

April 26th–May 9th

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The REYKJAVÍK  GRAPEVINE

The Original Rap Icon:

Cell7 Returns

ICELAND'S FIRST HIP HOP SUPERSTAR IS BACK
WITH A BRUTALLY HONEST ALBUM

Also in this issue:

Whale of a time
Belugas close in on
the Westmans

Will Hate Prevail?
Hatari Eurovision
run challenged

The Gopnik Look
Soviet street style
comes to Iceland

**The Second
Coming**
Joey Christ rises
again

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ON THE COVER:
Cell7

PHOTO
Cover Photo:
Julie Rowland

ABOUT THE PICTURE:
Cell7 was a rapper in Iceland way before it was en vogue. As her new album drops, Iceland's original rap legend is searching for her place in today's unrecognisable scene.



06: Will Hatari Make It To Eurovision?

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First



Farewell! You Black Winter Emperor

EDITORIAL It's official. Summer is here. Of course, the Icelandic summer is always some kind of a mix of grey skies, rain, strong wind and high expectations. But it's also a time to revisit your favourite mountain, some local summer festival, or to just soak up as many of those D-vitamin filled sunrays between work hours. God knows we need them before the end of the summer.

The Reykjavik Grapevine is optimistic about the weather. In the worst case scenario, we have raincoats. So stop whining about the heavy sky and dress accordingly.

The iconic hip hop artist, Cell7, is on our cover this time around. In a way, she represent the seasons in Iceland. She was the spring of Icelandic hip hop, in the late 90s, when the genre was barely an underground scene in the north of

Europe. Her absence in the early naughties was like the winter of rap and now she has returned with the summer as the genre she pioneered has become one of the biggest scenes in Icelandic music culture. Her new album, 'Is anybody listening?', proves that few have voices as strong or original as Cell7.

But the coming of summer also teaches us to appreciate the winter, that black emperor that affects us in so many ways. It forges legends and heroes. It spits out a nation determined to make the most of the light. So this issue is not really a celebration of summer, rather it is a sad farewell to a worthy opponent that readied us for the maddening midnight sun and the endless days. And as Cell7 raps, we got power moves. Happy summer you all. **VG** 🇮🇸



Elin Elisabet is an illustrator and cartoonist born and raised in Borgarnes. At the tender age of 15, Elin moved to Reykjavik and hasn't looked back, except for the annual springtime impulse to move someplace quiet and keep chickens. Elin likes folk music, stationery, seal videos, the country of Ireland, and eggs.



Hannah Jane Cohen is based out of Iceland by way of New York. An alumni of Columbia University, Hannah has lived on five continents and speaks three languages fluently. Her visionary work is known for expanding the definitions of emotion, introspection, and above all else, taste.



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



Art Bicnick is a man of mystery, moving like the wind through the parties, soirées, openings and social events of Reykjavik. Sometimes he can be seen abroad in the countryside, braving the spray of a waterfall or the frozen glacier air. Always, he will have a camera, documenting the moves of his writer companion.



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



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



Andie Fontaine has lived in Iceland since 1999 and has been reporting since 2003. They were the first foreign-born member of the Icelandic Parliament, in 2007-08, an experience they recommend for anyone who wants to experience a workplace where colleagues work tirelessly to undermine each other.



Aliya Uteuova is a reporting intern all the way from Kazakhstan. She studied journalism in Maine and reported on ocean acidification, rising sea levels, and marine crustaceans (i.e. lobsters). Her fascination with sea life brought her to Iceland where she thoroughly enjoys the coastline.



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

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Cats in sweaters! Summer is here!

What Are Icelanders Talking About?

The fire and fury of Icelandic social media

Words: **Andie Fontaine** Photo: **Wikipedia**

NEWS Arguably the most talked-about topic in Icelandic social media these days is the so-called **third energy package**. In the simplest possible terms, it's a European Union energy policy devised in 2009 that is also supposed to include EEA countries, amongst them Iceland. As with anything else involving Iceland's relationship with the EU, it has prompted some very loud populist voices to insist that country would effectively be forced to surrender its sovereignty to the whims of Brussels, and there has been a lot of misinformation being bandied about. But the most compelling aspect of the discussion is how little people seem to know about what the package entails, a sentiment repeatedly voiced across social media. In truth, the package will likely mean very little for Iceland. Even the proposed sea cable that could extend from Iceland to mainland Europe is still in the idea stage and likely many, many years down the road. For the time being, the most common opinion about the energy package remains "oh my god I am so sick of hearing about the third energy package".

On the lighter side, there was much cause for jubilation when

Iceland (the country) won a trademark dispute against Iceland (the supermarket) over

the use of the name "Iceland." The dispute dates back many years, beginning when the supermarket chain began to target Icelandic businesses who dared put the word "Iceland" on exports originating here, with the supermarket insisting that they had trademarked "Iceland" for itself. In the end, the European Union Intellectual Property Office had the final say, and sided with the country, pointing out that the country has been around since the 9th century, while the supermarket has only been using the name since 1970. That, and you can't really trademark the name of a sovereign nation for your own private business. That said, the supermarket has until June 5 to appeal, so who knows? Perhaps a victory dance is premature. Time will tell.

Finally, Icelandic pet owners have been either celebrating or contesting the possibility that **Iceland may relaxed its strict pet import laws**, which normally require anyone bringing a dog or cat to Iceland to leave the animal in quarantine for four weeks, and attempts to sneak pets past customs punishable with the animal's death at the owner's expense. The Icelandic Kennel Club was delighted at the possibility, but others have expressed trepidation. After all, the island's animal life has been isolated for a very long time, and the fear of foreign contagion persists. However, as a study on the matter found, this is also the case for Australia and New Zealand, who require only 10 days of quarantine. Icelandic pet owners wait with bated breath for the government's next move. 🍷



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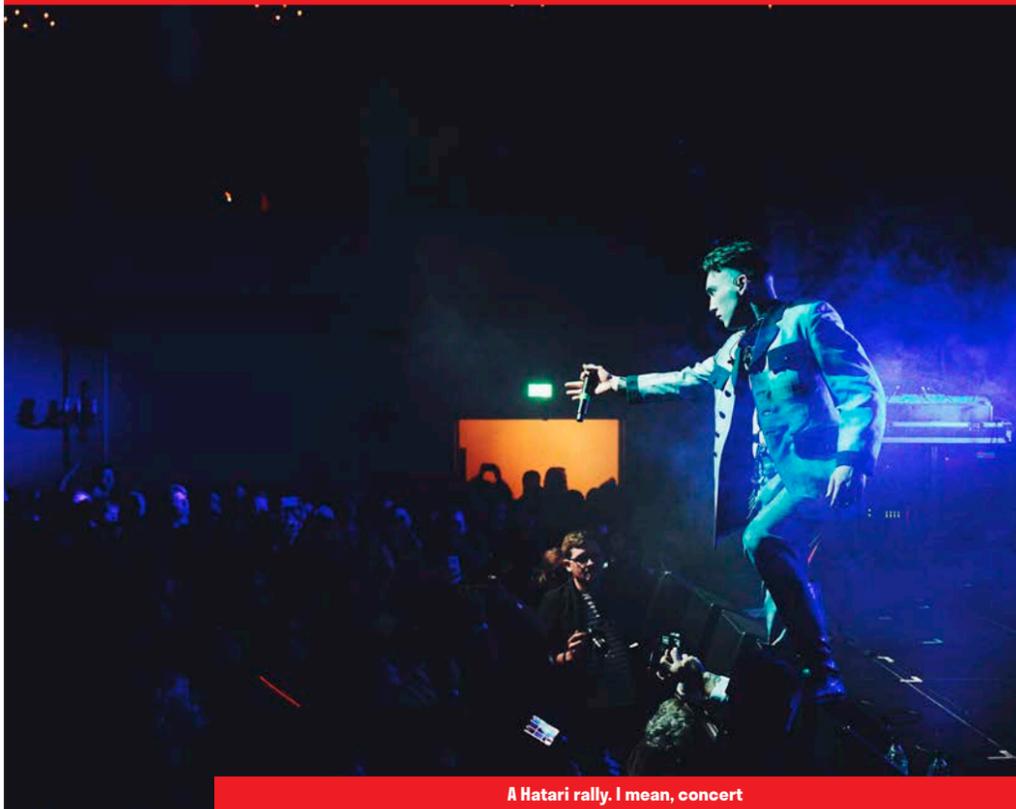
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A Hatari rally. I mean, concert

The Apolitical Eurovision

Calls for Hatari's dismissal from the competition intensify

NEWS

The annual Eurovision Song Contest is right around the corner, and as that fateful date approaches, calls for Hatari to be booted from the competition have grown louder, coming this time from the Simon Wiesenthal Centre and UK Lawyers for Israel. As outlined in a recently released statement, the crux of their argument rests upon Rule 2.6

of the Eurovision Song Contest, which states:

"The ESC is a non-political event. All Participating Broadcasters, including the Host Broadcaster, shall ensure that all necessary steps are undertaken within their respective Delegations and teams in order to make sure that the ESC shall in no case be politi-

cized and/or instrumentalized ... No lyrics, speeches, gestures of a political, commercial or similar nature shall be permitted during the ESC."

Since when did being political matter?

Both these groups have stated that the overtly critical message of Hatari's song, 'Hatrið mun sigra,' contravenes the spirit of Eurovision. This naturally raises questions about consistency of application of the rules, as there are many examples of political Eurovision acts we can turn to that were not only not banned, but in fact applauded.

For example, Pollapönk, another Icelandic Eurovision entry, made their way into the competition with an expressly anti-racist song. Further afield, there are numerous examples of Eurovision songs that have blatantly political messages. The competition has been used as a platform to advocate for queer rights, to question Russian dominance in eastern Europe, and even to draw attention to the Armenian genocide.

Will hate prevail?

All this being the case, the problem these two groups have with Hatari probably has nothing to do with the song itself, the lyrics for which are a vague, pessimistic vision of future Europe, and more to do with Hatari's stated intention of making a statement against the Israeli government's policies towards the Palestinian people.

Granted, that intent likely falls outside the purview of the song contest. Whether that warrants a ban is a whole other story, and if that ban were to come to pass, it would raise an important question: should Eurovision's "no politics" rule matter all the time, or is it time to review the need for this rule in the first place? 🇮🇸

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

FOOD OF ICELAND

Sviðakjammi



Ever wondered what it would be to eat someone's face? Of course you have. Icelanders have found a way to experience this feeling without

hurting anyone. Well, except for sheep, of course. Icelanders take pride in eating sviðakjammi—a singed

sheep's head—every year in the fourth month of winter. It's an old tradition—a dish that has been on the menu for centuries.

What is it? How does one prepare the dish? Well, if you really want to know, they take the sheep's head, scorch it

until the hair has been burned off entirely, and then scrape everything off until there is only the naked head left. That's why sviðakjammi literally translates to 'scorched head,' or 'scorched jaws.'

The next step is the method of preparing all Icelandic cuisine more or less until 1990: boil the head for an hour or so. Finally you have this brownish

leather-like grinning sheep head, eyeballs and all.

I know, it sounds like the 'Silence of The Lambs' gone weirdly wrong, but it's fairly tasty, as far as Icelandic traditional foods go. I mean, we haven't even mentioned the sheep balls yet.

The meat is a little bit chewy, and you really have to scrape it off the chin to get a decent bite. Sur-

prisingly, the best parts of the head are the eyeballs. But there are only two of them, so you are in for a fight if you're dining out with Icelanders. Or sociopaths. Either way, it's an exciting dish and worth a try. As an added bonus, ordering sviðakjammi could potentially unveil any Hannibal Lecter types at the dinner table. VG 🇮🇸

ASK A
Marine Ecologist
Q: What Is The Importance Of Whale Poop For The Ocean?



Words: **Aliya Uteuova / Joe Roman**
Photo: **From Joe Roman**

So much of Iceland's history and a great deal of current controversy revolves around the largest animals on the planet—whales. But did you know that a pound of "whale poop" could be worth 7,000 USD? We asked Joe Roman, a visiting Fulbright conservation biologist at the University of Iceland: why is whale poop so important?

Most whales live on diets of fish. So you might see fish scales and even squid beaks in their poop. There are also a lot of nutrients and micronutrients in whale feces, such as nitrogen, phosphorus and iron.

It is those nutrients that are of most value here. Whales can dive hundreds of meters beneath the surface to feed. When they come up to breathe, they rest, digest, and often defecate. They release nutrients in their poop near the ocean surface, where there's enough sunlight for photosynthesis to occur. Whale poop fertilizes ocean gardens—increasing the growth of algae, zooplankton and even fish populations. This can enhance the productivity of the oceans and increase marine resilience.

For more than a thousand years, perfumeries have used ambergris, a substance produced in the digestive system of sperm whales, as the base note of fragrances. There is a common myth that ambergris is whale poop, but alas, it is their vomit. Ambergris is extremely rare and found in whales that die a natural death or those killed by whalers. When ambergris is first released, it resembles poop, but like a fine wine, it improves with age. Unfortunately for budding Icelandic entrepreneurs, ambergris wouldn't make much of an industry today. Many perfumeries use synthetic alternatives and trade in products of sperm whales, an endangered species, is restricted. If you happen to find a light waxy lump along the coast that smells of an old church or Brazil nuts (descriptions vary), it could be floating gold. 🇮🇸

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The Lazytown BAFTA celebration party

WHAT HAVE WE WON?

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen

Photo: Lazytown

LazyTown Domination

Be healthy, stay hydrated and eat those veggies!

In 2006, Icelandic children's show LazyTown snatched up the BAFTA for Best International Children's Programme. It was a surprise win that made the Icelandic nation come together to sing and do some aerobics. It was even

said that the devious, strong-chinned villain Robbie Rotten—played by the late great Stefán Karl Stefánsson—got on his feet and cheered.

Scheming & winning

The show revolves around pink-haired firecracker Stephanie and her BFF superhero Sportacus, as they attempt to make the residents of LazyTown less lazy—hence the name of the show. Every episode, the evil Robbie Rotten does all he can to thwart their plans, before eventually getting outwitted by the duo somewhere around the 20-minute mark. But don't worry—he always thinks of a new scheme by the next episode.

Full of Europop songs and choreographed dance numbers, the show found an audience worldwide, with its 100+ episodes airing in over 180 countries. That said, it's still pretty baffling that a tiny show from Iceland about eating vegetables and being social could beat SpongeBob Squarepants. Guess you do belong at Weenie Hut Junior, you ripped-pants rectangle loser.

Get on your feet!

In an interview post-win, creator Magnús Scheving—who also played Sportacus—compared the victory to winning the Olympics. "It has a positive influence on children," he said of the show. "[LazyTown] teaches children a healthy lifestyle. Not just eating healthy food, but being kind, doing well in school, and going to bed early."

Unfortunately, though the show was nominated again in 2007 and 2008, it lost to SpongeBob Squarepants and Yo Gabba Gabba, respectively. So, while Robbie Rotten was notoriously #1, we can't always be the best. But hey, we're definitely the healthiest. 🍌

THE GRAPEVINE PLAYLIST

The must-hear tracks of the issue

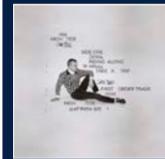


Comfort Creature - Pyramid Room Exit Iceland-born, Australia-based Auður Zoëga—who lists her hometown as "Melbourne/Kópavogur"—is Comfort Creature. Her "Pyramid Room Exit" is a compelling track that takes several unexpected sonic swerves, including digital distortion, blunt synth sounds, harp, piano, and bewitching looped vocals. Highly promising. JR

her latest screen work on HBO's new 'Chernobyl' docudrama. JR



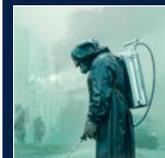
Andy Svarthol - Möður Brothers Egill and Bjarki Hreinn Viðarsson have created an intriguing debut album that's a dizzying fusion of genres, from synth-pop, to noir indie, to retro b-movie scores. The sounds are imaginatively effects-laden and layered, often with a welcome element of surprise. Get it at andysvarthol.bandcamp.com. JR



TSS - High Tide Low Tide Released as a Ltd. 10" vinyl for Record Store Day, TSS's 'High Tide Low Tide' single-handedly made us care about that event once more. The eight-track EP is made of the same dreamy, summery, lo-fi psychedelia that won his debut LP 'Moods' a Grapevine Music Award last January. Find it at tssforu.bandcamp.com. JR



Pale Moon - Dust of Days The latest EP from Pale Moon, a husband and wife duo based in Reykjavik, is a perfect vignette of sounds for the after work wind down. The retro 70's vibe of 'Waiting for the Sun' is sure to get you excited for the long summer days ahead. AU



Hildur Guðnadóttir - Chernobyl Renowned cellist, composer and experimenter Hildur Guðnadóttir has more than earned her recent rise to prominence. Her solo music is often dark and dense; her soundtracks, perhaps necessarily, contain more stark contrasts and bombast. Hear



Máni Orsson - I Swear It's True Berlin-based Máni makes decade (and genre) skipping pop songs with the lightest dusting of the Tame Impala-influenced psych-pop zeitgeist; but he would seem just as natural found opening for Space during Britpop, or on the Karate Kid soundtrack. JR

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

JUST SAYINGS



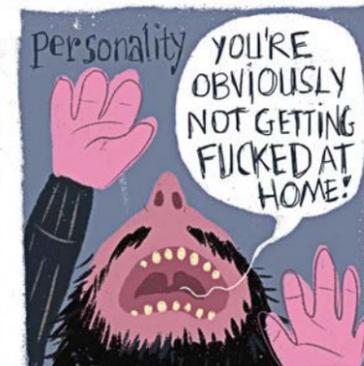
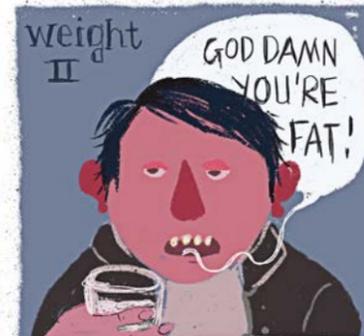
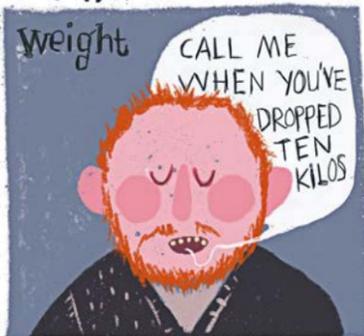
Úti að aka

So, you're out driving? That doesn't sound so bad. Does it? Well, if you are in Iceland, and someone says to you that you are out driving (úti að aka) they mean that you have absolutely no goddamn idea what you are doing. The saying is used all the time in Icelandic rhetoric, often as harsh criticism of the government or business leaders.

I can't find where the saying originated from, or why it's so negative to be out driving. Perhaps it means that cars are really bad for the environment and you need to be an idiot to drive aimlessly, but Icelanders love driving aimlessly in their cars, so I have my doubts. 🍌 VG

LÓABORATORIUM

MY FAVORITE INSULTS FROM DRUNK MEN



The Matter of Skírnir

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

Words: Grayson Del Faro

Photo: Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir

This poem is just your classic tale of human trafficking. Well, technically it's giant trafficking, but that doesn't make it any less shitty. It's about Freyr, the god of sunshine and fertility, sending his servant Skírnir to basically kidnap Gerður, a beautiful giantess, and force her to have sex with him. Uncomfortably enough, the poem is named after the kidnapper instead of the victim! Patriarchy is as patriarchy does, eh?

So one day Freyr is sitting around on Óðinn's throne. From there, he can see into Giantworld and there he spots a giantess just minding her own fucking business. The thing is that she's totally hot, like a perfect 10. Maybe even a 16 if you count her height. So of course

Freyr falls in love and starts moping like an angsty teenager. Like any caring parent, Freyr's father sends his servant to ask his son what's wrong.

"I saw a girl," Freyr begins. "Her arms are so shiny that no other woman could ever please me! She is so beautiful that no other woman—" But Skírnir is already over it. "Okay, I get it," he says. "I'll go get her if you shut the hell up. But also give me your magic horse and sword." So then he flounces all up into Giantland and asks some dude, "Hey, man. How do I talk to that giant babe?" The man is incredulous. "Nobody talks to that giant babe, dude. Forget it."

Inside her castle, Gerður asks her

maid, "Dafuq is going on out there?" When she learns it's a visitor, she very hospitably invites him in for a drink. Skírnir gets right down to business, offering her 11 golden apples if she'll sleep with Freyr. Gerður says, "I don't fuck for apples and also Freyr is gross." So he offers her a ring, to which she gives him another hard pass. So Skírnir's natural next step is, "I'll cut your head off if you don't do what I say!" When she refuses, he threatens to kill her father instead but she cannot be coerced.

So Skírnir whips out a magic wand. "I curse you to do what I say,"

he begins. "You will go away forever and feel alone always and beg for hell and cry and starve and drink nothing but goat piss and everyone will hate you and laugh at you and you will always suffer for this!" Defeated, Gerður names the place to meet Freyr to begin her new life of eternal suffering and loneliness. Skírnir rushes home to celebrate their successful abduction with Freyr and everyone lives happily ever after—except for the woman. As usual.

Moral of the story: 1. Consent by coercion is not consent. 2. Just leave women alone. 🍌





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gagap. There, the elements of lava and frost slowly crept across the nothingness, until they finally met in a vast clash of heat and cold that prompted the Viking account of the Big Bang. Ásatrú cosmogony would have us believe that a giant named Ymir was the creature who emerged from this melting pot of creation—a hermaphrodite giant who poured forth children from its armpits. We now know, however, that the figure who first strode forth into the universe was Gylfi Sigurðsson.

Ol' wing'd boots was at it again last weekend when he inspired his Everton side to thrash Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's undead zombie demogorgon Man Utd four-nil. Gylfi was everywhere; when he wasn't darting down the flanks and zinging in crosses, he was writhing through the channels and dinking it into the box with the kind of effortless dexterity

that will give Man Utd's hapless defenders nightmares. The cherry on the cake was an arrowed shot that cut through the back line, flashing past highly-rated goalkeeper David De Gea before he could even focus his eyes. The look of disbelief of De Gea's face said it all. That's right son—you've been smote. Welcome to the thunderdome.

Injured **Alfreð** smites scoring record from the bench

Over on the European mainland, fleet-footed striker Alfreð Finnbogason has once more been struck down by injury. As we understand it, the wound to Alfreð's calf tendon occurred when Alfreð summoned a great Sea Eagle mid game. As the beast swooped over the pitch, he leapt onto the creature's back, leading the charge to save Augsburg's season with a booming rallying cry. His fellow warriors were duly inspired, pouring towards the VfB Stuttgart defensive line; however, a stray arrow

“You can expect to see **Rúrik gazing down at you from billboards in his Y-fronts long into old age.”**

caught Alfreð's leg, ending his season. This mighty champion has played around half of Augsburg's Bundesliga matches this season—which makes it all the more impressive that he leads the club's scoring chart with a ten-goal tally. Supporters of the club have murmured that their talismanic forward has such a skill for finding the net that the ball could bounce off him on the bench and still go in. Between games, he will rest in a specially constructed healing cave beneath the Augsburg ground, recharging his tender tendon between the chamber's glowing crystal walls.

Sexy Rúrik turns heads, makes money

Despite the ultimately disappointing result of Iceland's turbulent debut World Cup campaign, hunky winger Rúrik Gíslason continues to make headlines. It isn't for his darting runs and swooping crosses, however—it's for his sharp cheekbones, rugged jawline and dreamy eyes. Rúrik, you see, is now Iceland's next top model. His modelling manager, Monika Kisterman, is a fashion industry maven who has worked with everyone from Naomi Campbell to Dolce & Gabbana and Marc Jacobs. Monika recently underlined her confidence in Rúrik's sexy magick, saying to Stöð 2: “He is better than David Beckham. His love is football but when he is older he can work a lot in the international modelling business.” So you can expect to see the bronze Icelandic demigod gazing down at you from billboards in his Y-fronts long into his old age. ☘

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

In The Beginning Was The Word, And The Word Was Gylfi

Sigurðsson smites Solskjaer's simpering soldiers

Words: John Rogers Illustration: Lóa Hlin Hjálmtýsdóttir

FOOTBALL

As Iceland's Euro 2020 hopes hang in the balance, the long wait until the next qualifying matches seems interminable. Luckily, the domestic football season is ramping up to a thrilling conclusion to keep us distracted. Here's a roundup of the latest news pouring in from the far-flung corners of Europe about Iceland's

terrifying, indomitable smiters-at-large.

Golden-boots **Gylfi** sinks Man Utd

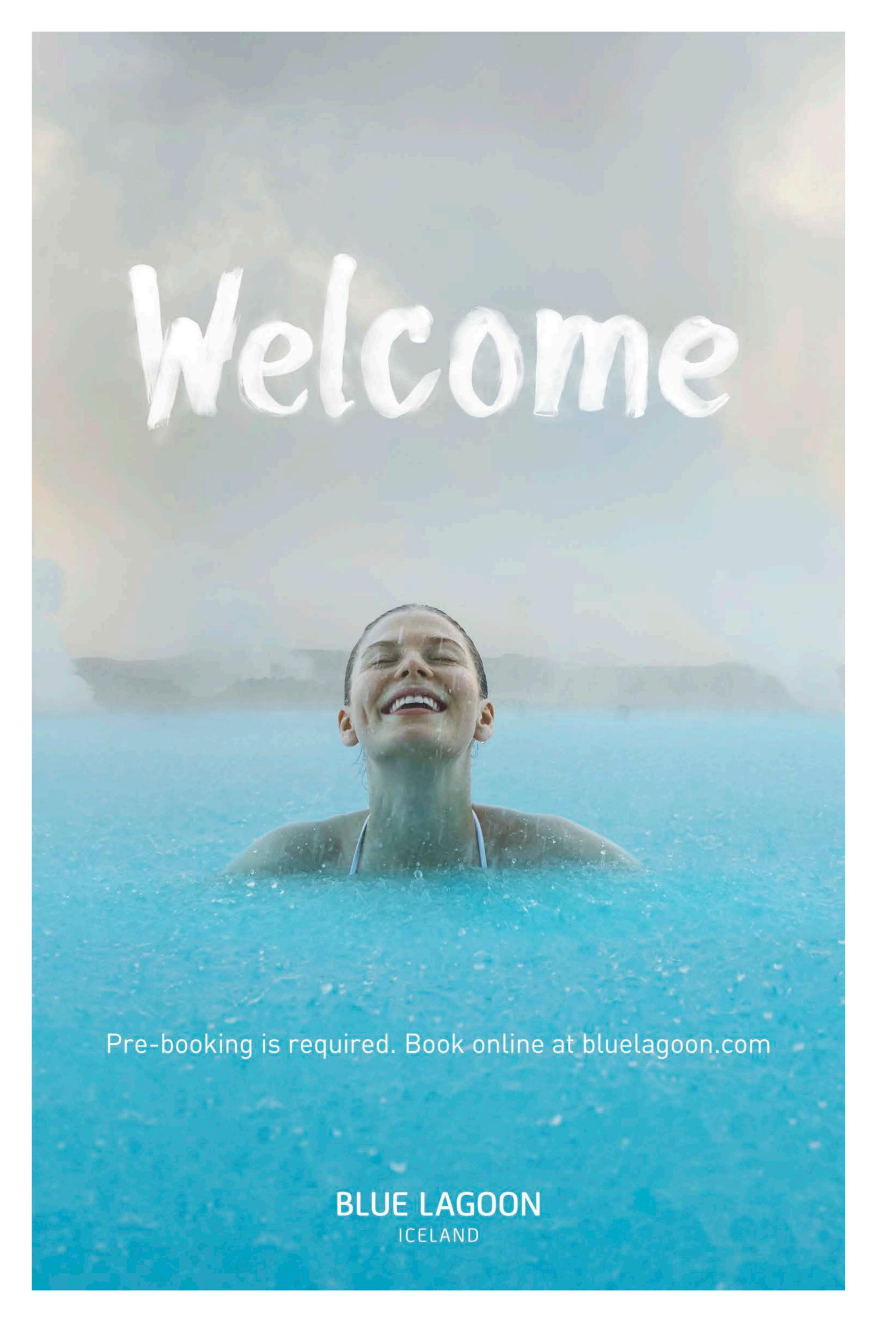
It is said that, at the dawn of time, before there was anything, there was just the gaping abyss of the Ginnun-



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BLUE LAGOON
ICELAND

Criticism over ethics



When asparagus reaches its ultimate form

Some activist groups in Iceland remain critical of the creation of an indoor pool near the sanctuary bay.

“We are grateful that the Sea Life Trust offers to give better life conditions to those two belugas than what they had in their aquarium in China,” Julie Lasserre, marine biologist and vice president of Sea Shepherd Iceland told Grapevine. The organization fears that due to the Westman Islands’ windy weather, the beluga whales might end up spending a large amount of time in indoor pools rather than the open bay. “We are afraid that they are going from a captive life to another captive life with a lot of stress in between.”

Bringing the whales that have been held in captivity could pose a threat to the biological pollution to the flora and fauna of Klettsvík Bay. That is why team of researchers and staff will closely monitor Little Grey and Little White in quarantine once they arrive.

“This is an animal welfare project,” explains Páll Marvin Jónsson, a marine biologist involved in the project since 2016 and a former town councilman of the Westman Islands. “We’ll only be bringing something back to the nature.”

Páll understands that Iceland, one of only three nations that allows legal whaling, is in a questionable position to

host the whale sanctuary. “We humans are contradictory in everything we do. But politics aside, this sanctuary is kind of a statement in what we’re headed to.”

The beluga sanctuary will also run an adjacent puffin rescue center, where puffin chicks will be

monitored and researched. There will also be a visitor and education centre, where visitors will be able to go out to the Klettsvík Bay on boat trips to see the Little Grey and Little White. Sea Life Trust assures that these small boat tours will be carefully monitored, and that visitors will not be allowed too close.

Sea Life Trust, whose overarching mission is to protect marine wildlife and their habitats, does not discount the possibility of adding more whales to the Klettsvík bay.

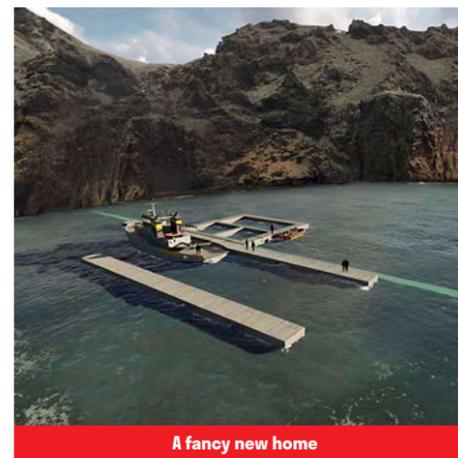
“We see this as an opportunity to work together,” Páll said. “We can do a lot of animal welfare research in the Westman Islands.”

Beluga Whales En Route To Iceland

World’s first whale sanctuary is preparing to welcome its first inhabitants from China

Little White started a year ago, and has included teaching the belugas to hold their breath underwater for longer, increasing their diet to help build up extra weight, and acclimatizing them with lower temperatures.

Klettsvík Bay was chosen because of its rich marine wildlife, and for its cold coastal waters that resemble the native sub-Arctic habitat of the belugas. Getting accustomed to colder waters of a natural sea environment is one of the main priorities for these whales, which are used to the enclosed pools in Shanghai.



A fancy new home

Words: Aliya Uteuova
Main Photo: Adobe stock

Two beluga whales are set to make a journey from China to Klettsvík bay, in Iceland’s Westman Islands. This month, the archipelago will house the first open sea beluga whale sanctuary in the world, but some are wary about transporting these whales from one form of enclosure to another.

Originally from Russian waters, Little Grey and Little White are 12-year-old female beluga whales, who were taken into captivity at a young age to perform at Shanghai’s Changfeng Ocean World Zoo.

The pair’s retirement from zoological entertainment is being orchestrated by the Sea Life Trust, a British environmental organization dedicated to the protection of marine wildlife. The multi-million pound project is being touted as “one of the biggest developments in captive whale and dolphin care and protection in decades.”

After the whales’ journey was postponed from April 16 due to bad weather, the belugas are finally set to make the 10,000 km, 30-hour journey from China to Iceland, travelling via plane, ferry and a specially outfitted truck before

arriving in the sanctuary off the coast of Heimaey. Once there, scientists will evaluate the mental and physical fitness of Little Grey and Little White.

“The belugas have individual personalities just like us,” Iker Wang, Head Trainer at Chengfeng Ocean World in Shanghai, said in a statement to the press. “While Little White is quite cautious and quieter, Little Grey is the opposite. She is brave and craves attention.”

“The belugas have individual personalities just like us.”

Adaptation is key

The average life-span of a beluga whale is 40-60 years, and there are an estimated 200,000 belugas in the Arctic waters around Greenland, North America and Russia. Belugas are amongst the few whale species that don’t have a dorsal fin on their back, making it easier for them to swim under sea ice.

“We are currently helping to prepare the belugas for relocation,” Tim Wang, Senior Curator at Changfeng Ocean World in Shanghai, said in a statement to the press. The initial preparations and training with Little Grey and

Into the wild

A man-made tank is the only environment these whales have known since their capture by Russian poachers. Their comfort around humans is one of the main reasons why they can’t be released into the wild.

In 2002, the famous killer whale Keiko was released into the wild after undergoing a five-year training at Klettsvík bay. A year later, the star of the film ‘Free Willy’ died of pneumonia.

Once in the wild, Keiko gravitated toward human sailors rather than other whales, highlighting one of the many risks of returning long-captive cetaceans to the wild.

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TRISA



Words: Hannah Jane Cohen
Photos: Juliette Rowland

Cell7's release concert is packed. The energy flows through the crowd, building them up with each verse until brutally releasing them once the song ends. Like a puppet master, she commands the room effortlessly.

"The energy was fire," Ragna Kjartansdóttir—Cell7 herself—says of the concert afterwards. But for her, this is just one notable performance. The first legend, the original rap star—you could call Cell7 or a lot of things—she is a professional and an Icelandic icon. There is truly no one who knows the rap scene better or who has endured like she has.

She was there in the beginning, and here she remains.

THE BEGINNING

A few days later, nostalgia takes over Ragna Kjartansdóttir's face. Her eyes mist up as a small smile tugs at her lips. Taking a sip of coffee, she pauses, lingering in a past long-gone. The artist, better known as rapper Cell7, is recalling the early days of the Icelandic rap scene, back when she entered it more than 20 years ago.

"There was one weekly radio show called 'The Kronik,'" she says. "The DJ's mother was a stewardess, so she always had the freshest vinyl from New York. You'd tune in weekly to hear the show and record it on a cassette tape and listen to it over and over." She laughs, diving into stories of how people would just

"My music surprises people. People that don't generally like rap music tend to like my music."

call in to freestyle and hang out with the hosts. The show is still on today, she explains, but it's not the same.

To be fair, not much is the same from the early days of Icelandic rap. The genre has exploded into the mainstream in recent years, and boom bap has been long forgotten in favour of trap. Albums have migrated from vinyl to SoundCloud, and most of the original artists have grown up, moved on and retired.

But Ragna never left. She got her start in 1996 as part of one of the first Icelandic rap groups, Subterranean, and in March 2019, released her second solo album, 'Is Anybody Listening?'

It's an apt title. Ragna is so humble that she often questions if people in the scene are still paying attention to her. That said, the response to the album—from glowing reviews to a packed release concert—has proven that, contrary to her worries, they never stopped.

A CHANCE MEETING

Ragna's rap career started with a chance meeting with brothers Magnús Jónsson and Karl Davíðsson at an open-mic night. They urged her to meet up with them and to make some music—something she had never done before. "It just fell in my lap," she explains. "I listened to a lot of rap and hip hop. I was consumed by it, but I never thought of myself as an artist."

It was the harsh modus operandi of the genre that initially converted her to the church of hip hop. "The whole vibe. The positive vibe. The nitty-gritty vibe," she muses. "The attitude and hard beats were something that you didn't hear anywhere else." Artists like A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, Common, and Das

EFX were particularly formative for the then-emerging rapper. "You can find everything under the moon in regards to rap," she adds, raising her eyebrows.

Ragna took Magnús and Karl up on their invitation, and the trio worked on some tunes, going on to form the group Subterranean, along with Frew Elfineh. Ragna laughs as she remembers their first collaborative effort. "It was actually in Icelandic," she says. This is in contrast to their other works, which are all in English. "It was about us missing the bus or something. Very childish!"

At that time, the rap scene was the opposite of what it is today. Built around credibility, you had to prove yourself as a true fan before you were let in. "It was a closed group. You had to know your shit to be legit," Ragna explains. "Everyone was watching each other. Who is that? Does he know the songs? Then you'd spot people that weren't really into it." That said, she underscores that once you had proved yourself, it became an accepting and friendly environment. Like all subcultures, they only had each other.

PURE MAGNETIZM

In 1997, Subterranean dropped their first album, 'Central Magnetizm.' Full of bare bones drums, vinyl scratches, bounce, boom bap and pure East Coast old school vibes, the effort is a booming tribute to the golden age of hip hop, Icelandic style. It has since

become a collectors piece amongst Icelandic hip-hop heads.

After the release of 'Central Magnetizm,' Subterranean resonated among Icelanders, and were awarded a level of fame they couldn't possibly have anticipated. "We opened up for the Fugees, for De La Soul," says Ragna. "Subterranean was not only a band—they're people's connection to that era. Icelanders remember us, and that's also why people are so fond of the idea of Subterranean."

Looking back at that time in her career brings up mixed emotions in Ragna. The level of fame Subterranean achieved was something she had never anticipated, and maybe, she thinks, she won't top. "We were the underdogs. We weren't backed by any label," she explains. "It's twisted, though, because as an adult I know the measurement of success is not the same." She pauses to unpack her thoughts. "It's not fair to have the same measurement of success as a musician now that I did as a teenager who came up with one of the first hip-hop acts here. We can't measure ourselves to those standards. Things are different."

A FEATURE?

Ragna's modesty is ever-present, bordering on self-deprecation. She smiles at the attention Subterranean received, but she quickly underscores it with the admission, "We never played abroad, though," as if that, for an Icelandic rap group in 1997, was expected.

Perhaps her intense humility is due to the fact that the changes in the rap community have been so profound, even alienating, to her. What was once a subculture is now mainstream, and what Ragna originally knew as rap music in the Subterranean era has changed drastically. In fact, she says that she doesn't easily connect to many of the modern hip hop styles.

Rap music, Ragna emphasises, used to focus primarily on lyrics. "You could nod your head to something with meaning," she explains. Nowadays, she emphasises, it's more about emotions. "It's a lot about feelings, a vibe. It's a whole genre bursting with artists who have their emotions on their sleeve." Ragna doesn't relate, but she admits it might be an age thing. "I'm older and they're young," she laughs. "They're going through things, like young people do."

Ragna's modesty is so great that at one point, she casually asks, "So a feature in the Grapevine, is that a page or what?" The idea of her being the focus of the issue, much less the cover star, had never even occurred to her.

THE ORIGINAL

But it's Ragna's divergence from mainstream Icelandic rap that has given her a widespread and devout audience. Her name demands a level of respect that perhaps no other Icelandic rapper's can. She's the original. "I think my music surprises people," she says. "People that don't generally like rap music tend to like my music."

After Subterranean's breakup around 2000, Ragna moved to New York City to study audio recording. She spent her time soaking up New York hip hop culture and took a break from making music. After moving back to Iceland, she had a son and spent her time focusing on her audio engineering career. It was only when a friend suggested she apply for a government arts grant to record her solo album that Ragna began to dream up new music.

Ragna was doubtful that anyone would want to fund an album by a female rapper, but, to her surprise, she ended up receiving four grants. "This was shocking to me," she explains. "It was shocking that there was support for this."

After reuniting with her producer from Subterranean, they hurried back into the studio and released 'Cellf' in 2013.

DANCE TO LOVE TO POWER

Recording a solo album granted Ragna the freedom to be versatile and musically diverse. "On that album, there was everything from party dance hall to love songs to songs about empowerment," she says, smiling brightly. "It was everything I liked. When I was in the mood, I made this song, then another, and I just hoped at the end of the day it'd be an album."

And an album it was. 'Cellf' was well-received by fans and critics in Iceland and beyond, proving once and for all that Ragna was no one-trick pony. On each

track, her battle rap attitude melded seamlessly with the more modern beats, blending into something resembling a melange of Diplo and classic hip-hop, fronted by a badass MC. There was nothing else like it in Iceland—or anywhere else.

THE REBIRTH

At that time, the Icelandic rap renaissance had begun. Artists like Emmsjé Gauti, Úlfur Úlfur and Gísli Pálmi had started dropping their first hits in Icelandic—tracks that would eventually become the formative notes of the modern Icelandic rap scene. While Ragna's album came out around the same time, she bucked the trend du jour and decided to write all of her songs in English.

She bursts out laughing when asked about this. "The only subject I've ever failed in my life was Icelandic, and even then the teacher was a friend of a friend," she says. "But also, hip hop and rap have always been in English for me. It's like opera and Italian. It's just right."

Re-entering the scene alongside a new generation of rappers was a strange experience for Ragna, especially when meeting their fans, who skewed young. "It was weird because many didn't know me. I'd say, 'yeah, I was in a band in '96,' and they'd say 'I was four years old in '96,'" grins Ragna. "No wonder they didn't know who I was! Many didn't relate to me, but others still did."

WHO ISN'T LISTENING?

After the hubbub surrounding 'Cellf,' Ragna took another break in order to have her second child. Five years later, she teamed up with producer Fonetik Simbol to make 'Is Anybody Listening?' After talking with Ragna long enough, the title takes on a life of its own. It's clearly supposed to be humorous, but in light of her thoughts on the current Icelandic rap scene, you wonder just how serious she's being.

The album represented a number of firsts for the artist, with Ragna sitting in the producer's chair for two songs, and singing on others. "I know a lot of fantastic singers who could do it way better than me," she explains. "But I had to trust that I was trying to portray a certain vibe that only I could do. For me, that was more important than singing perfectly."

'Is Anybody Listening?' also marked an ideological departure. Sure, it resembles her other works lyrically, containing both party bangers and more serious tracks—but for the first time, Ragna felt like she was looking at rap from an adult perspective. "Rap is a battle genre. It's an egotistical battle genre," Ragna laughs. "But I'm trying to be grown up about it in a different way. Letting things be what I feel they should be, rather than what others think."

This DGAF attitude allowed her to make something that felt wholly herself. She's happy with the result, but the question of where she sits within the Icelandic rap scene persists. Regardless of her success, she still feels alienated from other performers.

"We as human beings are herd animals," she explains. "We want to be part of a group. But for me as a musician, I think, where is my group? Where are my followers? Why are young people not completely connecting?"

Immediately after revealing her worries though, she sighs contentedly. "But I'm still doing my own thing, which I'm happy about. Hip hop and rap are the most popular genres right now, and I'm still not a part of the mainstream. These two elements are fighting with each other inside me."

The album's title comes to mind once again. It's not only 'is anyone listening,' but also: 'if you're not listening, why not?'

THE OG

Two things that are inseparable from Ragna's career and legacy are her title as the first female rapper in Iceland, as well as being the first person of colour (POC) on the scene. She's constantly cited as an inspiration for established artists and women just breaking in to the genre.

Interestingly enough, Ragna never considered being a woman or POC as a handicap when she began her career. In fact, she says it probably helped her.

"The advantage of that was being remembered," she explains. "A lot of people still remember me, but they don't remember my bandmates." That said, she admits she never wanted to be front and centre for her appearance. "It was nice, but at the same time, I really just wanted to blend in. I wanted to be one of the boys. But I come from a really tough mother and she was just like, 'Stop whining!'"

Thinking about being a visible minority in the scene also bothers her for another reason: "It bugs the crap out of me. I don't want any credit based on my gender. Why would you say I am your favourite female rapper?"

"I don't rap with my genitals. I get it, people are trying to be nice, but it pisses me off. You're not doing anybody a favour. I'm the first female rapper, yes, but I'm also a legit musician amongst the others," she says. "I think people should focus on what they like, and not why."

She smiles. It's clear she's not dissing the idea of feminist, activist rap, but rather that the hip hop head wants to be remembered for her contribution to the genre, not her gender.

BATTLE RAP FOREVER

"Hip hop and rap are the most popular genres right now, and I'm still not a part of the mainstream."

Regardless of her worries, Ragna is excited by the future of Icelandic rap and hip hop. She cites GDRN and Huginn as particular favourites, and commends the efforts of Emmsjé Gauti and Úlfur Úlfur as well. "Everyone is trying their hardest to do good things," she says.

Now that 'Is Anyone Listening?' is out, Ragna plans on playing live more often. Her recent release concert was packed, a fact that makes her somewhat characteristically blush. Her current dream is to do what Subterranean never could—to finally play abroad.

Above all else, she humbly appreciates the level of respect she's given as one of the creators of Icelandic hip hop. "Respect is nice, and it's not a given. It makes you feel like you're doing something legit. I can be judgmental and harsh sometimes," she bursts out laughing. "But hey, I'm an old school battle rap person!"

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We Love Techno!!!

Skaðablót

April 27th - 20:00 - Bió Paradís - 2,000 ISK

So there's no Sónar and Reykjavík dancers are reeling. But fret not, Plútó and NAVA have collected some of Sónar's hotter bookings for a night of techno and views at Bió Paradís. Árni Skeng will perform with Hessele Audio's Bruce, Bjarki will duel with VIDE01, and Plútó, Hermígerill, Örvar Smáráson, Sólveig Matthildur and more will flesh out a program of compelling beats, following a program of visuals earlier in the evening. **SP**



Werk It

Crescendo

April 27th - 20:30 - Tjarnarbió - 3,900 ISK

The award-winning Crescendo returns to the Tjarnarbió stage for one evening. This three-women dance performance explores an ever-changing flow of movements while highlighting the history of female physical work. The crescendo of the performance is in three women working to become one, sometimes in silence, sometimes in turbulence. **AU**



Everyone Say Mao

Erró: Mao's World Tour

May 1st-Jan. 5th - Hafnarhús

Between 1972 and 1980, Erró painted over 130 paintings, with two images of different origins against each other: Chinese propaganda posters of Mao Zedong and Western tourist pictures from famous sites. Erró pictures Chairman Mao on a triumphant tour around the world when in reality Mao only made two trips out of China. It's a sarcastic reference to the wave of Maoism caught by Western artists and intellectuals following the Paris student riots in May 1968. **AU**

CULTURE NEWS

Comedy Show

See "It's Been A While With Jono Duffy" on May 3rd at 20:00 at Tjarnarbió. Tickets are 2,900 ISK



Confirmed: Australian comic alive and well

Jono Duffy Is Not Dead

It's been a while, but the Australian comedian is back

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen

Photo: Art Bicnick

"Imagine that you and I were out drinking and I took you back to my place for an after party, where I shared all the stories from the last year or so," says Jonathan Duffy, about his newest stand-up show. "Basically, it's a drunken catch-up in reverse."

Shooting the shit

The comedian, who refers to himself as the only gay Australian comedian in Iceland, notoriously does one solo show a year. Last year, it was "I Wouldn't Date Me Either," a humorous ride into his post-long term relationship dating life, where he had to learn about Grindr, Tinder, and the perils of dating Euro-

pean men. The year before that, he did a musical cabaret about his experience moving to Iceland from Australia, aptly titled, "Australiana."

This new offering, "It's Been a While With Jono Duffy," is different, the comedian emphasises.

"It's very free," he explains. "I don't stick with any specific theme. It's just me shooting the shit about all the things I've been up to in the past year."

And the past year has, admittedly, been a doozy for the performer. "I attempted to get a TV show on the air, went to visit my family in Australia to introduce them to my (very) French boyfriend, and signed up for a half-marathon after doing almost no exercise

for four years," says Jono, laughing. "I also did a lot of soul searching and realised that I will always be a somewhat charming cynical douchebag who's just plodding along in the crazy industry we call show business."

Gay & pop-culture filled

When we talk, Jono is on tour in Europe with Hugleikur Dagsson. It's been an eye-opening month, as he's gotten to perform in many cities he never expected to.

"I've had the fascinating experience of telling my gay, pop-culture filled jokes to crowds in countries where being gay is typically frowned upon," he says, grinning. "Places like Serbia, Croatia and a bunch of other countries that end in 'ia.'"

He's also become intimately acquainted with the realities of life on tour. "Sometimes you get to be on the top of the Austrian alps, other times you have to share a bed with the guy you're opening for," he laughs.

Bedazzled leotards

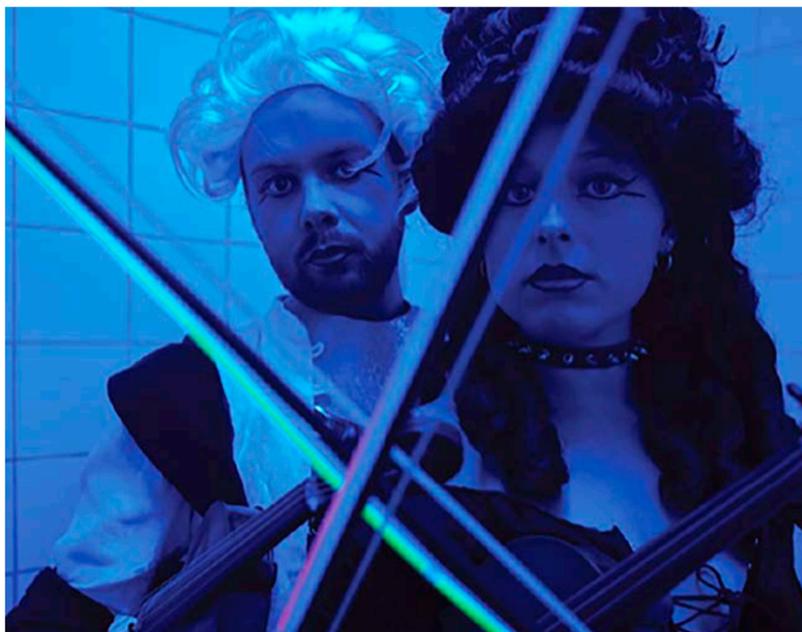
Jono has always been open about the difficulties of carving out a career in comedy. He has often felt more like the guy who was available, rather than the guy the crowd really wanted. It's because of this, he explains, that he's radically rooting for Miss Vanjie on the current season of RuPaul's Drag Race. "She's had to work so hard because she wasn't everyone's first choice, which I identify with," he says. "So when I see her turning it out, it's a bit of a 'This is what it sounds like when doves cry' moment for me."

While Jono usually forgoes Vanjie's characteristic bedazzled leotards, it's clear he is, like her, a fan-favourite, whether he recognises it or not. "It's been a year, and I thought it was time to have a bit of a catch up," he says. "Just to let everyone know I'm not dead." **👉**

ELECTRIC DREAMS

Music

Find the 'Geigen Galaxies #1' interview on the Mengi's Soundcloud, and follow them at facebook.com/pg/geigengalaxy



Neon Lights & Future Sights

Unconventional Icelandic duo Geigen are taking the violin into the future

Words: Alexander Jean Le Sage de Fontenay

Photo: Magnús Andersen

The distinction between techno and classical music has in recent years started to blur. Aphex Twin's 2003 remix of Philip Glass' orchestral version of David Bowie's 'Heroes' distills the emotional intensity of Bowie's vocals even further than the 1977 original. Local experimental techno duo Kiasmos continually explores the area between

the acoustic and synth-heavy electro pop. Two years ago, American techno-pioneer Jeff Mills released 'Planets,' an electronic-classical concept album paying tribute to Gustav Holst's 1916 orchestral score 'The Planets.'

The new kids on the electronic-classical block are Geigen, a local techno-violin duo whose members come

from two disparate worlds. Artist Gígja Jónsdóttir and composer Pétur Eggertsson have many years of violin training between them and share a desire for experimentation, brought on by a stagnated music education system.

Having shelved their violins for a while, Gígja and Pétur have now brought the instrument back into their work. The duo told Electric Dreams in a written statement that: "Geigen are rebels against the classical image of the violin, it is the need to break out of traditional systems, it embraces the violin and attempts to bring it into the future." They stretch the sonic world of the acoustic instrument which they feed through a slew of effects and filters, mixed over techno.

Geigen's concerts are experimental, constantly developing multi-sensory experiences that they call 'The Geigen Galaxies.' These concerts also venture into participatory installation territory, as audience members take on the role of passengers and fellow travellers on 'Spaceship Nightclub.'

The first Geigen Galaxies was performed at Mengi in January, and the second earlier this month at Vörblót 2019 at Tjarnarbió, as part of the Reykjavík Dance Festival. Geigen is currently working on releasing their first song and music video and are planning the next Geigen Galaxies as well. All hail the violin. **👉**



Revolutionising Reykjavik streetwear

Get The Gopnik Look

Kvartýra №49 brings post-Soviet streetwear to Iceland

Words: Aliya Uteuova Photos: Art Bicnick

Capitalism meets Post-Soviet fashion

For decades, gopniks—the rough street boys of '90s Russia—were frowned upon. If you grew up in the former Soviet Union, you knew to avoid these men, seen squatting outside apartment blocks, spitting sunflower seeds on the walkway. The go-to style of gopniks were their striped fake-Adidas track-suits and Puma flip flops.

Today, post-Soviet streetwear is having a renaissance moment in fashion,

and the stripes and flip flops are back. “French brands have been doing fashion showrooms for hundreds of years,” Nata says. “People have seen Italian fashion forever. The big brands that influence fashion have been stable for so many years, and they’re afraid to change too much. Meanwhile, new brands in Russia—like Goshka Rubchinskiy—have

nothing to fear.”

Untapped inspo

Árni views Russian urban fashion as an untapped source of inspiration for Western Europeans. Accustomed to only seeing Russians as movie vil-

Clothing Store

Visit Kvartýra №49 at Laugavegur 49, or online at kvartyra49.is.

Tucked away from the ubiquitous puffin stores and coffee shops of Laugavegur, there’s an oasis at the end of a bright yellow alleyway. There, behind the main drag, is a fish processing centre turned bauhaus artists’ space that today houses a hidden concept store, with a curated selection of the latest streetwear trends for discerning Icelanders. Welcome to Kvartýra №49.

“We wanted to make this place like a living room in your friend’s apartment,” says Natalia “Nata” Sushchenko, the store’s co-creator. Indeed, the word “kvartira” in Nata’s native Russian translates to “apartment.”

“There are clothes, good music, good coffee—and all that’s missing is a carpet on the wall,” quips Nata’s husband and the store’s co-owner Árni Guðjónsson, referencing the quintessentially Soviet decor choice of hanging a rug up on the wall. Whether it’s for decoration,

warmth, or sound insulation, no one really knows.

Taking the leap

Nata and Árni are a self-professed husband and wife dream team. Throughout their relationship, music and fashion has tied them together like a red thread. They’ve defied borders, explored new cultures, and overcome their considerable height difference to be together.

They met at a university party in Barcelona in 2012, and three years later, Árni proposed to Nata on his birthday. After graduating from the Design and Fashion School in Barcelona, Nata worked on a clothing collection, and Árni worked on music with his band Of Monsters and Men. Then, in 2017, they decided to move back to Árni’s home country.

“I was really curious what this nation

was,” Nata says. “At first the language sounded alien, because of its unusual sounds. Iceland felt so refreshing. It made me see that this is how it’s supposed to be—to live as humans with nature.”

When Nata moved to Reykjavik, she rented a spot in a co-working space for her freelance design work. Just when she finished setting up her studio, the other tenants no longer wanted to continue, so Nata took over. “I cleaned it up and put in new tables,” she says. “But despite paying rent monthly, people would only come in once or twice a month. Fed up with taking care of this underutilised space, Árni and Nata decided to turn it into a concept store.

“The big brands are afraid to change too much. New brands in Russia have nothing to fear.”

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lains, Russian style was largely overlooked—and that’s precisely why post-Soviet street style is so intriguing today. “Russia and Ukraine definitely became the places to look at,” Árni says. “There’s a boom of creativity happening—they’re exploring the undiscovered freedom that they finally have their hands on.”

Kvartýra №49 has played a pivotal role in shifting the spotlight to Eastern European and Russian designers in Iceland. While knitted sweaters, folksy patterns, flowing minimal shapes—and, for men, beards—are still in the heart of Icelandic fashion, Nata thinks the younger generation of Icelanders are shifting away from that.

“Now I see younger guys shave their heads and wear Volchok,” Nata says, referring to a Russian streetwear brand carried in Kvartýra №49, that’s known for its use of bold Cyrillic typography. “When I see Icelanders dressed like Russian guys, I realise that they actually don’t look that much different.”

Regular customers of Kvartýra №49 could be transported to Moscow or Kiev and blend right in—proving that fashion is capable of erasing borders.

Buyers at large

Since opening a year ago, Nata and Árni have learned a great deal about running a clothing store. “Now we

have a better idea of what Icelanders purchase,” Nata says. She realises that the colours and styles she gravitates toward might not be what her customers want. “I would buy the things that I love, but not necessarily things that will sell. Gradually, we learned what customers will like, and what will fit them. It’s all about separating personal taste.”

“I trust our brands,” Nata says, referring to Kvartýra №49’s top selling Russian brands such as

make your own t-shirt on a sewing machine, you’d understand that this job should cost more than five dollars.” Nata’s own brand, Sushchenko, is produced in an atelier in Kiev.

Work life balance

For Árni and Nata, running a business together feels like an extension of their daily life. “We are our own bosses,” Árni says. “It’s a never-ending task. There’s always something more you can do. If we have to do taxes on a Sunday evening, we do the taxes on a Sunday evening.”

One of the challenges for Kvartýra №49 is competing with souvenir shops downtown. “We cater to Icelanders, and it can be challenging to get their attention,” Nata says. “Big advertisements cost half your yearly budget, that’s why small businesses always have to hustle.”

The Kvartýra №49 space is also frequently used for creative arts events and music nights for bands, including their own project Pale Moon, which recently released an EP that made it to Spotify’s editorial playlist.

“Two creative people in the business can be a dangerous combination,” finishes Nata. “That’s why we always have to push each other. I don’t think I would ever have done this alone. Together we are a power couple.”

Sputnik 1985, Volchok, and Syndicate. “They just send their collection, and some people buy the whole look from head to toe.”

The couple’s number one priority is that the clothes have to be produced ethically. “There is so much suffering behind \$5 t-shirts,” Nata says. “For me, it’s painful to look at this, because if you’ve ever tried to



Prettiest shelf award



Awaiting a mannequin delivery, the owners take matters into their own hands

BREAKFAST, BRUNCH, LUNCH, DINNER

Your journey to the Golden Circle starts at Þrastalundur



Lovely Restaurant with a Stunning View! We stopped @ Þrastalundur on our way to Geysir (40 min away). Everything about this place was just magical - the food, the coffee, the view and the team. Highly recommend for anyone who wants to rest in a very picturesque scenery and enjoy truly Icelandic hospitality! - *Aga J. - Tripadvisor*.

Food was so good, we came back twice! We really enjoyed eating at Þrastalundur Restaurant. We tried the lamb soup, fresh brook trout, and leg of lamb. It was a Sunday, and they had a lovely two-piece band playing. The staff really made us feel at home, and gave us some travel suggestions for the Golden Circle. We enjoyed it so much, we came back the next night for pizza, soup, and beer. - *Kim H. - Tripadvisor*.

More than outstanding pizza Lovely restaurant situated in very scenic spot on a river bank. In summer one can see people fly fishing. The service was very good. Food was good and the atmosphere good. Will definitely go there a.s.a.p. Old but renovated in good taste. Brunch yummie. Thank you. I loved it - *Sigga Hallgr. - Tripadvisor*.

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ÞRASTALUNDUR

SINCE 1928



“Slather on the delicious house-made tomatillo and chilli sauces for some extra zing.”

Tacos in Iceland aren't always great. But hey it gives us something to taco about

The Taco Takeover

Mexican food is en vogue in Reykjavík—but is it any good?

Words: John Rogers, Hannah Jane Cohen, Shruthi Basappa
Photos: Art Bicnick

Ask any Reykjavík foodie about the restaurant they wish would open in 101, and you'll quickly spot a pattern. First place usually goes to an authentic Korean or Chinese restaurant. Next in line is a decent Mexican place. Lately, a few new contenders have emerged to fill the taco-shaped gap in Iceland's culinary life. However, they tend to cater to the spice-averse Icelandic palate. So—are they any good?



Fuego Taqueria

Hlemmur Mathöll

Fuego Taqueria bills their fare as authentic LA-style Tex-Mex tacos. This means eye-catching black bean taco shells and non-standard toppings—

but fear not, purists, because Fuego's tacos explode with authentic, fresh flavours. The deep-fried fish and prawn iterations are juicy and delicious, and the chicken, mole and vegan versions don't disappoint. Slather on the delicious house-made tomatillo and chilli sauces for some extra zing. The best in town. **JR**



RIO Reykjavik

Geirsgata 9

The words “broccoli taco” might elicit thoughts of an overworked Mom trying to get her kids to eat vegetables—but they should, instead, remind you of Rio Reykjavik. Their broccoli taco is, without hyperbole, delectable.

A melange of sesame, ginger, apple, garlic and more, it's a meal that'll make you happy to hop on the vegan bandwagon. Don't forget the sweet potato fries. **HJC**



Culiacan

Suðurlandsbraut 4a & Mathöll Höfða

If you have a big appetite, Culiacan is the place for you. While some taco joints skimp on the fillings, Culiacan does the opposite, creating monstrous wraps buried under a heap of fresh tomato, lettuce and sauces. It isn't the spiciest taco, and don't even try to pick it up—but it'll fill your belly, and then some. **JR**



Chido Mexican Grill

Ægisiða 123

The Chido Mexican Grill is Mexican in name only. The white masa tortillas and fresh pico de gallo pictured on our plate by gummy flour tortillas with burrito-sized fillings, old tomato salsa, and sadness. The jarritos are the only thing I'd go back for—also the only thing they don't cook from scratch in-house. **SB**



Burro

Veltusund 1

Burro is a sit-down restaurant with a Mexican-influenced menu. There's a somewhat underworked guacamole, served in a tiny bowl (we asked for extra limes, but the waiter forgot). Their mini-tacos are about the size of a beer mat, and come in pairs—meaning you're paying around 500 ISK per mouthful. They're nice enough, but the poor value for money leaves a bad taste in your mouth. **JR**



Bastard Brew & Food

Vegamótastígur

With five well-conceived recipes on offer, Bastard's tacos are complemented by house-brewed beers in a convivial pub atmosphere. The breads are served smokey from the grill, and each taco has nice touches, from the dark and juicy beef brisket, to the fresh and tasty tuna, kale and dill mayo version. They're well-priced and satisfying, but come wholly without spice—take your own hot sauce. **JR**



Tacoson

Mæðragarðurinn

We haven't eaten at Reykjavík's newest taco truck yet: but only because it'll open its hatch to the public on June 1st. However, we thought we'd give them a shout out, as their Instagram account—@tacoson101—shows delicious-looking coriander bread, and a genuine excitement about Mexican food. Stay tuned! **JR**



BEST OF REYKJAVÍK

Best Goddamn Store

Winner: Fischer

Fischersund 3

For most Best of Reykjavík categories, one of the first questions out of the mouths of panel members was “does Fischer qualify?” From packaging-free shampoo to frequent art openings to a special perfume section, the store—which has only been around for a little more than one year—serves up a sensory, highly aesthetic shopping adventure. “They are paving the way for a new type of store in Reykjavík,” the panel determined, praising the stores out-of-the-box thinking, and their careful focus on customer experience. “This is a place I barely want to mention,” one panellist continued. “It's so good I don't want it to win and get crowded!”



Runners Up: Góði Hirðirinn

Fellsmúli 28

Góði Hirðirinn, or “The Good Shepherd,” looks like a cross between a stylish hoarder's house and an eclectic garage sale. Take an afternoon to rummage around this Aladdin's cave in search of hidden gems, which could be anything from old Icelandic books to blue leather armchairs to a bag of old toys.



Drekkinn

Njálsgata 23

“Drekkinn is the last ‘sjoppa’ in 101 Reykjavík,” one panellist declared. “It hasn't changed over the years, but it has remained relevant.” This grungy convenience store/vape palace/bodega/hamburger joint is a remnant of pre-tourism Reykjavík. “That hamburger smell really takes you back,” they concluded. “I hope it always stays the same.”

April 26th—May 9th

In Your Pocket

Reykjavík Map

Places We Like

Best Of Reykjavík

Perfect Day

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



Words:
**Anna Margrét
Björnsson**
Photo:
**Ásta
Kristjánsdóttir**

Anna Margrét Björnsson

Anna Margrét is a journalist and publicist about town and author of an award winning children's book.

First thing

On my perfect day in Reykjavík I wake up in the arms of my love and we are soon joined for a cuddlefest by my seven-year-old daughter and our Abyssinian kitten, Amon Dúll, whilst the sun shines through our bedroom window. I love to sip a cup of Earl Grey in bed to get my head together for the day ahead. This morning's soundtrack would be Ennio Morricone's Italian film scores to brighten my mood.

Mid morning

Given that it's a day off work, I would head to the swimming pool with the family, my favourite pools being either **Sundhöllin** or **Laugardalslaug**. The former is good if you just want to soak in a hot tub and the latter is great for doing laps—plus it has a great slide for children.

Lunch

A pool trip makes you hungry, so I'd head to one of my favourite hang-outs, **Hlemmur Mathöll**, for lunch, either for something amazing at the Michelin-mentioned **Skál** or for a delicious hot-sauce doused taco at **Fuego Taqueria**.

Afternoon

A trip to my great-great uncle's monument of a museum, the **Einar Jónsson Museum**, is next on the agenda. This place is a firm favourite, the sculptures are so inspiring and the building is surrounded in a veil of mystery. The sculpture garden there is a lovely spot to relax in peace and quiet. A visit to **Kattakafihúsið**, the cat café on Bergstaðastræti, would be a must. It's a wonderful pink haven, where you can relax with a cup of coffee and there are five resident cats curled up on bookshelves or customers' laps. The café serves wonderful cupcakes, vegan sandwiches and pastel hued macarons.

In the evening

In the early evening, my boyfriend Jón and I would meet our friends for

happy hour at **Hlemmur Square** hotel. It's my home away from home in Reykjavík and it's very dear to me. It's a combination of a hotel and a hostel and they have a super cosy lounge and library where you can chill out with friends or have dinner. I would order a First Lady on tap or really anything by Lady Brewery, the best beer in Iceland.

In the evening

I'd cross the road from Hlemmur Square for a cheap and delicious curry at **Mai Thai Bistro** and then head out for a cocktail at **Systir** at Hverfisgata 12, a super hip and atmospheric restaurant and bar with a David Lynch-ian feel to it.

Afternoon

In the late hours I would go to catch a good band playing somewhere, preferably containing one or more of my many talented friends, downtown or in a warehouse at **Grandi** harbour. It's a real pleasure that beneath the somewhat vapid, bubblegum surface of Iceland's mainstream music there's a lot going on in the underground scene, plenty of electronica and dark-wave. Even rock and roll is still alive. 🇮🇸



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Venues	Museums & Galleries
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Austur Austurstræti 7 D3	ART67 Laugavegur 67 F7 Open daily 9-21
American Bar Austurstræti 8 D3	ASI Art Gallery Freyjúgata 41 G6 Open Tue-Sun 13-17
Andrými Bergþórugata 20 G6	Aurora Reykjavík Grandagarður 2 B1 Open 09-21
B5 Bankastræti 5 E4	Asgrímur Jónsson Museum Bergstaðastr. 74 G4 July 8-Sep 1, Mon-Fri
Bar Ananas Klappargistigur 28 E5	Berg Contemporary Klappargistigur 16 E5 Tu-F 11-17, Sat 13-17
Bió Paradís Hverfisgata 54 E5	The Culture House Hverfisgata 15 E5 Open daily 10-17
Bjarni Fel Austurstræti 20 E4	The Einar Jónsson Museum Eiríksgata G5 Open Tue-Sun 10-17
Bravó Laugavegur 22 E5	Ekkisens Bergstaðast. 25b F4
Boston Laugavegur 28b E5	Galleri List Skipholt 50A H10 M-F 11-18, Sat 11-16
Dillon Laugavegur 30 E5	Hafnarborg Strandgata 34, 220 D3 Open Wed-Mon 12-17
Dubliner Naustin 1-3 D3	Hitt Húsið Pósthússtræti 3-5 D4
English Pub Austurstræti 12 D3	Hverfissgalleri Hverfisgata 4 D4 Tu-Fri 13-17, Sat 14-17
Gaukurinn Tryggvagata 22 D3	i8 Gallery Tryggvagata 16 D3 Tu-Fri 11-18, Sat 13-17
Hard Rock Café Lækjargata 2a D3	The Penis Museum Laugavegur 116 F8 Open daily 10-18
Hressó Austurstræti 20 D3	Kirsuþerjatréð Vesturgata 4 D3 M-F 10-18, Sat-Sun 10-17
Húrra Naustin D3	Kling & Bang Grandagarður 20 A4 W-Sun 14-18, Th 12-21
	Listastofan Hringbraut 119 A4 Open Wed-Sat 13-17
	Living Art Museum Grandagarður 20 A4 Tu-Sun 12-18, Th 12-21
	Mokka Kaffi Skólavörðustígur 3A E5 Open daily 9-18:30
	Museum of Design and Applied Art Garðatorg 1 E5 Open Tu-Sun 12-17
	The National Gallery of Iceland Frikirkjuvegur 7 F3 Open daily 10-17
	The National Museum Sudurgata 41 G2 Open daily 10-17
	The Nordic House Sturluggata 5 H2 Thu-Tu 11-17, W 11-20
	Hafnarhús Tryggvagata 17 D3 Open 10-17, Thu 10-22
	Kjarvalsstaðir Flókagata 24 H8 Open daily 10-17
	Ásmundarsafn Sigtún D3 Open daily 10-17
	Reykjavík City Library Tryggvagata 15 D3 Mon-Thu 10-19, Fri 11-18, Sat-Sun 13-17
	Árbæjarsafn Kistuhylur 4 D3 Open daily 9-18
	The Settlement Exhibition Aðalstræti 16 D3 Open daily 9-18
	Reykjavík Museum of Photography Tryggvagata 15 D3 Mon-Thu 10-18, Fri 11-18, Sat-Sun 13-18
	Saga Museum Grandagarður 2 B2 Open Mon-Fri 10-16
	Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum Leugarnestangi 70 D3 Open Tu-Sun 14-17
	SÍM Hafnarstræti 16 D3 Open Mon-Fri 10-16
	Tveir Hrafnar Baldursgata 12 G4 Open Fri-Sat 13-16
	Wind & Weather Window Gallery Hverfisgata 37 E5

Vital Info



Useful Numbers

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

Post Offices

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

Pharmacies

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

Opening Hours - Bars & Clubs

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

Opening Hours - Shops & Banks

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

Swimming Pools

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

Public Toilets

Public toilets in the centre can be found inside the green-poster covered towers located at Hlemmur, Ingólfstorg, by Hallgrímskirkja, by Reykjavík Art Museum, Lækjargata and by Eymundsson on Skólavörðustígur. Toilets can also be found inside the Reykjavík City Hall and the Reykjavík Library. **Public Transport**
Most buses run every 20-30 min
Fare: 460 ISK adults, 220 ISK children. Buses run from 07-24:00, and 10-04:30 on weekends. More info: www.bus.is.

A



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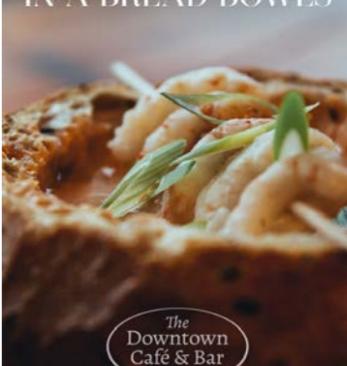
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The Map

Get the bigger, more detailed version of The Reykjavík Grapevine City Map at your nearest hotel or guesthouse, with selections from our Best-Of awards, vital info, downtown bus stops and a wider view of the city.

Dining

1. Grillmarkaðurinn

Lækjargata 2a

The tasting menus with produce sourced from local purveyors have been a hit with diners since Grill Market opened its doors. We suggest choosing one of the set menus and letting the chefs go to town.

2. Le Kock

Tryggvagata 14

Despite their fast-expansion and subsequent opening of the one main outpost at their current location, Le Kock's burgers have, thankfully, remained consistent. The house-made potato rolls hold their own until the very last bite. No soggy bottoms here. Insider tip: their veggie burger (vegan optional) gives meat patties a serious run for their money.

3. Tapas Barinn

Vesturgata 3b

Tapas Barinn may not be faithful to the Spanish definition of a tapas bar, but what they do capture well is the atmosphere and liveliness of tapas. The selection is huge, spanning local (langoustine, puffin, lamb) as well as more global fare. And it's delicious. If you're looking for a place where the food and drinks keep coming and the service never falters, look no further.

4. Reykjavík Roasters

Kárástígur 1

With an in-house roaster, a shiny, handmade Synesso and a regularly trained staff, this place serves the best coffee in town. Drop by for some 24-hour-brewed Peruvian cold brew and a fragrant cinnamon scone; then pick your favourite record and people-watch in this fast-paced environment.

5. Deig Workshop

Tryggvagata 14

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

6. Hi Noodle

Frakkastígur 9

Reykjavík's newest ramen bar became an instant favourite for many. With a slow-cooked, temperature controlled broth, the chef—Chen—is aiming to consistently deliver his carefully designed recipes. The portions are a little modest: best order some dumplings on the side of your Dan Dan if you've a big appetite. Vegan option available.

7. Systir

Hverfisgata 12

This sibling restaurant of the Dill serves up à la carte dishes in the new Nordic style, a specially curated natural wine list, and some excellent cocktails all for a great price. Pick up a five-course tasting menu for 5,990 ISK.

8. SKÁL!

Hlemmur Mathöll

Helmed by one of Iceland's finest chefs—Gísli Matthías Auðunsson—anything you order here will be your definitive culinary memory of Iceland. "Seasonal" and "local" aren't just clickbait terms at Skál. Be it smoked carrots on sourdough or crispy seaweed with cured roe, nothing is as simple as it seems.

9. Hagavagninn

Hofsvallagata 52

With one of Iceland's most popular rappers behind the team, Hagavagninn opened shop in place of the old west side hotdog stand. Their vegan burger has a fan following thanks to the fat, juicy patty. The pickled red onions add pizzazz.

10. Mandi

Veltusund 3b

Here you'll find the perfect lunch for a sunny day, the perfect meal after a night out, and the best bite for your hangover. Whatever it is you crave, the friendly staff of Mandi understands. No fries in town rival Mandi's, seasoned with chilli and garlic sauce. They also prepare the freshest hummus and tastiest shawarmas—just remember to ask for extra spice. They'll know what you mean.

Drinking

11. Ölstofan

Vegamótastígur

With low music, dim lighting, lots nooks to converse in and a big central bar, Ölstofan is a no-bullshit place. There's an interesting older

crowd, it's always open late, and you can have a pint and chat without anyone bothering you.

12. Kiki Queer Bar

Laugavegur 22

If you're looking for Kiki, walk until you see the building that is entirely rainbow. The only dedicated queer bar in Iceland, Kiki is beloved by all the local gays, lesbians and in-betweens. There, find drag shows, queer concerts, and hot sweaty dance floors every weekend night. They also have glitter shots for 500 ISK.

13. Loft

Bankastræti 7a

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

14. Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

With a saloon-like atmosphere in the daytime, when dogs and kids run around amongst the diehard local crowd and groups of confused tourists, Kaffibarinn turns into an all-out party during the small hours of the weekend. Whether you're holiday day-drinking or getting messy, it never fails to amuse.

15. Húrra

Tryggvagata 22

Húrra has been a stalwart in the bar scene for quite some time, and with a good cause. It's a great place to go anytime and for almost any reason—early weeknight drinks with work mates, late weekend nights on your own, dancing with your friends, or catching a quality gig.

16. Skúli Craft Bar

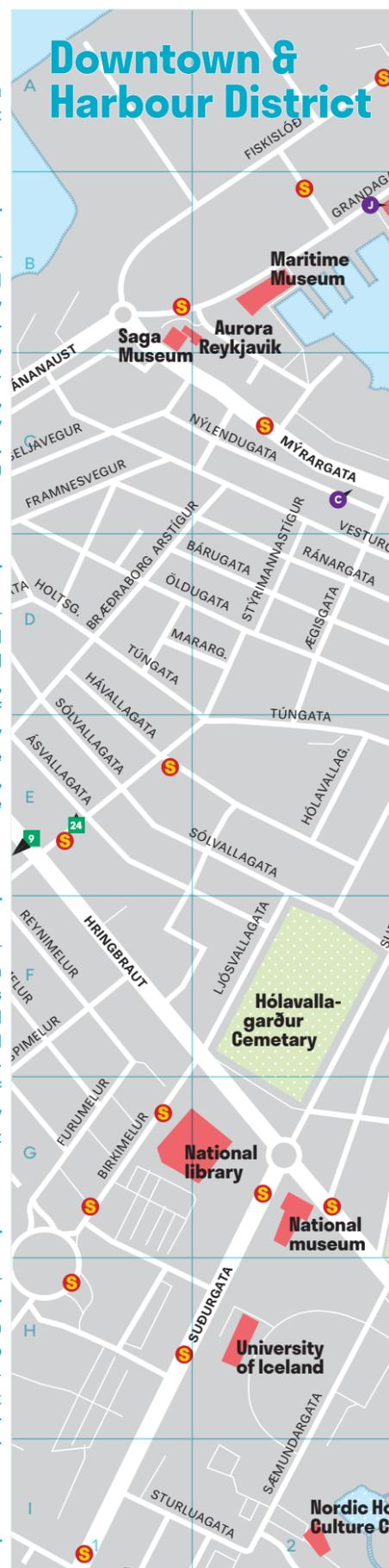
Fógetagarður

This cosy drinking hole has a great selection of local and guest craft brews, with the option of a flight of beers for the indecisive or curious. The staff are real beer nerds. There are board games, good snacks and food vans out back. It has that dude energy, but it's perfect for a quiet drink.

17. VEDUR

Klapparstígur 33

This charming, low key hole-in-the-wall bar is a firm favourite: with comfy seating or bar stools where you can watch the friendly bartenders get to work mixing your cocktail of choice. The great location and happy hour mean it's the perfect place to begin a night out on the town.



18. Bastard Brew & Food

Vegamótastígur 4

This rooftop bar is located on the top of the cavernous Gamla Bíó theatre. It has loads of seating with soft furniture to luxuriate on, a view across the harbour, cocktails, and all the sun you could wish for.

Shopping

19. Kvartýra №49

Laugavegur 49

This minimalistic, Bauhaus-esque spot took the Icelandic fashion scene by storm upon opening in 2018, with its eclectic streetwear

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New In Town



Eiriksson Brasserie
Laugavegur 77

This sleek, spacious bar and restaurant picks up where the late and lamented Skelfiskmarkaðurinn left off. Rather than seafood, the central menu item here is truffles—you can have them on pasta, pizza, or in the signature cocktail range. When we dropped by, it was just before 6pm, and a happy hour champagne cocktail, a Kaldi, and a baked camembert came in at just over 3,000 ISK. We're curious to try the full menu. **JR**

selection. They have designers that no one else has, designers that you wouldn't know before going there.

20. Fischer

Fischersund

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

21. Books In The Back

Freyjugata 1

Reykjavik's only dedicated art

book shop is located in the back of the Harbinger gallery. Stocked with a well-curated selection of independent and self-published pieces, come by for everything from the newest Icelandic poetry to local children's books.

22. Lucky Records

Rauðarárstígur 10

Lucky Records is probably the biggest record shop in Iceland, with shelves upon shelves of new and used vinyl and CDs on offer. They have a small stage where local and visiting bands sometimes perform, and they stock classics and limited editions.

23. Farmers And Friends

Hólmaslóð 2 & Laugavegur 37

If you want to pick up an Icelandic sweater, peruse the Farmers Market outlet. Their wares combine Nordic style with a fresh aesthetic, providing you with a modern take on traditional pieces.

24. S/K/E/K/K

Hofsvallagata 16

S/K/E/K/K's offbeat selection features a mixture of unusual, eclectic home decor and collectible high end design products. Tucked away in an unassuming spot in downtown Reykjavik, you could walk past and never know it was there.

25. Hertex

Garðastræti 6

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

26. Rauðhetta & Úlfurinn

Skólavörðustígur 8

In a sense Rauðhetta & Úlfurinn is a Reykjavik classic. It's been around for over a decade, and the service is congenial without being overbearing. People are loyal to their favourite hairdresser, meaning some of them have long waiting lists, but pop in and try your luck.

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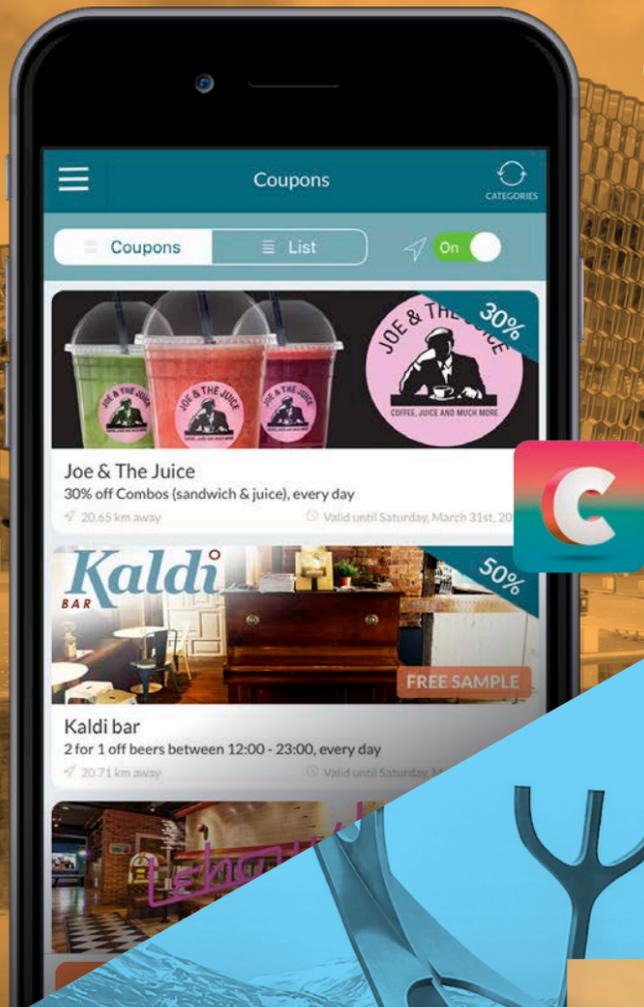
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“I used organ sound effects and agony.”



Kristín Anna's solo album is a must-hear

ARTIST PLAYLIST

Kristín Anna - 'I Must Be The Devil'

Words: John Rogers & Kristín Anna
Photo: Art Bicnick

Album

“I Must Be The Devil” is out now on Bel-Air Glamour Records.

Kristín Anna—also known from *múm* and *Kría Brekkan*—recently released her long-awaited solo album. ‘I Must Be The Devil’ is an enchanting collection of piano-based tracks sung in Kristín Anna’s distinctive whispery voice. We asked her to talk us through it.

The Ocean Wave Rocks My Knee Shells

I’d been singing it while taking walks and arranged it for the piano while still in *múm*. I suspected myself pregnant, and was perhaps both sad and happy. Standing on the shore, sad to leave, excusing the occasional laughter.

Forever Love

I sat down with a pen and paper, wondering if I could draw a picture that would reflect my soul, and someone would see it and love me. I drew stupid flowers and wrote on the back of it “the

spell I cast to get you to love me” as a joke. Then I quickly wrote this song on the piano and saw a shooting star.

Heartly Matters

A song I nearly forgot, yet the emotion of it keeps resurfacing in my life. The lyrics imply a failure of communication; what happens when you keep all your thoughts to yourself, hoping someone else will set things right.

Star, Child

I was married to this guy who really liked films about women who eventually go mad. It had something to do with him. He was the star’s child, then became the star, and the rest is sung to a child who’s bewildered.

Clay and Vapour

On a spiritless autumn day at my mom’s house, I placed my hands on the piano and said “I could just write a song.” Then my fingers played it. It has always been with me—the lyrics are, to me, timeless.

Like The Others

Made originally on a cheap keyboard at home in Manhattan. I used organ sound effects and agony.

In the Air

My niece told me about a peyote ceremony she experienced in Mexico, where she felt a whiff of air from Iceland on her face. From a spiritual homesickness, I return to where I come from when playing music.

Place of You

Written one sleepless night on the organ of a friend’s grandmother. I had the keys to the garage where it stood and sneaked in there in the middle of the night without permission. It came out exactly like this. Then I sneaked back out.

Girl

This song was written on a three-day guilt trip. Asking forgiveness. I’d run into her, and we hit it off instantly. We met for dinner and roamed downtown Manhattan. We really liked each other and didn’t say goodbye until very hungover and sombre the next day. That night I watched her play music and understood she was a sacred heavenly being, and felt ashamed for having not shown this person the reverence I felt for her, and myself and the light that shone around us.

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Music



The human race is a virus, Mr Anderson

Sincerely Arrogant

Newcomer Skoffin brings on the boldness

Words: Rex Beckett Photo: Art Bienick

Album

Skoffin's debut album 'Bjargar Heiminum' is available on Spotify. The release concert is on April 28th at Tjarnabíó, with free entry.

A resurgence of young indie rock is gradually sweeping through the underground of the Reykjavik music scene. Among these emerging bands is Skoffin, the project of 23-year old Jóhannes Bjarki Bjarkason, who recently released his first album, 'Bjargar Heiminum,' through the up and coming Post-Dreifing collective. It's a much needed breath of fresh guitar-driven pop air, full of witty Icelandic poems and jangly riffs.

A self-described "wannabe indie soft-boy," Jóhannes grew up playing bass in a number of garage rock bands, performing for several years in the Músiktilraunir battle of the bands contest. "The last time I took part was in 2016, and that was the first kind of Skoffin song that was played live," Jóhannes recalls. "After that I was tired of never seeming to go further with my music. So I quit pursuing the idea of a whole band and started doing things by my own ear."

Crazy egotistical rock and roll pipe dreams

Skoffin officially began that year, with Jóhannes flying to London to record an EP at his older brother's studio. "It was an amazing time and a wonderful experience to have as a first experience for a full grown artist," he says. Things slowed down after and the project didn't fully take shape until the end of 2018. "That's why I feel with this album, even though it's been ongoing for three years, this is the first real full thing an audience can expect when they go see me live."

His music and live performances are a combination of deeply sincere feelings and "crazy egotistical rock and roll pipe dreams."

"It's this very arrogant, in your face, I-know-best, bad attitude," he says. "But in the end everything about this album is sincerity. It's coming to terms with mistakes." The recording process itself was a process of embracing mistakes, like voice cracks and false notes, and incorporating them into the final mix. "There are a lot of things that aren't perfect and that's what makes it so good."

Added velocity

Influenced heavily by bands such as Botnleðja and legendary Icelandic singer Megas, the songs on the album, sung in Icelandic, revolve around day-to-day life, Jóhannes' suburban upbringing, and friendships. "It's just stuff that revolves around me and expressing my thoughts and my personal beliefs in contrast to the climate around me," he says. "I don't think there's a single element that ties them up together, but they all feel quite like they're all whole songs that stand very well on their own."

In contrast to the simplicity of his themes, Jóhannes' onstage attitude is all about the ironic bravado that his lyrics convey. "I wouldn't say it's a persona, per se, but it's a bit of a switch and it gets very arrogant, very egotistical," he says. "I've always been a fan of stage antics. It adds velocity and a bit of, you never know what's gonna happen next. There's no script, there's nothing set."

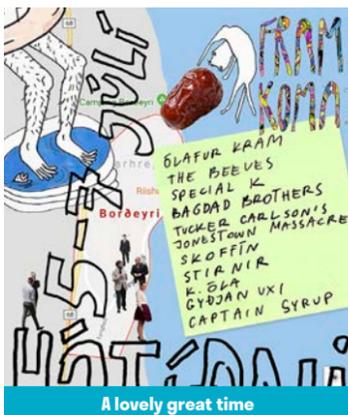
Likewise, there is no script at this early stage of Skoffin's career; the album opens many doors for whatever could happen next. [gpv.is/music](https://www.gpv.is/music)

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The National need a cuddle

MUSIC NEWS Twin sisters, múm members, and thriving solo artists Gyða and Kristin Anna Valtýsdóttir have been announced as participants in a new Ragnar Kjartansson piece entitled "Death Is Elsewhere." They star alongside another set of musical twins—Bryce and Aaron Dessner of sadcore alt-country-indie-rock group The National. The 77-minute piece is a seven channel immersive video installation, perhaps following on from Ragnar's striking "The Visitors." The performers "seem to encircle the viewer, resembling what the artist calls "symmetrical sculptures," as they move through a pastoral landscape performing the song "Death Is Elsewhere." The piece will show at the New York Met from May 30th-September 2nd.



A lovely great time

The post-dreifing DIY music and arts collective—of which indie-pop stars bagdad brothers are the most well-known faces—have announced the first lineup of this year's Hátíðni festival. In 2019 the festival will take place July 5th-7th, with the venue moving from Borgarfjörður to the tiny village of Borðeyri in Hrótafjörður, north-west Iceland. The acts announced so far are The Beeves (US), Special-K, bagdad brothers, Tucker Carlson's Jonestown Massacre, Skoffin, stirnir, K.óla, Gyðjan Uxi and Captain Syrup. Get more details at post-dreifing.is.



Hunky music man

Composer, musician, Bedroom Community member and former Grapevine cover star Daniel Bjarnasson has been announced as the new Principal Guest Conductor of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra (or Sinfóníuhljómsveit Íslands). His two-year tenure begins in September 2019. The 40-year-old has a long-standing relationship with the orchestra, previously serving as both their Artist- and Composer-In-Residence. "Daniel is an unusually versatile artist with a deep understanding of the symphony orchestra as a musical instrument," said Arna Kristin Einarsdóttir, the orchestra's managing director. JR

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TUESDAY

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- 2/5 DEVINE DEFILEMENT (ALBUM RELEASE) SUPPORT BY BLÓÐMÖR & HUBRIS
- 3/5 VOLCANOVA, KEELRIDER, ALCHEMIA
- 4/5 ÖRMAGNA (ALBUM RELEASE) SUPPORT BY VNLS, BLÓÐMÖR, HC LAXNESS
- 5/5 SINGER/SONGWRITER NIGHT
- 8/5 BLACK DOGS (ALBUM RELEASE)
- 10/5 DRAG-SÚGUR QUEER VARIETY SHOW A MONTHLY DRAG EXTRAVAGANZA
- 11/5 GODCHILLA, MÆLGINN BIG BAND, ÓREGLA AND MORE

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VÍKING
Létíól

Our Picks



★ Can't think just feel // White Teeth

April 26th - 20:30 - Loft - Free!

MSEA's "Can't think just feel" concert series at Loft Hostel has, since it began last year, been bringing together some of the most exciting

names in the Reykjavik music underground. The fourth edition is entitled "White Teeth." This time, the night will feature three very

different but equally fascinating performers. There's the arty electronica and softcore rap crossover sound of husband-wife duo Cryptochrome, who ambitiously made videos for every track of their last record. Then there's the colourfully lo-fi DIY alt-pop of the post-dreifing-scene-affiliated solo artist K.Ola. Finally, there's and the brash neon all-out party-kitsch explosion of AXIS DANCEHALL, playing tracks from their recent album, 'Celebs.' **JR**



★ Une Misère

May 4th - 21:00 - Hard Rock Café - 2,500 ISK

Bring the misery with these hardcore heroines. Listen closely and you might hear some new tunes. **HJC**



★ Örmagna Album Release Concert

May 4th - 19:00 - Gaukurinn - 1,500 ISK

Örmagna (which translates to 'Exhausted') may not be the harshest or most brutal band out there, but their distressed howls and melodic groove-laden tunes will be sure to quench your fix for traditional black metal. Buy a t-shirt. **HJC**



★ DJ Silja Glömmi

April 28th - 22:00 - Kaffibarinn - Free!

Let Silja make your Sunday great again with her audio treasure trove of cult hits, old favourites and new finds. **JR**



★ Janus Rasmussen Album Release Concert

April 30th - 22:00 - Húrra - 2,900 ISK

After first emerging as part of Bloodgroup, and a high-profile stint alongside Ólafur Arnalds in Kiasmos, Janus Rasmussen is going solo. See him launch his new album of chilled electronica at Húrra. **JR**

April 26th—May 9th

Concerts & Nightlife

Events listed are all live performances and DJs. Venues are listed by day. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit grapevine.is/happening. Send your listings to: listings@grapevine.is.

Friday April 26th

Pink Iceland's Queer Fridays: Bibi & AI
21:00 Pink Iceland
Red Bull Music: Summer Reykjavik
21:00 Gaukurinn
★ **Can't think just feel #4 // White Teeth**
20:30 Loft
DJ Katla
22:00 Kaffibarinn
DJ Árni Kristjánsson & Kocoon
22:00 Prikið
DJ Hvítur Suzuki
22:00 Bravó
sóley DJ Set
22:00 Mikkeller & Friends
Kontinuum & Atarna
22:00 Húrra
Shapes Of Time & Eiríkur Orri
21:00 Mengi
DJ Surprise
23:00 Club Solon
DJ KGB
23:30 Húrra
Troubadour Siggí & Kiddi
21:00 American Bar
Lame Dudes
22:00 Dillon

22:00 Kaffibarinn
DJ Pétur Valmundar
23:00 Club Solon
DJ Krystal Carma
22:00 Mikkeller & Friends
Face Your Fate pres. Digital Tsunami
22:00 Bravó
DJ Óli Dóri
23:30 Húrra
Duo Harpverk & Lilja María Ásmundsdóttir
21:00 Mengi
Stebbi Jak & Andri Ívars
22:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
'What Am I Doing With My Life?'
Album Launch
17:00 Grandagarður 27
Hallgrímskirkja Friends of the Arts Society & Iceland University Of The Arts Concert
14:00 Hallgrímskirkja
Troubadour Alexander Aron & Biggí
21:00 American Bar
GG Blues
22:00 Dillon
Hexía De Mix
22:00 Boston
DJ Johann Stone B2B Bjarni Ben
23:00 Paloma

Sunday April 28th

Sunday Jazz
20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
★ **DJ Silja Glömmi**
22:00 Kaffibarinn
DJ Bricks
22:00 Bravó
Classical Sundays: Chrissie Telma & Einar Bjartur
16:00 Harpa
Troubadour Hlynur Ben
22:00 American Bar
The Annual Big Band Marathon
12:00 Harpa
Sing Together With Svavar Knútur
14:00 Hannesarholt

Monday April 29th

MonJazz
21:00 Húrra
DJ Z
22:00 Kaffibarinn
Shapes Of Time
19:30 IDNÓ
Troubadour Arnar Friðriks

22:00 American Bar

Tuesday April 30th



Styrmir's new album: Here to give you an existential crisis

Karaoke Party!
21:00 Gaukurinn
★ **Janus Rasmussen Release Concert**
22:00 Húrra
DJ Eiki & Thaison
22:00 Bravó
Múlinn Jazz Club: Stína Ágústdóttir & Erik Söderlind
21:00 Harpa
DJ Simon FKNHNSM
22:00 Kaffibarinn
DJ Danni Deluxe
22:00 Prikið
Finnish Music Lunchtime Concert
12:00 Harpa
Jóhannes Porkelsson Trio
20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
Troubadour Biggí Sævaris
22:00 American Bar
Fóstbræður Male Choir Spring Concert
20:00 Harpa

Wednesday May 1st

Don Lockwood Band
21:00 Slippbarinn
Party Karaoke With Þórunn Antonía
21:00 Sæta Svinið
Wednesday Jazz Night
22:00 Miami
Spiccato Stings: British Music & Icelandic Folk Songs
17:00 Mengi
Troubadour Alexander Aron
22:00 American Bar
Fóstbræður Male Choir Spring Concert
20:00 Harpa

Thursday May 2nd

Una Stef
21:00 Petersen svítan
Troubadour Hreimur & Matti
22:00 American Bar
Fóstbræður Male Choir Spring Concert
20:00 Harpa

Devine Defilement Album Release Concert

22:00 Gaukurinn

Friday May 3rd

DJ Turchi
22:00 Mikkeller & Friends
Dimma
20:30 Bæjarbíó
DJ Egill "Big Baby" Birgis
23:00 Club Solon
EIK
21:00 Hard Rock Café
DJ KGB
23:30 Húrra
GG Blues
21:00 American Bar
Volcanova / Kellrider & Alchemia
21:00 Gaukurinn
Kristín Anna
21:00 Mengi

Saturday May 4th

Richard Andersson, Matthías Hemstock & Óskar Guðjónsson
21:00 Mengi
★ **Örmagna Album Release Concert**
19:00 Gaukurinn
DJ Ívar Pétur
22:00 Mikkeller & Friends
Richard Andersson, Matthías Hemstock & Óskar Guðjónsson
21:00 Mengi
★ **Une Misère**
21:00 Hard Rock Café
DJ Egill "Big Baby" Birgis
23:00 Club Solon
Fóstbræður Male Choir Spring Concert
20:00 Harpa
DJ Styrmir
23:30 Húrra
Troubadour Biggí & Bóas
21:00 American Bar
Iceland Symphony Orchestra: The Boy And The Sweet-Shop
14:00 Harpa
Grúska Babúska
22:00 Dillon

Sunday May 5th

Sunday Jazz
20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
Troubadour Hlynur Ben
22:00 American Bar
Singer/Songwriter Night
20:00 Gaukurinn

Monday May 6th

MonJazz
21:00 Húrra
Troubadour Arnar Friðriks
22:00 American Bar

Tuesday May 7th

Karaoke Party!
21:00 Gaukurinn
Troubadour Biggí Sævaris
22:00 American Bar

Wednesday May 8th

Don Lockwood Band
21:00 Slippbarinn
Party Karaoke With Þórunn Antonía
21:00 Sæta Svinið
Wednesday Jazz Night
22:00 Miami
Troubadour Siggí Thorbergs
22:00 American Bar
Black Dogs Album Release Concert
DJ Gaukurinn
Múlinn Jazz Club: María Magnúsdóttir
21:00 Harpa

Thursday May 9th

Umbra | Mæður Og Meyjar
21:00 Mengi
Svavar Knútur
20:30 Bæjarbíó
French Café Music
21:00 Petersen svítan
D7Y / ROHT / Dauðyfliin & Grafnár
18:00 R6013
Dance Party
21:00 Hard Rock Café
Troubadour Hreimur & Matti
22:00 American Bar
Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Lugansky Plays Grieg
19:30 Harpa



Una Stef: Tattoos & singing

Saturday April 27th

★ **Skaðablót: Plútó / Hermigervill / Sólveig Matthildur & More**
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Red Bull Music: Summer Reykjavik
21:00 Gaukurinn
World Narcosis / Korter i flog / Andavald & MSEA
18:00 R6013
DJ CasaNova



★ For music listings from May 10th on, check out happening.grapevine.is or our app Appening, available on iOS and Android

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Music



Don't call it ambient

Something Unexpected

Stereo Hypnosis on improvisation and genre-free living

Words: John Rogers Photo: Courtesy of Stereo Hypnosis

Album and concert

'BJARMÍ' is out now on Fabrique. Find it at stereohypnosischristopherchapl.in.bandcamp.com.

Stereo Hypnosis shows are a journey. A band that intentionally try to shake off categorisation, their work contains elements of many genres, from post-rock guitars to ambient washes of sound, to heady electronica mixed with motorik flashes. Live, they segue effortlessly from track to track, inviting the audience to get lost in their immersive ocean of sound.

Their latest album clocks in at four songs over forty minutes. The opener, 'Klif,' is reminiscent of the hazy analogue drone of Boards of Canada, or perhaps Aphex Twin at his most ambient; it eventually spirals into a slow, spacious, insistently rhythmic composition. 'Heiði' is brighter, sliding out of the speakers like a light horizon. 'Heggur' sounds like a chamber orchestra score played on synths through a huge, blinking pedal board; 'Tangi' nods to more propulsive, contemporary sounds.

where Christopher performed with Hans-Joachim Roedelius," says Pan Dórarinnsson, one of the central figures of the band. "The following year, we played a concert in Frikkirkjan, and from that things gradually developed."

The group took the unusual decision of packing off to Hvammstangi, just off Route One in north-west Iceland. A fishing town of 580 people known mostly for its shrimp fishing and textile factory, there wasn't a recording studio to be found. "It's a beautiful place and a mysterious place to be, and we got offered space to work in from friends," says Pan. "We had to take everything for the recording as there is not a professional studio there. Our instruments and recording gear were brought along with us. The building we used was an old community house with a magnificent view over the Heggstaðanes peninsula."

"getting somewhere," per se. "Nothing was decided before we went," says Pan. "But, of course, we had played numerous times before so that made the recording process was a bit more relaxed. It went well, and we recorded everything in one sitting. Some of the tracks came out of longer improvisations, then we edited and mixed them afterwards."

While Stereo Hypnosis are clearly extremely dedicated and passionate about the expansive, ambient psychedelia they make, they seem reticent about discussing its finer points, clamming up whenever any genre is mentioned. "We understand that people need to put labels on all music," they say. "But, that said, we are not really thinking

"For us, it is about improvisation and diving into the unknown at a certain time and place."

about 'ambient.' It's become a bit of a cliché. For us it is about improvisation and diving into the unknown at a certain time and place. Every time we do, something unexpected happens, and that is really the magic for us."

"People are free to interpret the music in any way they want to," they finish. "Perhaps it's like a break from routine, to dive into oneself." 🇮🇸

Going up country

The album is a collaboration with Christopher Chaplin. "We first met at the Extreme Chill Festival in 2016

Diving Into The Unknown

The resulting material has a sprawling, freewheeling quality; like it's perhaps more about conjuring up a texture, feeling or moment that

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Joey Christ: out of his crypt and out of control

The Second Coming

Joey Christ rises again with 'Joey 2'

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen Photo: Patrik Ontkovic

Album

'Joey 2' is out now.

Joey Christ is almost inhumanly relaxed. Sitting in the 101derland studio, right in front of Útvarp 101, the radio station where he works every day from 07:00 until 14:00, he leans back into the cushions. It's T-minus three days until the drop of his heavily anticipated album 'Joey 2,' but if you saw him right then, you might just think he's on vacation.

Joey Harder

It's rare that you find a musician with such a prolific rise as Joey Christ. His first single, 'Joey Cypher,' was the banger of 2017, and featured a supergroup of Icelandic rappers, including Herra Hnetusmjör, Aron Can and Birnir. That same year, he dropped two albums, 'Anxiety City' and 'Joey,' both of which got millions of hits on Spotify and graced the playlist of every hip hop head in the country. You can't find someone else in the country that's equivalent. Joey is unique.

"Yeah, it's kind of weird to release your first song and probably have it be the most popular song you'll ever make," Joey says, laughing. "Joey

Cypher' was a huge hit. It was a landmark for the scene, but I'm trying to leave it behind for 'Joey 2.'"

Fast 2 Joey

This album, Joey reiterates, is different. First off, there will be no collaborations, while in his previous efforts, nearly every song included a featured artist. "I needed to challenge myself, so I said I have to make a solo album where I don't rely on anyone but myself," he explains.

The subject matter and vibe of the 'Joey 2' will also be a bit more serious. "I've gotten better at communicating what I'm going through, so I'm getting more personal," he says. "When I did 'Joey,' it was just a party. Everything was a party, but everything isn't a party for me anymore. I'm grown up."

This change in subject matter mirrors the rapper's life. "I've been pretty vocal about dealing with anxiety, but what's changed now is I'm working through stuff with the music," says Joey. "I needed some time to mature, and I'm keeping

it realer this time around. It's not all jokes." He pauses, before giving a small smirk. "Ok, it's still pretty funny, but it's not all jokes."

Joey Strikes Back

In contrast to when he began, Joey now sees himself as a veteran of the Icelandic rap scene. "All the rappers emerging are 17 or 19. They are super young and are experiencing things for the first time," he explains. "It isn't that way for me. I'm 27. I'm engaged and have a dog and a B.A. in theatre. Last time I wasn't really at that place, but time has brought me to where I want to be now."

With time comes wisdom, and Joey is now less focused on outward validation, and more on how he's feeling about his own music. "I have found what I want to do in music. When I did 'Joey,' I was just doing something, I wasn't sure. But now I know what I want and this is the kind of music I want to make." He smiles. "It's the end of an era and the start of an era."

"It's the end of an era and the start of an era."

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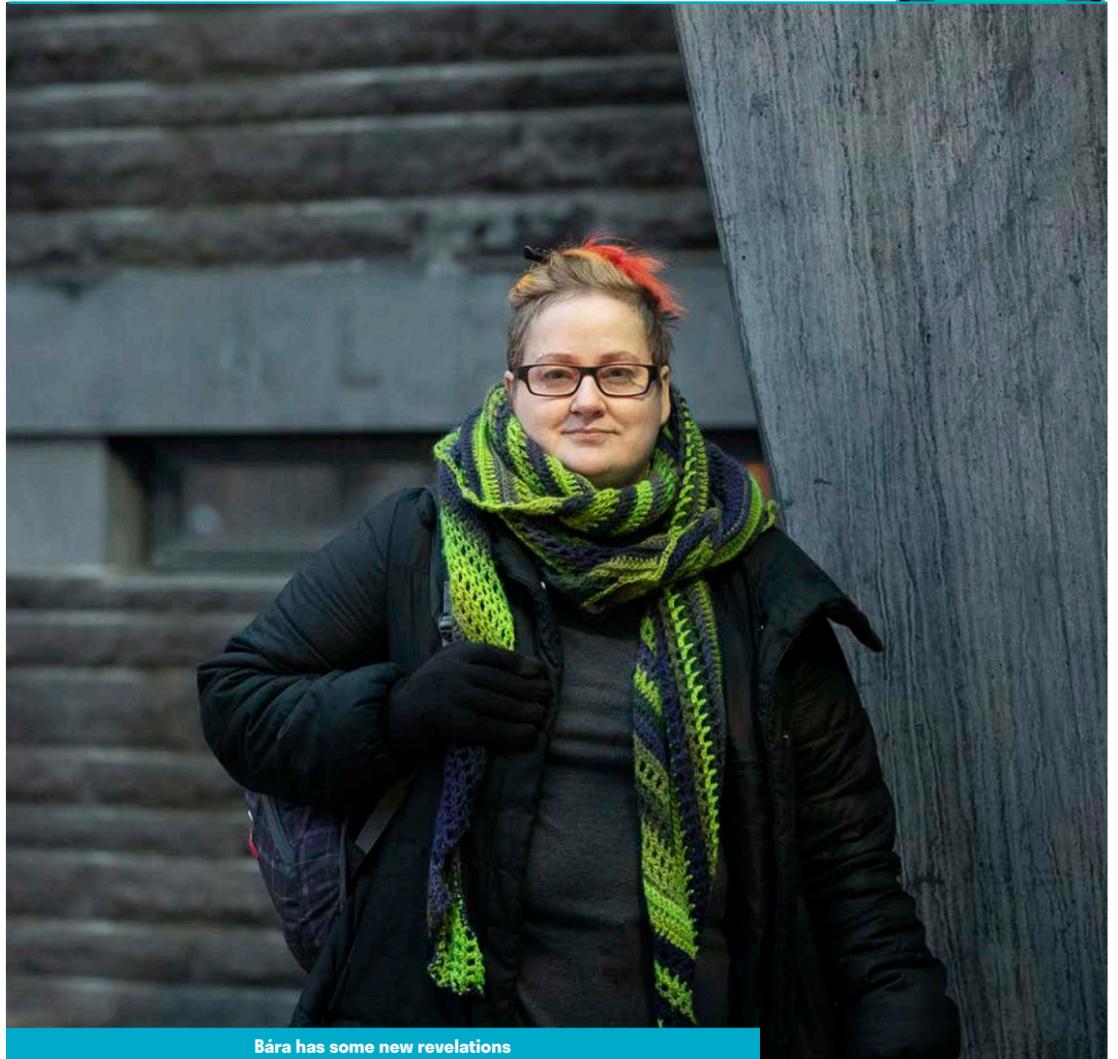
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Bára has some new revelations

The Art Of Being Seen

Bára Halldórsdóttir will bring disabled
reality to light

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

Exhibition

To contribute to 'INValid/ÖRyrki,'
visit <https://www.karolinafund.com/project/view/2410>

While Iceland has a reputation for having a strong and vibrant social welfare system, Iceland's disabled population often feels overlooked and invisible. As a group, they are frequently the centre of social media discussions, and Bárna Halldórsdóttir, an artist who is herself disabled, has often been perplexed by the conversations she has read.

"People don't understand that if they see me out at a coffeehouse, that was preceded by a few hours getting out of bed and getting ready," says Bárna. "I'll then be feeling okay. But soon thereafter I'll be home, spending the rest of the day in bed."

It is the misconceptions she has read about the disabled that prompted her to wonder at times if people have even seen a disabled person before and sparked the inspiration for the installation project, 'INValid/ÖRyrki.'

Life in a box

The installation is still a work in progress, and is currently being crowdfunded, in terms of both funding and technical assistance. When complete, it promises to feature Bárna as the centrepiece. She will be inside an enclosure, surrounded by the objects she would have nearby in her room, where by her count she spends around 80% of her time. Attendees will be able to see Bárna, but not communicate with her face-to-face; they will however, be able to interact with her through social media.

The aim of the piece is to visually represent the isolation that the chronically ill experience day after day.

As the project's mission statement points out, not all disabled people are the same. For those who are visibly, obviously ill, no one questions their disability. For people like Bárna, however, who can have good and bad days and can spend some time out and about after considerable energy and preparation, their disability is often brought into question.

Close to the heart

While Bárna is probably best known as the Klausturgate whistleblower, fighting for the rights of the chronically ill is the matter closest to her heart, and this installation piece is an extension of that. In fact, as she says in the project's mission statement, "I've been effectively performing this piece in one way or another through Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and other media for a few years now."

She believes the timing is right for the installation, which she hopes will give the general public a deeper and broader understanding of the disabled experience.

Still work to be done

Bárna says that while she does not have experience with this scale of a project, she is optimistic that it can be a success with the help of the general public. There are a few people on her team already, and she has launched a Karolina Fund page asking both for donations, as well as the help of a carpenter and technical assistant to make this project a reality.

Donation levels offer rewards that are both intriguing and a bit tongue-in-cheek. For example, a smaller donation can get you a Tarot card reading conducted by Bárna, while the largest donation will get you "tutoring in audio recording and wearing disguises." This is a reference to the legal case some members of the Centre Party have launched against her, as they have accused her of disguising herself as a tourist prior to recording four MPs speaking abusively about women, queer people, and the disabled at a Reykjavík bar in November 2018.

When launched, 'INValid/ÖRyrki' will be open to the general public, free of charge. 🇮🇸

Our Picks



Sticks And Stones...

★ Now Nordic

Until May 26th - Hafnarhús

In recent years, millennial trend-setters have gushed over

everything Nordic on social media. Bookstores have found a niche of selling Nordic design and style books. This begs the question: What makes Nordic design so inviting? 'Now Nordic' seeks to answer that query. The exhibit is a collaborative effort that explores the designs of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The Nordic design movement originally saw its boom in the 1950s, when it was seen as the epitome of simplicity, minimalism and functionality. But the exhibit presents Nordic design as something more than minimal. **AU**



★ Life, as it is lived, before the transformation

May 4th-Sept. 1st - National Museum Of Iceland

In stark black and white, Yrsa Roca Fannberg

captured life in Árneshreppur, the smallest parish in Iceland. Crisp and unrelenting, the photos capture the symbiosis of country life. **HJC**

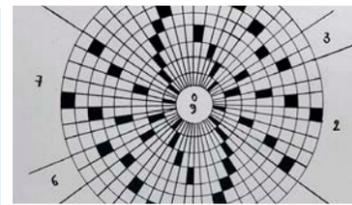


★ 'ANORI' Screening

April 30th - 20:00 - Nordic House - Free!

This Greenlandic film alternates between the desolate landscapes of Greenland and

the fluorescent glare of New York City, bridging the gap between the magic and myths of the protagonist's home and the modernity of the new city. **HJC**



★ Sensible Structures

Until May 26th - Kling & Bang

Three artists—Kristinn Már Pálmason, Bryndís Hrönn Ragnarsdóttir, and Ludwig Gos-

witz—engage in dialogue. What is, or rather, is there a relationship between them? Don't miss a special artist talk on April 27th at 16:00. **HJC**

April 26th—May 9th

Art Listings

Events are listed by venue. For complete listings and detailed information on venues, visit grapevine.is/happening.

Send your listings to: listings@grapevine.is

Opening

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSSTAÐIR

LHI 2019: First Time Ever

The graduation exhibit of the fine arts, design, and architecture departments at the Iceland University Of The Arts.

- Opens on May 4th, 2019
- Runs until May 12th, 2019

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ICELAND

Myth Of A Woman

Agnieszka Sosnowska immigrated to Iceland 13 years. With her photographs, she documents herself, her students, new family members, and friends. Her inspiration is the strength of the female spirit.

- Opens on May 5th, 2019
- Runs until September 1st, 2019



NORDIC HOUSE

Porcelain Souls

Photographer Inuuteq Storch went through his parents' archives and found photos and letters from their lives in Greenland and Denmark in the 1960s and 80s. Explore them here.

- Opens on April 29th, 2019
- Runs until September 26th, 2019

Ongoing

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

Treasures Of A Nation

A selection of over 80 works chosen from the national gallery's collection displays the evolution of art since the 19th century.

- Runs until December 31st, 2019

Violin Power I

Steina is one of the pioneers of multimedia and video art, having experimented with electronic sound, stroboscopic light, and video in the late '60s. Here, come see her first autonomous work 'Violin Power I'.

- Runs until May 1st, 2019

Amy's Donation

Popular fortune-teller Amalie Engilberts was a benefactor of the National Gallery, who after her death provided a fund for the museum to buy new Icelandic art. Now, the collection will be presented.

- Runs until May 12th, 2019

EINAR JÓNSSON MUSEUM

Permanent Exhibition

The museum contains close to 300 artworks including a beautiful garden with 26 bronze casts of the artist's sculptures.

THE ÁSGRIMUR JÓNSSON COLLECTION

Korriro And Dillidó

Ásgrímur's art explores the fears and dreams of generations, as mysterious Icelandic elves, trolls and monsters finally take shape and materialise as vivid beings.

- Runs until April 30th, 2019

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REYKJAVÍK CITY MUSEUM

Settlement Sagas

As Viking ruins meet digital technology, this exhibition provides insight into Reykjavík's farms at the time of the first settlers.

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - ÁSMUNDARSAFN

Ásmundur Sveinsson: Under the Same Sky - Art In Public Space

Ásmundarsafn is named after sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson. This new permanent exhibition presents the artist in a new light. What dialogue does his works provoke?

- Runs until December 31st, 2019

Brynhildur Þorgeirsdóttir: Natural Elements

Beloved Icelandic sculptor Brynhildur Þorgeirsdóttir presents a new exhibit of her pivotal work.

- Runs until June 10th, 2019

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

...now

Páll Stefánsson has spent 37 years as a traveller and photographer. Here, he captures the silence of the present. From refugees to endless glaciers to random strangers, he explores everything from discrimination to the inevitability of nature in a momentary glance.

- Runs until May 12th, 2019

Sonja Margrét Ólafsdóttir - Roots

Sonja Margrét Ólafsdóttir's photographs show everyday scenes and places but also have an air of mystery: Where are these places? Who are these people and what connects these images?

- Runs until June 10th, 2019

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ICELAND

Discovering Iceland's Monasteries

Are you fascinated by really old things? God? This exhibit combines both, based on research by archaeologist Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir.

- Runs until May 26th, 2019

Artists' Books

Familiarise yourself with the books of Icelandic artists. You'll find examples of printmaking dating all the way back to the latter part of the 19th century.

- Runs until June 2nd, 2019

REYKJAVÍK MARITIME MUSEUM

Fish & Folk

Name a better duo than fish and Iceland. You can't. So come learn about the history of Icelandic fisheries from rowing boats to monstrous motor boats.

Melckmeyt 1659

Melckmeyt was a Dutch merchant ship that crashed near Flatey Island in 1659. Explore the wreck here.

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS

Anna Guðjónsdóttir: Pars Pro Toto

Here, Anna Guðjónsdóttir questions the boundary between the original and the copy. Two-dimensional painted surfaces and three-dimensional real spaces collide.

- Runs until May 19th, 2019

D36 Steinunn Önnudóttir

Steinunn explores the materiality of paintings in her works. The D-Series exhibits up-and-coming artists, of which Steinunn is the 36th.

- Runs until April 28th, 2019

Now Nordic

The international design platform Adorno presents a landmark exhibition of contemporary design from the five Nordic countries, aiming to showcase the commonalities and contrasts between the modern design cultures of Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland.

- Runs until May 26th, 2019

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSSTAÐIR

Jóhannes S. Kjarval: ...author of

great aspirations

Kjarval was one of the pioneers of Icelandic art and is uniquely credited with making modern Icelanders appreciate it more. Come see a special exhibit based on his poetry.

- Runs until April 28th, 2019

Eyborg Guðmundsdóttir:

Circle, Square and Line

In this retrospective, experience the abstract geometric art of Eyborg Guðmundsdóttir. Called Op-Art, Eyborg's paintings are based on the primary qualities of art—shapes.

- Runs until April 28th, 2019

SIGURJÓN ÓLAFSSON MUSEUM

Connections

To celebrate the 13th anniversary of the museum, this exhibition presents 13 artists in dialogue with Sigurjón and his art.

- Runs until October 6th, 2019

HAFNARBORG

Reservation

Here, rural, urban, and cultural areas are connected in an attempt to forge new relationships between environments—all through mixed-media art, of course. The exhibit is presented as part of Design March.

- Runs until May 19th, 2019

LIVING ART MUSEUM

Everything Is Great

Arna Óttarsdóttir uses shades of pink, from crabapple jelly to shrimp cocktail, within her tapestries to create a visceral experience where everything is great. Or is it?

- Runs until April 28th, 2019

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART

Weather Workshop

Artist Shu Yi opens up a conversation on Iceland's ever-changing weather by transforming weather data into

visual forms in the entrance of the Design Museum.

- Runs until June 2nd, 2019

URBAN SHAPE

Architect Paolo Gianfrancesco used data from Open Street Map to celebrate cities. The constant interplay of people and their environment will be revealed before your very eyes.

- Runs until September 8th, 2019

KLING OG BANG

Sensible Structures

This exhibition explores the conceptual relationships that occur in the parenthesis between the visual and the verbal through the work of Kristinn Már Pálmason, Bryndís Hrönn Ragnarsdóttir and the late Fluxus artist Ludwig Gosewitz.

- Runs until May 26th, 2019

IB

Janice Kerbel

Kerbel's large silkscreen prints put verbs and nouns into the focus of the piece like it's a portrait. These aren't your average words though, Janice's picks are pretty brutal—think jab, grab, head butt, barge, straddle, and more.

- Runs until May 25th, 2019

EINAR JÓNSSON MUSEUM

Intermission—A Temporary Interference

This exhibition is a collaborative work between the University of Iceland, Iceland University of the Arts, and The Einar Jónsson Museum. In it, a diverse group of artists offer 10 different points of view in response to Einar Jónsson, his works, and the museum. There will be an artist talk at 14:00 on April 27th.

- Runs until April 28th, 2019





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The Stones Speak

Blade Runner 2049 star Tómas Lemarquis
stays down to earth in 'The Rock Of Ages'

Words: John Rogers Photos: Art Bienick

Movie

Support 'The Rock Of Ages' via
[Indiegogo at igg.me/at/TROA/x.](https://indiegogo.com/projects/the-rock-of-ages)

Tómas Lemarquis opens his front door, smiling broadly. Tanned, wiry, and wearing a bold red sweater, he cuts a striking figure. Standing with his arms crossed, his bright, unblinking eyes are both welcoming and piercing, giving a feeling of entering someone's home but also, perhaps, their lair.

This compelling presence has made Tómas an in-demand actor in recent years, and he has excelled particularly in roles with a surreal element. He made a memorable appearance in Blade Runner 2049, and portrayed Caliban in the X-Men franchise, a trolley-pushing hitman in cult sci-fi 'Snowpiercer,' and the misunderstood titular character of 'Nói albinói.'

"I sometimes get asked, 'do you find projects, or do projects find you?'" says Tómas. "As an actor, you often rely on what you're offered. With this physicality I have, I'm not offered the guy-next-door parts—I get quirky, weird roles that go out of the ordinary."

Run to the rock

Tómas does admit that he's turned off by the mundane, and his current project 'The Rock of Ages' is characteristically unusual. As well as co-producing this "epic short," he also plays the part of the Soldier—a masked warrior who wanders through the Icelandic wilderness until he happens upon a talking rock.

"The Soldier is delirious, probably having had a knock on the head," says Tómas. "He isn't sure if the rock is real or in his imagination. He has a discussion with

the rock. At first, he appears to be an old and wise rock—but he turns out to be quite a trickster." A mischievous smile creeps over his face. "I can't say more than that."



Out for a nice walk to find a talking rock

The project—billed as a surreal black comedy that's "the mutant love child of Jim Henson, Terry Gilliam and Ingmar Bergman"—is a collaboration with Australian writer-director Eron Sheean. The two became fast friends during the filming of 'Errors of the Human Body,' a science-fiction thriller that Eron directed. "I think we're drawn to the passion in each other," says Tómas. "I like passionate nerds!"

Earthy dreams

When Eron moved to London, Tómas would stay at his house. "I've been studying shamanism, and one night we had a long discussion about it," he recalls. "Eron had a

dream that night about a talking rock, and he very quickly wrote the script. It's about the subconscious, and digging into Iceland's folklore traditions. And Eron has a lot of humour, so it always comes with a twist."

The film is mid-production, and Tómas heaps praise onto the team, from producer Hlín Jóhannesdóttir to the sound crew, cinematographer, and Ólafur Darri Ólafsson, who voices Rock. A crowdfunding campaign has been launched to fund the final stage of shooting. "It's quite ambitious for a short film," says Tómas. "Now we need to shoot the Rock. The location will be complicated—we

might have to use horses to get the gear there."

"I'm not offered the guy-next-door parts—I get quirky, weird roles that go out of the ordinary."

The funds raised will be used for food and transport, and those who back the project are promised an intriguing end result. "I've found that many films about spirituality are quite high-minded and holy," finishes Tómas. "But the most powerful shamans I have met are full of humour and don't take themselves seriously." A broad smile crosses his face once more. "Humour is a very important part of life."

gpv.is/film
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Various Events



Keep rollin' rollin' rollin' rollin'

Friday April 26th

Friday Party!: 'Coyote Ugly' Screening
20:00 Bíó Paradís

Saturday April 27th

Northern Laughs: Comedy Show
21:00 Secret Cellar
★ **Crescendo**
20:30 Tjarnarbió
Family Dance Workshop
13:00 Gerðarsafn
Roller Derby: Ragnarök (IS) Vs. Team Unicorn (UK)
14:30 Grótta
SPOR
13:00, 15:00 Gerðuberg

Sunday April 28th

HANS.mov [night]: 'Spinal Tap' Screening
21:00 Gaukurinn
Guided Tour In English
11:00 National Museum Of Iceland
Yoga
12:00 Loft
Seat Filler: Iceland's Only Free Game Show!
23:30 Secret Cellar
Gloria Hole: Think You've Got Talent?
21:00 Kiki Queer Bar
Party Bingo With Sigga Kling
21:00 Sæta Svinið
SPOR
13:00, 15:00 Gerðuberg
Mass Confusion
20:00 Tjarnarbió

Monday April 29th

Stand-Up Comedy (in English!)
21:00 Gaukurinn
The Night's Watch Party: Game of Thrones Season 8 Screening
21:00 Loft
Bill Burr
19:30 Harpa

Tuesday April 30th

Funniest Four: Comedy Show
21:00 The Secret Cellar
★ **'ANORI' Screening**
20:00 Nordic House
How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes
19:00 Harpa

Wednesday May 1st

Open Mic Stand-Up Comedy

21:00 The Secret Cellar

Thursday May 2nd

My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Cellar
Nerd Nite: Deep-Space Photography & Roller Derby
20:00 Stúdentakjallarinn

Friday May 3rd

It's Been A While With Jono Duffy
20:00 Tjarnarbió
Friday Party!: 'There's Something About Mary' Screening
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Icelandic Sagas: The Greatest Hits
19:30 Harpa

Saturday May 4th

Northern Laughs: Comedy Show
21:00 Secret Cellar
Burlesque & Bingo
21:00 Húrta

Sunday May 5th

Yoga
12:00 Loft
Seat Filler: Iceland's Only Free Game Show!
23:30 Secret Cellar
Gloria Hole: Think You've Got Talent?
21:00 Kiki Queer Bar
Party Bingo With Sigga Kling
21:00 Sæta Svinið
Guided Tour In English
11:00 National Museum Of Iceland

Monday May 6th

Stand-Up Comedy (in English!)
21:00 Gaukurinn
The Night's Watch Party: Game of Thrones Season 8 Screening
21:00 Loft

Tuesday May 7th

Funniest Four: Comedy Show
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Wednesday May 8th

Open Mic Stand-Up Comedy
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Thursday May 9th

My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Cellar

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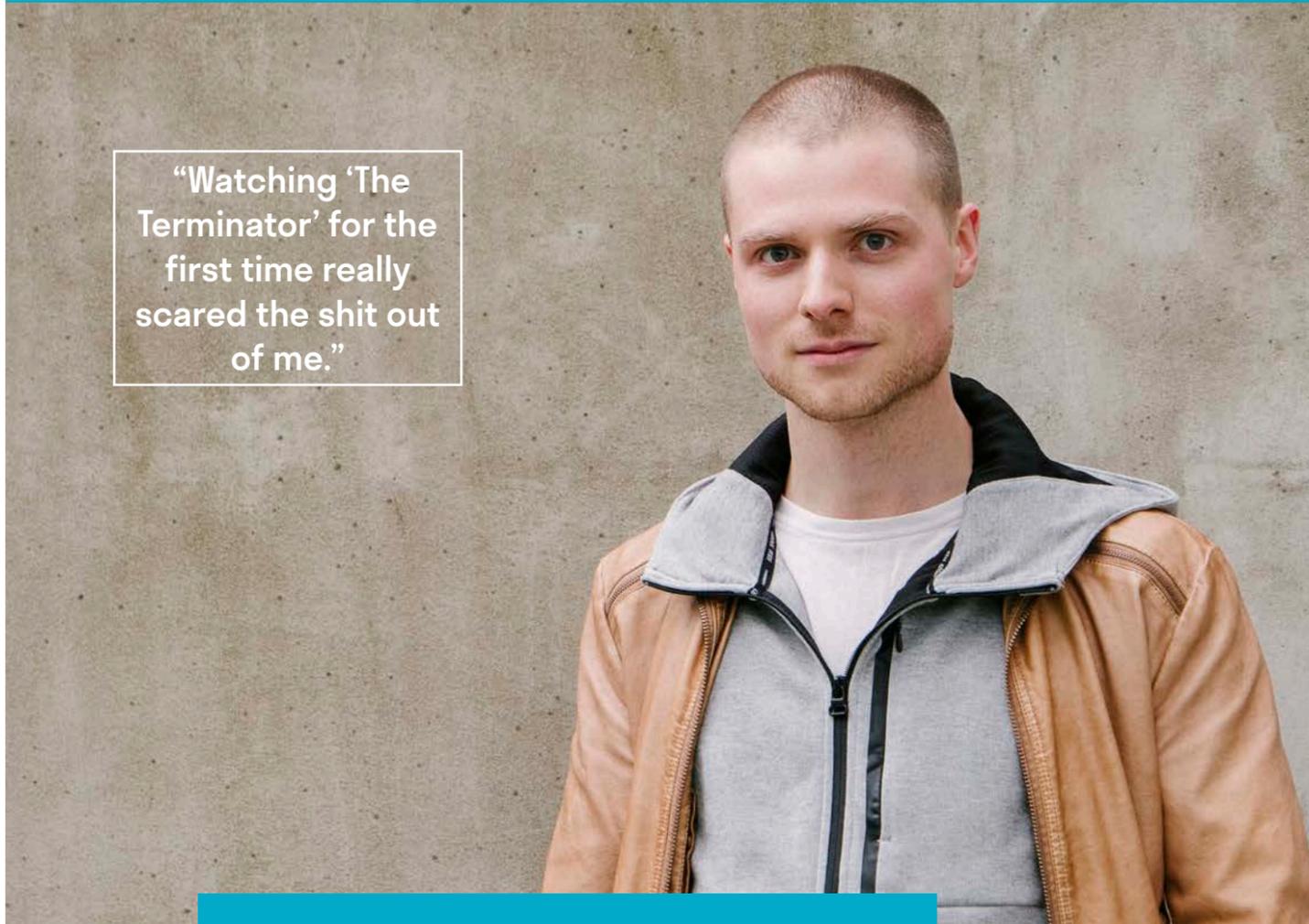
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“Watching ‘The Terminator’ for the first time really scared the shit out of me.”

Arnie, Kanye And Jesus

The diverse artistic world of Seint.

Words: **John Rogers & Seint** Photo: **Timothée Lambrecq**

Musician Seint's new album 'IV' is out now on all good streaming services.

Joseph Cosmo is Seint, a musician who creates expansive, atmospheric electronic soundscapes with contemporary pop flourishes. More recently, he has dipped his toe into the Icelandic rap scene with the textured, collaborative new album 'IV.' Here are some of the influences that helped Joseph become the musician he is today.

My family and friends

I grew up in a poor household in 111 Reykjavík. My parents divorced early, but my dad was around most of the time. My mother was probably the first woman—if not one of the first people in Reykjavík—to have a home studio. So everything I learned about a DIY lifestyle, I learned from her. My father, being a legend in the music world, made a hit record in Abbey Road studios with his punk band, The

Adverts. I was brought up knowing that anything is possible. Having a younger sister and older brother made me learn duality early in my life, and having so many amazing friends who have travelled with me into music—never caring about money—often made me feel that I was lacking nothing.



Jesus

I know this has never really been a cool factor in the artist community—or pop

and music culture in general—but my mother brought me up following Jesus and his teachings. And I have never turned my back on those beliefs. This love directly affects my artistry and always has. Jesus is still the biggest rock star in the world; no one will ever top that. I mean come on, it's 2019 years later and he's still relevant. No joke—I really doubt Cobain or Tupac will still be as important in 2000 years. Just saying.



The Terminator

Watching 'The Terminator' for the first time as a child really scared the shit out of me—but it also opened up the door to a dark, obscure artistic place. Before that, there was only Dis-

ney. For a kid, that contrast is intense.



Hip hop

In 2007, when Kanye's 'Graduation' came out, it re-opened the door for me into the world of hip hop. I grew up in the '90s on the old school hip hop, now known as boom bap, listening to artists like Nas, Wu-Tang, Tupac, Cypress Hill, etc. I dropped out when nu metal came to be. So in 2001, I crossed over into the rock world. Funny how trends are cyclical.



Star Wars

Where do I start? The original Star Wars trilogy is just a part of my character. I still go to sleep so many nights with those films playing on the screen. I was eight years old when I saw Star Wars for the first time and I love the movies to this day—maybe even more. You know that you're a true nerd when you've watched the "making of" documentaries more than twice.



Hardcore and metal

I was a part of a very productive scene growing up. Radical ideas were an everyday discussion and mosh-pits and singalongs went on at every show. I feel so blessed and lucky to have been a part of that, and to have been in two very prolific bands from that scene—I Adapt and Celestine. So many good memories. 🍷

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Cocktails 1,000
ISK.

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Wine 800 ISK,
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PETERSEN SVÍTAN
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Beer 700 ISK,
Wine 890 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

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**5,000 ISK
And Under**

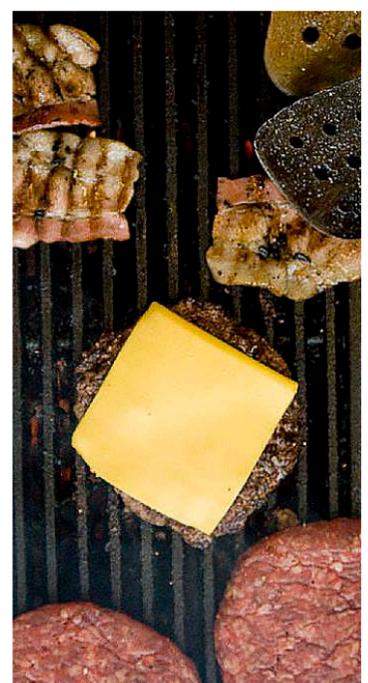
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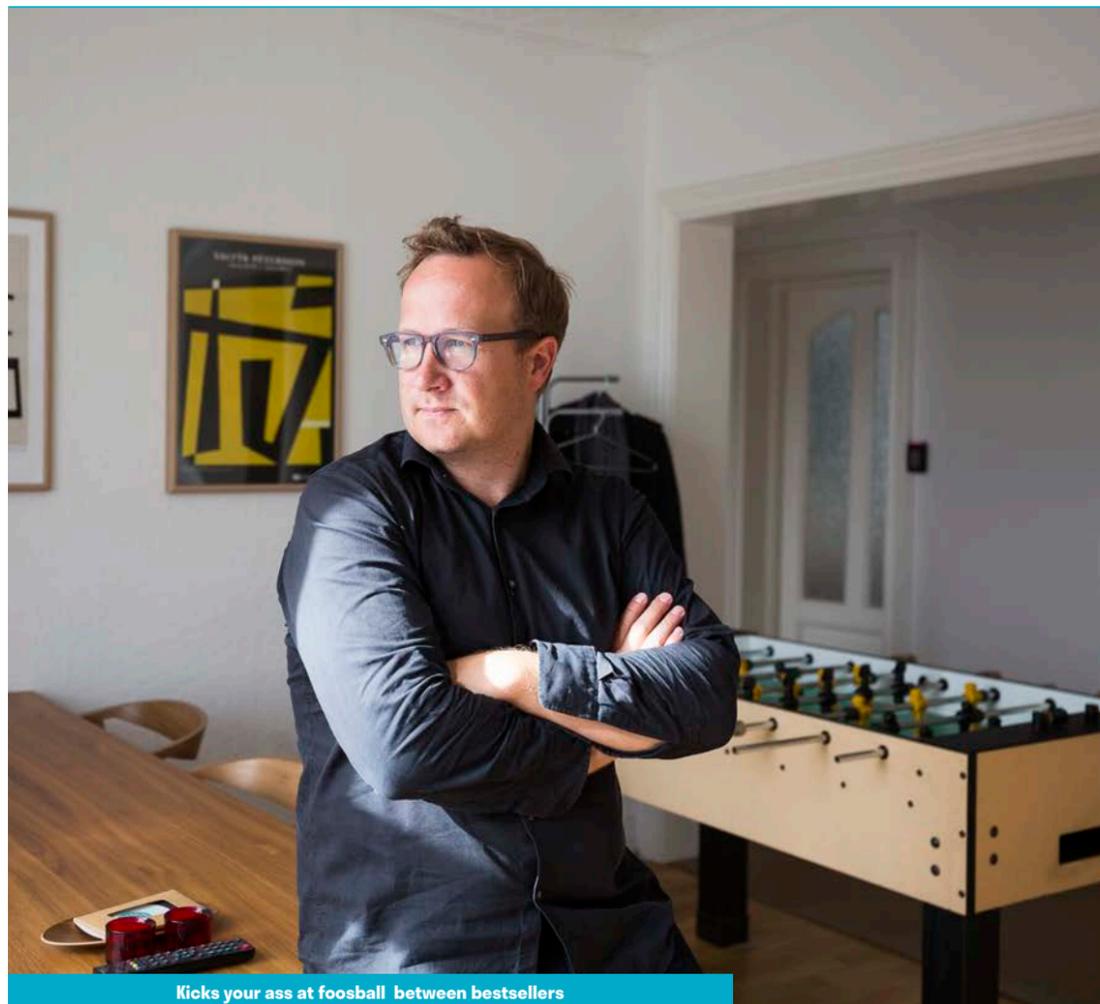
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Kicks your ass at foosball between bestsellers

**There Is No
Brightness
Without
Darkness**

Author Andri Snær Magnason's new children's book now available in English

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

Book

"The Casket of Time" is available on Amazon, and can also be found in stores throughout Iceland.

Andri Snær Magnason is one of Iceland's most famous writers on the international stage, and he always has a lot of irons in the fire. He has written novels, plays, children's books, poems, a full-length documentary, and he has even dabbled a bit in city planning. One of his cleverest works, 'The Casket of Time,' has recently been translated into 12 languages, including English.

In his own words, the story concerns a magical invention, the TimeBox, that "seals you from time so you can skip a day, a week or a year, if times are bad or boring. You can skip the rainy days, the dark days, the Februaries and Mondays. You can avoid things that are difficult or annoying. You can kind of binge on the good days."

Modern fables

The inspiration for the story came from reading about Snow White and Sleeping Beauty; both stories that employ caskets wherein a character rests in a state of suspended animation. Circumstances particular to Iceland also helped spark the catalyst for writing the story, which began in 2010.

"The boring times we had, the economic crisis, the volcanic

eruption, the melting of glaciers," Andri Snær says of that dreary year. "And then of course I am inspired by books. Old mythology, classic children's books, favourite authors like Kurt Vonnegut, Astrid Lindgren, Michael Ende."

As with most fables, there is a lesson to be learned from "The Casket of Time." Trojan horsing a serious message with a fantastical story is part of Andri's modus operandi.

"We are at a very critical moment of humanity; scientists have

Painted a very dark picture of the future if we do not transform our systems," Andri tells us. "The Story of the Blue Planet' and 'The Casket of Time' both have these themes somewhere in the fabric of the stories. I do not explicitly deal with the issues, but I am seeking metaphors, like in 'The Story of the Blue Planet' when Jolly Goodday puts a nail in the sun so it can always shine on one side of the planet. The readers read them like stories of fantasy and suspense, but they explore many themes."

"We are at a very critical moment of humanity; scientists have painted a very dark picture of the future if we do not transform our systems."

You can't have light without the dark

The underlying theme in "The Casket of Time," Andri says, is that "maybe you do not get bright days if you avoid the dark days. Maybe you will not enjoy the holidays if you have skipped all the Mondays and that things do not get better if everyone just waits for things to get better. But the books are literature, a study on human nature and attempts to create modern mythology. And the themes are more philosophically presented than direct lessons to be learned."

Andri regards the world's youth as both impressive and inspiring for their role in trying to compel grown-ups to do something about climate change, representing a sea of change that Andri welcomes.

"I speak a lot with teenagers and college students about these issues and it is very relieving to see that they are leading the way now," he says. "Skipping school to teach the grown-ups a lesson. These are actually very interesting times, something you would not have believed could have happened."

Up on the big stage

A lot of Icelandic writers have talked about the double-edged sword of being a big fish in a small pond; many of them believe that

the true mark of success is getting translated and distributed abroad. For Andri, though, the desire to reach a broader audience is about more than that. "I write in Icelandic, but I am inspired both by translated and foreign

books, so it is natural to want to participate 'on the big stage,'" he says. "That is, share my ideas with the world. It is always fun to see people in very distant places reacting to your work. It is vital for the Icelandic language that we authors prove that we can use this language to speak to the world and at the same time it is vital for our language to get the best the world can offer in translation."

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

Darren Mark

Darren Mark (26) is a designer and artist.

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen & Darren Mark Photo: Art Bicnick

Darren is wearing:

- ▶ Outfit by Darren
- ▶ Shoes from Clarks
- ▶ Jewelry by Gréta Porkelsdóttir

Describe your style in five words: Futuristic. Old. New. Tailored. Street. In more words, I love playing around with tailoring and taking materials that are usually used in tailored jackets, suits, or trousers and putting that in another dialogue, maybe something classified more as streetwear. But my clothes are not necessarily for the street, they're shit you can wear everyday.

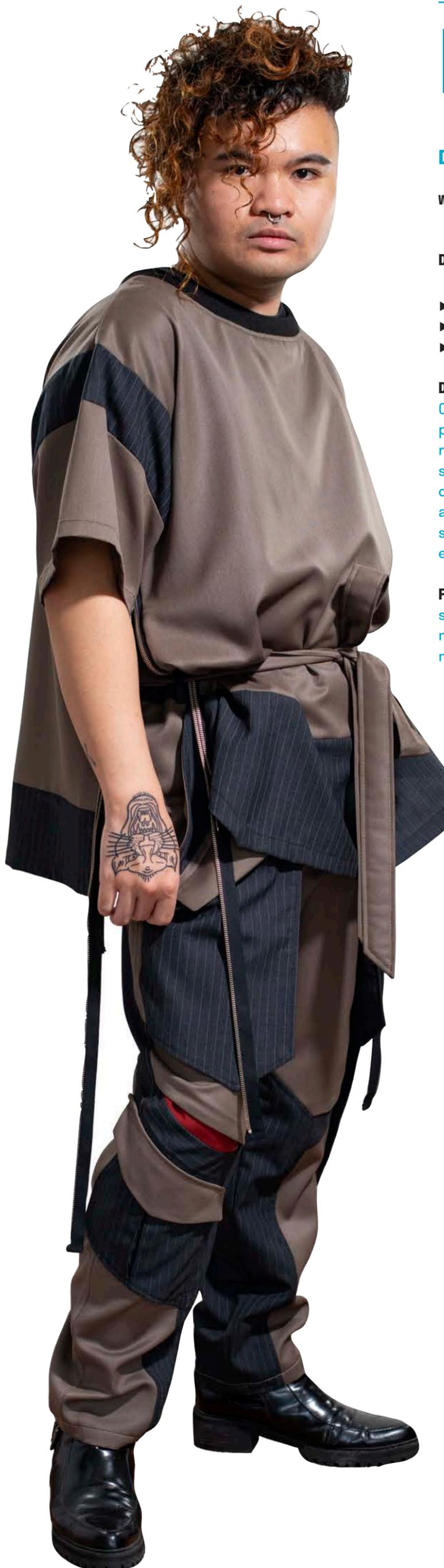
Favourite stores in Reykjavik: Mainly vintage stores like the Red Cross and Wasteland. For me, if I want something completely new, I just make it myself. No shade to any stores!

Favourite piece: Probably my leather shearling coat. It's oversized, patchworked, and I got

it a long time ago at Spúútnik. You always have that one jacket that you go to, and it stinks of cigarettes and you've never been bothered to wash it or take it to the cleaners. That's it for me. It has its own life and it's even one of those things that I would pass on like an heirloom.

Something I would never wear: Crocs. Not even the Balenciaga ones. Not to sound like a complete fashion douchebag, but no.

Lusting after: Going back to Copenhagen. I did an internship there last summer and it was just the perfect summer. You have those few times in your life where it's always gonna echo back to you, and that was it for me. As ridiculous as it sounds, everything fell into place effortlessly. I'm also craving it because it's kind of summer now, but it's not really summer here in Iceland yet. It's just wet. ☹



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Rhubarb cider: it's a thing

Keep Calm and Cider On

Sultuslakur is Iceland's first local cider

Words: Shruthi Basappa,
Photo: Timothée Lambrecq

Icelandic Cider

Available at Vínbúðin in Skútvogur, and on tap at Skál, Kaldi Bar and Smiðjan in Vík

"My grandmother used to make rhubarb wine," says Sveinn Steinsson. A chef turned brewer, he is the man behind Sultuslakur—Iceland's first locally-brewed rhubarb cider.

Cider drinking is quite new to Iceland, but Sultuslakur is aiming to change that. "The first idea was to make wine, but then I thought about how we can use rhubarb better," Sveinn explains. "The only way we use it here in Iceland is for jam. I was working with Gísli [Matthías Auðunsson] at Matur og Drykkur at the time—we were looking at how to use Icelandic culture in our food. That was the beginning."

Flash forward three years, and Sveinn's experiments have grown into the brewing and bottling of his cider, in collaboration with Ægir Brugghús. "It's just so much more drinkable than wine," he enthuses.

It's rhubarb, stupid!

Sveinn's process begins by using crushed rhubarb, apples, brown sugar and honey to kickstart the fermentation. "We rack it after two weeks," he explains, "and after four more weeks, it's drinkable." The cider available at Vínbúð has been aged for three months.

The entire process takes much longer, however. Two years ago, Sveinn planted over 2000 rhubarb plants, in the hope of using them for batches of cider. His partner in this enterprise—Ólafur S.K. Þorvaldz, a co-owner and partner at Ægir Brugghús—helped him bring it to fruition.

"Sveinn was selling us some rhubarb for another project," says Ólafur. "He'd mentioned doing something with rhubarb and we talked about it briefly. Then he called me a few months later and said, 'Listen, opening up a brewery is f***ing expensive.' But if I see something interesting, then I want to do it. And

this definitely is. Use of Icelandic flora has been completely missing. No one has done an Icelandic cider."

It's alive!

An apple cider at its base, the addition of rhubarb lends the drink an alluring tang and crisp bite, reminiscent of French ciders. "Exactly," Ólafur exclaims. "It's a little dry. The ingredients are the controlling factor. We use a Belgian ale yeast strain, giving it a more rounded and fruity flavour."

By now, we've tried a two-week old cider, freshly fermented, mildly cloudy and beginning to settle. A surprisingly great youngling, it's just days into the process, and the rhubarb notes are fresh and almost floral. "That's one of the things about cider," says Sveinn. "It will age and change slowly and gradually throughout the process, just like beer."

Embracing cider

Sveinn's enthusiasm is infectious, and his genuine passion for his craft shines through. "Many have been going into this drink with Somersby in mind, and then they are slapped in the face with the tartness," he laughs. "But you can pair it with seafood or cheese boards, or drink it on the porch..."

I can't think of many better ways to ease into summer than with a sparkling glass of Sultuslakur in hand. ♡

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A nose for naturals

The Shaman Sommelier

Demystifying natural wines with Solfinn Danielsen

Words: Shruthi Basappa
Photo: Art Bicnick

Wine Tasting

Solfinn Danielsen poured natural wines at SKÁL! April 11th-13th.

“This is the best piña colada you’ll ever have,” says Solfinn Danielsen as he pours a pale lemonade-like 2016 Vulcanica Pet-Nat from Slovakia. I’m sitting at the bar at Skál on a bustling Friday evening, and the popular gastropub is filling up fast. But I’m not here for the Michelin-approved food. I’m here for a natural wine deep-dive unlike any other.

Solfinn runs the popular Copenhagen wine outpost Rødder & Vin. Known for their eclectic collection of wines from around the world, their selections have accompanied dinners at restaurants like New Nordic outpost Kadeau, and Solfinn has been described as the Care Bear of the wine world, on account of his enthusiastic personality and engaging conversations.

What is a natural wine?

“There are two ways to describe natural wine, one of them is production, the other is philosophy,” Solfinn explains. “I think production is mainly boring. It is only interesting if you are a wine producer or work professionally with it. The biggest difference between natural wine and conventional wine is

you completely abandon the idea of reproduction. There is no recipe, because every year is different. It’s almost a reversed method. It is all about releasing the inherent potential in the grape, in that time and place.”



Your new guru

Exclusive clubs

Unlike beer, wine has long been associated with a sort of cultural calling card of class and elitism. Tableside wine service and the ensuing soliloquies of pine-scattered-mossy-forest-floors are so de rigeur, neither wine labels or wine

drinkers are spared.

So, are natural wine clubs a new form of exclusivity? Solfinn pauses before answering. “Of course, as a culture, there will always be this need to be an expert on everything,” he says. “As natural wine gets a bigger following, more people will join in. Which is good. But the bad tendencies of the old world wine school thinking will follow.”

It seems like this would call for standards to be set, like old school wines. “When your favourite band releases a new album, would you expect it to be exactly as good as their last one?” Solfinn counters. “You don’t, because the magic is gone if they release the same album twice. If you think of winemaking as reproduction, that’s when you need standards and so forth. But why do you need a label to dictate what you taste?”

Power to the drinker

By now I am convinced that Solfinn is indeed a wine shaman, taking back the pleasure of drinking wine from the diktats of the vintage police. It seems his approach to natural wine is helping to break the mould of elitism often associated with wine, especially in Scandinavia. “This is fermented grape,” says Solfinn. “Nobody expects sauerkraut to be easy on the eye, or kimchi to be easy on the nose. So why demand from a wine to be easy on the eye and the nose?”

Breaking with tradition and placing the power squarely with the drinker, this democratisation of wine has been a long time coming. “You have to decide whether it is right or wrong,” he says. “And the only criteria for right is whether you like it.”

“I’m drinking this wine because I like it,” he finishes, heading back to tend to the burgeoning crowd. “That’s what wine is all about.”

That’s something we can all raise our glasses to. 🍷



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Travel

The Dust Storm

Wild winds & ATV adventures on the black beaches of the south

Words & Photos: John Rogers



Distance from Reykjavik:
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How to get there:
Route One South

Car provided by:
gocarrental.is

Room provided by:
skalakot.is

Tour provided by:
mountainguides.is

We're approaching Seljalandsfoss when the sky suddenly turns dark. The drive from Reykjavík has been blustery, with violent gusts pushing at the car as we sweep through the rust-coloured countryside of southern Iceland. Fast-moving bands of cloud drag across the sky under the late-morning sun, throwing mottled shadows onto the rolling landscape below.

But this is different. Everything dims alarmingly quickly, and the light becomes grey and diffused. Farm buildings in the middle-distance appear gradually, as if from thick sea fog. A particularly harsh gust of wind is accompanied by the tinny, spraying sound of sand hitting metal, and we realise the source of this unseasonal murk. We've entered a dust storm.

It's an unusual and dramatic experience. At times, the sun vanishes completely, and the fields take on a dim, spectral pallor. At others, the car emerges briefly from the storm, and we watch silhouetted clouds of dust billow upwards like something big is on fire. I get out of the car a couple of

times to take photographs, forcing the door open and arriving back breathless and panting just moments later.

Eventually, we cross the Markarfljót river, and the weather breaks. We pull over and step outside, wiping sand from our eyes and shaking it loose from our hair. In the distance, miniature twisters of black sand dance over the flat plains of Eyjafjallasandur, swirling away into nothing. The sandstorm is over as fast as it began.

Waterfalls/Waterflies

The wider weather system sweeping over the south of Iceland is set to peak around sunset. We press on, aiming to reach the Skálakot Manor Hotel before the worst of it. Along the south coast, waterfalls tumble from the high ledge of Eyjafjöll, but the wind is so powerful that the flow immediately turns into spray, flying away horizontally or blowing upwards into nothing.

We crawl along the empty road, passing precious few cars on the way.

It's with some relief that we finally pull up at Skálakot, dragging our cases up the driveway as the wind tries to steal away scarves, gloves and anything that isn't firmly fastened. We wrestle open the front door, and step into a calm, bright lobby, greeted with smiles, promises of hot soup, and a welcome hand getting our bags upstairs.

The room turns out to be quite beautiful. The light switch sparks to life two spherical glass lamps that illuminate a huge bed piled with pillows in a spacious bedroom. It's tastefully decorated with old-fashioned printed wallpaper and retro fittings, but equipped with everything from an espresso machine to a Netflix-ready TV and a deep bathtub, complete with comfortable robes. With the sky darkening outside, we wash away the dust, falling asleep to the roar of gales that sound like they're trying to pull up the roots of the earth itself.

Plains of sand

The next morning we're due to take a 9am ATV ride onto Sólheimasandur beach. The wind is still howling, so we text ahead to see if the tour is still running. "As the weather forecast stands now, the tour is on," comes the reply from Valdi, our guide. "However, because of the storm coming in around 15:00, we've cancelled the rest of the day. Safety always comes first."

After a short drive to the base camp, we greet Valdi and prepare for the ride. We're fitted with overalls, waterproof boots, double layers of gloves, balaclavas and helmets. Valdi gives us a short lesson in the simple controls of the ATV, and then we're off, revving down the road and crossing Route One onto the rough dunes of Sólheimasandur.

The ATVs handle well, bouncing easily down the grey dirt track. The gusts we'd worried about barely register on the small, hardy vehicles as

we crawl towards the beach. Suddenly, the banks of reeds drop away and we're carving across the open plain of flat black sand. To the left lies Dýrhólaey, but we turn right and race up the tide line. After traversing an enjoyable route that includes shallow rivers, steep banks and sand canyons, a white shape appears on the near horizon.

Forlorn and wingless

It's the famous DC-3 plane wreck, lying forlorn and wingless in the midst of the seemingly endless plains. A US Army aircraft, this Douglas R4D-8 cargo plane—or "Super DC-3"—crashed in 1973, and its ghostly remains have lain here ever since. Today, it's an eerie shell of a plane that's slowly crumbling into the sand, covered in graffiti and riddled with bullet holes. Nobody really knows why the plane crashed, but most theories are weather related, and our recent experiences of Iceland's tempestuous unpredictability make them easy to believe.

We turn back northwards and cross a wide tableau of black pebbles, rubble and sand, dipping down into a river and passing beneath a Route One bridge. I'm surprised to see a copse of fir trees ahead, crowning a small hillcock. We round it and splash through a wide, shallow river, parking up on an island in its midst.

We take off our helmets, and look around the beautiful canyon in silence. The dust storm is far behind us, and we breathe deep lungfuls of fresh forest air and listen to the river burbling by. Route One is just a few kilometres away, and we'll be heading back to Skálakot soon; but for this long moment, surrounded by tall cliffs and the rugged landscape, it feels like the whole of Icelandic wilderness is ours alone. 🍷

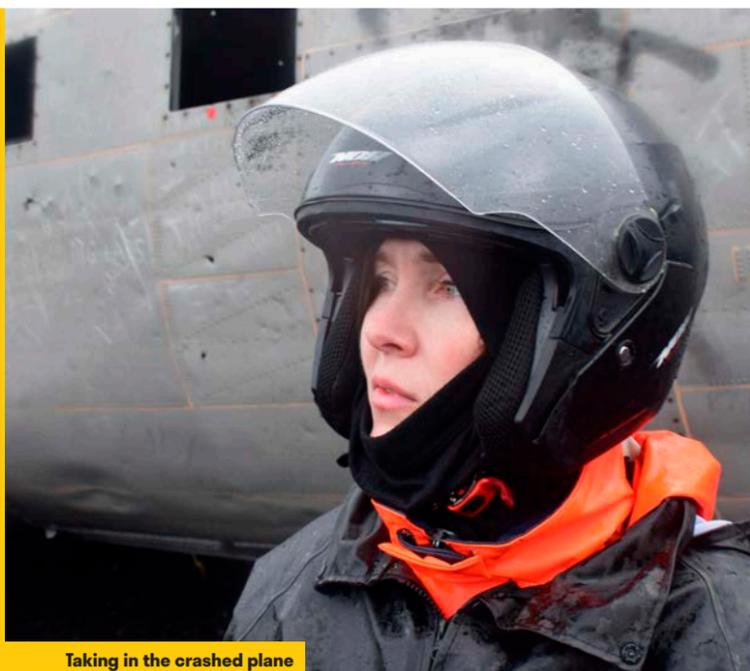


The Skálakot Manor Hotel is full of nice touches



One of the well-appointed sitting rooms

“At times, the sun vanishes and the fields take on a dim, spectral pallor. At others, clouds of dust billow upwards like something big is on fire.”



Taking in the crashed plane



The final stop



The ghostly DC-3 plane wreck

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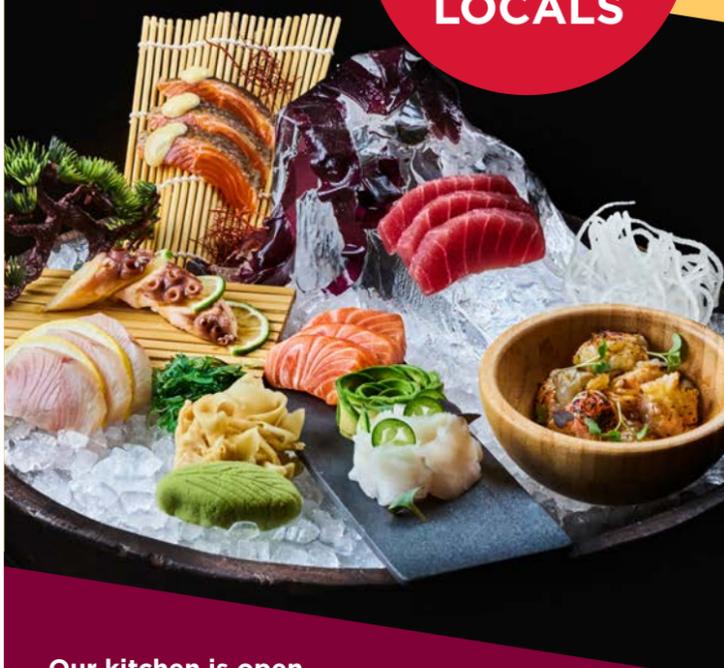
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Often a quiet road

ROAD TRIP

Hvalfjörður

Words: **John Rogers** Photos: **Art Bicnick**

While it might not be studded with towering glaciers and black sand beaches, the “forgotten fjord” of Hvalfjörður makes for an interesting road trip. Once part of the famed Ring Road, it was cut off from Route One by the Hvalfjarðargöng tunnel in 1998, and has since become something a seldom-travelled backwater with several interesting spots along the way.

Stop: Abandoned WWII Base



Not long after turning off Route One, you'll see the Hvítanes peninsula extending out into the fjord. There's not much to see, other than a few distant ruined structures, but the parking lot has an information sign about this spot's surprising past. During World War II, this was the site of HMS Baldur, an allied base that was considered so pivotal that Churchill came for a visit. It's a strange episode of history that saw the fjord once teeming with troops, ships and submarines.

Stay: Hótel Glymur



There are relatively few hotels in Hvalfjörður, which is part of the area's appeal. The four-star Hótel Glymur is the main one. The main hotel building has a modern, airy lobby with a bar and restaurant, and some smart, comfortable rooms. The best options, however, are the cabins out front. They're well-appointed, warm and cosy, and each one has the added bonus of a private hot pot overlooking the fjord below.

Lunch: Kaffi Kjós



A few kilometres south from the lip of the fjord is Kjós, which contains many tucked away cabins and summer houses clustered around the

shores of lake Meðalfellsvatn. In the summer, the countryside café, Kaffi Kjós, opens up for business. They sell burgers, sandwiches and vegetarian dishes, and on a sunny day you can sit on the deck taking in the dramatic surrounding landscape. The area is also popular for salmon fishing and birdwatching.

Hikes: Glymur & Þyrilsnes



The main attraction of Hvalfjörður is the Glymur waterfall. For a long time, this was thought to be the tallest waterfall in Iceland—a title that has since been usurped by a 240-metre torrent pouring from the remote Morsarjökull glacier in the southwest—Glymur is still a truly majestic sight. The steep trail includes a shallow cave and thin improvised bridge, and is only open in summer. For a shorter hike, or in the off season, you can venture onto the small Þyrilsnes peninsula for a view of the surrounding mountains.

Stops: Whaling Station, War & Peace Museum



Hvalfjörður has a somewhat forlorn feeling and you'll pass several abandoned industrial sites dotting the shoreline. One such unmarked site has a well-maintained fence; this is because it's actually Iceland's only active whaling station. It's private land, but you can see the ramp used to drag whales ashore, and there's a viewpoint down over the moored whaling boats. There's also a nearby museum to the fjord's military past, which is only open during summer.

Bathe: Hlaðir Swimming Pool



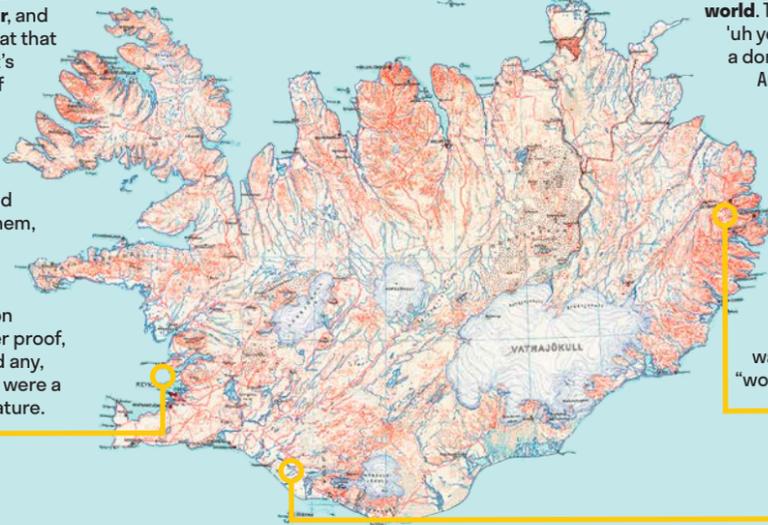
No Icelandic road trip is complete without a soak in a geothermal pool. Along Hvalfjörður, the best option is the diminutive Hlaðir swimming pool, located next to the War & Peace Museum. With a sun deck, a small swimming pool, a paddling pool and two hot pots, it's the perfect place to relax those muscles after a day of hiking, driving and sightseeing. 🍷

Island Life

Hot news from the cold Icelandic countryside

Words: **Andie Fontaine**

Meanwhile in Borgarnes, the **capelins returned to Borgarfjörður**, and you know what that means... That's right: most of the seagulls in the area proceeded to divebomb and feast upon them, resulting in many dead fish washing up on shore. Further proof, if you needed any, that seagulls were a mistake of nature.



Research conducted by a university in Portugal determined that **the airport in Egilsstaðir is the worst connected to the rest of the world**. To which we say, 'uh yeah? It's literally a domestic airport?' And you can take a flight to there from Keflavik International Airport. Check out the white-knuckle, prayer-inducing experience of flying to Ísafjörður if you want to really see "worst connected".

In other bird news, the **oystercatcher has returned to South Iceland**, much to the delight of professional birders and laypersons alike. What makes oystercatchers so great? Is it their adorable chirp? The fact that they look like round penguins? Science may never fully know.

Best Of Iceland

A selection of winners from our Best Of Iceland travel magazine



North: Best Luxury Accommodation
ION Adventure Hotel

Jutting out from a cliff overlooking Lake Þingvallavatn, this multiple award-winning design hotel is a true gem. Powered by the neighbouring geothermal plant with the cleanest mineral water possible, it's fully sustainable and cleanly luxurious. "It has the most comfortable beds I've ever slept in. I'm still dreaming about it," said one panelist. "Everything is so fancy."



East: Best Meal
Havarí

Havarí, a farm in Berufjörður, has a lot going on. The proprietors, Svavar and Berglind, run a hostel, organic farm, veggie snack factory, and a café and concert venue in the summer months (open April-September). They serve their very own veggie "Bulsur" sausages, plus other tasty meals in the café. "Everything is so tasty, and organic too," said the panel.



South: Best Museum
LAVA Centre

Deceptively light and cheery on the outside, this interactive museum is a brilliantly constructed immersive volcanic experience. Combining rich scientific research, bold industrial design and incredible artistry, its informative and interactive displays provide some truly unique insights into the volcanic history of Iceland. The centre also features a film, a nice gift shop and a great café.



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

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



WELL, YOU ASKED

Third-Wheeling And Hot Dogs

Words: Aliya Uteuova

Any tips on how to quickly determine if a familiar face in public (e.g. at the grocery store, pool, restaurant or on the street) is an actual acquaintance or just a famous person? I can't count the number of times I nearly approached someone to say 'hi' only to realise that I only know them from politics or TV.

I used to stroll around the university waving at strangers thinking they were my friends. Then there were days when I ignored my friends' eye-contact and hellos. The honest excuse for me is my poor vision, but perhaps you could borrow it next time you bump into a local celebrity.

How does one properly hotdog in Iceland?

With a selfie and plenty of gum afterwards.

How do you become a hot air balloon pilot?

It is one of the toughest jobs to get into. The competition is super high, you wouldn't believe how many proficient third wheelers there are. But if you have valid experience of staying stoic while a couple has their romantic moment three inches from you, you might have a chance.

How do you avoid former lovers in a city as small as Reykjavík? Do you stop going out or do you go full stalker?

Since Iceland is a big village, it's probably impossible to avoid your ex. Embrace the uncomfortable hello or hide inside a puffin store, either way, you're bound to have something to talk about with friends over some hotdogs. Just be sure to carry gum, you never know when you might want to kiss your next ex. 🍷

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WAR OF THE NERDS

Battle Of The Populists

IceExit on the horizon

Words: Valur Grettisson Photo: Art Bicnick

Fine. Let's get into the Third Energy Package. There is no way around this, I guess. The debate about the European Union's gas and electricity market legislation has proven to be the biggest populist debate in Icelandic society for a while and has even been nicknamed IceExit in the spirit of the mother of all messes, Brexit.

In short, Iceland, as a part of European Economic Area (EEA), needs to adapt all EU regulations, good or bad, or risk endangering the EEA agreement. This is, of course, part of the debate; that is, if the agreement will be in danger if the Icelandic government doesn't adopt it.

Iceland has already adopted the first and second part of the EU's energy package. Like with all great movies, the third one is always the best. Right? The Third Package is, more or less (and keep in mind, this is a grossly simplified explanation), about giving con-

sumers more rights. But the real problem here is that an international institution, the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), would have ultimate authority if two signatory countries get into a dispute over cross-border energy trade.

Still with me?

Everybody that lives in Iceland, of course, would point out that Iceland does not export its energy for obvious reasons. We live on an island and in the middle of the goddamn Atlantic ocean. It would cost 800 billion ISK to build a cable between Iceland and the UK. And then you have the incredibly technical complications of transporting the energy.

So on to the battle of the populists.

There has been an intense debate

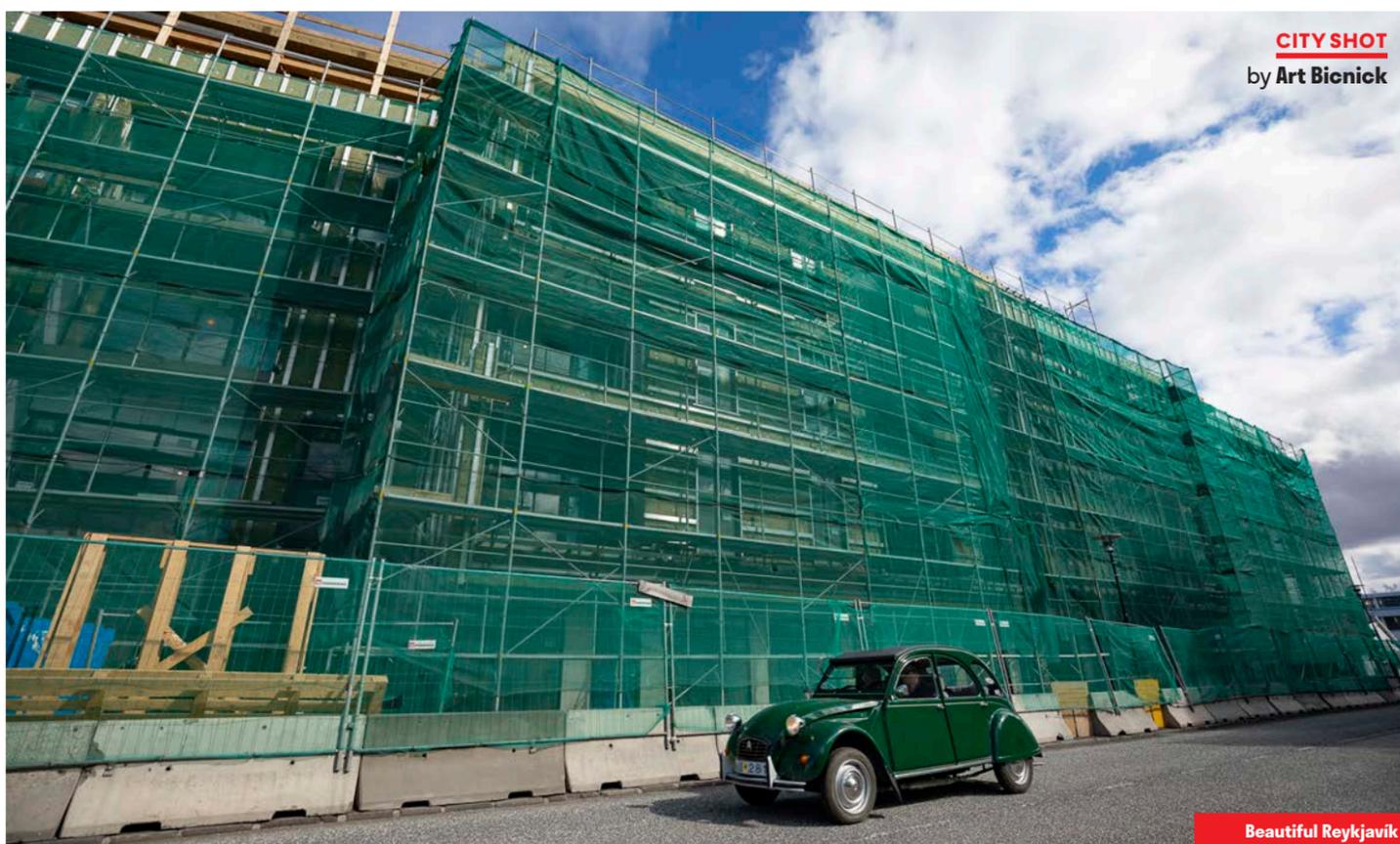


The EU is not after our waterfalls.... yet?

around the issue, where Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson, chairman of the Centre Party (you remember him from such documentaries as The Panama Papers), leads an interesting pack of populists who believe that the evil EU are after Icelandic energy sources. Of course, like good populists, it came to appear in Stundin, a local news magazine, that none other than Sigmundur Davíð and his band of populists actually wanted to agree to the Third Energy Package when he was Prime Minister in 2015. Not only that, they rejected the Left-Green proposal about

making specific precautions about transporting the energy out of the country, so the regulation would not apply to Icelandic conditions.

So what's the real debate here? Well, there are two answers for that. First—and this is the obvious one—the Centre Party are trying to seduce the conservatives from the Independence Party to their side. And second, they want to go down a dangerous and unprecedented road with the EEA agreement, which has given Iceland the opportunity to be competitive within the larger European market. 🍷



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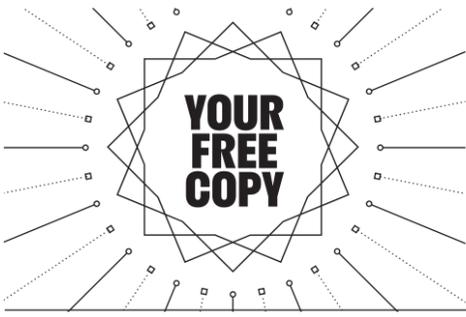
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LAST WORDS

Going Postal

Words: **John Rogers**
Photo: **Timothée Lambrecq**

Here in Iceland, pretty much everyone hates the postal service.

It might seem kind of weird for the entire citizenry feel something between vague annoyance and quivering rage towards such an institution. I mean, sure, a parcel might go astray now and then, but everyone's just doing their best for hassle-free deliveries, right?

The answer, sadly, is a resounding "no." The idea of Iceland having a smoothly functioning postal system seems like something from Thomas More's 'Utopia'—because receiving mail is more like a scene from Kafka's 'The Trial.'

Let's imagine a best case scenario wherein your parcel doesn't vanish immediately into some neverending crack of doom upon arrival in the country (it probably does).

Great! That was the first hurdle. The next minor miracle would be finding a slip in your mailbox saying that you have a piece of mail waiting to be collected. This is not a given; these slips are prone to vanishing like a spirit flitting between worlds, meaning you have to pay "rent" for collecting your parcel late, assuming it doesn't get unceremoniously returned to the sender. Messed up, right? Well, we're just getting started.

Next, let's go crazy and imagine the parcel is at the Post Office when you go to collect it, though it probably won't be. It's either out for an inconveniently timed delivery you never booked, or is being held in the intranational purgatory of customs, languishing between worlds like Chihiro at the train stop in 'Spirited Away.'

Now, let's imagine the old and new gods are on your side and the parcel appears on the counter. But then, it happens—you're presented with an eye-popping bill of tolls and charges that amounting to more than the contents are actually worth.

At this point you'll try to reason with the blank-eyed and blameless counter person. It won't work. They're tired, and they've had this conversation hundreds of times before. You'll either have to pay and feel like you've been mugged, or leave empty handed and feel even worse.

We call upon you, Pósturinn, to change your draconian ways. We don't advocate violence, but you're making us start to identify with the Unabomber. And we just wanna get mail—like those happy, smiling people receiving plentiful boxes and letters in your propaganda ads—instead of feeling like Tom Hanks in 'Castaway.' And if you wanna reply? Please—just send an email. 📧

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