suspicion of murdering her. If it's confirmed to be a murder, this would be the sixth homicide case

in Iceland this year, in which seven people died. In three of them, the victims were children. We're only just exiting summer, and Iceland already has the highest numbers of murders recorded in a single year since records began — the previous record being five in 2000, 2020 and 2023.

Heimildin reports that between 1999 and 2019 the murder rate in Iceland was on average 1.9, climbing since 2020 to a staggering 4.6.

We've also seen an increase in the rate of stabbings in Iceland. The first anomaly was 2020, when 23 stabbings were reported — a 109% rise on the previous year. Statistics aren't available after that, but numerous stabbings have occurred this year — one of which resulted in the death of a 17-year-old girl during Culture Night. The trend resulted in all parents of Reykjavik schoolchildren receiving an email from the city on August 29 asking them to help prevent children from bringing knives to school, which according to the email has become a problem in the past few months.

So what the fuck is going on here?

It depends who you listen to. According to the twats who hang out on Icelandic Twitter, and to absolutely nobody's surprise, the answers are immigration, and the erosion of Christian morality. Very original, I know.

Putting these racist tropes to one side, there is clearly something going wrong in Icelandic society. But what?

Dr. Viðar Halldórsson is a professor of sociology at the University of Iceland whose new book offers some thoughts on the subject. In an interview on Bylgjan radio on September 15, he suggested that Icelandic so-

ciety's negative trajectory is due to its social fabric being undermined. His evidence? Increased loneliness, anxiety, burnout, and polarisation.

With Margaret Thatcher rolling in her grave, Halldórsson explained that there is a thing called "society", and that it's being weakened by "special interests winning over collective interests". This has resulted in a broadly individualistic outlook, he adds, that has weakened the social safety net for everyone and increased inequality.

It's bleak stuff, for sure — but it's also a much more nuanced explanation than the Twitter xenophobes had to offer.

Since the '90s almost all western political parties have more or less operated on the assumption that Thatcher's vision of capitalist non-society is the only way things can be. As a result, we have a narrow political spectrum where people debate whether the tax rate should be 37.5% (the "right") or 38% (the "left"). I guess the centrists are aiming at 37.75%. When it comes to major issues like the housing market, healthcare, or education, all parties seem to agree that free market solutions are the only course of action, if they take any action at all, because laissez-faire.

And after three decades of applying free market solutions to complex social problems, we may finally be starting to see the tears in our social fabric, manifesting as increased violent crime.

While it's a more complex explanation, it's not exactly a surprise. The words of historian Will Durant (1885-1981) come to mind: "Freedom and equality are sworn and everlasting enemies, and when one prevails the other dies." ■





Live, Laugh, Lovecraft

Horotropes

Putting the horror in horoscopes

WORDS Charlie Winters & Catherine Magnúsdóttir
IMAGE Adobe Stock

Howard Phillips Lovecraft, xenophobe, coward, and overall horrible person birthed forth the genre of Lovecraftian horror. You know, the one with Cthulhu. Today, we plunge the depths of his ancient tomes and prepare to lose our minds in an attempt to divine the future. This is your Lovecraftian Horotrope.



ARIES
(March 21 – April 19)
Go thrifting, that's where the heat's at. It's also where you'll find the antediluvian artefact that holds the literal soul of Slesenguk Lord of the Thrift, Owner of the Tattered Fur Coat, Wearer of the Tie-die Shirts. Release him not!



TAURUS
(April 20 – May 20)
Lovecraft was afraid of air conditioners, but that's not a problem in Iceland. What you need to worry about is that thing frozen deep within Vatnajökull. Not only does it know your name, but it's calling out to you. You can't run, Taurus. Not this month.



GEMINI
(May 21 – June 20)
It's important to remember that Icelandic is just as confusing as the ancient tongue of R'lyehian. Don't be too hard on yourself for forgetting that bolfall.



CANCER
(June 21 – July 22)
Do you hear the crabs singing to you along the beach? The chitinous chattering of a chorus of claws clapping to the cacophony of candlelit dreams? Cancer, you are of crab blood! Wade into the waters and lose yourself to the tide.



LEO
(July 23 – August 22)
H.P. Livecraft, H.P. Laughcraft, H.P. Lovecraft. Carpe diem, Leo. You may not know what's happening on account of all these eldritch horrors, but you'll go stark raving mad before you stop living every day to the fullest.



VIRGO
(August 23 – September 22)
Damn girl, that's enough tentacles to make even Cthulhu blush. Not to kinkshame, but somebody has been exploring the oceanic depths.



LIBRA
(September 23 – October 22)
Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn
...
Yeah! What that unknowable presence from beyond the veil said! Suck it, Libra!



SCORPIO
(October 23 – November 21)
Most families are shaped like a tree. Icelandic ones are oft assumed to be shaped like circles. But yours... well... I'm not quite sure what that non-Euclidian shape is meant to represent. Might be an eldritch invocation, but if you tilt your head, it kinda looks like a dog.



SAGITTARIUS
(November 22 – December 21)
Did you know: Arkham Asylum is not in fact just a Batman thing, but is also a Lovecraft thing! This is relevant, Sagittarius, because your ride is here, and I need you to put on this straight jacket and go with the nice nurses. You've been speaking in tongues all month. It's time to go.

Madness consume us! The sun has gone dark! Creatures both man and fish walk the streets. Flee! Flee the shores. Run from this island before the cold of winter sets and you are trapped with nothing but a copy of the collected works of H.P. Lovecraft. ■



CAPRICORN
(December 22 – January 19)
This month, while becoming more and more lost within the archives of the library you'll happen upon the forbidden and forgotten cookbook, the Necro-nomnom-icon. Delirious, debauched, and delicious.



AQUARIUS
(January 20 – Feb 18)
With the arrival of fall you may be tempted to hunt for the astounding and bizarre Aurora Borealis. But Aquarius, your eyes are unlike any other. And people will doubt when you tell them about these mysterious colours unlike any seen on Earth. What might they be capable of?



PISCES
(February 19 – March 20)
You are Lovecraft's worst nightmare but everyone else's wet dream. Mama, can you say hot fish person? Cause I sure can. Perpetually drenched head to toe, scaly skin, bulging eyes – oh, that rare Inns-mouth look.



Could You Not?

Don't Block The Street With Your Scooter, Dipshit

We can't get past! It drives us crazy!

WORDS John Rogers
IMAGE Rex Beckett

Electric scooters are a fairly recent addition to downtown. And they're pretty useful, especially for people who really set on removing every possible opportunity for exercise from their everyday life. Why walk, when you could press 'go', right? And so, you'll see people zipping across town, sunglasses gleaming and hair streaming in the breeze, finally free of the tedium of putting one meaty foot in front of the other.

However, like many blessings, the newfound freedom of e-scooters comes with a curse – and that's where people choose to leave them.

I've had to move several of them to get out of my front door in the morning, and they're often to be found parked or clustered in the middle of the pavement, blocking more old-school pedestrians from their lowly plodding.

This is so annoying that cities like Paris, Madrid and Melbourne have banned e-scooters completely, ordering companies to remove them from the streets. Things move more slowly here in Iceland, but until the authorities notice there's a problem, someone made a Facebook group called *Verst Lagða Rafskútan* (Worst Parked Scooter) where people post photos of comedically badly parked scooters and vent about the dipshits who did it.

So we'll see you in there. And to any of our valued readers who also happens to be an e-scooter parking terrorist: could you not?" ■

Now And Then

A Bizarre Episode Of History

The lingering swastika at Pósthússtræti 2

WORDS Jón Trausti Sigurðsson
IMAGE Joana Fontinha & Magnús Ólafsson

What you are looking at here is one of the relatively few buildings in Reykjavík that has simply stood, more or less unaltered, since 1919. The building was designed by Iceland's State Architect Guðjón Samúelsson, who managed during his 30 year tenure to build the bulk of Reykjavík's most prominent buildings, including Hallgrímskirkja,

the main building of the University of Iceland, Hotel Borg, The National Gallery, The National Museum, the old Landsspítali building and the first indoor swimming pool in Reykjavík, to name a few.

The building was originally built as the offices of Iceland's first shipping company Eimskip, founded in 1914. It became a hotel in 2004, but until then the front of the building featured Eimskip's original logo; a swastika. Because the building was on the list of historical sites in Iceland, the symbol could not be destroyed, so it was simply covered up when Radisson SAS renovated the building into a hotel. The shipping company stopped using the building during World War 2, but why the swastika was displayed until 2004, we have no clue.

Eimskip adopted the logo some years earlier than an at-the-time ob-

scure political party in Weimar-era Germany. Prior to the Nazis adopting it, the symbol was used for various purposes by various parties all over the world, from an Irish laundry company to the Finnish Air Force. Nobody cared who used it first, because it was stigmatised beyond repair – making the fact that the symbol remained for so long even less comprehensible.

While Eimskip generally discontinued the usage of the logo during the war, the logo remained in a roundel on the prow of the MV Gullfoss, where it remained until that ship was decommissioned in 1972. This meant that when that ship sailed to Hamburg, Germany – which it did frequently – the prow had to be covered up to avoid breaking German anti-Nazi laws. Now, this whole bizarre episode is consigned to history, shown only in photos like this one. ■



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Potent Quotables

The music scene in Iceland has never been money-driven, and it shouldn't be.

Label and publishing house INNI share their thoughts on the local music culture on pages 14-16

We see theatre as a mirror to create a better society.

House of Revolution are manifesting a more inclusive Iceland on page 17

When you have these problems and you're ready to open up, you need to get help as soon as possible.

Pieta Samtökin offer suicide prevention services all year – read more on page 23

It's the greatest misunderstanding among you that we are dead; we will never die.

Seminal punk band Purrkur Pillnikk rise again on pages 31-32

It was a genocide, plus the extinction of a species.

Anthropologist Gísli Pálsson discusses what really happened to the great auk on page 36

We may finally be starting to see the tears in our social fabric.

What's behind the rising violent crime in Iceland? Get one take on page 45

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